

# REAL FATHERS INITIATIVE



## The Making of REAL Fathers: Involving Men in Violence Prevention

Sexual Violence Research Institute  
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Stellenbosch, South Africa



# REAL Fathers: Overview



**Partners:** Georgetown University's Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH) and Save the Children

**Purpose:** Father-centered interventions to reduce harsh punishment of children and IPV

**Location:** Northern Uganda

**Participants:** 500 Young fathers (ages 17-25) cohabitating with an intimate partner and parenting toddlers

**Duration:** October 2012 - September 2014

**Funders:** USAID, Oak Foundation

# Rationale of the Intervention

## Global evidence indicates:

- ✓ Harsh punishment of children and witnessing IPV are risk factors for later IPV
- ✓ Involving men is more effective than an exclusive focus on women
- ✓ Reach young men before their relationship expectations, attitudes, and behaviors are set
- ✓ Fatherhood is a promising avenue to emphasize positive and gender-equitable masculinities



Photo Credit: Save the Children/Dickens Ojamuge

# Formative Research

## GREAT Ethnographic Research (2011)

*Purpose: Inform GREAT intervention development*

- Life histories with 40 adolescents (10-19)
- IDI with 40 influencing others (age range)
- Semi-structured interview guide
- Participatory games, projective techniques

## REAL Formative Research (2012)

*Purpose: Inform REAL intervention development*

- Focus group discussions with 19 fathers (ages 16-25) in groups of 5-6
- Focus group discussions with 10 young couples (ages 16-25)
- Semi-structured interview guide

## REAL Baseline Study (2013)

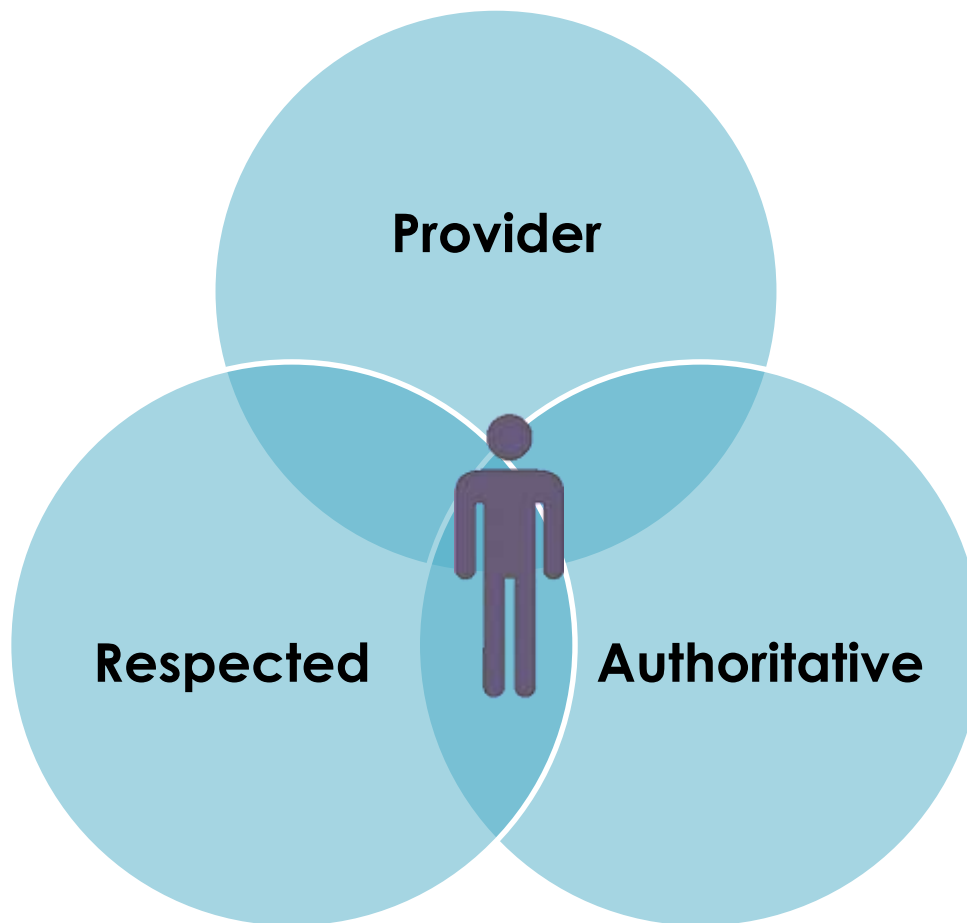
*Purpose: Evaluate REAL intervention*

- Structured interviews with 340 young fathers (ages 17-25)
- Structured questionnaire with participatory exercises
- DHS, GEM Scale, Parenting Scale, MICS

# Key Finding:

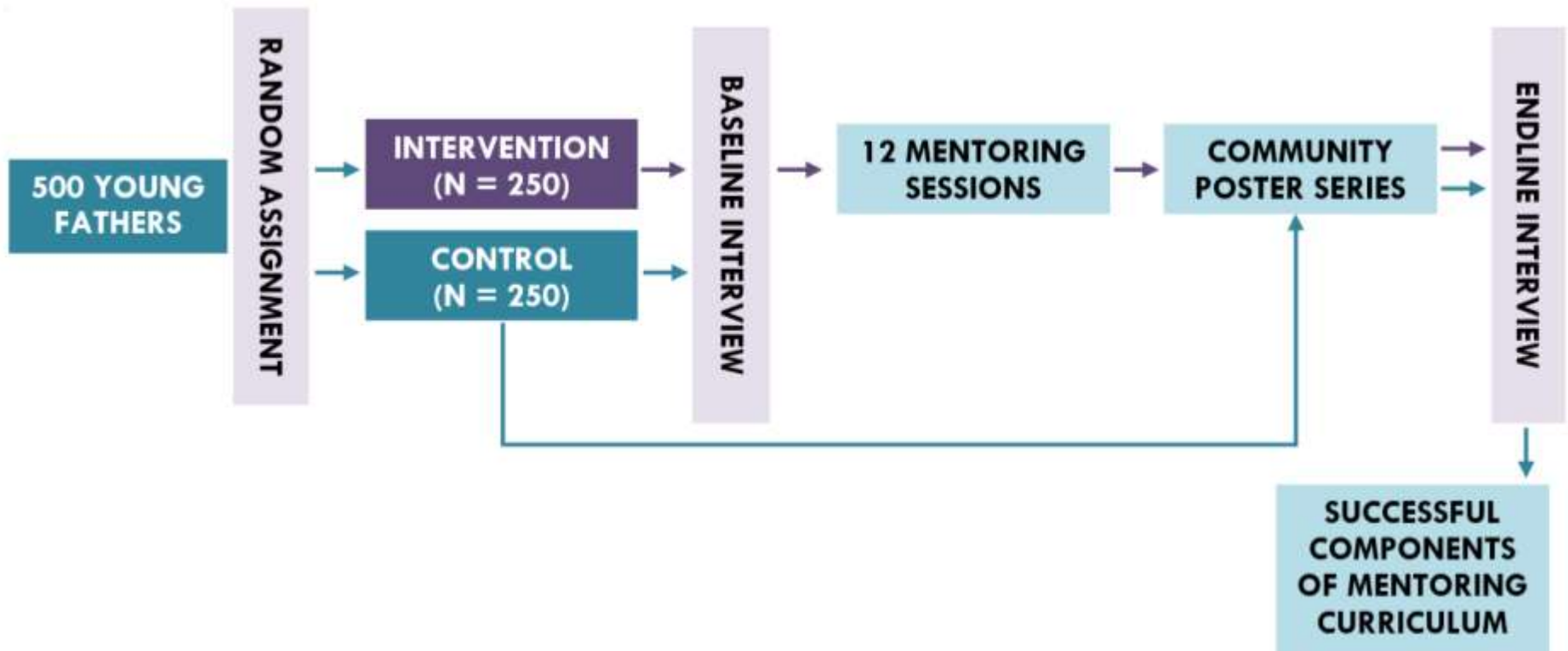
Ideal masculinity connected to gender power imbalances

**86%** agree a woman should obey her husband in all things



**81%** agree a man should have final word about decisions

# Evaluation Design



## Data collected on all 500 REAL fathers after randomization:

- ✓ 250 intervention group fathers
- ✓ 250 control group fathers

## Data collection in two phases:

- ✓ 340 fathers interviewed in June/July 2013
- ✓ 160 fathers interviewed in November/December 2013

## Key metrics:

- ✓ Followed up: 90% (448 fathers)
- ✓ Of followed up-Visited by mentor: 60%
- ✓ Of mentored-attended group sessions: 95%

# Methods



# Community Celebrations: Objectives

The community celebrations enabled the young fathers to:

- ✓ **SHOW** the community what they have learned and get recognized
- ✓ **SHARE** testimonies of the immediate benefits of the intervention
- ✓ **PUBLIC** pledges and commitments
- ✓ **MODEL** positive attitudes and behavior



Photo Credit: Save the Children/Dickens Ojamuge



# Words from a REAL wife....



“My husband was really bad news, but because of the mentoring sessions, there is change at home. He **bathes children**, sometimes **we weed together**, he collects firewood and there is **total sharing of responsibilities**. I am very happy for this and **my prayer is that he continues like this for the rest of the time.**”

WIFE OF A YOUNG FATHER

# Desired Outcomes

## Parenting

- Decreased utilization of harsh child punishment methods
- Increased self-efficacy related to fatherhood role

## Intimate Relationship/Marriage

- Improved communication with wives/partners
- Decreased perpetration of of IPV

## Gender / fatherhood norms

- More gender-equitable attitudes
- Fathers engage in non-traditional parenting roles

# Exposure to REAL Intervention

Component	# times	% exposed
Saw posters		n=434
		<b>89</b>
Mentor Visits		n=256
	1-3	41
	4-5	25
	<b>6+</b>	<b>34</b>
Group Mentor Sessions	1-3	43
	4-5	36
	<b>6</b>	<b>22</b>
Completed homework		<b>52</b>
Wife participated in conversations with mentor	1-3	64
	<b>4+</b>	<b>32</b>

# Summary of effects of exposure to REAL

## SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS ON...

### Parenting behaviors

- Use of nonviolent discipline
- Positive parenting

### Parenting attitudes

- Decreased support for harsh discipline
- Confidence in using non violent discipline

### Partner relationship

- Couple communication
- Reduced physical, verbal and psychological IPV

## NO EFFECT ON...

- Use of harsh physical punishment
- Spending time with the child
- Attitudes toward non-traditional parenting roles



Parenting Practices and Attitudes at Baseline and Endline for All Men by Group Assignment						
	Baseline			Endline		
	Control	Intervention		Control	Intervention	
	(n=250) % (n)	(n=250) % (n)	p-value	(n=179) % (n)	(n=256) % (n)	p-value
Harsh discipline	69.2 (173)	68.0 (170)	0.773	57.4 (103)	53.1 (136)	0.362
Nonviolent parenting	90.0 (219)	86.0 (210)	0.249	87.1 (156)	91.0 (233)	0.197
Attitudes in support of use of harsh physical punishment	10.37	9.73	0.015	11.11	12.07	<b>0.001</b>
Feels very confident to handle the child without shouting, threatening to beat, or hitting	24.4 (61)	25.6 (64)	0.948	15.0 (27)	28.9 (74)	<b>0.001</b>
Parent communication	7.58	7.52	0.743	7.14	6.37	<b>0.000</b>

IPV, Agreement with Traditional Gender Role, and Use of Family Planning at Baseline and Endline for All Men by Group Assignment						
	Baseline			Endline		
	Control	Intervention		Control	Intervention	
	(n=250) % (n)	(n=250) % (n)	p-value	(n=179) % (n)	(n=256) % (n)	p-value
Had at least one drink on 2 or more days in the last month	28.0 (70)	27.6 (69)	0.452	28.4 (51)	17.9 (46)	<b>0.041</b>
Beaten often as a child	24.4 (61)	29.6 (74)	0.190	18.4 (33)	16.7 (43)	0.658
Physical violence	40.0 (100)	35.6 (89)	0.310	25.7 (66)	27.7 (71)	<b>0.043</b>
Verbal violence	53.6 (134)	48.0 (120)	0.210	56.9 (104)	42.5 (109)	<b>0.001</b>
Psychological violence	46.0 (115)	36.4 (91)	0.029	36.8 (66)	25.0 (64)	<b>0.008</b>
Giving a bath and feeding the kids is the mother's responsibility (Disagree)	56.9 (140)	61.7 (152)	0.239	65.7 (117)	72.0 (183)	0.338
Only when a woman has a child	33.3 (81)	41.9 (104)	0.135	43.2 (77)	48.4 (123)	0.570

# Conclusions and Next Steps



Photo Credit: Save the Children/Dickens Ojamuge

- ✓ **Impact** of intervention differs by indicator
- ✓ **Intervention Combination** of posters, mentoring and group sessions recommended
- ✓ **Adding** visit with significant other, FP and HIV sessions, referral training
- ✓ **Integrating/expanding** into ECCD and YIELD programs

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[www.irh.org/projects/real-fathers-initiative/](http://www.irh.org/projects/real-fathers-initiative/)

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