



MenEngage

working with men and boys for gender equality

Tanzania



STATE OF THE TANZANIA'S FATHERS (SOTFs) REPORT

Uncovering Men's Engagement in Parenting, Child Protection,
and Gender Equality in Tanzania

Summary Report
June 2021

MenEngage Network Tanzania (MET)

The MenEngage Network Tanzania (MET) is an umbrella network of 36 community-based organizations interested in working with men and boys to promote children and women rights in Tanzania. MET works through partnerships with likeminded organizations to promote women's rights, children's rights, gender equality, access and acquisition of SRH services, positive masculinities and fatherhood. Furthermore, the network strives at promoting strong working relations with women and youth movements as well as local government and national government officials. The objectives of the MenEngage Tanzania are:

- To promote inter- and intra-network collaboration between MenEngage partner organizations on issues related to engaging men and boys for gender equality, health and human rights;
- To improve capacity of MenEngage partner organizations to engage men and boys for gender equality, health and human rights;
- To strengthen coordination among MenEngage partner organizations, government. Development partners and stakeholders at all levels; and
- To mobilize constituencies of MenEngage partner organization for common advocacy goals.

MET uses research and information sharing, joint trainings, policy audit and advocacy at local, national, regional and international levels, and community mobilization in accomplishing its mission.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study's objective was to explore the level of Tanzanian men's engagement in parenting, caregiving, Child Rights Protection (CRP), promoting gender equality, and preventing Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

The focus on fatherhood stems from its importance as an entry-point to address gender inequality, particularly cycles of violence such as Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) and Violence Against Children (VAC). To achieve transformative and sustainable social change around gender equality and equitable involvement of male caregivers is not only important, but necessary.

This study was qualitatively conducted in 9 regions of Tanzania Mainland, involving 63 participants: 52 parents equally distributed between mothers and fathers, 5 Government officials and 6 representatives from NGOs. Moreover, documentary review was used to collect secondary data. It is important to note that this is the first time that such study has been conducted in Tanzania.

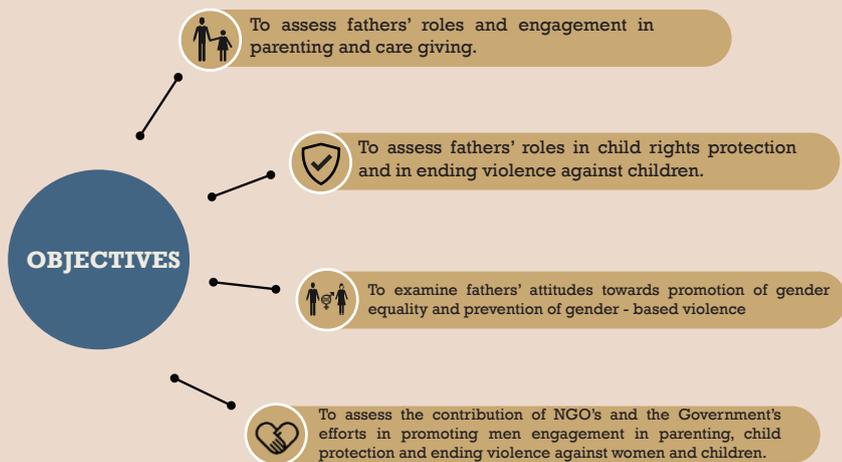


INTRODUCTION

This is a report of the state of fathers' engagement in parenting, child rights protection, and promoting gender equality in Tanzania, which is based on a qualitative study conducted in nine regions of Tanzania in 2020. It focused on fathers because fatherhood is a critical transitional point in the lives of men during which gender norms and attitudes are deeply entrenched. In addition, fatherhood is a critical opportunity and entry-point for contesting biased norms, promoting gender equality, working on couples' relationships, and supporting men's long-term involvement in children's lives. Having fathers fully engaged in promoting gender equality and raising their children helps in transforming the biased norms and cement a new reality in which men model and promote gender equality in their communities and societies. This report builds on evidence generated to strengthen the understanding of what it means to be a man, and a father, in Tanzania.

The report is timely in light of the launch of the new 2021 State of the World's Fathers – a look at the structural dimensions of father engagement that accounts for the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the dynamics of masculinity and fatherhood. Fathers' engagement in ensuring gender equality and equity in the society is currently becoming a topical agenda across the globe. The main reasons for this have been the prevalence of gender inequalities and abuse in different aspects of life such as family work distribution and work opportunities (UN General Assembly, 1989).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY



METHODOLOGY

This study was a qualitative research that uncovered the extent of fathers' involvement in parenting, caregiving, Child Rights Protection (CRP), prevention of GBV and promotion of gender equality. It was carried out in nine regions of Tanzania Mainland, confined purposively in regions where Men Engage Tanzania (MET) Network organisations operate: Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, Dodoma, Mara, Shinyanga, Mwanza, Arusha, Kagera and Tanga.

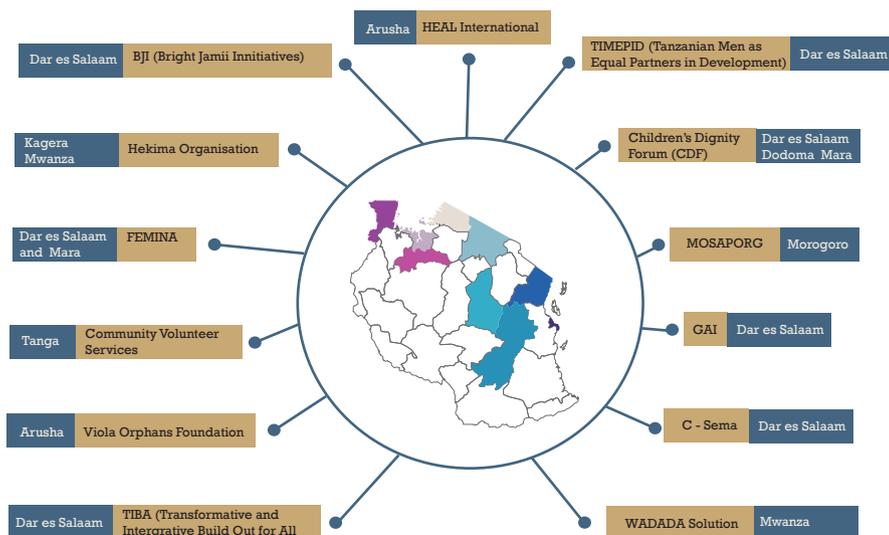


Figure 1: Map of selected regions where the study was conducted linked to MET organisations

A total of 63 participants from 13 districts selected from the nine regions were recruited and interviewed: 52 parents equally distributed between mothers and fathers in each district, i.e. 2 mothers and 2 fathers per district.

Additionally, 6 representatives from MET organisations and 5 Government officials were sampled and interviewed on their perceptions towards men's participation in parenting, promoting child rights and gender equality, and preventing GBV.

Findings indicated that men have recently become increasingly engaged in parenting matters than in the past.



KEY FINDINGS

4.1 COMMUNITY ATTITUDES AND NORMS ABOUT PARENTING ROLES DISTRIBUTION BY GENDER

The findings give evidence that parenting and caregiving roles in Tanzania are still regarded as women's responsibilities. This suggests that more sensitisation and educational interventions are needed to change the situation for collaborative parenting and caregiving within the family.

“In a big perspective, women still have a huge responsibility compared to men. Women have many responsibilities expected of them by the community and the family. They have a lot of responsibilities including making sure that they know the whole welfare of the family and that of children such as going to school as well taking children to hospital when are sick.”

4.1.1 Personal Attitudes towards Parenting Roles Distribution by Gender in Families

Generally, the results indicated that men have recently become increasingly engaged in parenting matters than in the past. These changes are partly due to the contribution of NGOs and other stakeholders.

Yet, some respondents perceived some men are not good enough in parenting though they provide material supports for their families. It was narrated that:

“There is poor parenting roles distribution between men and women. Men do not think about their families. They are capable of working to get money for beer but not to take care of the family... in my view, it is better to have equal parenting roles...”

4.1.2 Men's Participation in Prenatal Care

There was mixed viewpoint on the state of men's participation in prenatal care. Majority of interviewed fathers stated that they participate in different activities when their wives are pregnant. The findings based on fathers' responses are summarised in figure 2;

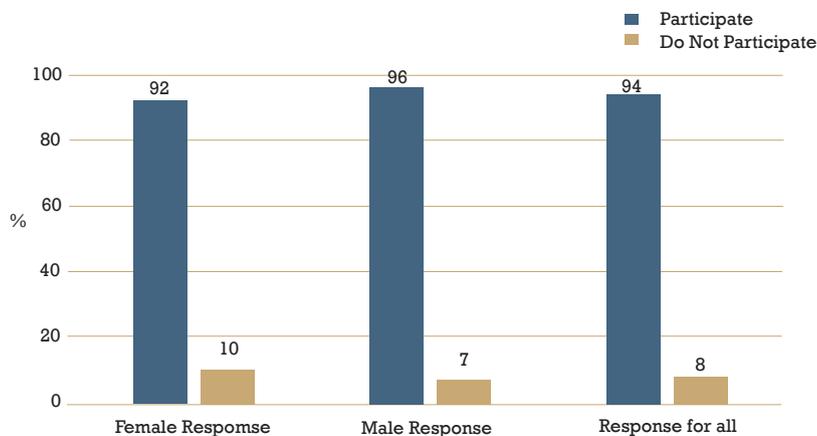


Figure 2: Participants' Responses on Fathers' Participation in Prenatal Care

In addition, majority of female respondents cherished the care and support they received from their husbands during pregnancy. This is a clear indication that men do care for their wives during pregnancy.

"I take my wife to hospital during pregnancy but what I see in the community when the mother is pregnant... it is difficult for the husband to go with his wife for prenatal clinics... I have seen this in many families when the mother becomes pregnant... even when she is about to give birth it is difficult for the husband to shoulder the domestic chores... otherwise they hire a house helper... this is also very common in the villages."

4.1.3 Men's Participation in Postnatal Care

Comparatively, male engagement in postnatal care was expressed to be lower than in prenatal care. In this view, parenting of children is left to mothers in most families.

4.1.4 Men's Participation in Child Care and Parenting Duties in Families

Men are regarded as heads of families and they have to work to provide for them.

4.1.5 Mothers' Satisfaction with Men's Engagement in Child Care

Men's engagement in inclusive parenting was viewed as low which requires intervention to improve. As indicated in Figure 3, majority of mothers were not satisfied with fathers' engagement in child care.

**“a child should live
in an environment
free from abuse”**



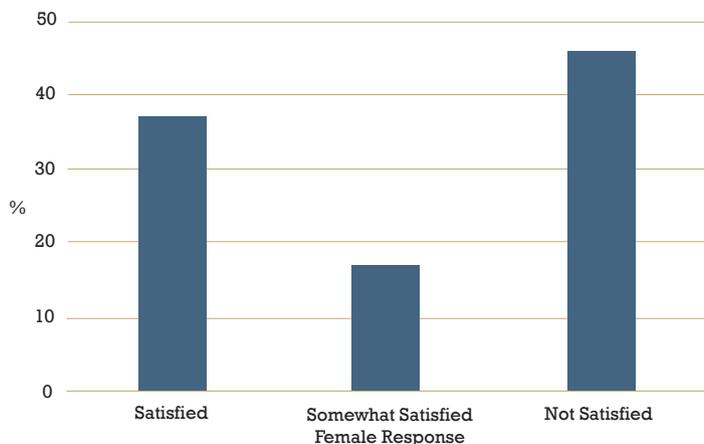


Figure 3: Mothers' Responses on their Satisfaction with Fathers' Engagement in Child Care

4.1.6 Contribution of NGOs on Gender Inclusive Parenting

Generally, respondents appreciated that NGOs have played a great role in changing the attitudes of fathers with regard to parenting.

"They have a great contribution! For NGOs being there, at least people are aware that parenting is a responsibility of all"

4.2 MEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN CHILD RIGHTS PROTECTION AND ENDING VAC

The following are the findings on the level of Tanzanian men's engagement in CRP and in ending VAC.

4.2.1 Perception of Child Rights Protection

Overall, majority of respondents reported having good knowledge of basic child rights.

"... a child should live in an environment free from abuse; a child should have access to education and health services, clothing, food, and opportunity to play."

4.2.2 Community Attitude on Child Rights Protection

Respondents expressed mixed perceptions regarding CRP. The majority of respondents reported that the community does not have a positive attitude towards CRP. Conversely, other respondents confirmed that the community has positive attitude towards CRP.

“My community is somehow informed about CRP. Children in my community have opportunity to play in a well supervised environment by parents who are there to provide help and support to any child in the community. In my community a child belongs to the community and all adults are responsible.”

4.2.3 Respondents' Attitude towards CRP and Ending VAC

The majority of respondents expressed favourable attitude towards CRP. This gives credit to efforts by stakeholders and the Government in promoting CRP and ending VAC

4.2.4 Men's Involvement in CRP and Ending VAC

Similarly, the findings indicated that fathers are well involved in promoting CRP and ending VAC in different ways. They are involved in several activities such as standing up for the child; providing basic needs, education and advice to the child; reporting to responsible authorities on matters pertaining to CRP and VAC; looking after child safety and health; and developing positive parent-child relationship, as shown in Figure 4:

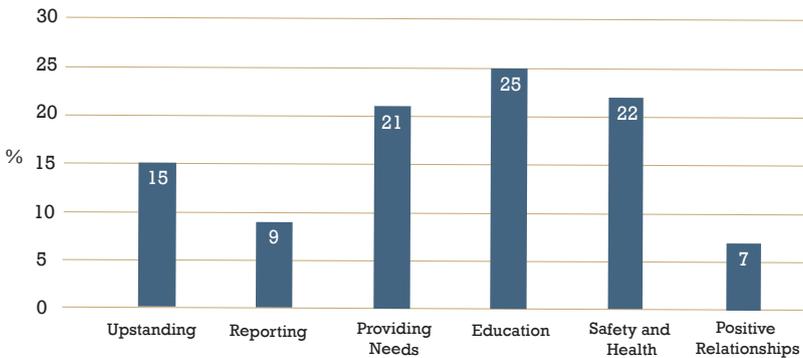


Figure 4: Fathers' Involvement in CRP and ending VAC

4.2.5 Who is Responsible for Child Rights Protection and Ending VAC?

The findings indicated three kinds of respondents' opinions regarding parents' roles and responsibilities on CRP and ending VAC:

The study found out that 62 percent of respondents (Mothers) were satisfied with the level of fathers' involvement in CRP and ending VAC.



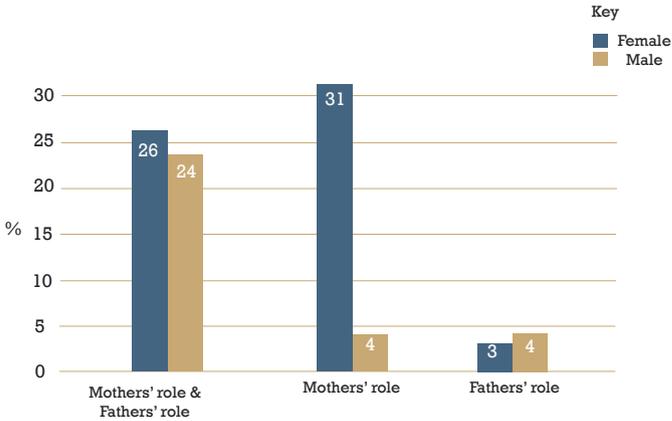


Figure 5: Responsibility in CRP and Ending VAC by Gender

4.2.6 Mothers' Satisfaction on the Level of Tanzanian Fathers' Involvement in CRP and Ending VAC

The study found out that 62 percent of respondents were satisfied with the level of fathers' involvement in CRP and ending VAC.

Since the issue of CRP is still a concern in Tanzanian society, further awareness and education on inclusive parenting, CRP and ending VAC is required. Additionally, a scale-up of evidence-based interventions by the Government and other stakeholders, including NGOs, was recommended.

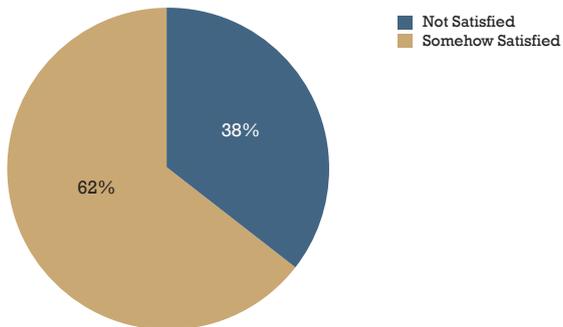


Figure 6: Mothers' Satisfaction with Fathers' involvement in CRP and Ending VAC

4.2.7. Contribution of NGOs on Fathers' Involvement in CRP and Ending VAC

The findings indicated that NGOs play a significant role in promoting child rights and ending VAC. However, more efforts are needed to increase their impact.

4.2.8 Government Efforts in Promoting CRP and Ending VAC

There have been commendable efforts in promoting CRP and ending different forms of VAC by the Government of Tanzania. In particular, the Government has established:

- Laws and legislations, policies, plans and programmes on child protection, such as The Law of Child Act (LCA; 2009) which clearly defines who is a child and his/her basic rights. Some of the rights stipulated in the LCA include right to life, survival, development, not to be discriminated, participation, protection, and identity.
- The Government, in collaboration with stakeholders developed a National Plan of Action to end Violence against Women and Children (NPA-VAWC, 2017-2022).

4.3 MEN'S ENGAGEMENT IN PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND PREVENTING GBV

The third objective of this study was to explore fathers' participation in promoting gender equality and preventing GBV in families and communities in Tanzania. Specifically, different subthemes were covered as indicated in the next sub-section.

4.3.1. Perception of Gender Equality and GBV

The findings about the perception of gender equality and GBV from both male and female respondents in this study indicated a good understanding on what key issues are required if one needs to define and identify gender equality.

"Gender equality may refer to the state of equality in roles distributions between men and women at family and community level which demand for both gender having equal chance of gain and not giving much priority to only one gender."

4.3.2. Community Attitudes towards Gender Equality and GBV

Respondents' comments on gender equality and GBV, indicated that there is prevalence of negative attitude in the community about gender equality and GBV.

Forced marriage, female genital mutilation and forced sexual practices are emphasized as the common types of GBVs in families.



"...there is serious gender imbalance in the community practice which tell the presence of negative community attitude towards distribution of different rights, responsibilities and opportunities for decision making. Majority of community members still hold that decision making in the family matters should be hosted in the hands of men as final decision makers and women act as advisors."

4.3.3 Knowledge on the Elements of Gender Equality

Concerning gender equality, respondents depicted good level of understanding the elements which are useful in telling the presence or absence of gender equality.

"...what I know is that, gender equality is evidenced by the state where by no one is above the other between men and women. That means, there should be no discrimination in terms of asserts ownership, opportunities for education and in any rights available in the family and community"

4.3.4 Knowledge on the Elements of GBV

During the interviews, respondents emphasised that the common types of GBV in families and communities include forced marriage, female genital mutilation and forced sexual practices.

"GBV is evident through different actions which are expressed in the community through forced marriage, female genital mutilation and forced sexual actions which are commonly done by men to women or girls."

4.3.5 Government Recommendations on the State of Men's Engagement in Gender Equality

The findings from the Government officials indicate that the Government considers seriously, the engagement of men in promoting gender equality and protecting community members from any form of GBV.

"The Government of Tanzania recommends the good efforts by different stakeholders to engage men in promoting gender equality. To support the effort in combination with its plans, the Government has plans to ensure that gender equality in the society is promoted. Through this mission, it has enacted laws, bylaws and different policies that will protect and promote equality of Men and Women within the society."

4.3.6 Satisfaction on Men's Engagement in Promoting Gender Equality and Preventing GBV

It was revealed that the majority of women in families are not satisfied with men's engagement in promoting gender equality and preventing GBV. Consequently, they recommended more education and sensitisation on the issues.

"I am completely not satisfied with men engagement in promoting gender equality and preventing GBV. This is due to the fact that, majority of men are perpetrators of gender violence and very few of them are supporting to improve the situation"

4.3.7 The Role of NGOs in Promoting Gender Equality and Preventing GBV

It was revealed that NGOs are doing a commendable job in provision of education and community awareness to improve gender equality. In general, the responses can be summarized as indicated in figure 9.

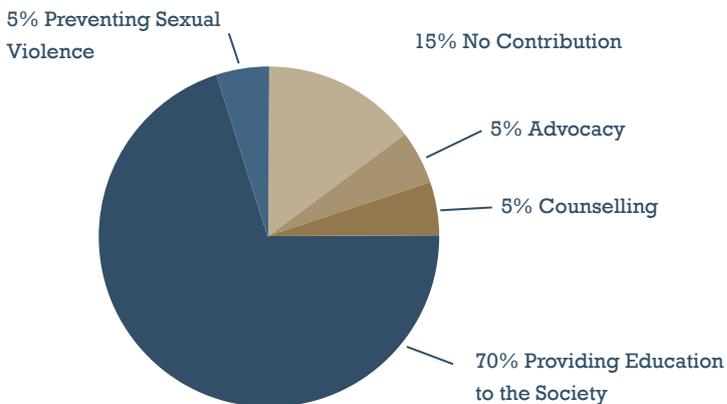


Figure 9: Role played by NGOs in promoting fathers' engagement in gender equality and preventing GBV

Based on the findings of this study;

Inclusive parenting and parenting roles distribution in Tanzania need to be intensively and extensively explored.



CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study:

- Parenting is the role of both parents—father and mother. However, the reality is that socio-cultural orientations impact on how the roles are distributed among parents.
- Inclusive parenting and parenting roles distribution in Tanzania need to be intensively and extensively explored.
- With the increase of women empowerment and less dependency of women to men, women are now taking jobs that keep them away from homes, as a result a lot of children care is left to house helpers.
- In contexts where both parents are leaving home early in the morning and coming late in the evening, there should be alternative ways of caring for children.
- Moreover, this study has shown that fathers apply different strategies in CRP and ending VAC including standing up for the children, providing basic needs, education and advice, reporting to relevant authorities on matters pertaining to CRP and VAC, promoting positive parent-child relationships, and ensuring child safety and health.
- Community members appear to have general knowledge about gender equality, though their attitude remains an obstacle.
- With this in mind, a holistic approach targeting both men and women is required in addressing issues of gender equality and preventing GBV in the society.
- It was further noted that gender equality and GBV related programs, plans, and interventions being implemented by the Government and NGOs are satisfactory, though limited in terms of coverage and efficiency in bringing about the desired changes in attitude and behaviour.

RECOMENDATIONS

1. Amendment of paternity laws, policies and regulations. Given that a large number of both fathers and mothers leave family for paid work, there is a need to have a comprehensive Labour Law that provides men with adequate and longer paternity leave to take an active role in parenting and child care.
2. It is recommended to increase efforts and resources for effective implementation of existing laws, policies, and regulations, and develop new ones that would enhance collaborative parenting and caregiving.
3. There is need for comprehensive, coordinated and holistic response services to GBV and VAC, including improving services rendered by duty bearers, such as police gender and children desks.
4. There is a need for Gender Transformative Approach in the context of couple's interventions to build men's and women's understanding and skills to envision and enact more equitable dynamics in their partnerships and parenting.
5. Specific and culturally relevant interventions are required to challenge socio-cultural barriers prohibiting collaborative parenting and caregiving.
6. NGOs should increase visibility and scale up evidence-based interventions on parenting, CRP, gender equality, and VAWC to remote or rural areas, and ensure sustainability.
7. There is a need to integrate topics of parenting, CRP, gender equality, and prevention of GBV and VAC in school curricular.
8. It is important to consider children and young people, as future parents, in conducting similar forthcoming studies.

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