



Is the Fatherhood Role being Abandoned?

Report of the “Fatherhood as a Role” Workshop
at Ububele, Kew, Johannesburg

18 & 19 March 2024



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Executive Summary

On the 18th - 19th of March 2024, 81 participants from government, the non-profit sector, researchers and corporates attended the South African Parenting Programme Implementors Network (SAPPIN) "Fatherhood" workshop in Johannesburg.

The theme of the workshop was "Is the fatherhood role being abandoned?" This was a unique opportunity for SAPPIN to learn, assess and acknowledge the state of fatherhood in South Africa through a personal and professional process. Two facilitation approaches were fine-tuned for this process. The first was Deep Democracy, which took the participants on a non-judgemental and personal journey, based on issues such as childhood, parenting and gender roles. On the second day, panel discussions and open space technology were utilised to deepen conversations further, as they were explored among practitioners and policy-makers.

Several concrete recommendations were recorded by SAPPIN, however, it was noted that overall, participants were not ready to conclude on a clear way forward. Further conversations are still required concerning parenting, caregiving, children and gender roles.

SAPPIN will take responsibility for the following key points:

- 1) SAPPIN will be the incubator for the Fatherhood Community of Practice (COP). SAPPIN will create a specific space on their website to present and share research, implementation, programmes, news and other interesting, and relevant, information on fatherhood. SAPPIN will share a Charter with the organisations interested in joining the COP, which will need to be signed.
- 2) A research article will be completed by SAPPIN and 19 participants, based on the workshop process.
- 3) The SAPPIN Parent Line app will be utilised to map existing programmes focusing on fathers, and specific to fatherhood in a South African context.
- 4) SAPPIN will share a comprehensive advocacy strategy around parenting, which includes fatherhood with participants. Organisations are requested to join the action for change on policy at legislative levels.
- 5) SAPPIN will share self-care and healing resources with participants of the workshop. Please share the resources which will be included in this offering.

Key findings and observations from the workshop were as follows:

- Safe spaces are needed for fathers, as well as challenging stereotypes concerning gender. Currently what is determined as a safe space by

practitioners is not necessarily appropriate; therefore experienced and sensitive facilitation is paramount to creating these spaces.

- A significant number of those who did not attend the workshop were men. A few of the men who did attend, commented that on the first day they felt intimidated by walking into a space with so many women.
- The voice of dissent was encouraged through the Deep Democracy process, and it was noted that the success of this was due to the proactive participation throughout.
- Women were often reported as being the gatekeepers for a father's access to their children. For example, the role of the father as the main provider is still being maintained by women, and their role in other areas, such as emotional or psychosocial support is not being prioritised.
- Gender roles are determined by culture, tradition, capitalism and practitioners. How can stereotyping be avoided, yet also encourage healthy practices?
- The role of fatherhood and manhood is directly connected in the African context. They cannot be separated from each other, as men are often raised to be good men to produce children. However, they are not taught how to be good fathers.
- Poverty and unemployment are huge barriers in a father's involvement in his children's lives. These various aspects include community, family and equality.
- Many fathers want to be involved in their children's lives, and understand how important it is. However, many places, such as clinics and ECD centres, or the overall community/family unit in general, are not conducive to male involvement.

SAPPIN Background

SAPPIN builds a secure future for all who live in South Africa by helping families create warm and non-violent homes, for children.

The purpose of the network is to strengthen the voice of civil society by working with families through collaboration, and shared learning. SAPPIN aims to enhance civil society in this realm through research, implementation, fundraising, communication and advocacy, to ensure that quality programmes are available and sustainable where they are needed, in communities across the country.

SAPPIN exists to contribute to a larger theory of change by linking to South African and international policies for the protection and security of children, and the prevention of violence in childhood. Positive parenting interventions informed by these policies have been proven to have a direct link to the reduction of violence within homes, and the promotion of alternative disciplinary strategies, contributing

to more securely attached children. These children have increased resilience, and have more enhanced opportunities for a better future, which impacts all of South Africa.

This network has its origins within the Violence Prevention Forum. All original, initiating partners within the network were present in the forum. The purpose of the network is to strengthen the voice of parenting programme implementers, to fortify our research capacity, particularly in the realm of implementation research, and to collaborate with government, civil society and researchers regarding fundraising, research and communication. This effort of joining facilitators in such a network ultimately serves to reinforce our capacity to collaboratively reach greater numbers of children and families, with quality, evidence-based parenting interventions.

The principles and values of the network guides the way it operates, and determines who can become a member.

Values

Care and Support: We honour the role of the family, seek to support parenting relationships that use non-violent communication, encourage nurturing and responsive care, and prevent violence against children.

Accountability: We commit ourselves to quality and excellence in our work with families and children. We commit to open and honest relationships with each other where we uphold good practices, share in mutual learning, and hold each other to what we commit to do and be.

Collaboration: Working together is better than working alone. We share knowledge and learning in practice, and commit to operating with integrity, openness, transparency and professionalism. We celebrate success and growth together.

Respect: We value cultural sensitivity and diversity by seeking to understand the intention of parenting practice, while also earning the right to present alternative ways of interacting with children that reduces harm, and increases emotional well-being in the home.

Principles

Principle 1:

The parenting programmes of SAPPIN members promote warm and non-violent family (caregiver) relationships.

Principle 2:

SAPPIN members are guided by an ethos of collaboration and learning amongst themselves, and stakeholders.

Principle 3:

Quality programmes are being implemented. SAPPIN members are committed to ensuring that (1) monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and (2) supervision are applied, that programmes are (3) evidence-based or informed, and that they occur within (4) a basket of services (referral network) to ensure optimal service delivery towards the families served.

Principle 4:

Parenting programmes are duly informed by relevant social, cultural and religious practices.

Principle 5:

All SAPPIN members uphold the principle of “do no harm”. All programmes apply ethical and respectful practices for implementation and research with regard to beneficiaries and staff.

Principle 6: Governance

SAPPIN members are registered, compliant entities in South Africa, and have child protection and safeguarding policies.

Check-In

In one of the preparation e-mails to participants, they were asked to bring any object to the workshop that symbolizes Fatherhood to them.

The check-in prompt on Day 1 was for people to introduce themselves, the organisation they represent, and speak about the symbol they brought, and explain its significance. The check-in process was triggering for a number of attendees. Many individuals remarked on the process of finding a suitable object, and how the process of thinking about the object already started their preparation for the workshop.



Deep Democracy

To begin the Deep Democracy process, considerable time was spent on explaining the reasoning behind using this methodology, and what it entails.

What is democracy?

- majority rules
- seeking harmony in traditional ways of thinking
- consensus
- diluting issues

What is the value of democracy?

- freedom of choice
- effective decision making

What is the downside of democracy?

- populism
- group thinking can be dangerous
- the majority is not always right
- suppresses the voices of minorities

Deep Democracy says the voice of “no” is encouraged, and that there is wisdom in those who disagree or go against the current.

Why use Deep Democracy?

Systems and roles are bigger than the individual. Our voices as participants represent the silent ones, and those who are not present.

There are many roles convened in the space. The process facilitates the ventilation of the system to get things unstuck...underlying things that persist in the system. One of these is the ghost role, which deals with repeating patterns and confusion.



What is needed to interrupt the status quo that can affect change? Something new in the system, such as voices and feelings not heard/experienced before. This is the space for the voice of “no”.

“Harmony is a wonderful thing, but not nearly as powerful as awareness” – Arnold Mindell

Awareness creates change, and being aware enables us to accept every facet of our experiences. It enables us to observe and bring into conversation not only the apparent issues and details of a particular scenario or conversation, but also the underlying emotions, visions, and dreams that, if kept hidden, tend to obstruct any attempt to establish lasting peace or resolution within ourselves, our relationships, and groups.



Deep Democracy as a theory and practice, together with process-oriented, small and large group work, affirm that all individuals, roles and emotions are essential. While Deep Democracy recognises the value of current democratic systems, it also emphasises the importance of being conscious of emotions and the environment during on-the-spot encounters, and institutional procedures.

Participants were encouraged to regulate themselves and not “get into their heads”, and to realise that wisdom lies within each of us.

Panel 1:

Stories of Fatherhood – Looking at Gender Roles and Beyond

This panel was facilitated by Esther Chunga, Director of Ububele.

Panellists for panel 1 included:

- Liesl Orr (Hand in Hand Parenting) has worked as a researcher and educator with various progressive organisations and trade unions.
- Madoda Ndlakuse (project coordinator at Nal'iBali) is a poet, storyteller, multi-award-winning author, literacy activist and fatherhood story enthusiast.



- Marcel Korth (Anglo American) is a gender principal in their Community Health and Wellbeing team.
- Geoff Mamputa (director at Tales of Turning) is a highly experienced mediator, facilitator, development practitioner and peacemaker.

Liesl spoke from a feminist perspective in a broader context. She emphasised that society doesn't support parents meaningfully, and the work of parenting is undervalued as it is often interpreted as only women's work. It is poorly paid, and has a low status. The focus is on profit, rather than people, in current society, and this perspective is not conducive to nurturing young humans. Parenting work needs emotional and financial support, as well as time. We need to advocate for parents and caregivers, and as activists, we need to push for parental rights, grants, etc. so that parents are not parenting from a personalised stressed place.

She described the differences in gender norms: men are socialised to be dominant and strong. They drop out, numb out, or punch out if they can't live up to the expectations to provide. Girls are taught to be submissive, hide their bodies, and make themselves attractive while being discouraged to show strength, anger or rage. As parents, how can we encourage a full range of emotions from our children?

Rather connect, than correct. Rather time in, than time out. We should all encourage the father's role in a family, and invite them to take their place in their children's lives.

Liesl's point around encouraging fathers to become involved, and inviting them to take their place, brought up a reflection by a participant about how women can sometimes also be gatekeepers for a father's role. The participant aptly asked, "How do we as women/mothers let go and allow fathers to take up their role, and allow them to step into their relationship without any judgment? Sometimes mothers are the gatekeepers."

Madoda shared aspects of his life growing up. He described his mother as a hustler; a great woman. She was uneducated, but she did what she could to support her children. She sent him to a rural area to live with his "second mother" as protection from negative influences. He, however, had traumatic experiences; he was bullied and sexually abused. He was bullied by



teachers in his school, and struggled during his matric exams. After school, he went looking for his father to find out about that side of his family. When he found his father, he initially blamed his mother for sending him where she did. He realised he didn't want to repeat the carelessness of his father, or parents.

His father played 0% in his life; he plays 99% in his children's lives. He encouraged men to support their partners by being involved during pregnancy. He motivated fathers to be there when the baby kicks, and to sing to their unborn baby because they can hear, and recognise, their father's voice. He wanted to be involved with his baby even before birth, and that set the tone for the rest of his children's lives.

While many participants related to Madoda's point concerning fathers being there for their partners, and their children, during pregnancy, it brought up conversations about whether we should be focusing on fatherhood, or parenting. One participant shared that, "Bringing two people who are raising the child should be where one starts. What we are going through is not about a particular gender. Let's start by focusing on parenting (the umbrella)" (sic). Are we as practitioners able to make this shift?

Marcel spoke from the perspective of a gay father, but he is raising a boy as a single parent, so can also identify with single mothers. He is a working father that has no family support, but has friends that provide a circle of support.

He wants to be a father who does things better in terms of raising a child who is healthy, vulnerable, resilient and can stand up to gender role expectations. He has realised though, that as a society we are stuck in the norms that we grew up with. He thought that he could project different ideas of masculinity, but found that he was struggling. For him, the answer is to model the principles that he values, but finds an eco-system is needed to support this. In hetero-normative ecosystems, it becomes much harder, and safe spaces are needed when challenging many stereotypes. What safe spaces are we creating beyond the family that can support being a boy, being a man and being a father, that are not the norm? For diversity in boys and girls that we want to raise, this is what is needed.



Geoffrey spoke from a traditional African perspective. He mentioned that when you are a new mother, you are given a new name, but when you become a father, there is no name given to a man that acknowledges fatherhood. New mothers are acknowledged and celebrated, but a father's life just carries on with no acknowledgement. Society encourages men to be raised as good men in order to produce children. They fulfil this role, but they are never taught how to be good fathers.

How do you bridge the gap between man and fatherhood? This is a shared responsibility with many other roles in the family and community. In some cultures, the firstborn is raised by the grandmother, which allows fathers to step away from

playing a role in their child's life. There is no responsibility in being a father other than being the financial provider. In fact, if men are unemployed, it is the worst thing that could happen to them as a man.

As a boy, you imagine a real man to be emotionally distant; there is no place for emotions with a focus on stoicism. Fatherhood is learnt through play and discussion with adults, and modeling from elders. When a boy comes forward with something emotional, they are supposed to be attended to, but often the child's emotions are closed down. "Don't forget you are a man." Men go through all these things and make babies as men, not expecting to become fathers.

Geoff's thoughts about bridging the gap between men and fatherhood caused some amazing discussions in the group. One of the questions that was asked was, "Can we really address the topic of fatherhood without addressing the topic of manhood, especially in the African context?" The consensus surrounding this question within the group was no, one cannot separate the two, and to explore the role of fatherhood in the South African context, one must look at the role of manhood.

The audience responded by questioning and providing examples of healthy/protective traditional African practices. One of these is the role of religion in the definition of the role of men and fatherhood and the conflict between religion and culture.

As a society we talk about the silos and traditionalism that socialises us into gender roles at a young age, but capitalism also plays a role in socialising children through shops and toys.

Men are allowed to express powerful emotions like anger, but not vulnerable emotions. This is also an influence of the socialisation of boys. There are changes happening however: male ECD (early childhood development) teachers, including men in baby showers, celebrating them being fathers.

A comment was made that mothers are gatekeepers, and can pressurise men into being powerless. While this is true in some cases, men do still have power in the family unit, and can assume that power in that space, like they do in other areas. There was, however, acknowledgement that women can exclude fathers from certain places, such as taking one's child to a clinic or ECD centre, and particularly so if the father is not proving financial support.



Panel 2: Healthy Fathering – What We Have Learned in Different Contexts?

The focus of this panel was on evidence, or programmes that are having an impact. The panel was facilitated by Nyasha Manjengenja, senior technical advisor of Clowns Without Borders South Africa.

Panellists for panel 2 included:

- Diketso Mufamadi-Mathebula is a deputy director at the Western Cape Department of the Premier, where she leads the Safety Priority and Family Strengthening Project.
- Lereko Mfono is the project coordinator at Heartlines' Fathers Matter campaign. He is a writer, with a background in drama and facilitation.
- Erika Jooste (replaced Thabo Shange) is the Global Gender Advisor of Sesame Workshop South Africa.
- Wendy Cochrane is the founder of Big Mama's Famous Truth Shop, and co-founder of the African Odyssey Project. She has a passion for discovering solutions to sticky problems through the art of experiencing diverse lives and perspectives.



Diketso did her master's on "Exploring Father's Experiences on Fatherhood and Fathering". In her studies, she assessed parenting programmes and wondered whether they should be called mom's programmes. She did twelve in-depth interviews with diverse men, and found that men want to be involved with their children, even when they are adults. "My child knows who I am" was an emerging theme. Fathers want to have a strong relationship with their child, and an attachment to them. They understand the importance of being involved with their children from the beginning, and view themselves as danger protectors.

Some of the influences impacting factors to fathering are the following: It is a conscious decision when your partner is pregnant that you are the sole provider for this child, and you have to be present. However, the biggest barrier to this is poverty. Even fathers involved in care work felt that if they can't provide, then they are not

being a proper father. Community concerns are related to how substance abuse and insecure communities breed cycles of neglect.

Barriers to attendance in parenting programmes are that they are primarily aimed at stay-at-home moms, and need to target men specifically. Delivery approach should be changed. Men also highlighted that they need a goal to complete a programme.

In the check-in on day 2, a perspective was shared that related to Diketso's point on parenting programmes. The attendee said, "As an implementor, I've been struggling for years to involve men. Last year we had a programme that had 20 men, but only 4 completed the programme. When we talk about emotions, they back off." From the conversations that were had over the two days, it is clear that there is a need to reassess the way that parenting programmes are delivered to ensure that fathers feel that they can attend, and more importantly, find value enough to complete them.

Lereko spoke about the 8 Heartline films that were developed in 2008, and their question was, "Do fathers matter?" In 2019 they conducted research and looked at barriers to fatherhood, which was the foundation of Fathers Matter. He indicated that it is possible for a father to be present, but not be involved. What is needed though, is an active, present father. He believes that the nuclear system of the family in South Africa does not exist. He attributed this to migration, which is still a big challenge for fathering. He said their project was focused on how stories can spark dialogue.



Lereko's point around the migrant labour system sparked dialogue among attendees, and one participant shared, "It takes a community to raise a child. From working in rural areas, I have seen that imbizos have had a good impact on boys and men." This point hones in on the need to take the South African context into account, as the cultural values and sociopolitical context all play a role in how a child is raised.

In addition, there are another 6 films that have come out with discussion material that organisations, churches, and other institutions such as non-governmental organisations, can use. Discussions are important, and the first step to starting conversations about change. The films can be accessed for free from the Heartlines YouTube channel, as well as their website. They also launched an ECD programme that is accessible free of charge, and aims to support ECD practitioners in involving fathers.

Erika shared findings based on a Takelani Sesame father's programme delivered to 420 men during the COVID pandemic.

They started with a needs assessment, a stakeholder analysis, and then the programme implementation. They learnt that in each area the findings were different, so before adopting the programme, it is important to understand the different contexts. The project tried to dematerialise fathering and the fatherhood role. One of the key findings of the project is that play is of huge value in this process. The research was done in the ECD space, and they learned that fathers are eager to be involved in their children's lives, as has been found in other studies referred to in this workshop,

Erika spoke about the scaling of the programme with two sets of assets. The first is transforming stereotypes by adding new gender identities to the Takalani Sesame programme, as they realised that the show is co-viewed by both children and parents. The second aspect is changing the narrative around play, and sharing the importance and value of play for both children and adults.



Takalani Sesame has a strong focus on using social media listening tools, and focuses on how to reach men on a mass scale through social media.

Wendy expressed a great sense of frustration with herself because there are ample opportunities to address the issue of fatherhood, but society cannot solve the problem. She felt it is an opportune time to make a change, as this could be an incredible moment for South Africa to show the world what we can do. As a nation, we usually show up despite the obstacles. We need to work with fathers as this is the key to change in society, but men feel they are voiceless in their communities.

She shared populist messages used in the advertising world, where focus is only on women when it comes to taking care of children and the home; these messages do not target men. She argued that messages are making use of fear to gain power.

She also shared her experience of conducting an ethnographic study in taverns in different contexts with men, and these men told her that they found dignity in a bottle. With alcohol, they can command respect. Some of them know that alcohol makes them a negative role model, but feel powerless to change their situation.

From this conversation, it became clear that society needs to create space and permission for men in society to express themselves, but it can't be left there. In the non-profit sector, facilitators need to be able to hold this space and build the necessary solutions.

Responses from the audience included that they are tasked to reach audiences that don't have access to many of the usual mediums for learning and communication; there is a gap between the community and the government; people are scared to go to the police; ECD centres are mainly female-friendly; culture is gatekeeping men from accessing services and support; current parenting programmes don't include men, and therefore perpetuate gender stereotypes.



A call was made by the attendees that it would be critical to use the upcoming elections to raise issues around parenting as this is also a political issue.

Open Space Technology

The decision to use Open Space Technology (OST) was intentional, by building on the Deep Democracy process experienced on day 1. OST enables all participants to create inspired meetings and events. Over the last 30 years, it has also become clear that OST, as an inclusive, peace-building practice, can lead to motivated communities and organisations, whereby participants work together to create extraordinary results with regularity.

In Open Space meetings, participants create and manage their own agenda, working sessions around a central theme of strategic importance. In the case of the Fatherhood as a Role workshop, the question: *Is the Fatherhood Role being Abandoned?* was posed to lead, and guide, the conversation.

The reason why OST was chosen for the second day of the workshop is because the model fits SAPPIN's values and principles, where everyone is equal and makes an equal contribution, and is respected and honoured for being part of the process. It further aspires to create a family atmosphere.

OST works best when objectives are complex, diverse people and ideas are involved, a passion for resolution (and potential for conflict) is high, and the time to get it done is yesterday.

For those who did not attend the Fatherhood as a Role workshop, this information will give a clearer understanding of the processes that were followed:

The Fundamentals of Open Space Technology

Theme: What are the current issues and possibilities?

Parenting for Social Impact: How can support for Families Impact Social Change?

Four principles

- Whoever comes is the right people
- Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.
- Whenever it starts is the right time.
- When it's over, it's over.

One Law:

The Law of Two Feet.

The law encourages people to leave a conversation if it doesn't interest them anymore. They can then move to a different conversation. This creates more conversation and also cross-pollination within the different conversations.

Extra:

Be prepared to be surprised!

The big surprise was that real conversations were had. People felt comfortable and took ownership of the discussions in the break-away sessions. It was not just a talk shop.



Invitation

This was sent out beforehand and was reintroduced during the second day. It announced the theme with the instruction to be brief, compelling, intriguing, allow the imagination to grow, and contain the promises:

- Every issue of concern to anybody will have been raised if they took responsibility for doing that.
- All issues will have received full discussion, to the extent required.
- A full report of issues and discussions will be given to all participants.
- Priorities will be set, and action plans made.

Issues (visible to all)

The invitation prepared attendees for what the discussion would entail.

Please find the reports of the break-away sessions attached to this report.

Action Plans Identified by Participants During the Break-Away Sessions

1. A platform for sharing programmes, learning, research, and best practices – an online community of practice.
2. Mapping of parenting, and other programmes, with a specific focus on fatherly involvement, and how the South African context has been taken into account.
3. Consult with communities and redesign. Which programmes are successful, and why? What is not successful? Co-creation should be a goal, as funders love collaboration. Co-creation with men, or women and men, depending on the angle.
4. More research and assessment through data collection is needed, as to why fathers are involved, or not involved. How are safe spaces created for fathers to heal and get parenting information? How do you create open communication between mothers/extended family and fathers to heal and trust each other? Avoid the standard one-size-fits-all approach, and assess content and delivery. Delivery is important. Identify where SAPPIN can publish research, and what practical platforms there are for using research.
5. Gender roles: How can SAPPIN focus on work that addresses gender stereotyping, and is transformative around gender roles? Remove/balance gender in parenting as much as possible, as we are also contributing to the stereotype.
6. Advocacy around parenting: Ensure practitioners have gone through the fatherhood programmes to have a good understanding. Same message around fathers' programmes for a united voice. Who are the changemakers in communities, and at government level, around this topic? SAPPIN to identify.



7. SAPPIN will also share resources (e.g. books, podcasts, videos) that are connected to healing, self-care, and good mental health.

Feedback from participants (sic):

- ✓ It was the most eye-opening Fatherhood workshop I have ever attended.
- ✓ How our lives as children have been shaped by our lived experiences, including our careers. The few examples of abusive language, and physical (sjambok) were profound. The whole check-in was profound and the use of symbols to share how or what fatherhood is, was also profound.
- ✓ Break-away rooms were helpful in capturing every voice in the room.
- ✓ I was shocked and surprised on the first day by the process which I later appreciated. I thought the process of Deep Democracy helped me personally as I listened to different insights and stories. I reached a point where I experienced a deep sense of empathy that helped me kind of understand or at least shift some of my perceptions.
- ✓ It felt as if Day 2's content and processes needed more time, although I realise that this may not be possible. I really hope that we can continue this important conversation as a wider group.
- ✓ I hope SAPPIN can do this for more practitioners because we are wounded people trying to heal other wounded people.
- ✓ I learned a lot as a young man. What I would love to see in the next Fatherhood workshop - more men and fathers attend.
- ✓ The networking opportunities take the lead for me!
- ✓ I am amazed by the men in the group and feel so hopeful because of their willingness to be vulnerable.
- ✓ Thank you to the two panels - wonderful gems were shared as well as practices/implementation and fatherhood work.
- ✓ The only thing I would do differently for next time is include more time for fun, play and levity.
- ✓ I'm particularly drawn to the "mothers as a gate-keepers" narrative and "manhood vs fatherhood" narrative. Looking forward to the research paper.



Conclusions: What we learned from the “Fatherhood as a Role” workshop

The themes that came to the forefront during the Fatherhood as a Role workshop were:

- The Deep Democracy process created a safe space to experience awareness of the participants’ own fatherhood processes. The recognition that participants are changemakers in the care economy, experiencing so much individual and collective trauma was evident. The need for similar processes to bring understanding and healing was one of the strongest themes of day 1, and this was the same for leaders (policy makers) attending the workshop.
- An appreciation for the diversity in the room, our experiences, and our future healing processes.
- A shared definition or understanding of the role of fatherhood would be helpful. It stems from the question, “How can we have a shared understanding of what fatherhood is, or should look like, when we have different experiences of fatherhood, or the lack of fatherhood?”
- Cultural perspectives and the clash between culture and societal systems.
- There is a difference between fatherhood and manhood – there are no measures for this.
- There is an absence of men in these spaces, and other processes.

Future Steps

There is always the awareness after such an intense experience that it should not just be a talk shop, and that definite actions should be taken. One of the possibilities of OST is to make this possible for every person who attended the workshop, but SAPPIN realises that the overburdened workforce of the care economy can only do what they can. SAPPIN cannot commit to doing all of the actions identified, but will take responsibility for the following future action points:

- In collaboration with the 19 participants who indicated their interest, SAPPIN will write and publish a research article on fatherhood.
- SAPPIN is now the proud incubator of the Fatherhood Community of Practice! SAPPIN will create a specific space on their website to present and share research, implementation, programmes, news, and other relevant and interesting information on fatherhood. With support from Sesame Workshop, SAPPIN will share a Charter to be signed by organisations interested in joining the COP. Please provide relevant information for sharing on this platform.

- Through the Parentline app, SAPPIN will start with the mapping and offering of parenting programmes that will include fatherhood.
- SAPPIN will share selfcare and healing resources with participants of the workshop. Please share resources to be included in this offering.
- SAPPIN will share a comprehensive advocacy strategy, around parenting that includes fatherhood, with participants. Organisations are requested to join the action for change on policy and legislative levels.
- SAPPIN will apply for funds/do funding proposals to duplicate this workshop in various provinces of South Africa.
- If you as an individual, or as a representative of an organisation, intend to take any action or future steps, please share this with the rest of the group. SAPPIN intends to keep the momentum going.

SAPPIN wishes to acknowledge and thank the following people who played a vital role in making the workshop a possibility:

Judy Connors, Rinchen van Rijswijk, Diketso Mufumadi-Mathebula, Suzan Eriksson, Erika Jooste, Mahlatse Diahle, Kaathima Ebrahim and Wilmi Dippenaar who started planning this workshop in November 2023.

The sponsors who contributed to the success of this workshop: World Childhood Foundation, Two Lilies Fund, Oak Foundation, Parenting for Lifelong Health and Mikhulu Trust.

You, the participants, who shared your time, stories, emotions, knowledge and humanity with one another. Without you, this workshop would not have been realised. You were the voices of the silent ones!

Esther Chunga and the team at Ububele who made us feel welcomed, cherished and loved. They also supplied homemade meals that added to the feeling of being among family. They also made psycho-social support available during the two days, and following two weeks, for participants who needed additional support.

The facilitators who carried the workshop for two days in a caring and assertive way - Jabu Mashinini (Leadership Pathways), Corlette Lesotho (Phaphama Initiatives), Miselwa Noqala (Aspire Youth) and Thamsanqa Mzaku (Phaphama Initiatives).

Jonathan Hoffenberg (The Parent Centre) [right] who was involved in the event's planning, and acted as MC for the two days.

The four scribes – Ayanda Mazibuko (ISS), Karen Ross (Mikhulu Trust), Robyn Hemmens (Dlalanathi) and Sive Vaaltein (Seven



Passes Initiative). It is thanks to their brilliant note-taking that you are reading this comprehensive report.

The Driver Group of SAPPIN – Mahlatse Diahle (JPCCC), Suzan Eriksson (CWBSA) and Wilmi Dippenaar for organising the event.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Families Indaba Report – Session 1: Room 1-4

Appendix 2: Families Indaba Report – Session 2: Room 1-4

Appendix 3: List of Participants/Registered

