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Chapter 2
Engaging Men to Support the Resilience of Syrian Refugee Children and Youth in Lebanon



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2.1 Introduction

Conflict damages the social ecological systems that sustain children's resilience such as the capacity of parents and communities to provide safety and basic needs and of the state to provide education and health services. In contexts of war and displacement, children's responses and experiences are most immediately mediated by their parents who play a fundamental role in regulating their exposure to risk and in protecting their mental health (Borowski, Ramey, & Bristol-Power, 2001; Garbarino & Kostelny, 1996; Masten & Obradovic, 2008; Murphy, Rodrigues, Costigan, & Annan, 2017; Panter-Brick, Grimon, & Eggerman, 2014; Punamäki, Samir, & El Sarraj, 1997, 2001; Qouta, Punamäki, & El Sarraj, 2008; Smith, Perrin, Yule, & Rabe-Hesketh, 2001; Thabet & Vostanis, 2000; Williams, 2010). The experiences of refugee men as parents are one of the least explored areas of psychosocial interventions with refugee families, necessitating greater engagement with men, including in their role as fathers (Panter-Brick et al., 2014).

Engaging men in gender-based violence prevention programming has emerged as a promising response in development contexts (Casey, Carlson, Two Bulls, & Yager, 2018). "Engaging Men" programs seek to challenge the social norms, attitudes, and practices that increase the risk of gender-based violence against women and girls while also harnessing positive male power to prevent violence and promote safety (Carlson et al., 2015; Ricardo & Barker, 2008). Most "Engaging Men"

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programs are primary prevention initiatives that aim to identify and address underlying causes of violence and minimize the likelihood of violence occurring in contrast with secondary prevention that aims to support gender-based violence survivors (Storer, Casey, Carlson, Edleson, & Tolman, 2016). An examination of the research literature on "Engaging Men" as a gender-based violence prevention intervention shows that children, if considered at all, are at a step removed, that is, in relation to women's roles as caregivers, while men in their role as fathers rarely figure (Abramsky et al., 2016; Hossain et al., 2014; Stern, Pascoe, Shand, & Richmond, 2015). Children may be considered as direct beneficiaries in terms of delaying girls' early marriage (Casey et al., 2018) or in engaging men to overcome barriers to girls' education (Jamal, 2014). Increasingly, it is recognized that violence against women and violence against children cannot be treated as distinct issues (Fry & Elliot, 2017). Targeting men in their role as fathers within "engaging men in gender-based violence prevention" interventions is under-explored. Yet an ecological framework for understanding the origins of gender-based violence, such as that proposed by Heise (1998), supports an argument for this linkage. In her ecological model, the first level is personal history including witnessing intimate partner violence as a child or experiencing abuse; the second level is the microsystem of family relationships and in particular the importance of addressing marital conflict; the third level is the exosystem comprised of the formal and informal social structures that impact people's lives, such as community structures that can create social isolation as a risk factor for interpersonal violence following forced migration; and the fourth level is the macrosystem whereby social and cultural norms can create a climate where masculinity is linked to dominance and violence is a socially accepted dominance strategy. Many "Engaging Men" interventions are conceptualized within an ecological model. In their work with Promondu, Ricardo and Barker (2008) argue that interventions should work at three levels: face-to-face awareness-raising; community-level efforts including community-level mobilization, advocacy, and targeting of male leaders that can mobilize change; and collaborations with organizations whose focus is broader than gender-based violence. Yet most models do not consider the intersectionality between violence against women and girls and violence against children as a social category more broadly. The World Health Organization, (2016) identified strategies for ending violence against children including strengthening norms and values that support gender-equitable relationships for all children; challenging harmful gender and social norms of boys; reductions in early and forced marriage of young girls; more favorable attitudes to non-violent approaches to parental discipline; and greater recognition of what constitutes abusive behavior toward intimate partners and children – not just girls. This would mean an opportunity to broaden the remit of "Engaging Men" programs where appropriate to include consideration of men in their role as fathers and also to give more consideration to boys under 18 years. The Interagency Gender-Based Violence Case Management Guidelines (2017) recognize that boys also face risks of sexual violence. Furthermore, structural violence faced by boys such as gender-based

norms that force them into child labor where a male head of household is incapacitated or absent is not generally regarded as a form of gender-based violence and therefore not considered.

This chapter presents the findings of an intervention evaluation that aimed to engage Syrian refugee and Lebanese men in Lebanon to address the main protection concerns for Syrian refugee women and children – including those related to domestic violence, sexual harassment and exploitation, and early marriage and child labor – by engaging Syrian refugee and host community men to promote safety in their communities and by increasing their capacity to use prosocial coping. The main findings have been described elsewhere (Veale, Hijazi, & Osman, 2016; Veale, Shanahan, Hijazi, & Osman, 2019), allowing this chapter to focus on the impact of the intervention on the lives of children and adolescents.

2.1.1 Syrian Refugees in Lebanon

The Syrian crisis has had a profound effect on children's lives and over half of Syrian refugees in Lebanon are children. Their families have experienced a steep decline into poverty as access to livelihood and income opportunities have diminished. In 2016, 70–80% of Syrian refugees did not have the necessary income to afford the survival minimum expenditure basket. A United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR, 2016) vulnerability assessment of Syrian refugees in Lebanon in 2016 found that 95% of visited households had borrowed money in the previous 30 days to purchase food, pay their rent, and access healthcare. A key reason for these extraordinarily high levels of deprivation was found to be a lack of access to work opportunities. Political factors have placed significant restrictions on Syrian men's traditional role as breadwinners for their families. Policies issued by the Lebanese government in 2015 tightened regulations over Syrian refugees, significantly restricting their mobility and their access to work opportunities. While Syrian nationals are allowed work permits in restricted labor markets (agriculture, construction, and cleaning services), in practice, work in the informal sector is restricted for men due to fear of crossing checkpoints, roundups, detention, and threat of deportation. Overall, 41% of Syrian refugees are without a legal residence permit. Unregistered refugees are ineligible for United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) funded services or Government public services including health care. Families survive by relying on UNHCR funds, but the eligibility criteria are continuously reassessed which generates ongoing anxiety. They also rely on cash grants from the Lebanese cash consortium, World Food Programme (WFP) food vouchers, and in some cases, the labor of family members including women and children in the informal sector.

2.1.2 Early Marriage

As a protective strategy, Syrian refugees have resorted to early marriage of their daughters in order to help protect them from sexual harassment and risk of sexual abuse or to help with financial security (Hassan et al., 2015; Yasmine & Moughalian, 2016). Although this practice was common in Syria before, early marriage is believed to be happening at higher rates due to the belief that marriage offers increased protection (Cherri, Rodriguez-Llanes, & Guha-Sapir, 2017). Child marriage in Syria would also typically happen within communities where families knew each other and protective social connections were well established. In displacement, families are marrying young girls to men with whom there is no pre-established connection, who may have a significant age gap, or who have multiple wives, increasing the risk of DV and IPV (Boswall & Akash, 2015; Cherri et al., 2017; Mourtada, Schlecht, & DeJong, 2017; Wells, Steel, Hassan, & Lawsin, 2016; Yasmine & Moughalian, 2016). Early marriage has other negative consequences for young girls. While lack of educational opportunities can be a contributing factor to early marriage (Cherri et al., 2017), early marriage also can limit continuing education for girls. Syrian women in Lebanon reported that they thought the acceptable age for a woman to get married was 18 so that she would be able to at least complete primary education and, in the past in Syria, she would be able to complete higher education while she was married. However, in the current situation, girls who are being married early are not continuing their education (Charles & Denman, 2013), limiting their opportunities to gain skills outside of the home. Mourtada et al. (2017) reported that there were differing perceptions on the acceptable age for a young woman to be married in displacement. Most young women thought that, even in displacement, the earliest a woman should be married is 20 years old. Mothers thought that this should be lower in displacement (around 16–17 years old) and fathers thought that an acceptable age was 15 years, as long as the potential husband was deemed acceptable. Early marriage can also have negative health outcomes. Becoming pregnant at an early age, where a girls' pelvic region is too small, can lead to higher rates of both infant and maternal mortality. Girls may also not have received education around reproductive and sexual health, leading to increased prevalence of reproductive health issues among young Syrian females (Mourtada et al., 2017). Syrian families in Lebanon have reported that early marriage practices are a way to ensure that their daughter is protected by a man from sexual harassment and financial burdens (Anani, 2013).

A recent study completed by Bartels et al. (2018) tried to gain a deeper understanding of what was contributing to early marriage among Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Their methodology included asking participants to tell an anonymous story about Syrian girls living in Lebanon. Although they were not asked to share stories specifically about early marriage, many of the stories shared by participants contained elements pertaining to early marriage. After participants provided the story, they would then be asked to interpret the story using an app on a tablet. The study highlighted some differences between male and female perspectives on girls'

protection as well as reasons that people resort to early marriage. It was found that while males in the community felt that females were under-protected, many females felt that they were overprotected. This male perspective of girls being under-protected is important to note as they are traditionally the head of the household and typically have the final say on family decisions. This means that even if females feel that they are overprotected, the male perspective will most likely be a major factor in decisions on early marriage or female mobility. Many females interpreted their early marriage stories to be issues of access to education, lack of security, and lack of financial resources, as well as societal expectations. Men interpreted their early marriage stories to mainly be about physical and financial protection. While this study does not provide any new information of the contributing factors to early marriage among Syrian refugees in Lebanon, it does provide an interesting insight into perception differences between genders on early marriage reasons and female protection levels, and how increased early marriage prevalence could be driven by male perspectives on women being under-protected both physically and financially.

In Lebanon, UNFPA (2017) found that child marriage rates of Syrian refugees are four times higher than among Syrians before the crisis. At a microlevel, Schlecht (2016) reported young girls sought out marriage to meet their basic needs as they knew their parents could not provide for them, while Syrian parents sought marriage for their young daughters to protect their honor due to the uncertainty of their future. At a macrolevel, displacement-related security issues, deteriorating economic conditions, and disrupted education for adolescent girls were attributed to be drivers of a reduced age of marriage among Syrian refugees in Lebanon (Mourtada et al., 2017).

2.1.3 Child Labor

According to the UNICEF Baseline Survey, (2016), approximately half of nearly half a million school-aged Syrian children in Lebanon are out of school and growing up without access to education. Syrian "out of school" children accounted for 35%, 40%, 45%, and 44% of Syrian 8-, 9-, 10- and 11-year-old children, respectively. Of children aged 12 and 13 years, 52% and 64% were out of school. This proportion increased further for older adolescents. In total, 75%, 83%, and 93% of 15-, 16-, and 17-year-olds were out of school, respectively. This highlights a particular vulnerability facing adolescents. Child labor is a major barrier to school enrollment and attendance as many families rely on their children to work instead of attending school (Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, 2017–2120; Human Rights Watch, 2016). In cases where the father cannot find work, has a disability, or is absent, adolescent males in the family may become the sole bread winner, prioritizing their responsibility of generating income over their education (DeJong et al., 2017). Another reported barrier to education for male refugees is fear of bullying and physical or sexual abuse from peers in attending school (Hassan et al., 2015). Al Ganideh and Good (2015) examined the treatment of Syrian refugee children

involved in child labor in Jordan compared to Jordanian child laborers. Unstable family structures contributed to children working longer hours and the likelihood of experiencing physical abuse. While Syrian refugee children had better prior schooling than their Jordanian counterparts, they were paid much less indicating greater vulnerability to exploitative practices.

2.2 The Intervention: "Engaging Men to Promote Resilient Communities"

In 2013, the implementing organization carried out an assessment of the protection concerns and needs of Syrian refugees in Akkar District, Lebanon (Concern Worldwide, 2013). It found that women and girls reported an increased incidence of intimate partner violence and early marriage since arriving in Lebanon. It also noted high school drop-out rates of Syrian children due to costs and security concerns and the use of child labor for the economic support of families. Gender-based violence referral pathways and case-management structures had been established for all areas in Lebanon hosting refugees, yet reporting of gender-based violence cases was low, because it was a culturally sensitive topic. The assessment identified a gap in agencies working with men in protection programming. This led to the development of a community-based protection program entitled "Engaging men to promote resilience communities," with the specific objective of addressing the protection needs of conflict-affected Syrian refugee and vulnerable Lebanese children, youth, and women in Akkar. A program handbook entitled "Facilitator's Handbook: Engaging Men to Promote Resilient Communities" (Concern Worldwide & Irish Aid, 2013) was developed on the basis of a number of resources, including "Change-Maker Training Facilitator Handbook" developed by Men's Resources International; Promundo's "Programme H"; Save the Children's "Child Protection Sessions for Parents and Caregivers"; and the Centre for Interfaith Action on Global Poverty's "The Faith Effect." The "Engaging Men" program utilized a 12-week training course structure with four core objectives: promoting peaceful interactions with others, reducing violence and gender-based violence, enhancing child protection and caregiving, and increasing community safety and harmony through a community project. In a 1-year period of September 2015–September 2016, participants were 1469 Syrian and Lebanese men (70% Syrian; 30% Lebanese) across 62 groups. An examination of group composition showed that groups were predominantly Syrian or Lebanese. They undertook a 12-week course aimed at understanding issues of gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection by engaging men to promote safety in their communities and increasing their capacity to use prosocial coping and to mitigate conflicts peacefully. Topics covered included understanding gender roles and relations, the cycle of violence, non-violent communication, men as caregivers, child development, education on child labor, and early marriage. The program hypothesized that men who have been trained on these topics will be less likely to engage in gender-based violence and other forms of violence and women

and children were conceptualized as the primary beneficiaries. In addition, each men's group was expected to identify, design, and implement a community project that increased the protective capacity of the community, particularly for those who were vulnerable. Two sessions focused on child-specific topics. Session ten examined the impact of caregiving and explored the stages of child development and how adult nurturing can reduce stress and promote development of children. Session eleven addressed protecting children with the aim of promoting understanding of the risks of child labor and early marriage (see Concern Worldwide & Irish Aid, 2013 for further details).

2.3 Method

Focus group discussions were conducted with ten "Engaging Men" groups selected randomly from a total of 56 groups to gather a range of views and experiences of the impact of the intervention. In total 130 men participated in the focus group discussions, of whom 80% were Syrian refugees, and 20% were Lebanese community members. Groups were predominantly composed of either Syrian or Lebanese participants. All participants had completed the 12-week "Engaging Men" training program within the previous year. A semi-structured focus group discussion schedule explored men's motivation to join the group, a free listing of the problems they faced, their experience of participation in the group, changes in coping strategies, gender-equitable attitudes and attitudes with respect to gender-based violence, attitudes to early marriage, and child labor and changes in inter-community relations. Focus group discussions were conducted in Arabic by two of the authors (Hijazi and Osman) who were female, while a third author (Veale) worked with female independent translators.

Five focus group discussions were carried out with 28 wives of Syrian refugee men participants, and two separate focus group discussions with 11 adolescent sons and 6 adolescent daughters of male participants aged 13–17. These focus groups explored questions about who is the main breadwinner in the house; main difficulties; observed impact being a member of the group had on male participants, on prosocial coping, on roles or relationships within the home, and on community relationships; and if items bought for the household instead of implementation of a community project made a difference in the life of the family.

In addition, ten family visits were conducted and the researchers met with former male participants and their wives separately, but the questions were similar to those above. There was no stipend or reward provided for participation in the focus group discussions. Peer researchers (two male and two female) linked to the "Engaging Men" intervention were selected through a recruitment and interview process. Selection criteria were that the men had participated in the program during the evaluation and the women were wives of other men who had participated in the program. They also had to be motivated, relatively educated, able to read and write in Arabic, and good communicators. They conducted ten interviews with former

participant Syrian refugee and Lebanese men. Peer research triangulates "outsider" knowledge gained by researchers with "insider" knowledge gathered by those who have relationships of trust, connectedness, and empathy with study participants (Ryan, Kofman, & Aaron, 2011). All participants completed a detailed informed consent sheet in Arabic which outlined issues of confidentiality, the right to withdraw, to refuse to answer particular questions, and to cease participation at any time. For children aged 13–17 years, written consent was obtained from parents and written assent from children. Boys and girls were interviewed separately. If participants experienced any distress, the protocol stipulated they would be referred for psychosocial support using the organization's existing referral structures. One man indicated that the focus group discussion caused him considerable distress as it reminded him of events that happened in Syria. During the discussion, proper ethical procedures were followed and later followed up with the organization's protection team. Ethical approval was granted by the Ethics Committee, School of Applied Psychology, University College Cork. All data was taped and transcribed. Qualitative data were read and reread to identify if and how the "Engaging Men" intervention achieved the expected outcomes listed above. This was a form of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), an inductive approach where the themes identified emerged from the data. The following section presents the key findings related to family relations and protection issues affecting children.

2.4 Key Findings

2.4.1 Family Atmosphere and Emotional Regulation

Participation in the "Engaging Men" programs was identified as an important source of psychosocial support for all participants and in particular for Syrian refugee men. Engagement in the group appeared to reduce men's irritability in two ways: (i) by providing a space with other men for emotional release; and (ii) through a very explicit focus by the group facilitators on teaching men to reduce irritable behavior and engage in calmer communication. One man noted:

> It has been difficult dealing with the teenagers. My son was changing physiologically as he hit puberty and he was becoming more difficult to deal with. I used to yell at him a lot and I could see him sinking into a depression. The training helped me to treat my son better, and understand the difficulty of our situation from my family's perspective. We live in a one room house; this is where we sleep, eat and sit. No one has privacy. This is difficult for our teenagers as well as it is difficult for us.

An adolescent boy provided the following anecdote of his father:

> My father used to scream at my mom and not explain what's the matter with him, but after the sessions he became more flexible and he explains to us. For example, he says to my mom, my darling I have a headache, please can you bring to me some Panadol.

Similarly, the daughter of one of the men noted that one visible improvement in men's treatment of their wives is through taking them to an evening social visit or to visit their families. Participation in the groups led to improved patterns of interaction communication and increased openness, empathy, and perspective taking; children said some men have learned to generally become more "flexible," open-minded, open to discussion, and more accepting of others' ideas. However, given the ongoing daily stressors, some wives questioned how sustainable the observed changes could be expected to be.

2.4.2 Men as Fathers and the Impact on Their Children

The main positive outcome that was spontaneously and nearly unanimously reported across groups and interviews with men, women, and children was men's improved engagement with their children. This raises a hypothesis that attitudes towards child rearing and interactions with children may be more malleable than attitudes towards gender and interactions with wives.

2.4.3 Reduction in Yelling at and Beating Children

Various men, women, and children reported that the men used to be much more irritable with their children (e.g., frequently yelling) prior to the groups and that their interactions with them have become much calmer. One woman noted that prior to the groups, her children would ask "why is dad always irritable?" Many men reported learning to reduce their use of harsher methods (e.g., beating) to discipline children, particularly since they learned that this could have adverse impact on the children psychologically and developmentally. Some women noted that their husbands started discouraging them from beating their children as well. One man, for example, stated that he learned to instead withhold a toy if a child is not studying. Peer researchers noted that, for most respondents, the area where participants changed most was in their treatment of children and this seemed to be sustained a year after the training. As noted by one male participant to a peer researcher:

> We talk to them more, consult them more often. We have developed new relationships with our children because we feel they need it more. These are children who have lived the crisis in their formative years. Their futures have been completely upended. If we do not develop relationships with them - if they do not learn to trust our opinions, they will be completely lost.

A wife of one of the participants reported to a peer researcher:

> I used to argue with my husband all the time about how to dress our daughter. He used to insist that she wear clothes that cover her body despite the fact that she is only six. After the sessions, he changed and now allows her to wear what she likes.

The following was noted by another woman in discussion with a peer researcher:

> Before [the training], my husband was often verbally abusive to me and he would hit our children. After the [12] sessions, his treatment of the children improved and to some degree, he was less violent. But this did not last very long. After a while, he went back to the way he used to be.

2.4.4 Increased Dialogue and Positive Time Spent with Children

One outcome noted by men was that they tried to calmly dialogue with their children about something they did wrong rather than yelling at them. Some adolescents reported that their fathers now listened and talked with them more and explained their financial situation in a way they could understand. A number of fathers reported that they spent more time with their children and played with them more often. One male adolescent shared that his "…father used to spend all night outside the house, but that after the sessions he now spends an hour or two and returns to home to spend the rest of the time with the family." This was consistent with some women's reports who praised their husband's increased patience and openness with their children. One man noted that he used to "go into the house as the head of the family" but now has softened his interactions with the children. Similarly, a woman noted that after her husband started dialoguing with their children and asking their opinion on things, she feels that her children have developed stronger characters and can assert themselves to him by saying "no". She added that the change in their father's demeanor permitted them "to open up to the world, and to think of what they want to do when they grow up." A number of fathers and children described the change in interactions, noting that the fathers have been seeking to "befriend" their children rather than act as an authoritarian father, particularly in the case of adolescents. Another girl noted that her father started taking them more on outings and walks.

It also appeared that some men took great pride in increasingly assuming the role of a transmitter of knowledge with their children. Several men noted that the groups heightened their awareness of the importance of setting up good role models for children and that they teach their children about what they learned in the groups. Examples of this type of role modelling include becoming more aware of not lying in front of children, discouraging violence by not buying children pellet guns, and not shaming boys for crying, as explained by this father:

> …one tells boys, don't cry, it's a shame, but now, one understands that a man can cry because crying is an internal feeling, and a man may want to go out into the wilderness alone to cry, over war, need, and deprivation.

A daughter also gave an example of how her father told her older brother, who was about to beat her younger brother over smoking, to not beat him, but to guide him gently instead. Another man shared how he valued learning that mistreatment of children, including deprivation of kindness and affection, has long-term adverse effects. Hence, the participants overall appeared to benefit from the information they received about child development.

2.4.5 Child Marriage

Although reduction in child marriage was not consistently *spontaneously* reported as a benefit from the intervention, when asked, many participants noted that the facilitators educated them about the adverse effects of child marriage and expressed an understanding of a number of reasons of why it might be problematic. These included incomplete cognitive development of the girl despite physical maturation, possibility of adverse health outcomes, increased risk of marital problems, divorce and the girl returning to her family, inability of such a young girl to tolerate the poverty of her husband, how marriage may prevent a girl from education, and the inability of a "child to raise a child."

One participant framed his increased awareness about the problem of child marriage through the lens of religious guidance. In that participant's focus group, participants also noted that:

> We agreed that the girl has to be above 18, and there should be no more than six years' difference between them, and that there needs to be compatibility in the education level between the girl and her husband. We learned that marriage could end up being unjust to the girl, it might not work out, and then she'd return to her family.

Another participant noted, for example, that he has two daughters of marriage age but that he was not going to marry them until they continued their education, no matter the financial difficulty. Another participant described how a fellow group member had a 13-year-old girl he wanted to marry but that he gradually listened to others' arguments about how his child might want to play and doesn't yet have the capacity to take care of children.

Some participants noted that there has been increased general awareness about child marriage, including in the media, and it has become a familiar and discussed concern. Most participants seemed to agree that young age of marriage is problematic. However, it was difficult to ascertain whether the endorsement of unfavorable attitudes towards child marriage among participants was representative. For example, one man noted that in his group, 3–4 men continued to believe in child marriage and planned on going ahead with it. It was similarly quite difficult to ascertain if these opinions actually trickled down to shape behavior. A peer researcher recounted the story of one participant who had a young daughter and wanted to arrange her marriage. The facilitator discussed this with him, convincing him against it, but after the training, the man ended up arranging her marriage anyhow.

Upon probing for examples of behavior, one man shared that the group participants advised their relatives to not marry their daughters young, and another woman gave an example of a young female relative whose uncles declined a suitor for her because she was very young.

An issue that was raised in only one setting and told to a peer researcher was the issue of how to marry girls who may already have had a sexual relationship. This story involved a wife of a participant talking about her 15-year-old daughter who had a suitor. Her husband refused to allow the marriage because he felt it was wrong "in all circumstances". But his wife worried for her daughter and tried to convince him

to allow them to marry, reporting she thinks "they may already have a relationship and this would be the only way to save her." The vulnerability of adolescent girls to sexual harassment was an important concern for men, but vulnerability to transactional/survival sex or rape did not arise as discussion topics.

It is worth noting that participants differed in their views toward early marriage possibly due to their cultural background, rural vs. urban location, whether early marriage has always been the local custom or was never accepted, or whether this became an issue only after the Syrian crisis. Some participants noted that people might marry their daughters early to "relieve themselves from their expenses" or "lift her responsibility off them." According to peer researchers, child marriage was raised by men as a protection response rather than as only a reaction to economic circumstances. A peer researcher explained:

> It is not about difficult economic circumstances. What fathers are worried about is that their daughters will be harassed or worse by men. In Lebanon, they are very limited in terms of what they can do to restore their honor. If they marry her off, the burden of this honor is transferred/or shared with the husband.

This was discussed in a number of focus group discussions. Another man noted that:

> They might not find a solution but to marry their children, because they would fear for their daughter that she is getting older, and her body is becoming more visible, and/or if she left school, there is no other solution but to marry her.

Peer researchers explained that daughters are married off to other poor Syrians who may not be well known to the family, and often, this new family has to depend on the daughter's biological family for support, especially when there are marital problems.

2.4.6 Child Labor

The issue of child labor was never brought up spontaneously in any groups or interviews and the researcher had to ask about it directly. Participants talked about the necessity of employing children for the livelihood of families:

> We ourselves need to work, also our kids need to work. There is a woman from the group found herself obliged to work in order to get medicine for her children. Another woman, her 10-year-old child is working for the same reason.

> Everything has changed. Whoever finds work (including children), they have to go for it; we wouldn't do this (to our children) if we didn't need this.

> In some cases it was easier for children compared to their fathers to find low level jobs, e.g., sweeping the floors at a barber shop.

Engaging men participants were also asked about child labor, and several stated that they knew or learned about adverse effects of child labor, including depriving children of the opportunity to enjoy their childhood, children being out of school,

and children becoming involved in street life and being exposed to work conditions that have adverse health effects. However simultaneously many groups noted that families had to send their children to work anyway. For example, one participant noted that:

> [the facilitator] brainstormed pros and cons of children working, if I put the child for example in a workshop, if he were to lift heavy things, he'd have disc problems, or if he were to become a painter, he would become sick when he's young, he can be molested, so I wouldn't want a child to work in a car workshop, because he'd become like a street kid, he would smoke, but I could take him to work with a tailor, because it's a cleaner opportunity, the store is visible to the public, and more contained.

In a focus group taking place in a rural location, participants noted that child labor is minimal, because everyone is really poor and no one owns a craft or a business where children could work. Another participant noted that civil society and organizations should have a bigger role to play in sponsoring families with no breadwinner, particularly those with widowed women, so that children would not have to work. While participants were educated on the risks of child labor, the income earned by children was often important to the family economy and so education did not lead to a change in family practice. Some men reported that they were ashamed to see their child working, while they themselves were unable to work.

2.5 Discussion

This analysis has explored an important aspect of children's social ecology in times of conflict, that is, the role of men as fathers and as a resource for children and their family through the examination of an "Engaging Men" intervention. In terms of Heise's (1998) ecological model addressing gender-based violence, the findings showed how, through guided discussion on masculinity and gender roles, Syrian and Lebanese men talked about their own personal history and Syrian men, in particular, talked about their changed circumstances as refugee men and fathers. Through dialogue, men took a step back from their responses of anger and frustration, became more attuned and reflective on their own needs and those of their wives and children, and were better able to regulate their emotions. This facilitated changes in family relationships through a reduction of irritable behavior and calmer communication in the home. There was a reported reduction in yelling at and beating children, increased dialogue and positive time spent with children, and a change from perceiving the father figure as authoritarian to seeing them as a guide and transmitter of knowledge. At the level of the exosystem of formal and informal social structures that shape people's lives, marriage practices are one such informal structure. Findings support those of other research on child marriage among Syrian refugees that men view it as a financial and physical protection strategy in insecure displacement contexts (Bartels et al., 2017; Cherri et al., 2017). The dialoguing method brought up men's concerns that girls are out of school and as fathers, due to their low status as refugees in a host society, they are limited in what they can do to

protect their daughters from harassment. However many participants noted being more aware of the adverse effects of child marriage such as incomplete cognitive development of the girl despite physical maturation, possibility of adverse health outcomes, girls dropping out of school, increased risk of marital problems, divorce and the girl returning to her family, inability of such a young girl to tolerate the poverty of her husband, and the inability of a "child to raise a child." These effects extend beyond financial and physical protection concerns to more child-centered concerns. Labor practices are another part of the exosystem. Structural inequalities in the labor market and security concerns excluded male refugee parents to a significant extent from engagement in livelihood opportunities. On the basis of self-report through focus group discussions, men reported little attitudinal change with respect to child labor.

In Heise's (1998) model, the macrosystem level refers to social and cultural norms. Many interventions which seek to engage men to address gender-based violence use community mobilization approaches through public theatre and media (Abramsky et al., 2014), but this was not a feature of this intervention. One interesting finding was that dialogue about child marriage in men's groups was supported by a broader public discourse in the media, suggesting that interventions that address a topic from different starting points may have a multiplier effect. Discourse in the public space seemed to facilitate more critical reflection in the private space of the men's groups and some attitudinal change. Typically, a medium-to-large change in intention results in only a small-to-medium change in behavior (Webb & Sheeran, 2006), and it is less clear if the intervention produced behavioral change in the context of ongoing insecurity for Syrian families.

A limitation of the intervention was that it did not engage with the issue that was the greatest source of frustration for Syrian refugee men, that of exclusion from livelihood opportunities which impacted their capacity to provide economically for their family. A recommendation was to developed integrated programming that could create linkages to livelihood programming or employment programs. The findings raised a question about the sustainability of reported changes in emotional regulation, family relations, and attitudes around early marriage if there is no change in the significant external stressors that impact on men's daily lives. As noted in the introduction, men may conceptualize problems differently to women and girls. A recommendation is that women and girls are included as stakeholders in planning and program implementation and that program aims are accountable to them.

This chapter draws attention to the intersection between violence against women and violence against children including the impact of yelling and beating in the home and structural violence against boys in the form of child labor. This is an under-considered relationship in many "Engaging Men" programs. A limitation of the reported intervention was that the program was overambitious and lacked a clear theory of change and causal pathways to achieving and measuring change. It sought to provide psychosocial support to men, including stress management and coping, promote gender-equitable attitudinal change, and address gender-based violence, child development, and protection. However, the findings point to the

value of focusing more on the intersection between gender-based programing that considers women and girls and to include a focus on violence against children as a social category more broadly. These topics were of interest to men and addressed a priority of theirs in their role as fathers. This intersection should be considered in the design of larger, multilevel, multi-stranded, systemic strategies over an extended period of time.

A further limitation of the intervention was that of blurred boundaries between primary prevention and engaging with perpetrators to reduce gender-based violence, with the intervention lacking a mechanism for addressing perpetrator accountability including violence against children in the form of beatings. The research raised the importance of clearly defining the focus, aims, and scope of interventions such as this.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed how programs which seek to engage men can also support men in their role as fathers. The analysis found that, through dialogue, a safe emotional space was created for men to meet collectively to talk about their problems, to become more attuned and reflective about their relationships with their wives and children, and to engage in better emotional regulation. Discussions on gender created a framework for talking about the stresses of their daily life, the changed gender roles and child roles in their families as a result of their displacement to Lebanon, and their feelings and reactions to these changes with the help of skilled and sensitive facilitators. The key impact, psychosocial support, emerged from the process of talking about gender and improved the quality of life of women and children through improved family relationships. It offered an example of a space in which the theories and methodologies of peace psychology such as dialogue (Tint, 2017), and the future use of emancipatory and participatory methodologies (Seedat, Suffla, & Christie, 2017) to engage women and girls as well as men as stakeholders, may have a particular contribution to make to enhance the capacity of refugee men in their role as fathers.

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