

**Master thesis in Public Administration [VT17]**

School of Public Administration, University of Gothenburg

Author: Andrea Hallberg

Supervisor: Stig Montin

Examiner: Iwona Sobis

# **Father groups in Burkina Faso**

– towards changed behaviors and a reconstruction of masculinities?

## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** The importance of the involvement of men when it comes to increasing quality of life for women and children as well as for men themselves are evident, and has been shown repeatedly in academic research. Women globally are the ones responsible for children and household. In addition, research has shown that poor rural societies, have a greater division between men and women and the challenges to reach equality is tough. Burkina Faso in West-Africa is one of the poorest countries in the world and most people live by agriculture. The vision of Yennenga Progress, an organization active in the country, is a community where men and boys, take responsibility for changing gender roles, renounce violence and take an active interest in their partners and children's health. Therefore, Yennenga Progress have initiated father groups in the village Nakamtenga, where men have been given the opportunity to discuss and reflect upon their role as men, fathers and spouses.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this thesis is to provide an empirically based exploration of the behavioral outcomes of Yennenga Progress's initiative with father groups in Nakamtenga, Burkina Faso. The study provides valuable insights of fatherhood and masculinities and the reconstruction of masculinities in an African context, as well as contributes to the overall experience of adapting the concept of father groups into diverse contexts.

**Method:** In order to collect the precise richness of data to understand the outcomes and implications of the initiative with father groups in Nakamtenga, a qualitative method was adopted. The empirical findings were obtained through seven open thematic interviews as well as participant observations, obtained during a ten week stay in Nakamtenga.

**Conclusion:** This study, like previous research, shows that an initiative like Yennenga Progress, giving men the opportunity to discuss parenting, communication and participation in the lives of their families, can contribute to a reconstruction of masculinities and changed behavior and attitudes. The traditional gender roles in Burkina Faso are strong and the division between men and the rest of the family is clear, resulting in children not knowing their fathers and fathers spending little time at home with their families. Women are in charge of household chores and the caregiving of children, whilst it is men who makes all the decisions concerning the family. As a result of a father group, men now chose to come home to spend time with their families and communicate with family members before making joint decisions. Changes in behavior and men doing duties seen as typically female has resulted in reactions from other people. Instead of hiding their behaviors, as seen in previous research, these men have chosen to initiate a dialogue and even in some cases act provocatively, resulting in a ripple effect and discussions regarding the division of labor between men and women and why there is nothing odd in a man washing his wife's underwear. This all has resulted in women, men and children being happier and has increased their overall quality of their lives.

**Keywords:** Africa, Burkina Faso, Nakamtenga, Yennenga Progress, father groups, fatherhood, family life, masculinities, gender roles.

## Table of Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1	Yennenga Progress and Father Groups in Nakamtenga, Burkina Faso	7
1.2	Purpose and Scientific Issue	9
1.3	Structure of the Thesis	9
<b>2</b>	<b>POINT OF DEPARTURE</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1	Masculinities in an African Context	11
2.2	The Case of Burkina Faso	13
2.3	Father Groups and Male Participation	15
<b>3</b>	<b>METHOD</b>	<b>16</b>
3.1	Research Perspectives and Approach	16
3.2	Data Collection	17
3.2.1	Entering the Field	17
3.2.2	Interviews	18
3.3	Ethical dilemmas	21
<b>4</b>	<b>EMPIRICAL FINDINGS</b>	<b>22</b>
4.1	Background	22
4.1.1	Burkina Faso and Nakamtenga	22
4.1.2	The respondents	24
4.1.3	The Original Father Group	25
4.2	Prior to the Original Father Group	26
4.2.1	Absent fathers	26
4.2.2	Parenting	28
4.2.3	Financial responsibilities	29
4.2.4	Male domination, female subordination	30
4.2.5	Household chores	33
4.3	Following the Original Father Group	35
4.3.1	Time Spent with the Family	36
4.3.2	Parenting	37
4.3.3	Communication between Husband and Wife	38
4.3.4	Financial responsibilities	39
4.3.5	Household chores	40
4.3.6	Happier Families and Bolder Children	41
4.3.7	Possible Negative Effects	42
4.3.8	Aftermath and Ripple Effects	42
4.3.9	Additional Father Groups	46
4.3.10	Similar Concept, Different Context	49
4.3.11	Reflections upon the Future	49
<b>5</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>51</b>
5.1	The Traditional Male	51
5.2	Failing and Hiding	52
5.3	Awareness-Rising	53

5.4	Moving beyond Nakamtenga .....	54
6	CONCLUDING REMARKS.....	57
	REFERENCES .....	58
	Sources .....	58
	Bibliography.....	58
	APPENDIX 1.....	62

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The paid workforce, globally, consist of 40 percent women and half of the world's food producers are women. Despite being almost half the paid workforce, the average income for a woman is still 24 percent less than that for a man. At the same time, men's involvement in caregiving and domestic shores has not kept up and women are still doing most work involving children and household. Global studies show that it is a matter of women doing at least two and a half times more unpaid care and domestic work than men and boys, in addition to their involvement in paid and unpaid work outside the home. These facts come from the report *State of World's Fathers* that has gathered and reviewed international research and data concerning men and fatherhood, from several different aspects and perspectives (Levtov, van der Gaag, Greene, Kaufman & Barker, 2015). Focusing on Africa and even more specifically on Burkina Faso in the western part of Africa, one can see that the above presented global trends are reflected also in this part of the world, in some cases to an even greater extent. As much as 70 percent of the burden of the households' water collection in the African countries south of Sahara, one being Burkina Faso, falls on the female population. It equals 40 billion hours a year for water collection, the same amount of worked hours by the entire workforce in France. Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world, with 44 % of the population living below the poverty line of 1,90 USD/day and ranked number 185 out of 188 countries on the human development index. The index measures progress in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living. In a country where most people work in the informal economy and subsistence agriculture, and where social and financial mechanisms to help families thrive are lacking, it is an even greater challenge to reach full equality (Levtov et al., 2015; UNDP, 2016). Together with the fact that the burden of unpaid care has the strongest impact on the poorest people in society as well as the division of labor between men and women being a contributing fact to poverty, one starts to understand the implications and problems evolving. A study carried out in Uganda, Nigeria, Nepal and Kenya showed that "women living in poverty carry heavier workloads than men in all four countries, across both rural and urban communities. Their responsibility for unpaid care work means they have less time to take care of themselves, rest or engage in paid work or subsistence" (van den Berg, 2015, p. 19). The traditional gender norms also tend to effect fathers' interaction with their children; only 25 percent of fathers in Burkina Faso states to be engaged in at least one activity to support

their children's learning. Family structures and relationships are further complicated by the fact that about 35 percent of fathers in Burkina Faso have had children with more than one woman (ibid.).

The positive involvement and participation from men, in the lives of children and women are important. It improves the sexual, reproductive and maternal health of women and leads to a higher use of contraception and the ability to secure that all children are wanted. Women are more likely to use available health services for themselves and their children with the support of a partner (ibid.). At the same time, does it have positive effects for men, by making them healthier as well as happier. In the end, it is about reaching equal rights and enable the full potential of all children, women and men (Levtov et al., 2015).

“The world needs men involved as caregivers not because fathers do uniquely “male” things, but because children are more likely to thrive with multiple, nurturing caregivers, regardless of their sex. Children need care and the world needs men- as biological as well as social fathers- to be part of that care.” (van den Berg, 2015, p. 47)

Reaching the full involvement and participation of fathers and men means challenging the traditional social gender norms, differing from country to country, from society to society. Social norms can be understood as the rules, formal and informal, which affect people’s behavior and actions; what they are able to do and not do in their lives. It is about individual behaviors as well as actions in relation to other people, in the public as well as the private domain. In addition, social norms connected to gender are the values present in societies, stating what it means to be a real woman or a real man and what is interpreted in being feminine and masculine (Namabira & Kamanzi, 2013). In other words, it is about changing stereotypes, behaviors and attitudes that has been a part of societies and generations for a very long time, maintained by traditional structures (Levtov et al., 2015). At the same time, van den Berg et al. (2015) states that there is an insufficient amount of data in regard to fathers in Africa and a gap in the literature, that needs to be filled to fully grasp men’s caregiving activities and thereby offer a contribution to change the institution of fatherhood. Kompaoré, McSweeney and Frisanco (2007) points out the necessity to create an information dissemination system that offers a summary and analysis of effective efforts when promoting the empowerment of females and gender equality. This would enable organizations to make

the most out of previous experiences. One possible way to challenge these structures are by giving men and fathers the opportunity to talk about their roles as fathers, spouses and men. The father groups initiated in the village Nakamtenga, situated outside of the capital of Burkina Faso and with a population of 1500 inhabitants, by the support of Yennenga progress network, is an example of this. By focusing on an initiative like that, this study can provide valuable knowledge concerning fathers in Africa and at the same time give Yennenga and other organizations the opportunity to learn from the experiences made.

## 1.1 Yennenga Progress and Father Groups in Nakamtenga, Burkina Faso

Yennenga Progress is a non-profit organization, without religious or political connections. The organization was founded in Burkina Faso 2006 and registered in Sweden by 2009. Some of their work is managed from Stockholm, by the board and the general secretary Stina Berge, also one of the founders. The work of the organization is related to the 17 global sustainable development goals, adopted by the United Nations in 2015. The goals state that the responsibility for a sustainable development globally is shared among all actors, both governments and industry as well as civil society and individuals. By acting as an accelerator for development and gather and share competences within their network, Yennenga wants to contribute to positive community building by developing and coordinating various activities in the local community. The organization works in areas where members has its operations, currently in 14 countries. The mission is to assist members in their work, to create the best possible conditions for success – both socially, environmentally and economically. One of the organizations most tangible causes is to create what they call “The good Village”; a self-reliant local community. Since the very beginning all the operations initiated in the village of Nakamtenga has focused on finding concrete solutions for social developments. The main dedication has been directed towards education, infrastructure and healthcare. These are all operations that in themselves cannot reach self-reliance due to the specific target group they are directed towards. Therefore, such community services must exist in a context where they can ensure long-term funding without being dependent upon ever changing trends in economic aid. The solutions lie with creating a structure for local funding together with the involvement from Yennenga Progress global network (Yennenga progress, 2017).

By educating leaders of father groups, starting in Nakamtenga in Burkina Faso, Yennenga Progress wants to focus on efforts towards fathers and men to increase gender equality. To solemnly work towards and with women to increase equality has proven to be very problematic (Färnsveden & Rönquist, 2000; Levy, C., Taher N. & Vouhe, C., 2000). The organization has come to see it as a necessity with efforts creating male role models and thereby raising the question of responsible masculinities to the surface. Masculinity is not a “fixed entity embedded in the body or personality traits of individuals. Masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action, and therefore, can differ according to the gender relations in a particular social setting” (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 836). A variety of social and health problems stems from a distorted view of humanity and the fact that women have no right to their own body. By working with men, Yennenga Progress hope to assist in fundamentally changing these structures and thereby achieving a sustainable gender equality that can benefit families and entire societies. The purpose is to get men more involved when it comes to their children, their partners and the household and by that contribute to a positive change in children's and women's living situation but also contribute to an improved quality of life for men (Yennenga progress, 2017).

“Yennenga Progress vision is a network of local communities where men and boys, including fathers, take responsibility for changing gender roles, renounce violence and care about their partners and their children's health.” (Yennenga progress, 2017)

Between 11<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2016 Yennenga Progress, in co-operation with Nils Pettersson from EQUALifies, introduced an initiative where 15 men were educated for the purpose of becoming leaders of father groups. The material used is developed by the Swedish organization "Men for Gender Equality" and has been used in several different environments and cultural contexts before. For the simplicity of this study I have chosen to refer to the educational program as the original father group (OFG). As much as the OFG was about discussing their roles as men and father's it was also an education in leadership and how to act as a role model. Through discussions within the group, the context and prevailing norms were conceptualized and serves as a starting point for further work and for use in future father groups. The participants agreed on a few statements regarding the role of fathers and men in the community. The responsibility for education and health within the family as well as providing food is on the man. Most men work for example hard to make sure all children



attend school. Due to the responsibilities, men spend more time outside of home but the importance of men spending more time at home and with the family was emphasized. It is also men which are expected to maintain peace within the family. On the other side, women are often marginalized and seen by men as objects and/or belongings. The communication between men and the rest of the family is limited and is mostly about men making the decisions. Because of the pressure on men in providing care and security for the family, some men abandon their families when they feel they are not able to serve for that. In general, the participants agreed on the need for men to discuss these issues with each other. Thereby, they will have better opportunities to act as positive role models, to improve quality of life for men, women and children (ibid).

## 1.2 Purpose and Scientific Issue

The overall aim of this study is to provide an empirically based exploration of the behavioral outcomes of Yennenga Progress's initiative with father groups in Nakamtenga, Burkina Faso.

The aim has resulted in the following research questions:

- To what extent and in what way have the participation in the original father group affected the participants and their families?
- To what extent and in what way do the initiative with father groups participate and contribute to a reconstruction of masculinities in Nakamtenga?

## 1.3 Structure of the Thesis

- In chapter 1, the research problem and relevant background information is presented, followed by the purpose and the research questions.
- Chapter 2 gives an overview of relevant theory and previous research, focusing on masculinities and the reconstruction of masculinities as close to the current context as possible. Chapter 3 contains research perspective and approach, followed by an explanation and justification of the data collection. The use of interviews and participant observation is motivated and ethical dilemmas are discussed.
- Chapter 4 is a presentation of the empirical findings from the interviews and participant observations, collected during ten weeks in Nakamtenga. It is presented according to the tendencies and themes identified by me as the most relevant and

important. The first research question; to what extent and in what way the father's participation in the original father group have affected the participants and their families, are being answered through the presentation of the empirical findings.

- In chapter 5, the empirical findings are discussed and analyzed further, with the help of theory and previous research concerning masculinities and the reconstruction of masculinities. The second research question; to what extent and in what way the initiative with father groups do participate and contribute to a reconstruction of masculinities in Nakamtenga, will be elaborated on in this section.
- Chapter 6 is a summary of the study, including remarks of the results as well as contributions and suggestions for future research.

## 2 POINT OF DEPARTURE

*Although this study is not guided by one single and overarching theory or has a hypothesis that shall be tested, it is still of importance to provide an overview of relevant theory and previous research for the field of study. For the relevance of the study, the focus is masculinities and the construction of masculinities as closely related to the current context as possible.*

### 2.1 Masculinities in an African Context

The approach to men and masculinity in social science are multifaceted and the number of theoretical perspectives are high. Ouzgane (2002, p. 243) is critical to the differing focus of masculinity studies in Europe, Australia and North America, in contrast to Africa. The first has been focused on “theorizing masculinity as a complex and historically determined construction ... and major scholars have demonstrated that masculinity is a fragmented, unstable, and internally contradictory thing. But the scholarship on gender in Africa continues to operate as though gender applied only to women, as though African men had no gender”. Morrel and Swart (2005) observe similar lack of research when it comes to men and masculinity in the part of the world they choose to call the postcolonial world, i.e. the part of the world that has been under the ruling of European colonial powers and where Burkina Faso is included. Porter (2013) on the other hand identifies extensive research on the subject but emphasizes the need of further knowledge being formed by African scholars and practitioners, rather than non-Africans that has been the case up until now.

With regard to the complexity and the aim to get as close to the current context as possible, it is of interest to focus on a report by Barker and Ricardo (2005). The report is a review of studies regarding masculinities and how it is constructed in Africa, as well as a presentation of studies conducted by themselves. Masculinities, rather than masculinity, is emphasized and the fact that the different types of African manhood are socially constructed, differing over time and in different settings and pluralistic. You cannot talk about the typical man in sub-Saharan Africa or one form of African manhood. Some forms of masculinities are associated with armed conflict and others with cultivation and cattle-herding. It is defined by traditional structures within tribal and ethnic groups, as well as modern versions being influenced by

Christianity, Islam and additional influences from other parts of the world. An almost universal note of masculinity is that it must be achieved, through specific actions and behaviors determined in the relevant social group. If you as a man is not able to behave in the expected way, you are running the risk of being judged as failing to be a man. According to Porter (2013), the testing take on different forms depending on the traditional and prevailing norms and the current context but the process of failing leads to similar psychological and emotional reactions and feelings globally among men. Not being able to meet the local ideals of what it means to be a man can result in feelings of embarrassment, humiliation, frustration, insufficiency and loss of dignity. In addition, a study on men doing traditional and typical female work in Mozambique, showed that middle-age men were least likely, in comparison to young and old men, to engage in female jobs, as they experienced a higher degree of social prestige and loss of dignity (Agadjanian, 2005).

In context with the construction of masculinities in this part of the world it is important to highlight the impact of armed conflicts. Statistics shows that more than 30 wars have been fought in Africa since 1970 and it is undoubtedly so that wars have a great impact on the existence of poverty and the development of people's living situation over all in a region. Historically, wars have been fought by men but with woman and children, being victims under the conflict. Masculinities are still being constructed in connection with these traditional gender roles but much of the focus today in the construction of masculinities is pointed towards work. Dover (2001) describes men in employment, in Zambia, and how many men in Africa move to other places or countries to get a job and make money. When returning home with money, giving them status and influence, these men challenge the traditional village structures. The traditional structures are rather built on kinship and age and is not necessarily about money. On the other hand, most men in Burkina Faso and the rest of Africa does not have a regular employment as interpreted by the Western part of the world. The impacts of colonialism have in some areas lead to the reconstruction of manliness and masculinities. Porter (2013, p. 489) argue that colonization has had a negative impact on the shaping of masculinities in Africa and that "the models of masculinity that exist in formerly colonized societies are particularly normative; based on sexist, heterosexist, ethnocentrist and adultist tenets". Before the colonialization, in a rural district in Kenya for example, manliness was built on the dignity of father's and husband's, reflected in respect from his children, wives and most notably, his own self-restraint. In the household, the male in charge was the one making the decisions and controlling the wealth. The colonial influences with an increase in

wage labor resulted in men moving to other parts of the country to work, with a reconstruction of the male role as they became breadwinners. As long as men had work, this was not a problem but the independence from the colonial powers in the 1960s and the slump followed by it, meant men were not able to find employment in the suburban areas and had to return to the rural areas. Population growth and loss of land resulted in limited possibilities for men in terms of cultivation and the small amount of money they earned were spent on women and alcohol instead of the family. Men's inability to contribute to the household, at the same time as women still took part in the cultivation and thereby contributed to the survival of the family, created problems. The number of marriages fell and the difficulties to pay the bride-wealth increased. Men's former self-evident connection to the families has transformed and as a result, they experience a loss in status and manhood, as it is among others associated to marriage (Porter, 2013; Silberschmidt, 1999; Silberschmidt, 2005).

## 2.2 The Case of Burkina Faso

When looking closer at specific research on Burkina Faso, one starts to understand the implications of prevailing norms and structures. At the same time, it is important to highlight the fact that 60 different ethnic groups in the country result in a variety of norms and structures. As mentioned above, kinship is of great importance and most people in Burkina Faso live under structures that connect families through the line of the father; a patrilineal society. The ethnic group of Mossi, the largest ethnic group in the country and the dominant one in Nakamtenga, value a large and extended family and polygamous unions are common. Despite the varieties within the ethnic groups, they all have two things in common with regard to hierarchies, namely age and gender (Helmfrid, 2004; Nanama & Frongillo, 2012).

“The age hierarchy always implies that a senior has authority over a junior and that a junior always has to respect a senior. Coming of age is a gradual process, marked by a few important breaking points, such as initiation, marriage and having a child.” (Helmfrid, 2004, p. 10)

A hierarchy based on age means that everyone sooner or later will have the opportunity to reach the top of the pyramid. This is not the case with the second hierarchy; gender, as it is given and therefore not able to transgress. Secondly, gender is of greater importance than age

in Burkina Faso, which means a younger man still have the authority over an older woman. The exception to the rule is the relationship between mothers and sons. Mothers have a special position and can thereby be given the opportunity to influence the decisions made in the local community, through their influential sons. In addition, siblings sharing the same mother typically have a close relationship and brothers respect their sisters, even though they are superior with regard to hierarchical structures. They do not command and make decisions over their heads, as could be the case in relation to other women. The patrilineal structure results in sons being the most preferable to get, as sons stay with the family while daughters leave when getting married. Daughters are thus important, to help and accompany their mothers with regard to household duties and as exchange in the event of marriage. In the group of Mossi, the prevailing norm is that babies need to be influenced to become female or male. Children are taught from an early age what it means to be a woman and a man and the division of tasks according to gender are significant, with daughters spending time at home with their mothers and sons accompanying their fathers from time to time. Throughout life, the fields relevant for men are made in daylight, meaning that the rights and actions of men are not questioned. Women on the other hand, need to negotiate and discuss during the night since the norms and traditions states that the only one they are able to influence is their husbands (Helmfrid, 2004; Kevane & Gray, 1999; Nanama & Frongillo, 2012). The gender roles, attributes and how to behave are clear:

“Men are expected to have authority, be strong, courageous, laborious and self-controlled. They should be able to live up to their principal duty of being a husband, which is to provide millet and to ensure the health of the family. Both women and men are expected to be laborious. Women are supposed to be obedient, caring, amiable, and enduring. They are thought of as being slow, mild, easily anguished and unable to control themselves. A woman should be able to live up to her principal duty as a wife and mother, which is to care for her children, provide meals and water, and be at the service of her husband.” (Helmfrid, 2004, p. 12)

A study analyzing the participation in Burkina Faso of women in decision-making concerning their own health care, major household purchases, and visits to family or relatives, further confirms the strict gender roles. 59 % of the women participated in at least one of three areas of decision-making, while only 12 % took part in all three. It was mostly common to be a part of decisions concerning visits to family and relatives. Education, permanent employment and age are factors contributing to increased female involvement in decision-making; the more

education and the older you are as woman, the more likely it is that you are able to take an active part. One theory is that women which are getting paid for work have a greater ability to argue for their case as they are able to support the decisions economically. This is further supported by the fact that the poorest women are the ones least involved in decision-making (Wayack Pambe, Gnoumou/Thiombiano & Kabore, 2014).

## 2.3 Father Groups and Male Participation

Initiatives have been taken in other parts of Africa to get men more engaged in their families, in everything from caregiving to health care, reproductive health and communication. Research with more than 600 Rwandan men and their partners who participated in father groups underlines the importance of avoiding to further reinforce the male role as breadwinners and the ones making the decisions, as well as only encouraging limited participation in the lives of children. The initiatives should rather “challenge existing norms and encourage men to be equitable and involved fathers, who share the full range of caregiving and domestic work with women, and perceive benefits from doing so.” (Doyle et al., 2014, p. 528). In addition, the research also shows that men are genuinely interested in caregiving, the problem is rather the implications of carrying out domestic tasks, normally seen as female duties. Some men stated it was against everything they as men were taught to do and they experienced stigmatizing attitudes from other men and women, making change complicated as it made men hiding their changed behavior (ibid.). Studies of similar initiatives with father groups in South Africa and additional ones in Rwanda showed similar challenges and how masculinities are not only formed in relation to femininities but also in practice with other men. At the same time, men described going from the role as strict fathers and breadwinners, to becoming more involved, nurturing and receptive towards children and wives. Female income gains and the slow transition of seeing wives as adequate partners when it comes to family, economy and politics are embraced by many men, as they experience the positive outcomes and improvements in their own as well as in the lives of their families (Sleggh, Barker, Kimonyo, Ndoimana & Bannerman, 2013; van den Berg, Hendricks, Hatcher, Peacock, Godana & Dworkin, 2013).

“In addition to describing improved communication and a better quality of relationships with children, men also recognized the positive role they can play in

bringing up the next generation to be citizens who are healthy, and respectful of the equal rights of all, including women and girls.” (van den Berg et al., 2013, p. 122)

## 3 METHOD

*This chapter starts with a description of the research perspectives and approach of the study. It is followed by a presentation of data collection and process of work, before finishing with elaborated views of possible ethical dilemmas.*

### 3.1 Research Perspectives and Approach

Based on the purpose of the study a qualitative research approach is seen to be the most suitable; to study actions, perceptions, interpretations and descriptions of everyday life by the individuals of interest. According to Tracy (2013, p. 12) “qualitative research is about immersing oneself in a scene and trying to make sense of it” and if successful, contributing to a greater understanding of the world, societies and institutions. It is difficult to generalize, in a wider perspective, with qualitative research in comparison to quantitative methods, but it is still possible to use the acknowledged conclusions and knowledge to understand other contexts and populations. The opportunity to do so is given to the reader by an extensive description of the research setting, the researcher's pre-understandings as well as the research process and the participants’ involvement (Morrow, 2006). In addition, qualitative research and more specifically ethnographic research methods, used in this study, gives the researcher an opportunity to enter a field of interest and be able to understand what people do and not just what they say they do. The understanding comes gradually, through practice and by taking on the actors’ perspectives, and later on in close connection with previous research and theories. The basis of ethnographic methods is in other words social interaction, lived experiences and understanding cultural contexts. The study is neither aimed at a rigid cause-and-effect relationship, nor does it claim to produce a final truth. The purpose is to generate knowledge that opens and furnishes opportunities for a deep understanding of the case under study. Because of the exploratory and theorizing approach, the process of data collection was guided by the study’s research questions instead of a theoretical framework (Aspers, 2007; Swedberg, 2012; Tracy, 2013).



“To work exclusively with theories, rather than to think in terms of theorizing, often translates into an awkward struggle of trying to get theory and facts together. When you theorize, in contrast, these two come together in a natural way. You begin with the facts, and an organic link between theory and facts is established from the very beginning.” (Swedberg, 2012, p. 33)

Swedberg argues that social science today is too focused on theory and tends to neglect the ways in which theory is actually formed. Instead he wants to emphasize the option of theorizing, where the students are taught to theorize their own empirical findings, instead of using the ideas of others. This approach lower the risk of theory and developed pre-understandings standing in the way and leaving out, for the study, relevant observations. Additional aspects to this subject and the importance of self-reflexivity as a researcher is further developed in the next section.

## 3.2 Data Collection

### 3.2.1 Entering the Field

The empirical data were mainly gathered through open thematic interviews, which implied direct contact between me and the respondents participating in the study. In addition, my ten weeks stay in Nakamtenga enabled me to collect field notes on relevant behaviors and facts, that will further contribute to my empirical data. To get valuable and rich data, it is important to get access to and be accepted by the group or community in interest of the study. Therefore, it is of value to spend the first time in the field trying to socialize as much as possible with the residents and curiously take part in their lives, if possible. At the same time, it is important to be aware of the cultural settings and the customs and traditions in the context of the study, to respect the residents and their lives and do as little harm as possible. The stages of the socialization process likely mean that you take on different roles as the time goes by and you adapt to the orders, from learner to collaborator and maybe in the end, friend. During the process one must be willing to handle the own vulnerability and understand that “access comes from performing; the actor must have a willingness to make mistakes and an ability to learn from them” (de Laine, 2000, p. 39). In addition, it is about understanding the context through self-reflexivity and by analyzing your impact on it and what you add to it. It is about spoken language but even more so, about appearance and non-

verbal actions. Clothes, body shape and size, the color of your skin, facial expression and heritage all affects the way people look upon you. By showing an understanding for non-verbal communication, people's perceptions and what they expect of you and your behavior, you will be more likely to experience the field as a challenging but positive setting. Only by doing so the researcher can go from a stranger, in a new setting, to establishing interpersonal trust and relations (de Laine, 2000; Tracy, 2013).

Having lived in the village for 10 weeks made the question about access a lot less complicated than it usually can become when undertaking research. It took me past the first steps of establishing contact as it came by itself, mostly due to my own and the residents' curiosity towards each other. I was very open about the reason I was there and what I aimed to do during my stay. The atmosphere was genuine and kind and everyone I meet was very helpful and willing to share their stories. Prior to conducting interviews, I spent the first time in Nakamtenga getting to know the settings and the people, to better understand the context. The observations made through-out and the reflections and stories told me where documented and developed into field notes. Scratch notes, shorthanded and handwritten on a piece of paper, were later processed into more explicit and detailed formal field notes. In addition, it is important to highlight the fact that my access to the village and the residents was made possible by Yennenga progress and people engaged in the organization. They can be seen as a form of gate-keepers or sponsors. It is people who make access in the first place possible and who might also have an interest in the conducted study; in this case, their interest in me considering the effects the father group might have in the village as one way of evaluating the organization's efforts and work (ibid.).

### 3.2.2 Interviews

Tracy (2013, p. 132) means that qualitative interviews “are not neutral exchanges of questions and answers, but active processes in which we come to know others and ourselves”. Although it is about social interaction with a purpose, a conversation between an interviewer and a respondent, the ability to control the dialogue and themes discussed mainly remains at the interviewer. This kind of power comes with a responsibility to serve for the respondent and consider all ethical aspects. As is the case with participant observation, interviews call for the researcher to reflect upon oneself and the impact one might have on the process, interview situation and the respondent (Ryen, 2004; Tracy, 2013). The interview structure, open

thematic interview, is linked to the scientific purpose of the study and the methodological approach. It is a form of unstructured interviews, with the purpose of open for discussion, new inputs and the viewpoints of the respondent, rather than the interviewer, equipped with a set of predetermined questions, leading the way. At the same time, the interview form puts a high degree of pressure at the interviewer, who must be creative, adapt to upcoming situations and make sure the data gathered still can be used based on the purpose of the study. An interview guide (Appendix 1) was designed, with seven predetermined topics and a limited number of additional themes and/or questions to each topic. The topics was identified, with the basis of the cultural context and the material and themes discussed within the OFG. Design and basic structure of the guide was the same for all interviews, with some smaller changes and another approach due to the different perspectives represented by the fathers and their partners. Topics and questions were brought up in a flexible order, suitable for the current interview situation. In addition, the interview structure opens up for additional topics, identified, and further developed, in interaction with the respondent. This type of guide gives the researcher an opportunity to focus on the respondent and the answers given, instead of keeping track of the interview guide. It also enables an analytic approach while interviewing (Aspers, 2011; Ryen 2004; Tracy, 2013).

To achieve valid data, the strategy was to interview both participants of the OFG, on the one hand, and participants' wives, on the other. The age of the respondents and number of children in their family were chosen as sampling criteria since the perception is that those criteria would result in the largest empirical variation. The deliberate choice not to sample husbands and wives married to each other was made to avoid comparing their answers and stories. Rather than that, the study is interested in looking at greater tendencies, perspectives and possible variations within the sample group (Aspers, 2011; Tracy 2013).

The official language and the language taught in school in Burkina Faso is French but the mother tongue and the communication language between the inhabitants of Nakamtenga is moré. Therefore, the French language skills of the father group participants and their wives vary and limited my possibility to interview all of them. The participants chosen for interview needed to have enough French to be able to express themselves sufficiently enough to contribute with important and extensive findings. The limited resources, both in terms of economic financing and access to qualified interpreters, left me with few options. An interpreter from Burkina Faso has most likely knowledge about various cultural and social

aspects of life in Burkina Faso as well as being aware of prevailing norms and structures. This could be valuable for someone like me, coming from another context, by helping and possibly adjusting the interview guide. At the same time, it can lead to questions not being asked or asked in a, for the study, disadvantaged manner. The village where I conducted my study is located on the country side and the only available French-English interpreters are in the capital Ouagadougou, one hour away. In addition to the high cost, there lies a clear disadvantage in using a language that is not the mother tongue for either me nor the interpreter. Instead I had the privilege of visiting Nakamtenga at the same time as a Swedish woman, fluent in French. Her helping me with the interpretation during the interviews gave me the opportunity to receive and process the information in Swedish. By discussing questions and answers with the person interpreting, in my mother tongue, the understanding of and variations within the empirical findings are more accessible to me and in the end resulting in a favorable contribution to the results of the study.

All interviews were held during a period of two weeks, about one month into my stay in Nakamtenga. All of those who were asked to participate choose to do so and I received no refusals. I perceived their participation as voluntary even though there could have been factors that made them feel obliged to participate. However, I choose to proceed with the participants and rely on the fact that I would be observant for any reluctance on their part. Prior to the respondents giving a verbal consent to participating in the study, they were informed of the purpose of the study, the implications of their participation and the possibility at any time to withdraw from participating. They were given the opportunity to ask questions and their anonymity within the study was emphasized. All interviews were conducted at the same location; the terrace outside of the house where I stayed in Nakamtenga. The terrace was relatively quiet and remote and gave us the opportunity to talk in private. The interviews lasted one-two hours, except for one that took over three hours. Followed by approvals from the respondents, all interviews were recorded with a mobile phone. To be able to analyze the data and adjust the interview guide during the process, all interviews were transcribed instantly and prior to the following interview. With regard to the process of analyzing, I also choose to alternate the interview order between male and female respondents. In accordance with ethical aspects and with respect to the respondents, the recordings were deleted when transcribed. As a result of the interpretation, the interviews were transcribed into Swedish. The direct quotations from the interviews were then meticulously translated by me, with the aim to reflect the meaning and thoughts given to me by the respondents. The original plan

was to complete approximately seven interviews, an estimation that turned out to be correct. After seven interviews, relatively few, new perspectives and insights were given and I made the deliberate choice that I had more than enough material for the completion of the study, in relation to the available amount of time left. In the empirical findings, I refer to the male participant as M and an ascribed number from 1-4 and the female with F and 1-3. Interviews and field notes were combined and analyzed, to be able to identify similar tendencies and perspectives, as well as variations within the empirical findings. The process of analyzing made it clear to me that I needed to code the material on a time aspect, thus, before and after the OFG. The former describes the traditional structures, norms and rules in Burkina Faso and Nakamtenga, while the latter tells the stories of everyday life in Nakamtenga one year after the OFG (Aspers, 2007; Tracy, 2013).

### 3.3 Ethical dilemmas

It is impossible or at least very difficult to avoid ethical and moral dilemmas while conducting fieldwork and some reflections have already been made concerning the subject earlier on in the report. The important thing is to continuously reflect upon the dilemmas and striving to handle them in the best way possible. de Laine (2000, p. 3) describes it by saying that “ethical dilemmas are situations in which there is no right decision, only a decision that is thoughtfully made and perhaps more right than the alternatives”. Some basic principles were always leading the way for my decision-making and action-planning during the time of the study; do no harm, be open and transparent, get informed consent and ensure the confidentiality for the participants of the study. One must know me being a citizen of the country that in many respects serves as a donor might influence the answers I obtain during my research in the village. If so, the observations conducted outside of the scheduled interviews are of special importance. To avoid only getting the answers the respondents might think I expect during the interviews, it was of great importance to ask for and get specific and illustrative testimonies from their everyday life. It enables a better understanding as well as serving as excellent comparative materials within the empirical findings (Tracy, 2013).

## 4 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

*The empirical findings will be a presentation of the respondents' statements and stories told, according to the tendencies and themes identified by me as the most relevant and important. It will be presented from a time aspect, thus, before and after the OFG. The former describes the traditional structures, norms and roles in Burkina Faso and Nakamtenga, while the latter tells the stories of everyday life in Nakamtenga one year after the OFG.*

### 4.1 Background

#### 4.1.1 Burkina Faso and Nakamtenga

Burkina Faso is a country in the center of western Africa, surrounded by Niger, Benin, Togo, Ghana, Mali and Cote d'Ivoire. The capital, Ouagadougou, is situated in the center of the country. If you take one of the bigger roads out of the capital, towards Niger to the east, you will arrive in Nakamtenga after about one hour drive. The village has 1500 inhabitants and most of them live in plain houses or huts, made from clay and straw. At the heart of the village one find a small market and a local bar as well as the various operations being a part of Yennenga. Most of Yennenga's buildings are characteristic with red bricks and blue details. The personnel at the nursery school and primary school welcomes 250 children every week, children dressed in similar blue and white checkered school uniforms. Every morning I see children on their way to school and in the afternoon when they are heading back home. Some children are walking on their own, without their parents. It is the pupils in primary school but also children in nursery school. The ones wearing luminous vests are living on the other side of the road and must cross it every day to come to school. Parents bring children on bicycles and motorcycles, sometimes two-three children at the same time. You can see fathers as well as mothers bringing and picking up their children and the division between the sexes seems to be fairly equal in this regard. The school in Nakamtenga is also a place where equal rights for girls and boys are strongly emphasized. They work actively with male domination and female subordination and all classes have an even distribution of boys and girls. Some of the other operations is a restaurant, also serving as a restaurant school, a dressmaker's workshop and a workshop making furniture and other forms of handicraft. In addition, people working with gardening and construction contribute to the management of existing properties as well as the

creation of future ones. Soon, a health clinic and a gas station can be added to the Yennenga family in Nakamtenga.

April-May, the time of my stay in Nakamtenga, is dry season and the warmest period of the year. During the day, the temperature normally reaches 40 degrees and seldom go below 25 in the night. The heat and lack of rainfall create great difficulties for cultivation and agriculture, resulting in many families struggling to get food for their own needs but also to make a profit in order to get other necessities of life. The operations of Yennenga have nevertheless given people the opportunity to achieve a regular income, which in return has boosted the local economy and improved quality of life for many people in Nakamtenga. Despite the difficulties and struggles still being a part of the lives of many people, the atmosphere and attitude in the village is warm and positive, at least with the eyes of a stranger. Several people tell me about courses they attend in the evenings, after finishing work, to improve their professional skills, for example as teachers or restaurant personnel. Women are gathered regularly, and has been for many years, to talk about everything from menstruation and the importance of hygiene to child-rearing and the use of gas instead of wood when cooking.

Religion plays a decisive role in many people's lives, either it is Islam, Catholicism or Protestantism, and the weekly visits to the church or the mosque are more the rule than the exception. Due to religion and traditions, the stories of polygamous families are many and it is likely that you will receive the question of whether you and your siblings share the same mother. The sight of a women carrying a baby on her back is common due to the number of children per family is high. Most adults have no less than five siblings, often with two-three different mothers. In accordance with tradition, marriage means women moving to the homes of men and their parents and relatives. The other way around is not an option. This results in women leaving their villages and families; providing a perspective on the importance of giving birth to sons, to secure future support and nursering. Some states that the pressure of giving birth to sons is a contributing fact to men having several wives. If one wife is not able to provide you with sons, you must make sure to find another one who can. Women are held as the sole responsible for any miscarriages or the gender of the babies, without any impact from men. As an effect of the traditions, Yennenga have made the deliberate choice of employing female teachers married into families in Nakamtenga, instead of women born and raised here since they are more likely to leave the village when they get married.

#### 4.1.2 The respondents

All respondents in the study apart from one, work within or have spouses working within Yennenga. This is not a coincidence as the participants of the OFG were mainly chosen from within Yennenga and employees married to each other occur. Great variations can be found in the age of the respondents, despite the exact age of the female participants not being asked and the information on the male participants coming from the documentation of the OFG. The information and estimations indicates respondents in their 20's, 30's, 40's and 50's. Number and age of children varieties, from one to six children, from newborns to some already grown-ups with children on their own. M2 is the only respondent without children but he sees himself as a father in the near future and get daily visits from the children of his brothers. Three out of four male respondents are born and raised in Nakamtenga and six out of seven respondents currently live in Nakamtenga. All female respondents describe moving to Nakamtenga because of marriage and by then moving in with the family of the husband. The only male not raised in Nakamtenga moved here due to work.

“I lived with my parents when my husband came to ask my parents if I wanted to come and live with him in Nakamtenga. My parents accepted, we got married and I came to Nakamtenga to live with him and his mother and father.” (F1)

All interviews began with me asking the respondents to introduce themselves. Thus, the information given were solely dependent on what the respondents choose to share, with me asking a few follow-up questions regarding number and age of children. Some shared stories regarding childhood and upbringing while others focused on present time with family and children. The stories of childhood are all describing the difficulties to provide children with enough food and the lack of resources for education and school fees. It is about struggling parents who send their children to relatives or other families, or parents themselves going away to work in a neighboring town or country. M4 ended up living with the family of a teacher because of the financial difficulties in his own family. The wife of the teacher on the other hand took advantaged of him living with them and he had to work hard to please her, with everything from making food to doing the dishes and cleaning. Despite that, he was determined to finish his education and succeeded in doing so. M2 were brought up in a polygamous family with very limited resources and he describes the long walk to school, without any shoes. Due to the financial difficulties, he was forced to work with gravel collection to make some extra money.



“Lots and lots of people in this country have similar financial difficulties. So instead of attending school, you make money by selling gravel for example.” (M2)

Working at the same time as going to school, he still managed to finish the basic education but failed with any further education. Instead he came in contact with Yennenga and as a result of dedication and hard work, he has been a vital part of the organization ever since.

#### 4.1.3 The Original Father Group

The proposal to educate leaders of father groups in Nakamtenga came from within the network of Yennenga. A successful application for funding resulted in Nils arriving in Nakamtenga in April 2016. Nils have had several similar educations in the past, in different contexts and countries, and has great experience from working with fathers and gender equality. The importance of a mixed group was emphasized and younger as well as older fathers were chosen. Even some men not yet fathers were offered to participate as they have an influential and important role in society and within Yennenga. It was at the same time a mix of men from Yennenga’s various operations. Because of the education being held in French, the participants were required to have satisfactory language knowledge to fully absorb the information given and participate in discussions. The male respondents were all immediately interested and viewed it as an opportunity to gain new knowledge and discuss what is implied being a father.

“I was told that an education for fathers were going to be carried out and became very interested as we normally talk about the days of women but never discuss what fathers do. I found it interesting and wanted to participate thus.” (M4)

The female respondents express the positive reactions their husbands got from them when coming home and telling them about the up-coming education. They were hoping for positive outcomes and as F2 describes it, an opportunity for her husband to “learn a lot of things that could benefit the family and change things”. All male respondents are very satisfied with their participation and the education. It is described as a pleasant surprise which gave them something they did not know before. The initial needs within the group differed but through discussions, they learned from each other and new information and insights caught their

attention and opened their eyes. Realizing that they do not communicate and spend time with their children and families, they were equipped with tools to make a change.

”First of all, we realized we didn’t have enough time for the children. And, in addition, we don’t take the time to talk to and discuss with our own wife.” (M1)

”There was one thing with the education which I really liked. Because we have learned how a father should be and behave towards his family. Especially towards the children.” (M4)

## 4.2 Prior to the Original Father Group

### 4.2.1 Absent fathers

”Earlier, I never had time for my children. We didn’t even eat together as a family since I got home at ten o’clock in the evening and the children and my wife were already asleep. So, we didn’t spend any time together. I worked in another town and left home in the morning to go to work. After work, I meet with my friends and took the time to talk to them and drink something.” (M1)

”Earlier, the men would meet and talk until ten in the evening and then they got home. And I was asleep and the children were asleep.” (F1)

”Earlier, men had spare time and meet with their friends, talked and discussed with each other and only got home to sleep. When they got home late, the children were already asleep and there was no time to be together and talk with the children. The children wanted to talk to their father but he never got time for them. When they went to him and wanted to do or get something, he immediately answered ”go tell your mother”. Me and the children had a close relationship but I could see that the children and their father had not.” (F2)

”Prior to the father group, it was only important to make money in order for the family to live. It was only about going to work, making money and coming home to sleep. My wife always cooked for the children but I ate somewhere else. I never

told my family when I was leaving and planning to return home. I just went out and came back whenever I felt like it.” (M3)

The above statements serve as examples of the typical behavior by men as described by the respondents, male as well as female. They describe their own realities but also the realities of others around them and the general distance between men and the rest of the family is clear. Men are responsible for making money and providing food and women take care of children and household. The children are left with their mothers, for better or worse. When done with work, men have spare time and often spend the evenings with other men at the local market/bar. For women on the other hand, afternoons and evenings mean starting their second shift, at home. Yennenga’s deliberate choice only having men working in the restaurant reflects the prevailing structures and division of labor between men and women. Working in the restaurant means working irregular hours, early mornings and late nights, and with women traditionally responsible for home and children, it turned out to be an aggravating circumstance. The division and distance is nevertheless causing troubles in many families, as emphasized by the statement from M1 and M3:

”I did not have time for my wife and the children and I felt her [the wife’s] anger towards me. It did not go well for my children in school and they received bad results. And my wife suffered since she did not make much money from working.”  
(M1)

”He [a neighbor] could not even sit down next to his own child to eat together. There were always lots of trouble within the family because they did not know each other, they did not have time for each other.” (M3)

As additional illustrative example, several of the respondents tell a similar story about children not knowing their fathers.

”I want to tell you a story. A woman lived with her husband and their small child. The father left home early and always got home late. The father left home before the child had woken up and got back when the child was already asleep. Thus, the child barely knew his/her father. One time, when the father was at home, still sleeping, the child asked his mother ‘who is that man sleeping over there?’ The

mother answered by saying 'it is your father'. Then, the child looked at his mother and said 'a father, what is a father?' (M2)

#### 4.2.2 Parenting

Fathers are described as strict and demanding, often using threats and punishment as ways of raising children. At the rare occasions when fathers come home prior to the children sleeping, the children leave home to avoid their fathers.

"Earlier, when the children had done something wrong, their father used a rigorous tone and the children were afraid of him. In Burkina, it is common that children leave home when their father gets back. When being with their mother, the children do a little bit as they feel like, because the mother does not do anything to harm them. But as soon as they see or hear the voice of their father, they change their behavior." (F1)

F2 gives a similar statement as F1, of children that turn to their mothers when done something wrong, since they are much more kind than fathers, but several others describe similar behaviors as men, from women towards children.

"Earlier, I always had to threaten the children in order to raise them. Not just in my family, that's how you do when raising children in Burkina, you threaten." (M3)

"Earlier, when one of our daughters had trouble in school, me and my wife yelled at her and called her things." (M1)

About school and education, a common opinion seems to be that of the correlation between education and the ability to raise and teach your children. M1 and F2 give expression to this but do not agree:

"In Burkina it is said, that if you have not attended school, you are not able to raise or guide your children. But for me, that's not true. Even though you have not attended school yourself, you can still tell your children 'open your books and start studying'. If the father sits down next to the child, the child will be even more motivated because of the attention from the father." (M1)

”Regarding the children, he [the husband] never went to school as a child. Before the education, the children always came to me and asked for help with homework or other tasks from school. But I always believed there are things that he could explain to them as well but he’s never done so.” (F2)

F3 and M4 on the other hand, state something else. F3 describes her husband playing with their daughter when coming home and says ”he likes to be with her and play with her”. M4 also insists on having a good relationship with his children, despite not doing much to encourage them in a positive way. He can become angry but has never raised his voice at the children or called them bad names, referring to his faith as he says ”it is painful for me to watch a child cry”. M1 also reflects over faith and the interpretation of the Bible, regarding the role as a father and man in society:

”According to the Bible, the man is the leader of the family and with that comes certain areas of responsibility. The prevailing view around here as a man is that you are the leader of the family but the effects are that you just control others and as a result, the woman must submit to the man. That is the prevailing interpretation of the Bible around here.”

#### 4.2.3 Financial responsibilities

One woman, not one of the respondents, told me about her up-bringing and the family living in Cote d’Ivoire due to the work of her father. After a while, the father decided it was best for the family to return to Burkina Faso. She, her mother and siblings moved back to the home village of her father, while he stayed and continued working. Sending back his family, not making them company and taking care of them, was not seen with positive eyes from the rest of the village and the family were treated badly. They got a plot for cultivation but it was inferior since the father was not present and could interfere. Her mother struggled to support the family, not receiving any money from the father in Cote d'Ivoire. Despite the difficulties, her mother managed to keep the children in school, as she valued education despite not having one of her own. The story serves as a good example of the prevailing traditions and norms. Men are expected to look after their families but at the same time, women are the ones serving for certain expenses, mostly concerning the children. As data indicate, men control the economy of the family and women have little or no access or say. Some men use the

money as they want and leave it to their wives to serve for education and payment of school fees for the children. Men spend money as they like, without any discussion with the rest of the family or the wife. M4 seems to be an exception while F2 gives a more common testimony:

”In case one of us [him and his wife] do not have any money, we help each other and share.” (M4)

”The children attend school and we have to pay school fees. In many families, the woman have to serve for the school fees being paid.” (F2)

In addition, M1 describes the financial problem when some men spend time with other men at the market and later, pointing at his own behavior:

”When he [an acquaintance] is at the market, he is not just drinking for himself but he is also paying for and treating others.”

”Earlier, my wife didn’t even know how much money I made per month and what I used the money for. ”

#### 4.2.4 Male domination, female subordination

M3 elaborates even more on the problems within some families:

”If there is a health issue, for example the women fallen ill, the man do not care. The woman must take care of everything. Many people act bad, causing negative effects for the family. Some like beating their wives, even in front of the children. If a father fight with his wife in front of the children, that is not good. There are a lot of things and details, in certain families, not working well.”

The story from another woman, not being one of the respondents, gives an additional perspective on the traditional gender roles and structures. She got pregnant at 18, with a married man. Her own family did not want anything to do with her, among others since she was pregnant and not married, and she was not welcome in their home anymore. Same thing with the father of her child; he told her she was not wanted in his house, with his family.

Through determination and hard work, she was able to serve for herself and her daughter but the struggle for existence was harsh. At one point, her daughter was taken away from her and brought to relatives of the father. Even though she has been able to create a very good life for herself, with her own business, she is still not allowed to see or take care of her own daughter. The father of the child says no; despite the bad condition the girl is in due to her current living situation. Women have very limited possibilities to make their own decisions and the view of what you do and do not do as a woman is evident. A conversation with a local leader in a neighboring village provide additional information. He is married to two women and his explanation to why is simple. He had one wife, with whom he had several children, but after a while, he fell in love with another woman. Divorcing the first woman would mean taking the children away from her. Despite progressive family legislation, regulating this kind of matters, reality and in practice is something else. Women have limited or no right to the children in the traditional tribe structures and according to him, his choices were made from concern for his first wife. M3 talks about other implications deriving from polygamous marriages, or you could imply, from forced marriages:

”Some marriages are not working well. Earlier, fathers forced their children into marriage. The father had a daughter and simply said ”your son has to marry my daughter”. But this young man, maybe he did not want to talk to her and then you force him to marry her. As a result of him not selecting his own wife, the marriage is not working well and he might meet another woman he likes. Then he wants to marry her and suddenly, he has two wives. He loves the second wife more than the first one and that will cause problems within the family, as he will not get along with the first wife. He will not communicate in a good way with his wives and they will not communicate in a good way with each other.”

Age and degree of influence are closely connected but first and foremost, it is about gender. Living together with in-laws and relatives is common and must be taken into consideration when looking at family structures and communication within families. The statement from F2 is an illustrative testimony of the implications of gender and age:

”Earlier, when the father [her father-in-law] said something to his son, my husband, he had to subject himself to his father. He just told my husband ’I want you to do this’. If I felt it did not suit me, as a woman, there was nothing I could

do. When the father-in-law said something, the only option was doing it, because he told his son. I was not asked.”

The voices and opinions of women are always subordinated those of men. One women in the village describes it by saying that they, as women, have always felt suppressed and dominated by men. When growing-up, the word of a son carries more weight than those of a daughter, even if she is older. The respondents elaborate even more on this as they describe the situation in general, as well as in their daily lives:

”When men in Burkina spend time together and talk, women are not allowed to come close. That is not how you do it. You can talk to your husband at home but not when he is together with other men. You accept that.” (F1)

”We did not take the time to talk to and discuss with our own wife. The culture is different here, it does not give any opportunities to discuss in private as husband and wife. It does not mean that there is no time for discussions, it is rather about the traditions giving the wife no say in family matters.” (M1)

”Earlier, my wife had to wait for a favorable moment before talking to me, that is to say, a suitable moment for me.” (M3)

”Earlier, we did not sit down and talked to each other. And when I talked about certain things, he did not listen.” (F3)

”The tradition means that a woman has limited possibilities to state her opinion, the woman is not called on to speak within the family. The man make the decisions and the women must subject herself. A man and a woman sitting at the same table, together with the children, talking and discussing, you do not do that in all families. Earlier, we did not talk to each other, not with me or the children, and as a result, there were a lot of bickering.” (F2)

According to M2 and M4, the communication within their marriages have always been okay. There has always been an understanding between husband and wife, even though M2 mention that his wife sometimes viewed him as the leader and the one making the decisions.



His statement indicates a deeper previous understanding, not visible in the statements of the others:

”Between me and my wife, there is a way to communicate and talk to each other which is good. It is not part of my character to demand as a dictator what she should do. She is a person, a human, just like yourself. She has the right to live like any other human and the right to sometimes relax, as long as it is not being exaggerated.” (M2)

He further explains by giving an illustrative example:

”For example, a friend of mine of mine tell me that he/she is coming to visit me on Sunday at two o’clock. After talking to my friend, I go to my wife and ask her if the visit is in order or if she already made other plans. So, we should make a joint decision. Same thing if my wife has something, she tells me and we talk about it. It is important to talk to each other and get on well. If you stop talking, it is very difficult to start all over again.” (M2)

#### 4.2.5 Household chores

Certain aspects on the division of labor between men and women have been mentioned and discussed but will be further elaborated in this section. It is mainly regarding household chores. The statements are unanimous, in general women do most the work in the household.

”It is tradition in our village that men do not help out with female duties in the household. In our families, men do not do anything. There are duties for women and there are duties for men. Even when it comes to water collection, which is very hard, it is the responsibility of women and men do not help. Normally, if you ask a man to collect a can of water, he says ’no, I will not do that’. The husband of a neighbor does not do anything at home, he is not helping at all with female duties. Even if his wife demands him, he will not do it. The men just say ’that and that is female duties and nothing for me’.” (F1)

”Around here, you have very specific chores which means you do not have the attitude to participate in the chores of women in the household. The woman cooks,

do the dishes, cleans the home, washes clothes, washes the children and collects water. There are many chores were we men do not participate at all.” (M2)

The situation in some of the families of the respondents are similar as stated above and they elaborate further:

”There was always a lot of things I had to do every day and he was just unoccupied. I started off with my regular work and during dry season, when I was done, I went home. Together with my children, I went out on the fields and worked with our vegetables, until I had to go back home and make food. He [the husband] did not have to do anything. He had his work on the fields and then he just got home to eat. We have three sheep and he took care of them but when finished, there was nothing for him to do so he just sat down.” (F2)

”There are a lot of things to do around the home, for example everything that has to do with the kitchen and cooking. Earlier, I never cooked.” (M1)

In the evenings, it is me who collect water and make to [traditional food in Burkina Faso] and we eat together. It is also me who do the other chores in the household; wash clothes and do the dishes. I care about the girl [the daughter]. My husband reads, a magazine or a book, and then he goes to bed.” (F3)

Once again, M2 and M4 seem to be the exceptions and give similar testimonies but the underlying factors appear to be different. M2 states:

”I cannot say that there is any big difference in my family. There might be differences in the other families [that has been a part of the OFG] but not with me. In other families, you do not share household chores but I have already understood that you need to help each other. When I come home and see that there are certain things my wife has not been able to or had the energy to do, I do them. The young people at my age do not behave as the young people from previous generations.”

He further elaborates on household chores and the new, young generation and the participants of the OFG. According to him, they are willing to take part in the chores in household, unlike

most men in their society. In this regard, referring to traditions as he says "your behavior is a reflection of society. There are certain traditions and things that always have been prevailing. You know that there is another way of living but traditions stand in the way". It is possible for men to clean, wipe the floor and wash clothes but one things are still unthinkable, even for the younger generation according to M2's statements. Making to [traditional food] is still and has always been women's work and would be humiliating for a man to do. The testimony from M4 indicates similar tendencies; some chores for men and some for women and the impossible in a man making to. In case a man starts making to, his wife will leave him as she will think that he does not need her anymore. At the same time, he states that he and his wife help one and other and that he for example wash the children if his wife is not home. He explains him doing duties seen as typically female as a result of being forced to do it when he was 15-16 years old, by a woman where he lived. She used him and that is why he learned to take care of himself, wash, do the dishes and shop. When asked about the unusual in him as a man doing this, he answers:

"It is a result of the hardship. I have done it and did not like it, but later, I understood I have learned something. It is a result of my suffering. I have done it for the woman which I did not like but now I do it for the women which I love, with a big smile."

### 4.3 Following the Original Father Group

All respondents describe changes in behavior and attitude as a result of men's participation in the OFG. The statements are descriptive and detailed, portraying the daily life of the respondents as well as their neighbors and others affected. Some testimonies are very much alike, while others differ and provide a variety of perspectives and insights into family life in Nakamtenga. The respondents elaborate on the implications and a possible continuance of the OFG, as well as the possibilities to introduce similar initiatives in additional villages and contexts in Burkina Faso. Following statement from M3 serves as an introduction as it summarizes the findings and points out the central aspects of the material:

”Earlier, I saw that we lived and acted like everyone else but the education and the awareness-raising made us understand that the life we had lived, it was not a good life, it was not the nice life. Now, I understand what it means to be a father.”

#### 4.3.1 Time Spent with the Family

Several leave statements of men spending time at home and with their families, interacting with their children and wives.

”After the course, I have realized I have three hours with my children every day. I finish work at four o’clock, go home and spend time with the children. The first hour and a half, we talk about school, look at their homework and I help them. I also take the time to play with them, for example cards. We have time to talk about other things, providing me with the possibility to understand their feelings and thoughts. Therefore, I am aware of the atmosphere within the family, since I spend time together with them.” (M1)

“Nowadays, everyone is home with their families and talk to each other and spend time with the children. Earlier, men could meet, talk and drink something but now, they come home. I am very happy this has changed.” (F1)

“Now, if I leave home, I always tell my family when I will be back and make sure to return prior to the children sleeping. We eat together, talk for a while and sleep together, at home. This father group made me understand how interesting it is to spend time with the family. Nothing bad can happen within my family nowadays, because every moment we spend together, even when we have vacation.” (M3)

They share stories from their own lives but also from the lives of others around them, other participants in the OFG, friends and neighbors. For some, the OFG made them understand how to live with their families and wives in a better way. In M4’s family, there has been some smaller changes regarding his involvement and participation in the family and time spent at home, but the knowledge given in the OFG rather served as a complement to things he already knew and had been taught. He states, he has always had a good life with his family. The statement from F3 is brief in this matter but according to her, her husband spent time with their daughter already prior to the OFG. When he returns home in the evenings, he

spends time and plays with their daughter. M2 is the only respondent without children of his own and he reasons around this matter:

“I think, later, when I become a father, there will be an even bigger difference. Now, I have understood the importance of a father’s role. I have understood, after spending time with Nils, the importance to spend time with the children. You must understand the children and their strengths and difficulties. You must observe and understand them, to be able to help them. It is important that your heart understand.”

#### 4.3.2 Parenting

In many families, there is more love and harmony and less conflicts. Several give examples of men now taking care of their children without the involvement from their wives. Earlier, when women left home, the children were left with female neighbors and relatives. Because of men spending more time with their families, one can imagine a change in communication as well. All respondents with children tell stories from their own families about new and better ways of communication and men taking the time to sit down with the rest of the family to discuss family matters. F1 describes a change of tone of voice and face expressions while others provide more concrete examples:

“We wanted to make a change at our backyard and nowadays, I do not make the decisions but rather comes up with an idea and ask the rest of the family for their opinion. The children answered they wanted a yard that looked like everyone else’s, despite me having a completely different idea. As a result, the children made the decision what it would look like and the changes are perfectly in line with their wishes.” (M1)

“After to the OFG, he started to explain to the children, telling them stories from the past, as well as making stories up. He can tell them about the traditions in our village and what they look like. The difference is significant, since it has always been my job to do all that.” (F2)

“Before the children are leaving for school, they wake me and tell me what they want or what they would like to eat. I talk to them about their worries and

problems. Nowadays, they are told about my plans far in advance, when I will leave and when I will be back. Now they know and do not have to worry. Otherwise they leave for school, thinking I will go away and not come back.” (M3)

In addition, M3 describes realizing the possibility raising and teaching children without threatening and punishing them. Similar statements are given by M1 and M4. M1 tells a story about his daughter not doing the dishes, as she had promised and him and his wife almost acting out, as they were used to. Instead he recalled his vow to the children; being patient no matter what happens. His daughter was given the opportunity to explain why she had forsaken the dishes; to help a friend with homework, and the parents realized their mistake of acting out, as the daughter had made the rightful decision. For M1, this was a perfect example of the importance of patience and making sure to understand why something occurs. In connection with patience, the statements of M3 and M4 about positive parenting are interesting:

“In case one of the children has done something wrong, I ask about it and they tell me what have happened. Afterwards, I let her/him know that ‘I will buy a gift for the other children but you have to wait until the end of the month. You will get one too but you just need wait a bit’.” (M3)

”After the father group, the children will just get one instead of two sweets, as their siblings, when done something wrong. And if they come home with good results from school, I encourage them and give them a gift, which I have never done before.” (M4)

#### 4.3.3 Communication between Husband and Wife

The respondents were asked more specifically about the communication between husband and wife, as a part of the communication within the family. All of them are describing positive changes regarding communication, with a variation in how it is being reflected and to what extent. The following statements are given by the respondents describing the most significant changes:

“When she returns home at night, we discuss and talk with each other. Now I understand that my wife, my partner, is the one I share everything with. When

realizing this, you understand the positive side of having time for each other, with each other. Now I know what she is like, she knows what I am like, what our thoughts and problems are. To participate in the lives of one and other, there is nothing more enjoyable. Now she knows everything.” (M1)

“He asks about my opinion, we talk and make joint decisions. It has changed a lot of things at our place.” (F1)

“Nowadays, my wife can always just come and talk to me, if she has something on her mind. We talk about it when it emerges and it will not be a problem.” (M3)

“Nowadays, we can sit down and talk to each other and it feels good. We do a lot of things together as well. We are a fine couple now. Earlier, when I talked about certain things, he did not listen but now he listens to me. Since we understand each other and get along better, a lot of things has changed.” (F4)

M2 talk about some changes in communication as well but states him and his wife always have had a good understanding and interaction between one and other. He informs and ask her when planning, for example when a friend is coming to visit, and she does the same. It is not in his personality to make decisions for her. Despite that, he later mentions that she looks at him even less as a leader and the one making the decisions nowadays, being the small change that seems to have occurred. He emphasizes the importance of talking to each other since “it is very problematic to start all over again, once communication has stopped”. M4 gives a similar statement, about him and his wife getting along and having an understanding already prior to the father group. Change can be seen regarding his involvement in the communication between his wife and the children. Nowadays, he interrupts when he notices his wife and a child arguing, trying to calm them down. In addition, he is softer in his judgements of the mistakes made by his wife and often chooses not to mention or say anything.

#### 4.3.4 Financial responsibilities

It is not only the thoughts and worries that are shared within the family and between husband and wife after the OFG. Economy and money was not mentioned specifically by me. Despite

that, three of the respondents used it as illustrative examples of the progress and changes made within their families.

“Nowadays, my earnings go to the family. A week ago, I went to the bank to ask for a joint account, where the earnings from me and my wife comes in. The bank told me it was possible, so now we have a joint credit card, available for both of us; since it is our shared economy. Nowadays, I do not have any expenses without talking to my wife in advance.” (M1)

“Nowadays, the woman and the man put their money together to pay for the school fees jointly. I know many families doing this now, not just our family.” (F2)

“At the end of the month, you must pay for everything; electricity, gas, school fees and other expenses regarding the children. The salary is not merely for me but for the entire family. My income and the income of my wife pay everything, together.” (M3)

#### 4.3.5 Household chores

All the respondents, with the exception from M3, gives statements regarding the division of labor in the household. The testimonies about men taking part in household chores are illustrative and resemblances one and other:

“There is a lot to do at home, for example cooking. Nowadays, I often cook. I have different recipes and suggest what to cook together. Sometimes it fails but then we laugh about it. Now, in my home, there is no work just for women or men. When I wake up in the morning for example, I take the broom and start wiping the yard.” (M1)

“Earlier, he only had his work at the fields, the sheep and sometimes, grocery shopping. But after the OFG, he began to help me out with the children, with water collection and making the dishes.” (F2)

“There are many changes, I will clarify. Since the father group, my husband has made changes: he collects water and helps me out with household chores at home.



When I make dinner in the evening, he washes the children and if he does not wash the children, he might wipe and clean the yard. He helps me with everything. He did not know you could help out with female duties. Now, when I ask him about something, he is happy to do it. When noticing we have run out of water, he goes to collect fresh one, without me having to tell him.” (F1)

The above statement by F1 are further supported by my own observations. Every morning when I eat breakfast, down by the restaurant in the center of the village, I greet the husband of F1. He is on his way to collect water for the family, often accompanied by other men, and returns with one or two filled cans. In the family of F3 on the other hand, she is the one doing the household duties; cooking, washing clothes and making the dishes. In addition, and as mentioned and elaborated earlier in earlier sections, M2 and M4 seems to represent the exceptions. They have already been taking part in the duties at home and cannot see any changes due to the OFG in this regard. See above for their elaborated statements.

#### 4.3.6 Happier Families and Bolder Children

As data indicates and as discussed above, the changes in behavior and communication within the families of the respondents are diverse, from major to barely noticeable, depending on the focus and area of interest. The implications of the changes are also an interesting subject and was discussed during the interviews. It is first and foremost the families, where changes seem to be the biggest, that the implications are most illustratively described.

“Since the father group and the changes occurring, I am very pleased and the children are pleased and happy. The fathers speak to their children in a calm tone and when they hear the voice of their father, they run to the door to be with him. And when I meet other wives, they all state the same. Everyone is very happy and satisfied since the men do not go to the market anymore but instead stay at home with the family.” (F1)

“My children belong to the best pupils in school and my wife is in a better mood and smiles a lot. The big difference is to be seen when they [the children] hear my motorbike. Now, they do not run away anymore but wait for me at the port. I want it to stay like this, to make sure the family is happy.” (M1)

“The children are bold nu, they have the courage to tell me about their wishes and what they want. Now they know, I will fulfill their wishes if I have the possibility. They have these expectations now; it has become a habit. Same thing with my wife.” (M3)

#### 4.3.7 Possible Negative Effects

As stated above, the positive effects are numerous. To get an even richer data, the respondents were asked about negative consequences and implications. F1 and F2 are clear in their statements, there are no negative outcomes because of the father group. M2 on the other hand are describing difficulties occurring in certain families. Some fathers have had troubles taking on a new role towards their children. In addition, some women have had a hard time to adapt to the changed settings and the consequences. Some have felt their position being threatened and as if the home domain will be taken away from them, as well. Men are superior in most arenas and areas, the household and the children has always been the responsibilities of women and were they have been in charge. M1 describes additional negative effects, occurring in his family. Because of his changed behavior, expectations have occurred. His new habit of wiping the yard and taking care of the garbage every Wednesday, means his family expecting him to do it. The problem began when he started a course every Wednesday evening and had less time to take care of the duties at home, instead taking the time to be with the family after coming back from the course. As a result, the yard was not cleaned and became untidy. He gives another example by describing how he is going away, telling the family when he will be back home but on his way home, something unforeseen happens and he is running late. In this case, the family immediately think he has gone back to his former behavior, not coming home until late. With the examples, he wants to emphasize the importance of being flexible and adapt to changed circumstances, trying to understand one and other, even after new expectations building up.

#### 4.3.8 Aftermath and Ripple Effects

Testimonies regarding reactions and discussions following the participation in the OFG, from family, neighbors and others around the participants are numerous and very illustrative. F3 is the only respondent giving a declining answer when the question about reactions from the other people being asked, while there was not enough time to discuss the topic with M4. M1 on the other hand gives an illustrative testimony about coming home after the first day of the OFG:

“At the course, we got the task to do something for the family which we had never done before. When I got home, I asked the children where my wife was. My wife heard voices, thinking there were some sort of problem and came to have a look. I walked up to her and kissed her on the cheek and she began to laugh. That night, I stayed at home with the family. We had dinner together and my wife immediately asked: ‘you have changed, what is going on?’ I told her I had received new information that will forever change me.”

The above statement illustrates the immediate change and reactions occurring in some families. M1’s new behavior was welcomed and he received instant positive response. Other actions and behaviors have gotten mixed response, household chores and men doing traditional female duties creating the most powerful ones.

“When the neighbors see him wiping the yard, they ask him what he is doing and why he is doing the duties of his wife. His answer to them is: ‘I can do whatever I want and I if I want to, I will even clean my wife’s plates’.” (F1)

“People say that the one doing female duties, it is no man, it is a woman! This man acts like a woman as he does the work of women. In this case, my husband claims that there is no work just for women, or just for men. Everyone can do everything.” (F1)

“Most people look at the changes in my behavior as a weakness, that I am a weak man. I understand them but it does not bother me, they have not experienced the same intellectual development. But I have a way to provoke them. One day when I was about to wash the underwear of my wife, a male neighbor came to me, and sighted what I was doing. We talked for a while, before he left in a hurry, to go and tell other people about my whereabouts. I am aware of the rumors regarding my behavior and therefor chooses to bring it up myself. When meeting with friends, I tell them after a while: ‘Sorry, but I must leave, to go home and wash my wife’s underwear. What is wrong with that? Your wife washes your underwear, then you can wash hers from time to time’.” (M1)

M1 describes similar scenarios and reactions, but this time from his children. To make them understand and broaden their views, he has shown them pictures of men making the dishes, wiping and washing clothes. Several respondents give similar statements regarding reactions towards men spending time with their families. Staying at home, you risk being seen as a woman and some people are questioning this. Others do not believe the stories told by the participants and want to see it with their own eyes. The statements from M3 and F1 serves as illustrative testimonies:

“The course made me understand how to be a father, which I have told other people about. When I meet friends and acquaintances in the village and we talk about the course, they just say ‘who has time for that, who has time for wife and children?’ They do not understand but when I try to make them understand, they realize the importance of communicating well with wife and children.” (M3)

“Nowadays, neighbors and friends come to our house to have a look if it is true what my husband says. A man helping his wife, you do not do that in all families and that is why they want to see it with their own eyes. The same thing with man and wife gathered around the same table, with the children, talking and discussing family matters.” (F2)

The respondents give further illustrative statements of the OFG participants using the reactions from other people on them doing and acting against traditions and norms to open for discussion and a greater understanding, sharing their newfound knowledge and experience.

“Due to my changed behavior, discussions arise and I get to tell people about the positive results and the importance of taking time for the family. People ask me how long time it has taken me to change like this and I tell them that it all happened very fast for me, you just need make a decision. If you do not agree on the positive effects, there will always be something negative. In other words, it is just one decision to make; to prioritize the family.” (M1)

“One day, a couple came to our house and we discussed the number of hours per day spent on the family, for women and for men. Then we realized, women spend a

lot more hours than men and my husband understood he should invest more time on the family, to do at least half of the work.” (F2)

In addition, the knowledge and dialogs are spreading and the wives of the respondents are having similar discussions as their husbands with neighbors and friends. Other women come to them and ask about their husbands changed behavior and what they have done to accomplish this. The participant’s wives tell them about the father group and what they have done in their families to improve family life. As a result, women are talking to their husbands, trying to accomplish similar changes. Furthermore, F2 describes how her and her husbands improved communication, including the children, have come to affect her father-in-law. He is slowly changing and do not make decisions without talking to the rest of the family to the same extent anymore. M3 and M2 on the other hand, elaborates on the difficulties and the hardship getting other people to get the same understanding.

“Often, when talking to a friend, using examples from the father group, the wife and children are present and the whole family understand what I mean. But not all families are able to understand. I cannot make everyone realize and get new understandings. Some are missing the awareness-raising. Once being aware of the possibilities, some at a time, they will understand.” (M3)

“The one who is curious and wants to know, is also the one having the possibility to make a change. The neighbors notice how peaceful and nice it is in my family, while they are fighting and having troubles. It works in my family but not in theirs. But if you realize you are having troubles at home, you also need to understand why you have troubles. It is hard to change society. We, the participants of the father group, need to contribute by talking and sharing our knowledge, to enable change.” (M2)

Furthermore, M2 states that people’s behavior reflects society and there are certain traditions and norms, deeply embedded into people’s live, despite the awareness of other ways to live. According to him, the young generation behave differently and this, in combination with a father course can enable better results and faster changes. It can help people realize the need to change traditions and find new ways to live their lives.

#### 4.3.9 Additional Father Groups

All male respondents except M4, because of lack of time, were asked if they had initiated their own father groups after the OFG. According to M1, he is the only one of the participants who have had his own groups and this is further supported by the answers from M2 and M3. The testimonies from M1 in this regard is illustrative and describes different stages and aspects of creating father groups. He has several groups, up to five. Some are initiated by himself while others are formed on the initiative of other men as describes in the following statement:

“One time, I washed my wife’s underwear when a neighbor approached me and told me it was forbidden to do such a thing but I told him by wife had instructed me to do it. I also told him it was good, since it would enable us [him and his wife] to have a nice time together in the evening. That same night, the neighbor returned, accompanied by other men. They had discussed doing female duties, for example washing clothes and thereby I got an additional father group.”

M1 has tried to keep it simple by asking whom of the participants who wants to host the next meeting. It gives them the opportunity to experience the lives of others and how they live and interact with their families. In addition, he emphasizes the importance of forming homogenous groups, consisting of individuals with similar views and mind-set. People have different ways to interpret their role as father and partner and live with their families, due to aspects as religion, profession and education. According to M1, these aspects need to be homogenous to be able to discuss and enable change in the long run. This is further enabled by exchange of experience within the group, opening up for new knowledge and additional ways to look upon things. Despite it being taboo to discuss the relationship between man and woman, they have been able to get around this and even discuss women’s value.

”We continue to find new and better ways to communicate with each other. In the beginning of such a group, everyone has differing and very firm opinions and do not want to listen to the opportunities. Around here, it is always the woman who need to change. If you give concrete and self-experienced examples, it is easier to make the changes but you have to take it step by step.”

M1 is comfortable in taking on the role as a leader, which he ascribes his pedagogical profession. At the same time, he wants to acknowledge the other participants, despite none of them having their own father groups, so far. According to him, they are role models just by how they live their lives, affecting others around them and contributing to changed behaviors. In addition, he points at the lack of an instruction manual, in French, on how to moderate father groups as a contributing factor to the difficulties to form groups. M2 and M3 further elaborate on the challenges in forming groups and alternative ways to discuss the issues:

“First of all, you need to find a way to attract people and get them interested in participating. To initiate a group is not easy. You need to become friends with the other participants, it is important to know each other fairly well. If you are good friends, it will be easier to discuss and talk about these issues.” (M2)

“I have not had regular, real groups but instead with my friends, one-on-one. Around here, you do not listen to someone acting patronizing and just talk but if I talk to a good friend, I am able to share what I have learned. But if you want to initiate father groups in my home village, I should not be the one in charge. Instead I should go to another village. There is a saying “no one listens to the prophet from your home town.” (M3)

The respondents were asked about their thoughts concerning a possible continuance of the OFG in Nakamtenga and gave an unanimously support for this. Male as well as female participation was raised and discussed, as well as the difficulties and implications caused:

“It is difficult since my wife has not gotten the same knowledge and insights as me and sometimes I even look at her as a child. It is very difficult to make the rest of the family understand.” (M4)

“I would like to see a continuance with a mixed group, consisting of both men and women in Nakamtenga. It is important that men and women talk to each other to understand one and other.” (M2)

“The OFG has changed a lot in our lives and it would be good with a similar course for women. It would improve our lives even more. Our husbands have

taught us a lot after the course and we have passed it forward to other women. Many women are a bit shy and do not have the courage. They look at me and my husband but do not dare to talk to their husbands in the same way. Therefore, a similar course for women would be a good idea.” (F2)

At the same time, several people in Nakamtenga describes courses held for the female teacher within Yennenga, over a long period of time. The courses have had a pedagogical focus but included issues concerning life in general as well, for example the role as woman and mother, hygiene issues and the usage of gas instead of wood when cooking. According to some, the discussions and guidance have made women understand their value and having the same rights as men. Earlier in Nakamtenga, women would never speak at a public gathering. Nowadays on the other hand, they express their opinion, affecting women in general in the village to take more space. The statements from F1 and data collected through participant observation serves as illustrative testimonies:

“Earlier, the teachers in the nursery school have learned how to interact with their children. Since the OFG, the fathers have gotten the same knowledge. Now, me and my husband have the same understandings and can be very happy together.” (F1)

“We [nursery school teachers] have understood, we have the same rights as men. We must stand up for ourselves and not back down. We [women] are half of humanity, if we do not get the opportunity to express ourselves, then we just have half a community”. (nursery school teacher Yennenga)

In addition, one of the teachers have initiated a group for nomad women. By the support of Yennenga and their network, every woman in the group has been able to buy a sheep. Normally, men are the ones owning animals and hopefully, the initiative can give women an income and thereby enable an increased female independence and a more equal relationship between men and women. The group is also used for educational purpose, in line with the needs and questions raised by the participants of the group, for example harmful traditional methods to raise children.



#### 4.3.10 Similar Concept, Different Context

Nakamtenga is in many regards an unusual village in Burkina Faso, influenced by the presence and development of Yennenga during the last 15 years. Therefore, the respondents were asked about the possibilities to start similar initiatives as the OFG in other villages and contexts in Burkina Faso. Potential difficulties were mentioned but not exemplified by the respondents and none of them said it would be impossible, rather the opposite. Practical issues as financing and volunteers are emphasized by some, while others point out dedication and joy as necessary elements. Several respondents state the importance of sharing of knowledge, making it possible for changes and development to spread like ripples.

“I will provide an example from a village 80 kilometers from Nakamtenga. I discussed these issues with the villagers there and they were convinced about the truth in my words. They started from scratch but now, a seed has been sown. Even if you go to a village and only initiate one group, it will still effect the surrounding villages. If you have a group leader doing his job, it will continue to spread. If it is possible to change men around here, to make life in the village easier, if the rest of Burkina was given the same opportunity, everyone would feel better.” (M1)

”Men talk to other men and thereby spreading what they have learned. In some way, you need to contact and raise the awareness of the need of a similar course for men in other places.” (F2)

“It is possible to carry out a similar father course in other villages. We have gotten the knowledge and are therefore able to educate other people.” (M3)

“It is not good making people used to getting paid for learning new things. Instead, it should be about people paying for knowledge.” (M2)

#### 4.3.11 Reflections upon the Future

The last subject discussed in most of the interviews were the future. The respondents were asked if they looked differently at the future now, in comparison to the time prior to the OFG. Their illustrative statements are presented as a conclusion of the empirical findings:

“Nowadays we talk a lot about the future but earlier, we only focused on the present, on everyday life. Earlier, you took one day at a time and did not talk about the next day or the days after that. If the man comes home, he puts money on the table for that specific day, then he leaves to meet with his friends and spend money on alcohol. Now on the other hand, after the OFG, I stay at home with the family and a dialogue has arisen between me and the rest of the family. It has given the family a vision for the future and everyone is striving towards a common future goal.” (M1)

“Prior to the OFG, I was hoping for him to change but did not have too high of a hope. I was hoping for change, some at a time, but the difference is that the change has occurred rapidly and almost immediately. Nowadays, we are happy and satisfied.” (F1)

“This is a community of criminals and people not following the law. When your relationship with the children is good, you can see what is going on and prevent them from committing crimes. You listen to the children and know them.” (M2)

“It is a brighter future nowadays, since all these changes has occurred and we are working a lot more together. A lot of things has changed and the future is bright.” (F2)

“I was brought up in a village and the way the villagers lived with their wives, we wanted to do the same. In Africa, you cannot imagine living differently. Earlier, I saw that we lived and acted like everyone else but the education and the awareness-raising made us understand that the life we had lived, it was not a good life, it was not the nice life.” (M3)

## 5 DISCUSSION

The previous sections have provided an insight into Yennenga progress initiative with father groups in Nakamtenga, Burkina Faso, as well as an overview of relevant theory and previous research focusing on masculinities and the construction of masculinities in Africa and more specifically in Burkina Faso. It is of importance to return to the overall aim of the study, that is to provide an empirically based exploration of the behavioral outcomes of Yennenga Progress' initiative with father groups in Nakamtenga. The first research question; to what extent and in what way the father's participation in the original father group have affected the participants and their families, are being answered through the presentation of the empirical findings. The second question; to what extent and in what way the initiative with father groups do participate and contribute to a reconstruction of masculinities in Nakamtenga will be further elaborated on in this section. The empirical findings will be discussed and analyzed further, with the help of theory and previous research concerning masculinities and the reconstruction of masculinities.

### 5.1 The Traditional Male

Due to Porter (2013) and Silberschmidt (2005), the prevailing forms of masculinities in former colonies, as Burkina Faso, are particularly normative. The respondents tell the stories of men spending a lot of time with other men, at the market and sometimes drinking alcohol, and how the division between men and the rest of the family and their partners are clear. As a result of the colonial heritage, wage labor grew and many men were able to fulfill the traditional and normative role of being a man; to get married and have children, as they were able to serve for their families in terms of money and food. The liberation from colonial powers in the 1960s thus resulted in a declination of jobs and many men had to return to the rural areas. Their options were limited and gradually they felt they were not able to live up to the role as breadwinners and head of families, instead spending even more time away from the household and the families. The stories about children not knowing their fathers or even what a father is keeps coming back during the interviews. At the rare occasions when men come home prior to the children sleeping, the children run away to avoid their strict and demanding fathers. Women have had to take on even greater responsibilities, to serve for the survival of the family, and the division between men and women have been more established.

This is further confirmed in the empirical finding, one example being how a whole family is leaving to work in Cote d'Ivoire where the father has found work, but after a while the father chooses to send back his family to his home village. The mother is now struggling on her own to serve for the children, providing food and education. In addition, they are not liked among the other villagers as the father is seen as a weak man, not able to take care of his family and therefore not fulfilling the role as a man and father. Similar tendencies are found among the material from the OFG, where the participants describe problems with men abandoning their families when they feel unable to serve for their care and security. It is important to comprehend that entire families are victims of structures that cements social rules on how to act and behave for one to be seen as a real man or woman. In addition, it was clear during my ten weeks in Nakamtenga that Burkina Faso is a society where the family and village community plays a decisive role in forming the individual maneuver room. In terms of change, it might make it harder to challenge existing norms and traditions. Even though you and your wife agree on what needs to be done and how to do it, the impact of older relatives and neighbors can further complicate the process and the gap between generations becomes evident. Additional aspects in this regard will be discussed in the next section.

## 5.2 Failing and Hiding

One can see that there are further aspects on the feelings of failure and not being able to live up to the traditional norms regarding masculinities. For several of the men in Nakamtenga, participating in the OFG has resulted in changed behaviors and new approaches to their roles as men and fathers. A reconstruction of masculinities has occurred and the testimonies of men spending time with their families and taking an active part in the lives of their children and their partners are several and descriptive. The traditional gender role of a man in Burkina Faso, described by Helmfrid (2004), differs from the one in Nakamtenga, one example being how in Nakamtenga men are spending much more time at home, instead of socializing with other men at the market as has been the case earlier. New forms of communication have evolved and men alone are not the ones making the decisions concerning family anymore and forcing their wives and children to obey and follow orders. At the same time, the research on similar initiatives with father groups in other parts of Africa show tendencies of stigmatizing attitudes from the surroundings, resulting in efforts to hide the attempts to do duties seen as typically female (Doyle et al., 2014; Sleghe et al., 2013; van den Berg et al., 2013). As my

material and previous research shows, both men and women in general consider spending time with the family and for example doing the dishes or collecting water as a man, going against everything being taught what it means to be a man and interpret it as a sign of weakness. On the other hand, as opposed to the indications from previous research about men hiding, the men in Nakamtenga seem to be doing the opposite, acting extrovert and taking the discussions with children and neighbors questioning their changed behavior. Some even describe actions of provocation, for example wanting people to take notice of them washing their wives' underwear, and thereby raising the discussion about gender roles and the division of labor. The male participants as well as their wives persist the possibility to share household duties and child care. At the same time, several state the impossible in a man preparing the traditional food to, as it would result in the women leaving her husband since she would think he did not need her anymore. In other words, it seems possible to reconstruct masculinities and challenge the traditional gender roles but only to a certain extent in the current context.

### 5.3 Awareness-Rising

Several of the respondents describe a process of awareness-rising where men, and women, got aware of the opportunity to challenge the traditional norms and division of arenas and labor between men and women. If you have never seen a man wash clothes or taking care of children, how would you be aware of the possibility for something like that occurring? It is easy to be judgmental and question what seems like ignorance, when many of these things are clear and obvious, from my point of view and growing up and living in today's Sweden. At the same time, it is important to remember that the recognition of gender equality and equal possibilities and rights in Sweden have not always been the case, and still is not. As emphasized in the material used during the OFG, change and development is possible if we look at and try to understand the context and adapt to the specific circumstances and conditions prevailing. Previous research as well as the empirical findings from this study, show similar results (Slegh et al., 2013; van den Berg et al., 2013; van den Berg et al., 2015). Men have an interest in discussing issues related to their role as a men, fathers and spouses. They are relieved when they get the opportunity to do so, without being judged and humiliated, and want to learn from experiences made by other men. Even though the first time during the OFG was described as difficult, as they were not used to take advise from and listen to others to this extent, they soon realized the positive effects of sharing, as a way of

opening their eyes and minds. Male participants as well as wives, in resemblance with the above-mentioned research, express their happiness and relief of the improved quality of life, for everyone in the family. With caring and nursing fathers, children get bolder and perform better school results, not just because they are men but because children are more likely to thrive with several positive role models and caregivers. Improved communication between husband and wife and within families, makes men as well as their wives and children happier. Furthermore, men recognize the possibility, and obligation, to contribute to a positive future for their children and the next generation of citizens (ibid.). In addition to respondents describing great changes with regard to their behavior and the improved quality of lives for their families, two male respondents express this to a smaller extent. When looking closer to their statements, it seems like the reason could be the fact that they have already been aware of the possibility for men to take an active part in duties and arenas typically seen as female. The first one represent the younger generation and is describing a different behavior from himself and others in his generation, in comparison to the older generation. He already had a way to communicate with his wife which meant he did not make decisions for her, but rather together with her. If he got home at night and found some duties not being done by his wife, for various reasons, he made them, already prior to the OFG. The research of Agadjanian (2005) is relevant in matter of age as a factor of influence, as it shows the impact of age when it comes to men taking on female jobs. Middle-aged men, in comparison to younger and older ones, are less likely to take on such jobs as they risk their social status and dignity to a higher degree. The oldest respondent, a male, give similar statements as the youngest one, about him already taking on tasks seen as female, as washing clothes and cleaning. As age could be a contributing fact, he also describes being taught the hard way and thereby through some sort of awareness-rising, depending on the interpretation. During his childhood, he was forced to perform household duties and he describes it by saying he did it for the woman he hated but now he is doing it for the woman he loves. Hopefully it is also about him doing it for himself.

## 5.4 Moving beyond Nakamtenga

The stories and testimonies from everyday life in Nakamtenga, from the respondents and additional people that I have meet in the village, are illustrative and touching. They have generously shared their life stories, thoughts and dreams. Some have already, prior to the OFG, been going against the traditional roles and norms, while others describe the course as an eye-opening experience, that has forever changed them. Despite results from previous

research pointing at tendencies of trying to hide specific behavior, these men seem to be doing the opposite. How could it be? Perhaps is the answer to be found in connection with Yennenga and the work and activities that has been a part of life in Nakamtenga for the past 15 years. One can see similar tendencies in Burkina Faso as in many other countries, where non-governmental organizations as Yennenga, have played a vital part in the distribution of services, such as schools and health care (Morrel & Swart, 2000). Despite the traditional structures, a strong hierarchical system and division between men and women, Yennenga have accepted the challenge and understood the importance of working with men and masculinities and the possible negative implications of ignoring the same. Initiatives like the OFG enables men and women to create a new future, together, by forming new and innovative ways of what it means to be a man. The female teachers in nursery school have already been going through similar processes as the participants of the OFG, where they have been given the possibility to discuss their role as women, mothers and partners. Emphasis has been put on their living situation in comparison to men and their entitlement to the same rights and possibilities as men. This and other activities within Yennenga and Nakamtenga, have already affected the traditional structures and gender roles thereby contributing when forming a stable ground for additional initiatives, like the OFG. It might have made people even more open and willing to change and develop themselves and their lives, in comparison to an “ordinary” village in Burkina Faso. The research from Wayack Pambe et al. (2014) contribute with additional aspects, as it shows that education and permanent employment, as is a fact for several of the women in Nakamtenga as employed by Yennenga, contribute to women being more involved in decisions concerning the family.

Due to the special circumstances in Nakamtenga, the respondents were asked more specifically about their thoughts regarding the opportunity to initiate initiatives like the OFG in other villages in Burkina Faso. They all claimed it would be possible and while some emphasized the need for financing, others spoke of engagement, an open-mind and a willingness to change as the most important ingredients. Either way, it could be of relevance to consider the prevailing age hierarchy in Burkina Faso (Helmfrid, 2004). While some data point at the younger generation as the most likely to change and behave differently than according to traditional structures and gender roles, the power relation that comes with age can be vital to get the desired effect. Older people are listened to and have the possibility to influence people around them. In this regard, it might be a good option to put together mixed groups, as was done when forming the OFG. At the same time, several of the respondents

emphasize the importance of having homogenous groups where people know each other, as it would make the conversations and discussions go easier. Female participation, i.e. mixed groups with men and women, was also mentioned as a condition to enable further change and development.



## 6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

To initiate a father group in Nakamtenga was not given, but the engagement from people who believed in the idea made it possible. As this thesis shows, even ten days of discussions and awareness-rising, as with the OFG, can contribute to the reconstruction of masculinities and changed behavior and attitudes. The study showed how the traditional gender roles and what is implicated in being a man, has resulted in children not knowing their fathers and fathers spending little time at home with their families. The woman is in charge of all household chores and the caregiving of the children, whilst it is the man who makes all the decisions concerning the family. As a result of a father group, men now chose to come home to spend time together with their families and communicate with family members before making joint decisions. Changes in behavior and men doing duties seen as typically female has resulted in reactions from other people. Instead of hiding their behaviors, as seen in previous research, these men have chosen to initiate a dialogue and even in some cases act provocatively, resulting in a ripple effect and discussions regarding the division of labor between men and women and why there is nothing odd in a man washing his wife's underwear. This all has resulted in women, men and children being happier and has increased their overall quality of their lives.

This study has provided an initial exploration of the behavioral outcomes and implications by a father group in Nakamtenga, enabling future researcher to have a standpoint. A similar study in a few years' time would give an even wider perspective of the possible results of the OFG, as well as open for the possibility to measure additional effects that will only reveal themselves after a longer period of time. In addition, this study is valuable when initiating similar initiatives in other contexts, such as different participants, countries, and cultures. A central aspect in becoming successful in such an initiative, is the importance of adjusting and adapting the content to the respective contexts. All of this to ensure the relevance to the participants and thereby give the best prerequisite for change. Masculinities and gender roles are complicated to transform and reconstruct but it is still possible. Such changes can in the long run, result in a possible increase in gender equality. We must believe that it is possible to reach equal rights, to enable the full potential of all children, women and men.

# REFERENCES

## Sources

Interview with M1, 2017-03-17 kl. 8.00-11.15.

Interview with F1, 2017-03-18 kl. 16.20-17.40.

Interview with M2, 2017-03-21 kl. 16.20-17.50.

Interview with F2, 2017-03-24 kl. 8.20-9.30.

Interview with M3, 2017-03-23 kl. 16.20-17.05 & 2017-03-24 kl.16.00-17.00.

Interview with M4, 2017-03-28 kl. 16.00-17.00.

Interview with F3, 2017-03-29 kl. 16.00-17.00.

## Bibliography

Agadjanian, V. (2005) Men doing “Women’s work”: Masculinity and gender relations among street vendors in Maputo, Mozambique. In Ouzgane, L. & Morell, R. (ed.), *African masculinities: Men in Africa from the late nineteenth century to the present* (p. 257-269). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Aspers, P. (2007) *Etnografiska metoder*. Malmö: Liber AB.

Barker, G. & Ricardo, C. (2005) *Young Men and the Construction of Masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implications for HIV/AIDS, Conflict, and Violence*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Connell, R. & Messerschmidt, J. (2005) Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the concept. In *Gender & Society*, 19 (6), p. 829-859.

Dover, P. (2001) *A man of power: Gender and HIV/AIDS in Zambia*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Uppsala University, Sweden.

Doyle, K., Kato-Wallace, J., Kazimbaya, S. & Barker, G. (2014) Transforming gender roles

in domestic and caregiving work: preliminary findings from engaging fathers in maternal, newborn, and child health in Rwanda. In *Gender & Development*, 22(3), p. 515-531.

Färnsveden, U. & Rönquist, A. (2000) Why men? A pilot study of existing attitudes among Sida's staff towards male participation in the promotion of gender equality in development. In *IDS Bulletin* 31(2), p. 79-85.

Helmfrid, S. (2004) *A profile on gender relations: Towards gender equality in Burkina Faso*. Stockholm: SIDA.

Kevane, M. & Gray, L.C. (1999) A woman's field is made at night: Gendered land rights and norms in Burkina Faso. In *Feminist Economics*, 5(3), p. 1-26.

Kompaoré, S., McSweeney B. & Frisanco, J. (2007) *The Quest for Gender Equality in Burkina Faso: Female Workloads, Education and Empowerment*. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization.

de Laine, M. (2000) *Fieldwork, participation and practice. Ethics and dilemmas in qualitative research*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Levtov R., van der Gaag N., Greene M., Kaufman M. & Barker G. (2015) *State of the world's fathers: A MenCare Advocacy Publication*. Washington, DC: Promundo, Rutgers, Save the Children, Sonke Gender Justice, and the MenEngage Alliance.

Levy, C., Taher N. & Vouhe, C. (2000) Addressing men and masculinities in GAD. In *IDS Bulletin* 31(2), p. 86-96. <http://bulletin.ids.ac.uk/idsbo/issue/view/92>

Morrow, S. L. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in counseling psychology. In *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(2), p. 250-260.

Nanama, S. & Frongillo E. A. (2012) Women's rank modifies the relationship between household and women's food insecurity in complex households in northern Burkina Faso. In *Food Policy*, 37(3), p. 217-225.

Ouzgane, L. (2002) Guest editorial: An introduction. In *Journal of Men's Studies*, 10(3), p. 243-245.

Porter, A. (2013) 'What is Constructed can be Transformed': Masculinities in Post-Conflict Societies in Africa. In *International Peacekeeping*, 20(4), p. 486-506.

Ryen, A. (2004) *Kvalitativ intervju- från vetenskapsteori till fältstudier*. Malmö: Liber AB.

Silberschmidt, M. (2005) Poverty, male disempowerment, and male sexuality: rethinking men and masculinities in rural and urban east Africa. In Ouzgane, L. & Morell, R. (ed.), *African masculinities: Men in Africa from the late nineteenth century to the present* (p. 189-203). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Silberschmidt, M. (1999) 'Women forget that men are the masters': *Gender antagonism and socioeconomic change in Kisii District, Kenya*. Copenhagen, Denmark: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

Slegh, H., Barker, G., Kimonyo, A., Ndolimana, P. & Bannerman, M. (2013) 'I can do women's work': reflections on engaging men as allies in women's economic empowerment in Rwanda. In *Gender & Development*, 21(1), p. 15-30.

Tracy, S. (2013) *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

UNDP (2016) *Human Development Report 2016: Burkina Faso*. Available at: [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr\\_theme/country-notes/BFA.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/BFA.pdf) [Accessed 17 May 2017]

van den Berg (ed.) (2015) *State of Africa's fathers: A MenCare Advocacy Publication*. Adopted from Levtov R., van der Gaag N., Greene M., Kaufman M. & Barker G. (2015) *State of the world's fathers: A MenCare Advocacy Publication*. Washington, DC: Promundo, Rutgers, Save the Children, Sonke Gender Justice, and the MenEngage Alliance.

van den Berg, W., Hendricks, L., Hatcher A., Peacock, D., Godana, P. & Dworkin, S. (2013) 'One Man Can': shifts in fatherhood beliefs and parenting practices following a gender-transformative programme in Eastern Cape, South Africa. In *Gender & Development*, 21(1), p. 111-125.

Wayack Pambe, M., Gnoumou/Thiombiano, B. & Kabore, I. (2014) Relationship in Burkina

Faso: A focus on participation in decision-making and experience of domestic violence. In *African Population Studies*, 28(4), p. 1146-1156.

Yennenga progress (2017) *Pappagrunder*. Available at: <http://www.yennengaprogress.se/projekt/hon-han-hen/> [Accessed 15 January 2017]

# APPENDIX 1

## Interview guide

### Men/Fathers

#### **Background/Presentation**

- family, children, work, role in the community

#### **Communication (before/after)**

- the children
- the partner
- within family
- people outside of the family
- men to men

#### **Education programme (before/during/after)**

- why participate, how information before
- during, experiences, positive/negative
- further involvement, any groups started, how?
- support before/during/after- tools, guidance, support from other participants

#### **Your own role (before/after)**

- father
- partner
- man
- leader

#### **Participation & Involvement (before/after)**

- household, domestic chores
- the children, positive parenting, encouragement
- partner, e.g. health, involvement in each other's lives, fellowship
- sphere outside of family, local community, relatives etc. Taking care other children?

#### **Reactions**

*On involvement father groups, potentially changed behaviour, involvement, communication etc.*

- the children
- partner
- people outside of the family

#### **Future**

*Depending on answers, follow-up questions.*

- thoughts about the future?
- different now than before programme?
- Possible with similar initiative in "ordinary" village?

## Women/Partners

### **Background/Presentation**

- family, children, work, role in community

### **Communication (before/after)**

- the children
- partner
- within family
- people outside of family
- women to women

### **Education programme**

- experiences partner's participation, before/during/after, positive/negative
- how developed afterwards?
- similar educations for women needed?

### **Your own role (before/after)**

- changed because of father groups
- if yes, in what aspects?
- Positive/negative?

### **Participation & Involvement (before/after)**

- household, domestic chores
- the children, positive parenting, encouragement
- partner, e.g. health, involvement in each other's lives, fellowship
- sphere outside of family, local community, relatives etc. Taking care other children?

### **Reactions**

*On partner's involvement father groups, potentially changed behavior, involvement, communication etc.*

- the children
- partner
- people outside of the family

### **Future**

*Depending on answers, follow-up questions.*

- thoughts about the future?
- different now than before programme?