

REAL FATHERS INITIATIVE

An effective, mentoring initiative to build young fathers' positive parenting practices and prevent men's violence in the home



Implementation Guidelines for Adaptation and Use

2019

Acknowledgements

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The REAL Fathers Initiative

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Overview

The REAL Fathers Initiative

The Responsible, Engaged and Loving (REAL) Fathers Initiative was designed in 2013 through formative research and collaboration with communities in Northern Uganda. Originally developed and evaluated as a pilot program to prevent harsh discipline of young children and intimate partner violence, REAL engages young men as they enter into partnership and fatherhood. This period of transition in their life is an opportunity to discuss and engage with different ideas and behaviors and to develop skills in their relationships and as parents.

Respected men in the community are identified by participating young fathers, their partners and community members to become mentors. Mentors participate in a training and mentor young fathers through home and group visits. Mentoring is supplemented with a monthly poster campaign designed to reinforce messages from the home and group mentoring sessions and a community celebration. REAL Fathers seeks sustained violence prevention in the home and improved family relationships.

The pilot program was implemented and evaluated in Amuru District, Northern Uganda from 2013 to 2015. Evidence for prevention of harsh discipline of children, improved parenting practices, reduced intimate partner violence and improved partner communication and participant's enthusiasm for the REAL Fathers activities led to the scale-up and adaptation of REAL. The adaptation and scale-up included implementation in other regions of Amuru District in Northern Uganda and adaptation of implementation materials for a different cultural community in the Nwoya and Nakapiripirit Districts in the Karamoja region of Uganda. The scale-up also included addition of a family planning module to the mentorship program to increase knowledge and demand for modern family planning, revisions to the guidelines for a lower literate community and integration in existing development programs (a livelihood program in Northern Uganda and early childhood development centers in Karamoja). Evaluation of the scale up (2016-2018) demonstrated sustained violence prevention and improved relationships as in the pilot.

Implementation Guidelines and Core Materials

The REAL Fathers Implementation Guidelines for Adaptation and Use are part of a series of documents to guide practitioners in implementing REAL Fathers. The Implementation Guidelines are accompanied by several core materials; these are:

- **REAL Fathers Mentor Training Curriculum.** Training curriculum for mentors
- **REAL Fathers Mentor Discussion Guide.** Session by session guide for mentors to use in home and group mentoring sessions. Examples of session by session posters are in this guide.
- **REAL Fathers Mentor Resource Sheets.** Brief guides that highlight main points from each session for mentors to use during mentoring sessions.
- **REAL Fathers Women's Group Sessions.** These were added to REAL Fathers scale up to gain involvement and support by wives and to understand how they experience the project.

Introduction

Welcome

Welcome to **REAL Fathers Initiative: Implementation Guidelines for Adaptation and Use**. Responsible, Engaged, and Loving (REAL) Fathers is an effective, violence prevention initiative that uses community-based mentoring to help young fathers build positive parenting and partnership practices, improve their communication skills, and prevent violence in the home. REAL Fathers increased awareness of and demand for family planning services.

Motivated by REAL Fathers' effectiveness in improving parenting practices and preventing violence against women and children, we prepared these guidelines for organizations that wish to adapt the initiative as a stand-alone project *or* as an integrated component of a larger program.

The REAL Fathers Initiative is grounded in evidence that early fatherhood is a pivotal period in which a young man can be receptive to new information and skills (McAllister, Burgess et al. 2012). REAL Fathers works with young, first-time fathers who live with their spouse or partner, and whose children are 1 to 3 years old. Toddlerhood is the developmental stage in which children begin to test boundaries and exert independence, and is thus when parental discipline often begins (United Nations Children's Fund 2017).

Violence in the home may be learned behavior, and may be underpinned by lack of skills in positive discipline, communication, problem solving, and emotion regulation. Often, communities and couples seek solutions to prevent violence. Through well considered interventions, men can and do change attitudes and behavior in their relationships with their children and their spouses (World Health Organization 2007). REAL Fathers reduces male violence against children and women by building on existing cultural beliefs, and by promoting universally accepted positive parenting practices grounded in the culture of implementing communities. REAL Fathers uses a mentorship approach, in which community-selected men are trained as mentors. Through at home and group mentoring sessions, the program creates opportunities for young fathers to acquire, discuss, and reflect upon new information, and to practice new behaviors.

The positive results of our REAL Fathers work in Uganda add to the growing evidence that working with men to redefine themselves as parents and partners can:

- Improve their parenting skills and confidence in using nonviolent discipline;
- Prevent their use of intimate partner violence and physical punishment of children; and
- Foster their acceptance of non-traditional gender roles in parenting and family life.

We note that, while we created the REAL Fathers Initiative in response to violence in the home, its materials and activities make little direct mention of violence. Instead, the initiative develops and supports young men's positive parenting and communication practices without elevating violence to the forefront. REAL Fathers works on the

Violence in the Home: A Global Problem with Lifelong Consequences

Violence in the home is a global phenomenon, with lifelong and even intergenerational consequences for the wellbeing of all household members--but especially the children and women who are its most frequent victims. Domestic violence encompasses intimate partner violence (physical, sexual, emotional) and control, and child maltreatment including harsh child punishment and all forms of child abuse.

For further information on the nature, scope, and prevention of violence in the home, see *Exploring opportunities for coordinated responses to intimate partner violence and child maltreatment in low and middle income countries* (Bacchus, Colombini et al. 2017). The authors review and link to literature on the global prevalence and consequences of violence in the home. They include evidence that community-based, male-focused, prevention focused activities such as the REAL Fathers Initiative can change attitudes, norms, and behaviors in favor of gender equity and nonviolent parenting.

assumption that *all* young fathers can benefit from gaining communication and parenting skills and the support of mentors and peers to practice these skills. Fathers need not (and should not) be screened for violence before being invited to participate.

In scaling REAL in Uganda (see below, 2015-2017), an additional module on family planning was added to the program. As with other modules, the family planning component was designed to work with couples in home visits and group mentoring and complemented with a poster campaign. The family planning module provided information and created space for couples to discuss family planning with the goal of increasing demand for family planning and intention to use it.

The REAL Fathers Story and Evidence of Success

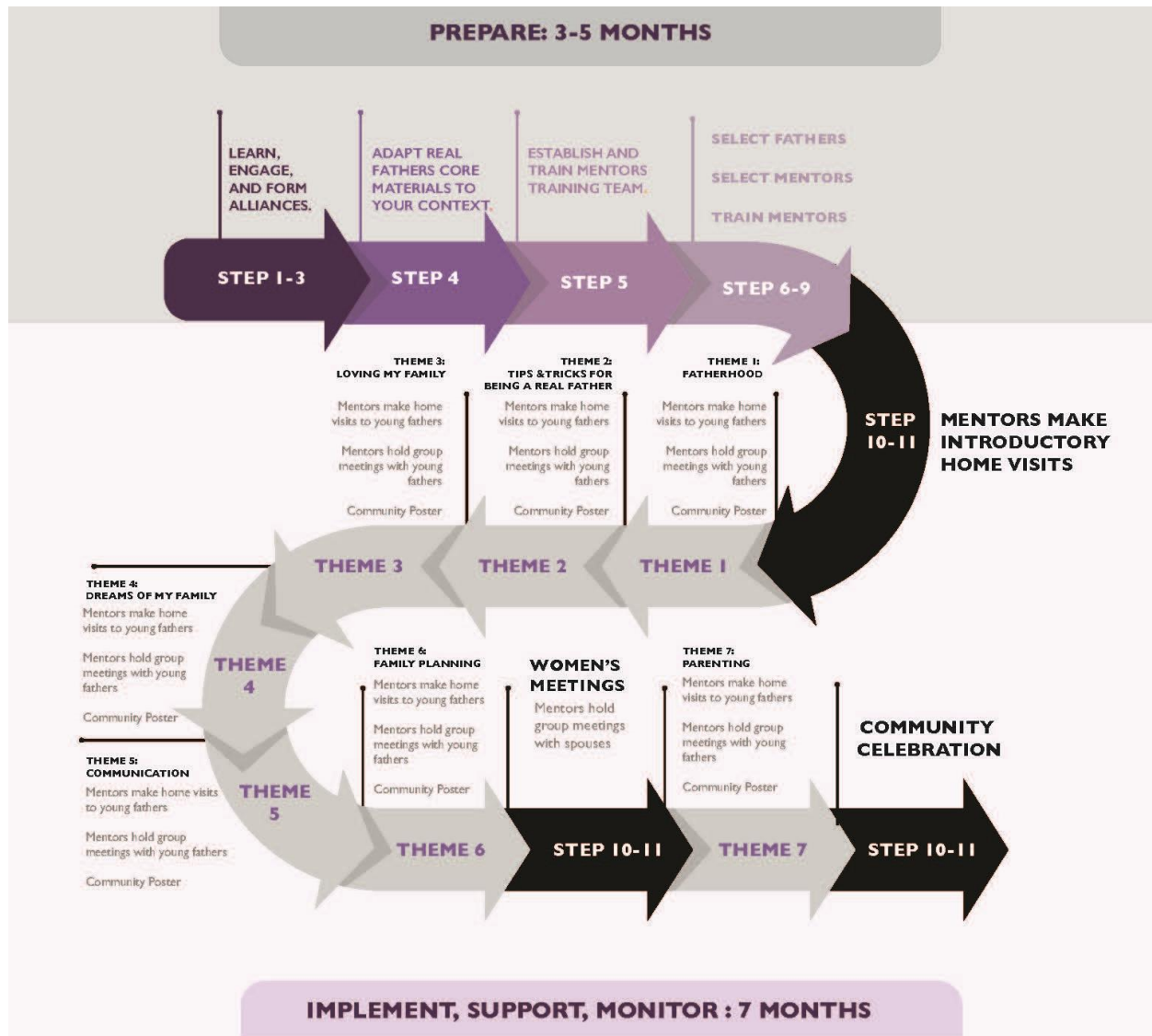
In Uganda, Save the Children and IRH developed, piloted and evaluated the REAL Fathers Initiative in Amuru District (2013 to 2015) (Ashburn, Kerner et al. 2017). We then replicated and scaled REAL in other areas of Amuru District in Gulu and adapted the intervention for Nwoya and Nakapiripirit Districts in Karamoja (2015 to 2017). In both pilot and replication/adaptation phases, participants described high enthusiasm for REAL activities. This section briefly recounts the outcomes of our work in Uganda with an emphasis on the replication and adaptation period between 2015 and 2017.

In Karamoja and Northern Uganda, REAL was evaluated using a baseline, endline and one-year post intervention survey comparing intervention and control participants on key outcomes. Additional qualitative research was conducted at baseline and endline with a subset of men participating in the intervention and their wives. Consistent significant effects were seen in both Karamoja and Northern Uganda on major indices including: physical punishment of young children and physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence. Complementing these key outcomes, fathers reported significant and sustained improved partner communication, positive parenting, confidence in parenting skills, and father-child interaction. These findings were significant at endline for fathers participating in the 7-month intervention and held true one-year post intervention. At the time of developing these guidelines, REAL was one of the first integrated violence prevention programs showing significant results on prevention of violence against women and children at the end of intervention and sustained results one-year after intervention.

The REAL Fathers Initiative at a Glance

Figure 1 below offers an overview of REAL Fathers activities over time. Your organizations should plan to devote *approximately one year* to the initiative, including *three to five months* to nine preparation steps, and *seven months* to two implementation steps, in which mentors work with young fathers one-on-one and in groups to introduce, discuss, and practice behaviors related to a pre-determined fatherhood theme.

Figure 1. The Real Fathers Initiative at a Glance



Is The Real Fathers Initiative Suitable for Your Setting?

We urge you to read these guidelines, and the linked core materials, in their entirety before deciding to implement the REAL Fathers Initiative.

We are unable to answer the question *is REAL Fathers suitable for your organization and the communities where you work?* but we do wish to provide some guiding considerations. Think deeply about the below topics as they pertain to the communities and cultural context where you might implement REAL Fathers, and to your organization's capacities and programming.

The Communities Where You Work

- How does familial violence occur in these communities? Is violence *perceived* as problematic by community members and/or leaders?
- Are people likely to discuss the topic of in-home violence in peer groups, in public? Are people likely to seek guidance from neighbors and other community members on parenting, communication, how to resolve conflict in the home?
- Will a mentorship approach suit the local context? Are young men (and spouses) likely to view elder men as valid teachers? Are elder men likely to feel some responsibility to guide a younger generation?
- What other violence prevention and response services exist in the community? Can these be used as referral services if needed?
- Are literacy levels sufficiently high to use the REAL Fathers materials, even in a simplified form?

Your Organization and Programming

- Can you commit sufficient resources, including human resources, to the REAL Fathers Initiative? Monitoring and supporting mentors as they work with fathers requires ample staff time. Insufficient monitoring could lead to undetected problems.

In These Guidelines

These **REAL Fathers Initiative: Implementation Guidelines for Adaptation and Use** provide simple instructions for building and implementing a program around the core materials. They are deliberately short and simple.

Structure of the Guidelines

The Guidelines divide the REAL Fathers into two phases: PREPARE and IMPLEMENT (see Figure 1).

PREPARE: Steps 1 through 4 guide you to investigate violence, parenting culture and gender norms in your operating area; build a network of stakeholders and allies for REAL Fathers; and adapt the REAL Fathers core materials to suit the local cultural context. Steps 5-9 guide you and your allies to invite communities and fathers to participate, and to train community-selected men as mentors of young fathers. This phase takes between 3-5 months. Though presented as steps, many of these activities may occur in tandem.

IMPLEMENT: In Step 10, the trained mentors will implement REAL Fathers activities with young fathers and their spouses. At the same time, Step 11 guides you and allies to support and monitor the mentors in their work. This phase takes 6-7 months depending on whether the family planning module is included in the intervention.

The Guidelines close with a **Resources and References** page, which provides links to documents cited within these guidelines, and to publications about (a) the global prevalence and effects of violence in the home, and (b) the REAL Fathers Initiative as we implemented and evaluated it in Uganda.

Core Materials

As we piloted and replicated the REAL Fathers Initiative in Uganda, Save the Children and IRH created a set of core materials for mentors to guide their work with young fathers and their spouses. These core materials describe training of community-based mentors by project staff. Step 4 describes adaptation of these materials and Steps 9-11 describes their use in implementation. Although adaptation of core materials are a part of Step 4, we have linked the actual resources to Step 9-11 so that it is clear see where they fit within program implementation. The core materials are also linked to the Resources and Further Reading section. The core materials are:

- **REAL Fathers Mentor Training Curriculum.** Training curriculum for mentors
- **REAL Fathers Mentor Discussion Guide.** Session by session guide for mentors to use in home and group mentoring sessions. Examples of session by session posters are in this guide.
- **REAL Fathers Mentor Resource Sheets.** Brief guides that highlight main points from each session for mentors to use during mentoring sessions.
- **REAL Fathers Women’s Group Sessions.** These were added to REAL Fathers scale up to gain involvement and support by wives and to understand how they experience the project.

We urge you to read these guidelines, and the linked core materials, in their entirety before beginning to implement the REAL Fathers Initiative.

PREPARE for the REAL Fathers Initiative

STEP 1: Survey the Behavioral and Stakeholder Landscape

Parenting Practices, Couples Communication, and Intimate Partner Violence

REAL Fathers promotes parenting and partnership practices and communication skills that are universally acceptable. To maximize REAL's effectiveness, you should ground these universal practices in local culture and norms. In Uganda, the project achieved success by grounding activities in local culture, norms, and a community vision for fathers and children's well-being.

If resources allow, you may wish to undertake original research into knowledge, attitudes, and practices surrounding parenting, partnership, violence, and gender norms and attitudes in your area. This formative research can provide grounding information about how young men learn to be parents and partners. It can identify local strengths, opportunities, and practices related to parenting and partnership.

At a minimum, however, we suggest that you make a few simple inquiries to help you situate the REAL Fathers Initiative in local realities:

- Seek and review existing research into violence, parenting and partnership in the locale or country where you work. Inquire with national academic institutions, the national statistics bureau, and other development organizations. Be sure to download the latest *Demographic and Health Survey* (DHS) for your country: full DHS reports typically include chapters on the status of women and on domestic violence. Chapters on child health, early childhood development, and youth may also contain useful information. Refer also to the World Health Organization's *Global Status Report on Violence Prevention*, UNICEF Multi-Cluster Survey and the United Nations Secretary-General's *Study on Violence against Children*.
- As you survey stakeholders and talk with potential allies, ask questions about local parenting and partnership practices, about gender norms, and about notions of men's and women's relative power and roles in the household. Ask about attitudes towards harsh child punishment and intimate partner violence, and about institutional (religious, legal) stances toward power and violence in the home.
- Learn about how communities view parenting and intimate relationships. What strengths exist within the community? How do parents learn to care for and discipline their children? How do couples learn to resolve problems? Can certain community members provide guidance as you develop messages, stories, or examples of good partner and good parent characteristics?

Stakeholders

The REAL Fathers Initiative will benefit from the collaboration and buy-in of other actors who are concerned with family wellbeing, intimate partner violence and/or harsh punishment of children in your programming area. Take time to learn about the local services, programs, and policies that deal (directly or indirectly) with parenting practices, and with violence against children and women.

The stakeholder landscape includes local government, both administrators and service providers in health, public safety, and education. It includes NGOs and community-based organizations with a social services purpose. It includes religious institutions, which can strongly influence norms and attitudes surrounding family life, and which may offer counseling and other services to members.

Before meeting with stakeholders, it may help to create a simple package of information about the REAL Fathers Initiative, its activities, and what it can realistically deliver. The package may include a presentation, flyer, frequently asked questions, and your organization's contact details.

Schedule and hold meetings with stakeholder organizations to:

- Understand their interests and services, and the expertise of their staff
- Inquire about family relationships and wellbeing, current problems of and solutions to violence in the home and community
- Introduce the REAL Fathers Initiative's purpose, content, and adaptability to local needs
- Ascertain their desire to have REAL Fathers Initiative in their community
- Identify possible points of collaboration and mutual support

As you introduce the REAL Fathers Initiative to stakeholders and potential allies, emphasize its focus on positive parenting rather than violence prevention. As noted in the Introduction, we created REAL Fathers in response to domestic violence and harsh punishment of children, but the initiative makes little direct mention of violence. Instead, it develops and supports young men's positive parenting and communication practices. REAL Fathers works on the assumption that *all* young fathers can benefit from gaining communication and parenting skills, and that *all* young fathers can benefit from the support of mentors and peers to practice these skills.

STEP 2: Stand-Alone or Integrate?

The REAL Fathers Initiative can be implemented as a stand-alone intervention, or it can be integrated into a larger program run by your own organization, by another organization (international, national, or community-based), or by local government. REAL Fathers can be adapted to either case, but by integrating you may be able to capitalize on a pre-organized population, a mobilized community, a functioning managerial and logistics structure, and/or access to a network of helpful allies and relevant stakeholders.

In our experience, REAL Fathers can be especially acceptable when integrated into programs that deal with related topics or sectors, such as early child development, economic empowerment, or gender equality. When we expanded REAL Fathers in one part of Uganda, for example, we integrated it into an existing early childhood development (ECD) program managed by Save the Children.

One way to explore whether or not to integrate REAL Fathers is to determine if young fathers in your area are already engaged in a program of any type. Young men may have places or activities for which they already convene and REAL could build on that infrastructure. When we expanded REAL Fathers in another part of Uganda, for example, we integrated it into an agriculture program in which young men were already grouped and working together.

STEP 3: Form an Advisory Team

Assemble a team of local collaborators to help you adapt and implement the REAL Fathers Initiative. An Advisory Team made up of knowledgeable, local stakeholders can:

- Advise your organization as you adapt REAL Fathers materials to suit local realities (Step 4)
- Support REAL Fathers' integration into appropriate local services (Step 4)
- Help you identify young fathers or organizations/locales where they congregate (Step 6)
- Create initial criteria for mentor selection (Step 7)
- Help you coordinate with relevant local and even national actors

Certain qualified members may also volunteer to train mentors (Step 5) alongside your staff, and/or to support and monitor mentors as they work with young fathers (Step 11).

Our REAL Fathers Advisory Team in Uganda included staff from Save the Children and IRH, the health department, the education department, community services officers, and the local legal system (including probation, police, and child protection workers). The Advisory Team was divided into two sub-committees: one dealt with monitoring, evaluation, and learning; the other with implementation. Bear in mind that our team was large and deeply engaged, in part due to the formative and evaluation research we conducted as we piloted and replicated REAL Fathers. Your own advisory team may be smaller. It may include representatives of local administration and services including the legal system.

The project team should reflect on and plan, in advance, how to identify, respond to and address any potential backlash by male or female partners or community members. For example, if men feel their power in the family and community is threatened as a result of REAL Fathers, this may create a negative response. We do not include here specific examples of how to respond to this as we did not experience in pilot or scale-up of REAL Fathers. This may be because the program takes a positive, learning approach to parenting and relationships.

Addition of a Family Planning Module

In the pilot of REAL Fathers, family planning was not included in the 6-session mentorship program. In the scale-up and integration of REAL Fathers, we added a theme on family planning to the mentors' work after finalizing the REAL Fathers Mentor Training Curriculum. In other words, ***the training curriculum shared here does not include the family planning theme***, but the mentor's work at scale-up included this in one-on-one and group sessions with young fathers.

If your project includes family planning, a session on family planning should be added on Mentor Training Day 3. You may want to invite a local health worker to the training to discuss (a) benefits of family planning and (b) the services and methods available. We did not have a poster for the family planning theme due to the later addition of the session, but you may want to include one.

We have included the Mentor Visit Protocol with the session on Family Planning in the Appendix as a resource. This was the 6th session when the project was scaled in Uganda.

STEP 4: Adapt REAL Fathers Core Materials to Your Context

The core materials (linked to Step 9) of the REAL Fathers Initiative are:

- **REAL Fathers Mentor Training Curriculum.** Training curriculum for mentors
- **REAL Fathers Mentor Discussion Guide.** Session by session guide for mentors to use in home and group mentoring sessions. Examples of session by session posters are in this guide.
- **REAL Fathers Mentor Resource Sheets.** Brief guides that highlight main points from each session for mentors to use during mentoring sessions.
- **REAL Fathers Women's Group Session.** Brief guidance to get feedback and reflection by wives/partners of young fathers participating in the program.

These core materials encompass globally appropriate adult education techniques. They contain accurate information about universally good parenting and communication skills. The materials do, however, reflect their origins in northern Uganda.

Naturally, young fathers, their wives, mentors, and community members at large must be able to relate to the materials if the REAL Fathers Initiative is to succeed. For that reason, you will want to review the core materials carefully, modify certain elements to suit the sociocultural context where you work, and pre-test your modifications with members of your intended audience(s).

In the pilot of REAL Fathers, we did not include sessions on family planning, though these were added to the scale-up. Due to timing of finalizing the materials, we included training on family planning in the Mentor Training during scale-up but the curriculum does not reflect this. The mentor visit protocol includes the family planning session and you can decide, based on your project goals, whether to include or note. See the box titled *Addition of a Family Planning Module* for additional information.

The REAL Fathers Women's Group Session were added to REAL Fathers scale up to gain involvement and support by wives and to understand how they experience the project. They were done near the end of the program, before community celebration.

Below, in a text box titled *Examples of Domains for Adaptation of the REAL Fathers Core Materials*, we discuss some of the domains where you may need to make adaptations to the core materials. We also offer examples of how we adapted the REAL Fathers core materials as we scaled the initiative in Uganda including when we brought the intervention to a different cultural region.

Examples of Domains for Adaptation of the REAL Core Materials *(and some adaptation examples from Uganda)*

Language

The REAL Fathers materials are in English.¹ You will need to translate all materials to the language that people speak at home, using words and phrases that convey familiar concepts. We advise that you *not* translate only to the country's official language (such as Spanish, Swahili, or French) unless young men and their spouses typically speak that language in their homes.

Use clear, simple vocabulary and clear, direct sentences. The REAL Fathers Initiative requires no technical vocabulary.

Profile of Young Fathers

In Step 6, you will invite young fathers to participate in REAL activities. First, however, you must define the profile of young men to invite. In Uganda, our criteria for inclusion for young fathers was:

- Aged between 16 and 25
- Father of a toddler between 1 and 3 years
- Married to, or cohabitating with, his female partner/wife

If demographics in your area vary significantly from the above (for example, if men marry later and begin parenting at an older age), you may consider altering the age range of participating fathers. This will offer the opportunity to learn how well REAL Fathers works with somewhat older men.

Images and Quotes

In all core materials, including Community Posters, replace our images with photos or illustrations that reflect your area: people's physical appearance, clothing, livelihoods and houses. The phrases accompanying posters can be adapted with language and messages that resonate with people in the community. It is important that participants recognize themselves in the REAL Fathers materials.

Activities

The basic activities that the REAL Fathers materials promote, such as discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and role plays, are universally familiar and appropriate. In some instances, however, you may wish to substitute local variations that your audience will understand, enjoy or engage in more easily. For example, our original materials used the idea of a yellow card to remind couples to take a 'time out' if their conversations escalated toward argument. The yellow card is from football, a popular sport in Northern Uganda. Football is not as familiar in Karamoja (the scale-up site), however, and the yellow card concept was not meaningful to participants. We substituted the image of a broken spear, which symbolized peace and de-escalation in that culture.

Examples of Domains for Adaptation of the REAL Core Materials (continued)
(and some adaptation examples from Uganda)

Community Norms and Behavior

The REAL Fathers materials reflect behaviors, norms, and practices that were typical in the communities where we worked, but may not be typical in your implementation area. For example, alcohol consumption is a common and expected male activity at social gatherings. Community members identified drunkenness as a significant factor in men's violence. If alcohol is not typically consumed where you work, you will want to modify the materials to reflect that. Understanding the local factors that uphold violence (Step 1) will help.

Literacy levels

Amuru District, where we piloted REAL Fathers, has a higher literacy level than Nakapiripit District, one of the scale-up sites. We therefore adjusted our materials* and methods to suit non-reading mentors who were unable to use the original Mentor Visit Protocol and Mentor Resource Sheets.

If you are working in an area where mentors are likely to be illiterate, review the REAL Fathers materials to identify every occasion where reading or writing ability is assumed. The below adjustments describe the changes that we made for the intervention in Nakapiripit to address lower literacy of the population including mentors.

- *Mentor training.* Divide the training into two parts so mentors do not need to memorize all information at once. For example, train mentors in Themes 1 through 4 as scheduled in these guidelines, and in Themes 5 through 9 midway through the implementation period.
- *Pair lower literacy mentors with higher literacy mentors.* We paired mentors by literacy level, rather than by neighborhood, to facilitate group meetings and increase support structures in the program.
- *Conduct group meetings first, and home visits second.* We switched the order of the mentors' work so that the lower literacy mentor gained practice with the materials during the group meeting, and could clarify points with the higher literacy mentor, before visiting each young father at home.
- *Replace Mentor Visit Protocol instructions with Key Questions for home visits.* Mentors with low literacy were not able to use the Mentor Visit Protocol during monthly home visits. Instead they came prepared with key questions about the month's theme to ask the young fathers.
- *Develop alternative ways to complete exercises where reading or writing is required.* During mentor training, facilitators talked through tasks instead of asking trainees to read. We capitalized on the area's strong oral traditions and used discussion instead of flip charts and other written aids. Likewise, we often used picture cards, rather than written words, as prompts.

*Note that the core materials linked to these guidelines are the low literacy versions we used in Karamojong.

As you adapt the REAL Fathers materials, we suggest that you engage your Advisory Team in two ways:

- Create a team of your staff and Advisory Team members to review core materials, consult community members on the materials' appropriateness, and propose adaptations in the categories described above.
- Bring the proposed adaptations to the full Advisory Team for their approval or further suggestions.

As you adapt core materials, pre-test them to ensure that information is clear, correct, and understood by participants.

STEP 5: Establish and Train a Mentor Training Team

Now that you have identified stakeholders, formed an Advisory Team, and adapted core REAL Fathers Initiative materials (including the Mentor Training Curriculum), it is time to establish and train a mentor training team. The established training team will participate with your staff as you undertake Steps 6, 7, and 8. The mentor training itself will occur in Step 9.

Your mentor training team will be composed of your staff and relevant, trusted local actors. The training team may include Advisory Team members, teachers, and especially those stakeholders who helped you adapt REAL Fathers materials to the local context. In general, mentor trainers should be well respected by officials and local leaders, and able to create linkages with other stakeholders to gain buy-in. Of course, all mentor trainers must:

- be good communicators
- have good facilitation skills (able to guide discussions, ensure learning)
- be able to interact with mentors as respected peers
- support violence prevention

Gather your mentor training team to spend approximately three days together to learn about the REAL Fathers Initiative, to gain and practice basic adult education skills, to familiarize themselves with REAL Fathers and the Mentor Training Curriculum (see link in Step 9) and other core resources, and to practice training sessions via role play.

STEP 6: Hold Community Introduction Meetings and Select Young Fathers

In Step 6, your staff and local allies will present the REAL Fathers Initiative to a group of eligible young fathers at a Community Introduction Meeting, and select participants from this group.

How you identify the pool of eligible men depends somewhat on if you are integrating REAL Fathers into an existing program, or implementing it as a stand-alone activity. In Nakapiripirit, we integrated REAL Fathers into an early childhood development project run by Save the Children. Therefore, our eligible pool consisted of fathers whose toddlers attended this early childhood development program. In the Amuru replication, we asked community-elected farmer leaders who were already engaged in a Save the Children agriculture program to identify eligible young men in their villages.

Whether you are integrating REAL into an existing intervention or not, it is likely that you began to identify new fathers during your survey of the stakeholder landscape (Step 2), formation of an Advisory Team (Step 3), and criteria-setting as part of materials adaptation (Step 4).

The community introduction meeting can be held in each community (e.g., village, neighborhood) where you plan to implement the REAL Fathers Initiative. Invite young fathers and their spouses to attend. Other invitees include local stakeholders such as administrators, customary and

As you identify and invite young men to a Community Introduction Meeting, bear in mind that you do not need to know if any specific individual is committing violence in the home.

In fact, it's best to invite new fathers to participate without describing this as a violence prevention intervention. Rather, emphasize the intervention's positive parenting aim. This program was designed with the assumption that *all* young fathers of toddlers can benefit from gaining communication and parenting skills and *all* young fathers can benefit from the support of mentors and peers to practice these skills.

As described in the Introduction and in Step 2, the REAL Fathers Initiative materials and activities make little mention of violence: instead, they develop and support positive practices without elevating violence to the forefront.

religious leaders, elders, and relevant service providers. You will have already introduced REAL Fathers to many of these stakeholders in Step 2.

After presenting the REAL Fathers Initiative, its activities and goals, invite young men to participate. Be careful to describe REAL Fathers as a parenting program, and to keep the focus on positive fathering rather than on violence prevention.

Make sure that fathers understand the timeline and their time commitments, and verify that they meet the eligibility criteria you defined when you adapted REAL Fathers materials (Step 4). We used a table (such as the sample below) to record basic information about eligible fathers.

Finally, begin to think about how to group three or four young fathers together to share a mentor: proximity (the men live in the same neighborhood) is one useful criterion for creating such groups, and mentors' literacy levels is another. You will ultimately group mentors (and the young fathers they serve) in Step 9.

Table 1: Sample Young Fathers Identification List					
Village: Fredonia A					
Name	Age	Child Age	Spouse Name	Neighborhood	Cell
Arsenio Folubro	22	2	Gava Lito	SW Sector	259 123 4567
Luko Mille	19	1, 3	Agina Mille	SW Sector	259 234 5678
Gannon Jone	18	1	Elean Ibro-Jone	SW Sector	259 345 5789
Cole Kona-Charn	24	2	Sinna Charn	Riverside East	259 456 7891
...
<i>*Details are fictitious</i>					

STEP 7: With Young Fathers, Nominate Mentors

Soon after the Community Introduction Meeting, gather the participating young fathers and their spouses to (a) select mentors and (b) create a community social map.

Explain the role of mentors in the REAL Fathers Initiative. Ask young couples to reflect on characteristics that would make a good mentor. You and your Advisory Team developed an initial list of mentor criteria as you adapted the core materials (Step 4). Share these with fathers and spouses, and ask for further suggestions.

Ask the fathers and their spouses to identify local men who fit the selected criteria. For each identified man, fathers should ask, *'would I trust him to teach me parenting and communication skills?'* and *'would I feel comfortable seeking advice from him?'* Record the names and locations of the identified mentors: you will invite them to participate in Step 8.

Finally, guide the young fathers and their wives to draw a social map of their community. (See References and Further Reading section for suggested guides to social mapping). Explain that the social map is a planning tool that will help you locate venues for group meetings and Community Posters, among other activities. Ask participants to draw major landmarks such as main roads, administrative centres, and market places. Then, ask young fathers to mark their own homes, the homes of the mentors they nominated, community meeting points, and locations where sign posts or community information boards are installed. Later, with your Advisory Team, you will visit these sites in each community, and select those best suited for group meetings and public display of posters.

In Uganda, participants defined a REAL Fathers mentor as someone who:

- is a father himself
- works hard to provide for his family
- never (or rarely) drinks alcohol
- is a good listener

STEP 8: Verify Mentors and Invite Them to Participate

Young fathers and their wives identified potential mentors in Step 7. In Step 8, you will:

- Verify with local leaders that the nominated mentors are suitable: that they are locally respected, and that their parenting and relationship history is consistent with the behaviors the project seeks to promote.
- Ask the nominated men if they are interested and able to be mentors in the REAL Fathers Initiative.

Table 2. Overview of Mentor Training	
<i>Training Day</i>	<i>Topic</i>
1	Understanding Gender Values and Norms
2	Happy Fathers, Happy Children
3	Happy Homes: Living in Peace
4	Putting It All Together: Practice Home Visits
5	Putting It All Together: Practice Group Meetings

After vetting each nominee, your staff will visit the mentor candidates, explain REAL Fathers and the mentoring role, and seek the men's consent to participate. Take particular care to discuss the time commitment that you expect of a mentor: the five-day training (Step 9), and the series of home visits and group meetings over seven months (Step 10 including Table X Indicative Calendar of Mentoring Activities). Note that if you divide the training into two parts, as we did in a lower literate area, then the time commitment should include two trainings of 5-days each.

STEP 9: Train Mentors

Mentor training occurs over five days. Your preparation for the training (or series of trainings, if your implementation area and/or your target population is large, or if your mentors have low literacy levels and you choose to train in phases) has already included adapting the REAL Fathers Mentor Training Curriculum to the local context, including translation (Step 4), and training of a mentor training team to use the curriculum (Step 5).

It is now time to:

- Select a convenient, comfortable training site
- Gather all training materials
- Organize meals and refreshments
- Organize lodging and transportation for trainers and/or mentors, if needed

Carry out the Mentor Training

The REAL Fathers Mentor Training uses the core resources:

- REAL Fathers Mentor Training Curriculum
- Mentor Visit Protocol
- Mentor Resource Sheets
- Women's Group Session Guide

All are available in the Annex.

The **Mentor Training Curriculum** includes a detailed agenda for each of the five days, objectives for each day's sessions, instructions for advance preparation and materials needed, information about the duration of each training element, and detailed training instructions for each session of each day. See Table 2 for an overview of the training.

Mentor Visit Protocol

The Mentor Visit Protocol is a detailed guide for each home visit and group meeting that mentors hold with young fathers. The Mentor Visit Protocol reminds the mentor of the month's theme (Table 3) and key thematic elements, and it offers guidance for discussion. It outlines activities and exercises, describes homework assignments, and suggests commitments (to selected actions) that a mentor can ask young fathers to make.

During the Mentor Training, you will distribute and use copies of the Mentor Visit Protocol on Day 4, and use them again on Day 5, as mentors practice home visits and group meetings. Each mentor will leave the Mentor Training with his own copy of the Mentor Visit Protocol.

After the training, mentors will use the Mentor Visit Protocol as a practical resource as they prepare for and conduct REAL Fathers activities (as described in Step 10). Importantly, the Mentor Visit Protocol helps ensure that REAL Fathers messages remain consistent across mentors, young fathers, and activities.

Use of the Mentor Visit Protocol is discussed again in Step 10.

Table 3. Themes of the REAL Fathers Initiative (described in Mentor Visit Protocol)	
1	Fatherhood
2	Tips & Tricks to Being a REAL Father
3	Family Dreams
4	Loving My Family
5	Communication
6	Parenting
Appendix	Family Planning (Optional)

Mentor Resource Sheets

The Mentor Visit Protocol contains a 'preparation' section to guide the mentor for each month's theme and activities. Several preparation sections tell the mentor to refer to a specific Mentor Resource Sheet. The Mentor Resource Sheets contain helpful hints for mentors as they implement home visits and group meetings. They give examples and guidance for the kind of behavior that the month's theme is promoting. For example, they may include conversational prompts that fathers can use with their children, alternative ways for parents to discipline children, and ideas for ways that fathers can play with and give positive reinforcement to children.

Use of the Mentor Resource Sheets is discussed again in Step 10.

Women's Group Session Guide

In a few home visits and group meetings, mentors will meet with young fathers *and* their partners/spouses. They will also hold a separate Women's Group Session after Session 6 through the mentoring calendar.

During our pilot end line evaluation in Uganda, a number of female spouses expressed concern about their exclusion from the mentoring activities. Despite their general knowledge of the purpose and content of REAL Fathers activities, they grew worried about what their husbands were learning, and saying to others, about life in the home. We therefore created a women's group session, with guided discussion on topics such as gender roles, communication, child discipline, and alcohol consumption.

This session keeps spouses informed of what their husbands are learning in the REAL Fathers activities. It helps them understand and support the parenting and communication skills that men are acquiring during mentoring sessions. Importantly, it provides your project with useful triangulation: the session opens with feedback from the women about how they understand REAL Fathers activities to date, as told to them by their husbands and/or as reflected in their husbands' behavior.

Use of the Women's Group Session Guide is mentioned again in Step 10.

REAL Fathers Posters

The purpose of the Real Fathers Posters is to inspire young fathers, and to present positive parenting and relationship messages for fathers and communities at large.

Each poster represents the theme of that month and is designed to support positive parenting and partnership skills. Each poster contains pre-tested images, and theme-related messages from the points of view of different family and community members. As discussed in Step 7 (social mapping exercise), the posters are hung in locations identified by young fathers (and ultimately chosen by your staff and the Advisory Team) in each community, with the purpose of catalyzing conversation. The group meetings are held around these posters to reinforce information and young fathers' commitments to new ideas and behaviors. (Note: rural areas often have no suitable structures on which to hang posters: you may need to budget for poster stakes/holders.)

The posters we used in Uganda appear within the Mentor Visit Protocol: each is followed by an English translation of the poster's messages. Note that we added Family Planning (Theme 6) in the middle of scaling up the intervention, and did not create a corresponding poster. You may want to make a Family Planning poster for your project.

After you create posters with adapted images and text to suit your context (Step 4), your project will print the posters and distribute them to mentors. Mentors then hang and use each thematic poster in its corresponding group meeting location. The posters remain hung in public for all to see throughout the month.

Use of the REAL Fathers Posters is discussed again in Step 10.

Develop Mentor Activity Schedules and Match Mentors

Before you close the Mentor Training, work with mentors to draft a calendar of their REAL Fathers activities over the next seven months. See **Table 4 Indicative Calendar of REAL Fathers Mentoring Activities** in Step 10.

Note that each *individual* mentor will need to take several actions every month:

1. Review the monthly theme in the Mentor Visit Protocol and Mentor Resource Sheet(s).
2. Visit each of his three or four young fathers individually at home to discuss the monthly theme.

Each individual mentor will be matched to one or two other mentor. Every month, each *pair or trio* of mentors will:

3. Schedule and conduct the monthly group meeting, to be held at the community-selected site where the REAL Fathers posters will also be displayed.

Additionally, the women's group session should add this to their activities.

You and the mentors will need to decide how, logically, to create pairs or trios of mentors: one obvious criterion is geographic proximity to each other and to the fathers each man mentors. If some mentors do not read and write, you may wish to pair low literacy mentors with high literacy members (as discussed in Step 4).

Each mentor will use his draft calendar of activities (Step 10) as a planning guide. Though mentor plans may look similar, this structured activity is to help mentors commit to when they will meet fathers and complete these activities within the monthly time frame. As implementation proceeds, the mentor will make precise, fixed appointments with young fathers and other mentors for home visits and group meetings.

Implement the REAL Fathers Initiative

STEP 10: Mentors Conduct Home Visits and Group Meetings

It is now time for mentors to work with young fathers (and their spouses) over approximately seven months. During this period, your organization's role is to provide supportive supervision as needed, and to monitor the mentors' work (Step 11).

Inception Visit

Each mentor will visit each young father and his spouse in their home for an introductory visit. The overarching purpose of the visit is to validate the couple's commitment to participate in the REAL Fathers initiative.

In each case, the mentor will discuss the purpose of REAL Fathers, deepening the couple's understanding of information they learned during the meetings in Steps 6 and 7. He will reiterate that the young father was not selected because he is deemed a bad father: rather, all young fathers and spouses can benefit from positive parenting support and communication skills. The mentor will outline activities, time commitments, and roles.

Inclusion of the spouse in this introductory home visit is essential: she should feel comfortable that REAL Fathers *will not* disrupt her household or expose its private concerns to the community.

Mentors will refer to the **Mentor Visit Protocol** for guidance on how to prepare for the introductory visit, and information on its purpose and thematic content.

Home Visits

Approximately every four weeks thereafter, the mentor will make a home visit with each of the three or four young fathers assigned to him. The mentor and the father (and, in later months, the young father and his spouse/partner) will discuss the theme of the month, and engage in an appropriate activity such as role-playing to build new skills. The mentor will assign 'homework' to the father or couple.

Mentors will refer to the **Mentor Visit Protocol** (and, as instructed in the Mentor Visit Protocol, the **Mentor Resource Sheets**) for guidance on how to prepare for and implement the home visits.

As discussed in Step 4, where literacy is low (as it was in Nakapiripirit, Uganda), your project may decide to reverse the order of mentor activities: group meetings precede home visits.

Group Meetings

At the close of each month, pairs or trios of mentors will hold group meetings with young fathers (and in some cases, with their spouses) at the pre-designated community site. Group meetings create the opportunity for young fathers to jointly reflect on and practice newly learned information and skills.

The group meetings take place at the pre-selected location, and mentors will have hung the month's poster in advance. This way, the group can easily discuss the poster according to the Mentor Visit Protocol, and community members will see the poster as it remains throughout the month.

Just as home visits often close with a homework assignment, group meetings often close with *commitments*, in which young fathers publicly pledge to practice behaviors that correspond to the month's theme.

Mentors will refer to the **Mentor Visit Protocol** (and, as instructed in the Mentor Visit Protocol, the **Mentor Resource Sheets**) for guidance on how to prepare for and implement the group meetings.

Women's Session

During the sixth month of implementation, mentors will hold a group meeting with spouses/partners of young men. See the **Women's Session Guide** for suggested topics to cover in the meeting, and ways to solicit women's feedback about their husband's participation in REAL activities.

Indicative Calendar of REAL Father Mentoring Activities

Table 4 indicates how a mentor's work will proceed over approximately seven months. It shows monthly themes, home visits, group meetings, and community posters, over the seven-month mentoring period.

Table 4 Indicative Calendar of REAL Fathers Mentoring Activities

Color Key

Home Visits	Young Fathers and Spouses	Young Fathers Only	
Group Meetings	Young Fathers and Spouses	Young Fathers Only	Spouses Only
Community Celebration	Community at Large		

Theme	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Community Poster
Inception Visits								-
1. Fatherhood								My Son Is a REAL Father!
2. Tips & Tricks to Being a REAL Father								My Dad is a REAL Father!
3. Family Dreams								My Friend is a REAL Father!
4. Loving My Family								I am a REAL Father!
5. Communication								My Husband is a REAL Father!
6. Family Planning								N/A
Women's Session								N/A
7. Parenting								
Community Celebration								REAL Fathers Bring Our Community Hope!

STEP 11: Provide Supportive Supervision and Monitoring

Supportive Supervision

Your staff, and members of the Advisory Team, will offer supportive supervision to mentors as they perform their monthly tasks with individual fathers and groups of fathers. You will want to create a supervision and monitoring calendar that closely tracks the activity calendars of the mentors themselves.

Supportive supervision is an essential piece of the mentorship activities: you will regularly check in with mentors as they proceed; advise them and offer assistance if they experience difficulties or need prompts as they work with young fathers. This may include reminding mentors, if needed, of their visiting and meeting schedule, and of the importance of being on time. You may help them remember elements of the training curriculum, and how they apply to the monthly themes. Finally, you and your Advisory Team will collect and review monitoring data.

Monitoring

Routine monitoring data will help you and your Advisory Team track REAL Fathers implementation. Both monitoring and supportive supervision will help you ascertain that information is being transmitted with fidelity, and that mentors, fathers, and spouses understand and are practicing new skills and behaviors. The monitoring system you create should, of course, mesh with the M&E structure that your organization already uses. If you are integrating REAL Fathers into an existing program, take special care to blend indicators, forms, and monitoring tasks for maximum efficiency and clarity.

In Uganda, we created and used three simple forms to monitor REAL Fathers activities:

- the Mentor Home Visit form, which mentors filled after each home visit with young fathers
- the Mentor Group Meeting form, which mentors filled after each group meeting with young fathers
- the Staff Observation form, which staff filled while observing a sample of mentor interactions with young fathers (home visits and group meetings).

We collected the two types of mentor forms monthly (Mentor Home Visit form, Mentor Group Meeting form), and entered information into a simple monitoring database (the table below shows the indicators we tracked). Data from all three types of form, but especially the Staff Observation forms, showed us where supportive supervision or coaching of mentors was required. In other words, while staff observers provided on-the-spot coaching to mentors at the close of each observed interaction, monitoring data helped us detect unobserved anomalies, problems common to several or all mentors, and the need for more structured support.

Table 5: REAL Fathers Initiative Indicators* Used in Uganda	
Mentor Home Visit	# individual sessions, session themes conducted, attendees, partners attending
	% mentor following protocol, homework assignment, ease of material use
	% fathers perceived to understand messages, perceived enjoyment of session, completed homework
Mentor Group Meeting	# group sessions, attendees, spouses attending, mentors/fathers completing all session topics
Staff Observation	# sessions observed (by session theme)
	% mentors able to facilitate, to answer questions appropriately, to encourage participation
	% participants understand instructions, speak, response to session
*indicators are disaggregated by community and session theme where applicable	

In addition to routine monitoring, and to any routine reporting your organization or donor requires, your staff should be alert to interesting stories arising from REAL activities. In Uganda, we wrote a series of case stories about

changes that participants made (in attitude or behavior, at home or in community) as a result of exposure to the REAL Fathers Initiative.

Let Us Know: Building a Body of Evidence for the REAL Fathers Initiative

It was the promising performance of the REAL Fathers Initiative in Uganda that led Save the Children and IRH to create these guidelines. At present, our knowledge of REAL Fathers' effectiveness is limited to our experiences in Uganda. We are most interested to learn about how the initiative fares in other countries and cultural contexts, and under the management of other organizations and stakeholders.

Please feel free to contact us and to share your stories and reports of REAL implementation and results.

Resources and Further Reading

Publications on the REAL Fathers Initiative

At the time of writing these guidelines, the following publications on REAL Fathers are available. You may want to look for additional articles and briefs to see if there are new publications developed after these Guidelines.

These publications are listed below and are available on the IRH website (<http://irh.org/projects/real-fathers-initiative/>)

- REAL Fathers Pilot Brief
- REAL Fathers Pilot Results Brief
- REAL Fathers Scale-Up Brief

Peer Review Publications

1. Ashburn K, Kerner, B, Ojamuge D, Lundgren R. Evaluation of the Responsible, Engaged and Loving (REAL) Fathers Initiative on Physical Child Punishment and Intimate Partner Violence in Northern Uganda. *Prevention Science* 2017; 18 (7): 854-864.
2. Exploring opportunities for coordinated responses to intimate partner violence and child maltreatment in low and middle income countries: a scoping review. *Psychology, Health and Medicine* 2017; 22(Sup1): 1-31.

References and Suggested Resources

From Preparation Step 1

Demographic and Health Surveys. <https://www.dhsprogram.com>

UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) https://www.unicef.org/statistics/index_24302.html

United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. UN Study on Violence Against Children. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Study/Pages/StudyViolenceChildren.aspx>

World Health Organization. Global Status Report on Violence Prevention 2014.

https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/status_report/2014/report/report/en/

From Preparation Step 7

IRH's *Tekponon Jikouagou Guide to Community Social Mapping* (available at

http://familyplanning.care2share.wikispaces.net/file/view/TJ_Guide_to_Community_Social_Mapping_ENG.pdf)

CARE's *Social Analysis and Action Guide* (available at

http://www.care.org/sites/default/files/documents/social_analysis_manual.pdf)

REAL Fathers Initiative Core Materials

REAL Fathers Mentor Training Curriculum

REAL Fathers Mentor Visit Protocol

REAL Fathers Mentor Resource Sheets

REAL Fathers Women's Group Session Guide

References

- Ashburn, K., B. Kerner, et al. (2017). "Evaluation of the Responsible, Engaged, and Loving (REAL) Fathers Initiative on Physical Child Punishment and Intimate Partner Violence in Northern Uganda." Prevention Science **18**(7): 854-864.
- Bacchus, L. J., M. Colombini, et al. (2017). "Exploring opportunities for coordinated responses to intimate partner violence and child maltreatment in low and middle income countries: a scoping review." Psychology, Health and Medicine **22**(Sup 1): 135-165.
- McAllister, F., A. Burgess, et al. (2012). *Fatherhood: Parenting programmes and policy - a critical review of best practice*. London/Washington, D.C. , Fatherhood Institute, Promundo, MenCare.
- United Nations Children's Fund (2017). *A Familiar Face: Violence in the lives of children and adolescents*. New York, UNICEF.
- World Health Organization (2007). *Engaging men and boys in changing gender-based inequity in health: Evidence from programme interventions*. Geneva.