Resilient Household Initiative:

How Ugandan Parents Protect their Children and Promote their Well-being

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Strengthening people’s capacity to deal resiliently with adversity is a key to reducing poverty--advancing sustained human development.

Scientific advances in neuroscience and epigenetics show that critical child development milestones are achieved or not within the context of parent/social interactions.

Need to examine social interactions at the household level as sources of childhood risk and resilience.
Research Objectives

How do Ugandan adults and children describe and understand parenting practices? Included explorations of both:

- “Positive parenting:” attitudes and behaviors that support children and promote their well-being; and,
- “Negative parenting:” attitudes and behaviors that place children at risk and undermine their developmental well-being

Gain a better understanding of what Ugandan parents do to protect and promote their children on a day-to-day basis

85 percent of the day to day care and protection of children takes place at household and community levels. 15% formal government actors

Effective scale up of a child protection system in Uganda needs to begin with households and communities and build out from there
Sampling and Methods

- Locations: Ibanda, Lira, and Kampala

- Purposive Sampling: specific knowledge sought in selecting locations

- Interviews: 180 adult caretakers (60 per area communities)

- Interviews: 180 children ages 8 to 13 (60 per area communities)

- Data Analysis:
  - research team
  - INnvivo
  - communities

- Key informant interviews and in-depth interviews with caregivers
Interviews to Common Themes

360 INTERVIEWS

More than 7,000 RESPONSES

RESEARCH TEAM SORTER(S) 1

INVIVO SORTER(2)

COMMUNITY REVIEW (3)

Common Theme

Common Theme

Common Theme
Findings

- Parenting behaviors fell into 8 categories
  - Care
  - Nutrition
  - Being Enterprising
  - Community Relations
  - Investing in Children’s Future
  - Protection
  - Rearing children
  - Intimate Partner Relations

- Converse relationship emerged between positive and negative parenting
- Example: Positive parenting involves provision of day-to-day care, whereas a hallmark of poor parenting is neglect
Investing in Children
“A pen today is a future asset. If children study and complete school, they become prosperous.”

- Planning for children’s futures is the highest ranked behavior associated with positive parenting (Most Important 282)

- Conversely, the lack of concern for a child’s future (its neglect) was indication of negative parenting (150)

- Paying school fees
- Providing children with school supplies
- Helping them with homework
- Ensuring they arrive on time,
- Visiting the school for meetings or to check on children.
- Ensuring children have technical skills
- Ensuring children know how to keep a house or a compound clean
Protection and Care

“He takes his children to school every day by car and this has helped his children not to be harmed by boda-boda men.”

Protection: Parents Shield Children from Danger

- Not leaving children alone
- Keeping children inside at night
- Being non-violent: do not beat children
- Shielding children from bad peer groups
- Providing mosquito nets
- Providing proper shelter/bedding
- Taking children back and forth from home to school.

Care: Parents Spend time with their Children and Provide for their Basic Needs

- Raises children well, with good values
- Spending time with children
- Providing health care, immunizations, medications
- Providing clothes, “long clothes,” toys, or gifts
- Keeping children clean, bathing, washing

“She is not well off but when her children are sick she sells what she has and gets them medication”
Nutrition
“There is nothing you do without eating”

- Breastfeeds (good mothers)
- Cooks and buys food
- Packs food for school (or pay for children to buy food at school)
- Farms for food
- Provides clean drinking water
- Provides a balanced diet
- Provides breakfast, lunch, and dinner

Good fathers provide money for food

“He always leaves enough money home to buy food for the family with the wife when he must go off for some good period like one to two months. This helps in refraining children from engaging in stealing and also the wife from practicing adultery.”
Enterprising

“When he gets money he takes it to his bank account to help with emergencies, not like others who will get money and drink it all without supporting their children.”

“He works hard to get money. When he gets money he provides for his children.”

“He spends his money on alcohol…his children can’t go to clinic when they’re sick.”

- Saving money
- Buying or owning land
- Farming and selling goods
- Owning livestock
- Buying land for children

- Wasting money
- Not spending money for school fees and health care
- Spending money instead on alcohol (co-occurring 144 times)
- Not farming for financial gains
- Not doing housework
- Being a thief/stealing
Good Neighbors

“People like and trust her and will even lend her money for her children’s school fees”

Children are held in high esteem if their parents are seen as honest and hardworking

- Caring for children other than your own
- Helping neighbors
- Teaching children good manners
- Being kind

He is undisciplined and has bad manners so his children are really suffering

- Being abusive physically and verbally
- Not caring for children
- Not helping neighbors
- Having money but not helping neighbors in need
Raising Children
Social and Moral Development

Positive Parenting
- Advises and Disciplines to be well behaved
- Raises children in church
  Does not use violence
- Does not shout
- Allows children to play

"He advises his children well. They always go to church"

Negative Parenting
- Makes child work all the time
- Sets a bad example
- Violent
- Shouts
- Does not advise the child well

"He only tells his children to fetch water. He never listens…he never advises"
Intimate Partner Relations

“She has a good relationship with her husband. They agree on how to run their family and how many children to have. So their children live happily in their family because they can manage them well.”

“When he gets into a misunderstanding with his wife he endeavors to solve it away from the kids like in his bed room. Their kids have never seen their dad abuse their mother and this nurtures them very well.”

- Listening to each other
- Working together to solve problems
- Non-violence
- Not fighting
- Mothers teaching children to respect their father
- Not being and adulterer or polygamous
Community Engagement

- Community Feedback Sessions

- Social Ecologies: what supports good parenting

- Community small grant program: How to get started

- “If we had more savings programs we could send more girls to school”
- “Our minister and church could do more”
- “Girl mothers need our support”