



**Building the capacity of young South African men in  
responsible, loving and nonviolent fathering**

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Philosophy: Public Management (Peacebuilding) in the Faculty of  
Management Sciences at Durban University of Technology

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## **Declaration**

I, Diaku Dianzenza K. declare that

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II. This dissertation/thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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## **Abstract**

The majority of South African children are growing up in households where the father is dead or absent. As a result, unless there is some other father figure in their lives, they do not experience fathering directly and so have a limited education in what it means to be a father. Given the extent of violence of various forms throughout the country, there is an urgent need to bring up children who are educated in values such as nonviolence and who will model and impart such values to their own children.

The overall aim of this research is to investigate how to build the capacity of young men to be responsible, loving and nonviolent fathers. The research design included three components (exploration of the experiences and attitudes of young men regarding their own fathers), action research (in the form of devising a training programme in responsible, loving and nonviolent fathering, and implementing it with three groups of young men) and evaluation (of the effects of the training on attitudes which, it is hoped, will translate into positive fathering behaviour in the longer term).

The short term outcome of the training indicates that changes in attitude in positive directions did take place for a significant minority of the trainees and suggests that training programmes of this type can be socially beneficial.

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Families are the foundation of any human life. The stability of any family takes its main roots from the ability of parents i.e. the father and the mother to love, provide and care for the well-being of the children. Fathers are believed to play the most important role in the development of the children (physically, emotionally and mentally). The father's absence in the family is believed to have overwhelming consequences on children, especially boys. If we want to bring up successful children who will be helpful in our communities and the nation, all parents are required to be responsible, loving, providing, caring, and to be present physically and emotionally in the household;

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## **Dedication**

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## **List of acronyms**

AIDS	: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ADAPT	: Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention and Training
AU	: African Union
AYP	: African Youth Policy
AYC	: African Youth Charter
BACS	: Business Academy and Computer Sciences
CAR	: Children's Act Regulations
CBD	: Central Business District
CEP	: Caring Equation Programme
CGE	: Commission for Gender Equality
CRC	: Convention of Rights of the Child
CRPS	: Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies
CSO	: Civil Society Organisation
CSW	: Commission on the Status of Women
CYFSD	: Child, Youth, Family and Social Development
DHA	: Department of Home Affairs
DMAB	: Durban Metropolitan Area Boundary
DRC	: Democratic Republic of Congo
FAPB	: Father Attachment and Parenting Behaviours
FP	: Fatherhood Project
FGD	: Focus Group Discussion
FHS	: Futura High School
GBV	: Gender Based Violence
HSRC	: Human Science Research Council
HRHS	: Hunt Road High School
INCHS	: Inanda Newtown Comprehensive High School
INK	: Inanda, Ntuzuma and Kwamasu
IT	: Information Technology
LAIM	: Learning Areas of the eTekwini Municipality
MAP	: Man As Partners

MELDCCC	: Minnesota Early Learning Design Co-parenting and Child Curriculum
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organisation
NYP	: National Youth Policy
OSW	: Office of the Status of Women
PACES	: Parent and Community Empowerment and Support
RCT	: Randomised Control Test
RCMA	: Recognition of Customary Marriage Act
SADoSD	: South African Department of Social Development
SAMCE	: South African Men Care Enough
SAPS	: South African Police Service
SC	: Sastri College
SPSS	: Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SP	: State Parties
TPSTP	: Teen Parenting Skills Training Programme
UNESCO	: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
URABMP	: Urban Renewal and Area-Based Management Programme
URP	: Urban Renewal Programme
USAID	: United States Agency for International Development
US	: United States



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# PART I: INTRODUCTION

## CHAPTER 1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

*Though we are not married yet, but we are fathers because we play the roles of our fathers who are absent* (Young man, Engonyameni 2015).

### 1.1 Background

The notion of father has been approached to be the unusual understanding of a person who brings into life a human creature. To further understand this notion deeply, researchers around the world link the concept father to consider a number of people who invest themselves in the different roles of a father vis-à-vis children, the family and the community in general, referred to as: fatherhood.

In South Africa, the issue of fatherhood and its negative constructions within the society has been highly considered in the past two decades. Among the outstanding publications portraying young fathers' issues in South Africa, *Baba* has been considered as a powerful tool with strong insights of the father issue around the country. In this research, contributors focused on issues that are well-argued in a study of young fathers. Dealing with fatherhood in general, many of the issues it raised portrayed the lives of impoverished young fathers, whose experience of fatherhood in the developing world bring into the public space the challenges faced by this social group. The thoughts expressed in this field of research that factors contributing to the impoverishment of young fathers in the developing world are mixed up with cultural practices and expectations, which require a particular attention to simple and unverified assumptions.

The study of young fathers' social constructions has been mostly highlighted as well in terms of understanding what it means to be poor, young and a father in a developing world context. It has addressed as well the motivation about understanding how teenagers living in impoverished communities experience fatherhood, the conditions and reasons surrounding the entry into fatherhood and ways in which these circumstances – personal, social and environmental – help out or hamper their participation in parenting their children.

Much of what makes the past of fatherhood in the context of South Africa has been constructed around the issues of collective, historical, political and economic developments as well as the negative consequences of apartheid, (Hosegood and Madhavan 2010) suggesting as well that the pre-colonial and early colonial era considered successful African men those who had important agricultural labour (Hunter 2006). This tendency has declined given the intense development of structures that have developed the usefulness of a man in the context of the family as a key role player in issues that concern the society. Also, the contemporary development of human rights' activism has contributed a lot in alleviating the negative factors of nurturing children by their own parents.

Challenges concerning the identity and subsistence status of who are the biological fathers of children in South Africa works on the basis of household surveys collection of data and population cohorts, making the exercise of evaluating fatherhood using methods of counting families difficult (Hosegood and Madhavan 2010). An estimation of the use of measuring biological mothers, marriage and kinfolds between members belonging to the same household revealed the existence of about 45-50 percent of men aged 15 to 54 years to have fathered a child (Posel and Devey 2006b). Unfortunately, half of these fathers did not have daily contact with children because of the twofold forces of migration for adults working far from their families as migrant workers, delayed marriage and separation, divorce and death (Desmond and Desmond 2006).

It is worth noting, however, that while surveys are conducted to understand the family composition in South Africa, characteristics of members dwelling in the household are determined by excluding members who do not reside in the household taking into consideration one or another criterion, disqualifying some of those in the context that fathers might be in the household (Posel and Devey 2006b). In so doing, there is the aspect of leaving behind the fathers' involvement in distance, which brings in the issue of underreporting of fathers involvement (Townsend, Madhavan and Garey 2006).

Considering the criterion of father presence in the household does not only lead to underreporting the capability of fathers' involvement, but also decreases the understanding of the scope of the relationship dynamics. A father might be physically present in the household, but psychologically absent. This links to the notion of caring and provision that are connected to social circumstances in the way to nurture children.

For many children, what they benefit from their fathers or parents has a direct impact in their lives.

It is therefore understandable that a father who is present in the household, but who does not provide is therefore considered as an absent father. In the same understanding, a father who is physically absent in the household but is effective if he provides for the social needs of his children, he then conforms more to the aspect of responsible fatherhood than the one who is present but does not provide. Probably, many of the fathers who are obliged to be more providing are kept away by the type of work they have, or in some other ways due to divorce or separation. In the case the father is dead the role of the father is always likely taken over by another person. It might be a member of the family, a teacher, a person close to the mother, but also the mother herself when there is no male to accomplish that role.

While circumstances of father absence linked to divorce or to behavioural constructions like being physically present but absent in the household, the issue of South African fatherhood absenteeism has long been associated with labour migration since the epoch of colonialism throughout apartheid (Wilson 2006). Wilson particularly notes that poverty impedes parents to feed their children; thus failing to fulfill their parental role. As a consequence of losing responsibility of his household, Zulu men declared having being robbed of *amandla* (power) because of their inability to form a family unit (Hunter 2006). The other reality in this thinking is the privilege that families have from benefiting social services from states institutions. For instance, besides money men have the right to access other community resources, not available to women like loans, mutual support and influence. A study conducted in Botswana, found that children are disadvantaged not essentially because they do not have their father, instead they are disadvantaged due to their belonging to a household that does not have access to societal position, labour and financial support provided by men (Townsend 2002 :270).

The most important studies on young fathers are mostly located in the global north. However, little is known about the occurrence of young fathers in contexts of persistent and chronic poverty. Researchers believe that since many arguments focus about fatherhood in the context of poverty in some developed countries, their insights are likely to be compared to those of the developing world. And so far that these issues of unemployment, absentee fathers and criminal involvement are shared among young

fathers, both in global north and the developing world perspective, it may be disputed that the contexts and circumstances of young fathers in the developing world are both more calamitous and more complex than those of their global north counterparts (Posel and Devey 2006b).

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

The focus of the study is on the attitudes and behaviour of a sample of young men in South Africa concerning fathering. Given that many young men did not grow up with their biological fathers or other males who played a fathering role in their lives, they may have little understanding of the responsibilities and practices of fathering. South African studies indicate that many young men carry a degree of sadness at not knowing their fathers and recognize that they lack experience and guidance regarding fathering roles and responsibilities (Swartz and Bhana 2009: 41).

One of the ways to address the issues faced by these young men in terms of: the lack of father role models is implement training programmes that address ignorance and negative constructions of the role of fathers. Through training programmes, young men can acquire attitudes and skills that can impact positively on their own fathering, be it current or prospective. Training can also develop better relationships between fathers and mothers which, as we will see, is integral to effective parenting; in addition, training can build households where nonviolent resolution of disputes replaces threatened or actual violence.

Young fathers have been classified as a social group representing a vulnerable population with many characteristics similar to those of adolescent mothers, including low socioeconomic status, lower educational attainment, and fewer employment opportunities than their equal who are not fathers. It is believed that adolescent and young fathers are also likely to have experienced greater psychological and emotional difficulties and to have a history of delinquent behavior than their non-parenting peers (Bunting and McAuley 2004). Suggestions have also been made that the behaviors of young fathers have been equally the same with those of old fathers since they all experience childhood exposure and parental separation or divorce. As a consequence, this brings a break out to positive paternal role models (Tan and Quinlivan 2006).

South Africa is one of the world's most violent countries. In recent years, there have been around 17 000 murders each year. Over 50 000 rapes and sexual assaults are reported to the South African Police Service each year and the most widely accepted estimate is that only one in 25 victims in fact report to the police (Harris et al 2015: 36). A survey of 1 738 African males in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape by Jewkes et al (2009) found that over 40 per cent of African men said that they had been physically violent to an intimate partner. At the school level, the 2012 *National School Violence Survey* (NSVS) found very high levels of violence experienced by learners, ranging from threats, physical assaults and sexual assaults (Burton and Leoschut 2012).

There is a strong relationship, according to social learning theory, between the way individuals experienced being fathered and the way they father their own children. Bandura and McClelland (1977: 5) suggest that 'most of the behaviours that people display are learned, either deliberately or inadvertently, through the influence of example'. The fact (see section 4.5) that half or more of South African children are growing up with an absent father means they have limited experience to guide them in appropriate fathering. The above data suggest that even when fathers are present their behavior may well be violent.

An important underpinning of peace studies is the belief that people can be educated and re-educated to behave differently. This research stands in this tradition and proposes and tests whether young men can be trained to be responsible, loving and nonviolent fathering.

### **1.3 Research objectives**

The overall aim of this research is to investigate how to build the capacity of young men to be responsible, loving and nonviolent fathers.

The specific objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To explore the experience of a sample of young men concerning their own experience of being fathered and their beliefs, attitudes and aspirations concerning their own roles as fathers;

2. Drawing on the findings from this exploration and the experience of existing fathering/parenting training programmes, to design a training programme appropriate to the South African context;
3. To implement the training programme with a sample of young men including those with children and those without children;
4. To undertake a preliminary evaluation of the outcome.

#### **1.4 Choice of the topic**

Upon completing my master's in Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies, I decided to volunteer for five years as a Peace Activist back home in the Democratic Republic of Congo. During this time, I came to start thinking about a research topic that had a focus on border conflicts, referring to the recurrent invasions of the DRC by its neighbours.

This did not, however, fit the action research focus of the Peacebuilding Programme at DUT. My supervisor had a plan B – a thesis based on action research which promoted responsible, loving and nonviolent fathering. I did not like this at all in the beginning but it began to grow on me as a father myself and as an individual who has experienced similar challenges during my childhood. In fact, I grew up with both my parents until the age of 10 but then moved to another town to stay with my uncle and his children. In this situation, my uncle became the person who played the role of my father and my mother. This is connected to our Congolese culture that is matriarchal where children belong to the mother and not to the father. Children are said to be more connected to the mother but also to the maternal uncle who, as the direct brother to the mother, plays an important role in the family. Anything that happens in the mother's household is reported straight away to the uncle who 'owns' the children. However, there are advantages and disadvantages in the handling of the relationship as some uncles believe they have the power over the entire family, especially if the sister has lot of children. The father of the children has less power than the maternal in decisions about the children.

From my own experience as a researcher in the fatherhood field, I have shifted my parenting practice. I understand that certain practices encourage negative behaviours of children on a short or long term basis. Some of the knowledge I have acquired in doing this research can be found in Table 1.1 below. It tells how I have developed a positive relationship with my partner but also with my child in handling my obligations as a father.

**Table 1.1 How this research changed my relationship with my son and my wife**

<b>Father</b>	<b>Son</b>
I financially provide and care	He has developed a sense of love particular toward me and his mother
I love her mother	He hugs me and his mother often
I regularly make sure that he has done his school works correctly and encourage him to listen to his teachers carefully	He has made tremendous improvement in his school results
I express my love to him	He loves me as well as a result of my care and concerns about his life
I encourage him to always tell the truth	He is unable to tell lies and it is very easy to see if he is lying, which he does not often do
I take him to the library to read books	He has developed his reading, listening skills
I use non-corporal punishment practices to educate him	He has developed a sense of responsibility in what he does knowing what is good and bad
I encourage him to understand religious values	-
While I am away from home, I phone to check whether everything is right	Once back from school, he phones to say he is home



While these aspects from the father's side are important, I have noticed my son's irresistible increase of love has developed to the extent that he questions my late coming home because of my absence a few years had left a gap in his mind. He might be worried that I am going to leave him again for a long period; he has to show my absence will affect him. In addition, this new relationship has increased his school work because of the love, the care and the provision that he is benefiting from his father and his mother. He has actually been doing well even with subjects that he was failing before and he is able to find answers by himself but I always make sure that I check and ask how he achieved finding the answers. It attracts me when he expresses his wish to become a scientist when he grows up. I will definitely help him in his long study journey for him to achieve his dreams.

With the composition of many African families involves five or more children, handling one child comes with both advantages and disadvantages. Dye (2008) believes that in developed countries, many families consider the challenges of parenting, including its financing (Devenny 2008), to be so great that they decide to be a one-child family. In the United States in 2006, 16.9 per cent of women up to the age of 44 had only one child. Furthermore, the tendency of one-child families has increased to 19 per cent of all US families. This is different to most African countries where children are seen as a particular treasure for parents and the large families are considered as asset. The child in a one child family lacks the support of siblings as they grow up (Lamanna 2009: 233). Additionally, such children may have excessive pressure from parents to succeed in life.

## **1.5 Definition of key terms**

### **Youth**

South Africa's *National Youth Policy (NYP) 2009-2014* has recommended new measures that enhance the development of the youth in order for them to undertake key roles in building a non-racial, non-sexist, prosperous and democratic South Africa (Tshabalala-Msimang 2008: 5, 12). It defined youth as:

Inclusively to refer to young people as those falling within the age group of 14 to 35 years. This is based on the mandate of the National Commission Act 1996 and the National Youth 2000. This inclusive approach takes into account, both historical as well as present-day conditions.

The *African Youth Charter* (AYC) similarly defines youth as youngsters between the ages of 15-35 years (African Union 2006).

Policies implemented in South Africa focus on the increase of youth development seeking to produce young people who are capable, able to appreciate their strength and realise their roles and responsibilities for a meaningful contribution to the country's development (Tshabalala-Msimang 2008: 13). The family is recognised as the fundamental social institution and enjoys the full protection and support of State Parties to enable the development of children and youth, with due consideration of social and cultural contexts (African Union 2006: 5).

The Africa Union (2006: 7) encourages each member state to put in place a comprehensive and coherent national youth policy considering the following aspects as specified by the Charter:

- A cross-cultural policy with relation to challenges facing the youth;
- An extensive consultation of the youth for the development of a policy that addresses the issues and challenges that face the youth for their involvement in the governance;
- A youth perspective to integrated and channeled for their involvement in the planning and decision-making in development programmes facilitated by youth focal points and governments structures;
- The country to enable mechanisms of the youth challenges within the national development framework;

## **Fatherhood**

Fatherhood, from the traditional African perspective, is one of the important roles conferred to men in carrying out their responsibilities as leading the households in a male-controlled social system (Morrell 2006; Richter, Chikovore and Makusha 2010).

The biological father was seen as an authoritative person overlooking all issues happening in the households. All important decisions were taken with his opinion firmly in mind, even during the times he was absent (Hosegood and Madhavan 2010). He was regarded as a providing financial and sensitive support, bringing the family together and exercising leadership. Much of these considerations from the African fathers are still applicable in the rural areas where traditions remain a way of life, while in the urban setting people regard them as values to be considered. Though researchers have argued about the conceptual, pragmatic and cultural definition of a father, it is strongly understood that fathers have the duty to satisfy the needs of children (Hosegood and Madhavan 2012).

Opinions about responsible fatherhood are drawn from the youth opinions concerning their father's behaviour in the household. Mothers may have different opinions. Discussions of responsibility in fathering generally include the following:

Loving, fair, nurturing, supportive, interested – each of this is a quality that Dad lived by. He was always fair and temperate, and quick to instil good values in his children (Radebe 2006: 38).

Definitely, perceptions of children vis-à-vis their fathers are all connected to what positive or negative behaviours they expose in the household. This incredible evidence of portraying fathers the way they interact with children but also with their partners and the rest of the community gives an understanding of the good behaviours but also the wrongdoings that the father is identified with in the family.

Basically, other studies have indicated responsibility is attached to satisfying social needs of the whole family. The example given above where the father's responsibility has been described in terms of loving, fairness, support and interest comes from the perspective of children. Considered from the mothers' perspective, father's responsibility is also viewed in terms of the father 'being there' for the children, helping to take care of them, providing financial support and playing with children (Coates, Batsche and Lucio 2011: 137).

## **1.6 Research methods**

These are explored in detail in chapter 7. The study has three research types or components – an exploration of the problem identified in section 1.2, the design and implementation of an intervention (the action research component, in this case a training of young men) and a very preliminary evaluation of its outcome.

As to research design, a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data was collected and analysed. As to data collection methods, these included a survey and focus groups, supplemented by observation during nine two to three hour training sessions and short questionnaires which attempted to measure attitude changes.

## **1.7 Delimitations and limitations of the study**

Almost any research conducted in any field of the social sciences has limitations. Some of these are the deliberate choice of the researcher, often made to keep the research project manageable. Such delimiting factors include the topic choice, the research objectives, the research questions, variables of interest, theoretical perspectives and the population that is chosen to be investigated (Simon and Goes 2011a).

The actual training of young men in responsible, loving and nonviolent fathering was limited to a small sample of young men aged between 14 and 35 in and close to Durban and it would not be sensible to generalize the results more widely. Insofar as other future studies reach similar results, it would be possible to have greater confidence in the findings of the present study, and its wider applicability.

In accordance with the fourth specific objective, I investigated whether the training had had any impact on the attitudes of the participants. Even if positive changes in attitude were to be identified, it is not possible to say whether the training activities will have a long term behavior change, given that this will take place over years and decades into the future.

## **1.8 Overview of the thesis**

**Chapter one** has dealt with the background of the study, the statement of the problem, aims of the study, the choice of the topic and, centrally, the overall and specific research objectives.

**Chapter two** discusses some of the important theoretical underpinnings of the research. Starting with the understanding of the meaning and origins of violence, it arrives at the conclusion that education training in the ways of nonviolence can be effective, thus justifying the action research which forms the basis of the thesis.

**Chapter three** examines research relating to the importance of fathers, the roles they play and the impact of the father-mother relationship on children. This chapter also deals with the theories that underpin this field of study in terms of the evolution of parenting and fathering.

**Chapter four** discusses aspects of the South African families and the fathers' roles. Emphasis is also given on the type of relationship that exists between people in terms of the family as an institution that takes care of children.

**Chapter five** examines some existing fathering training programmes, the content of the programmes, how they are organised, their presentation and outcomes. The training programme used in the present study, it should be noted, was developed by the researcher.

**Chapter six** concerns research methodology and focusses on action research. The chapter discusses the steps used in collecting the research materials up to the last step of the training evaluation.

**Chapter seven** reports on the survey activities and focus group discussions that were conducted to provide a foundation for the development of the training programme.

**Chapter eight** reports on the implementation of the training programme in responsible, loving and nonviolent fathering for three groups of young men.

**Chapter nine** presents an outcome evaluation of the training programme in terms of the attitudes of participants.

**Chapter ten** summarises the research with reference to its objectives and discusses the implications of the findings.

## **PART II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **CHAPTER 2: RELEVANT CONCEPTS AND THEORIES**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Before venturing into the literature concerning various aspects of fathering, this short chapter explains some key concepts and theories which provide a foundation for later chapters.

#### **2.2 Violence**

Conflict, in general terms, refers to a difference in needs and wants between individuals, groups or nations; it is inevitable and common. Violence is one way of dealing with conflict. Johan Galtung (1969; 1990) understood three types of violence - direct violence, structural violence and cultural.

- Direct violence is most easily understood in terms of physical violence but can take verbal, psychological and economic forms.
- Structural violence refers to programmes and policies which advantage one or more groups in society and disadvantage others. Inequality is a major consequence of structural violence, with some members suffering discrimination in social, religious and economic terms. Structural violence may be maintained by direct violence.
- Cultural violence can be defined as explanations or justifications used to legitimise direct or structural violence.

There are alternative ways of dealing with conflicts of which power, rights and collaboration are the most widely understood. Power, for example, may comprise physical strength, military strength or economic strength; usually but not invariably, the more power party prevails, resulting in a win-lose outcome. Rights are typically understood in legal terms and a legal judgement also results in a win-lose outcome. Collaborative problem solving occurs where the parties involved in a conflict attempt to

resolve their conflict by seeking a mutually satisfying (win-win) outcome. Ury et al (1996) explain that on a number of criteria – cost, time taken, sustainability of the outcome and the relationship between the parties – the last is the superior way to try to deal with conflicts.

Section 1.2 provided some evidence of the levels of violence occurring in South Africa. To reiterate, the 2012 *National School Violence Survey* (Burton and Leoschut 2012) found that nearly half of the respondents in the 2012 accepted the fact that ‘crime is a problem in my neighbourhood’. More than a third had seen a fight in their neighbourhood in the previous month, over 10 per cent reported having been assaulted at home in the last year and 60 per cent of these said they had been assaulted more than once. This is the environment in which the next generation of fathers are growing up and which undoubtedly influences their attitudes and behaviours.

Adam’s (2012) concept of ‘chronic violence’ seems to fit South Africa. It is said to apply when the following three dimensions are present:

- Rates of violent death are at least twice the average of the country’s income group
- These levels are sustained for five or more years
- Acts of violence are recorded across a range of socialization spaces, such as the household, the neighbourhood and the school, and this contributes to the reproduction of further violence over time.

What are the causes of such high levels of violence? I will discuss this in two ways. The first is that South Africa has a long and violent past, the effects of which are inherited by succeeding generations. It is not simply about apartheid which was, after all, only a legal enshrining of social and economic oppression which had existed for centuries beforehand. So colonialism, followed by apartheid, was explained, justified and excused by cultural violence (see section 2.2), was characterized by high levels of structural violence and was enforced by high levels of direct violence. It was by no means the only form of violence affecting people during this time and the end of apartheid has resulted



in only limited reductions in structural and direct violence. As a result, South Africans of all ethnic groups are traumatized and angry and, in consequence, violent.

It is critical to note that untreated trauma gets passed on from generation to generation.

As Volkan (2001:87) comments:

Within virtually every large group there exists a shared mental representation of a traumatic past event during which the large group suffered loss and/or experienced helplessness, shame and humiliation in a conflict with another large group. The transgenerational transmission of such a shared traumatic event is linked to the past generation's inability to mourn losses of people, land or prestige, and indicates the large group's failure to reverse... humiliation inflicted by another group, usually, a neighbour, but in some cases, between ethnic or religious groups within the same countries.

According to Kogan (2012:6), there are two mechanisms by which transgenerational trauma is transmitted. The first is 'primitive identification', which refers to the child's unconscious introjection and assimilation of the damaged parent's self-images through interaction with that parent'. That is to say, the child unconsciously incorporates into its own psyche the parent's ideas, apparently in an attempt to heal the parent and to help him/her recover. However, this identification leads to a loss of the child's separate sense of self and to an inability to differentiate between the self and the damaged parent. The second mechanism emphasises the role of the parent, who unconsciously or consciously forces certain aspects of themselves on to the child. In so doing, the parent affects the child's sense of identity and passes on certain specific tasks to the child to perform. In a sense, the children become 'reservoirs for the deposited images connected to the trauma' and as a result, 'the children are compelled to deal with the shame, rage, helplessness, and guilt that the parents have been unable to work through for themselves' (Kogan 2012:7).

More generally, the Centre for the Study of Violence & Reconciliation undertook a major study of violence in South Africa. In their summary (CSV 2009), they identified the major determining factors as:

- The legacy of apartheid and colonialism, which operates on the following levels:
  - Brutalisation and the culture of violence
  - The impact of apartheid on families and the education system
  - Racism
  - Firearms
  - Impunity in township areas
  
- Post-apartheid factors which reinforce the legacy of apartheid:
  - Inequality
  - Other structural economic factors
  - State institutions

One additional but obviously related factor behind violence are the systems which empower men over women and, with particular reference to gender violence, the way men think about women; this is discussed in section 2.4.

### **2.3 Corporal punishment**

Given the concern of the present study to promote nonviolent fathering, it is appropriate to discuss this here. While there have been a number of studies concerning corporal punishment in South African schools - many following its banning in 2006 - there are relatively few which have examined corporal punishment by parents. There is one major study - *Partner violence, attitudes to child discipline and use of corporal punishment: a South African national survey* (Dawes et al, 2004). From this nationally representative survey, a sub-sample of 952 parents with children (of which 31 per cent were men and 69 per cent women) were surveyed in late 2003 with respect to their attitudes towards discipline and the use of corporal punishment. The major finding was that 57 per cent of parents with children under 18 reported having smacked their children at some time, with 33 per cent using severe corporal punishment such as a belt or stick, as opposed to smacking. The most common age of children subject to smacking was three years, for those subject to severe corporal punishment the figure was four years.

The findings of academic studies concerning the effects of corporal punishment were the subject of a meta-analysis of 88 academic studies by Gershoff (2002). A summary of these results by Durrant (2005: 73) is presented in Table 2.1. In short, the studies show overwhelming evidence of the negative effects of corporal punishment on child health, the child’s behaviour when young and later as an adult, and on the relationship between parents and children. The only positive outcome detected was immediate compliance by the child after corporal punishment or its threatened use.

**Table 2.1. Developmental outcomes associated with corporal punishment**

Outcome	Number of studies examining relationship	Number of studies confirming relationship
Child victim of physical abuse	10	10
Poorer child mental health	12	12
Poorer adult mental health	8	8
Impaired parent-child relationship	13	13
Lower moral internalisation	15	13
Child aggression	27	27
Adult aggression	4	4
Child delinquent and antisocial behaviour	13	12
Adult antisocial behavior	5	5
Abuse of child or spouse in adulthood	5	5

The effects of corporal punishment will also be felt at the macro-level. In his book *Parenting for a peaceful world*, Robin Grille provides persuasive evidence that 'the collective childhood experience of a society is probably the single most important factor driving group decisions made at political, business and social levels' (2005: 100). The widespread use of corporal punishment may be both a symptom of the anger and trauma which seems to characterize South Africa, and a cause of it.

## **2.4 Patriarchy and masculinities**

Patriarchy is a system where power resides in male hands and women are subordinated. So power in a household is exercised by the husband/father, even in instances when he spends most of his time elsewhere. Masculinity is a social/cultural construct which shapes the way men think about being a man and about how they should behave in a particular context (Morrell 2001; 2006). It is commonly manifested in dominant, assertive and aggressive behavior towards other men and towards their girlfriends and wives.

The implications of holding to such beliefs are that violence is excused and justified. Studies of young Zulu men by Sathiparsad (2005; 2007) and Mulumeoderhwa and Harris (2013), for example, found that most held strong opinions about themselves and their girlfriends. In short, they felt that sexual abstinence was not an option and that it was their girlfriend's role to meet their need for sex; that if a girlfriend was not willing, then the use of force was acceptable; that having multiple sexual partners was acceptable for a man; and that use of a condom was a man's decision. Clearly, attitudes which promote beliefs in the innate superiority of men and their right to dominate women can easily spill over into gender based violence. A nationally representative study of 1738 African males in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape reported that over 40% said they had been violent with an intimate partner; 14% had been violent within the last year (Jewkes et al 2009). A major report on gender based violence in South Africa (Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation 2008) is titled *A state of sexual tyranny*.

Can this change? The fact that masculinities are a social construct, albeit heavily entrenched, and that patriarchy is a system, suggests that change is possible. Among others, Sathiparsad and Taylor (2008) have emphasized the importance of developing alternative masculinities as a means of reducing gender based violence and York (2014)

has documented the potential of indigenous knowledge approaches in training for alternative masculinities. Hence we now turn to discuss the role of education and social learning theory.

## **2.5 Educating and training for peace**

It is a foundational belief of peace studies that people, especially men, are not innately aggressive but are influenced, trained and educated by the environment in which they grow up and live. In other words, 'nurture' is more important than 'nature' and so great efforts are being made in the area of peace education. Major contributions to the understanding of peace education include Salomon and Nevo (2002), Harris and Morrison (2004) and Bajaj (2008).

An important theoretical support for peace education is Bandura's social learning theory, which emphasizes the importance of observing and modelling the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Social learning theory explains human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences. In Bandura's words (1973: 22)

Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action.

Just as people learn from the behavior of people around them, so they can unlearn undesired attitudes and behavior and re-learn more positive ones and this is exactly what peace education attempts to do.

Peace education can take place in different contexts. These include:

- Places of ethnic tension where the emphasis is on anti-racism
- Places of relative social harmony with a focus on classroom violence

- Places of conflict and violence between political and/or ethnic adversaries
- Places of chronic violence like South Africa (see section 2.2) where there are high levels of interpersonal violence within a fairly stable political context characterized by high levels of social and economic inequality.

A review of peace education 'lessons' from the third category, and specifically Israel-Palestine, is provided by Salomon (2013). Those of most relevance to the present study are that

- Socio-political forces can override the impact of a short term peace education intervention
- 'One size does not fit all' i.e. different groups may see the same conflict quite differently and so need to be educated differently
- Peace education can be effective in changing attitudes but not deep-seated convictions
- Dialogue is not the only method of peace education e.g. sporting teams and environmental action groups can be composed of different ethnicities.

In some respects, the lessons of peace education in Israel-Palestine are very relevant to the present study. Most of the peace education initiatives there are about changing the hearts and minds of Israelis and Palestinians by learning to regard the other side as 'sharing a common humanity and possessing a legitimate narrative' (Salomon 2013: 11). So with the present study, which asks young men to think differently from the prevailing masculinities and patriarchal norms?

The present project's dialogue is not between men and women or between fathers and their children; the dialogue is with and between young men. New ideas and ways of thinking will be introduced as well as alternative ways of thinking about old ideas. The participants will be asked to think about the future e.g. what will I do if my girlfriend tells me she is pregnant? Will it be 'business as usual' for me and 'her problem' or will it mean real changes in my life and taking on responsibility as a father? The idea behind

this education is that the young men either will have a thought out position if such things happen or will have principles – responsibility, love and nonviolence – which they can apply.

Turning to training, there are a multitude of training packages on related issues in South Africa. Some examples are:

- *Stepping stones: a training manual for sexual and reproductive health communication and relationship*: [www.stepsstonesfeedback.org](http://www.stepsstonesfeedback.org)
- Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) Basic, Advanced and Train the trainer workshops: <http://avp.international>
- *Phoenix rising and conversations in families*. Discussion materials used by Phoenix Zululand in its work in prisons: [www.phoenix-zululand.org.za](http://www.phoenix-zululand.org.za)

Training programmes in fathering are examined in chapter 5 and the point of referring to them here concerns their impact and its evaluation. We have noted Salomon's (2013: 9) point that while attitudes may be subject to change (his example is 'I can trust the Palestinians') but convictions ('We [Israelis] have the historical right to the land') are much harder to change. Evaluation issues are discussed in section 6.5 and chapter 9 but an important point to note is that changes in attitude may not last long after the training. Typically, outcomes are assessed quite soon after (sometimes immediately after) a workshop when participants are genuinely feeling positively disposed to the changes which they have been invited to take on. Evaluations undertaken a long time after training are more reliable guides to the longer term effects of training on attitudes and behavior. Indeed, it is the months and years into the future which will be the real test of the outcome of the training provided in the present study.

## **2.6 Summary**

This chapter has explained some key peace theories which underpin the present study. It examined the ways in which peace theorists understand violence and particular attention was given to corporal punishment and gender based violence which occur at alarmingly high levels in South Africa and form part of the chronic violence which besets the country.

The fact that the masculinities and patriarchal systems which underpin much of this violence are socially-constructed and learned suggests that change can happen. Peace education and training is one way to bring about change but the size of the task which it faces cannot be doubted.



## **CHAPTER 3. THE IMPORTANCE OF FATHERS**

### **3.1. Introduction**

Fathers are a key moral source in the family structure to help children grow in an environment of love, provision and care. The roles attributed to fathers are various but work in compliance with the society's need of bringing up children who are necessary for the future of any nation. From their many roles of providing care, health, education and satisfying all social needs of the children, fathers are considered as the pillar in the family. These many roles will not be persuasive of bringing peace, love, affection and other aspects if mothers also do not do their part of the duties.

Besides their mother's daily household tasks that they have to care about, the roles of the mothers go beyond all expectations that children benefit in the domain of parenting. From their maternal roles and influence, they initiate children with the first steps and help them acquire the first sound of language until they utter their first word in the process of growing. Their roles, relationship and influence work together with the father presence as a whole known as a family. Once positive social constructions have been nurtured by both parents in a household, children will be successful. Because parents influence children psychologically and physically, their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours need to be in line with social values acquired from their parents.

This chapter starts by looking at the theories that developed this field. It emphasises as well the aspects of the father's influence on children, the father-mother relationship on children, the mother-child relationship, the role of fathers, and the traditional influence of fathers on children.

### **3.2 Parenting theories**

Parenting and fathering theories have emerged as important guides to understand different problems happening in the household and all the aspects connected to them. Through observation these theories have generated facts leading to the identification of causal relations. Investigations led in this field have contributed to specify causes of particular outcomes generating predictions and incorporating new observations. Child-rearing theories performed by parents consciously or unconsciously shape the way

parents behave toward their children (George 2009: 28). In the same way, a number of researchers who conduct insightful investigations in different fields with a focus on family matters have contributed to theory serving as a point of departure for further policy development and intervention implementation.

It is worth underlining that there are many theories in the parenting or fathering field. Each theory brings a light to certain core issues of family care. This research puts an emphasis of young fathers' lack of experience and the way they were reared by their own fathers but also focus on what they think will be their own way of using their experience to bring up their children. The analysis of parenting theories in this section will look at the behavioural aspects. Much of parents' daily way of life stands as principles or anti-values in front of children. Be it psychological or emotional response to a disturbing event provoked by a member of a family, children's view them their own way. In other circumstances, such behavioural reactions might only be considered by children as values they could adopt in their daily life.

Two categories of theories have been identified in the parenting perspective (George 2009). The first theories include: lay theories and parental behaviour and the scientific theories of development. The second category that George called major theories of parent-child relationships consists of the following: evolutionary psychology, attachment, social learning, bio-ecological systems and human behavioural genetics.

### **Lay theories and parental behaviour**

The understanding of lay theories has been made simple by the fact that they are described as those theories that are used in daily expressions and clichés such as: “Like father, like son – like mother, like daughter, he's the spitting image of his father”. The clichés and expressions indirectly identified in this situation reflect the complete features of parents associated to the child. This explains for instance that a child who steals something from the shop and who is identified to his father or mother is connected to the father or the mother by their respective behaviours. As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the way parents behave in the household may affect the family status as a whole.

It is being considered that theories defined in this category are prescriptively connected to their importance. Whether they are lay (clichés or expressions) or scientifically defined, they are much more conformed to carry significant meaning and importance in the family as they advise how parents should comport themselves in the household in particular and in the society in general (George 2009: 28).

The development of the parental behaviour was developed by the early psychologist called John B. Watson (1878-1958) known as the father of behaviourism for encouraging the study of behaviour. Among his findings, he suggested that some parents believed that giving too much attention to children is one way of spoiling them. Unfortunately, his behavioural theory contended that giving more attention to children make them want it all the time. Thus, he concluded by warning parents about the many dangers of love and affection.

Because of the evolution of parenting theories, the dangers of love and affection as approached by Watson might be considered unethical. Some studies have concluded that parents who do not share a positive relationship with children do not help them become good fathers in the future. Also, parents who believe that children should be taught the strongest way of social living becoming more authoritarian than authoritative. Parents become authoritative by using power with their children but not over their children.

On one hand, the authority is based on respect rather than fear – but more importantly what is believed to be the authority is – earned through a trusting connection with children relying on inspiration rather than coercion (internal frame of reference). On the other, authoritarian parents teach their children to obey abstract rules about right and wrong i.e. external frame of reference (Grille 2008: 180). Authoritative parenting is then considered as parent-centred nor child-centred, but relationship-centred. Developing a relationship engendered by honest understanding between parent and children must be the path to follow as a way to impact positively on their future.

## Scientific theories

For more than a century theories that deal with children development and the progress of parents' influence have known an increase. Parent-child relationships have different theoretical approaches because they contrast by scope. Theoretical approaches are said to have dissimilarities in scope looking at parent-child relationships from a phylogenetic (development of the species over time) or ontogenetic (development of individuals over their life span) standpoint (George 2009: 30). A further discrepancy is also observable in the importance they assign to parents on the basis of environmental stimuli on children's development.

The modern theory about children's development was an initiative of Sigmund Freud (1856-1936) with an emphasis on five psychosexual stages. He assumed that the development of children grew in a mechanism that is fixed and orderly system through discrete stages including oral, anal, phallic and genital stages. Thus, to become a psychologically well-balanced adult, one is required to successfully pass through each stage to get to the next stage. In this process, however, he sustained that maturation drove development, but with an important role performed by parents.

Freud's focus on psychosexual stage theory was followed by his interests about how fathers and mothers were uniquely important in the lives of their children on a development perspective. More importantly is the fact that mothers occupy the first place in the lives of children. In a significant manner the relationship that is established between the infant and mothers is the model from which children form all subsequent relationships (George 2009: 31). On the fathers' side, the importance comes later in life according to Freud because their role is primarily prominent in the moral development of their sons.

Children are also identified as being more connected to the same sex parent. At the age of 5, Freud believed that boys are more attracted to their mother justifying this behaviour commonly known as the *Oedipal Complex*. He justifies this behaviour claiming that though the boy might be too young to know about sex, he knows that his father share special relations with his mother, and he wants this for himself. Those feelings, suggests Freud result in fear. And if the father is aware of his son's desires, the father may attack him or even amputate his penis (George 2009: 31).

Finally, the scientific theory on development putting more emphasis on the relationship between children and parents must be understood as the pathway to mapping the way forward to avoid misconceptions over children rearing. Good parents, who positively develop their relationship with children, help them to prosper and be successful in their endeavours. This suggests as well that parents who negatively manage their relationship with children contribute in their failure in the future.

A dissimilar statement evidencing this has been drawn from children abusers. It rejects the idea that children abusers whether in a household structure or not serve as re-enacting their past experiences. This is to say that when parents mistreat their children, there is little evidence because of the facts remains unreported mainly in cases where no injury or death has resulted from the abuse (Mercer 2012: 137). This contradicts findings about the influence of parents' relationship on children in their future life.

### **Theories of parent-child relationships**

Theories that have a particular focus on parent-child relationship provide a foundation for understanding different findings in the history of research. Five theories have been identified having each a different contribution. Three of the five have been chosen for analysis. The *Evolutionary Psychology* theory looked at the evolution of humans and animals. Applied to parenting, researchers wanted to find out about the patterns of child rearing (George 2009: 32). Evolutionary theorist Kevin MacDonald argued that the feeling of love for a child has been selected for over hundreds of years. That love working as an emotion has functioned to confirm the consistent relationship within the family and the paternal involvement in child rearing.

The second theory known as *Attachment Theory* suggests that love has been one of the key aspects that identify the parent-child relationship. This theory is based on our understanding of the love that exists between a parent and a child. The essential foundation of the attachment theory rests upon the relationship between a parent and an infant. This relationship reflects the system of behaviour that promotes the survival and competent functioning of the offspring. *Attachment theory* believes that the absence of the mother is connected to the history of parent-child interaction, because infants who received sensitive parenting during their first year of life developed secure attachment. To a certain extent, while some parents may love their infants but for some reasons

might have no time, they might likely misjudge their infants' needs or be inconsistent in the way to take care of them.

The third called *Social Learning and Social Cognitive Theories* has developed the understanding that suggests that while in the process of growing, the change in children is believed to be drawn from their social changes and their interaction with others in their world. This is the basis of the social learning theories and their derivative, social cognitive.

### **3.3 Fathering theories**

As to where the difference between fathering and parenting stands, researchers have used these two concepts without any sharp semantic distinction. Most importantly, whether parents are well educated or not, highly skilled or not, fathering or parenting takes place. This is where the use of these two concepts becomes slightly confusing. For the few researchers who have shown concerns over these concepts, the real meanings of the concepts have rather focused on the activities that fathers have been performing. For instance, while some fathers are said to be less involved in bringing up children, others have been more concerned and involved as mentioned in the quotation below:

They were unskilled and lacked qualifications and had spent and lacked qualifications and had spent *significant* amounts of time out of employment, even before having children. Crucially, ... while fathering is typically about "*doing*" things – physical play, taking the children out, playing games, etc. – these four men talked about fathering as caring and in relational terms (Brannen and Nilsen 2006: 340).

So fathering and parenting must be considered as involving numbers of activities that fathers have to achieve in the family. The activities accomplished by fathers contribute strongly in the lives of children. The impact of fathers on children in the fathering or parenting experience leaves important souvenirs in children. When children testify whether their fathers were good, bad, playful, highly indifferent etc. they refer to the common behaviours that they noticed from their fathers. Whether fathers positively or negatively influenced their children, it all has to do with fathering or parenting. Justifying the failure of children in their future lives because of the family failing to instil them with positive values is an example.

Some opinions in the fatherhood domain have, however, suggested that fathering is concern between adults or between adults and the government. While values are defended in the society to give care to failing issues that affect communities, policies are generated for intervention, which the government structures, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Church Based Organisations (CBOs) and philanthropic organisations are responsible for.

The understanding of these two concepts is correspondingly the same. The fatherhood discourse has not agreed on which aspects might be the appropriate semantics to be used in one case or another. Of much importance, the two concepts deal with the issues of taking responsibility within the context as well of improving their relationships with children and the children's mother.

Since no specific boundaries have been drawn from the view point of the different roles undertaken by parents, my thinking rather suggests that parenting and fathering might differ from the involvement and satisfaction's angle. Probably, a father who is promptly responding to his children social issues, paying more attention and care would qualify to be doing fathering, while the one whose circumstances of custodial or voluntary withdrawal of responding to the above duties, would be parenting. As both are believed to be involved positively or negatively in nurturing children, their contribution from the moral and physical point of view remains unpredictable and difficult to follow-up.

Three main theoretical perspectives concerning fathering can be identified - evolutionary-biological, economic and ecological. The progress of fathering theories must be linked to the capability of human beings to reproduce and bring up children ensuring the cyclical provision of descendants within the family structure. An example of the theories that explicitly talks of the ways that humans are organised takes roots in the socio-economic aspect. According to the *evolutionary perspective* humans are embedded into the cyclic reproduction of human nature, which responds to the comprehensive behaviour of accessing to numbers of resources to enhance their lives and those of their children (Grych 2001: 67), without which life would not be possible. The two other theories have focused as well on the important aspects that have hugely contributed to the way fathering has evolved from the ancient times to today. A summary of fathering and parenting theories is presented in Table 3.1.

Fathering theories of involvement on one hand show how females played the most important role of caring and providing for in the parental practices compared to males. Males, however, are said to becoming more concerned or involved in the lives of their children once they notice that they are biological fathers. It is suggested, however, that since parents are more educated nowadays and that they have some formal acquaintance of child development awareness, the tendency to child involvement has been positively developing. Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie indicate that more fathers passionately participate in fathering than in previous decades (2006: 292) These theories have also emphasised that the presence of both parents makes a key contribution to the development of physical and cognitive conducts of children. On one side, this theory also focused on the economic perspective that considers the father as the main person to provide for the family, while on the other it brings in the importance of the type of relationship that the father and the mother share in the household. Parenting theories on the other hand, suggest that children must learn from their parents by conviction as opposed to imposing upon them severe practices.



**Table 3.1 Summary of fathering and parenting theories**

	Types of theories	Description
<b>Fathering theories of involvement</b>	<b><i>The evolutionary-biological perspective</i></b>	Two important hypotheses – (1) the high rated of female reproduction compared to male makes female to be more involved in parental efforts than males, with a tendency of male to invest on mating effort to gain access to other females. (2) Fathers become more involved in fathering once they assume they are biological fathers. Key other focuses include the human development of family revolving around monogamy and the importance of both parents’ presence to encourage in the children cognitive and behavioural competencies. Many social changes around the world have contributed in the increase of women in the workforce, leading large number of men to care for their children.
	<b><i>Economic perspective</i></b>	Generally, the traditional understanding of economic perspective in fathering children was most linked to effect of – father as a main provider and the focus on marital stability was one of the key factors, while the in the contemporary period (Braun, Vincent and Ball 2011: 19) suggest that the thinking has rather changed from a provider to – the absence of using other means that help generate potential appreciative measures of being and practicing fatherhood making engendering rely on dependent factors linked to the context.
	<b><i>Ecological perspective: family systems theory</i></b>	It is a well-identified relationship that comes into action between the father and the mother focused on the social and emotional aspects working as predictors of family health. Parents’ background play an important role as it has a persistent influence on the quality of care to offer to children.
<b>Parenting theories</b>	<b><i>Lay theories and parental behaviour</i></b>	It is considered that there is a correlation in the behaviour of children to that of the parent. The pervasive belief that children must be taught with an authoritarian way rather than with authoritative means have been considered unethical.
	<b><i>Major theories of parent-child relationship: evolutionary psychology, attachment theory, Social Learning and Social Cognitive Theories</i></b>	The connectedness with the <i>evolutionary psychology</i> applies to the old outstanding <i>love</i> of parents to their children functioning in an emotional way that approves the social liaison within the household and the parental contribution role that takes place in the rearing of children. The <i>attachment theory</i> takes the angle of love from the child-parent perspective sustaining that developing a safe connection in a child’s life in his first years makes parenting more sensitive. <i>Social Learning and Social Cognitive Theories</i> focus on aspects related to the many changes that happen in the life of a child while growing learning many things in his social environment.

#### **4 The influence of fathers on children**

Parenting and roles that govern it has known substantial changes over years. Until recent years, fathers were expected to be providers and have been described as forgotten contributors in the sense that they were not much involved in the process of nurturing. This has changed to a significant extent that they have been involved in the last few years. The involvement of fathers in the lives of their children is connected with a positive choice to pay attention to issues surrounding them (Richter 2006). Across different contexts, fathers make time to spend with children, show physical affection and practical involvement in childcare and domestic activities and provide financially (Hunter 2006: 56-58). Research in this field has clearly demonstrated a positive role of fathers in the lives of their children is associated with positive cognitive, social and emotional development of children (Lundahl *et al.* 2007).

Positive fathering can result in specific educational benefits. A study among African Americans for example investigated the relationship between father's contact with a child and their educational success. Father involvement meaningfully predicted increased school success early on in the child's life and continued involvement had significant impact on reading achievement through to the age of 10 (Robbers 2009: 123). It may also be important in building what Chae and Lee (2011) term 'social competence'. In their study among Korean child development, they found out that social competence is important for intellectual fitness, personal regulation and social and academic success in the lives of young children through to early adulthood (Chae and Lee 2011: 628). The most important aspect of social competence is its effects in transforming children to become 'good citizens' (Pruett 2000). Those who do not develop appropriate social skills in their infancy may develop low levels of social competence which is difficult to change (Thomas and Pierson 2002). Though humans have the capacity to unlearn bad behaviors they have voluntarily or involuntarily acquired, educating children to develop social competence early in their lives is much more cost effective.

The income of parents and the numbers of working hours influence the way fathering happens. If fathers have long hours of work, they are likely to be less effective in caring about the needs of the children, while the quality of their jobs, which is normally reflected in earnings, can mean a more congenial home environment, widely defined that fathers have multiple responsibilities – to provide in economic terms and to be emotionally involved with their children e.g. (Paschal, Lewis-Moss and Hsiao 2011). The extent that they are ‘involved’ in their children, the studies report positive effects on child development, widely defined but including educational performance and socially desirable behaviours.

When fathers are involved in fathering, it is likely to understand whether they are positively contributing to the well-being of their children or not. But fathers who had a more closer relationship with their fathers while growing feel more secure and are likely to participate in a more sensitive way in caring about their own children. The inspirations that children benefit from their fathers are likely to spill over in their own parenting attitudes and experiences (Nicholson, Howard and Borkowski 2008). So studies from of fathers in Korea found out that fathers who had experienced positive nurturing from their own fathers were far more likely to give positive nurturing to their own children (Plantin, Månsson and Kearney 2003 ; Forste, Bartkowski and Jackson 2009). Another aspect of father nurturing to be is examined in more detail is chapter 3, concerns the inter-generational effects of fathers involvement with their children, especially their sons. Fathers tend to parent the way they were themselves parented.

Some findings, however, disagreed about the way class affects fathering roles compared to previous practices that considered fathers as distant while they worked to provide a second income in their household (Weis 2004); Brannen and Nilsen (2006). Plantin (2007) suggests that some studies agreed with the continuity of past practices because working-class understand household and gender roles better according to traditional ways of involvement than the middle-class, while Brannen and Nilsen (2006) found out the involvement of the young generation in fathering practices.

The division of tasks is partly explicable according to the physical differences that exist between boys and girls, with men doing work that demands greater muscular effort. In terms of culture, the sharing of duties in the household means that a boy is trained to do tasks that show his manhood. So boys may say, as in a Ghanaian study: I am a boy so I do not carry rubbish to the dumpster or cook in the kitchen; my sister, however, can carry rubbish to the dumpster and she can cook (Ampofo and Boateng 2007).

Finally, there is the matter of physical violence, while recognising that there are other forms of violence. Gender violence is very largely perpetrated by men against women and both boys and girls are educated by the ways their parents deal with their conflicts. Among many studies Geffner, Igelman and Zellner (2014) document the various negative consequences for children living in a household with parents who mete out violence. Some studies suggest that men who participate in fostering young kids are not as much likely to involve in violence against their female partners (Plantin, Månsson and Kearney 2003 ). As with household tasks and roles, however, negative attitudes and behavior can be unlearned and re-learned.

### **3.5 The mother-child relationship**

'If your mother didn't invest in you emotionally, you probably didn't invest in her either.' Mothers are regarded, first and foremost, as creatures whose task is to provide love, affection and special care to children. Mothers have the aptitude make a secure and social environment for rearing children. Their ability to understand and satisfy babies' needs suggest a God-given temperament of managing and handling all aspects of nurturing:

All expressed willingness to take care of their baby on their own, since they believed that they were best prepared to understand their baby and what the infant needed at any given time, making it difficult to delegate this task to other people. Some talked about the pleasure they felt from caring for their baby, feeling that the child needed them, and being able to talk to the baby and get a response

(Fleury, Parpinelly and Makuch 2010: 303)

Mothers are the first caregivers of bringing up children because of the roles they play in the life of children. Mothers feel proud to care about their children because they are the only ones to provide care that children need at the beginning of their life. Fathers roles cannot be neglected as well but they are limited in terms of contribution because mothers are responsible in almost all aspects of children rearing. The primary care of children means mothers spend vastly more time than fathers with their children. This, let alone anything else, brings mothers closer to the children.

### **3.6 Family policy**

The 1991 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) recommended that each child has the right to know and be taken care of by his own parents (Article 7) (Engle, Beardshaw and Loftin 2006: 293). In the same token, states have been obliged to recognize that the father and the mother have common responsibilities for them to bring up and develop the child (Article 18). The state was also required to render adequate assistance to parents and legal guardians in their duty of child-rearing responsibility. Many nations have put in place structures dealing with these recommendations and results have been very encouraging (Engle, Beardshaw and Loftin 2006: 293). In the Scandinavian nations, for instance, men have been motivated to become caregivers with the extension of their paternity leave allowing them share the happiness of the new-comer with the wife. Iceland, for example allows a parent-leave system for the father and the mother to take leave up to six months. While on leave, parents continue to receive eighty per cent of their salary. Many other nations around the world have prolonged parental leave to fathers (Gornick and Meyers 2003; Hantrais 2004).

### **3.7 Absent fathers**

As will be explained in detail Chapter 4 (see Table 4.1), South Africa has extremely high proportions of households with decreased or absent fathers, especially among African ethnic group. This section focuses on the experience of living without a father and identifies gaps in our knowledge about absent fathers.

There is a clear distinction between having an absent father and being fatherless. The difference of these two terms must be understood in their semantic and social environmental meanings. On one hand, it is clear that absent fathers could be strongly connected to their children if they chose to do so. Besides the aspect of providing for needs, absent fathers are also able to contribute emotional support making them physically far but still present in the minds of the children. While children are fatherless if the father has died or basically abandoned his family. The essence is that being fatherless means no chance of return, while father absence suggests at least occasional contact and the prospect of the father eventually coming back to live with his family.

As in most developing countries, the colonial power encouraged production – agricultural, mining and industrial – which needed cheap labour, the obvious source of which was the indigenous black communities. A range of policies were devised to force or encourage the movement of labour, mainly young adult males, from their rural communities to the locations where their labour was needed. Accommodation was provided for the worker, but not for his family (Rabe 2006: 250). The apartheid regime reinforced what was already largely in place from colonial times. As a result, huge numbers of men moved to centres of employment and they had limited contact with their home communities. Under apartheid, their right to be in the centre of employment and their right to single person's accommodation, being dependent on them having a job.

The implications of this system for fathers are obvious, with hundreds of thousands of men being absent from their families for all but a small part of the year. The end of apartheid has seen little change in this pattern of absence.

The mining industry was particularly dependent on migrant labour and the system was generally viewed as providing benefits to all parties. 'The mineworkers themselves, their families and the mine owners found the oscillating migrant pattern initially preferable to mineworkers settling on the mines' (Rabe 2006: 251). Mineworkers were keen to retain their homes in rural areas, which they saw as their place to retire and as insurance in case of retrenchment. However, their involvement as fathers was different as a result of their absence. Table 3.2 summarises the views of migrant versus resident fathers about what it means to be a good father. Migrant fathers placed greater emphasis on providing

for the needs of his family, while resident fathers tended to focus on the relationship between the father, his wife and his children.

**Table 3.2 Migrant and resident fathers' views about being a good father**

<b>Migrant fathers</b>	<b>Resident fathers</b>
A good father is a father who cares about his family (Sebastian).	If you are a good father it is better that you are working, you get money, if you are working you go to your wife and you plan the money, so you are a good father and when you don't go with the money, you are not a good father you see? (Luksa).
It is a man who supports his family. He is also working. I think a good father is a father who does not abuse his children by shouting at them or by beating them (Mandla).	It is one who does not fight with kids, treats his wife well, the one who loves beautiful things, who is not a drunkard. (Anthony)
A good father is the one who corrects you from doing wrong things (George).	A good father? A good father is one who is always look after the child, play with his children, buying for his children and help them right. Maybe he is happy all the time, stick to your wife (Isaac).
A good father is a father who cares about his children and who has discipline (Thabo).	Well if your child is asking for something you see, if you give him or her what she wants, I think you are a good father. Even the homework if you help I think you are a good father (Stuart).
A good father is the one who takes care of you, good behavior (Mac).	A good father is a father to be responsible that is the first thing. To take care of their family and to take and to take all the responsibility as a father at home (Steven).
A good father is a father who does not always beat his children; he does not do bad things. A good father is a father who always looks after his family. (Simpiwe)	A good father tries to treat his children very well and then try to support them very well and then you show them love and you say to them: I love you (Dean).
He is the one who will give you everything you want, he is the right father. (Fernando)	
He supports his kids, he looks after his home, he supports hi wives, and even the neighbours will like him as a father (Jerome) (Rabe 2006: 254)	

Source: Rabe (2006: 257)



Rabe's study suggests that it is difficult for a father who has been absent for many months to develop a warm relationship with his children. One young man remembered his father's visits home in the following terms:

Eh he was a very strict somebody and according in our culture you know the father is like a lion, you understand, he thinks – there is no chance to smile and to joke and do that. When he arrives at home, he just sitting down like this [he demonstrates] with the questions: 'What, what? What is it not like that and this? So when you see he comes you run away because he is going to ask us a lot of things 'Why did not do this, why did you not do this?'... but usually it was not bad.

(Rabe 2006: 260)

Another young man remembered how uncomfortable he felt when his migrant father returned home. 'I am just afraid of him, even to look at him straight'. This is not to suggest that migrant fathers were cold and never listened or that resident fathers were warm and always did so. One who asked for advice about girlfriends from his resident social father (an uncle) recalled being shouted at and ridiculed (Spjeldnaes *et al.* 2011: 14). Perhaps it is not unreasonable to suggest that migrant fathers suffer from a lack of practice in relating to their children which may mean that they emphasised power over love.

Grille (2005) suggest that when scientists started to focus on discipline in the household in the 1950s and 1960s they had the propensity of categorizing what parents were doing as based on either power or love, with the former tending to focus on hitting, yelling and threatening. Power-based discipline hinders the development of 'positive human beings':

Authoritarian parenting can arrest the development of more sophisticated and complex thinking processes. It prevents the development of the deeper understanding of human motivation that is essential to the growth of humility and compassion. The result is a smug, righteous and moralistically bipolar (good versus evil) attitude to human relations

(Grille 2005: 352).

A meta-analysis (Gershoff 2002) has demonstrated conclusively that normal (not harsh) use of corporal punishment by parents is associated with a range of negative consequences for the children, both as children and later in their lives as adults. The only 'benefit' which corporal punishment provides is immediate compliance.

Insofar as power-based discipline is more commonly – practiced by migrant fathers (and there is no hard evidence to prove this), it may have negative consequences from their children. However, no fatherly discipline as a result of absence may have its own negative consequences.

### **3.8 Experiencing an absent father**

Father absence has almost invariably been portrayed as negative, but a present father might be emotionally absent, while the one who is physically absent can be emotionally supportive (Morrell 2006: 18). The emotional absence of a father is considered more in terms of its negative effects. More specifically, the absence of the biological fathers does not necessarily mean that nobody will take responsibility. The 'social fathers' role is believed to fill the gap in cases where fathers have been absent for long time or have died. Social fathers may be the new husband of the mother, a relative or a friend. Without in any way disparaging their efforts, evidence from the US and elsewhere suggests that biological fathers are better for their children than step-fathers:

Perhaps most importantly, fathers love their children in a way that studies show step-fathers do not. This is not, of course, to say that most step-fathers and other men don't lovingly raise other men's children, but on average children living with their biological fathers are less likely to be abused, less likely to be delinquent, less likely to drop out school, less likely to be emotionally neglected (Gilligan 2001: 36).

So, in the absence of a biological father, a social father from within the family structure but possibly outsiders like neighbours and teachers may take on fathering responsibilities. These categories of people have been found to play an important role in the lives of South African children (Clowes, Ratele and Shefer 2013: 255).

Young boys are likely to benefit from the relationship of the social fathers because they need a male role model. It needs to say that the involvement of non-biological fathers especially those in the category of neighbours have been recently questioned in the US studies. Browning, Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn (2005: 760) for example, show how children can adopt neighbourhood behavior 'which goes against the ethos which the parents were trying to instill.

A number of North American studies on the effects of father absence are summarised in Table 3.3. In general, the studies demonstrated the importance of a father in terms of providing a role model for his children (McCandless and Sheldon 2010: 204; Cartwright and Henriksen Jr 2012). Absent fathers seems to put children at a disadvantage in terms of health and educational achievement (DeBell 2008), but individual children have different views. Nyanjaya and Masango's (2012) study of Zimbabwean children of migrant workers shows a range of attitudes towards absence. Its traumatic impact on one adolescent male can be seen in his statement that 'it is better to have a dead father than an absent one', but others felt less concerned, stating that their mother made up for the absence of their father.

**Table 3.3 Research studies on father absence in the lives of children**

Aim of the study and setting	Factors contributing to father absence	Results	Reference
<p>To address challenges faced by mothers when raising children without active, positive involvement of the biological father with a focus on how mothers raise children with male-positive attitudes in case of parents' romantic relationship break-up.</p> <p>(Minnesota, USA)</p>	<p>Woman parenting in the absence of a biological father have identified the following factors: divorce, marital separation, widowhood, termination of a cohabiting relationship, the break-up of a short-term or long-term non-cohabiting relationship or from sperm donation to a heterosexual woman or woman in two-parent lesbian relationship (Doherty and Craft 2011: 64)</p>	<p>The way to promote children well-being by mothers was to manage their feelings and promote the male-positive attitudes by helping the mothers understand the following to their children: saying positive things and bad things about the father, not to lie about him or for him, acknowledge the absence of the father and the child's feelings, expressing the idea about not knowing why the father is absent...</p>	<p>(Doherty and Craft 2011).</p>
<p>To explore the life experiences of collegiate black males raised in absent father homes.</p> <p>(South East Texas, USA)</p>	<p>No information is provided on factors that led fathers to be absent in their households. Instead, participants expressed the way their respective mothers played the fathers' role.</p>	<p>Given the father absence, participants raised the importance of having a male role model or mentor, which they referred to uncles, step fathers, pastors and mentors who taught them about manhood.</p>	<p>(Cartwright and Henriksen Jr 2012).</p>
<p>To estimate the number of American children in grades K-1 living without biological fathers and examine the association of absent-father status with children's well-being.</p> <p>(USA)</p>	<p>In bivariate comparison, father-absence has been associated with reduced well-beings, specifically worse health, lower academic achievement, worse educational experiences and less parental involvement in school activities. On socio-economic perspective, father-absence has been associated with small deficits of well-being.</p>	<p>Various indications have been taken into consideration to gauge the well-being of children as to their relevance to school-age children development and education. Four specific indicators have been considered in this research: health, academic achievement, educational experience and parent involvement.</p> <p>Children living without their fathers were found to be at a disadvantage compared to those who live with their fathers (DeBell 2008: 432)</p>	<p>(DeBell 2008).</p>

Aim of the study and setting	Factors contributing to father absence	Results	Reference
<p>To review the clinical literature around relevant issues such as father hunger, developmental deficits and the varying effects on the child depending on age, sex and the degree of father absence.</p> <p>(USA)</p>	<p>Among factors contributing to father-absence, the following have been identified: the rapid increase of children born to unmarried mothers, the high divorce rate of (about 50%) and the increase of single women who chose to adopt children via artificial insemination.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>	<p>(Wineburgh 2000)</p>
<p>To assess the impact of traumatic experiences lived by children in the absence adolescent male children fathers.</p> <p>(Zimbabwe)</p>	<p>Migration work opportunity abroad.</p> <p>(Nyanjaya and Masango 2012)</p>	<p>Some children feel resentment because of the lack of father's influence and speak of feeling being abandoned and betrayed. One child that he would better have a dead father than having an absent one. However, some others who were materially supported by their absent fathers suggested that the father's presence was not very important as far the mother provided for these for them.</p>	<p>(Nyanjaya and Masango 2012).</p>

While some children seem to cope without a father in their lives, evidence from Langa indicates that children indeed want to 'know who their father is':

Simon: It is just like the pain of – you know sometimes when I play with friends and sometimes we have these little fights, and they are going to say I am going to call my father.....but have no father to call.

Themba: It is very embarrassing to tell your friends that you do not know your father.

Researcher: What is embarrassing to you?

Themba: That you do not know who you are... You feel maybe you were born by mistake because you do not know who your father is.

William: My closest friend has his father. Most of the time we would go, maybe on weekends, his father lives at 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and his father would like treat us – you see – give him cash to go and buy clothes. I wouldn't show it but I would be dying inside...you know feeling jealous and wishing it was you.  
(Langa 2010: 521)

Father absence can have serious psychological effects on children and Cartwright and Henriksen Jr (2012: 34) found out that young men living with absent fathers are in need of social father to play that role.

### **3.9 Social identity construction and absent fathers**

Research in the United States on the construction of social identity among young black men with absentee fathers (Green 2009: 1) reports the struggle of these men with issues of racial, male identity and masculinity.

With regard to male identity, the relationship between gay and heterosexual men in study a showed a significant deficiency of emotional kinship to and linked to other males, but also linked between the development of identity and intimacy (Markstrom and Kalmanir 2001). As for masculinity, men are openly taught to support emotional suffering compared to women as a way not to show their weaknesses (Wallace 2007), found in danger for psychological wellbeing related problems like self-confidence and

unhappiness (Mahalik, Pierre and Wan 2006; Hammond 2012) but also associated to gender role conflict with black men found with higher mental distress and exhibited riskier sexual behavior (Bingham, Harawa and Williams 2013). Such conflicts, suggests the researchers come from unsatisfied social effects related to gender roles. Traditional understanding of masculinity where black men identify themselves through family, human community and spiritually and humanism (Hunter and Davis 1992) but also responsibility, maturity, accountability and sacrifice have surfaced as (Chaney 2009; Dancy 2011; Mincey *et al.* 2014).

### **3.10 Summary**

Fathers traditionally have taken the role of provider, while women have taken the roles of homemaker and nurturer. Such allocations have very strong traditional underpinnings which may find support from religion and some challenges from modernity. Father absence in the family has different impacts on the psychological and sociological life of children. Research suggests that both resident and absent fathers have are able to contribute into the well-being of their children and family. Resident or absent fathers may still positively be involved if they wish to do so.

Research generally indicates that young men with an absent father fail to create many opportunities compared to their counterparts with father presence. To adapt themselves into the society, many find it necessary to get connected to their respective racial, male identity and/or masculinity to find a role model of their own as a way to fill the father absence gap.

The research reviewed in Section 3.4 points to the significant benefits for children which come from having an involved and nurturing father. The research also points to the significance of the education provided by fathers to their children. If they nurture children, their boys will in turn nurture their own children. The nurturing consequences of not growing up with a father are considered in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 4: SOUTH AFRICAN FAMILIES AND FATHERS

Take a moment to look around you. Depending on where you are reading this book right now, you may see various kinds of people. Young, old, native, immigrant. Wealthy, needy, working class. Multiple shades of skin with myriad experiences. But there is one thing we all have in common. Each of us, at some time, has been a child. We are born into the world as sponges for information. And most of us, the primary source of that information – about the world, how to think and feel, and how to behave – *was our parents*.

(George 2009: 3-4).

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the different mechanisms that contribute to the foundation of the family in the South African context. Challenges that poor communities face in South Africa have changed the way a family is understood as a caring institution. Issues of acute poverty, home-based violence and rape, unemployment etc. are highly stressful to families. Government provision response includes the child grants and other services to encourage the well-being of children.

This chapter is divided into parts and split into sub-sections. Following this introduction, the second part looks at the meaning of a family, the third focuses on marriage within the South African context, the fourth and the fifth examine the South African data on single parent households and absent fathers. Current responses to these challenges are then explored and gaps in the knowledge and practiced are identified.

### 4.2 The meaning of a family

It is almost universally held that the family plays a key role in the society:



Stable, healthy families are at the heart of strong societies. It is within the family environment that an individual's physical, emotional and – psychological development occurs. It is from our family that we learn unconditional love, we understand right from wrong, and we gain – empathy, respect and self-regulation. These qualities enable us to engage positively at school, at work and in society in general. The absence of a stable, nurturing family environment has a profoundly damaging impact on the individual, often leading to behaviour which is profoundly damaging to society. (Centre for Social Justice, 2010:6).

At its simplest, a family is a group of two people or more related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together. Some researchers have emphasised that families are a collective social group associated with affinity, marriage, adoption, or affiliation with close passionate attachments one another going beyond physical residence (Amoateng and Richter 2007: 4). The Department of Social Development (DoSD) asserts that the household provides a place of dwelling and a sharing of resources between people being connected by blood, and others. Social scientists view the official definition of a family as the nuclear family considering it as consisting of a married couple with or without children or at least one parent and his or her children. Given its multicultural nature in South Africa, it has been difficult to agree on the definition of family that will satisfy everyone, but it most typically refers to the nuclear family comprising of parents with biological or adoptive children only.

However, many families in South Africa do not comprise of both parents and their children and may include other children who do not live with their genetic parents. The second aspect justifying the incompatibility of a nuclear family is the frequently insignificant role played by parents even they live with their children (Budlender and Lund 2011: 927). This is largely a consequence of father. In the case of divorce, courts have typically privileged the mother to assume the responsibility of being the primary care giver (Khunou 2006: 270).

'Nuclear' has never accurately described the majority of South African families given their propensity to include extended families in the household. Holborn and Eddy (2011: 3) showed that the proportion of households consisting of nuclear families declined between 1996 and 2001 from 46% to 40%, while the proportion of households made up of extended families increased from 32% to 36%.

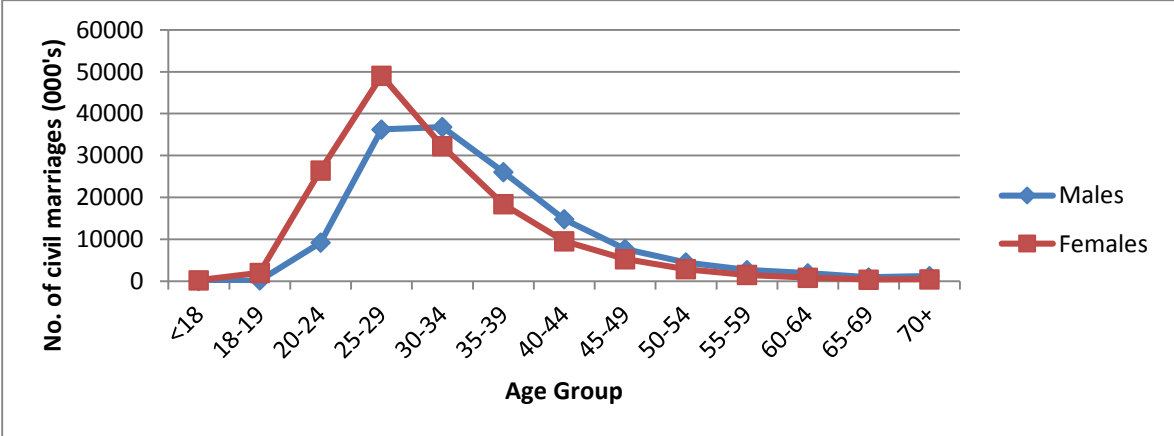
Fertility rates have declined an average of 6 to 7 children per woman in the 1950s to 2.9 children per woman in the late 1990s and to 2.4 children per woman in 2008 (Palamuleni, Kalule-Sabiti and Makiwane 2007), the greatest decline in the Sub-Saharan Africa. The decline has been attributed to the systematic high use of contraceptives and the high levels of HIV/AIDS. Lerato (2012: 2) indicates that the percentage of youth fertility in South Africa is on decline as well dropping from 81 births per 1000 women aged 15 and 19 in 1997 to 54 in 2010.

**4.3 Marriage and relationships in South Africa**

Census data on civil marriages show the typical age of individuals getting married for the first time in South Africa was 32 years in 2006 and 33 in 2010, 1996 respectively for males; the comparable figures for females was 29 in both years (Kalule-Sabiti *et al.* 2007), as shown in Figure 3.1 and 3.2.

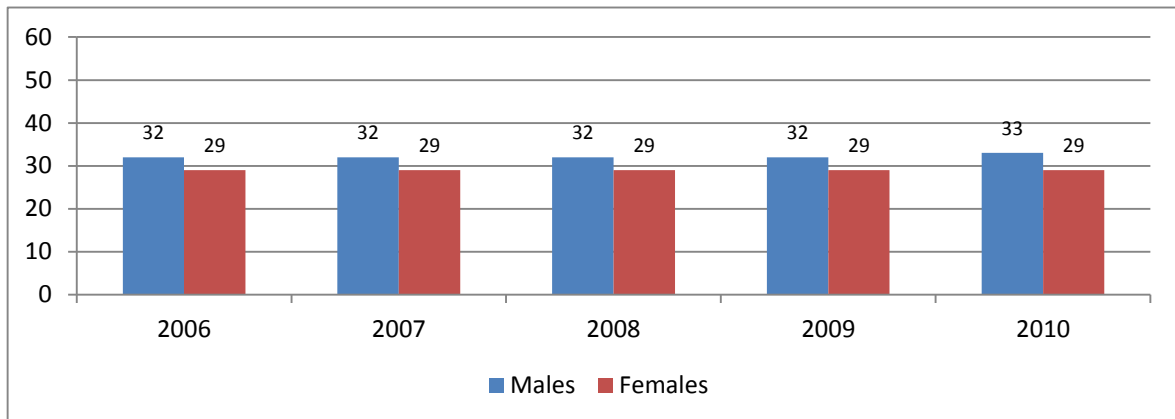
The Recognition of Customary Marriages Act of 1998 (RCMA) defined Customary Marriages as marriages that have been negotiated, celebrated, or concluded according to any of the systems of indigenous African customary law which exists in South Africa. Such marriages are only used in data once they have been registered at the Department of Home Affairs (DHA). No official data on the number of polygamous marriages in South Africa exists.

**Figure 4.1: Number of males and females getting married for the very first time by civil marriages by age group, 2010**



Source: Statistics South Africa 2010. *Marriages and Divorces, 2010*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa

**Figure 4.2 Median ages of males and females getting married for the very first time at time of civil marriage, South Africa, 2006-2010**



Source: Statistics South Africa (2010). *Marriages and Divorces, 2010*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa

South Africa has one of the lowest marriage rate in all the African continent (Richter and Panday 2006: 2) and the second highest rate of father absence in Africa after Namibia (Posel and Devey 2006a: 42). It also has the lowest rate of paternal maintenance for children (Khunou 2006: 267) and records high rates of abuse and neglect of children by men (Richter and Dawes 2008: 78). It is therefore, not surprising that many South Africans deny responsibility of paternity in order not to pay *inhlawulo* (damages for impregnating a girl) or *lobola* (bride wealth) (Hunter 2006: 104).

#### **4.4 Single-parent household and female-headed households**

In 2007, 40 per cent of South African households were headed by a single parent, while 34 per cent were headed by both biological parents. Most single parents are females whether through divorce or abandonment, death of husbands or lengthy migration and their households have the following characteristics (Collinson *et al.* 2006):

- They are on average larger than male headed households (3.7 persons per household compared to 3.3 for males) with a higher total dependency ratio (0.8 to 0.4);

- Many of the dependents in Female Headed Household (FHH) are children: on average 33 per cent of these households consist of children compared to only a fifth for male headed households);
- FHHs are more dependent on social grants, are more likely than male-headed households to indicate remittances and social grants as sources of income, and are less likely to indicate salaries and wages as the main source of household income than male-headed households (44 per cent compared to 67 per cent);
- FHHs are more likely than male ones to be extended households and less likely to contain a single generation (single households containing only siblings for instance);

#### **4.5 South African absent fathers**

Absent fathers is a central theme investigated in this research. Fathers' absence has been attributed to migration, death or divorce. In the South African context, researchers link father absence with less collective safety and lack of self-esteem for the family (Mturi, Xaba and Sekokotla 2005: 56). One aspect of this is the common practice of delaying decision-making on children's education until the return of the father at home.

The fatherhood literature in South Africa shows how common absent fathering is. For instance, (Collinson *et al.* 2006) reported that 60 percent of adult men are absent in the family for more than six months per year.

Chapter 2 dealt with this generally and here we focus on the South African context. Table 4.1 provides illuminating statistics. The key fact is that, 18.1 percent of African children had a deceased father and a further 50.6 percent had a living but absent father. Less than a third of African children; then had fathers who were present. This represents a dramatic fall from 44.5 percent in 1996.

**Table 4.1 Percentage of children with/without fathers by race, South Africa 1996 - 2010**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Presence of father</b>	<b>1996<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>2002<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>2009<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>2010<sup>c</sup></b>
<b>African</b>	Deceased father	10.0	12.8	18.4	18.1
	Absent (living) father	45.5	50.2	51.5	50.6
	Father present	44.5	37.0	30.1	<b>31.3</b>
<b>Coloured</b>	Deceased father	7.3	7.4	6.1	7.1
	Absent (living) father	34.3	37.2	40.8	38.7
	Father present	58.4	55.4	53.1	<b>54.2</b>
<b>Indian</b>	Deceased father	4.8	5.0	2.4	3.6
	Absent (living) father	16.6	8.4	12.2	13.4
	Father present	78.6	86.6	85.4	<b>83.0</b>
<b>White</b>	Deceased father	3.4	2.4	1.7	2.3
	Absent (living) father	12.8	10.9	15.0	16.9
	Father present	83.8	86.7	83.3	<b>80.8</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>Deceased father</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>16.1</b>
	<b>Absent (living) father</b>	<b>41.6</b>	<b>45.8</b>	<b>48.0</b>	<b>47.4</b>
	<b>Father present</b>	<b>49.2</b>	<b>38.7</b>	<b>35.9</b>	<b>36.5</b>

Source: Holborn and Eddy (2011)

These figures are simply staggering and hugely significant, given the consequences of father absence discussed in Chapter 2. The situation for other race groups is far less serious. Presumably, they drew on StatsSA. The explanation for this, as we have seen in Chapter 2, lies in the ongoing migrant labour characteristic of the economy and as we shall see, in the mindset of African men. The proportion of fathers of children aged 15 years and younger who were reported either absent or dead increased from approximately 43 per cent in 1993 to 53 per cent in 2002 (Posel and Devey 2006:42).

Alternatively, about 1.5 million children without fathers or with absent fathers in South Africa live with their grandparents and great aunts or uncles in 'skip-generation' households (Lerato 2012: 2). In the same research, Lerato suggests that some 13% of all African children are fatherless compared to 6% of coloured, 3% of Indian and 2% only for white children. These figures demonstrate that the African community (i.e. black) is the more affected as a result of the apartheid consequences on families as explained in this chapter.

#### **4.6 Responding to absent fathers**

Under the apartheid regime, many young men – current fathers and prospective fathers – were subject to various kinds of violence. The trauma they suffered from various degrees inevitably impact on their interpersonal relationships including fathering. The economics of apartheid required men to work in distant places on terms of migrant contracts. The work was often physically hard and the environment brutal and were exposed to pain, hardship and violence. Today, South Africa continues to experience high levels of violence which have continued though important reforms have taken place since 1994 (Kaminer and Eagle 2010: 12). Although apartheid has gone, the same economic organisation continues to trigger severe havoc in many black families (Møller 2013: 920).

In addition, there is mounting evidence about changing attitudes and behaviour of young men South African men concerning women e.g. Sathiparsad (2006); Mulumeoderhwa and Harris 2013), which may be a strong pointer to their attitudes and behaviours towards children resulting from a relationship. Hence the emphasis of this study on training young men in responsible, loving and nonviolent fathering is a way to shift young men's attitudes and perceptions of nurturing tasks.

There has been of course, extensive and sustained effort by government, NGOs and individuals to help men heal and play a more positive role in their families and we now review some of these efforts.

South African law obliges the head of the family to meet the daily needs of his wife and children (Herbst and Du Plessis 2008: 125). For low income households, the social security system provides a monthly support grant for children, as well as support for older people and the disabled.

Assessments on the child support grants in South Africa (Case, Hosegood and Lund 2005: 470) confirm that the amount allocated for children while small, is a useful in addition to the household budget and is largely used for its intended purpose.

There are government structures and civil society organisations which promote positive male role involvement in their families, along with general issues of parenting. A sample of these structures and organisations is summarised in Tables 4.2 and 4.3. In the light of the proportions of children with absent fathers (see Table 4.1), the number of men suffering from various trauma and the strongly patriarchal nature of the South African society, these structures and organisations face an almost overwhelming task.

**Table 4.2 Government structures working for the promotion of male involvement**

Name of the structure	Type of structure	Activities
The Office on the Status of Women (OSW)	Government	This structure was initiated by the government to promote men’s active and constructive involvement in the fight against women’s oppression. It later on, started getting involved in a number of meetings at the international level, leading it to be implemented with its own main aims of encouraging men and boys in achieving gender equality as a way to work for the well-being of children.
The Commission on Gender Equality (CGE)	Government	It is a constitutional body established by the Commission of Gender Equality Act 39 of 1996 to support the development and implementation of democracy. Its constitutional mandate is to promote, protect and monitor gender equality in South Africa. It is an institution committed to creating a society free from gender discrimination and other forms of oppression, a society where people will have the opportunities and means to realise their potential regardless of gender, race, class, religion, disability or geographic location.



**Table 4.3 Civil society organisations working with men**

Name of the structure	Type of structure	Activities
The Parent Centre of the Western Cape	Civil society organisation	<p>The Parent Centre was created in 1983 to strengthen aspects of parenting and family health. It has successfully formed valuable partnerships with national and international organisations that thrives the cutting edge skills and expertise as a way to encourage cohesion in the field. According to Salie (2013), the Parent centre has among its work to teach communities the way to parent their children positively, change the attitudes of parents with their partners, children and the community. Among the activities organised by the centre are:</p> <p>(1) Parent and Community Empowerment and Support (PACES) meant for counselling and support groups, parenting skills training courses, workshops and talks for parents and caregivers;</p> <p>(2) Parent-Infant Intervention Home Visiting Programme looking at preventing measures of child victimisation, neglect and abuse through enhancing a parent or caregiver’s capacity to cope with the challenges of early parenting but also teaching and strengthening positive parenting values; and</p> <p>(3) The Teen Parenting Skills Training Programme starting as a teen parent support group model. Later on, after an increase in pregnancy was noticed. With the suggestion of educators the programme was implemented in schools. As a result, learners became more responsible for their lives but also accountable. Learners developed their self-esteem upon completion of the programme and most of them passed their Grade 12;</p>

<p>Fathers Speak Out and Men as Partners:</p>	<p>Civil society Organisation</p>	<p>This structure comes from the pro-feminist men's organisations in 1994. It dealt also on the literature of men and masculinities in the South African context. Its work is based on primary focus reaching men and fathers.</p>
<p>Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention and Training (ADAPT):</p>	<p>Civil society Organisation</p>	<p>The key mission of ADAPT is its commitment to shifting the social values and structural factors that preserve violence against women through the promotion of the spirit of independence, mutual respect and co-existence between women and men. The organisation's concerns are also focused on the family as a unit mostly affected by violence in the home and in the community. It is involved in providing counselling on what men can and should be to their children, while its primary aim is to create a nonviolent society.</p> <p>Strategies or activities for the prevention of Gender Based Violence of ADAPT take place within the community. On the intervention level or prevention activities are held in partnership with government and bodies such as Commission on Gender Equality, South African Network of Trauma Service Providers, Voluntary Services Overseas etc. Much work of this structure is done at the community level.</p>

Men as Partners (MAP):	Civil society organisation	<p>Men as Partners (MAP): <i>“I have to take a stand so that society can see that change is inevitable.” ---MAP Activist.</i></p> <p>It is a national network that gathers thirty member organisations working in most South Africa’s nine provinces in an attempt to reduce the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS by encouraging men to take a stand against violence against women and children. Their struggle is directed into two interconnected epidemics: violence against women and HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>Its activities include: conducting street outreach, holding workshops and engaging in community education, undertaking community mobilisation activities, improving the quality and availability of HIV services for men, strengthening the organisational capacity of the network members, promoting collaboration, working with national, provincial and local government and conducting on-going research, monitoring and evaluation.</p>
The Five in Six Projects and the Everyday Hero Campaign	Civil society organisation	<p>This programme enlists men as everyday heroes to end violence against women. The campaign was launched to educate men about the price all men pay when some men endorse violence against women and children. The campaign’s plea to women remains the identification of men with positive attitude toward women who are asked later on to join the group as new advocates women’s rights.</p>
The Bright Star Mentorship Programme (BSMP)	Civil society organisation	<p>This programme takes the responsibility of mentoring orphan children in the Durban area. Most of the children who benefit this programme dwell in hostels. The programme defines a mentor as guide who can help the mentee to find the right direction and who can help to find solutions to life’s challenges.</p>

Of particular interest to the present study is a major research project – the Fatherhood Project initiated in late 2003 in the Child, Youth, Family and Social Development (CYFSD) at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). Its purpose is to analyse and debate the influential factors that have emotional impact on fatherhood looking as well at the policy as a way forward for the well-being of families.

It challenges the existence of stereotypes that dominated thinking about men as fathers. The understanding of the term fathers – was very wide and included biological fathers, stepfathers, grandfathers, uncles, older brothers, priests, teachers and neighbors who undertake fathering roles in difficult contexts e.g. unemployment, the loss of traditional status and the social marginalization of men. The project has highlighted the positive role men can (and do) play in the lives of children. Its main publications was *Baba: men and fatherhood in South Africa* (Swartz and Bhana 2009); the latter deals with young men aged 16-21 years.

In broad terms, the main message which the Fatherhood Project has promoted is to encourage fathers to become more caring and responsible. It includes the following:

- Encouraging the concept that every child originates from a family structure which the focus on this aspect supports the idea of a “social father” whose role is to take responsibility of children in situations where a biological father is absent. The absence might be for a short or permanent basis due to circumstances. Among the people who are said to take responsibility have been identified grandfathers, uncles, step-fathers, foster-fathers, older brothers, cousins etc.
- Children need the care of men. Most cultures attribute key importance to fathers or father-figures to help their children develop into positive male adults.
- In circumstances where fathers live far from their children, they were encouraged not to lose contact with them. Hearing from the father time to time sends a positive message of care and concern about their well-being which is strongly appreciated.

- Fathers, including father figures can make a very important difference to children's lives by preventing or stopping abuse that other men may impose on children.
- Men have often been sidelined in the nurturing of children because mothers undertake the primary care of children. Media portrayals of men contribute to this sidelining. The potential nurturing role of men as fathers needs to be promoted.

Among the positive contributions of the project, *Baba's* chapters scrutinises fathers and fatherhood from different perspectives including questions related to the entire dynamic of fathering and its core challenges. In the compilation of data from diverse sources, researchers have considered questions such as: How does fatherhood feature in the way men understand masculinity? How many men are fathers in South Africa? How did apartheid affect fathers and patterns of fatherhood? What is the role of poverty in shaping fatherhood? What do children want from their fathers? The book's key message is to encourage fathers' involvement in the lives of their children.

An important body of literature has emerged from the Fatherhood Project highlighting different social constructions of fathers' lack of abilities for some and the use of harmful behaviours for others. An overview of the content of *Baba* and *Teenage Tata*, along with other publications from the project, is included in Appendix A.

The project reports some wonderfully positive examples of fathering:

My Dad was born and raised in Durban [from] where he later moved to Benoni. He attended Saint Dunstons Memorial School [When] ... his mother died. his father left him and his two younger sisters. He lived with his Grandparents and then his Aunt before being moved to an orphanage. During his years in the orphanage, he had to face many adversaries and learned many lessons. He was exposed to bullies and often had to protect his sisters.... In 1990, I was born and ever since, I have been so close to him. My father has played an important role in my life, and I someday wish to pass on this gift he has given to me. He has been my teacher, my sports coach, my mentor and most of all, my closest friend.

(Jonathan 2004: 6)

Some fathers have the natural talent of developing a relationship that keeps them in close ties with their children. When a child is able to tell the story of his late father with details of life and the difficulties he (the father) encountered, it tells of the good relationship that existed between the father and the child. Such accounts are a necessary balance to a broadly negative viewpoint concerning South African fathers of neglecting to undertake a fathering role and, far too often, perpetrating direct violence in the household. Research has also disclosed that some young fathers have demonstrated their sadness at not knowing their fathers. They have recognized that they lack experience and guidance regarding father roles and responsibilities (Swartz and Bhana 2009: 41).

As Makusha and Richter (2014: 985) suggest, men are beginning to shift their involvement, but in South Africa, men are in early stages of change:

...men are beginning to share household chores with their employed partners and are providing care for children. Informal observations in South Africa indicate that some fathers now undertake direct household and child care work. These activities include spending more quality time with their children, attending their children school functions, attending health centers with children who require immunisations, and walking and driving children to and from school (Makusha and Richter 2014: 985).

When a father gets involved in the daily activities of the family and the children showing commitment and care in handling duties that the mother usually does, chances are high that he positively influences the standard life of the family and that of the children. Children will be psychologically and morally proud of benefiting from a caring, loving and involved father in helping resolve issues that the mother would not be able to do due to certain social factors linked to work, pregnancy, sickness etc. The context of mothers involved in work while the husband is unemployed might be an important motivation for the father to help, though cases of the father voluntarily being involved by sharing tasks and duties in the household after or during work hours is to be appreciated because of its positive impact in the family.

## **4.7 Summary and conclusion**

This chapter has identified the extent of absent fathers in South Africa (and, as we saw in chapter 2, many present fathers are psychologically absent). The lack of fathering input is a current loss of their children and probably means that the male children will themselves be 'distant' fathers, in psychological if not locational terms. The efforts of government and NGOs, and particularly the research under the Fatherhood Project, have been outlined. The challenges they face are gigantic.

The next chapter will look at the existing fatherhood training programmes. It focuses on the content, and the learning and teaching methods used.

## **CHAPTER 5: TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN FATHERING**

### **5.1. Introduction**

A responsible father will offer discipline, spend time with his children, praise them, develop his children's talents, be attentive to his children's needs, read and help with their homework, provide in the financial sense and support the child's mother. These skills and attitudes can be learned by fathers who lack them. Training programmes in fathering skills have been offered in many countries but some countries remain moderately fragile in providing this type of training for fathers. This can be due to having to consider the father's working hours and to accommodate the family's household work schedules. Evidence from training programmes demonstrates that parenting knowledge and skills contribute to a decrease in negative fathering behaviour, to the benefit of their children. Evidence from training programmes demonstrates that parenting knowledge and skills contributing in decreasing fathers negative behaviour problems.

### **5.2 Fatherhood training programmes**

Seven parenting programmes some of which focus specifically on fathers are summarised in Table 5.1, while these programmes are focused on parenting and/or fathering. They recognise that this key activity is influenced by other life skills and life challenges, including substance abuse. Of particular interest to the present study was the emphasis of several aspects (e.g. Barlow, Parsons and Stewart-Brown 2005; Fagan 2008) on the centrality of the mother-father relationship. If this relationship is strong, many positives follow, including better parenting and fathering.



**Table 5.1 An overview of studies on parenting programmes**

<b>Authors, year of publication and location</b>	<b>Number of participants, age and gender</b>	<b>Programme summary</b>	<b>Main findings of the study</b>
Bushfield (2004), US	32, male	The North Idaho Correctional Institute (NICI) programme was implemented to benefit prisoners. Its emphasis was on education, pre-release, life skills and substance abuse in addition to the discipline of a boot camp routine. The curriculum was based on four modules: child development, concepts about fathering, communication skills and positive discipline, supporting educational development. Daily classes over four weeks	Pre-posttest design using Multi-Dimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MDSPSS), Parent-Child Relationship Surveys, Bushfield Responsible Father Questionnaire, and the Adult Adolescent Parenting Inventory and the semi-structured interviews post program. Most significant changes were in attitudes towards the use of corporal punishment child development and the importance of father involvement.
Robbers (2009), US	310, male and female	The Caring Equation Programme (CEP) focused on locating fathers and conveying the importance of father involvement and parenting through classes, activities and counseling. The programme also encouraged fathers to be involved in their children's life.	Correlations for the two year post-test variables revealed a significant relationship between the age of the father and how the father interacted with his children. This was a positive relationship showing that older fathers were scoring higher on the scale. Negative correlation was also depicted between the age of the child and assistance including greater father assistance provided to children.
Bavolek (2000), US	Various age group (6 to 30 years)	The Nurturing Parenting Programmes (NPP) were implemented to develop and research a family-centered parenting programme to help control problems of child abuse and neglect.	Data indicated that prior to their involvement in the treatment programme, abused children supported the use of corporal punishment by parents, showed little empathic awareness of the needs of others. Posttests data indicated. The follow-up scores of abused children one year after their participation in the programme showed a significant increase in self-awareness and decrease in support for corporal punishment.
Barlow, Parsons and Stewart-Brown (2005). A number of countries.	Children aged 3 years	The programme addressed the effectiveness of parenting programmes to increase the emotive and behaviour of change of children aged less than 3 years.	Though parents could be very much aware of the impact of the intervention, but there is insufficient evidence to say if the short-term advantage of the intervention would be effective on a long term basis.
Fujiwara, Kato and Sanders (2011), Japan	91, women	The group Positive Parenting Programme (Triple P) is a form of behavioral family intervention based on social-learning principles. It was designed as a multilevel prevention-oriented system to support parenting.	Mothers who underwent Group Triple P intervention reported improved conduct in their children, a reduction in the use of dysfunctional parenting styles and better parenting adjustment compared to those who did not undergo intervention.

Authors, year of publication and location	Number of participants, age and gender	Programme summary	Main findings of the study
Fagan (2008), US	154 young fathers and their partners	The Minnesota Early Learning Design Co-parenting and Child Curricula was an intervention associated with changing fathers' perceptions of their co-parenting behavior rather than mothers' perceptions of the fathers' behaviours compared with childbirth programme.	<p>Fathers regardless of their place of residence and mothers residing with the father reported higher levels of fathers' engagement with infants when the father participated in the co-parenting intervention compared with fathers participated in childbirth intervention.</p> <p>Intervention outcomes studies have sometimes reported delayed effects of experimental interventions. The follow-up assessment in the study revealed a similar pattern of results as the pretest to posttest findings.</p>
Kane, Wood and Barlow (2007), UK	Mixed	The paper examined parents' experience and perceptions of parenting programmes.	Findings show that parenting programmes were at the core of the intervention strategies of parents of children with emotional and behavioural problems. Reviews showed as well that such programmes can improve various aspects of family life

These programmes were typically offered in the form of workshops held at least once a week over a number of weeks. Learning methods were almost always experimental. That is, rather than being lectured to, participants examined their own experiences, attitudes and behaviours and considered the effects these were having on their children. Many of the challenges faced by these parents could be practically dealt with although such interventions benefit a limited number of participants. Much use was made of small group discussions. There seemed to be particular benefit in realising that many of the challenges they faced were shared by others. Sharing their stories is one way of healing bad experiences and helps resolve their challenges through learning from other. There is evidence that the longer the time over which training took place, the stronger was its effects (Bavolek 2000; Barlow, Parsons and Stewart-Brown 2005). The seven programmes were all carried out in developed countries which have the financial resources to support such interventions. Many developing countries do not have these resources for such programmes as yet.

Clearly such programmes need to be evaluated in terms of their outcome in order to help their promoters do more effective interventions. Probably by implementing more of these interventions, many people would be able to access the knowledge that is beneficial for the society. Typically, this involves comparing participants' attitudes and reported behaviour before and after the training programme. Table 5.2 reports the results of an evaluation of the Dad2Dad programme which compared pre and post-test scores for 14 measures (Sanders *et al.* 2000).

**Table 5.2 Pre-and Post-test mean scores (Sanders et al. 2000)**

Measure		Mean-Pre	Mean-Post	Mean-Diff.
1.	Get your child to see school as important	81	84.79	3.79
2.	Help your child get good grades at school	84	82.08	-1.92
3.	Get your child to enjoy school	74.83	77.92	3.08
4.	Show your children that working hard at school influences later success	84.5	85.42	0.92
5.	Get your children into activities that provide them with positive social experiences	76.5	84.79	8.29
6.	Get your child to keep physically fit	77.5	81.67	4.17
7.	Find time to leisure activities with your children	81.5	83.08	1.58
8.	Help your children make good choices making friends	77.83	82.08	4.25
9.	Get your children to do things you want at home	73	80.42	7.42
10.	Instill your values in your children	78.33	86.46	8.13
11.	Prevent your children from doing things you do not want them to do outside the home	73.67	81.88	8.21
12.	Help your child bounce back after they tried their best and failed	78.67	82.71	4.04
13.	Get yourself to keep trying when things are going really badly	80.83	84.17	3.33
14.	Get rid of self-doubts after you have had tough setbacks	68.67	83.96	15.29
	Scale Scores	1090.83	1161.43	70.58

An important point concerning the outcomes of such programmes is made by the Fagan (2008) study of the Minnesota Early Learning Design Co-parenting and Child Curricula. At the end of a series of workshops, participants are likely to feel more positive and committed to new ways of thinking and acting. This confidence is important because it shows how the programme has contributed to their life challenges. In the Dad2Dad evaluation, for example there was a huge improvement in measure 14 – Get rid of self-doubt after you have had tough setbacks but to what extent will this last in the ensuing weeks, months and years? Follow-up evaluation programmes six months or a year later after the workshops have been conducted will help assess the impact of the training on participants. That is why follow up workshops held, say six months or a year after the main workshops can help remind participants of what they had learnt and reinforce the commitment to change. Their capacity to remember the materials they learnt during the workshops helped provided the commitment and the motivation to continue practicing what they had learnt for longer periods.

A potential problem with ‘before versus after’ evaluation is that many identified change may not have been the result of the intervention but due to some other factors. Such factors may be related to the intervention process. For example, feelings of warmth as a result of being listened to and being able to share experiences may explain positive attitudes to training rather than the specific matter of attitudes towards fathering. There might also be external factors which occur at the same time such as religious teachings which impacts on participants’ lives more generally and spills over into fathering. While external factors are much more concerned with specific behaviour that might change the results of the activity, this is difficult to avoid. The point is that we may think on the basis of before versus after scores, that our programme is effective when it actually is not.

To counter this, it is best to use Randomised Control Tests (RCT) to evaluate outcomes. This involves measuring before versus after scores for an experimental group (who had the training for example) and a control group (who are as similar as possible to the experimental group but who did not participate in

the training). Presumably, the pre-test scores will be similar for both groups; if the post-test scores differ, it is reasonable to believe that the training is responsible.

Two other related points can be made. First, it is always better to prevent negative behaviour than if it is to treat its consequences later. So training young men in positive parenting attitudes and behaviour before they become fathers is better than training them once they become fathers (provided the learning from the pre-fatherhood training is retained and applied). Second, it is always better if such training in life skills is undertaken right across the society. This will include, as we have noted, the relationship between the mother and the father to which we now give particular attention.

### **5.3 Enhancing the mother-father relationship**

The term co-parenting is used to refer to the ways that parent and/or parental figures relate to each other in the role of parenting. Co-parenting occurs when individuals have corresponding or collective obligations for the nurturing of children and consists of the support and coordination (or lack of it) exhibited by parental figures in child rearing (Feinberg 2003: 96). We have seen in chapter 2 and 3, the importance of fathers in the development of their children. Obviously, their involvement is likely to be greater if the father is committed to a responsible level of co-parenting and this will be enhanced if he has a good relationship with the child's mother. Though fathers' participation is acknowledged to be encouraging for the benefit of their children, records of studies supporting this tendency are said to originate from studies from middle-income married, residential fathers. More importantly, Beers and Hollo (2009) underline that research focused on relations between the involvement of fathers not residing with their children and their welfare is limited and slightly unsatisfying.

Better marriage relationships can be built. A programme among US army families (Stanley *et al.* 2010), a one year programme was estimated to have prevented divorce in four out of every 100 couples who participated. The training

programme included content on the implications of the entry of new baby into a household and the respective roles of mother and father in parenting. There are numerous motivations leading to divorce between married military personnel and their wives. Among the most quoted aspects are the separation sorrows in times of deployment of the husband, moving in different locations etc. According to Miles (2005) a Build Strong and Read Families (BSRF) was used to support single soldiers in making an adequate choice of a mate, while an improvement on communication skills including Partner Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge (PICK) was also one of the alternatives to help them improve their relationships.

Among other research dealing with enhancing parenting skills, Dion (2005: 140-150) talks about a number of training programmes called 'healthy relationship initiatives' that covered all aspects of family challenges. The programme seeks at helping communities by providing 'support, information and education about good relationship and marriage'. In one of the programmes for instance, Dion (2005: 142) shows how a curricula called "Bringing Baby Home" helps couples who are waiting for a baby to get help from others as a way to encourage positive childcare of children. The majority of the marital learning curricula of the programme address issues like communication (i.e. listening and expressing effectively), dispute managing, solving of problems etc.

A different study in the Introductory Psychology enrolled 97 males and 117 female undergraduate students to measure a self-report questionnaire about self-confidence and a scale for social interest and protection shows that all components of the questionnaire were positively correlated with defensiveness (Dion and Dion 1975).

Similar interventions to help families deal with their problems exist such as the Shift to Fatherhood (Petch *et al.* 2012), Nurturing Kids when Parents are not Married (Doherty and Craft 2011; Wilde and Doherty 2013), Migration (Weine 2011) and Times Loss and Mourning (Boss and Carnes 2012; Weingarten 2012). Other intervention programmes as well include Helping People Living with Special Problems like Autism (Solomon and Chung 2012) but also General

Unhappiness (Valdez, Abegglen and Hauser 2013) provided for people to improve their living conditions. Of course, simply continuing to stay together is no guarantee of a good relationship or of positive parenting but it is more than often a significant component in a better upbringing for children.

While the well-being of the family is a concern of both parents, the lack of one of them has important consequences on children. Children being brought up by single parents have a higher risks of being caught in poverty and experiencing health, academic and behavioural problems compared to those that have both parents in control (Amato 2005: 75). A study by Eldar-Avidan, Haj-Yahia and Greenbaum (2008: 77) involving 22 Israeli young men aged between 20 and 25 years old about the consequences of divorce showed that participants raised issues related to finance after their parents divorced and the impact that it had had on their psychological behaviour. Three important classifications of their opinions were noticed: the practical financial deterioration, the recurrent financial problems leading to conflicts between the parents and the impact of the divorce on the young men's emotional well-being due to financial consequences of divorce.

#### **5.4 Father training for young South African men**

Apart from their own personal experiences, individuals in South Africa are influenced in their attitudes and behaviours by tradition, modernity and religion. The first and third of these can often be quite resistant to change but modernity is more flexible and dynamic. It is modernity which has spawned the various rights movements which have improved the lot of many previously disadvantaged individuals and groups in the west.

This modernity is relevant to mother-father relationship and to fathering. The 'old ways' of patriarchy which very largely privileged men and oppressed women, are appropriately in my view under threat. Men often find themselves confused and bewildered as a result, particularly when this is combined with the decline of traditional ways of 'being a man' (from warfare to migrating to the mines through



to loss of jobs which require physical strength). New thinking about fathering, among other things, could be regarded as way out of some men's confusion. Men could be men by being responsible, loving and nonviolent fathers. For this to happen, men's mind-sets need to be re-oriented by education and training. The present research is one step towards their education and training.

## **5.5 Summary and conclusion**

This chapter has looked at fatherhood training programmes in developed countries. It has shown that education and training in mother-father relationships and fathering can be effective and thus points to one way of making better fathers and husbands in South Africa.

## **PART III. METHODOLOGY AND DATA**

### **CHAPTER 6. METHODOLOGY**

#### **6.1. Introduction**

Different research texts offer different meanings of key terms and choices need to be made about the use of these terms in order to avoid confusion. I have chosen the definitions and meanings used by Mouton (2001), the standard South African research text. To Mouton (2001: 55, 143 ff), research design refers to the overall approach taken in the research, which is also referred to as the research approach or research type. A research project can be based on a sequential activity that combines different research designs. In the present study, the research designs are exploratory, action research and evaluation.

In terms of methodology, a research project can focus on qualitative or quantitative data (or both). The former typically involves in-depth information collected from a small number of participants usually involving close assistance from the researcher or an assistant. The latter, typically involves more straightforward data collected from large numbers of participants from whom the researcher is detached. A researcher project can combine these and such projects are said to be employing a mixed methodology.

These types of methodology typically use particular data collection methods. Projects using a qualitative research methodology often use small focus groups and individual interviews as a way of obtaining in-depth information whereas a quantitative study may rely on surveys using questionnaires. Qualitative research data may be collected in audio recorded form, written form (by the researcher, as an interview or participants, as in an easy or extended open-ended question) or on a screen.' It is easiest to analyse it if it is transcribed and printed out.

'Thematic content analysis' is a generic term describing the analysis of qualitative data. Always keeping your research objectives firmly in mind is one of the important things to do. Common steps of analysis, as suggested in the literature (e.g. Davies 2007; Merriam 2009; Wagner et al 2012; Creswell 2014), are as follows:

- Devise a good question(s)
- Read carefully and think about response #1; make notes, jot down ideas
- Moving on to response #2 etc, begin to code; begin to create structure, devise classifications
- Using data from all respondents, develop themes; 5-6 is a typical number
- Reflect on and interpret the themes; not simply giving a number of quotes, useful though these can be. 'Winnow' the information, bearing your research objectives in mind. Useful questions might be 'what have I learned?' What does this remind me of?

## **6.2 Research design**

As noted, this project had three components – exploration, action research and evaluation. The research began by exploring to find out from a sample of young men – some of whom were already fathers – their own experience of being fathered and their attitude towards fathering. However, simply exploring and thus having a better understanding of a phenomena will not itself bring about change. Therefore, action research is a second and major part of this project's research design. Action research in this project involved the design of a training package which was delivered to three groups of young men, some of whom were fathers and some of whom were prospective fathers. The aim of this training, in keeping with the project as a whole, was to build more responsible, loving and nonviolent fathers.

A third component of the research design was evaluation. That is, the short term outcome in terms of changed attitudes was investigated. As discussed in section 2.5, it is the behaviour of the participants in the months, years and even decades

ahead which matter, but the only insights into this which are possible for this project are possible changes in attitude in the short term i.e. immediately after the training. Salomon (2010; 2013) points to the erosion of the positive effects of peace education over time (although this can be reversed) and emphasises the importance of leaving as long a time as possible for the effects of training to be measured. In practice, however, evaluations usually take place right at the end of the training.

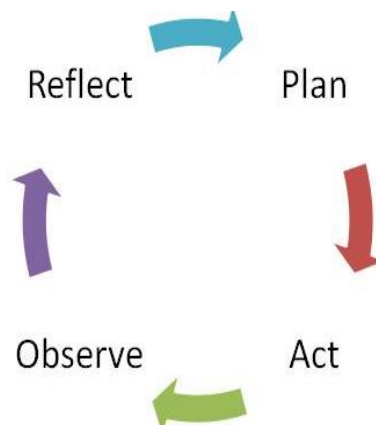
Whilst exploration as a research design is well known, action research is not and we therefore examine this in detail in the next section. Early action researchers like Lewin (1948: 202-203) believed that research that consisted of research of producing books was not sufficient of itself to bring change. This resonated with the general understanding that Peace Studies as a discipline is not content simply to analyse and understand a problem; it is fundamentally concerned to bring about change. Reason and Bradbury (2001) suggest that action research is assumed to be as a group of people taking action to improve the issues that affect them.

Some researchers connect Participatory Action Research (PAR) to different community activities of the 20<sup>th</sup> century including the reform of land-living entitlement, anti-colonialism and the necessity of adopting innovative research approach taking place around all over the world regions (Glassman and Erdem 2014: 206) differing from the foundation of action research that developed in US. Both researchers have raised fears that the word 'PAR' can be unclear or distorted.

AR has always been connected to challenges faced by communities like community-focused achievement (community in search for social change), education locations (teachers' plan to try a new methodology) and well-being division (treatment/health practices and the consequences on patients) (Kaye 2015). Reason and Bradbury (2001) suggest that action research is assumed to be as a group of people taking action to improve the issues that affect them.

Action Research is a cyclic activity that consists in steps like planning, acting, observing and reflecting as show in Figure 6.1. After acting, some would want to add evaluation, but this may be a subset of reflection. Others would point to the cyclical nature of AR, under which interventions are tried, reflected upon, adjusted and retried.

**Figure 6.1 The action research process**



Glassman and Erdem (2014: 208) suggest that while PAR emerged to tackle challenges facing communities, it took different names in different locations. For instance, in Tanzania it was described as participatory research, in Brazil and Chile it was called popular research, in India it was linked to Gandhi and Tagore’s creativities while in Columbia it was given the name of action research.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) requires that the researcher takes more of a facilitating role, in recognition that local people have both great insights into problems and also resources to tackle them (Datta *et al.* 2014: 581). In PAR, the researcher may be part of a reference group which does the observing/reflecting/planning/acting outlined above (Wilson 2007; Denzin 2008). In such a context, Mouton and Babbie (2001) suggest that the researcher has to play the roles of a catalyst who encourages local people to recognize their insights and resources and to organize them to deal with a social problem.

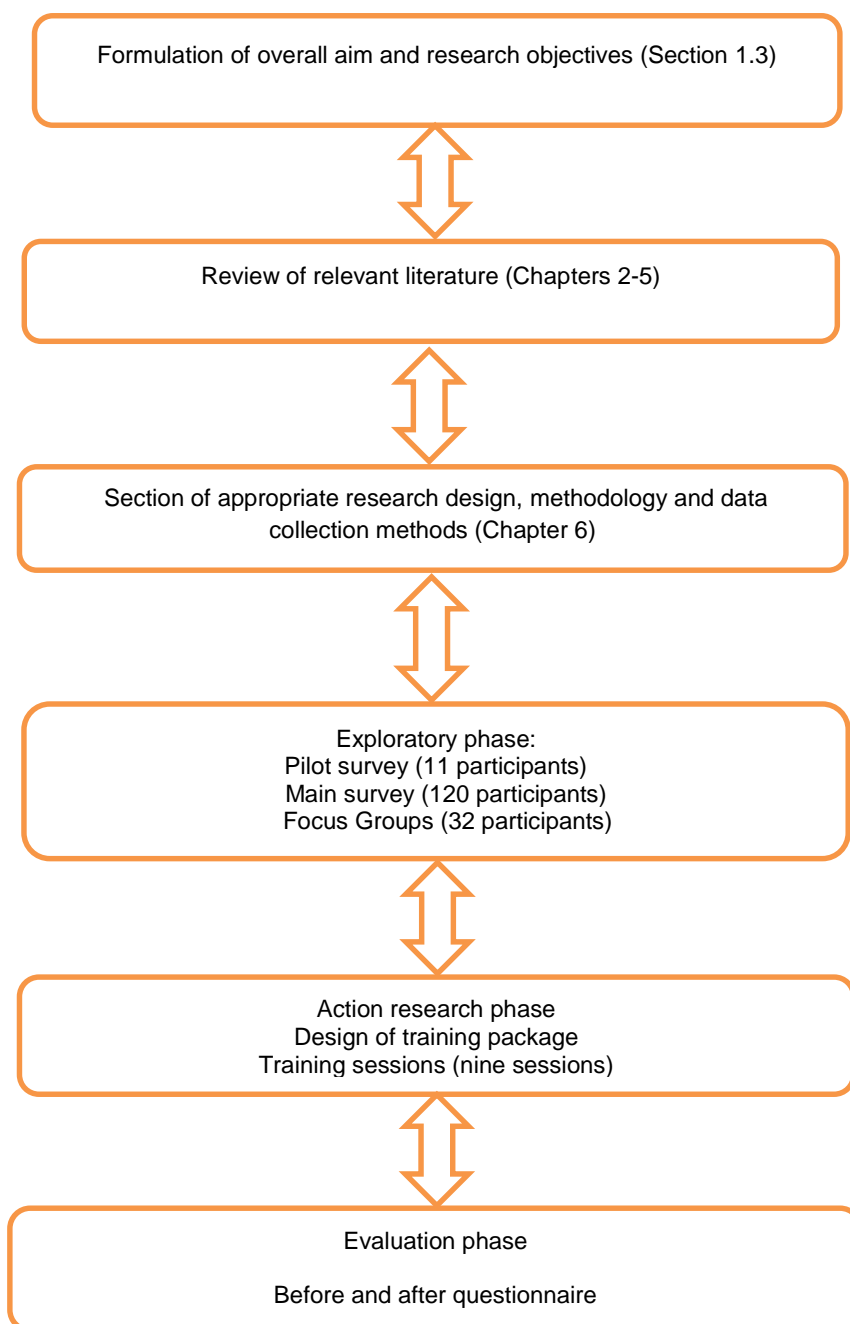
A major challenge of AR is doing the action – in this case the training of young men - and collecting research data at the same time. To meet this challenge, I employed two co-facilitators to keep time and assist participants when they were doing activities in groups. Most importantly, notes were written down by the co-facilitators in order that insightful comments were not forgotten.

### **6.3 Research methodology**

Mixed methods were used in the process of investigation. Mixed method helps to counterbalance the weaknesses of any single form of data collection with the strengths of others, but can also ‘produce a comprehensive empirical record about a topic’ (Axinn and Pearce 2006: 4). The mixture of methods helps to improve the researcher’s understanding of observable facts and thus this project, makes the intervention potentially more effective. In addition, it offers a triangulation component and thus increases the validity and the reliability of the results (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner 2007: 116). The data, both quantitative and qualitative, were of great importance in designing the training package.

Accordingly, this project began with a survey of the experiences and attitudes of a sample of young men, some already fathers. The quantitative data thus obtained was used to form the questions which were then asked during the next collection of qualitative data. Both forms of data were used to design the training package. A diagram of the entire process is presented in Figure 6.2.

**Figure 6.2 Diagram of the research process**



#### **6.4 Data collection methods**

Data was initially collected from a sample of 120 male students aged 16 to 22 years old from four schools. The schools were chosen for reasons of convenience. The data was collected between from 21 August 2014 to 17

October 2014. A questionnaire included in Appendix B asked a series of questions concerning the respondents' experiences of being fathered.

A prior pilot survey conducted on 16 June 2014 at the Durban Computer College with 12 respondents aged between 19 to 28 years old helped to refine the questionnaire. The survey data was supplemented by four focus group discussions (FGDs) (one in Durban and three in Ntuzuma). It is important to say that the informal exchanges outside the formal data collection process also provided important insights.

Data from this exploration was used to develop a training package consisting of three modules, each of 2.5 to 3 hours in duration. The three modules were:

- Module 1: Communication,
- Module 2: Father-mother relationship and
- Module 3: Responsible, loving and nonviolent fathering.

A total of nine training sessions were carried out in three different locations – the Durban Central Business District (CBD), Engonyameni and Ntuzuma. These three locations were chosen for reasons of convenience and that they covered a range of young men and were relatively easy to access in terms of transport. Also, the choice of these locations was strategic in that it included participants from the urban, semi-urban and rural area and allowed the possibility of differences between the three locations to be identified.

The Durban CBD group included both foreigners and South Africans, almost all of whom were students aged 18-30 years old. Those from Ntuzuma were typical of township out of school youth, with partly completed education and being unemployed. Engonyameni is a rural area adjacent to Umlazi. Its participants were also unemployed but unusual in that almost all were active in community development issues and projects. This was the result of their involvement with an empowerment non-governmental organisation called *Sinani KZN Survivors of*



*Violence* over the last couple of years and meant that they were used to discussion and open to new ideas.

## **6.5 Outcome evaluation**

There are three broad approaches to evaluating a programme. The first asks questions to participants immediately after the programme (e.g. at the end of a training session), which may be about process (e.g. do you have suggestions about how the training could be improved?), or be more outcome focused (e.g. what was the most important insight you gained from the training?).

The second seeks to find out if participants have changed, taking into account the programme's objectives. For instance, participants could be asked to write an essay or any changes they felt the training had brought about or, as in this case, complete before and after training questionnaires. However, it is possible that changes which have happened were not as a result of the training but of some other cause. It is always necessary in this situation to be careful about the real outcome that the training brings about.

The third approach, therefore, uses experimental groups versus control groups and is known as Randomised Control Testing (RCT). This type of evaluation consists of having one group (the experimental group) that goes through the training and a second similar group, which does not. The groups will be similar in terms of some attitude or behaviour. If it happens that there is substantial difference after the training, it is reasonable to attribute the difference to the training.

In the present study a combination of 'before versus after' training questionnaires were used as the main tools of outcome evaluation. The pre-training questionnaire is included in Appendix C and was completed by 41 participants in the first training session.

## **6.6 Validity and reliability**

Validity in quantitative research involves following precise procedures which allow the calculation of specific statistical measures. In qualitative research, the accuracy of the findings is validated in other ways, typically by using several data collection methods, the results of which are compared with each other. If these methods produce the same results, the research can be more confident about the results. The use of more than one method is termed triangulation. In addition, (Creswell 2013: 201-203) list further seven validity strategies. Three of these strategies were used in this present study, namely checking results and interpretations with the participants, involving peers in the collection and analysis of the data and presenting negative or discrepant information. In addition, my thesis supervisor could be regarded as having played the role of external auditor of the project.

Reliability refers to the consistency or stability of the results and requires strict attention to accuracy in recording the results and in the definitions used which, says Creswell (2014: 203), can 'drift' over time. It is also possible for researchers to be misled by their informants as reported, for example, in a recent study of a HIV clinical trial (Jonathan 2015). There was no evidence that misleading information was provided in the present study.

## **6.7 Ethical considerations**

All data collected were treated with the utmost confidentiality, although the use of group methods meant that individual comments became known to other individuals. Respect for one another and each other's contributions was emphasised. Pseudonyms were used throughout when reporting responses.

## **6.8 Delimitations, limitations and challenges**

Delimitations are characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries of the study including the choice of objectives, the research questions, variables of interest, theoretical perspectives and the population you chose to investigate

(Simon and Goes 2011). This study used non-probability sampling procedures, for example, and thus can make no general claims about the findings.

Limitations refer to issues that are out of the researcher's control including obtaining permission to survey school students. An important potential limitation concerns language particularly given the fact that the researcher does not speak IsiZulu. The focus on ensuring that participants understood key or technical words was crucial and words such as responsibility, absence, provision, care etc. were carefully discussed. Interesting insights were obtained by asking for related words or phrases in IsiZulu.

I came to realise the tension in this action research project of simultaneously engaging in training and in collecting data which could be reported in the thesis. The dual process necessitated the involvement of two research assistants to help record verbal responses of the participants, distribute documents required for the activities, act as time keeper, keep an eye on those who might be distracted or not understand the tasks etc. The research assistants also helped in taking photos and videos of the training activity, with the prior consent of the participants.

The challenges of the dual role – training and collecting research data – meant that I inevitably missed hearing important data at the time. Hopefully, my research assistants, themselves postgraduate student 'filled in the gaps'.

## **6.9 Summary and conclusion**

This chapter has provided a detailed overview of the research process used to collect the data of the research process used to collect the data needed to meet research objectives. The challenges of conducting action research – in this case training of young men and collecting data at the same time – was also noted.

A summary of the data collection activities can be found in Table 6.1 below, which complements Figure 6.1. It will be noted that there was a month between the training sessions for any group.

**Table 6.1 Summary of the research process**

Activity	Number of participants	Location	Date
Pilot test	10	Durban	16 June 2014
Survey	41	(Inanda Newtown Comprehensive High School)	21 August 2014
	17	Durban (Hunt Road Secondary School)	4 September 2014
	32	(Sastri College)	4 September 2014
	30	(Futura High School)	17 October 2014
Focus groups	8	Ntuzuma K Section (Group 1)	15 December 2014
	8	Ntuzuma L Section (Group 2)	19 December 2014
	8	Durban (Group 1)	2 January 2015
	8	Durban (Group 2)	3 January 2015

### Summary of the research process (continued)

Activity	Number of participants	Location	Date
(4) Training sessions	-	-	-
	13	(1st) Ntuzuma	28 February 2015
	11	(1st) Durban	7 March 2015
	09	(2nd) Ntuzuma	28 March 2015
	08	(2nd) Durban	4 April 2015
	16	(1st) Engonyameni	11 April 2015
	08	(3rd) Ntuzuma	25 April 2015
	06	(3rd) Durban	2 May 2015
	13	(2nd) Engonyameni	9 May 2015
	10	(3rd) Engonyameni	6 June 2015

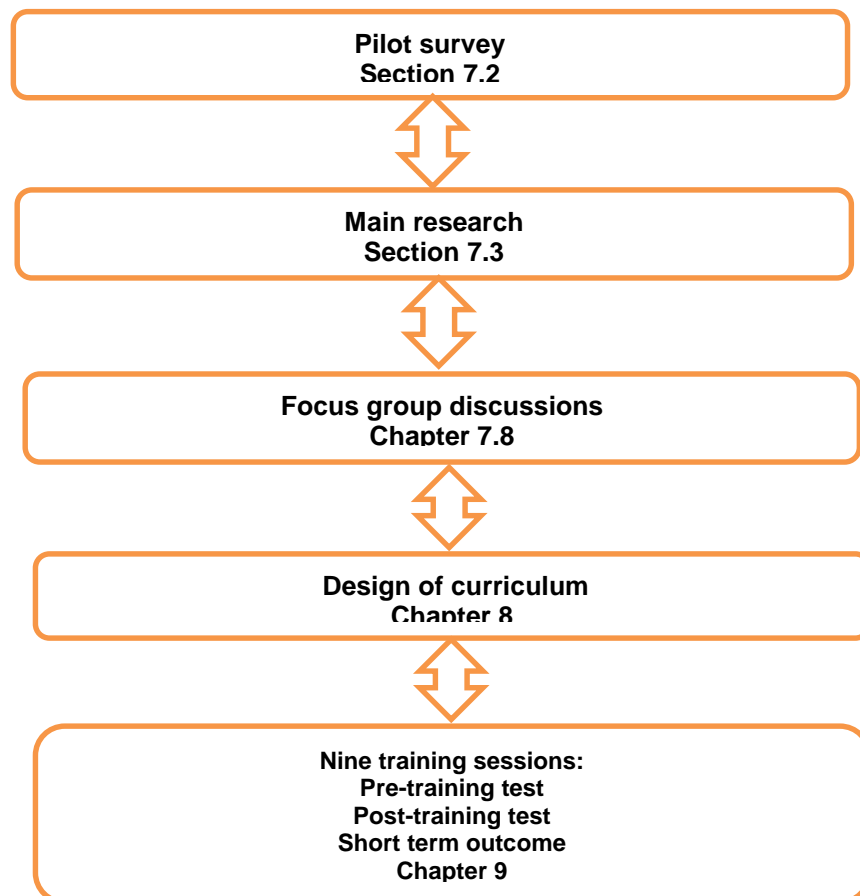
## CHAPTER 7. EXPLORATION: SURVEY AND FOCUS GROUPS

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter is directed at the first objective (see section 1.3): To explore the experience of a sample of young men concerning their own experience of being fathered and their beliefs, attitudes and aspirations concerning their own roles as fathers'.

The exploration used a survey and focus group discussions and the learning and insights from these fed directly into the design of the training curriculum (chapter 8) and its use in the training sessions (chapter 9). The components of the data collection, analysis and action research are presented in Figure 7.1.

**Figure 7.1 Summary of data analysis and action research**



## **7.2 The pilot survey**

The process of collecting information started with a pilot test surveying young men at one college. The pilot test survey was conducted on Friday, June 16<sup>th</sup> 2014 at the Business Academy and Computer Studies in the Durban Central Business District. Ten young men between the ages of 21 to 30 years old (average being 24.2 years) participated in the survey. Their tribal or language background shows that one was Sotho, three were Xhosa and six were Zulu. The pilot asked the sample to report on their experiences of being fathered and their expectations when if when they as they grew to become fathers. The pilot survey also inquired whether they grew up with their biological fathers or somebody else played that role. Closed and open-ended questionnaires were used. The aim of conducting this pilot study was to help identify barriers linked to the understanding of the questionnaire in order to appropriately adjust its content.

In terms of responses to the main questions, Table 7.1 provides a list of representative responses to a number of the main questions asked during the pilot survey. It needs to be said that participants had a strong fathering presence in their lives. All but one had the involvement of their biological fathers in their lives, although in half the cases the father did not live at home.



**Table 7.1 Results from the pilot study**

Issue	Representative responses
Father's responsibilities for children in the event of divorce	In my culture and religion, the children always belong to the father no matter what, and the surname of the child is called by the for father's surname, not the mother. So children must stay with the father and he must assume the responsibility for them. (Respondent 5)
Use of violence during conflicts between the father and the mother	Children will group with the bad influence and it breaks the right of the mother not to be abused. (Respondent 8)  That is not acceptable at all because that means it is teaching me to be violent and if there is an issue they should talk in private. (Respondent 10)
Spending time with their children	It builds the relationship between the father and the children and it makes it much stronger. (Respondent 4)
Hugging children	It shows love and tenderness to the children and to the mother. (Respondent 1)  Because that shows a good care to your children. You make them feel special to your heart. (Respondent 2)
Father's relationship with the mother	I agree that it is the most and important thing that must happen so that they stay well together with their children. Because if there is no love also the children would be affected but if there is love also there will be great good way of living. (Respondent 1)
Meaning of responsible fathering	A responsible father means a father who will always be there for his family to take care of it and protect it from the bad life outside. And he doesn't leave his family alone for long time without reason. (Respondent 2)  It is taking care of your family by support, providing them with shelter, food and clothing in life. That is what it means to be a responsible father. (Respondent 7)  I agree so that children will not learn bad influence of drinking because children copy what adult people do. So if they see their father drinking they would think that it is a good thing because it is done by his father. (Respondent 1)

All participants disagreed with the statement that if a father and a mother were to break up, the children must live with the mother and the father does not have any responsibility for them. Among the motivations of the disagreement by the participants, there is the inappropriateness of leaving the children's responsibility to the mother due to socio-cultural and religious constraints.

All participants rejected the idea that the care of children was the sole responsibility of the mother. They agreed that children belong to both the father and the mother and that in the event they are separated for any reason; the father still has the responsibility to provide, care and visit his children.

Giving their opinions on the issue of violence, all respondents rejected the idea that the father had the right to use violence against the mother. Some of the opinions related to a desire to see their parents live in harmony, while others mentioned the negative effects on children, including the behavior which they were being 'taught'. Their religious beliefs provided support for their future views about the inappropriateness of violence.

In terms of fathers spending time with children, there was a strong opinion that fathers must spend time with their children. The majority of young men agreed that this is a major way of getting to know their children better and having a positive influence on them.

Half of the participants said that their fathers were at home every day while a third of the total had their father at home a few days a month. They noted that being at home is one thing but spending time with children is another.

Love can be expressed in different ways. More than a half participants believe that hugging is a positive way of expressing love.

A strong majority believed that a positive relationship between the father and mother is an essential part of a good family. The respondents saw a strong connection between the parental relationship and their relationship with the children.

On the aspect of the meaning of father responsibility, more than a half of the participants believed that their fathers acted responsibly as far as fathering is concerned. Caring for the family in economic terms is a major part of this and setting a good example in terms of lifestyle was also emphasised.

Talking about discipline, three participants said that they had never experienced the use of corporal punishment by their fathers while the others reported various frequencies of its use.

The second emphasis of the questioning concerned their intentions when they became fathers. Their responses suggested that they are setting high standards for their involvement in fathering and a strong plea that they needed training in fathering.

Two specific difficulties encountered during the pilot test were the understanding of some key words to be translated into English and the time the questionnaire required. Some participants were unable to understand the meaning of words such as “slap” and “hug”. The correct translation of slap in isiZulu, is *ukushaya ngempama* and hug is *ukuwanga*. Second, the expectation that the whole process would be completed in 20 to 25 minutes was too optimistic and the process took closer to an hour. In particular, participants were slow in writing answers to open ended questions. Both were noted and allowed for in the main survey.

### **7.3 The main survey**

Four schools were selected using a convenience sampling method to find out the possibility of conducting a survey with their institutions. Three schools were in the Durban and one in Inanda Ntuzuma and Kwamashu (INK) area.

Before the questionnaires were personally distributed, learners were gathered in a single room and the process was explained to them. The questionnaire was read to the learners and explained if some of them did not understand the content. The approximate time to answer the questionnaire was between 35 to 45 minutes. The activities in all schools were conducted without the presence of the school

teachers or the administrative staff of the school. Respondents were encouraged to express their views without any fear and with the assurance of anonymity.

How representative was the school sample? Sample representativeness means the closeness of a sample that resembles the population that is under study (Graziano and Raulin 2013: 137). The more a sample is representative; the greater the confidence that findings represent the characteristics of the population as a whole. The topic under study used convenience sampling with a non-probability approach to sampling (Greenstein and Davis 2012: 88). The choice of the convenience sampling was motivated by practical criteria such as geographical proximity, availability, easy accessibility or willingness to volunteer. However, this has costs in terms of confidence that the results are representative of the population as a whole. It is worth mentioning that the process of getting access to school students is always difficult and can be undermined by administrative factors and individuals. For example, I had major difficulties in securing permission from the schools for me to carry out the survey; emails were not answered, people did not keep appointments with me, school boards were concerned that I was asking questions about sexual matters. The ordinary pressures of the school timetable, particularly tests and exams, also led to postponements of the training. There were also unforeseeable complications. For example, on the day of the survey was to take place in one school it was cancelled because there was no water in the premises and learners had to leave earlier than usual. Alternative arrangements were made and the survey took place the following week.

#### **7.4 The research instrument**

The research instrument used was a questionnaire consisting of 24 items, divided into three sections:

Section A: Biographical data

Section B: Experience of being fathered

Section C: Beliefs about fathering

In total, 120 questionnaires were completed. The questionnaire is included Appendix B

### **7.5 Characteristics of the sample**

The three schools in Durban were Futura High School (FHS), Hunt Road High School (HRHS) and Sastri College (SC), while Inanda Newtown Comprehensive High School (INCHS) was in a township area of Durban. All are co-educational. Table 7.2 gives more details. Schools involvement can be found in Appendixes D, E and F. The municipal authorities' gatekeepers' letters can be found in Appendixes G and H. The mean age of respondents was  $17.5 \pm 1.8$  years.

**Table 7.2 Characteristics of the schools**

School name	Characteristics	Location	N°participants
Inanda Newtown Comprehensive High School	Inanda was established in the 19 <sup>th</sup> century as a reserve as a reserve of Africans. Public school, Co-Educational School: Secondary	A typical township school located in the Inanda Highway.	41
Futura High School	The school specialises in grades 8 to 12 with an aim of ensuring learners achieve good matric results. Public school Co-Educational Secondary	The school adjacent to Botanic Gardens and the Durban University of Technology.	31
Hunt Road High school	Public school Co-educational Secondary	Hunt Road High school is situated in the Berea area in Durban.	19
Sastri College	Public school Co-Educational Secondary	The school is situated on 1, Winterton Walk in the vicinity of the DUT (ML Sultan Campus).	29

The ethnic distribution of respondents is represented in the figure below:

**Figure 7.2 Ethnic group representations**

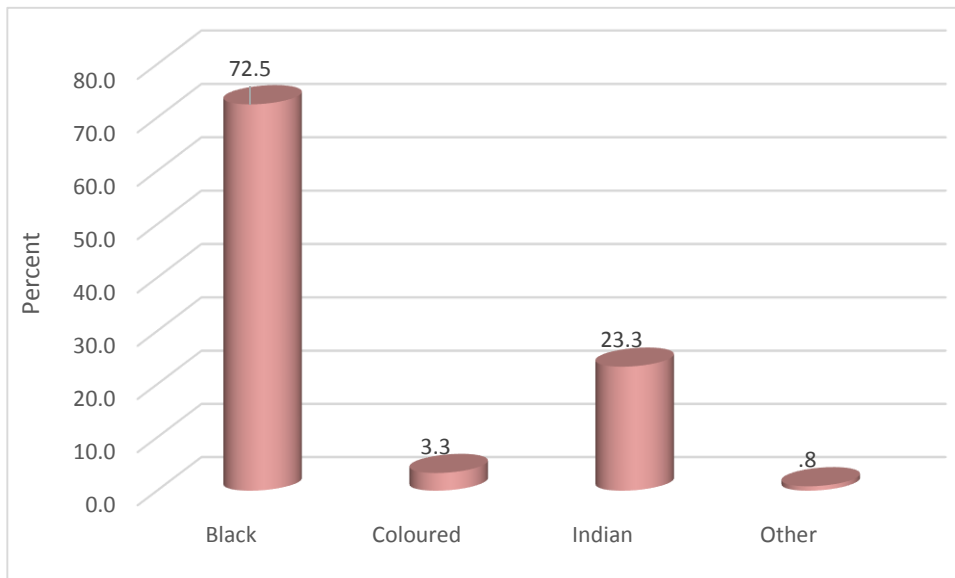


Figure 7.2 shows that the majority of the respondents were Black (72.5%) with Indians forming nearly a quarter of the sample (23.3%).

**Table 7.3 Home language**

	Frequency	Percent
<b>Zulu</b>	60	50.0
<b>Xhosa</b>	22	18.3
<b>English</b>	37	30.8
<b>Setswana</b>	1	0.8
<b>Total</b>	120	100.0

The home language of the respondents is shown in Table 7.3. Most came from Zulu or Xhosa language contexts. The home language of all Indian respondents was English.

Participants were asked about their religious affiliation (See Table 7.4). The choice of affiliation is individual although in most cases, the parents' affiliation becomes automatically the child's one. The vast majority of participants indicated that their religion was very important or important to them. Religion can have a transcending impact on individuals in the sense that, along with the influences of culture and modernity it strongly influences the way live their lives.

**Table 7.4 Importance of religion**

		Religious affiliation					Total
		Christian	Muslim	Hindu	African traditional	Other	
Importance of religion	Very important	54	13	6	6	1	80
	% within Religious affiliation	67.5%	81.3%	66.7%	60.0%	20.0%	66.7%
	Important	20	2	3	3	2	30
	% within Religious affiliation	25.0%	12.5%	33.3%	30.0%	40.0%	25.0%
	Not important at all	2	1	0	0	1	4
% within Religious affiliation	2.5%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	3.3%	
Do not know	4	0	0	1	1	6	
% within religious affiliation	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	20.0%	5.0%	
<b>Total</b>		80	16	9	10	5	120
% within Religious affiliation		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

## 7.6 Experience of being fathered

This section presents data on the way young men were brought up in terms of fathering. To start with, participants were asked whether they had a father or father figure in their lives as they were growing up.

As table 7.5 shows, the results reveal that biological fathers very largely performed this function, with only 10 per cent indicating no father or father figure. This contrasts with previous findings (See section 3.5), which suggested that nationally 51 per-cent of all African children, 38 per cent of Coloured children, 11 per-cent of Indian children and 19 per-cent of White children live with an absent (living) father. In the category of deceased fathers, African children score 17 per cent, 7 per-cent for Coloured children, 4 per-cent for Indian children and 2 per-cent for White children living with deceased fathers. A likely explanation is that the sample is from an urban area or semi-urban area. Urban households are more likely to have a father present than rural ones, where fathers need to work far from their families. The difference between this urban and the national figure will be very important in subsequent discussion.

**Table 7.5 Did you have a father or father figure in your life as you grew up?**

	Frequency	Per cent
Biological father	96	80
Stepfather	5	4.1
Other male relatives	7	5.8
Mother, grandmother	12	10.0

A related question was asked, if they had more than one father/father figure, and if so, who was the most important. A little over a half indicated that their biological father was the most important person playing the role of father or father figure with another third specifying other male relatives.

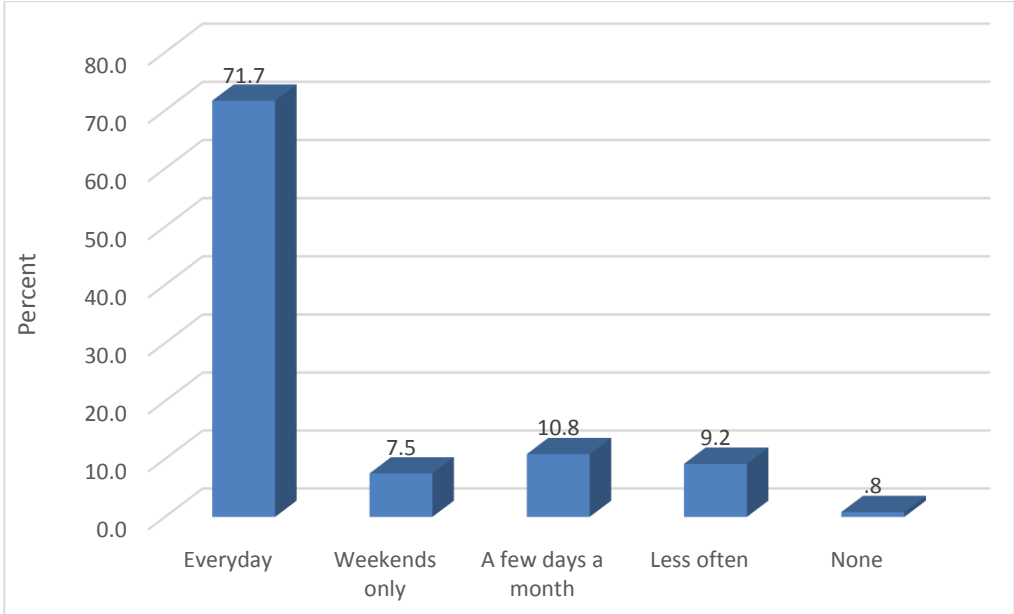


**Table 7.6 Most important father or father figure**

	Frequency	Per cent
Biological father	62	51.7
Other male relative	37	30.8
Stepfather	5	4.2
Mother	15	12.5
Not answered	1	0.8

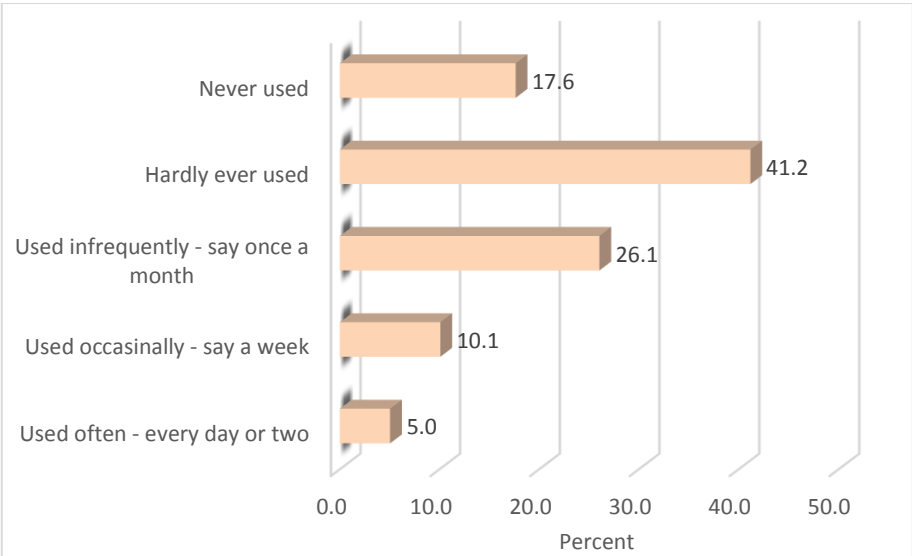
The time spent by fathers at home could be expected to have important implications for the contribution they made to their children’s upbringing. Figure 7.3 shows that a strong majority of fathers/father figure (72 percent) were at home every day, again confirming that this urban sample is quite different from the nation as a whole.

**Figure 7.3 Time spent by the father or father figure at home**



Respondents were asked about the frequency that their father disciplined them. Figure 7.4 presents their responses. Almost 60 percent said they never or hardly ever had they been physically and a further 26% said it was used infrequently. Previous research among mothers and fathers in South Africa showed that 57 per-cent of parents said they used corporal punishment on their children at some time, with 33 per-cent saying they used severe corporal punishment (meaning that using the belt or stick as opposed to spanking) (Dawes *et al.* 2004). Mothers used corporal punishment more often than men, presumably because they spend more time with the children. Again, there is evidence the sample in the study is different from the nation as a whole.

**Figure 7.4 Use of corporal punishment**



Among the responses to the open-ended component of this question, one African learner expressed what is often thought to be the typical scenario: ‘when my father wanted to beat me, he used a stick just like other parents and he would beat me up and I would cry. That is how my father disciplined me’ (emphasis added). Other responses included the following:

- He did not give me pocket money for the following day to take to school. Sometimes he would punish me by taking things that I value the most (African learner).

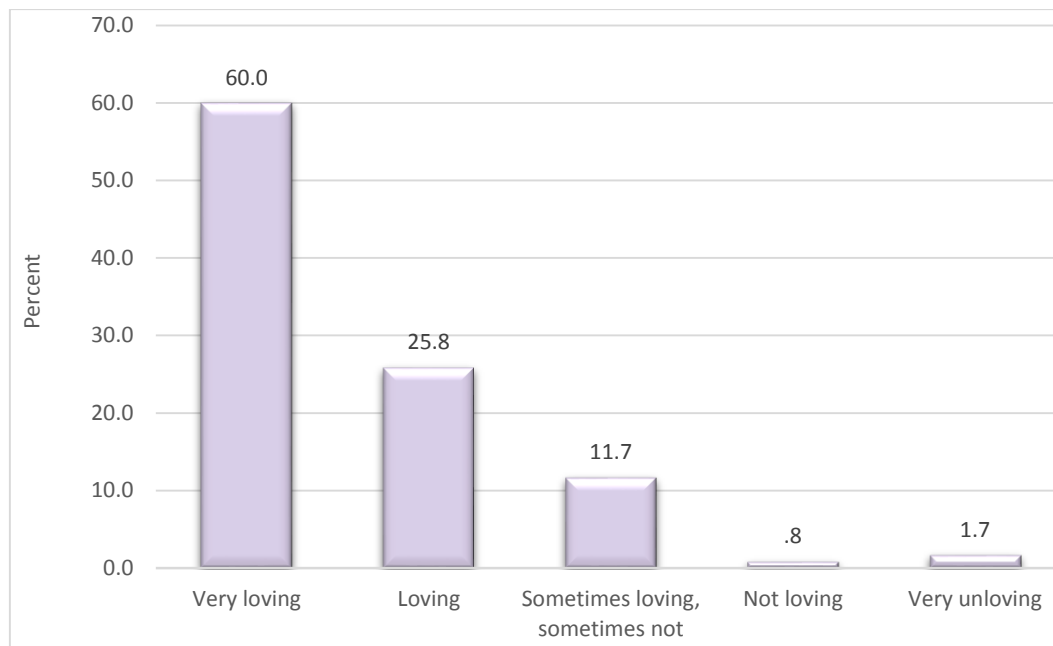
- My parents and I have an understanding. So there was never use of corporal punishment. My father would talk to and reason with me (Indian learner).

**Table 7.7 Person administering corporal punishment**

	Frequency	Per cent
<b>Father</b>	35	29.2
<b>Mother</b>	24	20.0
<b>Other relatives</b>	43	36.9
<b>Both parents equally</b>	3	2.3
<b>None</b>	15	12.5
<b>Total</b>	120	100.0

Table 7.7 shows that relatives other than the father or the mother were identified as the principal persons who use corporal punishment which suggest that a range of relatives are involved in the participants' upbringing.

**Figure 7.5 Whether the father or father figure was loving**



Participants were also asked whether they thought their father (biological or a father figure) was basically loving to them. It is clear that love can be understood in various ways. However, the pilot survey responses gave us confidence to continue with the question in the main survey, e.g. the provision of needs, or safety or of happiness.

A very impressive 86 percent said he was either very loving or loving. The following were very positive comments and reflected wide definitions of love.

- He was there for me in my whole life, whenever I would need something no matter what it was, he would help me. He took care of me in my whole life.
- Besides my happiness and security were met, he showed and is still showing concern for joy in my life which is much greater.

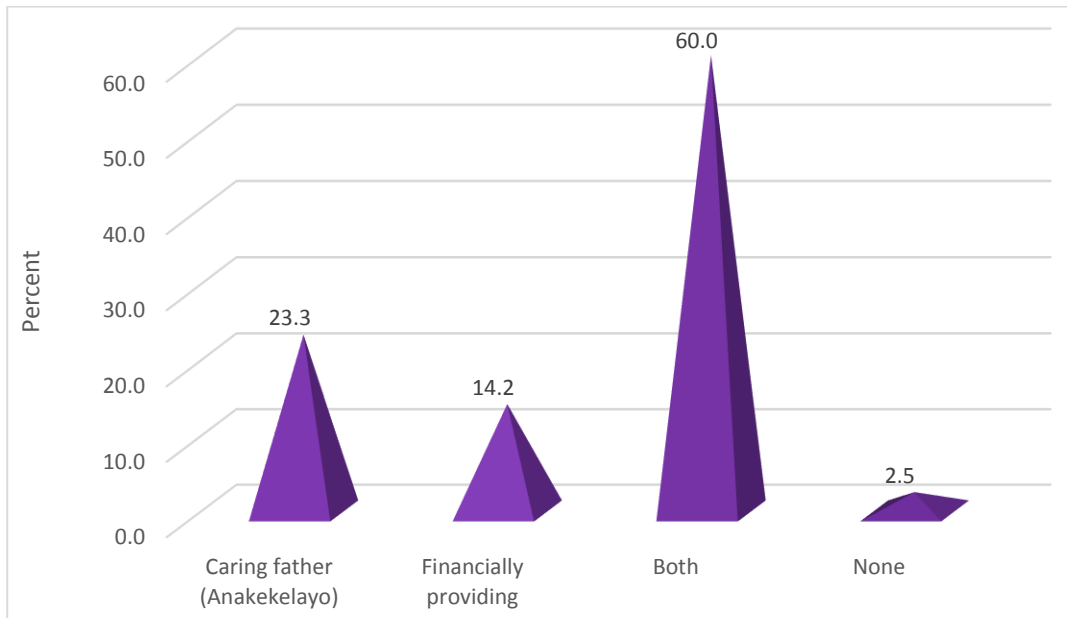
From the respondents point of view love might be understood differently. It is at the same time attached to the provision of needs (emotional), or for some respondents the father's love means being the provider of safety and happiness (physical and psychological and/or emotional).

Participants were asked whether they felt their father or father figure was responsible in terms of fathering duties (See Table 7.8). Over 80 per cent felt that he was responsible or very responsible. This was investigated further by asking respondents to identify their father as a caring father (*onakekelayo*) or as financially providing father (*owondlayo*), which picks up the dimensions discussed, for example by (Lamanna 2009: 4). Results in figure 6.6 as below suggest that 60 percent of respondents said their fathers were both caring and providing.

**Table 7.8 Is he a responsible father to you?**

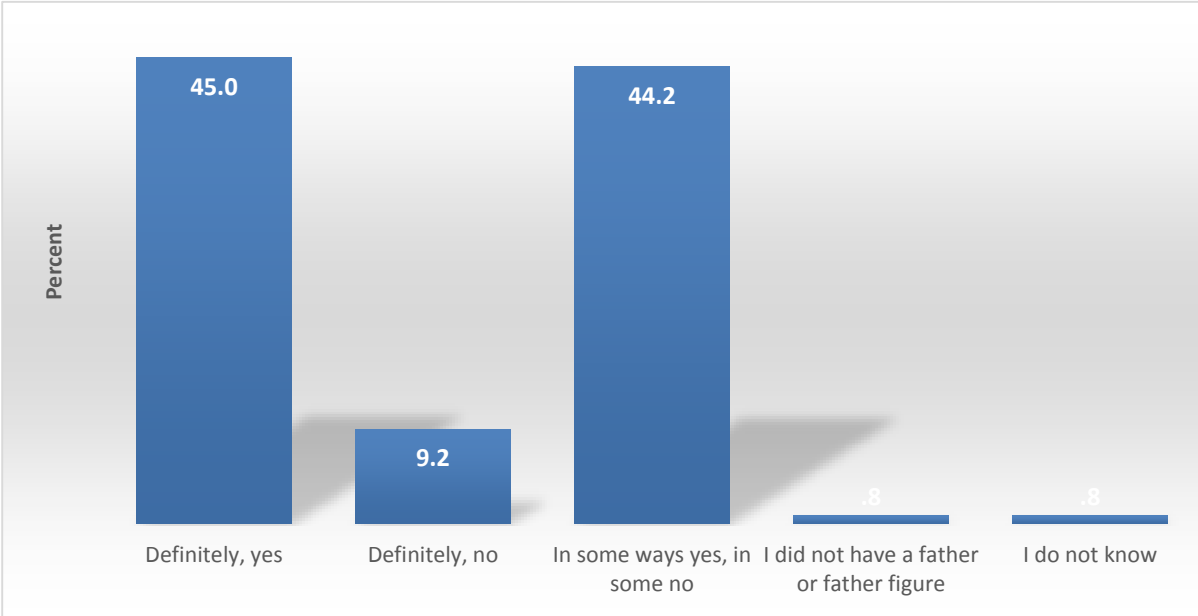
	Frequency	Per cent
Yes, very responsible	59	49.2
Yes, responsible	40	33.3
Partly responsible, partly not	13	10.8
Not very responsible	3	2.5
Not at all responsible	5	4.2
Total	<b>120</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Figure 7.6 A caring or providing father?**



Respondents were asked whether they would raise their children the same way their father or father figure did. It is reasonable to expect that if they had positive views about their father/father figures performance, they would be likely to follow their father’s model of fathering. In Figure 7.7, 45 per cent said they would follow in their father’s footsteps, though a similar proportion would modify some aspects.

**Figure 7.7 Raise your own children like your father did?**



**7.7 Beliefs about fathering**

This section looks examines the participants beliefs about fathering. Eight propositions were posed to the students in order to find out their attitudes to various aspects of fathering. Their responses are summarised in Table 7.9.

**Table 7.9 Opinions on bringing up children**

	Agree	Disagree
Fathers and mothers should share the various tasks of bringing up their children.	95.0	5.0
If a father and a mother break up, the children must live with the mother and the father does not have any more responsibility for them.	11.7	88.3
When children come along, it is time for the father to stop drinking with his friends and putting more time into bringing up his children.	92.5	7.5
Fathers have to use corporal punishment in order to bring up good children.	34.2	65.8
It is OK for a father to slap (ukushayi ngempama) a mother.	3.3	96.7
It is important for fathers to hug (ukuwanga) their children.	95.8	4.2
It is important for fathers to spend time with their children, e.g. helping them with their homework, taking them to church, taking them to the beach etc.	99.2	0.8
If a father is dead or has disappeared, his role in the life of his child/ren can be easily taken over by the child's mother.	55.8	44.2

Most of the eight responses can be regarded as presenting highly positive set of opinions. Of course, expressed opinions and attitudes do not always translate into action when 'the going gets tough', but they do at least provide a potential foundation for positive behaviour.

The respondents very strongly favoured the sharing of child raising between mother and father, the continuation of father's responsibilities to his children in the event of divorce and giving up the single man's lifestyle once children come along. A third agreed that corporal punishment was necessary to bring up children, which is more than expected given the seemingly limited extent to which they received corporal punishment themselves (See Figure 7.4). However, only three per-cents said it was OK for a father to slap a mother. He has no right to lay hands on his wife in such a manner 'said one African learner, while another asked 'what is the point of being in love with the mother if the father keeps slapping her?' Of considerable interest is the simple majority who thinks that a father's role, in the

event of his death or disappearance, can be easily taken over by the mother. Fathers, it seems, have a distance role to play in their children's lives.

The results of this survey produced facts that were far more positive than could be expected given the national data about the fathering experience of young South Africans as discussed in chapter 3. It seems that urban fathers may well provide better fathering to their children than their rural-based counterparts. Nonetheless, the responses provided useful insights in the design of the training programme and its implementation.

To supplement this survey data, focus group discussions were held with a sample of young men and this is the subject of the next chapter.

## **7.8 Focus groups**

Focus Group Discussions are meant to be conversations between small groups of people. Ideally, they involve assertions and opinions, agreements and disagreements, fixed positions and flexible positions, emotion and reality. That is, despite being set up for the purpose of research, they are meant to provide the researcher with a window into the way participants think and feel. The researcher's role is low key. He/she will introduce a few questions for discussion and may occasionally probe; otherwise, he/she will keep quiet and let the conversation flow.

## **7.9 Setting up the groups**

Participants were recruited from young men associated with churches in each of the three study areas. Given that almost all South Africans are 'associated' with a church, albeit at different levels of intensity, I do not think this biases the results in any important way.

I approached four churches in Durban and five in Ntuzuma and had the unusual problem of non-response. In the event, there were four FGDs groups, two in from the Durban CBD, which included a mix of migrants and South Africans, and from Ntuzuma in the INK area, all of whom were Zulu in origin. Each group had eight



participants, making a total of 32 in all. A third were already fathers while the majority were prospective fathers.

The Durban group was difficult to organise, largely because of the need from participants to continue with their employment and economic survival activities. However, the recruitment and organisation for the Ntuzuma groups was greatly facilitated by a young church leader who is himself a head of the household to his younger brothers and sisters following the death of both their parents. The FGDs were held between 15 December 2014 and 3 January 2015.

Key points from the discussions were written down by the researcher or in the case of the Ntuzuma groups, who preferred to speak in IsiZulu, a trained Zulu speaking assistant helped. The researcher was also present. It was important to allow participants to speak in the language in which they felt most comfortable in order that the discussion flowed.

The FGD questions were designed in accordance with the research objectives of the study (See Section 1) and from some of the insights from the survey of school students presented in Chapter 6. The following questions were progressively introduced during each FGD:

- What do you think being a responsible father would involve?
- What do you think being a loving father involves?
- What do you think a nonviolent father involves?
- What sort of relationship would you like to have with your children's mother?
- How might that relationship affect your children?

## **7.10 Results**

As a preliminary comment, the attitudes and opinions of participants will derive from firstly their own experiences of being fathered and secondly, from a mix of tradition, modernity and religion. On the first point, participants with positive personal experiences of being fathered may well want to father in their own father's footsteps. However, the attitudes which derive from tradition/modernity/religion may be subject to reassessment. If so, the FGD experience may be a motivator of such re-thinking although this was not an objective of the process. In reporting the results, I have relied heavily on the words of the participants.

### **7.10.1 A responsible father**

Responsibility involves the father providing for the physical needs of his children. The following comment from a young migrant emphasises this although there is more to responsibility than addressing physical needs alone.

A responsible father is the one who feeds, dresses, educates, send children to school and protects them from any problem. If he is unable to do that, he is not responsible. As in my case, my father and my mother divorced when I was 12 making my father not to be involved in any way concerning my life. I last saw him when I was 19 after completing my schooling in 2011. The only thing he does is to wish me a happy birthday but does not send me money or ask about my schooling. Instead, my mother is responsible, not my father.

Note that he is the last of a family of seven children and the only one to have grown up without his father's involvement.

Responsibility involves presence – 'being there' – as revealed in the following words of a young father with three children from Ntuzuma:

My view is that a responsible father involves the aspect of taking good care of your children and giving them love but also being there.

This participant was unemployed but clearly had opinions which speak of responsibility. His attitudes may be more realistic than those of other young township man without children, who believe that the state's Child Support Grant (CSG) provides fathering some financial incentive. While R300 per month per child is certainly a positive contribution to a family without an employed breadwinner, it clearly is not enough to provide for the broad-based needs of a family. Participants with children recognised this but many without children did not.

### **7.10.2 A loving father**

We have seen that participants in the survey identified two main aspects of a loving father namely, meeting the needs of his children and being present in their lives. The main theme which emerged for the FGDs was that love means active effort in the tasks of bringing up children. This goes in accordance with the survey findings (See Section 7.6) where love by a father included meeting various economic needs of his children and being physically present and involved in their lives. One participant expressed it as follows:

In my understanding, a loving father involves the father presence i.e. he should be there. I did not have a father who showed that love to me as a child. It affected me because I saw my friends being fetched from school by their fathers, while I had to walk home alone. I saw how my fellows were happy leaving school with their fathers and going home (Young father without children in Durban)

Participants recognised that loving involvement in the children's lives could be more difficult if the father was employed and lived elsewhere for reasons of his work. In the above case, the young man experienced the conflict between his father showing love by providing economically for the family and not being physically present to collect him from school.

This aspect of loving fathering resulted in a surprising amount of discussion in the FGDs. Participants spoke of the strength of negative external influences which children faced. They emphasised the critical importance of children developing a strong 'moral compass' in order to 'build positive attitudes' and to have moral and psychological stability in their children's lives. The spoken and lived example of their fathers/father figures was central to this but needed assistance from the church.

A third element which FGD members discussed under the heading of love was the moral training a father provided. This could come from both the words and example set by the father – the extent to which he 'walks his talk', as one FGD participant puts it.

Another source of moral training discussed by the FGD participants was the church and that a loving father, would make sure his children attended regularly. In the words of one participant:

A loving father involves his capacity to teach his kids respect, sending children to church where they will get advice and will know right and wrong (Young man with children in Ntuzuma).

Participants struggled with the issue of violence. They were aware that the nature and extent of conflicts between mothers and fathers are likely to be beyond their children's understanding but the strongest sentiment was that if a father really loved his children, he would stay and not abandon them.

To summarise love, the FGDs emphasised action by fathers is necessary in three areas – economic provision, presence in their children's lives and moral training.

### **7.10.3 A nonviolent father**

Nonviolence means dealing with the inevitable conflict involved in fathering without using verbal or physical force. Typical statements from the FGDs were as follows:

A nonviolent father involves a father who is not aggressive but the one who tries his best in a polite way to solve the problems with a soft attitude (Young man with children in Ntuzuma);

He is the one that keeps peace in the family. He does not intimidate and shout; instead he talks and solves the problem that arises. Punishment is allowed but it is requires that he does it in a way that the child feels guilty of his mistakes. Punishment must be there to build the relationship, the future and to correct mistakes without verbal or physical violence. If he does not do that, then he is a violent father (Young father without children in Durban).

The FGD participants saw a role for corporal punishment but they were less committed to its use than were the survey participants (See Section 6.5). A 'higher' call to be nonviolent in general seemed to influence the participant's views, although this was not well articulated and they did not seem to link corporal punishment and violence by husbands against their wives.

#### **7.10.4 Relationship with the children's mother**

In short, FGD participants felt that respect and attention between mothers and fathers is critical in the development of a healthy family.

Both men and women must know their place and duties. If the relationship is not good enough, it will likely affect children. And for the children to grow in a safe environment parents need to solve problems without fighting or shouting because children will be traumatised (Young man with children in Ntuzuma).

Having made this point, much of the subsequent discussions were centred on divorce and its destructive consequences. Clearly, divorce was feared. One participant whose parents were divorced in his early teens said the following:

For me, I will have to avoid to divorce with my wife because I know what it means to live without a father and a mother together since it affects children's intellect. I do not want to see my children to experience the moral and physical suffering that I have gone through. A suitable relationship based on caring and good friendship with my wife will be my choice. (Young father without children in Durban, migrant).

As part of divorce preventive strategy, participants placed a lot of emphasis on sharing past experiences with their partner as an essential ingredient for a happy marriage. There was a concern that late knowledge of past unknown relationships could put severe strain on a marriage. Mothers and fathers who had had such past relationships needed to be free from fear that these might be revealed. This fear could be dealt with by honestly speaking about their past before marriage.

[A good relationship]...is based on sharing our past experiences. Because where there is an official union, there is love and where there is love and an official union, there is commitment. Commitment is important because love can collapse if we do not consider our past. Her experience of the past will reflect in our daughter's life (Young migrant father in Durban).

The theme of honesty and openness between mothers and fathers is also evident in the following comments:

[A good relationship] means understanding and mutual teamwork. But also it must be known that both the father and the mother have weaknesses that might endanger their lives in the household. If they have any problems, it is necessary to talk about it and solve it" (Father with three children in Ntuzuma).

My relationship with my child's mother is based on equal sharing of physical emotions for instance when my child feels sick or when I think I do not have enough money to buy food. What is good is that I always tell my wife that if I do not have, she must help as well (Young man with 3 children in Ntuzuma).

Participants had little to say about specific alternative arrangements for parenting if the mother and the father were to divorce although they agreed that a man should not use divorce as an excuse to give up being a loving and responsible father.

The FGD participants spoke in understanding terms of traditional gender roles was but this was not rigid. It was deemed appropriate for men to take women's roles when and if necessary.

It happens to me that I should be involved in different chores not because I am weak as a man but because I have to. When my wife is not there, I have to make tea or food or do some cleaning of the yard. And I know it is a woman's work but I will not leave my children being hungry without me doing something. It is part of my responsibility to cook and feed my children if my wife is away or if she is sick. This is my contribution as a father to share the tasks (Young man in Ntuzuma with children).

There was quite some discussion about a criticism from friends and other family members concerning a man who took on such roles. Most participants thought that if the mother and the father themselves found that it was working positively, such criticism should be ignored.

## **7.11 Conclusion**

The opinions of FGD participants concerning responsible, loving and nonviolent fathering were in broad agreement with those expressed by the younger survey participants. Fathers need to provide economically, be involved in their children's lives and train them morally. The results presented in this and the preceding chapter were used to develop the training curriculum.

The unexpectedly high fear of divorce, among other things, may motivate young men to participate in such training.

# CHAPTER 8. ACTION RESEARCH: THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

## 8.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with research objectives 2 and 3:

- Drawing on the findings from the exploration and the experience of existing fathering/parenting training programmes, to design a training programme appropriate to the South African context;
- To implement the training programme with a sample of young men including those with children and those without children.

A central assumption of peace studies is that people can be educated and re-educated so as to live nonviolently (see section 2.5). The basis of this training programme assumes that fostering positive attitudes of young men can be learned, improved and that it will flow into their behaviour. Given that some young men have had limited experience of positive fathering they may have limited capacity to offer love, care and provision to their own children. It is argued that a well-focused fathering training programme can be helpful to the participants and will be a key contribution to society. The use of the term fathers covers both those who are fathers and those who will be fathers in the future. This fathering training curriculum is based on the exploratory research conducted in the schools and churches and reported earlier in this chapter.

This training programme consisted of three modules, each of which was scheduled to last 2½ hours. The sessions covered Communication, the Father-Mother relationship and Responsible, Loving and Nonviolent father practices. A month separated each module. Table 8.1 summarises the training programme schedule (included in Appendix I). A stipend was paid to participants to motivate their involvement in the process and a certificate of attendance was given to those who participated in all three training sessions. The training took place in the locations where participants lived.



**Table 8.1 Young fathers' training programme**

Module	Module structure, sessions and exercises	Timing		Comments
<b>Module 1: Communication</b>	<b>Session 1. Positive communication</b>			<i>In-between the sessions, there were tea-breaks and some activities designed to re-energise the participants</i>
	Welcome, introduction and code of good conduct	10 min.	9h00-9h10	
	Exercise 1: Speaking and listening skills	30 min.	9h50-10h20	
	<b>Session 2: Alternatives to Violence Project model</b>			
	Exercise 2: Introducing AVP with practical exercises	30 min.	10h40-11h10	
	Exercise 3: Scenario and practicing I-Messages	40 min.	11h10-1150	
	<b>Session 3: Conflict resolution</b>			
	Exercise 6: Some practical steps to resolving conflict effectively	25 min.	11h30-11h55	
	Exercise 7: Mediation	30 min.	11h55-12h25	
<b>Module 2: Father-mother relationship</b>	<b>Session 1. The 5 love languages</b>			
	Welcome, introducing yourself and code of good conduct	25 min.	9h30-9h55	
	Exercise : Practising the 5 love languages	50 min.	9h55-10h45	
	Exercise 10: Improving your relationship	40 min.	10h45-11h15	
	Exercise 11: How young men deal with their relationship	35 min.	11h15-12h00	
<b>Module 3: Responsible, loving and nonviolent fathering practices</b>	<b>Session 1. Responsible, Loving and Nonviolent fathering</b>			
	Welcome, introducing yourself and code of good conduct	25 min.	9h30-9h55	
	Exercise 1: Responsible father: What does it mean to be responsible with respect to children	50 min.	9h55-10h45	
	Exercise 2: Loving father: What is the basis of your relationship?	40 min.	10h45-11h15	
	Exercise 3: Nonviolent father: What do you have in your toolbox?	40 min.	11h15-11h55	
	Exercise 4: Evaluation: Assessing if participants have changed their attitudes	30 min.	11h55-12h25	

A participatory approach to learning was used with interaction between the trainer and the participants being encouraged. Discussions in groups were also used to good effect and allowed participants who were reluctant to talk in the big group to express their views in a smaller group. I designed the training programme, the version of which is included as Appendix J.

## **8.2 Modules**

### **8.2.1 Module 1: Communication**

The aim of the communication module was to teach participants the use of alternative ways of speaking and listening and make use of these practical skills in their daily life. In the process of training this module, two important themes emerged.

#### **Avoiding misunderstanding one another**

One of the participants in Durban related a conflict he witnessed between a man and his wife because of the misunderstanding:

A man who was on holiday in Maputo, Mozambique called his wife in Durban. He told her he was enjoying his stay in Maputo saying “I wish you were here”, which the wife misunderstood as “I wish you were *her*”. From this misunderstanding, the wife got angry and started shouting at the husband (Group 2 of young men in Durban).

From the husband’s perspective, the message he was communicating to his wife was a positive one, whereas the wife “heard” him saying that he had a good time with a beautiful lady sitting next to him. The misunderstanding originating from her mishearing the word ‘*here*’ as ‘*her*’, which started a conflict between the husband and the wife.

In the discussion, participants were able to understand that small misunderstandings of this kind could cause problems between people and this can include parent-child interactions. The wife’s response perhaps suggests that there was prior behaviour on the part of the husband which led her to be suspicious and sensitive; we did not have information on that matter. It seems very unlikely that the husband tells the wife that he

was sitting with another woman, unless it was his way of telling his wife that their relationship was over, in which case a clearer message given face to face ('if he had the courage') would have been far more preferable. The fact that the wife thought he was referring to another woman points to a severe lack of trust or perhaps jealousy that he was able to travel to a faraway place without her.

### **De-escalating tensions when misunderstanding happens**

Conflicts often result in high levels of tensions between mothers and fathers and between parents and children. Dealing with such tension and anger is obviously a major challenge in households.

Participants were trained in the use of value of 'I-messages' to de-escalate the disputes they face. However, in the discussion that unfolded, two important sub-themes emerged. Some believed that humble words helped in decreasing tensions, while some believed that some people stubbornly stick to their positions. In the latter case, the stubborn party was clearly seen as the stumbling block to resolution and the cause of on-going tensions. I-messages spoken peacefully by the party in conflict were seen as a positive way forward.

An practical example of the potential of the I-message was given by a participant as follows:

It might happen that I am taking a beer in the pub and one of my friends comes and grabs the bottle of beer without prior permission from me. It might happen that I react by violence to claim my right. But I can use an I-message by telling my friend "I think you should have asked me to share with you the beer instead of taking it by force" (Group 1 of young man in Ntuzuma).

This participant believed in resolving the problem by talking to his friend so as to convince him not to behave in that way. It is true there are many ways people can control their anger when they are confronted. Violence is one way and the environment could influence the owner of the beer to retaliate against the person who grabs the beer for two main reasons. The first was the influence of friends around the table who might

consider the lack of retaliation as a weakness. The second involved considering whether the owner of the beer and the person who intentionally took the beer without asking were sober or drunk. Being sober is likely to reduce the likelihood of the incident happening in the first place and to encourage a reasoned response by the offended party. In the discussion, another participant came up with another solution, which he believed will teach a good lesson to the friend who grabs the beer without asking. He suggested the following:

If it happens to me, I will embarrass my friend by buying more beers to make my friend understand that the best thing to do was to ask first. Because he did not do so and to avoid the fight between him and me, I will only prove him wrong by buying him more beers (Young man in Ntuzuma).

The problem with such a strategy, as some other participants pointed out, is that bad behaviour is rewarded and reinforced and may encourage him to think that such behaviour is acceptable. One way of resolving this is to stop such behaviour at the beginning before it becomes a common practice that he might repeat with other people.



**Photo 8.1 Participants at the training held on 28 February 2015 in Ntuzuma**

## **Resolving conflicts**

Another example of conflict suggested by one participant resulted in a lot of discussion:

I agree that there is a possibility to resolve our conflict by making sure that we deal with the main causes of it. But what will happen for instance if you have a girlfriend who does not listen to what you tell her. What if your girlfriend beats you every day and does not listen to anybody. What if you use very nice words but every time you meet, she seriously beats you (Young man in Ntuzuma).

An immediate suggestion was that the boyfriend would better give her a call before they meet and try to resolve the conflict at a distance. To find a lasting solution about the misconduct of the lady requires asking why she is acting violently. Is the beating of the boyfriend related to issues that they don't agree with or does the recurrent violence is

motivated by something else that other people are not aware of. A better option would be for the young man to give up the relationship immediately instead of living with a woman who does not understand that there are always nonviolent alternatives to conflicts.

Of course, the vast proportion of violence in relationship is from men towards women. This is what many women face when they live with men that abuse them on a regular basis. But what really happens when men are victims of the violence as in the above example? Mostly, there is reluctance to speak about it because the man will be weak for being a victim of the woman. Overall, the concern of the participants to portray themselves as potential victims may speak to a general feeling of insecurity and fear which many young men seem to have.

### **Mediating conflicts**

Mediation is an important skill that people need to understand its workings and how it could be used in a conflict situation. During the training participants, were taught what it means to be a mediator and how they might play that role as fathers or prospective fathers as well as in their relationship. One of the most interesting factors is the excitement that people felt once they were aware of the details of playing the role of a mediator in a conflict.

During the training, participants were taught the basics of using mediation as a tool of conflict management rather than a tool of conflict resolution. That is when somebody is a mediator; it is not his role to resolve the conflict but only to help both parties to reach their own positive outcome. Participants were taught to understand the role of a mediator to be:

- Someone whose morality and social background is respected in the community;
- Someone who has been consulted with a common agreement between the conflicting parties to facilitate the talks;

- Someone who is impartial in dealing with issues that affect disputing parties;
- Someone who does not impose his views to those who invited him to help reach an agreement but helps them find their own win-win solution;
- Someone who does not divulge the content of the disputes he was involved in to other people.

A living example of the thirst to mediate a conflict took place in Ntuzuma when one of the participants in the second training session revealed his failed attempt to helping two friends reconcile. The full story of the conflict was not revealed to the group during our session because one of the parties involved was also part of the group but the spontaneous mediator spoke as follows:

I was involved in the mediation of a conflict some days ago but I was confronted with a strong resistance from the parties directly involved in the conflict. My intention was really to help them stop the dispute but maybe I was wrong to think that I must be a mediator in this situation (Young Man in Ntuzuma).



**Photo 8.2 Trainees in Durban 7 March 2015**

The participant's intention to play the role of a mediator was sincere but he did not have adequate skills to help the parties reach a win-win solution. The participant in the conflict, it needs to be said was, very upset and left the group for some time to calm down.

One of the important qualities of a mediator is to be confidential about the issues and outcomes of any mediation process he gets involved with. The young man left who the group to calm down felt that his confidentiality was violated by the friend (the mediator), and this situation may have resulted in a new dispute between the two. A better way would have been to tell the story without mentioning the names of people involved. The case of using different names, places and the period the incident took place would have been anonymous but still understandable as it focused on the problem only.



Another example came from the Durban cohort a few days after the module was completed. One of the participants told a story of a successful mediation process between his brother and his wife.

My brother is married to qualified woman since 2002. They have had difficult life but they have managed to live happily together without any problem. My brother's wife has been working two years after they got married, which does not allow her to do the chores as usual. When she comes back home, she gets tired because of her busy schedule at work. This started the conflict with the husband who happened to coming home earlier than the wife. My brother shared the story with me and I gave them my views about what to do. I was happy that they both agreed to my ideas of having a schedule of the household tasks with me also doing some tasks when they are away (Young men in Durban).

This story of a successful role as a mediator contrasts with the first. Whether the success of the mediation in the following example was motivated because of the trust people have in the person (a family member) as in this case, or whether the person is an outsider, the results of the mediation is what counts. One of the insights which the participants were clear about was that most people in fact want to resolve their conflicts.

The participants felt that the wife's schedule of coming late was maybe hiding something that was not revealed during the mediation and which the husband knew about. In this case, the mediated outcome would collapse because, in the words of one participant, the mediator 'only pruned the conflict without cutting the roots of the tree'. A mediator in such a dispute would not understand that his efforts to help the parties were doomed to failure because of the parties not revealing the hidden issues.

### **8.2.2 Module 2: The father-mother relationship**

Empowering participants to develop a positive relationship between the father and the mother or the boyfriend and the girlfriend came out in Chapters 7.3.4 as a key way of improving the family bond. Building good communication and conflict resolving skills are important to improve relationships of people. The aim of this session was to teach participants practical ways of improving the relationship between the husband and wife

or boyfriend and girlfriend by using small practices of love based on their preferred love language. Participants found these concepts both very interesting and very relevant in helping them see where individuals often “miss” each other in terms of showing and receiving love.

The focus on father-mother relationships or boyfriend-girlfriend relationships proved an exciting module for the participants. This module was made up of six sessions, each sending a message to participants as a way to help them shift the way they understand, practice and handle their relationship with their partners. It was a consciousness-raising approach that participants found very helpful in shifting their attitudes, perceptions and behaviours vis-à-vis their partners on a short and long term basis.

In his popular book, *The five love languages*: Gary, D. Chapman (2010) it is suggested that each individual has one main love language. If this language is used by their partner, then they will feel loved. Furthermore, individuals normally show love using their own love language, even if this is not the love language of their partner.

In a relationship people are free to use all five love languages to show commitment and care about their partners. However, in any individual, there is always one language that is preferred. The five love languages are:

- *Words of affirmation*: they are encouraging and kind words used by a partner to show love to a person that one loves. For example you are wonderful and I love you very much. There are also words that are used to express gratitude, such as I thank you for washing the baby while I was away
- *Quality time*: undivided attention, quality conversation, learning to talk etc. This section includes time that an individual gives to his/her partner such as shopping together, just going out together, or going out to specific places for relaxation
- *Gifts*: many people feel loved when they receive a gift from their partner
- *Acts of service*: doing things to assist your partner by cooking meals, setting the table, making the bed, sweeping the yard, fixing the tap etc.

- *Physical touch*: like holding hands, kissing, hugging and sexual intercourse are ways of communicating emotional love to your spouse.

As mentioned previously, the above five aspects represent the pillar of love, which many people practice without knowing the relation of what we do and its real meaning in life.

As participants talked about their own love language, various insights were expressed. One participant commented as follows:

I have two love languages. My first love language is *physical touch*. But besides that I also have to show my girlfriend that I love her by offering her *quality time*. When I talk about *physical touch*, I mean sex. But everything must not be only about sex because you cannot be having sex all the time. That is why I said that *quality time* was my second love language that I have used a number of times when I take my girlfriend to the beach (Young man in Ntuzuma).

The choices people make in terms of love languages are specific to particular individuals. As the respondent revealed, a choice of a love language does not necessarily mean that people only use a single love language. The opinion about having a second choice i.e. *quality time* in addition to *physical touch* implied a wider commitment by participants to the principles of human dignity, mutual understanding and respect. Love cannot only be expressed because of the common inclination of both partners to be having sex. Instead, the 5 love languages mentioned in this module are part of the practical ways of how humans practice love. There is time to show love by satisfying the sexual instinct, while love must also consider other important aspects to balance life.

Participants in Engonyameni, the rural area where people have limited resources and recreational spaces, look for opportunities to show love further afield. Asked whether young men have used quality time in the past, one respondent in Engonyameni spoke as follows:

I remember that I took my wife and child for *quality time* at Mega City [a shopping centre] some 20 kilometres from Engonyameni. We had good time because we ate *cow stomach and took some soft drinks*. We sat for quite long at Mega City just to show my wife that I love her (Young father in Engonyameni).

His telling of the story when he took his wife and child to have fun was remembered when the participants were asked if any of them would remember having had quality time in the past. More striking was the fact that the respondent could recall even then the particular food that they ate, which the other participants applauded.

Subsequently, the sharing of quality time that the respondent refers to is combined with another love language which is receiving gifts from the woman's perspective. While the man's intention in visiting Mega City was to share quality time, the woman's perspective according to him, was also to receive gifts. Though the respondent did not mention that quality time was his favourite language, his easy remembrance of the gesture that he did for his family suggests it is his main language.

As mentioned previously, people tend to offer love using their own preferred love language. The participants were intrigued to think that someone might be expressing love in a different love language and that their partner may not feel loved because he/she had a different language.

## **Sex**

People have different love languages but they tend to remember the most exciting ones because they serve as moments of joy, intimate sharing and a special time in their lives. In the Durban group for instance, one participant spoke as follows:

The first time I got involved with a girl in my life was the most significant moment. I had to follow her after school and we talked for hours. Then it happened that one evening we met and shared our problems after kissing. This ended up that we had sex. But I also bought her everything that she asked from me. It was a true love though we could not get married (Young father in Durban).

The reality is that many young men equate loving and being loved with having their sexual needs met. Many of the stories which participants told concerned past relationships in which there had been a strong focus on sex. There is plenty of evidence like (Morrell 2005; Sathiparsad 2006; Mulumeoderhwa and Harris 2013) that young South African men have high expectation that their girlfriends will provide sexual gratification for them. They did recognise, however, that in the longer term, other factors would be needed to sustain a relationship.

The aim of this section was to understand participants' behaviours and practices that would help them develop a positive relationship with their partners. One of the key reasons is to understand how this positive relationship would spill over to their children. To do this, participants were divided into two different groups; each group chose a group leader to lead the discussion and report back. Participants were given 15 minutes to complete the activity.

To complete their task participants responded to four questions on issues related to sex and other factors that encourage or discourage a good relationship.

- Do you agree that your girlfriend can sometimes refuse to have sex with you?
- Is it morally acceptable that you force your wife or girlfriend to have sex with you?
- Is OK to have more than one girlfriend at a time?
- In terms of financial provision, what do you do to meet your wife or girlfriend's needs?

The results are summarised in Table 8.2

**Table 8.2 Four questions about sex**

Aspects of the question	Opinions of participants		
	Durban	Engonyameni	Kwamashu
Do you agree that your girlfriend can sometimes refuse to have sex with you?	<p>In the 21st Century many things have changed. Women can decide things</p> <p>Menstrual period is understandable as one way to refuse sex from the partner</p>	<p>Yes, if she is having her period or maybe doesn't feel like having sex or even if she is sick.</p> <p>Yes, she has the right to refuse if you ask her to have sex every day because that can turn her to be a sex slave.</p>	<p>Your girlfriend can refuse to have sex with you when she is in her period.</p> <p>She could say no when she is tired or not in the mood.</p>
Is it morally acceptable that you force your wife or girlfriend to have sex with you?	<p>Not right. It requires mutual agreement. Any other thing else is rape. It is rape even if you are married.</p> <p>Not right, because sex starts psychologically.</p>	<p>No, because she won't enjoy it if you force her, you as a man won't enjoy it too.</p> <p>Our constitution does not allow partners to have sex if one hasn't agreed. Otherwise it becomes a rape.</p>	<p>Sometimes you are forced to have sex with her when you discover that she was lying about being in her period.</p> <p>It is very wrong idea.</p>
Is OK to have more than one girlfriend at a time?	<p>Yes and no. The society is led by cultural and religious beliefs. E.g.: in the Zulu culture, it might be OK to have more than one girlfriend or wife.</p> <p>It is not appropriate. Multiple girlfriends cause STD/STI.</p> <p>I think it implies no commitment in the relationship but also it is against the biblical teachings.</p> <p>It is acceptable to have more than one girlfriend, but NOT appropriate to have more than one wife.</p>	<p>No, it is not OK. Because of diseases.</p> <p>It is not OK because there are many illnesses e.g. Sexually Transmissible Diseases (STD).</p> <p>According to my religion, I am not allowed to have many girls</p>	<p>It is wrong to have more than one girlfriend because girlfriends are difficult to maintain.</p> <p>I have more than one because girlfriends are difficult to trust.</p> <p>I have more than one girlfriend because your current girlfriend can leave you anytime. You have to balance things up.</p>
In terms of financial provision, what do you do to meet your girlfriend's needs?	<p>There is no bond between a boyfriend and a girlfriend – no obligation. However, if the boyfriend offers the girlfriend a gift, it's an element of charity. But in marriage it's an obligation.</p>	<p>I have to work hard to satisfy my girlfriend's needs.</p> <p>I sometime buy her stuff she needs.</p>	<p>The reason that I do not give money to my girlfriend is that sometimes she can take the money I give her and give it to some other friend.</p>

The difference between traditional sexual behaviour, where men's views held total influence and the newer legal understanding where at least in theory a woman's view has equal weight must be considered. The task of negotiating sex was viewed as tiresome but necessary, given the commitment that many participants respect their partners.

For question 1 about wives/girlfriends sometimes refusing sex, participants indicated that women have the right to refuse sex during menstruation if they are in their menstruation. A related question was also asked "*whether it was OK for the wife to suggest that she would like to have sex with her husband*". There were mixed responses, with some participants indicating it was the wife's or girlfriend's right to do so while others saw a danger of the female partner having freedom to approach other men for sex. Participants were aware of the double standard implied it only men can ask for sex.

Forcing a female partner to have sex with you was considered inappropriate. The weight of participants' comments indicated a mutual agreement instead of force. Participants mentioned the lack of enjoyment when it comes to forcing a partner to have sex because sex starts in the psyche.

On the issue of young men having more than one girlfriend, culture and religion were mentioned as motivations for the group that suggested that it was wrong. Some others reported the difficulty to maintain two girlfriends, suggesting that more than one girlfriend is connected to more expenses in terms of maintenance. Interestingly, those who believed that it was acceptable, raised the issue of trusting the girlfriends, expressing the fear that the girlfriend could change her mind anytime she finds somebody who is more financially stable than him. Their own duplicitous behaviour – (because there was no suggestion that the presence of other girlfriends would be shared with a partner) – may have made them fearful of the same treatment from their girlfriends.



**Photo 8.3 Group of young men in Durban in discussion, 2 May 2015**

One of the participants told of his experience with his girlfriend:

My girlfriend was cheating with me while I trusted her. I lived with her for five years. One of my friends told me that my girlfriend had another boyfriend, which I could not believe. I remember buying her a T-shirt that I was also wearing while we were going for fun at the beach. I was well-known by her parents and believed she was a lady that I could marry. After investigating for few weeks, I caught them [together...]. I could not believe she could lie to me (Young father in Durban).

Again, the fear of young men about betrayal came out and there was recognition that mutual trust was a vital ingredient in a good relationship.

Several other questions were asked which focussed more on acting responsibly in certain circumstances. The two questions were:



- What would happen if your girlfriend falls pregnant?
- What if you find out later that the child was not yours?

It seemed important for the participants to be sure that it was their child. 'If I know it's my child, I will take responsibility' (Young man in Ntuzuma). A more detailed response contains similar elements.

It depends on the kind of relationship I have with the lady. I will carry out a DNA test to determine paternity. If it's my child, I'll support it, if not I will discard her. Because you can't depend on the child grant it will be my responsibility to make sure the child is mine (Young man in Ntuzuma).

Responding to the question what participants think if they later found that the child was not theirs, one said 'I will kill the mother and the child' (Young man from Ntuzuma), a solution he repeated three times. A more moderate view was 'I will just let it go even though it is very difficult. Children should not suffer for the sins of the mother' (Young man in Ntuzuma). There was some confusion in the discussion concerning the nature of the relationship between the young man and the woman. Some participants clearly assumed that it was a relationship of limited length and that woman was trying to get support for the forthcoming child while others were thinking more of infidelity within a committed relationship.

### **Being present in a relationship**

This session dealt with the issue of being present as opposed to just being there for the family. It aimed at understanding what presence means in the life of children. A few important categories of presence were identified and discussed:

- Being *physically and emotionally present* in the family i.e. in the life of your children and the mother's children;
- Being *physically present but emotionally absent*;

- Being physically absent but emotionally present;
  
- Being emotionally and physically absent.

Firstly, there are fathers who are physically and emotionally present. To understand this, the facilitator explained the factors that contribute in the father being present physically and emotionally. A father is present in the life of his family when he is physically (his bodily presence) at home. He is emotionally present when he cares and provides in all related issues of his children and their mother regarding education, shelter, food, health etc. The father is seen by his family as the person who keeps the moral and physical balance of everyone and everything within the family. Participants were clear in expressing that this was the target to which fathers should aim.

Secondly, there are fathers who are physically present but emotionally absent. He can be at home much of the time but does not care and provide for the family. Whether the father works or not, he has little or nothing to do with issues that affect the family. There was quite some discussion about how this type of father – viewed as common – arose. The experience of the father during his own upbringing was the common suggested explanation for this behaviour.

Thirdly, a father can be physically absent but emotionally present due to circumstances out of his control he has had to leave his family and work far from the household or in a situation where the father and the mother have divorced. Despite his physical absence at home, distance is not an obstruction for him to care or provide for his children. Although being physically absent and afar from the family his emotional contribution, which includes such aspects sending money home, phoning to ask about the children's health and education etc. are factors showing responsibility and presence. Participants expressed admiration for the efforts that such fathers make.

Another way by which a father can show that he is physically absent but emotionally present is to have a person who represents him by a regular presence at the household to ensure that everything is going well. Such a person is called a social father. Participants spoke of the need many children have for such an adult male figure in their lives.

Lastly, a person is considered as an emotionally and physically absent father when he does not care or provide for his family but also whose whereabouts might or might not be known or known but refuses to do anything for his family.

### **Issues of trust, help and equality**

The strengthening of relationship between partners has a number of aspects, of which three were discussed in particular: trust, help and equality.

On the issue of trust participants agreed that it must be mutual: *Ungithembe, nami ngikuthembe* (trust me so that I trust you too) (Young man from Engonyameni). The issue of trust concerns both the father and the mother or the boyfriend and the girlfriend. Trust is more effective when both partners are engaged in a serious and committed relationship. This rural area participant believed it was important not to build mistrust on mere accusations of treachery from others. You should take time to verify any allegations made against her.

The fears and uncertainty of participants was again evident 'you cannot trust your girlfriend 100 percent; they are cheats' (Young man from Ntuzuma). Also evident was the double standard, as evident in the following quote: 'it is acceptable for guys to cheat, but it is wrong for a girl to cheat' (Young man from Ntuzuma) and society requires girls to be chaste, girlfriends should not cheat, guys can – it is acceptable' (Young man from Durban).

Perhaps out of their fear of being a victim, many participants expressed the view that they could not trust their girlfriend. The societal 'rule' which a number of them also expressed – that it is OK for men to cheat, but not women – seems to come more

from the fear than of sense a male superiority or entitlement. Building trust seems to be a task of great importance.

Women bear by far the largest part of household work – cooking, cleaning, washing and caring for children. The participants were not averse to sharing such tasks and indeed, when the female partner is away or sick it is normal that the male partner takes over some of the duties that the female partner cannot handle. One participant suggested the importance of planning and negotiation in sharing such tasks. Some views raised by participants on the issue of help considered specific circumstances. One participant said the following:

When my wife is not home, I take care of the children and the household because our children are still young. Also, there's no one that can help besides me. We plan how the tasks will be dealt with beforehand to avoid misunderstanding (Young man from Durban).

Other participants stated that the allocation of household tasks would be influenced by whether one or both partners were employed. In such a situation they need to find alternative ways of handling the tasks. Equality (if it in fact happens) in terms of sharing household tasks is one thing, but participants were keen to discuss other aspects, including the inherent worth of men vis-à-vis women. Again, the insecurity and fear of men came out, perhaps because they feel that current laws favour women over men, at least by comparison with what they see happen under traditional laws:

Our government is not fair on males. The constitution protects females more than it does to males ... if I beat my girlfriend, I must be arrested straight away, but if my girlfriend beats me, there will be no effect (Young man from Ntuzuma).



**Photo 8.4 Young men in Ntuzuma group discussing parenting photos, 25 April 2015**

### **8.2.3 Module 3: Responsible, loving and nonviolent fathering**

This was the core part of the training and the hope was that by reflecting on such issues, young men might reconsider – or consider for the first time – these critical aspects of fathering.

#### **Understanding what a responsible father involves**

Prior to getting participants involved in a scenario prepared for this session, the issue of responsibility from the young father's perspective was discussed with participants. Participants were asked to suggest the relevant isiZulu words and came up with *ubaba onakekelayo* (caring father), which is different to a providing father (*ubaba owondlayo*). Using isiZulu words added important insights to the discussion.

As pointed out in the previous chapters, the concept of being a responsible father is connected with various fathering tasks. A responsible father loves, cares, provides and protects but also is said to be physically and emotionally present for the well-

being of his children. To link the theory to practice, a scenario of a man and a woman in a potentially difficult situation of providing care to the child was provided as follows:

Temba Mkhize is a mad soccer player and is very committed to his work. He also coaches a junior team. Almost all his Saturdays are devoted to soccer. Tandekila works during the week and looks after the child as well. She asks Temba to be available for a few hours on Saturdays to mind/be with the child. If you were Temba, what would you do?

A range of responses were generated of which the following could be regarded as representative. No participant, it should be emphasised, said that it was the mother's problem to sort out.

Discuss with the wife and adjust the time to take care of the child or by planning together (Young man from Ntuzuma);

Depending on the age of the child, the father can take the child to the training (Young man from Engonyameni);

Take the child to the crèche and communicate positively with the wife on issues of payment etc. (Young man from Durban);

The father must get involved in the child's life; he cannot be always committed elsewhere all the time (Young man from Durban).

In devising these alternative means of dealing with the problem, young men used strategic thinking for the parties to reach an agreement. As mentioned in the responses, participants felt it is the father's duty 'to be there' for the family. Work is what generates income for the family to survive, and cannot be given up. While there were attempts to find a way which would still allow the father to engage in soccer all

day Saturday, there was a somewhat grudging acceptance that some if not all of the day really should be given to the child.

The next activity consisted in asking participants to write down three aspects that showed that the *father was responsible* and three others showing that the *father was not responsible*. Typical results are summarised in Table 8.3.

**Table 8.3 Characteristics of responsible fathering**

Aspects of a responsible father	Aspects of a non-responsible father
He must be there for the family	Not providing for the family
He must provide for the family	Violent, aggressive and difficult
He admits and apologises when he has done something wrong	He is always right Does not provide support for the family
Provides for his family	Violent and disrespectful to the wife
Has to be there physically and emotionally	Physically and emotionally absent
He shows love and respect to the wife	He is absent for not a good reason
He must love his family	Unresponsive to fathering duties

Finally, there was some discussion of the effects of marriage break up on children. Children feel loved, safe and cared of when they have both parents acting responsibly, and are negatively affected if the father leaves. As one participant stated:

When my father left us, I only knew that I could not see him physically. But I could feel that there was someone missing. And my mother did not tell us why my father was no more regular at home. A few months later, I was told by my siblings that my father and my mother divorced, which I could not understand because I was young. His absence in the family affected me because I felt good when I could see my father and my mother at home (Young man from Durban);

Participants felt that there are always negative effects on children when the father leaves the household. It affects children leaving a gap in the life of children.

### **8.3 Nonviolent fathering**

Nonviolence from the father's standpoint includes abstaining from aspects of verbal and physical abuse but also promoting positive peace so that the underlying causes of conflict are weakened.

The aim of this activity was to find out whether participants were able to identify good or bad practices to link it to their own understandings of fatherhood. In the activity, participants were provided with a set of 10 photos displaying parents' way of handling their children. Participants were divided into groups and asked to discuss the photos. Representative responses are provided in Table 8.4 and the photographs are contained in Appendix K.



**Table 8.4 Parenting photos**

Photo description	Typical comments from participants
1. Baby relaxing with a gun	Bad influence with father likely trying to pass some traits to his child (army, soldier, terrorism etc.) (Young men from Durban) Lack of responsibility: teaching or having your child grow up in this condition can affect the child into a violent behaviour (Young men from Kwamashu)
2. Baby in a horrible toys' environment	It shows a bad influence, but the father or the mother might have placed the child in such a place to stop the baby crying (Young men from Engonyameni)
3. Mom leaving her baby to play with a gun	Guns are poisonous. The mother laughs but seems not to be a mature parent (Young men from Kwamashu)
4. Young girl with a gun machine	Father or mother instilling violent behaviour but it is also morally abusing children (Young men from Durban)
5. Father, mother and children in a happy time	It is a responsible and happy family showing steadiness (Young men from Kwamashu) Good company, quality time with family showing responsible parents (Young men from Engonyameni)
6. Child wrapped with plastic	The parents are untrustworthy because of the treatment they give to their child. If it is for discipline, this is not the way to do it because the child is physically in pain (Young men from Ntuzuma)
7. Mother and daughter	The mother is abusive because she is teaching wrong things to the child (Young men Durban)
8. Mother carrying her baby hidden in the jersey	It may suffocate the child, this is not good (Young men from Ntuzuma)
9. Chimpanzee carrying baby with care, while the mother carries her baby with head down	This is a sign of abuse from the human being than the chimpanzee that carries the baby with care (Young men from Durban)
10. Father-mother happily chatting with child watching	Good relationship between the father and the mother teaches children to behave well (Young men from Durban)

In the discussion, participants were able to identify good from bad ways of handling children. Good practice of handling children is favourable to bringing up children who are peaceful and respectful to others, while bad practice inculcates behaviours of violence and aggression. Young boys might be eager to playing violent games because they grow in an environment where parents exposed them to hard practices. Though some cultures adopt tough practices to boyhood to manhood, there are usually strict guidelines on such practices.

### **Corporal punishment**

Participants had varied experiences of corporal punishment as they grew up and varied opinions of its desirability in their own fathering practice. Some had received it as children and generally approved of it. One of the participants said 'I can say that my father used to hit me when I did something wrong. I am happy with what I have become because of him' (Young man from Ntuzuma). By contrast, another participant said, 'I become very scared of my father even if I did not do anything bad. Even the way he talks, you feel like he wants to beat you' (Young man from Durban). This participant raised the possibility that corporal punishment was part of a wider practice of violence. 'My father used to shout my mother a lot and I did not like it' (Young man in Durban).

Concerning alternative nonviolent forms of discipline, participants were struck by the evidence from developed countries of the harmful effects of 'ordinary' corporal punishment (Durrant 2003; Coleman, Dodge and Campbell 2010). They realised that they had little practice experience of alternatives and expressed a willingness to learn these. A recent example of training in nonviolent discipline among refugee mothers in Durban is reported in (Umubyeyi and Harris 2012).



**Photo 8.5 Engonyameni: group of young men sharing what they understand about the parenting photos 9 May 2015**

#### **8.4 Overview of the survey**

The training sessions proved insightful because of the active contribution of the respondents. Their stories and opinions showed that they were aware of the many issues faced in the family and relationship in general and in their own lives. They were open to consider issues of responsibility, love and nonviolence to their own actual and prospective fathering and, indeed, to wider areas of life.

One of the unexpected insights I gained from the participants was their personal fragility, which showed up in their fears and in their lack of trust of women. Like men in many societies, these young men were struggling to identify what it means to be real men! (Insofar as this depends on a job, the socioeconomic environment means this is only available to a handful of young men). Their lack of trust, as shown, for

example, by their need for proof that the baby whom this girlfriend was pregnant with, was in fact theirs, is in part due to a perception of their own actual and potential untrustworthiness.

This insight suggests that the training offered – on conflict resolution, on speaking and developing responsible, loving and nonviolent fathering – is essential. The question of the outcome of the training programme, in the short term, is explored in the next chapter.

## **8.5 Focus groups**

Focus Group Discussions are meant to be discussions between small groups of people. Ideally, they involve conversations, including assertions and opinions, agreements and disagreements, fixed positions and flexible positions, emotion and reality. That is, despite being set up for the purpose of research, they are meant to provide the researcher with a window into the way participants think and feel. The researcher's role is low key. He/she will introduce a few questions for discussion and may occasionally probe; otherwise, he/she will keep quiet and let the conversation flow.

### **8.5.1 Setting up the groups**

Participants were recruited from young men associated with churches in each of the three study areas. Given that almost all South Africans are 'associated' with a church, albeit at different levels of intensity, I do not think this biases the results in any important way.

I approached four churches in Durban and five in Ntuzuma and had the unusual problem of non-response. In the event, there were four FGDs groups, two in from the Durban CBD, which included a mix of migrants and South Africans, and from Ntuzuma in the INK area, all of whom were Zulu in origin. Each group had eight participants, making a total of 32 in all. A third were already fathers while the majority were prospective fathers.

The Durban group was difficult to organise, largely because of the need from participants to continue with their employment and economic survival activities. However, the recruitment and organisation for the Ntuzuma groups was greatly facilitated by a young church leader who is himself a head of the household to his younger brothers and sisters following the death of both their parents. The FGDs were held between 15 December 2014 and 3 January 2015.

Key points from the discussions were written down by the researcher or in the case of the Ntuzuma groups, who preferred to speak in IsiZulu, a trained Zulu speaking assistant helped. The researcher was also present. It was important to allow participants to speak in the language in which they felt most comfortable in order that the discussion flowed.

The FGD questions were designed in accordance with the research objectives of the study (See Section 1) and from some of the insights from the survey of school students presented in Chapter 6. The following questions were progressively introduced during each FGD.

- What do you think being a responsible father would involve?
- What do you think being a loving father involves?
- What do you think a nonviolent father involves?
- What sort of relationship would you like to have with your children's mother?
- How might that relationship affect your children?

### **8.5.2 Results**

As a preliminary comment, the attitudes and opinions of participants will derive from firstly their own experiences of being fathered and secondly, from a mix of tradition, modernity and religion. On the first point, participants with positive personal experiences of being fathered may well want to father in their own father's footsteps.

However, the attitudes which derive from tradition/modernity or / religion may be subject to reassessment. If so, the FGD experience may be a motivator of such re-thinking although this was not an objective of the process. In reporting the results, I have relied heavily on the words of the participants.

### **A responsible father**

Responsibility involves the father providing for the physical needs of his children. The following comment from a young migrant emphasises this although there is more to responsibility than addressing physical needs alone.

A responsible father is the one who feeds, dresses, educates, send children to school and protects them from any problem. If he is unable to do that, he is not responsible. As in my case, my father and my mother divorced when I was 12 making my father not to be involved in any way concerning my life. I last saw him when I was 19 after completing my schooling in 2011. The only thing he does is to wish me a happy birthday but does not send me money or ask about my schooling. Instead, my mother is responsible, not my father.

Note that he is the last of a family of seven children and the only one to have grown up without his father's involvement.

Responsibility involves presence – 'being there' – as revealed in the following words of a young father with three children from Ntuzuma:

My view is that a responsible father involves the aspect of taking good care of your children and giving them love but also being there.

This participant was unemployed but clearly had opinions which speak of responsibility. His attitudes may be more realistic than those of other young township man without children, who believe that the state Child Support Grant (CSG) makes fathering a financial incentive. While R300 per month per child is certainly a positive contribution to a family without an employed breadwinner, it clearly is not enough to

provide for the broad-based needs of a family. Participants with children recognised this but many without children did not.

### **A loving father**

We have seen that participants in the survey (See Chapter 6) identified two main aspects of loving fatherhood namely, meeting the needs of his children and being present in their lives. The main theme which emerged for the FGDs was that love means active effort in the tasks of bringing up children. This goes in accordance with the survey findings (See Section 6.6) where love by a father included meeting various economic needs of his children and being physically present and involved in their lives. One participant expressed it as follows:

In my understanding, a loving father involves the father presence i.e. he should be there. I did not have a father who showed that love to me as a child. It affected me because I saw my friends being fetched from school by their fathers, while I had to walk home alone. I saw how my fellows were happy leaving school with their fathers and going home (Young father without children in Durban).

Participants recognised that loving involvement in the children's lives could be more difficult if the father was employed and lived elsewhere for reasons of his work. In the above case, the young man experienced the conflict between his father showing love by providing economically for the family and not being physically present to collect him from school.

This aspect of loving fathering resulted in a surprising amount of discussion in the FGDs. Participants spoke of the strength of negative external influences which children faced. They emphasised the critical importance of children developing a strong 'moral compass' in order to 'build positive attitudes' and to have moral and psychological stability in their children's lives. The spoken and lived example of their fathers/father figures was central to this but needed assistance from the church.

A third element which FGD members discussed under the heading of love was the moral training a father provided. This could come from both the words and example set by the father – the extent to which he ‘walks his talk’, as one FGD participant puts it.

Another source of moral training discussed by the FGD participants was the church and that a loving father, would make sure his children attended regularly. In the words of one participant:

A loving father involves his capacity to teach his kids respect, sending children to church where they will get advice and will know right and wrong (Young man with children in Ntuzuma).

Participants struggled with the issue of violence. They were aware that the nature and extent of conflicts between mothers and fathers are likely to be beyond their children’s understanding but the strongest sentiment was that if a father really loved his children, he would stay and not abandon them (See also Section 7.3.4).

To summarise love, the FGDs emphasised action by fathers is necessary in three areas – economic, provision and presence in their children’s lives and moral training.

### **A nonviolent father**

Nonviolence means dealing with the inevitable conflict involved in fathering without using verbal or physical force. Typical statements from the FGDs are as follows:

A nonviolent father involves a father who is not aggressive but the one who tries his best in a polite way to solve the problems with a soft attitude (Young man with children in Ntuzuma);



He is the one that keeps peace in the family. He does not intimidate and shout; instead he talks and solves the problem that arises. Punishment is allowed but it is required that he does it in a way that the child feels guilty of his mistakes. Punishment must be there to build the relationship, the future and to correct mistakes without verbal or physical violence. If he does not do that, then he is a violent father (Young father without children in Durban).

The FGD participants saw a role for corporal punishment but they were less committed to its use than were the survey participants (See Section 6.5). A 'higher' call to be nonviolent in general seemed to influence the participant's views, although this was not well articulated and they did not seem to link corporal punishment and violence by husbands against their wives.

### **Relationship with the children's mother**

In short, FGD participants felt that respect and attention between mothers and fathers to help develop a healthy family.

Both men and women must know their place and duties. If the relationship is not good enough, it will likely affect children. And for the children to grow in a safe environment parents need to solve problems without fighting or shouting because children will be traumatised (Young man with children in Ntuzuma).

Having made this point, much of the subsequent discussions were centred on divorce and its destructive consequences. Clearly, divorce was feared. One participant whose parents were divorced in his early teens said the following:

For me, I will have to avoid to divorce with my wife because I know what it means to live without a father and a mother together since it affects children's intellect. I do not want to see my children to experience the moral and physical suffering that I have gone through. A suitable relationship based on caring and good friendship with my wife will be my choice. (Young father without children in Durban, migrant).

As part of divorce preventive strategy, participants placed a lot of emphasis on sharing past experiences with their partner as an essential ingredient for a happy marriage. There was a concern that late knowledge of past unknown relationships could put severe strain on a marriage. Mothers and fathers who had had such past relationships needed to be free from fear that these might be revealed. This fear could be dealt with by honestly speaking about their past before marriage.

[A good relationship]...is based on sharing our past experiences. Because where there is an official union, there is love and where there is love and an official union, there is commitment. Commitment is important because love can collapse if we do not consider our past. Her experience of the past will reflect in our daughter's life (Young migrant father in Durban).

The theme of honesty and openness between mothers and fathers is also evident in the following comments:

[A good relationship] means understanding and mutual teamwork. But also it must be known that both the father and the mother have weaknesses that might endanger their lives in the household. If they have any problems, it is necessary to talk about it and solve it" (Father with three children in Ntuzuma).

My relationship with my child's mother is based on equal sharing of physical emotions for instance when my child feels sick or when I think I do not have enough money to buy food. What is good is that I always tell my wife that if I do not have, she must help as well (Young man with 3 children in Ntuzuma).

Participants had little to say about specific alternative arrangements for parenting if the mother and the father were to divorce although they agreed that a man should not use divorce as an excuse to give up being a loving and responsible father.

The FGD participants spoke in understanding terms of traditional gender roles was but this was not rigid. It was deemed appropriate for men to take women's roles when and if necessary.

It happens to me that I should be involved in different chores not because I am weak as a man but because I have to. When my wife is not there, I have to make tea or food or do some cleaning of the yard. And I know it is a woman's work but I will not leave my children being hungry without me doing something. It is part of my responsibility to cook and feed my children if my wife is away or if she is sick. This is my contribution as a father to share the tasks (Young man in Ntuzuma with children).

There was quite some discussion about a criticism from friends and other family members concerning a man who took on such roles. Most participants thought that if the mother and the father themselves found that it was working positively, such criticism should be ignored.

### **8.6 Overview from the focus groups**

The opinions of FGD participants concerning responsible, loving and nonviolent fathering were in broad agreement with those expressed by the younger survey participants. Fathers need to provide economically, be involved in their children's lives and train them morally. The results presented in this and the preceding chapter were used to develop the training curriculum. The unexpectedly high fear of divorce, among other things, may motivate young men to participate in such training.

### **8.7 Summary and conclusion**

This chapter has reported the results of exploration into the experiences and attitudes concerning fathering of a sample of young men. The data were used to help prepare a training programme for three groups of young men in the hope of building responsible, loving and nonviolent fathers.

## CHAPTER 9. EVALUATION: THE OUTCOME OF THE TRAINING

### 9.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to deal with the fourth research objective from section 1.2 - to undertake a preliminary evaluation of the outcome of the training. As we have noted before (see sections 2.5 and 6.2), the long term impact of the intervention will only become apparent in years, even decades, to come, to the extent that the young men's behaviour as fathers is different from what it otherwise might have been.

The pre-training questionnaires which was completed by all participants is included as Appendix C and the questions provide the structure for this section (9.2).

### 9.2 Pre-training responses

**Question 1: When you were growing up, did you have a good relationship with your father (or father figure)?**

The responses to this question are presented in Table 9.1. The entire Durban group which, it will be recalled, included both South Africans and migrants, responded positively to the question but almost half the Ntuzuma group and a quarter of the Engonyameni trainees responded negatively. The reason for negative responses was not explored for the trainees although it was for the students who were surveyed and during the FGDs (see section 8.5).

**Table 9.1 Good relationship with father or father-figure**

	<b>Ntuzuma</b>	<b>Durban</b>	<b>Engonyameni</b>
<b>Yes</b>	7	11	9
<b>No</b>	5	0	3
<b>Partly yes/partly no</b>	4	1	0
<b>No father figure</b>	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	16	12	13

## **Question 2: How do you think a father shows love to his children?**

The trainees were given a list of five ways in which a father might show love to their children and were asked to say whether, in their opinion, these were important or not so important. The results are presented separately for each of the three sites in Tables 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4, but three ways were selected by almost every respondent across the three sites, namely 'spending time with their children, telling their children that they love them and helping them with things'. On the last point, informal discussions suggested that the respondents were thinking of their school work and sport, whether formally or informally organised. Hugging their children and giving them gifts were selected as important by about half the trainees.

Informal discussions with the trainees showed that they realised that fathers who worked full time, particularly if this required them to live away from home, limits the time a father can spend with his children. There was no suggestion, in pre-training discussions of trade-offs between the three preferred ways e.g. telling them that he loves them more often in recompense for living elsewhere. The overwhelming emphasis was that exemplified by a quotation from (Ratele, Shefer and Clowes 2012: 557):

My father, I could say was always there for me, always stood up for me, taught me a lot of things, spent quality time with me... and you name it, I mean just taught me a lot of things which I still treasure today and which I am trying to pass on to my son.

**Table 9.2 How fathers show love to their children (Ntuzuma)**

Features	Important	Not so important	No opinion
By spending time with them	16	0	0
By giving them gifts	8	6	2
By helping them with things	14	0	2
By hugging them	7	9	0
By telling them that he loves them	16	0	0

**Table 9.3 How fathers show love to their children (Durban)**

Features	Important	Not so important	No opinion
By spending time with them	12	0	0
By giving them gifts	6	6	0
By helping them with things	11	1	0
By hugging them	7	5	0
By telling them that he loves them	11	1	0

**Table 9.4 How fathers show love to their children (Engonyameni)**

Features	Important	Not so important	No opinion
By spending time with them	9	0	0
By giving them gifts	3	6	0
By helping them with things	9	0	0
By hugging them	4	5	0
By telling them that he loves them	9	0	0

### **Question 3: How do you think men show they are responsible fathers?**

The responses concerning responsible fathers are summarised in Table 9.5. While all four aspects were supported by a majority, two responses – spending a lot of time at home and respecting and supporting the children’s mother – were very strongly supported. The first of these is consistent with the responses to question 2 concerning loving fathers but the one concerning the child’s mother is a less direct form of showing love and justifies the inclusion of this in the training module. Sharing household tasks and providing economically were both strongly supported as well, but less than the above two others responses. There appeared to be differences between the sites, most noticeably in that the Durban group was less inclined than the other two groups towards sharing the household tasks. Table 9.5 reports the results.

**Table 9.5 How men show they are responsible fathers (pre-training)**

Aspects	Durban			Ntuzuma			Engonyameni		
	Important	Not so important	No opinion	Important	Not so important	No opinion	Important	Not so important	No opinion
By spending a lot of time at home	10	2	0	15	1	0	10	0	0
By sharing the household tasks	7	5	0	14	2	0	10	0	0
By providing economically	11	1	0	11	5	0	7	3	0
By respecting and supporting the children's mother	9	3	0	16	0	0	10	0	0

Note: multiple responses were possible



#### **Question 4: Is corporal punishment necessary to bring up good children?**

Table 9.6 reports the responses of with regard to corporal punishment. Half of the participants said that it was not necessary although this result was influenced by very high numbers from the Engonyameni group. It is likely that their prior experience of community development (See Section 5.4) has given them a more progressive attitude.

**Table 9.6 Participants' views on corporal punishment**

	Necessary	Not necessary	Partly necessary, partly no
<b>Durban</b>	5	3	4
<b>Ntuzuma</b>	5	7	4
<b>Engonyameni</b>	2	10	1

### **9.3 Post-training results**

The participants completed a post-training questionnaire at the end of the final training session some two months later. As discussed in sections 2.5 and 6.5, it would have been desirable in terms of methodology for this to have taken place a number of months after the final session to see what the longer term outcomes in terms of attitude and behaviour have been. Logistical and monetary constraints made this impractical.

The questionnaire was designed to facilitate comparisons between pre and post-training opinions and attitudes but also to allow for some explanation of these attitudes, given that they now had some experience discussing these matters. In addition, trainees were asked to indicate the most important thing they had learned and to reflect on this. The post-training questionnaire is presented below. It should be noted that there was considerable attrition from the first to the third training sessions. The individuals who completed both pre and post-training questionnaires were 8 in Durban (compared with 12 who completed the pre-training questionnaire); the respective numbers for Ntuzuma and Engonyameni were 6 (16) and 10 (13). Overall,

24 of the 41 who completed the pre-training questionnaire completed the post training questionnaire. Individuals who did not complete both have been omitted from the following analysis.

**POST-TRAINING QUESTIONNAIRE**

**ID**

**number:**

**1. What will you do as a father to show love to your children? Tick the best answers for you.**

	Important	Not	so
	important		

By spending time with them: .....

By giving them gifts : .....

By helping them with things .....

By hugging them : .....

By telling them that he loves them:.....

Can you say why you chose this answer:  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**In your opinion, which one of these is the most important? Circle it!**

**2. What will you do to be a responsible father? Tick one the best answer:**

Important

Not so important

By spending a lot of time at home: .....

By sharing the household tasks: .....

By providing economically:.....

By respecting and supporting the children's mother: .....

Can you say why you chose this answer:

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**In your opinion, which one of these is the most important? Circle it!**

**3. As a father, do you accept to use corporal punishment to bring up good children? Tick one**

Yes: .....

No: .....

Partly yes/partly no: .....

**Can you say why you have chosen this answer?**

.....  
.....  
.....

**4. What do you think is the most important thing you have learnt from these workshops? Choose the best answer for you!**

Important	Not so important				
I have learnt how to be a responsible father.....					
I	have	learnt	how	to	be
nonviolent.....					
I have learnt how to deal with my anger.....					
I have learnt how to take care of my partner.....					
Other.....					
Can you say why you chose this answer?.....					

In this study, change was identified if a participant changed their response from important to not very important, or vice versa. This, it must be admitted, is a very basic measure of change. In hindsight, it would have been more useful to have asked for a numerical score between say one and ten, for example, where one meant extremely important and ten meant of no importance whatever. This would have allowed the extent of change, not just change itself, to be measured.

**Being a loving father**

Table 9.7, 9.8 and 9.9 present the post-training results for the question ‘What will you do to show love to your children?’ and can be compared with Tables 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4 respectively. There was a very high consistency in terms of results between the three sites. First, the three main ways in which the participants intended to show love – time, helping and telling – were confirmed. Second, in addition, there was a movement by a number of participants who expressed that gifts and hugging become more important.

This second point was particularly true for the Ntuzuma and Durban groups but was less so, although still identifiable, with the Engonyameni group. In total, there was a change in around a fifth of the responses, almost always in a positive (i.e. more responsible and more loving) direction.

**Table 9.7 How fathers show love to their children (post-training, Ntuzuma)**

	<b>Important</b>	<b>Not so important</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
Time	6	0	0
Gifts	5	1	0
Helping	6	0	0
Hugging	5	1	0
Telling	5	1	0

**Table 9.8 How fathers show love to their children (post-training, Durban)**

	<b>Important</b>	<b>Not so important</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
Time	8	0	0
Gifts	5	3	0
Helping	8	0	0
Hugging	6	2	0
Telling	7	1	0

**Table 9.9 How fathers show love to their children (post-training, Engonyameni)**

	<b>Important</b>	<b>Not so important</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
Time	10	0	0
Gifts	6	4	0
Helping	10	0	0
Hugging	5	5	0
Telling	10	0	0

**Being a responsible father**

Table 9.10 reports the responses to the question ‘What will you do to be a responsible father?’ and can be compared with the pre-training results in Table 9.5. The results are similar to that for love. That is, spending time and supporting the children’s mother, maintained their pre-eminent positions and the lesser, but still strong support for sharing household tasks and providing economically was maintained. Again, around a fifth of the responses represented change in a positive direction.

## Being a nonviolent father

Table 9.11 reports on the question 'Do you accept the use of corporal punishment to bring up good children?', and can be compared with pre-training results in Table 9.6. There was no change in the results from the Engonyameni group which, it will be recalled, was already strongly against the necessity of corporal punishment. There was quite a change in the Ntuzuma and Durban groups, most of which was from yes (it is necessary) to partly yes/partly no or from partly yes/partly no to no (\*it is not necessary). Overall, those who regarded it as not necessary rose from half to two-thirds of the trainees. There seems to be a strong awareness that the use of corporal punishment was passed on from father to son 'I want my children to be nonviolent. If I use it they are going to do this to their children' (Young man, Engonyameni).

**Table 9.11 Use of corporal punishment: post-training**

	Yes	No	Partly yes/partly no
Durban	1	7	0
Ntuzuma	1	5	0
Engonyameni	2	8	0

### 9.4 An overview of pre and post-training responses

In summary, there was a move in positive directions by about one-fifth of the respondents as regards being a responsible father and showing love and by about half of the Durban and Ntuzuma groups in terms of corporal punishment (the Engonyameni group was already strongly in favour of nonviolent forms of discipline).

Participants were also asked in the (post-training questionnaire, question 4) to indicate which of the ways of showing love and acting responsibly was most important to them. Spending time with their children was chosen by almost three quarters of participants as their preferred way of showing love. In terms of being a responsible father, a little over

half chose respecting and supporting the children's mother followed by spending time at home.

### **9.5 Issues of validity and reliability**

It needs to be emphasised that the experience of training with three small groups of young men in three sites cannot provide general results. Validity and reliability were discussed at a more theoretical level discussed in section 6.6 and here I will reflect on my experience of the training with the young men by trying to answer two questions.

First, there is a validity question – did I use appropriate research methods and did I use them well so as to bring out findings which are correct? On this, I have already discussed (see section 6.2) a major challenge of action-research, is that of training people (for example) and collecting research data at the same time. I explained my use of research assistants to try to overcome this. They also acted as sounding boards as I reflected on my data and I received insights and corrections from them. I used several methods – questionnaires, focus group discussions and interactions during the training sessions – to collect data. I tried my findings out on some participants, particularly the trainees, in an attempt to get feedback on whether I had interpreted things correctly.

Second, there is a reliability question – is the data that I collected true or have I been misled? I had the strong impression during this project that the young men were very interested in the issue of fathering; it is a role they want to do well. While in some cases the training topics may have challenged their views, I never felt that they felt intimidated and said or wrote what they thought I wanted to hear. Indeed, they were often quite forthright, especially as they discussed things within their own groups but also in interviews with my research assistants. The research assistants provided a useful informal link between the trainer and the trainees.



## **9.6 Summary**

A reasonable interpretation of the outcome of the training sessions is that they resulted in around a fifth of the trainees reported a change in the attitudes or opinions towards one or more aspects of loving, responsible and nonviolent fathering. This provides grounds for optimism that training of young men in this vital area has considerable potential.

## PART IV. CONCLUSION

### CHAPTER 10: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### 10.1 Summary of findings

The evidence worldwide is clear: fathers play a critical role in producing stable, well-adjusted children. South Africa has a very high proportion of its children growing up without fathers. One result of this is that when young men become fathers themselves, they will have little personal experience of what it needs to be a responsible loving father.

Given this, four specific objectives of this research were set out (see section 1.3) and the results for each are summarised below:

*Objective 1: To explore the experience of a sample of young men concerning their own experience of being fathered and their beliefs, attitudes and aspirations concerning their own roles as fathers*

A survey was carried out among 120 male year 10 learners in four secondary schools, three in Durban and one in Inanda Township. This was supplemented by four focus groups, each involving eight participants in Durban and Ntuzuma carried out with young South African and immigrant men.

The main findings are reported in Chapter 7 were as follows:

- The proportion of learners with father absence in their lives was far higher than the national figures, which suggest that over a half South African children have fathers who are either dead or absent. Urban children, it seems, are far less likely to have absent fathers than rural children.

- Their experience of being fathered was generally positive. As a generalisation, fathers were typically emotionally present in the household as well as physically present and played their role as fathers.

Data from the focus groups (see chapter 7) generally supported the survey results.

- Participants agreed that their fathers were responsible and loving because they provided the needs of the children and were emotionally present.
- The father-mother relationship was emphasised as a key factor in maintaining a stable family.

*Objective 2: Drawing on the findings from this exploration and the experience of existing fathering/parenting training programmes, to design a training programme appropriate to the South African context.*

The training curriculum was developed with three main components - positive communication, father-mother relationship and nonviolent fathering - and can be found in Appendix J.

*Objective 3: To implement the training programme with a sample of young men including those with children and those without children.*

Training was implemented with three groups of young men – an urban group, which comprised both South Africans and migrant men, a township group and a semi-urban/rural group. Each group had three training sessions about a month apart and each session lasted around two and half to three hours. The training programme experience is reported in Chapter 8.

*Objective 4: To undertake a preliminary evaluation of the outcome of the training.*

An evaluation of the short term outcome of the training is reported in Chapter 9, based on a comparison of pre-training versus post-training questionnaire responses. Movements in positive directions were recorded for around a fifth of the respondents.

## **10.2 A personal reflection**

In the course of the three years in which I was involved in this research, I have myself undergone some changes in attitude and behaviour. I am now a more responsible, loving and nonviolent father and husband.

I have become increasingly convinced of the vital role which fathers play in shaping the quality of life of households, communities and societies. If they are absent – physically and/or emotionally – then society suffers. Young men must be trained in the ways of good fathering. It is an investment which will bear very high returns in the longer term.

I have become aware of the importance of helping people to think differently about issues. Also, to encourage people to think ahead about issues that they don't currently face but may well face in the future .e.g. how will I behave when my wife/partner/girlfriend becomes pregnant? Will I just say that the child is her responsibility and continue living as usual, or will I take up the responsibilities of being a father? What alternatives are there in such a situation?

To my surprise, many of the participants in this project have high levels of fear and anxiety when it comes to relationships with their wives/partners and their children. Perhaps I should have expected this, given the fact that most young men are growing up without a father. This vulnerability can be tapped as a motivator for them to learn good ways of being husbands and fathers.

### **10.3 Recommendations**

The result of this research cannot be generalised beyond the specific groups and locations in which it took place. The survey sample, for example, seems quite different to the national figures concerning the proportion of children with fathers who were present in their lives. Complementary research could be undertaken in rural areas where, presumably, absent fathers are more common and the forces of tradition more powerful.

The training, in terms of both the process and outcome, seems to have been effective although the real proof of this will only be known in months, years and decades ahead. Longitudinal studies of the fathering practice of young men, both trained and untrained, would be valuable research.

Given the findings of the HSRC's Fatherhood Project and supplementary evidence such as the present study, training young men in responsible, loving and nonviolent fathering would seem to be a high priority area for government. It can make policy, provide financial support and produce training materials. Training could take place as part of the Life Skills subjects at secondary school. However, 'the government alone cannot directly influence individuals, households, and communities for the good. Faith communities, given their ethos and location throughout the country, could enter into partnership with government structures to actually provide fatherhood training. Failing this, government could partner with organisations of the kind which have been effective in educating young people in the practice of safe sex.

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