

# ROLE OF MEN IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN

**A Study of How Improving Knowledge  
About Men in Families Helps Strengthen  
Programming for Children and Women**



# **The Role of Men in the Lives of Children**

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**UNICEF  
3 U. N. Plaza  
New York, NY 10017**

Prepared by Joseph Foubi and Ronnie Lovich,  
edited by Sheila Barry Tacon and researched  
by Sangeeta Raja and Adriane Martin Hilber

On behalf of the

**Interdivisional Ad Hoc Working Group on  
Men and Families**

Chair	-Marjorie Newman-Williams
Members	-Katharina Borchardt -Bruce Dick -Misrak Elias -Joseph Foubi -Srilakshmi Gururaja -Silvia Luciani -Erma Manoncourt -Janet Nelson
Former members	-Krishna Bose -Mark Connolly -Ahmed Magan

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Français

C'est lorsque la mère et le père participent dans les soins, la nutrition et la protection de leurs enfants que les intérêts de ces derniers sont le mieux servis. L'engagement des hommes afin d'atteindre plusieurs objectifs importants du développement a été souligné dans le cadre de deux conférences importantes des Nations Unies, celle du Caire en 1994 et celle de Beijing en 1996. Tel que l'indique le chapitre IV de la conférence du Caire, "...l'objectif est de promouvoir l'égalité entre les sexes dans tous les aspects de la vie d'un être humain, notamment au sein de la famille et de la collectivité, encourager les hommes à faire preuve du sens des responsabilités dans leur vie sexuelle et leur comportement procréateur et dans leur vie sociale et familiale, et leur donner les moyens de le faire." (paragraphe 4.25).

De fait, les droits et le bien-être de l'enfant sont le mieux servis lorsque les relations entre l'homme et la femme au sein du foyer se fondent sur le respect mutuel, les mêmes droits et le partage des responsabilités. Conformément à cette réflexion et tenant compte de son expérience, l'UNICEF doit élargir la portée de sa recherche et de ses programmes pour inclure les hommes et les garçons en tant qu'intervenants importants dans les programmes de coopération qui visent le bien-être de l'enfant.

Le présent document d'information entre dans le cadre d'un effort continu en vue de mieux comprendre le rôle que peuvent jouer les hommes dans la vie de leurs enfants et des femmes. Il avance les divers arguments venant appuyer le soutien de l'UNICEF aux activités axées sur les hommes et les garçons. Un tel soutien est d'ailleurs étayé par les initiatives précédentes et en cours déployées par l'UNICEF pour faire participer les hommes aux programmes de développement pour les enfants et les femmes ainsi que par l'examen général de la littérature actuelle.

Les études et projets récents se sont penchés sur le domaine peu connu des connaissances, attitudes, croyances et pratiques des pères et grands-pères relatives à des questions qui affectent directement la santé, le niveau d'instruction et le bien-être général des enfants. On a également étudié mais, dans une mesure moindre, le point de vue des hommes sur les rôles des deux sexes, l'emploi des femmes, la violence et la socialisation des fillettes et garçonnetts. L'examen dégage certaines leçons et suggestions pour la conception et l'évaluation de programmes qui visent à renforcer le rôle positif des

hommes dans la vie des enfants et à arriver à des rôles et responsabilités équilibrés au sein duménage.

### Enseignements tirés

1. Les hommes jouent souvent des rôles uniques et positifs dans la vie des enfants et peuvent être persuadés de soutenir activement les efforts faits en vue de réduire l'inégalité entre les sexes. Toutefois, un travail supplémentaire doit être fait pour mieux comprendre les facteurs qui influencent les comportements positifs ou négatifs des hommes et pour utiliser cette connaissance pour repenser les stratégies actuelles relatives aux enfants et au programme 'Gendre et Développement.'

2. Les foyers traditionnels où le père assure les moyens de subsistance et la mère nourrit les enfants et s'en occupe sont de plus en plus remplacés par des relations et des rôles moins conventionnels au sein de la famille. Mais un grand nombre de familles ont du mal à s'adapter à ces changements et on y observe une dégradation de la situation des femmes et des enfants. Heureusement que les études et expériences pilotes commencent à dégager des stratégies en vue d'aider les hommes et les femmes à s'adapter à leurs nouveaux rôles bénéficiant ainsi à l'enfant et assurant une plus grande égalité entre les sexes.

3. La socialisation des enfants est un des grands déterminants de leur avenir en tant qu'homme, femme, mari, épouse et parent. Les normes traditionnelles si elles sont appliquées inflexiblement peuvent freiner le développement d'un enfant. Les études recommandent que les rôles et responsabilités soient déterminés par les besoins familiaux et non par des attentes prédéterminées ou des stéréotypes basés sur le sexe.

4. La socialisation est un processus important de l'identité culturelle et il ne saurait y avoir une approche universelle à la création de nouvelles images et de nouveaux rôles pour les hommes et les femmes au sein de la société. Il faut chercher au sein des communautés à identifier les modèles de rôles positifs attirants d'un point de vue culturel et social pour les parents et déterminer des manières efficaces de les rehausser et de les promouvoir dans la société.

5. C'est tout au long du cycle de la vie, de la prime enfance jusqu'à l'âge adulte que se fait l'acquisition de valeurs et de compétences nécessaires pour devenir des parents responsables et pour forger des relations

constructives entre homme et femme. Cela demande donc que l'on travaille avec divers partenaires et systèmes qui influencent le processus de socialisation à des étapes d'importance critique du cycle de la vie. Il s'agit des groupes traditionnels et religieux, des organisations communautaires, du système d'éducation, des associations de parents et d'enseignants, des organisations non gouvernementales, des réseaux de jeunes et d'adolescents, des groupements masculins et féminins, des mass médias, d'autres secteurs gouvernementaux (législation, main-d'oeuvre, communication) et du secteur privé.

6. La plupart des programmes qui ont réussi à engager les hommes de sorte à bénéficier aux enfants et/ou aux femmes ont intégré des stratégies et des activités axées sur les hommes aux projets et programmes en cours. Prenons les exemples suivants : mobilisation des hommes pour accroître l'utilisation de la TRO et la couverture vaccinale au Viet Nam ; participation des hommes aux activités de prévention de la syphilis maternelle et congénitale en Zambie ; activistes hommes et femmes luttant contre la violence à l'égard des filles et des femmes en Afghanistan, au Bangladesh, en Inde, au Népal, au Pakistan et au Sri Lanka ; prévention du VIH/SIDA par le biais d'une meilleure socialisation des garçons et des filles au Zimbabwe et en Ouganda ; développement communautaire par l'intermédiaire des partenariats forgés entre hommes et femmes dans les communautés Baha'i à l'Est du Cameroun et socialisation entre sexes et éducation à la vie familiale dans les Caraïbes pour enrayer la propagation du VIH/SIDA et prévenir la grossesse de l'adolescente, la violence et l'abus de drogues. La réussite de ces projets dégagent et renforcent des arguments en vue de cibler les hommes dans le cadre de la programmation et, de plus, les projets eux-mêmes peuvent servir de point d'entrée efficace afin de déboucher sur une approche plus vaste englobant le cycle entier de la vie et visant à une socialisation positive des garçons et filles.

7. Les données indiquent que beaucoup d'hommes peuvent être motivés par ce qu'ils sentent être dans le meilleur intérêt de leurs enfants. Il faudrait en tenir compte lors de l'élaboration des futurs programmes visant à engager les hommes. Il convient d'explorer davantage les autres facteurs qui influencent la motivation qu'ont les hommes de répondre aux besoins des enfants et des femmes.

## **Divers aspects à envisager lors de l'élaboration des programmes**

1. La première étape lors de l'élaboration de stratégies visant à engager les hommes dans la vie de leurs enfants consiste à faire l'analyse de la situation. L'accent devrait être mis sur le rôle des pères. On

cherchera à voir comment la relation entre les hommes et les femmes affecte les enfants. Les études faites à ce propos devraient chercher à identifier les comportements capables d'adaptation et persévérants (ceux qui s'écartent de manière positive de la norme) ainsi que les facteurs qui influencent ces comportements. L'information dans les domaines suivants devrait être utile :

- ✓ Croyances, attitudes et pratiques communes concernant les relations et les rôles entre les sexes au sein du foyer et de la communauté ;
- ✓ Modes de socialisation des garçons et des filles ;
- ✓ Genèse et perpétuation des croyances et pratiques (positives ou négatives) qui affectent les enfants et les femmes ;
- ✓ Comment les rôles prescrits et les pratiques connexes affectent les enfants, les femmes et la communauté ;
- ✓ Etat des politiques et de la législation qui protègent les droits des femmes et des enfants;
- ✓ Initiatives passées et en cours en vue de faire participer davantage les hommes à la vie des enfants et/ou arriver à une plus grande égalité entre sexes ;
- ✓ Eventuels partenaires pouvant participer à la programmation aux niveaux communautaire et national.

2. Le document offre des suggestions pour les stratégies et les volets fondamentaux des programmes. Il s'agit notamment des suggestions suivantes :

- Mobiliser les hommes pour la réforme juridique et des politiques en faveur des enfants et des femmes: Les hommes jouent un rôle très important au niveau de la formulation et de la mise en oeuvre des politiques et lois qui se répercutent sur le bien-être des femmes et des enfants. Si on leur donnait le soutien et les directives nécessaires, un grand nombre d'entre eux répondraient de manière positive aux questions des droits de l'enfant et de l'égalité entre sexes. Ceux qui défendent la cause devraient la présenter de manière personnelle aux législateurs, en tant que mari, partenaire et père puisque la plupart des hommes se soucient bien du bien-être de leurs enfants. Dans de nombreux contextes, il existe un besoin urgent de formuler ou de renforcer des lois qui protègent les femmes et les enfants contre la violence, l'exploitation sexuelle, la violation des droits à la propriété et aux indemnités de subsistance, à la discrimination sur le

marché du travail et dans d'autres sphères de la vie.

- Créer un contexte constructif durable pour les enfants par le biais d'une socialisation positive. Une approche vue sous l'angle du cycle de la vie pour arriver à l'égalité entre sexes commence par les parents. S'ils veulent impartir une redéfinition positive de la masculinité à leurs fils, les hommes doivent d'abord trouver valeur et intégrité dans leur propre rôle au sein de la famille. Ces valeurs doivent être assimilées par d'autres systèmes tels que l'école, les organisations religieuses et les mass média qui jouent traditionnellement un rôle important dans la socialisation de l'enfant. La recherche dans la communauté aiderait à guider le choix des messages et des compétences qui pourront être renforcés par le biais du programme scolaire et le travail réalisé par d'autres partenaires. Il faut trouver les canaux appropriés pour atteindre les parents.
- Créer un contexte constructif au foyer. Une des grandes questions opérationnelles qui se pose est de savoir comment on peut aider les hommes à trouver des manières non violentes d'exprimer leur frustration et d'apprendre à participer aux travaux ménagers, à l'éducation des enfants et de s'occuper des besoins de ces derniers. Il est de toute première importance de faciliter la communication entre les membres de la famille. Il faudra trouver des partenaires qui ont de l'expérience en matière de consultations familiales et les mobiliser à la cause. Une recherche supplémentaire doit être approuvée en ce domaine.
- Créer des partenariats pour la programmation et le plaidoyer. On ne peut limiter la fourchette de partenaires au sein du gouvernement et de la société civile. En effet, il est capital de faire appel aux organisations et groupements masculins pour progresser dans le court terme.
- Intégrer les activités ciblant les hommes aux programmes en cours. Le document ne recommande pas une approche verticale pour la participation des hommes mais suggère davantage des stratégies en vue de ré-examiner, le cas échéant, les programmes existants et d'inclure les hommes en s'inspirant des leçons apprises jusqu'à présent.

3. Finalement, le document traite des résultats escomptés des stratégies ciblant les hommes et propose des indicateurs pour mesurer la réussite dans trois grands domaines :

- Pour déterminer les changements dans les rôles et les images qu'ont d'eux-mêmes les hommes et les femmes. Une information devrait être collectée dans les domaines suivants :a) changement de rôles au sein du ménage, par exemple temps passé à des activités

rémunératrices, tâches ménagères et soins de l'enfant par les hommes, les femmes, les garçons et les filles et b) changement dans la perception de la masculinité et de la féminité au niveau communautaire, par exemple, attente face aux rôles masculins et féminins et modèles de rôles populaires.

- Pour évaluer les avantages que comporte l'engagement des hommes pour les enfants, les familles et la communauté. Le but en fin de compte des stratégies ciblant les hommes consiste à améliorer le bien-être des enfants et à arriver à une plus grande égalité entre les sexes. Point besoin d'élaborer de nouveaux indicateurs pour cela. Il faudrait chercher à évaluer les effets des stratégies ciblant les hommes sur la réalisation des objectifs et buts déjà définis des programmes et des projets. L'évaluation devrait viser à déterminer la valeur ajoutée des stratégies ciblant les hommes. L'accent pourrait être mis sur les domaines de la santé et de la nutrition infantiles, la santé sexuelle et de la reproduction, l'éducation des filles et la participation communautaire. Des indicateurs sectoriels ont été utilisés pour évaluer l'impact des stratégies ciblant les hommes au Cameroun et au Viet Nam. Au Cameroun, le taux de fréquentation scolaire pour les filles est passé de 7% à 100% (dans la zone du projet) en l'espace de deux ans suivant l'introduction des stratégies ciblant les hommes. Au Viet Nam, l'utilisation des SRO a augmenté de 60 % et la couverture vaccinale de 90 % dans l'une des provinces ciblées.
- Pour évaluer d'autres gains spéciaux pour les femmes. Les gains spéciaux pour les femmes varieront suivant les facteurs contextuels. Il peut s'agir de la diminution de la violence conjugale, de la révision des lois et pratiques se rapportant à l'héritage, de la diminution de l'exploitation sexuelle des femmes et des filles et de l'utilisation de drogues et d'alcool.

Pour l'UNICEF, travailler davantage avec les hommes relève d'un défi du point de vue opérationnel et politique. Mais la relève de ce défi peut déboucher sur de nouvelles voies permettant de mieux atteindre les buts de développement de l'enfant et de contribuer à l'élimination des obstacles à l'égalité entre sexes. Ces efforts permettront de traiter les questions des droits et du développement de l'enfant au niveau du ménage, entraînant ainsi un effet positif sur les programmes en cours tel qu'en témoignent les expériences précédentes faites sur le terrain.

**P**ara satisfacer de la mejor forma posible las necesidades de los niños, tanto la madre como el padre deben participar en el cuidado, protección y sostén de sus hijos. La participación de los hombres como medio para lograr varios objetivos importantes de desarrollo se destacó en dos conferencias de las Naciones Unidas: las celebradas en El Cairo en 1994 y en Beijing en 1995. Como se señala en el párrafo 4.25 del Capítulo IV del Programa de Acción de la Conferencia de El Cairo, "... el objetivo es promover la igualdad entre los sexos en todas las esferas de la vida, incluida la vida familiar y comunitaria, y alentar a los hombres a que se responsabilicen de su comportamiento sexual y reproductivo y a que asuman su función social y familiar".

Los derechos y el bienestar del niño se atienden mejor cuando las relaciones entre el hombre y la mujer en el hogar se basan en el respeto mutuo, la igualdad de derechos y las responsabilidades compartidas. De acuerdo con esta reflexión y teniendo en cuenta su experiencia, UNICEF debe ampliar el enfoque de su investigación y programas para incluir a hombres y niños varones como actores importantes en los programas de cooperación.

Este documento de fondo es parte de un esfuerzo constante por comprender mejor el papel que los hombres pueden desempeñar en las vidas de los niños y las mujeres. Se examinan los argumentos a favor del apoyo que debe prestar UNICEF a las actividades relacionadas con los hombres y niños varones. Las iniciativas anteriores y actuales de UNICEF para incluir a los hombres en programas de desarrollo para mujeres y niños, así como una evaluación general de la literatura actual, contribuyen a dicho examen.

Estudios y proyectos recientes han investigado el terreno poco conocido de los conocimientos, actitudes, creencias y prácticas de padres y abuelos acerca de temas que afectan directamente la salud, rendimiento escolar y el bienestar general de los niños. También se investigó, aunque en menor grado, la perspectiva masculina acerca de los papeles de los hombres y las mujeres, el empleo femenino, la violencia y la socialización de los niños y niñas. El análisis lleva a algunas conclusiones y sugerencias para el diseño y evaluación de programas que tratan de realzar el papel positivo de los hombres en las vidas de los niños y lograr papeles y responsabilidades equilibradas en los hogares.

## Conclusiones

1. Los hombres desempeñan a menudo papeles únicos y positivos en las vidas de los niños y se les puede persuadir de que apoyen efectivamente los esfuerzos por reducir las desigualdades entre hombres y mujeres. Sin embargo, hay que trabajar más para entender mejor los factores que influyen sobre las conductas positivas o perjudiciales de los hombres y utilizar esos conocimientos para reevaluar las actuales estrategias relacionadas con los niños y el género y el desarrollo.

2. Los hogares tradicionales en los que el padre sostiene a la familia y la madre le brinda atención y cuidados, están cediendo su lugar, cada vez más, a relaciones y papeles menos convencionales dentro de la familia. Sin embargo, muchas familias no están logrando encarar bien estos cambios y la condición de mujeres y niños ha empeorado. Afortunadamente, de los estudios y experiencias piloto están surgiendo gradualmente estrategias para ayudar a los hombres y a las mujeres a adaptarse a sus papeles cambiantes, en formas que pueden beneficiar a los niños y promover la igualdad entre los sexos.

3. La socialización de los niños determina en gran medida su futuro como hombres, mujeres, esposos, esposas y padres. Si se aplican inflexiblemente, las normas tradicionales pueden constituir un impedimento para el desarrollo del niño. Los estudios recomiendan que las necesidades de la familia, más bien que expectativas predeterminadas o estereotipos de género determinen los papeles y responsabilidades.

4. La socialización es un proceso importante en la identidad cultural y no puede seguirse un enfoque universal para construir nuevas imágenes y papeles para los hombres y mujeres en la sociedad. Se debe trabajar en las comunidades para identificar modelos positivos que sean cultural y socialmente atractivos para los padres y para determinar formas efectivas de cultivarlos y promoverlos en la sociedad.

5. La adquisición de valores y habilidades requeridas para ser padres efectivos y cultivar relaciones constructivas entre hombres y mujeres se debe llevar a cabo durante todo el ciclo vital, desde la infancia hasta la edad adulta. Esto exigiría que se trabaje con una amplia gama de asociados y sistemas que influyan sobre el proceso de socialización en fases críticas del ciclo vital. Entre éstos están los grupos tradicionales y religiosos, las organizaciones basadas en la comunidad, el sistema educativo, las asociaciones de padres y maestros, las organizaciones no gubernamentales, las redes de

jóvenes y adolescentes, las asociaciones de hombres y de mujeres, los medios de comunicación social, otros sectores gubernamentales fundamentales (legislación, trabajo, comunicación) y los empleadores dentro del sector privado.

6. La mayoría de los programas en los que han participado con éxito los hombres en formas que benefician a los niños y/o a las mujeres, han incluido estrategias y actividades centradas en los hombres, en proyectos y programas orientados hacia la solución de problemas. Éstos incluyen la movilización de los hombres para incrementar el uso de las sales de rehidratación oral (SRO) y la cobertura de la vacunación en Vietnam; en Zambia, la participación de los hombres en los esfuerzos de prevención de la sífilis materna y congénita; hombres y mujeres dedicados a combatir la violencia contra mujeres y niñas en Afganistán, Bangladesh, la India, Nepal, Pakistán y Sri Lanka; la prevención del VIH/SIDA mediante una mejor socialización de los niños y niñas en Zimbabwe y Uganda; el desarrollo de la comunidad mediante la creación de una alianza entre hombres y mujeres en las comunidades Baha'i del Camerún Oriental; y, en el Caribe, la socialización en materia de género y la educación en habilidades vitales para controlar la propagación del VIH/SIDA e impedir los embarazos, la violencia y el uso indebido de drogas entre adolescentes. Aunque el éxito de tales proyectos ofrece y da fuerza a los argumentos a favor de la incorporación de los varones en la programación, los proyectos mismos pueden servir como puntos de partida efectivos hacia un enfoque más amplio de la socialización positiva en materia de género que continúe durante todo el ciclo vital.

7. Los datos sugieren que es posible motivar efectivamente a muchos hombres mediante lo que ellos perciben como lo que más beneficia a sus hijos. Esto se debe tener en cuenta en el futuro en el diseño de programas en los que se persiga la participación de los hombres. También deberían investigarse más detenidamente otros factores que influyen sobre la motivación de los hombres para responder a las necesidades de los niños y las mujeres.

## Consideraciones de programación

1. El primer paso en el desarrollo de estrategias para hacer que los hombres participen en las vidas de los niños es el análisis de la situación. Se debe enfocar el papel de los padres y evaluar cómo afecta a los niños la relación entre hombres y mujeres. Los estudios que se realicen en apoyo de esta investigación también deben tratar de identificar conductas flexibles (positivas desviadas) de los hombres así como los factores que influyen sobre esas conductas. Sería de gran ayuda poder contar con información en los ámbitos siguientes:

- ✓ Creencias, actitudes y prácticas comunes relacionadas con las relaciones entre los sexos y sus papeles en el hogar y en la comunidad;
- ✓ Modalidades de la socialización de los niños y niñas;
- ✓ Génesis y perpetuación de las creencias y prácticas (positivas o negativas) que afectan a las mujeres y a los niños;
- ✓ Cómo afectan a los niños, las mujeres y la comunidad los papeles predeterminados y las prácticas conexas;
- ✓ Estado de las políticas y legislación que protegen los derechos de las mujeres y los niños;
- ✓ Iniciativas anteriores y en curso para proteger los derechos de las mujeres y los niños;
- ✓ Posibles aliados que podrían participar en la programación a nivel comunitario y nacional.

2. El documento ofrece sugerencias de estrategias y componentes básicos de los programas. Éstos incluyen:

- La movilización de los hombres para la reforma de las políticas y las leyes en favor de las mujeres y los niños: Los hombres son fundamentales en el desarrollo y la aplicación de políticas y leyes que repercutan sobre el bienestar de las mujeres y los niños. Si se les da el apoyo y orientación adecuados, muchos responderían de forma positiva ante temas relacionados con los derechos de los niños y la igualdad entre los sexos. Los defensores de las mujeres y los niños deberían hacer un llamamiento personal a los legisladores, como maridos, parejas y padres, la mayoría de los cuales, indudablemente, quieren sentir que están haciendo lo que más puede beneficiar a sus hijos. En muchas situaciones, existe la necesidad urgente de desarrollar o fortalecer las leyes para proteger a las mujeres y a los niños de la violencia, la explotación sexual, la violación de los derechos a la propiedad y a las pensiones alimenticias, contra la discriminación en el mercado laboral y en otras esferas de la vida.
- Crear un ambiente de apoyo duradero para los niños mediante una socialización positiva. El enfoque del ciclo vital para lograr la igualdad entre los sexos empieza con los padres. Para impartir una redefinición positiva de la masculinidad a sus hijos, los hombres deben primero encontrar valor e integridad para sí mismos en su papel dentro de la familia. Es preciso que otros sistemas tales como las escuelas, las organizaciones religiosas y los medios de comunicación social que, tradicionalmente, desempeñan un papel importante en la socialización del niño, asimilen estos valores. La investigación en la comunidad ayudaría a orientar la selección de los mensajes y habilidades que se desarrollarían a través de los pro-

gramas escolares y el trabajo de otros colaboradores. Es necesario buscar conductos apropiados para obtener comunicación con los padres.

- Crear un ambiente de apoyo en el hogar. Una pregunta operativa fundamental que se debe contestar es cómo ayudar a los hombres a encontrar formas no violentas de expresar frustración y de aprender a compartir el trabajo doméstico, la crianza de los hijos y el papel de proveedores. Es crucial facilitar la comunicación entre los miembros de la familia. Se debería identificar y movilizar a colaboradores con experiencia en asesoría familiar y se debería dar apoyo a la investigación ulterior en este ámbito.
- Desarrollo de alianzas para la programación y la defensa. La gama de colaboradores dentro del gobierno y la sociedad civil no debe ser limitada. La importancia de las organizaciones y grupos de hombres es de importancia decisiva para poder avanzar a corto plazo.
- Integración de actividades orientadas a los hombres en los programas en curso. El documento no recomienda un enfoque vertical para lograr la participación de los hombres, sino más bien sugiere estrategias para examinar de nuevo los programas existentes, donde corresponda, e incluir a los hombres sobre la base y con la orientación de las conclusiones a las que se ha llegado hasta ahora.

3. Por último, el documento examina los resultados esperados de las estrategias orientadas hacia los hombres y sugiere indicadores para medir el éxito en tres ámbitos principales:

- Determinar los cambios en los papeles e imágenes que tienen de sí mismos los hombres y las mujeres. Se podría reunir información sobre los siguientes aspectos: (a) la modificación de los papeles dentro del hogar, es decir la cantidad de tiempo que los hombres, mujeres, niños y niñas invierten en la adquisición de ingresos, las tareas domésticas y el cuidado de los hijos; y (b) los cambios en la percepción de la masculinidad y la feminidad a nivel de la comunidad, por ejemplo, los papeles que se supone que deben

desempeñar los hombres y las mujeres, la popularidad de los modelos.

- Evaluar los beneficios que rinde la participación positiva de los hombres para los niños, las familias y la comunidad. El objetivo final de las estrategias dirigidas a los hombres es mejorar el bienestar de los niños y lograr la igualdad entre los sexos. Para ello no es necesario crear nuevos indicadores. Se deben hacer esfuerzos por evaluar los efectos de las estrategias dirigidas a los hombres sobre el logro de los objetivos y metas ya definidos en los proyectos y programas. La evaluación debe tratar de determinar el valor añadido de las estrategias dirigidas a los hombres. Se debe hacer énfasis especial en los sectores de la salud y nutrición infantil, la salud sexual y reproductiva, la educación de las niñas y la participación de la comunidad. En Camerún y Vietnam se utilizaron indicadores basados en sectores para evaluar las repercusiones de las estrategias dirigidas a los hombres. En Camerún, el índice de asistencia escolar de las niñas aumentó del 7 al 100 por ciento en dos años, después de la introducción de estrategias dirigidas a los hombres. En Vietnam, el empleo de las SRO aumentó en un 60% y la cobertura de la vacunación en un 90%.
- Evaluar otros logros especiales para las mujeres. Los logros especiales para las mujeres variarán según los factores contextuales. Pueden incluir una disminución de la violencia doméstica, la modificación de las leyes y prácticas en materia de herencia, la disminución de la explotación sexual de las mujeres y niñas y la disminución del uso de drogas ilícitas y alcohol.

Para UNICEF, trabajar más con hombres es un desafío operacional y político. Pero hacerlo puede proporcionar nuevas formas de lograr mejor los objetivos de desarrollo infantil y contribuir a la eliminación de los obstáculos que se oponen a la igualdad entre los sexos. Estos esfuerzos ayudarán a encarar problemas en materia de derechos del niño y de desarrollo a nivel de los hogares, con repercusiones positivas sobre los programas que se están llevando a cabo, como lo demuestran experiencias anteriores en el terreno.

## English

**T**he best interests of the child are well served when both the mother and the father are involved in the care-taking, nurturing, and support of their children. Involving men as a means to achieving several important development objectives was highlighted in two United Nations conferences in Cairo (1994) and Beijing (1996). As stated in the chapter IV of the Cairo Conference, "...the objective is to promote gender equality in all spheres of life, including family and community life, and to encourage and enable men to take responsibility for their sexual and reproductive behavior and their social and family roles" (paragraph 4.25).

Indeed, the rights and well-being of the child are best served when relations between men and women in the household are based on mutual respect, equal rights and shared responsibilities. In line with this reflection and taking into account its past experience, UNICEF must broaden its research and programme focus to include men and boys as important actors in programmes of cooperation.

This background paper is part of an ongoing effort to better understand the role that men can play in the lives of children and women. Arguments for UNICEF's support to activities focused on men and boys are discussed. This is supported by UNICEF's previous and ongoing initiatives to involve men in development programmes for children and women as well as a general review of current literature.

Recent studies and projects have investigated the unfamiliar ground of the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and practices of fathers and grandfathers about issues that directly affect child health, educational achievement, and general welfare. Also investigated, though to a lesser degree, has been the male perspective on gender roles, women's employment, violence and socialization of girl and boy children. The review leads to some lessons and suggestions for the design and evaluation of programmes which seek to enhance the positive role of men in the lives of children and to achieve balanced roles and responsibilities within households.

### Lessons

1. Men often do play unique and positive roles in the lives of children and can be persuaded to actively support efforts to reduce gender inequality. However, more work is needed to better understand the factors that influence the positive or the harmful behaviours of men and, use this knowledge to rethink current child-related and GAD strategies.
2. Traditional households with the father as provider and

the mother as nurturer and care giver, are increasingly giving way to less conventional relationships and roles within the family. However, many families are not coping well with these changes, and the conditions of women and children have worsened. Fortunately, strategies to help men and women adapt to their changing roles in ways that benefit children and foster gender equality are gradually emerging from studies and pilot experiences.

3. The socialization of children is a large determinant of their future as men, women, husbands, wives and parents. Traditional norms, if inflexibly applied, can pose an impediment on a child's development. Studies recommend that roles and responsibilities be commanded by family needs rather than by predetermined gender-based expectations or stereotypes.

4. Socialization is an important process in cultural identity and there cannot be a universal approach to building new images and roles for men and women in the society. Work must be done in communities to identify positive role models which are culturally and socially attractive for parents and, to determine effective ways to nurture and promote them in the society.

5. Acquisition of values and skills required for effective parenting and cultivating constructive relationships between men and women should take place throughout life cycle, from early childhood through adulthood. This would require working with a broad range of partners and systems which influence the socialization process at critical phases of the life cycle. These include the traditional and religious groups, community-based organizations, the education system, Parents & Teachers Associations, Non-Governmental Organizations, youth and adolescents networks, men's and women's associations, the Mass Media, other key governmental sectors (legislation, labour, communication) and employers within the private sector.

6. Most programmes, which have successfully involved men in ways that benefit children and/or women, integrated males-focused strategies and activities into ongoing problems-focused projects and programmes. These include the mobilization of men to boost ORS use and immunization coverage in Vietnam; participation of men in the maternal and congenital syphilis prevention efforts in Zambia; men and women activists fighting violence against girls and women in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka; prevention of HIV/AIDS through improved socialization of boys and girls in Zimbabwe and Uganda; community development through building a partnership between men and women in Baha'i communities of

Eastern Cameroon; and Gender Socialization and Life-Skills Education in the Caribbean to control the spread of HIV/AIDS and prevent teenage pregnancy, violence and substance abuse. While the success of such projects provide and strengthen the arguments to target males in programming, the projects themselves can serve as effective entry points to a broader and life-cycle-wide approach to positive gender socialization.

7. Data suggest that many men can be effectively motivated by what they perceive is in the best interest of their children. This should be taken into consideration in future programme design seeking men's involvement. Other factors, which influence men's motivation in responding to the needs of children and women should be further investigated.

## Programming considerations

1. The first step in the developing strategies to involve men in the lives of children is the analysis of the situation. The focus should be on the role of fathers and assessing how the relationship between men and women affects children. Studies to support this exercise should also seek to identify resilient (positive deviant) behaviours among men as well as factors, which influence these behaviours. Information in the following areas would be helpful:

- ✓ Beliefs, attitudes and common practices related to gender relations and roles in the house hold and in the community;
- ✓ Patterns of boys' and girls' socialization;
- ✓ Genesis and perpetuation of beliefs and practices (positive or negative) which affect children and women;
- ✓ How prescribed roles and related practices affect children, women and the community;
- ✓ State of policies and legislation which protect the rights of women and children;
- ✓ Past and ongoing initiatives to better involve men in the lives of children and/or to achieve gender equality;
- ✓ Potential partners to involve in community and national levels programming.

2. The paper offers suggestions for strategies and basic programme components.

These include:

- Mobilizing men for policy and legal reform in favour of children and women: Men are critical in the development and implementation of policies and laws which impact on the well being of women and children. If given the right support and guidance, many would respond positively to the issues of child rights and gender equality. Advocates should appeal to lawmakers on a personal level, as husbands, partners and fathers, most of whom surely want to feel they are doing their best for their children. In many settings, there is urgent need to develop or strengthen laws to protect women and children against violence, sexual exploitation, violation of rights to property and maintenance allowances, discrimination in the job market and in other spheres of life.
- Creating a long lasting supportive environment for children through positive socialization: A life cycle approach to achieving gender equality begins with parents. To impart a positive redefinition of manhood for their sons, men must first find value and integrity for themselves in their role in the family. These values need to be assimilated by other systems such as the school, religious organizations and the mass media which, traditionally, play an important role in child socialization. Research in the community would help guide the choice of messages and skills to develop through school curricula and the work of other partners. Appropriate channels to reach parents need to be sought.
- Creating a supportive environment in the household. A key operational question to address is how to help men find non-violent ways of expressing frustration and learn to share in domestic work, child rearing and provider role. Facilitating communication between family members is crucial. Partners with experience in family counselling should be identified and mobilized and, further research in this area should be supported.
- Developing partnerships for programming and advocacy. The range of partners within the government and civil society cannot be limited. The importance of men's organizations and groups is crucial for achieving progress in the short term.
- Integrating male-targeted activities into ongoing programmes. The paper does not recommend a vertical approach in involving men, but rather, suggests strategies for re-examining existing programmes when applicable and to include males on the basis and direction of lessons so far learned.

3. Finally, the paper discusses the expected outcomes of male-targeted strategies and suggests indicators for measuring success in three main areas:

- To determine the changes in the roles and self-images of men and women. Information could be collected in the following areas: (a) change of roles within the household, e.g., amount of time spent in income earning, domestic tasks and child care for men, women, boys and girls; and (b) changes in the perception of masculinity and femininity at community level, e.g., expectation of gender roles, popularity of role models.
- To assess the benefits that the positive involvement of men yields for children, families and the community. The ultimate goal of male-focused strategies is to improve child well-being and achieve gender equality. There is no need to develop new indicators for this. Efforts should be made to assess the effects of male-focused strategies on the achievement of already defined project and programme objectives and goals. The evaluation should seek to determine the value added of male-focused strategies. Special emphasis could be in the areas of child health

and nutrition, sexual and reproductive health, girls education and community participation. Sector-based indicators were used to evaluate the impact of male-focused strategies in Cameroon and Vietnam. In Cameroon, the school attendance rate for girls increased from 7 to 100 percent in two years, following the introduction of male-focused strategies. In Vietnam, the use of ORS increased by 60% and the immunization coverage by 90%.

- To assess other special gains for women. Special gains for women will vary depending on contextual factors. They may include decreased domestic violence, revised inheritance laws and practices, decreased sexual exploitation of women and girls and, decreased use of illicit drugs and alcohol.

For UNICEF, working more with men is operationally and politically challenging. But, doing so may show new ways to better achieve child development goals and contribute to the elimination of obstacles to gender equality. These efforts will help address child rights and development issues at household level, thereby impacting positively on ongoing programmes, as shown in previous field experiences.

# I. Introduction: Promoting Gender Equality in Families

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## The Argument for Men's Involvement

**T**he rights and responsibilities of children, women and men as individuals and family members are articulated in international fora and declarations such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Declaration of the World Summit for Children (WSC), the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW). Children, in particular depend on the family and parents for protection and assistance. Their rights can only be ensured when relations between men and women are based on mutual respect, equal rights and shared responsibilities.

To achieve the best interests of the child, UNICEF concluded at its Innocenti Global Seminar that promotion of the larger objective of gender equality between women and men must include greater efforts to involve men in their capacities as decision-makers in family and community (Richardson: 1995). The Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) recognized that gender prescribed roles also limit men's opportunities to fully enjoy family life and call for equal participation of men and women in all areas of family and household responsibilities. This reflects the shift in programme emphasis that has taken place in the last decade— from Women in Development (WID), to Gender and Development (GAD). The latter approach recognizes the limitation of focusing on women alone, and highlights the need to look at men and women as partners within their socio-cultural and political context.

The UNICEF gender policy calls for recognition of the diverse roles played by both men and women in child care and for greater attention to the parenting role of men (UNICEF:1994). However, while policies developed at global and country levels tend to support the inclusion and the participation of men in gender and development efforts, research and programmes have been focused almost exclusively on the mother and the girl child, excluding the father and the boy child. Consequently, we know little about the role played by men in shaping gender relations, which factors influence this role, and how it impacts on the child and the family.

An inter-divisional working group at UNICEF/ New York has been meeting to discuss the role of men in achieving the rights of children and gender equality in the family, within the rights-based framework. It is the opinion of the working group that involving men is more likely to achieve gender-based change that better meets family needs. By working in partnership with men, this change can be less threatening to them, non-violent, and less likely to undermine the cultural identity of men and women. Programmes that address gender will be better able to overcome gender-related obstacles that hinder the success of child health and welfare programmes. Thus programmes can be more effective at protecting the rights of children as well as women. And involvement of men can mean longer lasting and sustainable change when it leads to community-initiated change.

This concept paper was developed as the background for a consultative meeting to begin a dialogue with inter-agency partners, NGOs and researchers. Its objectives are to clarify why organizations such as UNICEF

**S**tate Parties shall use their best efforts to ensure recognition of the principles that both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of the child. Parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians, have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child. The best interests of the child will be their basic concern.

- Article 18, Convention on the Rights of Children

should focus on men's involvement as a strategy to promote equality between women and men. We will explore problems that households are facing in a rapidly changing world, the challenges men in families are confronting, and ultimately the impact of these on children. Changing traditional family roles are having an important impact on the socialization of children with both positive and negative results. We must look critically at the impact of these changes in order to prevent the perpetuation of discrimination against girls — elimination of which is fundamental to achieving gender equality and improvement in the status of women (FWCW: 1995).

The paper will also summarize the major issues emerging in the promotion of men's involvement, analyze benefits to child, family and community of programmes which foster positive involvement of men, examine some of UNICEF's initial experience in men-targeted programming. Based on this it will highlight considerations for programme planning, monitoring and evaluation.

The background information gathered for this paper is from a variety of reports, documents and interviews with members of the inter-divisional working-group. The authors recognize that this is not a comprehensive review of the literature, and that there are certainly other UNICEF supported projects not noted here that involve men in the process of achieving child rights and gender equality.

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## II. What We Know about the Role of Men in Families

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### I. Gender Socialization and Discrimination

#### The Process of Gender Socialization

**G**ender socialization begins at birth. From the day he or she is born, a child's interactions with others are based largely on whether born a boy or girl. This early socialization begins to chart a course for that child's life and future. One's identity, self image, and ability to live up to his or her potential are influenced by these interactions and the expectations of others.

Not all of the consequences of gender roles are negative; many exist for practical reasons. But they are potentially harmful when they are rigidly applied, needs are not met, or if they cause discrimination. When a family's work is divided along gender lines, and not based necessarily on specific needs or ability of family members, the woman and girl child are more likely to suffer. When boys see their mothers undervalued and expected to do disproportionate amounts of family work, they often carry this standard into their own adulthood and expect the same of their wives and daughters.

There is a lack of understanding about gender socialization and its effects. And because gender socialization varies between cultures, much of what is known is not generalizable to many settings. We do know that there exist underlying processes by which girls and boys are socialized. These often protect and prevent girls from independence, but encourage boys to learn survival skills which prepare them for economic independence and readiness to assume the responsibilities of a family (PIOJ/UNICEF: 1995). As families and particularly parents struggle to adapt to new harsh economic realities, these traditional socialization patterns are less successful.

**Socialization of Girls.** How much work a girl child does, how much food she receives, and the amount and type of education she is given are dependent on how her family and community value girl children. How she views herself, and in fact, her whole future, depend entirely on her socialization as a girl. For girls to get the education, skills training, independence and survival skills they need for our changing world, the expectations of both parents as well as the community must often change to allow it.

As a girl enters young adulthood, her sexual and reproductive health outcomes will depend on her gender socialization. Many family rules and ascriptions for girls often relate to the need to being a good wife and mother. Specifically, families' direct concerns are to maintain the girl's virginity, or delay pregnancy as long as possible. A girl learns to avoid sexual advances, and that sexual experience for women is looked down upon. Yet to protect herself she must be able to negotiate safer sexual relationships, have sex only when she consents, and get pregnant only when she is ready. But when a woman is too dependent and has limited skills, her survival (and often her children's) depends on her relationships with men. Thus she has far less negotiating power, and is vulnerable to exploitation, early marriage, and early pregnancy, all of which has direct implications on her future status, health and possibilities of employment (Elias: 1996).

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A girl learns values and behaviors in preparation for her eventual transition to the home of her future husband; she will later take the life skills she has developed with her to her new environment (Brown: 1995). Though not universal, in many developing countries the first obligation of the girl is to her mother and the family during this period. When mothers begin earning income outside of the home, girls and older women are expected to take on child care duties. In many instances this involves leaving school to take care of younger siblings, effectively limiting the chances a girl may have at achieving a better future for herself as a woman (Elias: 1996). Often the larger role played by the mother is not seen as an expansion of her worth or value within the family, but rather in terms of her failure to maintain her womanly duties for which her daughters, sisters, mother and grandmother must now compensate. Thus, making life better for girls requires challenging the gender perspectives of men, but also the community at large, remembering that women also help to perpetuate these expectations.

**Socialization of Boys.** In contrast, boys have a different socialization pattern. The survival skills often encouraged of boys are learned largely outside the home from friends, neighbors, or extended family members (Chevannes: 1996; Nieves: 1992). Parents tend to spend less time developing social skills and value systems for boys than they do for girls in many cultures. Boys are expected to learn these things on the road. Deviation from family norms for boys may yield harsher punishment in an attempt to toughen the boy or develop greater survival skills. Boys are also encouraged to seek sexual experience from a very early age in contrast to common prohibitions / restrictions placed on girls' sexual exploration, further demonstration of the double standard parents regularly submit their girl and boy children to, despite similar risks of sexually transmitted disease, pregnancy, and exploitation (Brown: 1995).

But expectations of boys often clash with the changing needs and circumstances often facing younger generations. As boys attempt to accommodate the expectations placed on them under increasingly difficult economic realities, they find themselves less able to develop successful survival strategies. Education and skill acquisition may come by any means necessary - sometimes resulting in unsafe or illegal activity. This is a dramatic divergence from the structured family and community supported process of development envisioned by parents and care givers (Chevannes: 1996). As a result, parents feel a loss of control and hopelessness, and increasingly find themselves unable to ascertain why their boy child is less able to achieve what they achieved at his age. This disillusionment creates further disenfranchisement of the child, and feelings of inadequacy, futility and confusion on the part of the parents.

**External influences and gender socialization.** Apart from the socialization boys and girls get in the home, children are bombarded daily with gender oriented messages from a wide variety of community sources. Schools communicate gender-based expectations in many ways, some of them discriminatory. Religion prescribes roles and rituals, many of them gender-based. Rigid adherence to interpretations of religion help to maintain family power dynamics, where women are subordinate to men, and their primary role tied closely to childbearing and child rearing.

By the time boys and girls reach adolescence, they spend a considerable amount of time with their peers whose values, influence and acceptance become increasingly important. If they have been lacking guidance or are receiving conflicted messages from parents, they are

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more likely to turn to their peers for example. Peers have long been noted as a source of information, as well as misinformation, and inspiration to try new things as well as take risks. For many youth, there comes a time when the values of their peer group outweigh the values of their families.

Media and gender socialization. Another key determinant in gender socialization is the media. Media has extraordinary power to communicate and lend authority to social stereotypes, many of which reinforce notions about families and the respective roles of males and females (UNICEF / Innocenti: 1995). Media at times portrays violence as an end to conflict, stereotypes gender roles for women and men, and links violence with sexuality. Exposure to mass media images of sexuality, violence, and gender roles can have a profound effect on the values, material aspirations, and interactions of young people with one another, their families, and their communities (Hawkins & Meshesha: 1994). Young people are vulnerable to messages that exaggerate imbalances in gender roles, and stereotype beauty and sexual relationships, without the life experience and perspective necessary to recognize that these images are not based on real lives. Tobacco and alcohol manufacturers successfully market to impressionable youth by glamorizing their products with strong sexual stereotypes. In many countries, mass media is controlled by the government or a few individuals, often men, that may benefit from maintaining the status quo.

But the media can also be used positively to raise awareness and educate people about health and welfare problems, their prevention and their solutions. It has been used as a strategy in public health, social welfare and environmental programmes to promote behaviour change. Such approaches are sure to have applications for developing culturally appropriate role models with whom men can identify, with the goal of promoting gender equality and greater involvement of men in the family.

### **Socialization as a root cause of discrimination**

Discrimination against girls has its roots in these socialization processes, starting well before birth. In countries such as China, and parts of Southeast Asia where there is boy preference and one-or two child policies, an unborn girl fetus is much more likely to be deprived of adequate pre-natal sustenance and care, and more likely to be aborted if the parents are made aware of her gender. At birth, boy preference in many societies can lead to neglect, malnutrition and abandonment of girl babies by mothers already overburdened, undernourished, or pressured by family to give birth to a boy. As the girl child grows, pressure to help care for younger siblings and do domestic chores often assumes greater importance than her own development.

Access is only the first form of discrimination against girls in terms of educational opportunity. Preference is given to boys over girls in school, as gender bias enters both written and unwritten teaching materials. The result is that in most developing countries, girls in school still receive less education than boys, and those that do stay tend to avoid typically male careers in science, mathematics, engineering and medicine (UNESCO: 1994). Gender bias also enters school through teachers, administrators and parents. Expectations that boys must achieve more than girls creates a school culture which promotes male achievement in academic subjects. Girls tend to be geared toward less ambitious careers, presumably to allow them time for future mothering duties (MOHONK / UNICEF: 1995). The situation has got-

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ten so critical in recent years, that the FWCW's Platform for Action called for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against the girl child. UNICEF, in turn has identified girls' education as a priority first step toward achieving equal opportunity and gender equality for girls.

## 2. Gender Equality and Families in Transition

Traditional households, especially those with father as provider and mother as nurturer and care giver, are increasingly giving way to less conventional relationships and roles. In more and more households, children are being raised by mothers alone, grandparents, and other arrangements. Consequently, roles and responsibilities of household members are in transition. In some cases these changes are acceptable to family members, while in many they are not. Parents lack the role models of previous generations to prepare them for their new responsibilities. Some of the coping mechanisms adapted by mothers and fathers to meet their parental responsibilities are detrimental to the father-child relationship, and place a disproportionate burden on women. Women have assumed an increasing share of the financial burden without a decrease in domestic and child-care responsibilities. Ill-equipped to deal with a rapidly changing world where their traditional roles are less appreciated, some men turn their frustration into violence.

As responsibility for income earning shifts, household expenses are increasing, and the number of dependents per provider is also increasing. In many developing countries that have implemented debt-reduction policies, families have had to assume the costs of education, an essential requirement to prepare children for the modern economy. Many working adults are also supporting elderly parents and extended family members, increasing the dependency burden due to the rise in life expectancy (United Nations: 1994). Meanwhile, family support networks and traditional safety nets are eroding, as households become smaller and in some cases fragmented (UNDP: 1993). The economic burden is compounded by the pandemic of AIDS, particularly in some communities of Sub-Saharan Africa, where there are fewer and fewer adults able to provide and care for children and the elderly (WHO & UNICEF:1994). The resultant burden of poverty suffered by families has increased, making it ever more difficult for families to function as a front line of protection for children.

### Men's Contribution to Family Resources

There has been a sharp increase in women's formal and informal employment. Many jobs traditionally held by men are now performed by women for lower wages (Standing: 1989; The Economist: 1996). Increases in informal employment have diminished employment security as they are usually low-wage and less stable (UNDP: 1993). This presents a number of threats to children, and to the family as a whole.

When women earn extra income, most or all is dedicated to their household, including non-cash earnings (Bruce: 1995). However, in the case of fathers, the cash contributions to their households may be smaller. This may be because some fathers contribute a portion of their income to one or more households in which they are supporting children, as well as other past or current sexual partners. Cultural norms may dictate, as is in the case

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Families are not coping well with changing times and changing family needs. As a result, children suffer.

of Botswana, that support is derived not from the father but from the woman's brothers and/or father (Engle and Breaux: 1994). In many West African countries, there are clear distinctions for household expenses that are the father's responsibility, and those that are expected to be the women's contribution (Bruce: 1995). Several studies have shown that fathers spend a substantial amount of their income for personal use (Desai: 1994). Children however, are better off in families where both the father and mother are contributing to the household, even when the male spends an estimated 30% of his income on non-family related expenses (Engle: 1995). But when a man feels threatened or displaced by the need to share the provider role, even this reduced contribution is may be diverted outside the family.

## Men's Share of Domestic Responsibilities

Despite the added provider role, women's role in domestic work and child care has remained unchanged in many societies. The added burden of income generation has enormously increased the workload for women, and especially mothers. Although male financial contribution has decreased, many men have not proportionately increased their share of domestic responsibilities. Women shoulder almost all responsibilities for child care, regardless of their involvement in paid work and household tasks (Desai: 1994). In southern India, women who are not working outside the home spend seven and a half hours per day in domestic activities, whereas women who spend seven hours or more in market work still continue to spend nearly seven hours in domestic work (Desai & Jain: 1992). The result of this double burden is that these women are left very little time for child care and for themselves. Indeed, it has been shown that as women take on activities to supplement household income, time is sacrificed from child care and leisure before there is a decrease in hours spent in domestic duties (Ware: 1984; Kendall, Foote & Martorell: 1984). Unless men take on more household responsibilities, this trend will go on or worsen.

Several studies have shown that in the best of cases, that fathers contribute about one-third as much time as mothers to direct child care (Bruce: 1995). In developed and developing countries, women, whether they are mothers or not, work much longer hours than men (Szalia: 1975). Furthermore, some evidence even suggests that when men and women live together in a household, men add rather than share women's workload. Data from Ghana shows that women who do the least work (domestic and market) live without men, while men who live with women do the least work. (Lloyd: 1993). The increase in the number of children in a household also increases the workload for women but not necessarily for men.

Perhaps one way of accounting for some lack of men's involvement in domestic activities rests in their confidence to do so. The more men feel supported in the parent role by their wives, the more they tend to stay involved in the care of their young children. It was observed that a kind of vicious cycle has developed in which men are presumed incompetent, accept that verdict and neither seek nor are given a chance to overcome their presumed incompetence (Bruce: 1995). In China men and women believe that fathers are inherently incapable of handling infants. Consequently, men tend to avoid getting close to children. This observation is further corroborated by studies looking at mothers' attitudes and their influence on fathers' behaviour. A study on Italian fathers showed that the degree of a father's involvement with his children and his level of satisfac-

Children are better off in families where both the father and mother are contributing to the household, even when the male spends an estimated 30% of his income on non-family related expenses (Engle: 1995).

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tion as a parent were highly correlated with the extent of his wife's encouragement.

It has been observed that development initiatives can be inadvertently complicit in perpetuating the imbalance of responsibilities. Policies and programmes focused on women often assume that women's ability and willingness to take on more work are limitless, particularly when it provides promise of improving the health and welfare of their families (Kabeer: 1992; Desai: 1994). Policies and programmes aimed at improving the welfare of women do not often calculate the time cost versus added benefit to the woman herself in the development of such initiatives. Adding income-generating activities to other programmes such as health projects, for example, requires a great deal of time and energy from women who are already overburdened, and ignores the broader context of social relations and living conditions (Goetz: 1991; Heyzer: 1992). Not surprisingly, such efforts have not had a significant impact on gender inequality within the family, and underscores the need to broaden programmatic approaches that challenge gender stereotyping and traditional roles in light of the new realities families are facing (Ulin: 1992).

### **More Women Raising Children Alone**

There has been a drastic increase in female-headed households in many parts of the world. War, disease, environmental degradation and political unrest have conspired to drive families apart. The lack of economic opportunities has led many men to migrate away from their homes in search of work, and even abandon their families. Data from Southern Africa showed that men may initially leave their homes to earn wages for the family's benefit, but their commitment to sending money home, or the practical possibility of doing so, sometimes fades (Bruce: 1995). Many of the households are de-facto female-headed due to men being unemployed or victims of alcoholism and drug addiction.

An increasing number of households in both the developed and developing world depend solely on women's economic contribution. This has been especially true in Latin America and Southern Africa (Desai: 1994) where women face increasing economic burdens, yet limited employment opportunity. The causes include divorce in the United States (Sweet & Bumpass: 1990); single parenthood in developing countries, such as Botswana (Lloyd and Desai: 1992); polygamy or parental migration in Sub-Saharan Africa (Lloyd: 1993); and widowhood in South Asia (Dreze:1990). A recent study found that 30 - 50 percent of first marriages in developed countries and 25 percent of first marriages in developing countries are dissolved by the time women are 40 - 49 years old, many as a result of divorce or separation. The break up of parenting partnerships generally worsens the economic condition of mothers and children as the financial support from men dwindles over time. (Bruce: 1995).

The incidence of teenage pregnancies worldwide has also contributed to the increase in single motherhood. Studies conducted in several Latin American countries show that the bonds between unmarried, pregnant, adolescent women and their sexual partners are typically weak (Morris, 1993). Marriages due to unplanned pregnancy can often be unstable. Teenage girls are often socially marginalized when they become pregnant out of wedlock, and as a result do not receive support or services during the pregnancy (Ghee: 1995). This has direct impact on the health of the

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baby and the young mother herself. The future for both is likely to be difficult, as the adolescent mother often has less education, low income and an uncertain claim on the father's earnings (Bruce: 1995).

In many places there are few exit costs to make men accountable for leaving their families. (Engle: 1995). Men are often without obligation to provide financial support for their families when they leave. Families supported primarily by women are poorer than families supported by both men and women. There are fewer wage earners in female headed households. Women, especially mothers, are subject to discrimination in the job market. Also, women and children lack the protection of effective maintenance, inheritance and property laws and entitlements, leaving their households vulnerable. (Goldscheider & Waite: 1991; Mencher & Okongwu: 1993; Weitzman: 1985).

### **Men's Presence and Family Welfare**

Women and children suffer not only from lack of financial support from the father, but also from the deteriorating father-child relationship that often occurs when he is absent. Increases in teen suicide, substance abuse, and pregnancy have been associated with father's absence. Boys living without fathers are more vulnerable (Popenoe: 1996). Divorce can, by itself, contribute to weakening the father-child bond. A study in the U.S. showed that almost half of under 16 year-old children of divorced parents had not seen their father in the previous 12 months (Goode: 1993). Contact between Jamaican fathers and their children was severely curtailed when another man was living with the mother and children (Brown 1993). In this setting there seemed to be an implicit understanding between men to respect each other's rights over women, even at the expense of the father-child bond.

Recent research has shown that the presence of men as fathers and husbands in the home can have both positive or negative impacts on women and children. A nurturing, supportive partner in economic, domestic and child care responsibilities has immeasurable positive effects on the physical, emotional and financial welfare of children. However, absent, non-functioning, or abusive men in families can cause tremendous hardship and suffering. When a father's role has changed, and he feels he no longer commands respect in the family because he is no longer the sole provider and protector, his attachment and sense of responsibility to his children diminish (Engle: 1995).

Positive involvement of fathers has positive outcomes for children, as well as the family and the community. Some studies have focused on child health and development benefits of positive fatherhood. A longitudinal study of Mexican adolescent fathers found that 75 per cent of fathers who were present at the birth of their children were still involved in their children's lives after four years (Engle and Rico: 1994). Another study, (Littman: 1995) found that a woman whose husband supported breastfeeding was more likely to breastfeed her child, than one without husband's support. In South India, it was found that children received more calories in families where there was no violence against women, than in families where there was violence.

In Chile, the simple presence of a father in the house was found to be associated with children's good diet and nutrition levels (Sachs: 1993). But, in Barbados, children performed better at school, when their fathers were

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more involved in their lives, whether or not the children's father resided with them (Russell-Brown: 1992). A longitudinal cohort study in Brazil found that children living with their biological or adoptive father presented significantly lower proportions of school failure than those living in a house without a father (Barros: 1995). In Tanzania, children who have lost their father are less likely to be enrolled in school, probably as a result of the loss of financial support (Bruce: 1995). Children in the USA, particularly boys, exhibited more empathy towards others when their fathers had been actively engaged in child care (Miedzian: 1991).

When men are present in the home they play an important and sometimes overriding role in decisions that affect the health and well-being of women as well as children (UNICEF: 1994). There is a growing body of data demonstrating that decision-making about sexual and reproductive health issues, such as whether to use contraception and/or practice safe sex, is largely determined by men. However, much of this research has been mainly examined from a perspective of a deficit, viewing men as barrier rather than potential resource in improving the condition of women and children (Barker: 1996).

### 3. Role Transition and Male Identity

**I**n many parts of the world, men see their primordial role in the family as protector and provider (Nolosco: 1993 and Barker and Loewenstein: 1995). Supporting one's family economically is valued universally as a mark of masculinity (Brown: 1996; Chevannes: 1996; Bruce: 1995). Fathers who cannot financially support their families lose prestige and power, and may react by retreating from family obligations or reverting to violence against women and children. With more women sharing the provider role, men are in need of role models to help them adapt to their changing roles as fathers and spouses, while preserving the same sense of personal identity (Barker: 1996). How men adapt to their changing role within the family and community has tremendous effects on children.

The extent of men's involvement with children as well as the image of manliness are influenced largely by culture. In some parts of West Africa, contact between fathers and very young children is taboo (Nsamenang: 1992), while in other places, there is strong cultural prescription for close father-child contact.

In a study of men in three Caribbean countries, it was found that one cannot talk meaningfully about a man's fathering roles apart from his roles in relation to women, or apart from his understanding of manhood. This concept of manhood involves 1) sexual prowess, offspring and multiple partners, and includes some level of homophobia; 2) roles of provider, protector and disciplinarian; and 3) God's Plan which grants him authority over women and children and deems him the head of the home (Chevannes & Brown: 1995). In another recent study, Caribbean men expressed a much broader definition of their role as fathers. These included a wide range of domestic and child care responsibilities and the man's unique role in serving a good role model and fostering positive behavior, free from gender stereotype, among their boys and girls (Brown 1993). While these studies do not represent men everywhere, they do illustrate how perceptions of masculinity and male identity are connected with their ability to care for their children.

UNICEF sponsored case study research in Vietnam that explored male roles

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and male identity. The men in the families interviewed saw themselves as the household leaders who made decisions on large issues, with responsibilities as economic provider, moral educator, preserver of family lineage, and supporter of parents and elders. The men saw themselves as having the primary responsibility for their children's education. In terms of the provider role, men saw women's contribution as secondary, and expressed fears of being left with household work while their wives worked outside. (Ngan: 1995)

As families cope with the forces of modernization, traditional systems of authority are increasingly disrupted, causing a breakdown in the cohesion of families (Engle: 1995). In societies built on well-defined and well-understood systems of authority, mostly run by men, changing gender roles are challenging accepted social structures, without clearly defining alternatives. Family members previously accustomed to submitting to paternal authority are finding themselves in new situations where this is lacking, or not valued. Without extended family or community to reinforce the traditional social hierarchy, the basis for father or elder authority diminishes. Loyalties are no longer automatically bound to the family or community, but develop in response to a number of other influences—schools, cultural institutions, government services, media. Individualism is taking precedence over the group (Engle: 1995). At the same time, families living apart from kin groups and familiar social patterns, especially in urban areas, show a greater willingness to accommodate diverse family structure and gender roles than their rural counterparts.

When male authority is challenged there is often an increase in domestic violence, as authority figures attempt to maintain control over the family (Penn: 1994). As a man perceives a loss of power and role, he may cling to the behaviors that characterize his manhood, look for social situations where his manhood is preserved (i.e. new family, if necessary), or try to assert his manhood in his household, possibly with force or violence. Any of these in excess can be harmful to women and children. Younger family members are more vulnerable to some of the negative role models and examples of poor coping behaviors they see around them, particularly when family structure and guidance is lacking. The decline of male authority in the home is also significant in shaping discriminatory patterns against girls. If men feel their authority is in jeopardy, they may attempt to tighten control over the women and girls around them, especially if it is perceived that female gains toward independence or equality mean a loss in their own entitlement as men.

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## 4. Violence and the Power Balance Within the Household

**A**s men perceive a loss of control in their household, the frustration they may be feeling for other reasons, such as underemployment or poor working conditions, can too easily turn to violence. It is striking to note that as women take on more of the financial responsibility within the household, they too are beginning to exhibit frustration and aggression due to stress (Penn: 1994). The transformation of families is also having a profound affect on children, particularly adolescents. As the father's authority diminishes, parents often resort to violent measures to control their children. Adolescents react by holding less and less esteem for traditional power structures. This dynamic then creates a cycle of frustration, powerlessness and violence that can come to replace the traditional authority once held by the family. One global study found that, where such data are recorded, 40 to 80 percent of all physical abuse suffered by women takes place at the hands of a close family member, usually a husband. Research from the U.S. finds that domestic violence is correlated with economic stress, poor self-esteem and traditional ideas about gender roles (Bruce: 1995).

Attempts to address domestic violence have centered on interventions that have been more reactive rather than preventive. Programmes have mainly focused on public education and shelters for battered women and their children. There are, however, a few that have worked with adolescent and adult men, seeking to address the deep rooted causes of violence and promote alternate gender roles (Barker: 1996).

In addition to violence suffered in the home, children have always been victim to male perpetrated violations such as child prostitution, child labor, and war. Sexual violence against children - girls and boys - has been receiving more attention recently. HIV, STIs, early pregnancy and a mountain of mental health problems are only some of the sequelae. Fears of HIV infection have caused some men to seek out younger girls. Women and children are overwhelmingly the victims gender-based violence and of wars they have little part in.

Living with any kind of violence or abuse in the home or community presents a tremendous health burden ( Heise: 1994), threatens the identity and self esteem of children, and teaches them that this is how women and children are to be treated. Without breaking this cycle the health and welfare of women and children cannot be vastly improved, nor their rights ensured.

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### III. Programme Considerations

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**T**his time of demographic and social transformation provides a ripe opportunity to help men and women to adapt to the changing roles and changing needs within their families in a way that fosters gender equality. Men are critical to this process, as both fathers and mothers create the most important environment in which the child will be socialized. But the transition will occur more easily by maintaining some identity for men and women as roles change. A balancing of power within the family that is free from violence and supportive of both parents is needed to achieve gender equality as well as the rights of the child. But the transformation needs to happen beyond the family, in communities and institutions as well, since education, laws and policies and the media all are powerful forces in the socialization of children. To achieve our goals we must continue to explore the complex factors affecting men and their families as a means to achieving the best interest of the child.

By addressing these challenges we can assist families to adapt to alternative roles and responsibilities, and achieve a new social dynamic where roles are redefined to place value on nurturing, caretaking and compassion. Roles and responsibilities in the family can be based on need, rather than on predetermined gender-based expectations or stereotypes. Indeed the best interest of the child are served when men and women can create a positive partnership based on mutual respect within a supportive social fabric of family and community. UNICEF can better achieve the best interest of the child if its traditional efforts toward empowerment of women were complemented with male-focused interventions aimed at promoting a constructive partnership among family members.

There is an urgent need for operational field experience in working with men and families throughout the life cycle, and to measure the added value it will bring to improve the lives of children. Multiple key entry points such as parents, the school system, peer processes, and the mass media are crucial for ensuring that gender socialization for both sexes has positive outcomes for generations to come. UNICEF, whose mission statement recognizes the role of families as the core unit for achieving the goals agreed by countries at the World Summit for Children, is in a strategic position to promote the participation and responsibility of men/fathers in the lives of children and families.

#### I. Strategies and Programme Content

##### 1.1 Involve Men in the Development and Implementation of Sound Gender-related Policy

Men, often dominant within the home, the community and at the national level, have tremendous influence on the institutionalization of socially and culturally and politically prescribed gender roles. As fathers, brothers, husbands or friends they exert their values and belief systems on the women and girls around them. Men are therefore critical to the development and implementation of policies and laws to foster gender equality and more positive involvement of men in the family. In places where men are key decision makers and holders of power and public resources, they can facil-

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itate or, ultimately obstruct gender-related policy reform and support or ignore laws designed to protect the rights of women and children.

The way men are socialized is a good predictor of the extent to which they will, as adults, influence gender-related policies and practices. Experience shows that many adult men respond positively to initial consciousness raising and other positive influences. Consequently, it can be assumed that there are men who are willing to take a step in the direction of better gender relations and gender equality, if given support and guidance. It has also been shown that if this is done in the ultimate interest of child health and well-being, some men are even more likely to be motivated (Ref: UNICEF Zambia / FHI; UN-NADAF). However, without sparks to ignite such sentiments into action, it is likely that those who fear or oppose changes for gender equality will remain as barriers to positive gender-role transition within their families and communities. Advocates need to appeal to lawmakers on a personal level — as husbands, partners and fathers, most of whom surely want to feel they are doing their best to meet the needs of their families.

Men's involvement in policy reform is needed in several key areas to ensure that the rights of children and women are protected. Policy reform to promote positive men's involvement and gender equality in the family might include:

- labor laws to ensure family cohesion (length of the work day, and lodging requirements for mobile workers); to ensure gender equality in the labor market and work place, and to allow parenting time for working mothers and fathers (maternity leave, father leave, breastfeeding time, child care, and leave to care for sick family members)
- maintenance laws for divorced, absent and teen fathers to ensure greater economic responsibility toward children; and
- protection laws to ensure rights to property and inheritance for women and children, and equal rights to education and information for both boys and girls.

Laws alone cannot guarantee change, as they are sometimes hard to enforce. Law and policy reform that promotes gender equality and more involvement of men in families must be accompanied by community-initiated change. Traditional laws can be a more powerful force than modern law, especially when modern laws contradict deeply rooted social expectations. Involving men is critical to implementing successful law and policy reform, as they often hold more power in modern and traditional realms. At the same time, women must not be excluded from these processes.

### *Men are Motivated by the Best Interest of the Child and the Community*

Experience from the developing countries shows that some men can be mobilized when acting in the best interest of the child, the family and the community. Programmes targeting men's issues with a gender equality focus are beginning to see some success as are initiatives that appropriately pinpoint male motivation factors such as greater health for their children (Engle: 1995). In Zambia, a maternal syphilis project succeeded in getting 60 - 80 percent of prospective fathers to come forward for treatment when their wives were found to be infected with syphilis. The main motivating

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factor was concern for the health and safety of the unborn child, but the treatment approach also provided an opportunity for counseling of couples and promotion of sex-related dialogue in the family. The UNIFEM sponsored Baha'i project on traditional media as a change agent in Cameroon learned that social norms and the power of group culture were critical variables in gender-related attitudinal and behavioral changes, particularly at the household level. (UN NADAF:1996) Both the programmes in Cameroon and Zambia showed that people will rethink community values when there is demonstrable benefit to the family. Such approaches can be effective in building constructive partnerships between women and men, promoting sexual and reproductive health as well as family health and wellbeing, and fostering equality in gender relationships.

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## 1.2. Create a Long Lasting Supportive Environment Through Socialization

To achieve lasting change for men and women, boys and girls, new socialization processes are needed. There must be expectations and acceptance that men and women share child rearing and household work, as well as the provider role. Such social change will go a long way toward ensuring gender equality for girls and boys, and a more positive role for men in the family as the norm. Achieving such change will require intervention with all age groups with appropriate entry points throughout the life cycle.

### The Life Cycle Approach to Achieve Gender Equality

A life cycle approach assumes that it will take the lifetime of at least one generation for real change to occur and be sustained. Working with different age groups may speed the process of positive change toward gender equality. A new socialization process must begin in early childhood, when values and attitudes which shape our identity as women and men are quickly taking hold. Working with new parents can help positive socialization processes to begin in infancy and early childhood. Support for working mothers, parenting skills for fathers, and involvement of men in more child survival and development activities are examples of strategies that can facilitate positive socialization processes beginning in infancy and early childhood. Family life education for school children and adolescents can help ensure that youth will have life skills they will later need to negotiate relationships. Adolescents in particular need help to build skills that will enable them to survive economically, and establish roles and responsibilities in the households they will form. Interventions with parents and elders will help to create a climate of acceptance for more positive participation of men in families where needs are changing. Work with parents will help them to maintain their place as role models as they adjust to changing economic, social and demographic conditions. It is felt that after one complete life cycle where positive involvement of men and gender equality in families are the norm, there will be greater assurance of lasting change.

Creative strategies to address socialization processes throughout the life cycle are proving more and more useful. Programmatic attention has begun to focus on developing life skills for boys and facilitating adaptation to changing family structure and roles for fathers. At the Caribbean Child Development Center, a gender socialization project explores deeply embedded elements in the socialization of boys and girls through discussion groups of men and women (Brown: 1995; Brown, Broomfield, Owen 1994.). Fathers Incorporated, an organization in Jamaica formed by a group

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of young fathers, attempts to facilitate improvements in the self-image and behavior of Jamaican men by projecting a more positive image of fatherhood through workshops and community activities (Chevannes: 1996).

UNICEF's school health programmes in Sri Lanka provide health education through the integration of life skills training into the school curriculum. In the Philippines, UNICEF supported peer programmes target vulnerable adolescents through youth organizations and other extra curricular activities. In South Africa, the challenge of learning survival skills is facilitated through mass media (television) (UNICEF: 1995). By stimulating debate through school, health communications and the media, a supportive environment is created to help young people cope with increasingly complex societal and familial expectations. Programmes strategies such as these provide tools to address socialization in the home, community, and through the media — first steps in achieving new images of men, manhood and fatherhood.

### *Helping parents accept new roles and responsibilities*

Adapting to new roles has been particularly challenging to men as partners and fathers. In some settings, the often perceived (if not real) decline of male authority in the home is also significant in shaping discriminatory patterns against girls. The resultant upheaval can lead initially to an exaggeration of traditional values and behavior patterns—many of which serve to maintain historic discriminations against girls. It should also be recognized that women can also have beliefs and expectations that can lead to rigidly defined gender roles and even discrimination. Both parents need help to ease into new roles within the family without feeling threatened or a loss of dignity, so that they in turn can help their children adapt to the demands of a changing world.

Children who see parents in the home performing non-traditional gender tasks are likely to grow up socialized to accept alternative gender roles and responsibilities. Unfortunately, redistribution of roles and responsibilities between men and women, fathers and mothers, is not always comfortable nor valued. As a result, fathers may assume some domestic tasks, and mothers may assume income generating responsibilities without either parent acknowledging the value and importance of these changes. Their children are left feeling confused and insecure, ill-equipped, or unaware of the role they can now play as they enter school and other social relationships.

For men to impart a positive redefinition of manhood for their sons, they must first find value and integrity for themselves in these new roles. As role models, when fathers begin to perform domestic chores, assist in child care, and provide nurture, love and guidance absent of violence to all family members, their children, and especially sons will begin to embody a new image of masculinity and fatherhood. As provider and protector, fathers must help their sons gain survival skills in the home rather than on the street. Values and social skills taught primarily to girls need to be extended to boys, alleviating the confusion that mixed messages leave on children struggling to define their identity (Chevannes: 1995). Parents can be encouraged and supported as they renegotiate their roles, by appropriate programming and policy initiatives.

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tices can occur more effectively when they are first challenged within the community and its institutions. (UN-NADF: 1996)

### Fostering equality and nondiscrimination between boys and girls

Fundamental to achieving gender equality is securing the health, education and welfare of the girl child. Improving the status of girls requires, however, a transformation in attitudes and behavior of parents and community, such that girls are valued equally with boys. New socialization processes can help to overcome stereotypes that foster discrimination against girls.

Equal opportunity for girls to develop their intellectual and physical potential depends on education that is free from gender bias. (Elias: 1996). Both boys and girls need exposure to socialization that values female education and training. At the same time, educational opportunity for both sexes must be balanced with equal responsibility for domestic tasks, enabling girls to keep up in school. To achieve this, partnerships with parents, schools and community organizations are essential.

Interventions aimed at addressing gender stereotypes in young children can have a significant impact later in adolescence, where they may serve as role models or informal peer educators. In one such project, youth engagement through participatory peer education helped to build self-esteem, develop decision-making skills, and communication skills (Aguilar: 1992). UNICEF has successfully used Life Skills Education as a socialization approach. Life Skills Education focusing on key factors such as self-esteem, relationships, friendship, and peer-support can positively influence a young person's ability to build negotiating skills for more equitable partnerships between men and women (MOHONK/UNICEF: 1995).

### 1.3 Stable, Supportive and Non-Violent Balance Within the Household

#### Maintaining identity as roles change

Positive adaptation to changing family needs cannot be achieved without consideration for male identity. If men feel they are being emasculated by sharing the provider role and taking on domestic responsibilities, they are likely to resist the changes needed for a healthy role transition. Alternatively, if men begin to appreciate and value their own contribution in the household, the transition might be easier.

Gender roles can be redefined within an acceptable cultural context. The complementary nature of male and female roles can be preserved. What must change however, is the rigidity with which expectations for gender roles are applied. Traditions are often changed or adapted to meet new needs without a loss of cultural identity, especially when a practice is deemed harmful. However, since expectations about what it means to be a man or a woman is at the heart of cultural identity, it is especially challenging to address harmful gender-based practices and expectations while preserving what is perceived as positive in the culture.

Men need help to view sharing in domestic work, child rearing, and some of the provider role as positive and masculine, and not as signs of weakness or failure as a man. The challenge is to find examples of men who

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have gone beyond gender stereotypes for the good of their family, and to build upon these examples and images. Existing programmes can find numerous entry points by exploring ways that male identity and their role in the family can impact on health and welfare outcomes within their own areas of programme focus. Recognizing that there is no one formula for facilitating this change, nor one image of masculinity that will be acceptable everywhere, these initiatives must be developed locally.

By facilitating dialogue in families and at the community level, gender-based inequalities can be addressed — the more women and men communicate their needs with each other, the better able they will be to form strong partnerships. In many (or perhaps most) places, men and women are not accustomed to this level of dialogue, yet it is needed if they are to successfully negotiate roles and responsibilities based on family need, and not predetermined gender roles.

Male identity, or masculinity, may be also significant entry point for appealing to men on behalf of their children. As demonstrated in the Zambia syphilis project, albeit indirect, it was a motivating factor to take action for better sexual health. Through initiatives such as these, women can gain negotiating power to help them better meet their own needs as well as their children's.

### Elimination of domestic violence

The violence occurring with modernization and social disintegration presents a challenging area requiring new programme approaches with multiple entry points and target groups—boys and girls, men and women. (UNICEF: 1989) Programmes can help men and women adjust to their new social and economic realities in constructive ways. As more and more women enter the workforce, there is an increasing need to help men at all levels (family, community, institutional, policy) to see the relationship between male frustration at changing family roles compared with the gender-based expectations they may have grown up with, and domestic violence. Male frustration with their perceived loss of role is an important issue that may be confronted by programmes seeking to have more of an impact on prevention of domestic violence.

## 2. Partners in Programming

Community and institutional partnerships are crucial for programming strategies for more involvement of men, and social change in general (UN-NADAF). This needs to occur in a variety of levels. Some examples have been described in this paper - initiatives in Vietnam, Zambia, and Cameroon. Potential partners include:

- ✓ Parents Associations where parents are already gathered on behalf of their children. They often seek to make improvements in their children's education and may be open to initiating gender oriented activities.
- ✓ Existing men's networks provide a non-threatening environment in which to begin the necessary dialogue and consciousness raising that is needed to facilitate an easier role transition for men.
- ✓ Education system and religious organizations where gender socialization occurs in a sanctioned institutional forum.

- Gender roles can be redefined within an acceptable cultural context. The complementary nature of male and female roles can be preserved. What must change however, is the rigidity with which expectations for gender roles are applied.
- Men need help to view sharing in domestic work, child rearing, and some of the provider role as positive and masculine, and not as signs of weakness or failure as a man.
- The more women and men communicate their needs with each other, the better able they will be to form strong partnerships.

- ✓ Youth groups and peer counseling and education programmes often focus on skills building in communication, self esteem, and sometimes address gender related issues. The young men and women in these groups are often highly motivated to serve as agents for change for themselves and their peers.
- ✓ Mass media is a key determinant in modern gender socialization. Just as the media can promote harmful or false gender images, mass media can be used to promote positive new gender images for both men and women. Social marketing which has been used by programmes to promote family planning, safer sex, oral rehydration, and prevent teen pregnancy offers experience and lessons that can be applied to facilitate a positive gender role transition.
- ✓ Other organizations with an interest in improving the health and welfare of women and children such as NGOs and CBOs.

## **Integrating Men - Focused Strategies into Ongoing Programmes.**

Strategies for more positive involvement of men can be achieved by linking them with ongoing child survival and development strategies and activities. The findings and observations in this paper provide compelling rationale for targeting more involvement of men to achieve the rights of children as spelled out in the CRC Declaration.

For organizations such as UNICEF, this need not mean large new vertical programmes. There are many ways in which men's involvement can be worked into ongoing programmes. Research and programme examples cited throughout this paper suggest ways that men can be included in child survival activities for better child health outcomes. Better use of ORS, breastfeeding and better treatment of syphilis are just a few. Findings on positive involvement of men show potential for better school enrollment and performance, especially for girl children. Sexual and reproductive health services need to include men in education and services must take men into account if they are to successfully help communities to prevent behavior-linked problems such as STIs and HIV, as well as unplanned and high risk pregnancy. Programmes working to stop sexual exploitation and violence against women and girls in all of its forms must work with men for effective prevention. While these strategies may require a new consciousness for programme implementors, positive men's involvement can be achieved in the context of ongoing interventions, and not necessarily separate initiatives. The table on the following page gives examples of UNICEF sponsored programmes that have already been implemented or are in progress.

**M**ale frustration with their perceived loss of role is an important issue that may be confronted by programmes seeking to have more of an impact on prevention of domestic violence.

**S**trategies for more positive involvement of men can be achieved by linking them with ongoing child survival and development strategies and activities.

## Some UNICEF Experience Targeting Men

A number of UNICEF-country offices have initiated innovative activities to involve men for better child outcomes and / or gender equality. Some have targeted both parents together, as in the Better Parenting Programme. In others men have been targeted as a means to achieve other programme objectives. For example, the Zambia project for prevention and control of maternal and congenital syphilis sought to break the cycle of recurrent syphilis infection. When male partners were encouraged to seek treatment, almost 60 - 80% of male partners came to the MCH clinic, ordinarily a female domain. It was found that men sought treatment not for improved health outcomes for themselves or their partners, but because the treatment would ensure that the baby would be born healthy.

UNICEF is focusing on life skills education for adolescents in a number of countries, some with emphasis on gender relations and roles. In Zimbabwe, systematic teaching of life skills has been incorporated throughout the primary school curriculum, using HIV/AIDS as an entry point. In Thailand, a life skills curriculum has been incorporated that deals with HIV/AIDS, but also with a set of broader issues, some of which are gender-based. In Cameroon, school health clubs were established in secondary schools to develop life skills, provide counseling and address other broad issues. Partnerships were also developed with the media, government, NGOs and donors. In the Caribbean, a situation analysis of life skills has resulted in a regional initiative to develop materials for health and family life education using an integrated approach to problems with a gender basis such as AIDS, teen pregnancy, violence, as well as substance abuse.

The UNICEF Vietnam supported study on the role of men and grandparents in families found that fathers had very little knowledge about children and women, while grandparents spent the most time with the children. In response to the findings, a Facts for Life contest among men was organized. Men were reached through the Vietnam Women's Union, which has a membership of 11 million countrywide. The intervention was very popular; 47, 000 men participated countrywide. In one province, the use of oral rehydration salts increased 60% and immunization reached 90% months after the contest. Thus the link between father involvement and better child health was very obvious.

A Gender Socialization Project was initiated with the support of the UNICEF-Jamaica office. Gender-linked behavioral patterns were observed, including the steady decline of school enrollment among boys from primary school through University. A steady rise of urban crime, especially among young men, and a growing influence of peer and street cultures on the socialization on male adolescent children were evident. The project implemented by the University of West Indies involved six low-income communities in an effort to involve residents in a process of self-examination. The methodology consisted of in-depth interviews, group meetings and discussions after staged public events. The evaluation of the project revealed that the intervention raised debates within the community on the impact of gender-based roles on their lives, and there was a better understanding of the consequences of socialization, especially among men.

UNICEF/ROSA has supported interviews with "activists," men and women working to stop violence against girls and women in their communities in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Over a third (57) of those interviewed are men. The findings demonstrated that there is room to challenge cultural concepts of masculinity to achieve a non-violent definition of manhood. (Hayward:1997)

The Safeguard Youth from AIDS (SYFA) project in Uganda, initiated with UNICEF support, aims to reduce the vulnerability of young people to HIV/AIDS. To achieve the project objectives, a broad range of partners was mobilized within the government and civil society, including church groups, government ministries, the mass media and other community-based organizations. As part of a SYFA media campaign, an ongoing newspaper, Straight Talk, provides information to stimulate dialogue among youth and families around issues related to sexual health and relationships. Its aim is to challenge gender stereotypes, demystify sex and encourage real friendships and understanding between boys and girls. Schools and NGOs have started to conduct regular meetings to discuss issues raised in Straight Talk. (Henry: 1995)

## 4. New Studies/Operations Research

New exploratory studies are needed to understand the knowledge, attitudes and practices of men in child rearing and other family responsibilities, and to further document the impact that men can have on the well-being of children and their families. Research on this topic that is relevant for developing countries is limited; available studies are from a few regional areas and are not representative of the many regions where UNICEF operates. Because family structure, roles and socialization processes vary so divergently between cultures, local assessments and analyses will prove invaluable for planning programmes and interventions. There is even less information on men who play a parenting role in the absence of the biological father, or the dynamics of intra-familial roles and relationships with siblings or extended family members.

Operational research is needed to test pilot interventions in gender socialization projects, as this is a relatively new strategy. Pilot studies can also help to further document improved effectiveness of child survival and development strategies that specifically include men.

Positive fatherhood is a key factor in breaking gender prescribed attitudes and promoting overall positive child socialization. By gaining a clearer understanding of this in culturally specific contexts, organizations such as UNICEF can build on examples of positive fatherhood and work to facilitate more involvement for better child health and gender equality.

## IV. Indicators for Success

Expected outcomes from male involvement strategies can be characterized on many levels. For programmes to be successfully planned, implemented and outcomes documented, clear indicators for success need to be identified. A few examples of indicators of progress are included here.

### I. Sharing Responsibilities and Building a New Image

The Report on the Innocenti Global Seminar summarized that if gender disparities on the woman's side of the equation stem from their lack of political power and public life, their heavy work burden and low wages, disparities on the male side come from underdeveloped negotiating and power-sharing skills when it comes to family decision-making, their tendency to be competitive rather than cooperative, and their relative lack of nurturing capacities (UNICEF: 1995). Planners of programmes and policy aimed at reducing gender inequality through men's involvement must pay attention to the new values, skills and attitudes that men need to assume. As men begin to share new roles with their partners as nurturers, care-givers and providers, and as perceptions of masculinity and femininity change, a new socialization process will produce tangible outcomes.

Changes in role and responsibility can be documented by measuring amounts of time spent in income earning, domestic tasks and child care by both men and women. Qualitative methods that explore cultural expectations for gender roles can provide the means to understand and measure attitude change such as greater value placed on nurturing and care giving activities, and progress toward better balancing of roles and responsibilities.

### Priorities for Operations Research / Studies

- Exploratory research on role of men in lives of children. Further documentation of the impact that men can or do have on child health and welfare.
- Analysis of laws and policies that act as barriers to positive male involvement, and identification of strategies to work for change at national, institutional and grassroots levels.
- Testing of strategies that work in specific cultural contexts, using a life cycle approach to have maximum benefit for girls and boys, adolescents, and parents.
- Identification of culturally acceptable and positive images of men and women that can potentially demonstrate a balance of roles and responsibilities between men and women

Markers for new socialization processes might include popularity of role models, equal aspirations for boys and girls, changes in types of interaction between fathers and daughters, mothers and sons, and so on.

Measures that have been used in research to understand gender role have relevance for setting objectives and documenting outcomes of changing role perceptions and images. For example, it has already been shown that some men are changing their roles in the family or are at least interested to do so (Barker: 1996). A study of 700 fathers in Jamaica found that 50% of the urban-based fathers reported to be involved in domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning and shopping (Chevannes & Brown: 1994). Interviews with 130 working men in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil show that most men highly value women's work. Sixty-six % of these men had heard of paternity leave; of these, 89 % considered it important so that they could help their wives. (Barker: 1996). Another study in Brazil found that younger men seem more flexible in gender roles than older men (Barker: 1995/6). Studies such as these offer key concepts for programme planning and evaluation.

## 2. Benefits for Children, Families and the Community

Strategies that facilitate more involvement of men can be expected to have better outcomes for child health and welfare, and for girls in particular. For many of these initiatives, new indicators will not have to be developed. Because these strategies have the same ultimate goals for improved child health and welfare and for gender equality, many measures of their success will be similar to those of existing programmes. For example, child health and welfare outcomes from men-targeted interventions can be measured in terms of nutritional indicators, changes in morbidities that are affected by gender-linked behaviors and attitudes, or school attendance, especially by girls. To document effectiveness of male involvement initiatives, it would be necessary to compare these indicators with those outcomes when men are not specifically targeted.

Research findings cited earlier suggest that efforts to improve the gender socialization process might see gains throughout the life cycle. Improved self esteem of girls as well as boys, better gender balance in schools, more young women entering the work force, and more men engaged in the rearing of their children are examples of milestones toward gender equality and child welfare that can be documented. Using a life cycle approach, it should be possible to see measurable gains for adolescents in particular. School attendance, skills development, earning potential, and substance use are a few areas where it may be possible to document improvement as a result of more involvement by fathers. Similarly, fewer teen pregnancies, later initiation of sexual activity, and reduced rates of HIV and STI infection are indicators which would be expected to improve with more positive male involvement.

Positive involvement of men not only contributes to the strengthening of the family, but is also expected to yield short and long term benefits to the community. It can accelerate gains for the status of women, children and adolescents, as well as the participation of women in community development and decision-making activities. Successful projects targeted at men have yielded outcomes such as increased women's access to community-level decision-making, improved girls school attendance and reduced violence in the community (UN-NADAF, 1996).

### Changes in role and responsibility can be documented by measuring:

- amounts of time spent in income earning, domestic tasks and child care by both men and women.
- value placed on nurturing and care giving activities.
- popularity of role models.
- equal aspirations for boys and girls.
- types of interaction between fathers and daughters, mothers and sons,

Policies and laws that are changed or initiated as a result of male involvement in advocacy work for gender equality will provide preliminary evidence of success. But beyond the passage of such laws and policies, it will be necessary to document the impact they have on communities and families, in terms of attitude and behavior change.

### 3. Other Gains for Women

Other benefits for women and the community at large from positive male involvement can be measured in terms of the contextual factors being targeted. Indicators of successful programme outcomes might include rates of violence against women, inheritance laws and related practices, measures of economic independence, or extent to which women use sexual favors for survival. Measures of other health problems with underlying social causes that are often gender-based might include drug and alcohol use, sexually transmitted infections, in addition to violence. Evidence of more women participating in community decision making and planning is another clear outcome toward gender equality and a better future for girls.

In addition to measures such as contraceptive use and protection against STIs, there are other ways to document progress in gender relations around sexual and reproductive health. Adherence to social, cultural and religious taboos and myths around reproduction and sexuality has limited many couples ability to openly discuss and act in the best interest of their mutual health and the health of children. How women and men negotiate their reproductive and sexual lives is an area of research that is just starting to receive serious attention, and may hold answers on how to more effectively involve men in reproductive and sexual health promotion initiatives. Monitoring progress toward more open communication about sexual and reproductive health issues between couples, and also in communities will help to document successes in the struggle against the consequences of unsafe sex — unplanned and high risk pregnancies, abortion, STIs, HIV as well as sexual coercion. Changes in attitudes toward childhood marriage and community support for relations between young girls and older men would also demonstrate gains.

### 4. How pilot projects have assessed outcomes of male-focused strategies

To date, data on outcomes of men's involvement in programmes for women and children are limited, partly because most initiatives are still at their early implementation phase. The following are a few examples of outcomes of male-targeted strategies for children, women and communities.

In Cameroon, the Baha'i Community has used traditional media to show how reducing gender inequality can help address community development problems. At the same time, technical and financial supports were provided to assist communities in key development sectors. After two years, the first qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the project has found that: (i) men make more money available to their family and, spend less on themselves than before; (ii) the enrollment of girls in school has increased from 6 - 7 percent to nearly 100 percent; (iii) women now participate and increasingly play key roles in local councils and community decision-making ; (iv) domestic violence has decreased, according to women's views and; (v) the project was able to achieve these results by involving the com-

Other benefits for women and the community at large from positive male involvement can be measured in terms of the contextual factors being targeted.

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- Child's nutrition
- Morbidity
- Health Services utilization
- Gender balance in school
- Teen pregnancies.
- Women in community-level decision making.
- Rate of domestic violence.
- Policy and legislative reform etc.

To document effectiveness of male involvement initiatives, it would be necessary to compare these indicators with those outcomes when men are not specifically targeted.

munity, men in particular, in a process that helped community members to reexamine their traditional values and integrate new values into their lives. (UN-NADAF: 1996).

In Vietnam, the Women Union mobilized men and grand fathers in support of child health programmes. In one of the targeted provinces, this resulted in a 60% increase in Oral Rehydration Serum use and achievement of a record 90% immunization coverage.

In the Lusaka Province of Zambia, the percentage of men who took syphilis treatment after being invited by a Maternal and Child Health clinic increased from 6-8 to 60-80 after a multi-media campaign to eradicate congenital syphilis. Men were more opened than traditionally to talk about sexual and reproductive health issues when the dialogue was driven by child health concerns (Zambia Case Study: 1995).

Sexual and reproductive health prevention strategies which target men, especially adolescents, fostering decision-making and negotiations skills can contribute to slow but sustainable change. A study of 130 low-income men in Rio De Janeiro found that younger men showed more flexible ideas and more support for men's involvement in family planning and reproductive health than older men (Griffin: 1994). It has also been found that the rate of condom use among young men is increasing. Research in the USA shows that adolescents who start using condoms during their first sexual relations are more likely to consistently use them later on (Barker: 1996).

## VI. Conclusion

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**B**uilding and strengthening partnerships between men and women will improve family health and welfare. Programme approaches that exclude men miss a significant opportunity to generate understanding and enthusiasm for efforts to improve child and family health and welfare. Early experience is showing that programmes that do work with men can be more successful at achieving the best interest of the child, and of women as well.

Programme experience is needed to find ways that the positive involvement of men can lead to better outcomes for children as well as women. Work toward gender equality and balance in the family needs to address the changing roles and responsibilities of both men and women. Initiatives are needed to explore ways that work with men can lead to better education and economic opportunities for girls and women. At the same time these efforts must also address ways to help men develop their skills and esteem for domestic activities so that they can help to ease the double burden that women and girls are facing. It is necessary to identify strategies that will help people to view sharing in domestic work as a positive component of masculinity. One challenge will be to determine positive images for men, which are culturally acceptable and, building on them so that role transition can occur without undermining identity.

By maximizing linkages with ongoing programme activities and partners, UNICEF can build on groundwork already established by various in-country initiatives for effective strategies that can have a synergistic impact at lower cost. By working with partners we can use a variety of entry points to reach people at key points in the life cycle.

If programmes can help to ease a practical role transition such that roles and division of tasks for family members is based on need, and not gender expectations, it will be helping to meet more family needs overall. Thus, priorities of gender equality, non-discrimination against girls, and ensuring the rights of children will all be served.

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