



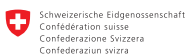
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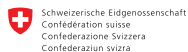
# State of the World's Fathers – Balkan Review –



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# State of the World` Fathers

— Balkan Review —



Men **Care**

## State of the World` Fathers

### — Balkan Review —

CARE International Balkans as part of its gender equality and women's empowerment strategy works to engage men and boys to address gender based violence and gender inequalities that harm women and girls, men and boys. Since 2006 CARE has worked to challenge prevailing social norms that can contribute to violence and limit women and girls full access to their human rights. In our work with young men we have sought to promote more positive and healthy concepts of masculinity and to engage young men as allies in achieving gender equality.

In working to address broader social norms and address gender justice across communities in the Balkan regions, we believe more needed to be done to promote a more equitable shift in family relationships and responsibilities that start before children enter school. Through our work with the Men Care campaign, we sought to promote men's involvement as equitable, nonviolent fathers and caregivers in order to achieve family well-being, gender equality, and better health for mothers, fathers, and children. We aim for men to be allies in supporting women's social and economic equality, in part by taking on more responsibility for childcare and domestic work. We believe that true equality will only be reached when men

are taking on 50 percent of the child care and domestic work around the world.

The first of its kind State of the World Fathers Report launched in June 2015 in 10 cities around the world, provides a periodic, data-driven snapshot of the state of men's contributions to parenting and caregiving globally by addressing four issues related to fatherhood: unpaid care work in the home; sexual and reproductive health and rights, and maternal, newborn, and child health; men's caregiving and violence against children and women; and child development.

Men's positive involvement in the lives of their partners and children creates a global opportunity for equality, and it benefits women, children, and men themselves. Engaging men as involved fathers can lead to improved maternal and child health, stronger and more equitable partner relations, a reduction in violence against women and children, and lifelong benefits for daughters and sons. Research has shown that men's involvement as caregivers also has benefits for them: it makes them better fathers, improves their intimate relationships, and enhances their quality of life.

This report is designed to highlight findings and recommendations from the Glob-

al Report and highlight existing data and policies from the South eastern Europe / Balkans (Albania, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo). As part of the process we conducted a policy review from the region, focus group with fathers and engaged with policy makers, researchers and NGO professionals to develop key policy recommendations as part of the first regional conference on fatherhood and care giving organized in Sarajevo from November 11-13th , 2015. As a result of this conference, many government policy makers involved in gender equality have made commitments to include some of the recommendations on gender equitable fatherhood and care giving into existing or new strategies being developed. The sustainable development goals (SDG's) provide a level of support and accountability for policy makers to come together with researchers and gender justice activists to address gender equality, violence against women and children through the development of policies that enhance human rights and the well-being of families.

We hope this report provide support for researchers, policy makers and NGO's to come together to improve policies and develop concrete actions that benefit women, men, children and all families in the

region. We look forward to working with you on the next steps to address fatherhood and care giving and its contributions to gender equality.

Our greatest thanks goes to Parents' association for promotion and support to responsible parenthood "Nest" from Belgrade whose consultants Aleksandra Galonja and Tanja Azanjac Janjatovic greatly contributed to the development of this report, as well as to Mr. Elvis Kralj, activist from Cakovec who shared with us his parenting experiences. We would also like to express our gratitude to Promundo, Rutgers, Save the Children, Sonke Gender Justice and the MenEngage Alliance for the summary of the State of the World Fathers that was incorporated in this document.

*CARE International Balkans*





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# The State Of Fatherhood In Balkans

Introduction >

Ongoing efforts to understand the role of men in achieving gender equality and serving the rights and well-being of the child, and specifically the issue that directly affect child health, educational achievement, socialization, and general welfare of children; as well as men perspective on gender roles and women's rights in general; lead to initiatives which strive to promote enhancement of the positive roles of men in the lives of children and balanced roles and responsibilities within households.

CARE's *Boys and Men as Allies in Violence Prevention and Gender Transformation in the Western Balkans* or *Young Men Initiative* (YMI) project is such an initiative. Implemented in Croatia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia, the project targets young men in deconstructing the challenges they face, particularly around certain social and cultural norms around masculinity. Addressing gender norms both in terms of promoting gender equality and addressing some behavior risks young men face around health and violence requires engaging with boys and young men (men throughout society) to address attitudes, beliefs and actions that impact boys and men's (and girls' and women's) choices.

In order to set a baseline in the regional effort to promote gender equality by recognizing the importance of active engagement of men in promoting and achieving gender equality, this paper contains a review of regional policies and practices which recognize the actual shift in contextualization of gender issues as exclusively – women issues. As one of the best examples of this shift is responsible fatherhood, its recognition in the regional political practices, could serve as a roadmap for wide promotion of the gender equality as the responsibility of the society as whole, and not as a 'women concern' only.

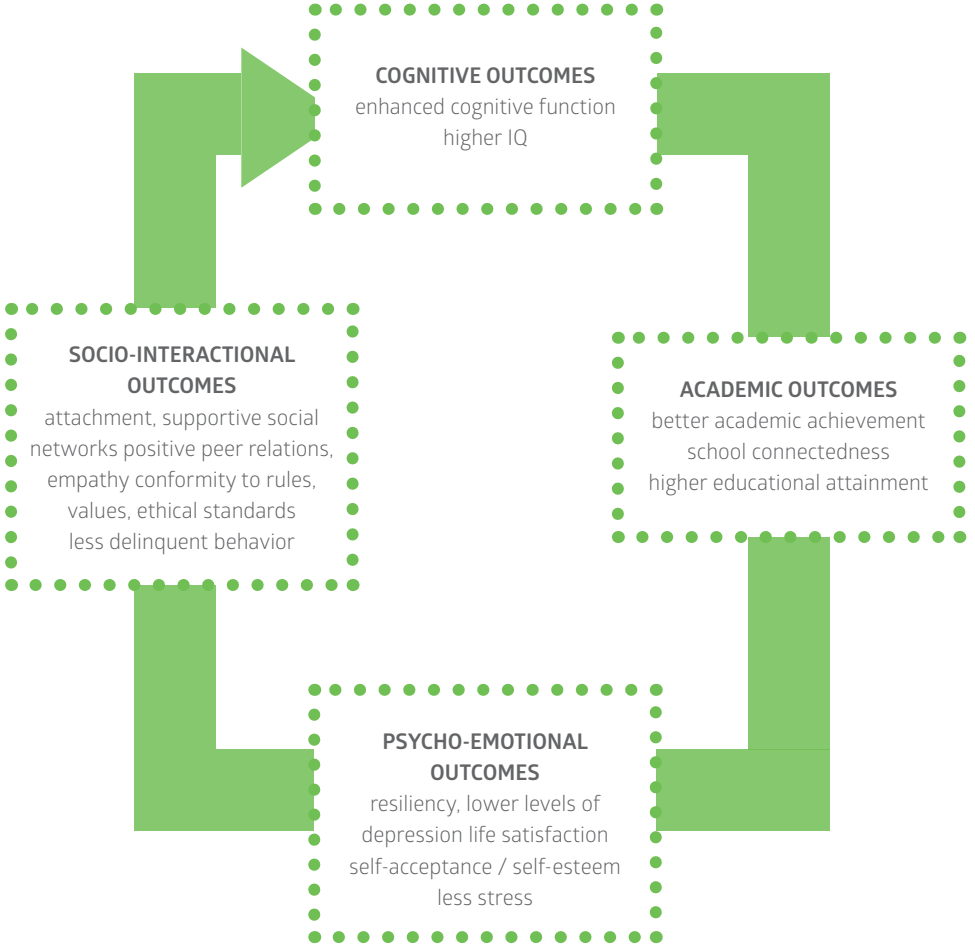
Although for some movements the issue of fatherhood and caregiving can be controversial issue; though feminism and fathering can fit together politically and theoretically: "The most revolutionary change we can make in the institution of motherhood is to include men in every aspect of childcare"<sup>1</sup>. So, in spite of evident positive changes in social reality for women, men are still predominantly perceived as breadwinners and women are viewed as caregivers. This dynamics results in unequal distribution of unpaid labor and consequently, in economic and general inequalities.

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1 · Ruddick, S. (1995). *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Apart from evident benefits to gender equality, men's greater participation in child care and development, has been proven to be of great importance for child wellbeing in general: It is important to emphasize that the Con-

vention of the Rights of the Child<sup>2</sup> standards found its practical implications in numerous research and studies presenting evidence of direct effects of fathers' involvement on child wellbeing<sup>3</sup>:



2 · Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989; entry into force 2 September 1990.

3 · Ball, J., Mossele, K. (2007). Father's Contributions to Children's Well-being. Public Health Agency of Canada.



# The State Of Fatherhood In Balkans

Review  
methodology >

## Guiding Principles

As a member of the Global MenCare campaign<sup>4</sup>, Care International Balkans since 2006 “has worked and engaged with young boys and young men around gender transformation and the promotion of healthy masculinities. As an outgrowth of that campaign, CARE saw a need to work with young fathers-to-be and those who recently became parents. Since 2012, it has been doing research to better understand the role of fathers in the regional Balkans context that helped lay the groundwork for the program it has developed.”<sup>5</sup> This review is one additional step in this direction. Being the member of the campaign, Care International Balkans and its partners believe and abide by the following principles:

1. Believe that gender-equal parenting holds benefits for men and men’s well-being;
2. Promotion of women’s rights;
3. Promotion of children’s rights;
4. Promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR);

5. Believe that transforming fatherhood will reduce gender-based violence;
6. Seeking the transformation of parenting practices to end violence against children;
7. Supporting non-biological parents and recognizes diversity in parenting;
8. Upholding the right of all people to care for children, including LGBT and other often-marginalized groups;
9. Promoting fathers’ presence during pregnancy and delivery;
10. Advocating for paid parental leave for both parents.<sup>6</sup>

Being embedded in all Care International Balkans programs and actions, these principles also provided the framework for this review.

## Subject and the Goals

**The subject of the review** is the current policy and practice in promotion of healthy, equitable, nonviolent parenting practices and specific gender equality patterns, and thus active fathering and caregiving, as well as division of

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4 · <http://men-care.org/>

5 · <http://men-care.org/about-mencare/our-partners/>

6 · <http://men-care.org/about-mencare/guiding-principles/>

labor within the households, in Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Albania.

Father involvement (active fathering) is defined as men's "positive, wide-ranging, and active participation in their children's lives".<sup>7</sup> Active fathering can be defined in many more ways:

- direct interaction between a father and child (play, caretaking);
- accessibility, or how available a father is to his child when needed;
- building of social capital, or how fathers provide a support network for children as they grow up to contribute to society.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, apart from the issue highly relevant to child rights, fathering is par excellence gender justice concern, recognizing men as change agents for gender equality.

In this way, the review is focused on relevant issues related to gender equality, such as the framework for its promotion, paid parental leave, division of labor within the households, etc.

**Specific goals of the review are:** a) To recognize regional normative and regulatory opportunities and barriers; b) To ensure better understanding of the most relevant regional practices; and c) To get an insight into specific examples of active fathering in Serbia.

## Methodology

Fatherhood issue, as one of the aspects of social and behavioral norms related to gender roles, and at the same time – phenomenon which has not been given needed attention in regional theoretical and political practices, required the use of qualitative methodology. For the purposes of understanding preconditions for promotion of healthy, equitable, nonviolent parenting practices, as a strategy for advancing gender equality and wellbeing of the child, different information and data gathering techniques have been used:

- Analysis of secondary data – international policies and instruments, reports of state organs, regional legislative documents and public policies that concern with gender equality in general and fatherhood, as its specific aspect;
- Focus group discussion with active, engaged fathers.

The analysis of secondary data included the analysis of international standards that pertain to the gender equality and child rights generally but also to men's role in achieving gender equality and child rights, specifically.

**Overview of the national legislation framework** in the project countries was provided by the identification of general anti-discrimination and gender equality framework. In this way, the most general acts have been analyzed

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7 · Marsiglio, W., Day, R.D., Lamb, M.E. (2000). "Exploring fatherhood diversity: Implications for conceptualizing father involvement". *Marriage and Family Review*, 29, 269–293.

8 · Pleck, J.H., & Masciadrelli, B.P. (2004). "Paternal involvement by U.S. residential fathers: Levels, sources and consequences". In M.E. Lamb (Ed.), *The Role of the Father in Child Development*, 4th Edition (pp. 222–271). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

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in order to determine values of the system in regards to fatherhood and the preconditions for its promotion. In addition, laws that are specifically relevant for the active fatherhood (Labor Law, Gender Laws, etc.) were analyzed and presented.

In this segment of research, full attention was paid to **materials** gathered by the organizations involved in the project Boys and Men as Allies in Violence Prevention and Gender Transformation in the Western Balkans, published in the form of annual or multi-annual reports, studies, brochures and similar. In addition a gender lens framework was used to look specifically where policies and practices could promote the uptake of equitable and nonviolent fatherhood practices.

In order to understand men's perception of fathering, one focus group discussion was organized with active, engaged fathers from Serbia.

The goal was to explore their perception of fathering and the role of the father in child life, from the point of specific socio-cultural context of Serbian society.

Moreover, the objectives were to:

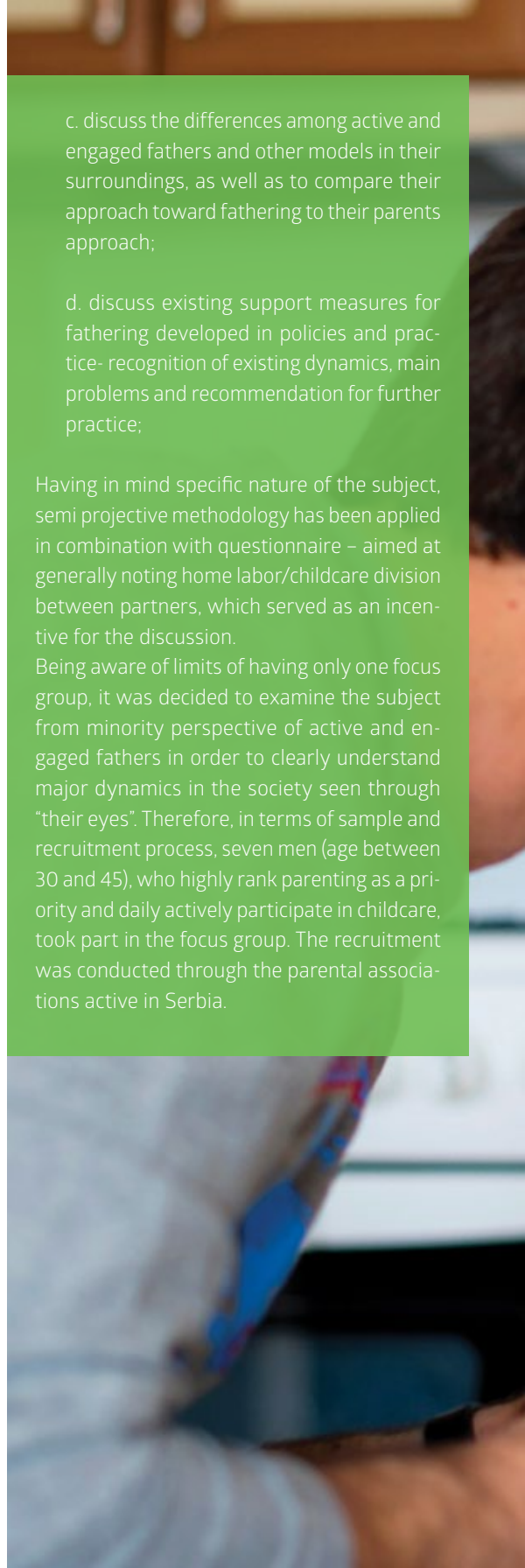
- a. explore respondents' personal view of parenthood/fathering;
- b. explore the nature and quality of their partnership relationship from perception of different roles fathers vs. mothers take in various aspects of childcare (i.e. health care, educational attainment, socializing including gender roles, etc.), and domestic duties;

- c. discuss the differences among active and engaged fathers and other models in their surroundings, as well as to compare their approach toward fathering to their parents approach;

- d. discuss existing support measures for fathering developed in policies and practice- recognition of existing dynamics, main problems and recommendation for further practice;

Having in mind specific nature of the subject, semi projective methodology has been applied in combination with questionnaire – aimed at generally noting home labor/childcare division between partners, which served as an incentive for the discussion.

Being aware of limits of having only one focus group, it was decided to examine the subject from minority perspective of active and engaged fathers in order to clearly understand major dynamics in the society seen through "their eyes". Therefore, in terms of sample and recruitment process, seven men (age between 30 and 45), who highly rank parenting as a priority and daily actively participate in childcare, took part in the focus group. The recruitment was conducted through the parental associations active in Serbia.



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# The State Of Fatherhood In Balkans

## International Standards for Promotion of Active Fatherhood >

The basis for promotion of active fatherhood could be found in the key documents regulating women's and child rights. Namely, the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women<sup>9</sup> prescribes obligations of states to "eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and in particular, on a basis of equality of men and women", and to guarantee them "the same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children"; as well as "the same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights"; "the same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation"<sup>10</sup>.

In a similar manner, the Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>11</sup> recognizes the obligations

of the states to "ensure that a child shall not be separated from his or her parents against their will, except when competent authorities subject to judicial review determine, in accordance with applicable law and procedures, that such separation is necessary for the best interests of the child. Such determination may be necessary in a particular case such as one involving abuse or neglect of the child by the parents, or one where the parents are living separately and a decision must be made as to the child's place of residence; "respect the right of the child who is separated from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except if it is contrary to the child's best interests"<sup>12</sup>. Specifically relevant to the issue of fatherhood, CRC prescribes the obligations of the states to "use their best efforts to ensure recognition of the principle that both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of the child. Parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians, have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and

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9 · Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 34/180 of 18 December 1979; entry into force 3 September 1981.

10 · CEDAW. Article 16, paragraphs 4, 5, and 6.

11 · Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989; entry into force 2 September 1990.

12 · CRC. Article 9, paragraphs 1 and 3

development of the child. The best interests of the child will be their basic concern”<sup>13</sup>.

In analyzing international practices in promotion of gender equality, change in the paradigm of the women as main stakeholders to the paradigm of shared responsibility in achieving equality, was the tipping point for the introduction of specific measures for fatherhood promotion. In that way, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action<sup>14</sup> encouraged men to fully participate in all actions towards gender equality and urged the establishment of the principle of shared power and responsibility between women and men at home, in the community, in the workplace and in the wider national and international communities.

The most relevant framework for the promotion of active fathering and men’s greater involvement in care giving could be found in conclusions from the 48th session of the Commission on the Status of Women<sup>15</sup>. Conclusions were formulated in regards to:

- Recognition of the importance of boys’ and men’s contribution to gender equality (including their contribution within families);
- Promotion of the understanding of the importance of fathers (along with mothers, legal guardians and other care givers) to well-being of children and the promotion of gender equality;
- The need for developing policies, programs and school curricula that encour-

age their positive involvement in achieving gender equality and positive results for children, families and communities;

- The need for creating and improving training and education programs to enhance awareness and knowledge among men (and women) on their roles as parents, legal guardians and caregivers and the importance of sharing family responsibilities, and including fathers (as well) in programs that teach infant child care development;
- Developing and including information on ways and means to increase the capacity of men to raise children in a manner oriented towards gender equality in education programs for parents, legal guardians and other caregivers;
- Adopting and implementing legislation and/or policies to close the gap between women’s and men’s pay and reconciliation of occupational and family responsibilities, including through reduction of occupational segregation, introduction or expansion of parental leave, flexible working arrangements, such as voluntary part-time work, teleworking, and other home-based work;
- Encouraging men to fully participate in the care and support of others, including older persons, persons with disabilities and sick persons, in particular children and other dependents, through training and education.

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13 · CRC. Article 18, paragraph 1

14 · Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 4-15 September 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No.E.96.IV.13).

15 · Forty-eighth session 1-12 March 2004. *The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality*. Agreed conclusions, 12 March 2004, as adopted.



Even more specific recommendations were formulated in the report on the online discussion of the Commission's expert group:

- Expanding paternity leave;
- Offering flexible work options, opportunities for men to be able to work part-time when they have children;
- Changing family laws, including laws regarding custody of children so as to enable men to be more active partners and caregivers in the context of the lives of children and dependents;
- Expanding the provision of childcare, including providing work-based day-care centers in all enterprises with a certain number of employees, and counting men as well as women in calculating childcare needs;
- Implementing programs in the public education system to give boys and men the skills and knowledge needed to take on new roles in households, including school-based "life skills" courses for boys.

In addition to these recommendations, The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat presented additional following recommendations in its *Men in Families* publication<sup>16</sup>:

- Education policies designed to encourage men's involvement with their children in school and day care, and encouraging more men to become involved in teaching and early childhood care;

- Health policies that encourage men to participate in maternal and child care, including during childbirth and in all matters involving reproductive and sexual health;
- Livelihood and poverty alleviation policies that recognize the roles of men and women, varying family configurations, including the needs and realities of women and men who migrate and single-parent households, and that support both women and men in achieving joint household control of assets and joint household decision-making, and adequate and dignified livelihoods.

As the most important political agenda, recently adopted United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>17</sup>, aiming at ending poverty, fighting inequality and injustice, and tackling climate change by 2030, provide a broad sustainability agenda and address the root causes of poverty and the universal need for development that works for all people. As such, SDGs could be considered as the most relevant political framework for all future actions of states, but also other relevant actors such as civil society organizations and others. "SDGs are intended to be universal in the sense of embodying a universally shared common global vision of progress towards a safe, just and sustainable space for all human beings to thrive on the planet. They reflect the moral principles that no-one and no country should be left behind, and that everyone and every country should be regarded as having a common responsibility for playing their part in de-

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16 · United Nations publication (2011). *MEN IN FAMILIES and Family Policy in a Changing World*. New York: United Nations.

17 · The seventeen Sustainable Development Goals were adopted at the seventieth UN General Assembly with the aim to end poverty in all its forms by 2030.

living the global vision. In general terms, all of the goals have therefore been conceived as applying both as ambitions and as challenges to all countries. All of the goals and targets contain important messages and challenges for developed and developing countries alike.”<sup>18</sup>

SDGs through the fifth goal Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, clearly reestablished obligation of the states for the improvement of policies and practices in regards to gender equality. Specific targets related to the men’s greater involvement in achieving gender equality through increasing responsibility for household and childcare are targets 5.4 (*Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate*) and 5.6 (*Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform of Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences*). Priorities within the target 5.6 were described by the Article 5, para 2 of CEDAW (*States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of*

*the children is the primordial consideration in all cases*).

Apart from having an important function in achieving gender equality and general welfare of the child, fatherhood and the greater involvement of men in child upbringing and development and unpaid labor, obviously plays very important role in poverty reduction and is recognized as such by the most important international actors and policies, including SDGs and EURO 2020 Strategy<sup>19</sup>.

Gender equality policies of the European Union also recognize the importance of greater men’s involvement and responsibility for gender equality. Some of the most relevant studies and documents dealing with this issue are: the Council of the European Union’s Conclusions on Men and Gender Equality (2006)<sup>20</sup>, European Commission’s Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010–2015<sup>21</sup>, study *The Role of Men in Gender Equality – European strategies and insights*, produced by the European Commission in 2012<sup>22</sup>

Since the EU framework is specifically relevant to this review and the CARE International project’s countries, recommendations from the study could serve as a starting point for all future efforts in promoting fathering. Specific recommendations in regards to this topic are formulated in regards to:

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18 · Universal Sustainable Development Goals: *Understanding the Transformational Challenge for Developed Countries*. Report of a Study by Stakeholder Forum.

<http://www.stakeholderforum.org/index.php/news>.  
19 · COM(2010) 2020 final, Brussels, 3.3.2010. *EU-ROPE 2020, A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*.

### Support involving men in childcare

- Establish more gender-balanced parental leave systems as a main matter
- Develop incentives and measures to reward parents of preschool children for a gender-equal balance of care after the parental leave period
- Make benefits of men's care involvement visible
- Establish the support of gender-balanced caring within couples and families as a primary target of policy reforms
- Conduct research to reveal (unintended) impacts of reforms in different policy fields on division of paid and unpaid work within families

### Encourage the involvement of men in domestic work beyond childcare

- Counteract the stereotype that domestic work does not fit to a traditional picture of masculinity, by using authentic gender-balanced role model

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20 · 15487/06. 2767th Council Meeting, Brussels, 30 November–1 December 2006. *The Council of the European Union's Conclusions on Men and Gender Equality*.

21 · Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 21 September 2010. *Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015* [COM(2010) 491].

22 · European Commission, DG Justice - Unit D2 Gender equality. Contract ref. no.VC/2010/0592. *The Role of Men in Gender Equality - European strategies & insights*.



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# Normative and Regulatory Preconditions and Fathering Practices in Western Balkans

## Constitutional Provisions on Gender Equality

<b>CROATIA</b>	<p>Article 3</p> <p>Freedom, equal rights, national and gender equality, peace-making, social justice, respect for human rights, inviolability of ownership, conservation of nature and the environment, the rule of law and a democratic multiparty system are the highest values of the constitutional order of the Republic of Croatia.</p> <p>Article 14</p> <p>All persons in the Republic of Croatia shall enjoy rights and freedoms, regardless of race, color, gender, language, religion, political or other conviction, national or social origin, property, birth, education, social status or other characteristics. All persons shall be equal before the law.</p>
<b>BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA</b>	<p>Bosnia and Herzegovina will ensure the application of the highest level of internationally recognized rights and freedoms provided in the documents listed in the Annex to the Constitution. In particular:</p> <p>(1) All persons within the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall enjoy the rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) To life;</li><li>(b) To liberty, with arrest and detention authorized only by law;</li><li>(c) To equality before the law;</li><li>(d) To freedom from discrimination based on race, color, sex, language, religion or creed, political or other opinions, and national or social origin; ...</li><li>(j) To protection of the family and of children...</li></ul>

## SERBIA

Article 1	Republic of Serbia is a state of Serbian people and all citizens who live in it, based on the rule of law and social justice, principles of civil democracy, human and minority rights and freedoms, and commitment to European principles and values.
Article 15	The State shall guarantee the equality of women and men and develop equal opportunities policy.
Article 21/3	All direct or indirect discrimination based on any grounds, particularly on race, sex, national origin, social origin, birth, religion, political or other opinion, property status, culture, language, age, mental or physical disability shall be prohibited.
Article 21/4	Special measures which the Republic of Serbia may introduce to achieve full equality of individuals or group of individuals in a substantially unequal position compared to other citizens shall not be deemed discrimination.
Article 65/1	Parents shall have the right and duty to support, provide upbringing and education to their children in which they shall be equal.
Article 66/1	Families, mothers, single parents and any child in the Republic of Serbia shall enjoy special protection in the Republic of Serbia in accordance with the law.

## KOSOVO

Article 3/2	The exercise of public authority in the Republic of Kosovo shall be based upon the principles of equality of all individuals before the law and with full respect for internationally recognized fundamental human rights and freedoms, as well as protection of the rights of and participation by all Communities and their members.
Article 7/1	The constitutional order of the Republic of Kosovo is based on the principles of freedom, peace, democracy, equality, respect for human rights and freedoms and the rule of law, non-discrimination, the right to property, the protection of environment, social justice, pluralism, separation of state powers, and a market economy.
Article 7/2	The Republic of Kosovo ensures gender equality as a fundamental value for the democratic development of the society, providing equal opportunities for both female and male participation in the political, economic, social, cultural and other areas of societal life.
Article 22	Human rights and fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the following international agreements and instruments are guaranteed by this Constitution, are directly applicable in the Republic of Kosovo and, in the case of conflict, have priority over provisions of laws and other acts of public institutions: (1) Universal Declaration of Human Rights; (2) European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its Protocols; (3) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Protocols; ... (6) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; (7) Convention on the Rights of the Child; ...

## ALBANIA

Article 18/1  
All are equal before the law.

Article 18/2  
No one may be unjustly discriminated against for reasons such as gender, race, religion, ethnicity, language, political, religious or philosophical beliefs, economic condition, education, social status, or parentage.

## Anti-discrimination Legislation

### CROATIA<sup>23</sup>

Grounds  
Race or ethnic affiliation or color, gender, language, religion, political or other belief, national or social origin, property, trade union membership, education, social status, marital or family status, age, health condition, disability, genetic heritage, native identity, expression or sexual orientation

Definition  
Placing of person or a related person (kinship or other relationship) in a less favorable position based on mentioned grounds or a misconception of the existence of the grounds

Forms of Discrimination  
Direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment, encouragement to discrimination, segregation, multiple discrimination, and victimization

Fields specifically stated  
Work, education, social security and social welfare, health, judiciary and administration, housing, public information and media, access to goods and services, membership in trade unions, NGOs, political parties and other organizations, and access to culture and art.

Responsible Institution  
Ombudsperson

23 · Anti-Discrimination Act, No. 71-05-03/1-08-2

**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**<sup>24</sup>

Grounds	Race, skin color, language, religion, ethnic affiliation, national or social origin, connection to a national minority, political or any other persuasion, property, membership in trade union or any other association, education, social status and sex, sexual expression or sexual orientation, other circumstances.
Definition	Every different treatment including exclusion, limitation or preference based on real or assumed mentioned grounds with a purpose or a consequence to disable or endanger recognition, enjoyment or realization, of rights and freedoms in all areas of public life.
Forms of Discrimination	Harassment, sexual harassment, mobbing, segregation, instruction to discriminate and assistance to others in discrimination, incitement to discriminate.
Fields specifically stated	Employment and labor, education and trainings, science and sports, social protection, health, judiciary and administration, housing, public information and the media, membership in professional organizations, including membership in organizations of employers or employees, goods and services, performing entrepreneurship, cultural and art creations, public life, families, rights of a child.
Responsible Institution	Ombudsperson

**SERBIA**<sup>25</sup>

Grounds	Race, skin color, ancestors, citizenship, national affiliation or ethnic origin, language, religious or political beliefs, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, financial position, birth, genetic characteristics, health, disability, marital and family status, previous convictions, age, appearance, membership in political, trade union and other organizations and other real or presumed personal characteristics
Definition	Any unequal treatment, that is to say, omission (exclusion, limitation or preferential treatment) in relation to individuals or groups, as well as members of their families or persons close to them, be it overt or covert, on mentioned grounds.
Forms of Discrimination	Direct and indirect discrimination, as well as violation of the principle of equal rights and obligations, calling to account, associating for the purpose of exercising discrimination, hate speech and disturbing and humiliating treatment, severe forms of discrimination
Fields specifically stated	Courts of law and public administration, labor and employment, public services, the use of premises and spaces, religious discrimination, education and professional trainings, gender, sexual orientation, rights of a child, age, national minorities, political party or trade union membership, disability, health.
Responsible Institution	The Commissioner for the Protection of Equality

24 · "Official Gazette of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina" No. 59/09.

25 · "Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia" No. 22/2009.



**KOSOVO<sup>26</sup>**

Grounds	Sex, gender, age, marital status, language, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, political affiliation or conviction, ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief, race, social origin, property, birth or any other status
Definition	The principle of equal treatment shall mean that there shall be no direct or indirect discrimination against any person or persons based on the mentioned grounds
Forms of Discrimination	Direct and indirect discrimination, harassment, an instruction to discriminate, victimization, segregation
Fields specifically stated	Employment, self-employment and occupation, vocational guidance, vocational training, working conditions, membership in organizations of employers or employees, social protection, social advantages, education, housing, goods and services, tribunals and all other organs administering justice, personal security, public affairs and places.
Responsible Institution	Administrative bodies and courts of competent jurisdiction, which have jurisdiction over the concrete issue covered by the claim

**ALBANIA<sup>27</sup>**

Grounds	Gender, race, color, ethnicity, language, gender identity, sexual orientation, political, religious or philosophical beliefs, economic, education or social situation, pregnancy, parentage, parental responsibility, age, family or marital condition, civil status, residence, health status, genetic predispositions, disability, affiliation with a particular group or for any other reason
Definition	Every distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference because on the mentioned grounds that has as a purpose or consequence the hindering or making impossible the exercise, in the same manner as with others, of the fundamental rights and freedoms recognized by the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, with international acts ratified by the Republic of Albania as well as with the laws in force.
Forms of Discrimination	Direct and indirect discrimination, discrimination because of association, annoyance, denial of a reasonable accommodation, victimization
Fields specifically stated	Discriminating advertisements, participation in politics, conscience and religion, recruitment and selection of employees, the treatment of employees in the work place, membership in labor unions and the possibility of benefiting from the facilities that this membership secures.
Responsible Institution	The Council of Ministers and the Minister of Education and Science

26 · The Anti-discrimination Law No. 2004/ 3.

27 · Law No. 10 221 on Protection From Discrimination.

## Gender Equality Legislation

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	Areas of Particular Interest	Education, employment, labor and access to resources, social welfare, health care, sports and culture, public life, the media, prevention of violence, statistical records, judicial protection compensation of damages, responsibilities of the authorities, monitoring the implementation of the law
	Relevant for Fatherhood	<p>Article 8</p> <p>Prohibited:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· different treatment of men and women in relation to leave following childbirth;</li> <li>· any unfavorable treatment of parents or guardians in the reconciliation of professional and family obligations</li> </ul> <p>Article 13</p> <p>The same right to health care, accessibility of health services, including family planning</p>
	Relevant for Potential Promotion of Active Fatherhood	<p>Article 6:</p> <p>Syllabi, curricula and methodologies provide for the establishment of an education system which includes guarantees for the elimination of stereotyped curricula which produce discrimination and gender inequality as a consequence. Materials promoting gender equality shall be an integral part of curricula for all levels of education...</p> <p>Article 17</p> <p>Developing measures for prevention of gender based violence, in order to eliminate bias, customs and all other practices based on the idea of inferiority or superiority of either sex, as well as stereotype roles of men and women. This includes but is not limited to education and raising awareness among civil servants, the public, etc.</p>

SERBIA	Areas of Particular Interest	Employment, social and health care; family relations; education, culture and sports; political and public life; judicial protection; supervision of the enforcement of the law;
	Relevant for Fatherhood	<p>Article 28</p> <p>The right to health care and to receive medical services related to family planning</p> <p>Partners are equal in planning the number of children, access to information, education and means enabling them to exercise these rights.</p>
	Relevant for Potential Promotion of Active Fatherhood	<p>Article 7</p> <p>Special measures aiming at eliminating inequalities are not considered discrimination.</p> <p>Article 31</p> <p>Education about gender equality is an integral part of pre-school, primary, secondary and university education, as well as an integral part of permanent education in order to overcome restricted gender-based roles, liberation from gender-based stereotypes and gender-based prejudices. The state administration bodies in charge of education shall ensure that the policy of equal opportunities is implemented.</p>





SERBIA

Relevant for Potential Promotion of Active Fatherhood

Article 41  
Information released through the mass media (including advertisements) must not contain or encourage gender-based discrimination and the mass media shall develop the awareness of gender-based equality in their programs as well as undertake adequate measures to amend social and cultural patterns, customs and any other practice, which condition stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination

CROATIA

Areas of Particular Interest

Employment and occupation, education, political parties, media, statistical data, enforcement of the act, provision of funds, judicial protection.

Relevant for Fatherhood

Article 13  
There shall be no discrimination in the field of employment and occupation in the public or private sector, including public bodies, in relation to balance between a professional and private life; pregnancy, giving birth, parenting and any form of custody.

Article 3

- Obligation of relevant institutions to implement gender analysis
- Obligation of relevant institutions to implement trainings on gender equality for their staff

Article 9  
Special measures aiming at eliminating inequalities are not considered discrimination

Article 11

- Obligation of relevant institutions to apply specific measures and adopt action plans for the promotion and establishment of gender equality on the basis of an analysis of the status of women and men every four years and related to the National Policy measures
- Relevant institutions and legal persons with more than twenty employees, shall incorporate anti-discrimination provisions and measures with a view to achieving gender equality in their general acts
- Social partners shall comply with the provisions of this Act and with the measures aimed at ensuring gender equality

Article 14

- Subject matters related to issues of gender equality shall be an integral part of pre-school, primary and secondary school education as well as higher education and lifelong learning and additional training

Article 16  
The media shall use their program, programmatic framework, program guidelines and self-regulating acts to promote awareness on equality of women and men

Areas of Particular Interest

Responsible bodies for the achievement of the law, funding of the responsible bodies, collection of information and gender statistics, political parties, civil society, economy, employment, education, media, civil rights, penalty provisions, media, resolution of disputes and sanctions

Relevant for Fatherhood

#### Section 13

- Employers take all necessary measures to enable females and males to correspond to both their professional and family obligations
- Unpaid work of females and males is considered as a contribution to the development of the family and the society in cases of:
  - a) The care for family welfare;
  - b) The care for children

Relevant for Potential Promotion of Active Fatherhood

#### Section 14

The competent bodies and institutions in the field of education of all levels shall establish, implement and supervise policies with the purpose of ensuring gender equality, especially concerning... gender equality education, research on the status of genders in Kosovo, as a specific method in education

#### Section 15

- All media shall promote equality through: ... educational programs, promoting the equal role of females and males in the society, providing accurate and complete information on gender equality.
- The Broadcasting and publishing of gender discrimination programs, materials or information is prohibited

#### Article 25

- Responsible educational institutions shall ensure the teaching help in promoting and building an equality mentality and in preventing gender discrimination, negative stereotypes, prejudices
- Higher education institutions undertake initiatives to carry out studies in the area of gender equality, or include it in the actual study curricula, to ensure material with relevant information, as well to proceed to the practical and scientific development of this area.

#### Article 26

The media helps in increasing the general awareness of equality between women and men by not discriminating on a gender basis in its reporting; applying gender-neutral terminology; and avoiding gender stereotypes throughout its activities.

## Areas of Particular Interest

Responsible bodies for achieving gender equality, decision-making process, labor relations, education

## Article 9

Special measures aiming at: providing a special protection to... young parents, as a result of their natural childbirth or adoption of a child...; facilitating and assisting persons who have special responsibilities in their families due to their daily care for disable members; are not considered discrimination

## Article 17

The actions of the employer in the public or private sector shall be discriminatory if based on gender the employer uses differentiated standards and/or procedures towards employees with regards to ... the right to leave and paid leave...

## Relevant for Fatherhood

## Article 21

Female and male employees shall have the following rights without any gender discrimination:

... to enjoy health protection and safety at work, including protection of the reproductive function...; to have the necessary support and the encouragement of the social services system in order to allow the employed parents to balance family obligations with professional responsibilities.

## Article 23

The unpaid work of females and males shall be considered as a contribution to the family and the society in cases when he/she:

- a) takes care of the wellbeing of the family;
- b) takes care of the children;
- c) takes care of the other members of the family..

## Relevant for Potential Promotion of Active Fatherhood

## Article 7

In order to ensure gender equality and eliminate gender-based discrimination, relevant government agencies shall be committed to: ensuring practical implementation of gender equality principle, ensuring prevention of any type of gender-based discrimination; ensuring alteration or repeal of any legal acts, customs or practice which pose gender discrimination; taking all appropriate measures to create the necessary and legally objective facilities aiming at guaranteeing equal chances and access to both genders; ensuring effective protection for both genders against any discriminatory action through public institutions and national courts.

## Article 8

Special measures aiming at eliminating inequalities are not considered discrimination

## Right to Parental Leave

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">CROATIA<sup>28</sup></p>	<p>Maternity leave: 45 days before expected delivery until the child is six months (Article 12)</p> <p>Mandatory maternity leave: 28 days before until 42 days since childbirth (Article 12)</p> <p>Paternity leave: After the lapse of the mandatory maternity leave, if the parents so agree, the right to maternity leave can be used by the child's father (Article 12)</p> <p>Parental leave (for both parents, until child's eighth year): six months – 3 per parent (Article 13,14)</p> <p>For twins, third and every other child: 30 months – 15 per parent (Article 14)</p> <p>Affirmative action measure: If the father uses parental leave for minimum of 3 months, the leave prolongs for 2 more months (Article 14)</p> <p>Parental leave: If one parent dies, or is justifiably unable to take care of the child, the other parent could use all related rights (Article 18)</p> <p>Child nursing – parents: After the lapse of mandatory leave, right to work one half of normal working time until the child is 6 month of age (Article 15)</p> <p>Child in need of greater care – one parent: After parental leave, the right to work half of full-time working hours up until the child is three years of age (Article 16)</p> <p>Adoptive parents: 6 months until the child is 18 years of age (Article 36)</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">FEDERATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA<sup>29</sup></p> <p>Paid leave for childbirth: Seven working days (Article 53)</p> <p>Maternity leave: 28 days before expected delivery up to one year (Article 62)</p> <p>Mandatory maternity leave: 42 days after childbirth (Article 62)</p> <p>Parental leave: After the lapse of the mandatory maternity leave, if the parents so agree, the right to maternity leave can be used by the child's father (Article 62)</p> <p>Paternity leave: If the mother of a child has died or abandoned the child, or for other justified reasons is not able to take care of her child, the rights are the same as mother's (Article 62)</p> <p>Child nursing – mother: After the lapse of maternity leave, right to one half of normal working time until the child is two years of age (Article 63)</p> <p>Child nursing – father: The same rights if the mother is working full-time during this time (Article 63)</p> <p>Child in need of greater care – one parent: After the child is one year of age, right to work half of full-time working hours up until the child is three years of age if the child (Article 64)</p> <p>Child with severe developmental problems – one parent (single/both parents employed): Right to work fifty percent of a full working schedule (Article 69)</p> <p>Adoptive or foster parents: The same as mother (Article 70)</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">REPUBLIKA SRPSKA<sup>30</sup></p>	<p>Paid leave for childbirth: Three working days (Article 60)</p> <p>Maternity leave: 28 days before expected delivery up to one year (Article 73)</p> <p>For twins, or for the third or any subsequent child – up to 18 months (Article 73)</p> <p>Mandatory maternity leave: 60 days after childbirth. In this case, additional 60 minutes of break during working hours in order to breastfeed the child (Article 74)</p> <p>Paternity leave/adoptive parent: If the mother of a child has died or abandoned the child, or for other justified reasons is not able to take care of her child, the rights are the same as mother's (Article 75)</p> <p>Child in need of greater care – one parent: Upon the expire of maternity leave, right to work half of full-time working hours until the child is two years of age if the child (Article 76)</p> <p>Child with severe developmental problems – one parent: Right to work half working hours (Article 77)</p> <p>Adoptive or foster parents: The same as mother (Article 70)</p> <p>Salary compensation/woman: At the level of average salary she was earning during the last six months before the starting date of the maternity leave (Article 78)</p>

**SERBIA**<sup>31</sup>

Paid leave for childbirth: Seven working days (Article 77)  
Maternity leave and child nursing leave: 45 days before expected delivery up to 365 days (Article 94)  
For the third and every subsequent newborn child – up to two years altogether (Article 94a)  
Mandatory maternity leave: 28 days before until the child is 3 months (Article 94)  
Child nursing – mother: From the day of commencement of maternity leave until the expiry of 365 days (Article 94)  
Parental leave: After the lapse of the mandatory maternity leave, the right to child nursing (Article 94)  
Paternity leave: If the mother of a child has died or abandoned the child, or for other justified reasons is not able to take care of her child, the rights are the same as mother's (Article 94)  
Child with developmental problems – one parent: Upon expiry of the maternity leave and the leave for nursing a child, right to be absent from work, or to work half of the full working hours, at most until the child becomes five years old (Article 96)  
Adoptive/foster parents/guardians: The right to be absent from work for eight consecutive months, from the day the child is accommodated with a foster and/or guardian family, and at the most until the child become five years old (Article 97)  
Where the accommodation has taken place before the child became three months old, the right to be absent until the child become 11 months old (Article 97)

**KOSOVO**<sup>32</sup>

Paid leave for childbirth or adoption: Two working days (Article 50)  
Unpaid leave for childbirth or adoption: Two weeks at any time before the child reaches the age of three (Article 50)  
Maternity leave: 45 days up to 12 months (first 6 months – compensation is 70% of basic salary, next 3 months – compensation is 50% of average salary, last 3 months – unpaid) (Article 49)  
Mandatory maternity leave: 28 days before expected delivery up to 6 months (Article 49)  
Parental leave: After the lapse of the mandatory maternity leave, if the parents so agree, the right to maternity leave can be used by the child's father (Article 49)  
Paternity leave: If the mother of a child has died or abandoned the child, or for other justified reasons is not able to take care of her child, the rights are the same as mother's (Article 49, 50)  
Child in need of greater care – one parent: Upon the expire of maternity leave, right to work half of full-time working hours until the child is two years of age if the child (Article 52)

28 · The Maternity and Parental Benefits Act, NN8 5/08,110/08,34/11,54/13,152/14.

29 · "Official Gazette of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina" No. 62/15.

30 · "Official Gazette of Republika Srpska", No. 38/00.

31 · "Official Gazette of the RS", No. 24/2005, 61/2005, 54/2009, 32/2013, and 75/2014.

32 · Law No. 03/L-212 on Labor, <http://www.assembly-kosova.org/common/docs/ligjet/2010-212-eng.pdf>.

Paternity leave for male employees in public administration: 3 days<sup>34</sup>  
Maternity leave: 35 days prior up to 365 days (Article 27, Law on Social Insurance)  
For more than one child: 60 days prior, up to 390 days (Article 27, Law on Social Insurance)  
Mandatory maternity leave: 35 days prior and 42 after delivery (Article 104, Code of Labor)  
For more than one child: 60 days prior and 42 after the delivery (article 104, Code of Labor)  
Adoptive mother: When a child of up to one year of age is adopted, the right to maternity benefit beginning from the day the adoption occurred, but not prior the 42nd day of childbirth, subject to a maximum of 330 days from baby delivery.  
The minimum period of benefit is 28 days (Article 27)  
Birth grant – one parent (mothers have priority): Birth grant shall be a lump sum equal to 50% of the minimum monthly wage, provided one parent has contributed for one year prior to the childbirth (Article 29)

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33 · Law, No 7961 on Labor; Law, No. 7703 on Social Insurance; The Council of Minister's Decision No. 511 on "Working Hours and Leave in Public Administration".

34 · According to the Council of Minister's Decision No. 511 dated October 24, 2002 "On working Hours and Leave in Public Administration"



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# Fathering Practices in Western Balkans

## Men's Involvement in Childcare and Domestic Duties >

"Although caring for children and participating in household chores is not a part of the traditional male gender role, there are indications that men today, more than they did in the past, participate in these activities. The issue of dividing up the household chores and childcare is related to the big social change of the previous century, which is the participation of women in the labor market. Consequently, it is to be expected that, since women are employed, men would spend more time on household chores, however the changes in the sphere of paid work were much more radical than the ones at home."<sup>35</sup> On the one hand, numerous studies done since the 1960s about the distribution of labor and leisure time at home have shown that things are, in fact, changing. On the other hand, private spheres are still characterized by immense gender imbalance, particularly in childcare and domestic duties; and asymmetric household labor division still reduces women's labor market competitiveness and reproduces trans-generational inequalities. Even though this fact is universally

acknowledged, adequate programs and policies which promote men's greater involvement in childcare and domestic duties, still lack. Also, comprehensive evidence on specific practices and trends in this field are still to be continuously collected across the region of Western Balkans. In addition, our communities entirely lack the evidence on the impact of a greater involvement of men in childcare on the children's wellbeing, which could serve as a good starting point for active advocacy for policy making and introducing specific measures for promotion of fatherhood.

Good practice example and one of the most comprehensive efforts in the area of gathering data which could serve as a relevant starting point for development of adequate policies and projects is the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES), as a component of the Men and Gender Equality Project coordinated by Promundo<sup>36</sup> and other partners and implemented from 2009 to 2010 in Brazil, Chile, Croatia, India, Mexico and

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36 · Centre for Education, Counseling and Research. (2010). *Men and Gender Equality Policy Project*

36 · <http://promundoglobal.org/programs/international-men-and-gender-equality-survey-images/>

Rwanda. In addition, Care International Balkans supported both NGO Perpetuum Mobile – Centre for Youth and Community Development and Centre for Education, Counseling and Research in Croatia to implement the research in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. This household survey on men’s attitudes and practices and women’s perception of men’s practices includes a wide variety of topics related to gender equality and specifically, fathering and domestic duties practices<sup>37</sup>.

Based on the results of the IMAGES research implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, imbalance in labor division is still very obvious and men even openly report on their lack of involvement (being satisfied with it at the same time – “about 95% of men in Bosnia and Herzegovina are satisfied with the division of work”<sup>38</sup>):

Men’s report on participation in domestic duties	Wash clothes	Repair house	Buy food	Clean bathroom	Prepare food	Pay bills
Bosnia and Herzegovina		94,6	72,8	35,7	31	83
Croatia		96	74	27	39	76

Although indirectly, based on the types of listed activities and the report on men’s involvement, it could be noticed that men are still more involved in traditionally male activities – outdoor and less repetitive chores; and that the average time per day spent in household activities is less than for women, although the majority (61%) report that they work equally or more than women.

At the same time, 80% men in Bosnia and Herzegovina and 92% of men in Croatia report about (at least one) accompaniment

during prenatal visits, but only 7% of men in Bosnia and Herzegovina and 17% of men in Croatia were present in delivery rooms during delivery of children. Since the following directly depends on general and hospital policies, among other things, presence in delivery rooms should be one of the important topics for future policy making and activist efforts. Although still rudimentary, the practice of using parental leave, could also serve as an argument for affirmative measures which lead to promotion of gender equality and more active fatherhood. Namely, 20% of men in Bosnia and

37 · Data from this section are presented in details in: Men and Gender Relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina: <http://menengage.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/IMAGES-Bosnia1.pdf>; and Evolving

Men: Initial Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey: <http://www.icrw.org/publications/evolving-men>.

38 · Ibid.

Herzegovina and almost 40% of men in Croatia used their right to paid parental leave during birth of his last child. In this sense, positive effects of the implementation of The Maternity and Parental Benefits Act in Croatia are yet to be seen.

As per the care of children under 5 (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and 4 (Croatia), men in Croatia are much more involved in childcare and both men in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia are more dedicated to playing with children in comparison to cooking for them:

Men's reports about care of children under 5/4	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatia
Play with child	68,6	76
Cook for child	21,4	45
Change diapers for child	31,0	52

In order to get an idea whether the situation in Serbia follows the trends noted in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, for the purpose of this review, we organized one focus group discussion with active, engaged fathers. Generally, overview of the main findings shows that recognized dynamics are present in Serbia as well. Namely, if we go in depth in analyzing main inputs gathered from the discussion, following could be important for further exploration of the current situation.

All respondents demonstrated commitment to parenting as well as importance that role of father plays in their life – important part of personal identity. In line with this, they perceived as same importance the partnership relation, which they consider as base of successful parenting. They see their partners as equal, counterpart in all sphere of life including parenting. Gender equality they perceived as important value, personal belief, which is incorporated in everyday life and upraising of children. In addition, they stressed clearly disagreements (even disgust) with ruling concepts in society, which

present men as dominant towards women, call it “primitive, conservative, old-fashion patterns, that can’t survive the challenges of modern life”. Moreover, according to them, gender equality is a practical outcome of the challenges we all facing in getting certain level of quality of life. It is hard to manage quality life, if the mother is staying at home, unemployed. On the other hand, if she’s employed it means that it is necessary to divide duties among partners daily and to equally participate in family decision making. Quality and responsible parenting lays on assumption of gender equality.

Analyzing the level of compatibility of partners, it is obvious that all shows agreement on crucial, priority life issues, perception of world, including sharing of same value system. Still, however, they do recognize some similar incompatibilities, such as style in communicating with outside world – in socializing, or difference in communication with children, as well as in level of being practical and efficient in dealing with particular everyday issues. Certain stereotyping could be noticed in reporting on general disagreements.

In terms of parenting, some of respondents noted differences between them and their partners – mothers, in the way they communicating with child in problem solving situations. While they try to promote practical, efficient approach in problem solving, respecting limits of situation, mother turns to develop relations based on emotional, overprotecting models toward child. This discussion led us to the issue of child perception of role of father vs. mother, especially of those children rose up in families who promote equal, sharing based parenting. There is an impression that some fathers, in the end, regardless of their engagement, do not feel equal to mother in terms of opportunities to be involved in parenting at same level – “when child is ill s/he wants mother to take her/him and make her/him calmed”. This topic requests to be further examined in future.

The discussion about division of labor and childcare among partners provide opportunity for getting more insight on current trends. Although all respondents said that they “share jobs depending on needs/ circumstances”, there are some trends similar to results from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, presented above. They all do each particular job from time to time (depends on circumstances). However, usually it is the case that they shift household jobs/ domestic duties between partners. A part of our respondents are more likely to take role of “outdoor boy”, i.e. driving, buying stuff, cleaning backyard or does repair jobs in house. However, almost all put some of the duties as “his usual obligation to do” such as – cooking, washing clothes and dishes, and cleaning house. Still, it seems that they had opportunity to choose some of the “favorites” to do.

However, in other aspects – i.e. education, health care, fathers seems to be more equal to

mothers in dividing jobs, being motivated and involved. The same is with their involvement in emotional and social development of child – especially in developing social skills, which all respondents indicated as important aspects seeking involvement of both mother and father equally. The other important observation is that when it comes to development of social skills – relation with peers and authorities, all of them reported that they practice democratic patterns in discussing and making decision about important happenings, challenging situation – family meetings/panels, etc. It is important to notice that equal sharing based parenting turns to be very much connected to development of equal, partnership relations among children and parents – promoting and respecting dignity and rights of the child as well as its responsibility and independence. All this was highly valued by majority of respondents’ who reported that their personal success in parenting would be to help children grow up in independent, self – assured, and responsible members of the society.

Getting back to the understanding of parenting and role of fathers in the Serbian society, respondents do not consider them as majority. Although they see Serbian society progressed in way of accepting gender equality, they recognized that traditional stereotypes of man and women, especially in family matters, are still present and promoted by noisily group of people, who perceived themselves as majority. However, they have no connection with this group as well as they do not consider that they can ever be changed no matter on any policy or program efforts, which could be developed with that aim. It is important to mention that they show significant level of animosity, even hostility to those groups in the society. Their negative attitude towards those targets is important to be taken in consideration if and when

the intervention programs are created (i.e. programs where active and engaged fathers serves as role models, who actively promoting different approach to fathering among old – fashion, traditionally oriented men).

They consider legal framework fair enough in terms of recognition and guarantee of gender equality, although they do not have particular knowledge on this issues – they are informed on particular measures, i.e. possibilities for father to take leave, or to be present in hospital during child delivery or child illness. They recognize certain problems in implementation of those measures, which is a problem of Serbia in general, as well as they recognize that women are still more vulnerable than men in terms of labor rights, which request development of stronger protecting measures in this regard. Cultural patterns and lack of motivation of men to understand the beauty of engaged parenthood have been perceived as the main obstacles in getting more responsible parents. According to them, if we want to make some changes in this regard the intervention programs should be focused to children and youth, as earlier as it is possible. For this to be achieved a generational change may be required, as it was the case in life of the respondents, who reported that they are completely/ or significantly different parents than their parents were, due to different understanding and expectation of partnership and family relation.



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# Key recommendations

Key recommendations were developed during a session of the regional conference **“Fatherhood and Gender Equitable Parenting in the Balkans: Practice, Policy and Research”** held in November 2015, organized by CARE International Balkans. Over 80 policy makers, researchers and civil society representatives took part in the process. Based on this feedback collected from the Conference participants, specific recommendations for policy, research and practices improvements have been formulated as follows:

## ***General Recommendations***

- Establish a comprehensive and functional system that see men as partners in the promotion of gender equality and considers men as active subjects in achieving gender equality on all levels
- Mainstream the issue of gender-equal parenting and active fatherhood into existing policies and develop new policies, legal provisions, programs and services in this area, in compliance with the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular with the principles of gender equality and the child’s best interest, using life-cycle and age-specific approaches<sup>1</sup>
- Establish efficient data collection system and comprehensive statistics on gender aspects of active fatherhood and men’s equal involvement in household/unpaid labor
- Create operational mechanisms for inter-sectorial cooperation for the purpose of

effective promotion, advocacy, monitoring and analysis of the existing measures and programs.

## ***Civil Society and Government Institution Cooperation***

- Create common understanding within civil society sector of the need for active involvement of men in all actions regarding gender equality (from a gender justice framework)
- Establish long-term cooperation with all relevant institutions and organizations, and particularly with independent institutions, education and health institutions, centers for social work and other institutions for social protection, employment agencies and employers’ associations, parents’ associations, labor unions, women’s organizations, etc.
- Specifically target and establish cooperation with the organizations gathering marginalized groups (LGBTIQ, minority ethnic communities, etc.)

## ***Research, Monitoring and Public Advocacy***

- Map existing resources which should be utilized in promotion of active and non-violent fatherhood on the national, and regional, including organizations, methodologies and tools, etc.
- Implement comprehensive policy analysis in order to formulate adequate policy proposals
- Continuously implement needs assessments



and comprehensive research of the men's involvement in child care and unpaid labor

- Develop sustainable participatory mechanisms for continued monitoring the implementation of policies and specific measures and practices, including the institute of guardianship and other aspects of parental rights
- Implement cost-benefit analysis of gender inequalities and its specific aspects to serve as one of the most effective public advocacy tools
- Implement public advocacy actions aiming at:
- Institutionalizing the issue of active and non-violent fathering and mainstream it through the existing policy and legislative framework
- Advancing existing policy and legislative practices and specifically those regarding paid parental leave
- Fostering implementation of equality regulations

### ***Capacity Development and Male Engagement***

- Develop education programs and methodologies and organize and implement trainings for professionals from relevant institutions and organizations aiming at building their capacities for adequate proactive engagement in promotion of active fathering and men's greater participation in household duties
- Create and implement offline and online programs and services for fathers
- Create framework for constant activation and motivation of men for full participation

in achieving gender equality, including active parenting and involvement in household duties through organizing peer support groups and applying highly participatory approach

- Implement capacity building activities with interested fathers in cooperation with the health institutions (especially gynecologists), family counseling services, etc.
- Mainstream the concept of gender equality and active men's involvement in its achievement, as well as specific aspects of active fatherhood in school curricula at all levels
- Promotion and Campaigning on Gender Equitable Fatherhood
- Create a wide front of support for the issue of active and non-violent fathering and implement continued promotion of the issue which should include local, national and regional media and representatives of relevant institutions and organizations, as well as prominent public figures
- Implement regional and national grass root and grass top campaigns on gender equality and active and non-violent fatherhood

# A journey toward becoming an engaged Dad

## ***My family background and how that affected this journey***

I grew up in a large family in an informal Roma settlement as one of six children. My family wasn't any different than others in our community. We – my three brothers and two sisters – were faced with poverty and uncertainty from early years. My parents were unemployed and uneducated. My father used to work as wage earner, from time to time, while my mother used to beg for mercy in villages close to our community, trying in that way to collect money for our daily needs. I do not have a lot of good memories from that period. As in other Roma families in our community, taking care of daily chores was clearly defined and divided between man and women – mothers were taking care of us children and the house alone, while fathers were out of the house almost whole day trying to provide support for family. I can't say a lot about my parents' relationship, again no different than in other homes – a bit of everything – alcohol, quarrels etc. I believe that our education was the biggest challenges for us, since both of my parents were uneducated, meaning that they were not able to help or motivate us. However, I managed to finish high school and in a fact, I do have some nice memories related to my education and family relationships, especially in relation to my mum. Since she was illiterate, I wanted to teach her how to read and write. I used to teach her everything what I was learning in school. I wouldn't say I was a very successful teacher at that time, but the hours that we spent together were precious for me and for her. I had developed a close relationship with my father as well, later when I grew up. I liked to talk to him and to consult him about important decisions I had to make.

## ***Partnerships – my partner and I***

I wanted to do everything different in my life than what I could see around me in my community and my family. In our culture, women get married very young, immature and unprepared for marriage, for a partner relationship and parenting. I wanted to find my soulmate and to develop mature partnership based on love, mutual respect and equality. And I did it! Both my wife and I are employed, and beside our regular jobs we are active in different NGOs that develop social inclusion programs, quite different than our parents.

My wife and I have developed a relationship which is stable, interdependent and mutually supportive. Our daily routine it to talk about everything – issues related to family, home, personal issues and business. Coming from a Roma community as well, she is my soul mate who shares my passion and mission to fight for Roma people to achieve better quality of life, especially for children and women. Mutual respect, understanding and support even when we feel or see the things differently is the most important symbol of our relationship.

***The moment to become a father –  
how this experience changed me, my partner, our life***

For me, fatherhood presents an important personal assignment and a challenge. Since I was a child I was dreaming to build a different family than my own, where partner relationships and those with children would be filled with love, attention and care – all what I missed so much as a child to see around me. Today, I am a father of six – three of my own and three that we are taking care of as foster parents. Both, my wife and I wanted not only to have our biological children, but also to help other children from a Roma settlement to get a chance to have a different life. I have to say that my wife was more determined to become a foster parent than myself. Although, I'm working as Roma assistant in school, I had some doubts about managing it all well. It was one of the most important decisions in our lives and today I dare to say we succeeded in developing a big happy family, filled with support, care and love. I'm proud of it!

We have developed a very different way of life than other Roma families, but we see it as our mission to bring a change around us, to motivate other Roma people to break dysfunctional community cultural norms of behavior. This is very much about gender relations and the role of women vs. men in sharing daily chores. In line with that, I tried to equally share all responsibilities with my wife. We are making daily plans depending of our and children' activities. This applies to all the topics and situations, when we speak of domestic duties or duties related to childcare (physical, health care, etc.). So, we are both doing all kind of household tasks. We are aware that we are role models for our children, so it is tremendously important to show our children that there is no difference between man and women in this respect. Since we have five children – equal number of boys and girls, we involve them in those tasks as well. Thereby, everybody has his or her obligations, things to do. For instance, we have Friday's family meetings, where we exchange news, discuss problems, but also make agreements, plans related to the household obligations. Being a big family with big house it wouldn't be possible to manage it all any other way. However, we also try to respect certain individual preferences towards particular duties. For instance, I like to cook very much and I dare to say I am good at, while my wife is less interested in cooking. Children prefer my cooking as well, which makes me very satisfied.

Speaking of other duties related to child care, we share that equally too. I can't remember any situation when any of our children was sick that we didn't take him/her together to the doctor. We both took care of them while there were small – changing diapers, or bathing, putting to sleep, preparing food for them. If I would to make comparison between my role and approach as father and my wife towards children needs, I would say that there is a different way of sharing affection. My wife is more emotional while I'm there to be strong and supportive, to give confidence and sense of safety to the children and her. Also, it is important to say that in some matters children are approaching me or my wife depending on some particular issues, for instance, during adolescent period, girls are more comfortable to consult with their mum about some physical changes they are facing, than with me.

*Education* is one of those topics where both of us are involved into. Four of our children attend school, and we both do take active part in re-thinking, discussing and planning their education or resolving their problems related to school. In some matters, I am more involved in supporting children doing their homework, since I'm more educated than my wife. However, we are both present on parental meetings and we are both involved in council of parents as class representatives. We both try to continuously spread the message how much education is important for their future.

*Socializing, developing healthy social relations with peer and authorities* – it is an important and challenging task for us as a family. We live in a part of town inhabited with mostly Croatian families; actually we are the only Roma family in the street. It is challenging to secure smooth integration of our children in school, kindergarten, with other peers. Somehow, for some institutions, we used to be the first experience of Roma family, i.e. my child was the only Roma child in the kindergarten. We had challenges, and I'm proud to say we have managed to resolve them in a way to contribute in supporting institutions to build their awareness and capacities for inclusion of those children who are mostly marginalized. However it is not a comfortable situation, not easy to deal with. My background of being an activist, having knowledge and support of different actors/NGOs surely is important support for me in those situations, but I'm drawing the biggest strength from the fact that I have my wife on my side in those moments.

Although we think that it is important to react and to fight for the rights of marginalized, strengthening communities and institution to become more aware and accessible, we also try to build capacities of our children to deal with problems on their own. We both find important to support children to develop clear boundaries and to get sense of their own identity – who they are, and to take responsibilities for their own actions. We have been sending messages related to and have provided support to fight against intimidation and physical aggression as well as discrimination. I am happy to say that I believe that all my children have healthy relation with majority of their peers – having friends, visiting them, as well as with authorities.

# SUPER DAD

## *My place as engaged Dad in society*

The experience of being a father opened for me as a person a new perspective. It is so different when you are responsible for others to give them love, care and provide opportunities. To be an engaged and supportive father who is able to be there for his children all the time, is not an easy task. Not all is given; that is something we should learn about. For the Roma community, it is an issue of particular importance, since there is no support in society for men to be involved in this way in their family life. The norms and customs are different, rather opposite than supportive for men's involvement. My wife and I take this as our life mission to promote, motivate and support those Roma who are ready to break shells and to develop more quality life for them and their children. We believe, that change will be possible if we manage to create a core group of those who are ready to see life the same way we do. State, with its institutions should be there to support our efforts, by providing services, education and measures which will help us to accomplish this goal.



MenEngage  
boys and men for gender equality

*The State of the  
World's Fathers*

MenCare

Adapted in part from: **Levtov R, van der Gaag N, Greene M, Kaufman M, and Barker G (2015). *State of the World's Fathers: Executive Summary: A MenCare Advocacy Publication*. Washington, DC: Promundo, Rutgers, Save the Children, Sonke Gender Justice, and the MenEngage Alliance.**

# The State of the World's Fathers at a Glance:

## Summary and Recommendations

Fathers matter. Father-child relationships, in all communities and at all stages of a child's life, have profound and wide-ranging impacts on children that last a lifetime, whether these relationships are positive, negative, or lacking. Men's participation as fathers and as caregivers also matters tremendously for women's lives. And, it positively affects the lives of men themselves.

Approximately 80 percent of men will become biological fathers at some point in their lives, and virtually all men have some connection to children – as relatives, as teachers, as coaches, or simply as community members. Whether they are biological fathers, stepfathers, adoptive or foster fathers, or legal guardians; whether they are brothers, uncles, or grandfathers; whether they are in same-sex or opposite-sex relationships; and whether they live with their children or not, men's participation in the daily care of others has a lasting influence on the lives of children, women, and men, and an enduring impact on the world around them.

Massive changes in the workplace and in households are bringing changes to men's participation as caregivers – that is, the state of the world's fathers is changing. Yet, men's involvement in caregiving has too often been missing from public policies, from systematic data collection and research, and from efforts to promote women's empowerment.

This first ever *State of the World's Fathers* report brings together key international research findings along with program and policy examples related to men's participation in caregiving; in sexual and reproductive health and rights; in maternal, newborn, and child health; in violence and violence prevention; and in child development.

*State of the World's Fathers* has the potential to put some of the most exciting and farthest-reaching changes happening in the lives of men and women around the world into the public eye and onto the public agenda. The move toward more involved fatherhood and equitable caregiving must be supported as part of a wider agenda to challenge the structures and ideologies that restrict us all from developing as full human beings in a more just and equal society.

## ***Key findings***

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### **Involved fatherhood helps children thrive.**

As men take on more caregiving, research increasingly confirms that fathers' involvement affects children in much the same ways that mothers' involvement does. Fathers' involvement has been linked to higher cognitive development and school achievement, better mental health for boys and girls, and lower rates of delinquency in sons. Studies in multiple countries have shown that fathers' interaction is important for the development of empathy and social skills in sons and daughters.

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### **Involved fatherhood allows women and girls to achieve their full potential – now and in future generations.**

Globally, women earn on average 24 percent less than men do, in large part due to their greater burden of care work. By sharing the caregiving and domestic work, men support women's participation in the workforce and women's equality overall. Involved fatherhood also carries forward across generations: it has been shown to contribute to boys' acceptance of gender equality and to girls' sense of autonomy and empowerment. Research finds that daughters with fathers who share domestic chores equally are more likely to aspire to less traditional and potentially higher-paying jobs. Data from multi-country studies find that men who have seen their own fathers engage in domestic work are themselves more likely to be involved in household work and caregiving as adults.

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### **Involved fatherhood makes men happier and healthier.**

Men who are involved in meaningful ways with their children report this relationship to be one of their most important sources of well-being and happiness. Studies find that fathers who report close, non-violent connections with their children live longer, have fewer mental or physi-



cal health problems, are less likely to abuse drugs, are more productive at work, and report being happier than fathers who do not report this connection with their children.

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**Men's involvement in caregiving is increasing in some parts of the world, but nowhere does it equal that of women.**

Women now make up 40 percent of the global formal workforce, yet they also continue to perform two to 10 times more caregiving and domestic work than men do. Research on time use shows that, as women have taken on more responsibility outside of the home, particularly in the labor force, men's participation in care work and domestic work has for the most part not kept up. A study of trends in men's participation between 1965 and 2003 across 20 countries found an average increase of six hours per week in employed married men's contribution to housework and childcare. Still, men's contribution did not exceed 37 percent of women's contribution in any of these countries.

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**Fathers want to spend more time with their children.**

Many fathers around the world say they want to be more involved in the lives of their children. Data from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) show that most fathers (ranging from 61 percent in Croatia to 77 percent in Chile) report that they would work less if it meant that they could spend more time with their children. In the United States, one survey found that 46 percent of fathers said they were not spending enough time with their children, compared with 23 percent of mothers.

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**Men's participation and support are urgently needed to ensure that all children are wanted children.**

More than 220 million women lack access to or do not use safe and effective contraception, leaving them unable to delay childbearing or to space their pregnancies, which exposes them to greater risk of maternal and newborn death. Globally, about 85 million pregnancies were unintended in 2012, representing 40 percent of all pregnancies. Women's contraceptive use represents approximately three-quarters of total contraceptive use worldwide, a proportion that has changed little over the past 20 years. More needs to be done to engage men in contraceptive use and decision-making in ways that support women's reproductive choices, and to ensure that all pregnancies are wanted pregnancies. Apart from being a question of gender equality, studies around the world find that fathers tend to be more engaged in the lives of children whom they intended to have, with lasting benefits to those children.

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**Engaging men – in ways that women want – early on in pre-natal visits, in childbirth, and immediately after the birth of a child can bring lasting benefits.**

The involvement of fathers before, during, and after the birth of a child has been shown to have positive effects on maternal health behaviors, women's use of maternal and newborn health services, and fathers' longer-term support and involvement in the lives of their children. In low- and middle-income countries, men's presence at pre-natal visits varies greatly – from only 18 percent in Burundi to 96 percent in the Maldives. Recent analyses of research from low- and middle-income countries found that male involvement was significantly associated with improved skilled birth attendance and utilization of post-natal care. In high-income countries, fathers' presence has been shown to be helpful in encouraging and supporting mothers to breastfeed. Fathers' support also influences women's decision to immunize their children and to seek care for childhood illnesses.

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**Promoting fathers' involvement must include efforts to interrupt the cycle of violence.**

Approximately one in three women experiences violence at the hands of a male partner in her lifetime. Three-quarters of children between two and 14 years of age in low- and middle-income countries experience some form of violent discipline in the home. These forms of violence often co-occur. Studies in high-income countries suggest that anywhere between 45 and 70 percent of children whose mothers are experiencing violence themselves experience physical abuse. Research confirms that some forms of violence – particularly men's violence against female partners – are often transmitted from one generation to the next. Data from eight countries found that men who, as children, witnessed their mother being beaten by a male partner were approximately two and a half times more likely to use violence against a female partner as adults. At the same time, research finds that a more equitable division of caregiving is associated with lower rates of violence against children: a nationally representative study in Norway found that rates of violence against children – by mothers and fathers – were lower in households where men's and women's caregiving were more equal.

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**Children, women, and men benefit when fathers take parental leave.**

While maternity leave is now offered in nearly all countries, only 92 countries offer leave that can be taken by new fathers; in half of these countries, the leave is less than three weeks. Well-designed leave policies, when combined with free or affordable childcare, show the strongest potential for shifting the care burden. Leave for fathers is a vital step toward recognition of the importance of sharing caregiving for children, and it is an important means of promoting the well-being of children and gender equality in the home, the workplace, and society as a whole. In the United Kingdom, fathers who took leave after birth were 19 percent more likely to participate in feedings and to get up with the baby at night eight to 12 months later, as compared with fathers who

did not take leave. Furthermore, leave for fathers also appear to lead to improved maternal health – including mental health – and reduced parenting stress.

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**Men's greater involvement in care work also brings economic benefits.**

If women participated in the labor market at the same rates as men do, it is estimated that the gross domestic product (GDP) could increase in the United States by five percent, in Japan by nine percent, in the United Arab Emirates by 12 percent, and in Egypt by 34 percent. There is increasing evidence that providing paid family leave is good for business: it improves employee retention and reduces turnover, it increases productivity and morale, and it reduces absenteeism and training costs. At the household level, leave for fathers support women's participation in the labor market and can increase their income and career outcomes. A study from Sweden showed that every month that fathers took paternity leave increased the mother's income by 6.7 percent, as measured four years later, which was more than she lost by taking parental leave herself.

## ***Recommendations for changing the State of the World's Fathers***

To achieve full gender equality and maximum well-being for children, we must move beyond rigid, limiting definitions of fatherhood and motherhood and move toward what children need most to thrive. This is not merely a question of encouraging men to be nurturing and caring. This is an issue of social and economic justice. Changes are needed in policies, in systems and institutions, among service providers, within programming, and within data collection and analysis efforts. This report provides specific recommendations for change at each of these levels. These recommendations can be summarized as follows:

1. **Create national and international action plans to promote involved, non-violent fatherhood and men's and boys' equal sharing of unpaid care work.** Action plans on fatherhood and caregiving should span multiple sectors, including gender equality, children's rights, health, education, economic development, violence prevention and response, and labor rights. Actions must be matched with clear indicators and budgets in order to measure progress and make visible the need for men and boys to do a fair share of the care work.
2. **Take these action plans and policies into public systems and institutions to enable and promote men's equal participation in parenting and caregiving.** This will involve the transformation of policies, protocols, and curricula, as well as structures and spaces, in sectors as diverse as health, education, employment, and social services. This is necessary to ensure that these institutions are able to play a role in challenging, rather than perpetuating, inequitable norms around men's caregiving.
3. **Institute and implement equal, paid, and non-transferrable parental leave policies in both public and private sectors, as well as other policies that allow women's equal participation in the labor force and men's equal participation in unpaid care work.** In settings where a large proportion of the population is not formally employed, different policies and strategies, such as conditional cash transfers and social insurance systems, are needed to promote men's caregiving.
4. **Gather and analyze data on men's involvement as fathers and caregivers and generate new evidence from programs and policies** that work to

transform the distribution of unpaid care, prevent violence against women and against children, and improve health and development outcomes for women, children, and men.

- 5. Achieve a radical transformation in the distribution of care work through programs with men and boys, as well as with women and girls, that challenge social norms and promote their positive involvement in the lives of children.** Gender-transformative work should start early and continue throughout life. Boys and girls must be prepared from early ages to be future caregivers and future providers. Programs can be embedded within institutions and existing structures, such as schools, early child development initiatives, health services and education, parenting programs, and violence prevention and response efforts, to enable their implementation at scale.
- 6. Recognize the diversity of men's caregiving and support it in all of its forms.** Programs and policies need to be designed in ways that acknowledge and respond to the needs of diverse family configurations, including single parents, adoptive parents, non-resident fathers, gay fathers, adolescent fathers, and extended families.

When implementing all of these recommendations, the participation of children is needed to define and realize a new vision of fatherhood and caregiving.

Engaging men in caregiving is about helping men to have the deep, meaningful connections to others that are at the root of well-being and happiness – but even more than that, it is about enabling men's, women's, and children's full potential. It is also about achieving full equality for women and girls. State of the World's Fathers 2015 argues that it is time to shift both the perception and the reality of the role that men can play in nurturing, and to bring in the social measures and economic, social, and political support that are necessary to make this transformation possible.



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