

## ***Soul Buddyz 3***

### ***Audience Research***

#### **Girls' and boys' perceptions of masculinity**



**Soul  
Buddyz** ours  
tomorrow is

***Research conducted for Soul Buddyz by***



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## **Recommendations for *Soul Buddyz 3***

- *Soul Buddyz 3* could make a contribution to changing the perceived social norms around masculinity by presenting alternative role models and by opening up for discussion the issue of the social determinants of masculinity.
- *Soul Buddyz 3* needs to model positive masculine behaviour at two levels. We need to see boys and men who display positive characteristics.
- These boys and men should be interacting with reality in that they live in the kind of difficult community contexts that children are describing in this report. Boys need to be under the same pressures as boys and girls describe in the research.
- Modelling friendship between boys that is positive and supportive would also be important.
- Showing boys standing up to negative peer pressure with the support of their friends is important too.
- The issue of congruent behaviour in all situations needs to be explored. The series should show boys being the same person in the peer group and at home, for example.
- Fathers who are involved in their son's lives would be another important role to model. It is particularly important that these fathers are seen to be openly discussing issues with their children.

# 1. Introduction

## Introduction to *Soul Buddyz*

*Soul Buddyz* is a multi media edutainment vehicle created for 8 to 12 year olds. It consists of a television drama, radio drama and a book for use in the Grade 7 Lifeskills classroom. The first television drama series was aired on SABC 1 and the book was distributed around South Africa during 2001. The second series was aired on television in 2002 and the book distributed in 2003.

Based on the success of *Soul Buddyz* and *Soul Buddyz 2* Soul City is presently developing *Soul Buddyz 3*. *Soul Buddyz 3* will deal with the following issues:

- Financial management
- Gender and masculinity
- How schools are dealing with children affected by HIV/AIDS
- Nutrition

This report covers the gender and masculinity theme.

## The Soul City research and development process

Over the years Soul City has developed a particular approach to the creation of a mass media vehicle such as *Soul Buddyz*. This includes an extensive consultation and research process that ensures that all stakeholders and target groups have input into the materials. The research reported on here is part of the target audience research for *Soul Buddyz 3*.

This research, along with a literature review and input from stakeholders, will be discussed at a message design workshop. The messages will inform the script writing process. Once the scripts have been written they will be tested with the target audience and only then finalised.

# 2. Research approach

## Child participation

Children participate throughout the creation of the *Soul Buddyz* series. This strong commitment to child participation is motivated by a number of factors.

Firstly, the right of children to participate in issues that will affect them is enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), to which South Africa is a signatory.

*States parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child...* (Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child)

Clearly, within the context of the CRC children have a right to participate in the creation of media such as *Soul Buddyz*. It is not enough, however, to say that children have a right to participate. It is also important to understand why they should participate.

Children's participatory rights are legitimated in a number of different ways. The most common arguments are summed up in the following three points (adapted from Kj rholt and Qvortrup, 2000).

1) The first argument for children's participation suggests that participation is in the best interests of children. It contributes to a positive development of individual identity, competence and a sense of responsibility.



2) The second argument for children's participation emphasises the way in which children's social participation constitutes an important area for social democratisation insofar as it represents the extension of some democratic rights to a disenfranchised group.

3) The third argument is that children's participation in social processes gives us access to essential information that we could get from no other source, thereby making society a better place for all of us. The following quote sums up this argument:

*Developing better methods of working with children and enabling their participation is beneficial not only to children. By including some previously invisible groups we are making our research, our programmes and our communities [and our media] more inclusive, more functional and effective. Omitting a large sector of society means that everyone loses and fails to see the bigger picture. If we are unaware of the problems and issues that concern children and young people we cannot hope to devise strategies or solutions [or media] that will address their concerns, and will constantly be struggling to make sense of the world without some of the vital information we need. (Ivan-Smith and Johnson, 1998, p299)*

This last argument is perhaps the most important in the context of the creation of *Soul Buddyz*. If we want a media vehicle that educates while it entertains, it must take into account the real problems and issues that concern young people. We can only do this if we allow them to participate in the making of the media at an early stage in the process.

Boyden and Ennew (1997) point out that if children's participation is to be more than token it needs to be devised in such a way as to take particular ethical issues into account and to make sure the activities are suited to the ages and stages of development of the children and youth. Both these issues were taken into account in this work.

### **Ethics**

An adapted form of the ethical guideline for research work with children reproduced in Boyden and Ennew's (1997) publication on research with children (see Appendix 1) was applied in this work.

In addition another key ethical principle was applied in this research.

*It is not ethical to expose a child already vulnerable to any additional risk through an investigation that carries no benefit for the child. Interviews about painful subjects should be performed with the principle of 'least harm' (Boyden and Ennew, 1997, p43).*



Researchers who ran the focus group discussions were aware that some of the topics we were exploring could touch on sensitive and difficult issues for many children. The principle of 'minimising harm' was applied throughout.

Practically this meant that researchers made it possible for children to withdraw at any stage, were sensitive about issues which might have caused shame or embarrassment, did not challenge the child about answers given, and did not ask questions which could have been upsetting. They also created an environment in

which children could tell just as much of their story as they felt safe to tell. They did not probe about the details of a painful event, nor ask about a child's feelings. What the child offered was accepted, even if not all the details were present. Note that this applies only to information that was potentially painful. In other situations the researchers used secondary questions to probe for details.

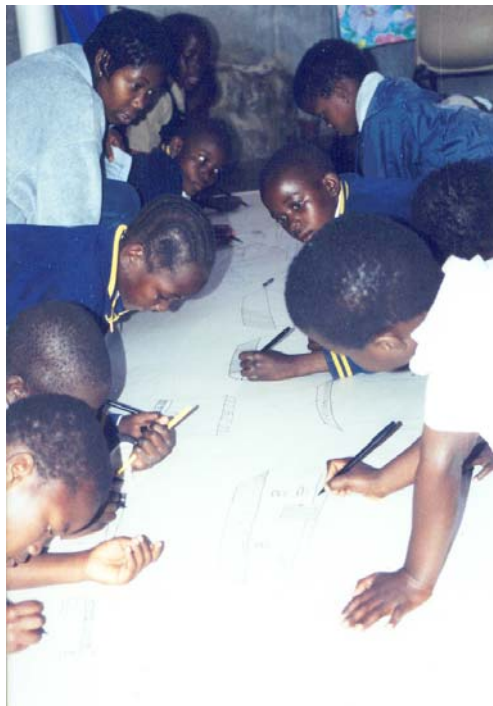
In addition, ensuring complete confidentiality of data was another way in which we sought to minimise harm. Particular schools are not named in the research report and descriptors are used to identify quotes.

***Appropriate activities***

To make sure the research was truly participatory group activities were devised in such a way that

*...children's ideas and perceptions could be expressed in their own terms without being blocked or misrepresented by the ways adults think and talk.*  
(Boyden and Ennew, 1997, p45).

This meant that we used techniques that were less dependant on words, for example mapping and drawing.



We also attempted to reduce the power relationships between children and adults in the research process by playing games with children before we began the work and by working in a space where children felt comfortable.





### Research aims

The audience research on gender and masculinity aimed to find out boys and girls perceptions about:

- Masculinity
- Masculine relationships
- How men cope with problems
- How boys become men in their community
- Male role models in their community
- What makes men powerful

It is important to note that throughout we looked at these issues from the point of view of the children themselves.

### Research groups and activities

The research consisted of a series of participatory discussion groups held with randomly selected children aged between 8 and 12 from a diverse range of environments in 6 provinces around South Africa.

The following table outlines the range of groups who participated in the research around gender and masculinity.

Province	Age group/gender	Area	Language
Gauteng	8-10 boys	Thokoza, township	Sesotho/Setswana
Gauteng	11-14 girls	Blairgowrie, suburban area in Johannesburg	English

Gauteng	11-14 boys	Lenasia South, Indian area	English
Gauteng	11-14 girls	Sebokeng, township outside Vereeniging	Sesotho/Setswana
W Cape	11-14 boys	Factreton, Cape Town, an area classified 'coloured' under apartheid	Afrikaans
W Cape	8-10 girls	Woodville, Coloured area	Afrikaans
W Cape	11-14 boys	Eisenberg, Stellenbosch, farming area	Afrikaans
Limpopo	11-14 boys	Polokwane, suburban	English
KwaZulu-Natal	11-14 boys	Chatsworth, Durban, Indian area	English/Zulu
KwaZulu-Natal	11-14 girls	Clermont, township area, Pinetown	Zulu
KwaZulu-Natal	11-14 boys	Clermont, township area, Pinetown	Zulu
Northern Cape	8-10 boys	Barkley West, small rural town	Afrikaans
Eastern Cape	11-14 boys	Nompompolelo, shack area outside East London	Xhosa
Eastern Cape	11-14 girls	Nompompolelo, shack area outside East London	Xhosa
Eastern Cape	8-10 boys	Traditional rural area	Xhosa
Limpopo	8-10 girls	Ga Maja Traditional rural area	SePedi

### Data analysis

Group discussion took place in the children's home language. All the discussion during the participatory workshops was taped, translated and transcribed. These transcripts formed the data that were then analysed. The transcripts were analysed using a standard qualitative data analysis tool, thematic analysis.

### 3. Findings from participatory groups

The findings from the girls' and boys' groups were analysed and are presented separately. Findings from the different age groups are presented together, and where there were differences these are highlighted.

#### **Theme 1: How do boys and girls define being a boy**

##### **Girls**

In all groups girls defined boys in terms of:

- their physical characteristics
- the activities they did
- their behaviour (which was often negative behaviour).

- *He has a thick voice.*
- *He grows a beard.*
- *His hair grows short. (township)*
  
- *They have an Adam's Apple.*
- *When their voice breaks.*
- *They have moustaches. (suburban)*

Girls were coy about describing boys' biological differences from girls.

*Researcher: What makes this boy a boy?*

*Laughter*

*- Naughty, naughty!!!*

*Laughter*

*Researcher: What are you whispering – oh, they have got a penis, right?*

*Laughter. (suburban)*

Girls described boys doing different activities and having different interests from girls.

- *The chores they do are different.*
- *Girls work mostly in the house.*
- *Then in the farms and rural areas boys herd cattle, girls do not.*
- *Boys work in the garden, girls clean and cook in the house. (township)*
  
- *He plays with cars.*
- *He plays soccer.*
- *They do the garden.*
- *They work less than girls (girls, township)*
  
- *How they dress.*
- *Baggy stuff.*
- *They don't wear nail polish.*

- *They don't wear make up.*
- *They don't wear stockings.*
- *No, they are not interested in that.*
- *They are interested in different things.*
- *Like skateboarding, play station. (suburban)*

Girls also talked about how boys use their environment differently, that they can go out more and do more outdoor things.

- *Boys do lots more activities than girls. They can go around the place but we have to go home.*
- Researcher: Why is that?*
- *Because it is not safe for us to go around. Our mothers tell us to come home after school. We play in the garden. The boys go to the streets and around the place.*
  - *Boys don't go to the library most of the time*
  - *Most of boys don't like school*
  - *In their spare time they think about girls. They don't do their homework. (township)*

All of the groups said what defined boys was some negative behaviour.

- *They tease/bully each other. They treat each other badly.*
  - *They fight.*
  - *They don't care for education.*
  - *They do not wear like girls.*
  - *Some boys do not care for themselves. They do not care how they look, even their bodies.*
  - *The way they talk to people (referring to their slang). (township).*
- 
- *He is smoking.*
  - *He goes after girls.*
  - *What makes him is the stealing he does.*
  - *He talks about girls. (township)*

In the groups run with children in the Western Cape 'coloured' areas boys were defined by girls by negative behaviour alone. They mentioned very few positive activities or behaviour.

- *They act tough in the street.*
  - *They act like "the man" in the streets.*
  - *They use bad language in the streets.*
- Researcher: What makes them boys when they are with other boys?*
- *They steal and break in places.*
  - *They smoke.*
  - *They drink.*
  - *They sit on the pavements and when they are drunk they swear at the people.*

- *They fight.*
- *What do boys do to make them boys when they are with girls?*
- *They take the girls to wrong places. (rural coloured area)*
  
- *He has got a big attitude.*
- *If a boy wants to do something and a girl doesn't want to, they start arguing and the boy forces the girl to play the game that he wants.*
- *Like if they are watching TV, if a boy likes soccer and a girl doesn't, he switches it on anyway. (coloured area)*

This transcript from a group of 8-10 year old girls presents a particularly negative view of boys.

*Researcher: What do boys do that makes them boys? At school?*

- *They steal.*
- *They use drugs.*
- *Do bad things that they are not supposed to do.*

*Researcher: On the streets?*

- *They kill.*
- *But some boys are not like that.*
- *Girls clean the houses when the boys are out.*
- *At school?*
- *They fight at school.*
- *They play soccer at school.*
- *They swear.*
- *They interrupt and disrupt classes.*
- *They kick the girls.*
- *They play wrestling and they are not supposed to rough other children up.*
- *They play rough, push each other, get blue eyes.*

*Researcher: When with other boys?*

- *They play soccer when they are together.*
- *Some can rob people's houses.*
- *Some will even say let's go smoke drugs and do this and that, wrong things.*
- *They put peer pressure on each other. Till you say yes, they don't leave you.*
- *Or they smoke.*

*Researcher: When they are with girls?*

- *They kiss the girls.*
- *They hug the girls, they go on with them.*
- *Put girls on the floor, sometimes they kiss them and go on with them.*
- *Hulle maak oudewaarts.*
- *They pull down girl's pants.*
- *If the girl doesn't want to do what they do, they hit her.*
- *They scream up girl's names.*
- *Touch girl's private parts.*
- *Some people in South Africa, will take you to the bush and rape you and they kill you. Like the other girl, they first raped her and killed her*
- *Sometimes they take small children and they force them by threatening them.*

*Researcher: At home? What makes them boys?*

- *They play soccer.*
- *They get angry at the mothers and they swear, walk out the door, and slam it. (coloured area)*

Girls in suburban groups did not describe negative behaviour related to social problems but they did talk about how boys behave negatively at school.

- *Boys, like backchatting.*
- *They think it's funny to be rude.*
- *They think it's cool.*
- *Like if a boy does something rude to a teacher, "Ah how cool was that man, she didn't even shout at you" they say to each other (suburban)*
- *More boys don't do their work than girls.*
- *Not all boys are like that though. But most are. (suburban)*

### **Boys**

Boys also refer to physical characteristics when saying what makes a boy a boy.

- *His soul makes him a boy.*
- *His brain makes him a boy and his penis. (rural coloured area)*
- *The sperms.*
- *Having sex.*
- *Being in love.*
- *Boys have beard and girls don't have it.*
- *Boys have penis. (township)*
- *Parts like he doesn't have breasts, he has a penis, he has testicles.*
- *Biology. (township)*

They also refer to activities and behaviour.

- *And the behaviour.*
- *Sometimes boys are more rougher than girls.*
- *They play rugby.*
- *They play more roughly than girls.*
- *Girls just like cooking and boys just like going out and doing stuff, anything like sports, anything.*
- *Boys act tough. (suburban)*
- *Boys can make their gardens beautiful at home.*
- *They can go to work and bring money home.*
- *Boys work, come with money and buy food.*
- *Boys herd goats and cattle. (rural)*

- *They fight.*
- *They pierce their ears.*
- *They pierce their chests. Their tongues.*
- *They look for girls and they touch girl's bums.*
- *They smoke.*
- *Most of the time they just have fun.*
- *They watch blue movies. Rude movies when the parents are far away.*
- *They get bored.*
- *They play ball with the sisters.*
- *They play Sony.*
- *They visit their girlfriends.*
- *They watch TV.*
- *They do not clean the house.*
- *They wash the car or something or just laze around.*
- *Or listen to music.*
- *Oh! but girls also listen to music.*
- *Yes but they spend most of their time cooking. (Indian area)*

In the rural Eastern Cape group boys referred to initiation.

- Researcher: What do boys do that makes them boys?*  
*- It is going to initiation (ukoluka). (rural)*

In some groups boys talked about how they behaved differently from girls.

- We do not talk long on the phone we just say hello bye bye.*  
*Girls can waste a whole airtime on the phone. (Indian area)*

One boy when asked what made boys, boys talked about how the media influence boys.

- Media – on TV and movies, you see these tough guys and boys want to be like that (suburban)*

Boys also talked about the fact that they had more freedom to do things than girls.

- *They ride bikes.*
- *Some girls do.*
- *But they do not do the stunts that boys do.*
- *Girls do not ride on the streets because their mothers will not allow it. - Girls can get raped on the streets. So they are not safe there.*
- *Girls will go home crying if they fall on their bicycles whereas boys just take it in. They can play on the street but they are more likely to cry.*
- *Boys mostly get into trouble and girls hardly get into trouble.*
- *Mothers worry more about girls than boys because might get raped.*
- *Also because they do not have as much strength as the boys and they can't defend themselves.*
- *Boys have weapons to defend themselves. (Indian area)*

When describing activities and behaviour that define a boy some boy's groups described negative behaviour, in some cases almost exclusively.

*Researcher: What makes boys, boys on the street?*

- They fight and use drugs.
- They use guns and stab each other.
- They gamble and then stab each other.
- They are rude in the streets.
- They are rude and break in. They use jail language.
- They play tock-tockie (knock on doors and run away ).
- They laze around. They beg and if the people don't give them money they assault them.
- They beat up the drunk bums in the park.
- They hurt the people. (coloured area)

*Researcher: What do boys do on the street that make them boys?*

- They steal from the people and they wear and use knives.
- They are hungry.
- They smoke there and make money to buy wine. They steal money.
- They kill the people and they rape the little children. They bully and hit the children. And they scratch around for food.

*Researcher: What do boys do when they are with other boys that make them boys?*

- They form gangs and then fight against the other gangs. They smoke and they like breaking in and steal things.
- What do boys do that make them boys when they are with girls?
- If they are their boyfriends they have sex. They force the girls.
- They buy the girl off with money and earrings, or even just a packet of chips then the girls want to.
- They get the girls drunk. They molest the girls if they don't want to and if they make babies then they don't want to look after the children then they say it is not their children.

*Researcher: What do the boys do with the girls at school that make them boys?*

- They hit the girls and swear at them. If the girl does not want the boy then they hit them.
- They feel the girl up when they go into the classes and look under the girls dresses.
- They play spin the bottle when the bottle spins and stops at you then you can get a kisses or neck the girl. (rural coloured area)

This listing of negative behaviour was obvious in township groups too.

*Researcher: What do boys do that makes them boys at school?*

- Smoking.
- Drugs, pills.
- Boys don't listen in the classroom during lesson time.



- *Smoking dagga.*
- *Holding guns.*
- *Beating girls.*
- *Carrying knives.*

*Researcher: What makes them boys when they are with other boys?*

- *Robbery.*
- *Spinning. They play spinning.*
- *They play soccer.*
- *They hijack the cars.*
- *They play with the guns.*
- *They kill people.*
- *Drink alcohol.*
- *They play loodo.*

*Researcher: How do boys behave when with girls?*

- *Rape them.*
- *Force girls to kiss them on the street.*
- *Touch girl's private part.*
- *Propose them.*
- *Ask for their names.*
- *Beat girls if they don't want to fall in love with them.*
- *They also swear at them.*
- *Yes. (township)*

In the suburban groups boys descriptions of how they behave when with girls is very different. They do not describe harassment and abusive behaviour but talk about how they try to be polite.

*Like when with girls, you drink tea and talk. When you are with the boys, you smoke and walk around and beat people. (suburban)*

### **Analysis**

It is important to remember that the material here was given in response to questions about what defines a boy. Some of the answers relate to the physical differences between boys and girls and activities such as soccer and rugby. Apart from some stereotyping these types of responses are not unexpected.

What is disturbing, however, is the fact that boys and girls in all groups associate being a boy with negative behaviour. In some groups this negative behaviour included examples of violence, crime and drug abuse. It is clear from these quotes that many boys and girls are growing up in communities where they have experience of boys and young men who behave in this way. The influence of these boys as role models is obvious in the way children have used these behaviours to describe boys. There are always boys and young men who do not behave negatively but these boys are not used by children to define being a boy. It would appear that those boys involved in negative behaviour could have become, for children, the social norm.

## **Theme 2: Boys' relationships with others**

A central theme that emerged from the discussions was how boys related to each other and to their parents.

### **Girls**

Girls discussed how boys and girls have different friendship relationships. Girls perceive boys as not having the same tight friendship groups that they have. According to the girls boys have looser alliances.

- *It does not worry boys to lose friends.*
- *They have lots of friends.*
- *Girls are in groups.*
- *Boys too.*
- *Not the same type of groups.*
- *Like four people in a group if you are girls.*
- *No, boys don't hang out in small groups.*
- *Boys play soccer.*
- *They have a massive group.*
- *At school we are in small groups – they are playing soccer or in big games. (suburban)*

*Girls always play together but boys play with any boy who wants to play. (coloured area)*

- *Girls always want to see each other. Boys can wait and see each other when they do.*
- *Boys sometimes see each other on the street and do not go out of their way to meet. (coloured area)*

*They don't sleep over with their friends like we do because they're scared people will say they are gay. (coloured area)*

In some of the groups girls also talked about how boys in groups behave worse than when they are alone.

- *Their behaviour is not good because they are in the group. They will do bad things because they are a group.*
- Researcher: Like what?*
- *Because they are a group. At school they will beat up other children and take their money. (township)*

Most groups of girls felt that boys put each other under a lot of pressure to fit in with the group. This fitting in was usually related to negative behaviour.

*I think when my brother is with friends, he tries to act like a different person, he tries to fit in as he fears if he doesn't, he won't have friends. He will be part of the uncool group. They won't be well known. (suburban)*

- *They don't take work at school seriously.*
- *Some boys think that it's cool not to do work.*
- *Maybe it's peer pressure. Some of their friends say why do you have to do work? Why don't you just come and play like us?*
- *What did you do that for? They say that if one of them works hard at something.*
- *Like when people, for example, a boy finds money on the ground and hands it in, at assembly they call him up for citizen's week. They say, 'You're stupid, I would've kept that money if I was you'.*
- *If they pass and a friend fails they don't say "I got higher than you" like girls.*
- *It's like it's OK to fail the test.*
- *It does happen with girls but not as much.*
- *Like my brother when he brings friends home he's always naughty, trying to be funny in front of friends.*
- *They are trying to be funny all the time.*
- *For example with my friends it is not like if she gets better marks, I'm not saying "Ah you studied and you're not cool". But boys say that.*
- *We congratulate her. "That's very good". (suburban)*
  
- *Some boys can steal money from home so that he can buy friendship from other boys.*
- *He can steal money at home so that he can buy fancy clothes like other boys or men. And can start smoking so that they can accept him in the group.*
- *Because they always compare themselves with each other every time. Like if this friend of mine is not in the same level with me. I have to leave him. I look for those who are at same level with me.*
- *I think they don't have friends like us as girls because they don't like to see someone being better than them.*
- *Other boys don't like to see others getting better things. (township)*

Girls also talked about how boys relate to their mothers and fathers. Girls perceive mothers as giving advice and guiding boys.

- *Mothers give advice to boys so that they can grow and be real boys.*
  - *They give the advices that will help boys to quit bad things.*
  - *Some mothers beat their boys if they do something wrong. (township)*
  - *Mothers teach boys.*
  - *Tell him the wrong things that he should not do and how he should behave in the house.*
- Researcher: Things like what?*
- *Smoking and breaking into people's houses.*
  - *That he should not sleep with girls. (township)*

Mothers also appear to reinforce particular roles for boys and girls.

*- Or the mother will also tell a boy that you are not a girl, you are all boy.*

*Researcher: Do mothers tell you that?*

*- Yes they do. When they shout at you. Say your mother has bought you dresses and you do not want to wear them instead you wear trousers. She tells you that what you are a girl and not a boy. (coloured area)*

In some groups girls describe boys talking to their fathers, in one area they felt that fathers talked more to boys than to them.

*- They talk about lobola*

*- Talk about the clothes boys should wear.*

*- They ask their farther how can their father help them when they need to pay for the lobola?*

*Researcher: So you think boys talk to their fathers?*

*- Yes, they do. More than the fathers talk to us. The boys talk with the other fathers at the house too. (township)*

*Researcher: What does his father do that makes him grow to be a boy?*

*- He sits with him and talks to him about initiation. Tells him how to behave as a boy.*

*- Teaches him to care for education.*

*- Teaches him not to sleep with girls at a young age.*

*- Shows him how to do gardening and to take care of livestock.*

*- Tells him how to take care of his family when he is adult, that he should not drink, and hang around in the village when he as a wife.*

*- They tell their boys that when they eighteen it does not mean that they should smoke dagga and drink. (rural area)*

In two groups girls said boys most often talk to their mothers because their fathers are busy.

*- They would like to talk to their mothers because most of the time their fathers are too busy*

*- Sometimes a child has achieved something important. Daddy does not have time to listen and he goes to his mother (coloured area)*

*Researcher: What does his father do that makes him grow to be a boy?*

*- They give boys advice. Or try to make boys see them as role models.*

*- Some boys are scared to talk to their fathers.*

*- They want their boys to learn from them.*

*- Some of fathers don't see the need of talking to their boys.*

*- Some don't have time to talk with their sons.*

*- Others try to teach boys good things.*

*- Or teach boys how to behave in public. (township)*

One group of girls describe how fathers socialise their sons into certain kinds of behaviour.

*The father is more protective to the daughters but at some stages, other fathers allow the son to swear in front of them, smoke in front of them. They don't really teach the son what's good for them because they allow whatever they want to do – they like let them do it because they are sons. (Indian area)*

Girls also talked about how they thought boys (and maybe girls too) would like to talk more with their parents but were afraid to talk about certain topics, sex in particular.

*They want to talk about sex but they don't talk about it. (township)*

*- They (boys) want to talk about sex with their mother but they don't ask. They want to ask, but do not.*

*Researcher: Why don't they talk about these things?*

*- It is because they are scared.*

*- Their parents do not take action. They do not talk about it.*

*- Their parents are not open.*

*- Their parents judge them and they want to know where did they learn all this – why are they asking questions about it.*

*- Parents think they're making jokes when they ask these questions.*

*(township)*

## **Boys**

Boys concur with the girls about their friendship groups. There is a perception among boys that girl's friends are more faithful and supportive.

*The girls can talk to their friends but a boy can't go tell his friends that he has HIV because they will not want to be their friends anymore. They will say if they touch them they will also get HIV. (township)*

*And if you go to jail then no-one comes to visit you. Some of the girl's friends will go visit her. (coloured area)*

*- Girls speak to each other, they are more open with each other. Girls like each other. If they are friends they give each other presents. Boys hang out at break times. But they don't hug each other.*

*- Yes.*

*- Girls talk about things more openly. While boys, they want to feel like a man and lie about it. (suburban)*

*If he is a gangster friend then he will tell you that it is not his problem and that he does not want to know. That you must sort out your own problems. (coloured area)*

Boys also talk about how their friendship groups put pressure on them.

*We are under a lot of peer pressure. You are with your friends and they say if you do not smoke then you are not one of us or if you do not smoke you are a moffie. (coloured area)*

*If you are the only one amongst your friends who does not have a girlfriend, they tell you that you are foolish. You should go and have one (rural boys)*

Boys spent some time talking about what boys talk about with friends.

*Researcher: What do boys talk about with friends?*

- They like to talk about sex*
- Talk about robbing people*
- Hijacking cars*
- Killing people*
- Challenging other boys with football*
- Robbing people. (township)*
  
- They talk about soccer.*
- They will talk about a girl that they have had sex with.*
- They will talk about something funny that happened to someone else.*
- They talk about cricket and some of them who are maybe in a gang will talk about the people that they have killed and about their friends that are dead.*
- They talk about how the people are shooting in the streets.*
- What type of advice do boys ask of each other?*  
*They ask how they should smoke dagga. Where they can buy dagga and how they can smoke teabags, or about drugs.*
- How to become cool. (coloured area)*
  
- Boys talk about girls and movies they shouldn't watch like pornographic movies and usually say come over to my house and watch a video – a porno movie.*
- I think boys tend to talk more about bodies and penises. Girls don't usually do this and talk about that stuff. But then boys do*
- Sometimes boys don't even talk, maybe boys just go and visit a friend, maybe like watch a soccer game or something*
- They like to brag about stuff.*
- They use that to feel superior to their friends. Feel like a man as they are ahead of them.*
- Brag about how rich they are. They brag that their parents are rich, the others ones are not as rich. They brag he's got stuff, computers while others don't have that stuff. (suburban)*

Boys describe how they often talk about girls with friends.

- We say this girl is beautiful and I like this one. Other one says that one is ugly, this one is nice.*
- Some boys say I went out with a girl just because she's rich.*

- *Beautiful.*
  - *Some boys compare breasts of the girls and how they grow up.*
- Laughter*
- *And their figure.*
  - *And some boys, like where I come from, where I live, like to look at the girls' bums*
- Laughter.*
- *Most of my friends, see a group of girls over there, how their breasts are, they only talk about her body and compare with others. (suburban)*

For boys mothers are also the ones who give advice and guide them.

- Researcher: What does his mother do that makes him grow to be a boy?*
- *She tells him not to mess other people around. Do not steal so that you grow up a good person.*
- Researcher: Does she tell this to a boy only and not a girl?*
- *The thing is boys are the ones who break into people's houses. Who rob people, who are troublesome. At least girls do not do those things*
  - *She tells you not to like girls much, sleep with this girl and that girl*
  - *She tells you not to sleep with a girl that has got AIDS*
  - *Not to sleep with many girls. You'll get AIDS (rural boys)*

Boys discussed relationships with their mothers and fathers. Their relationships with their mothers are often linked to home and household chores.

*They have to do the dishes, and to clean the yard. When you come back from school you have to help clean the house. Your mother says. (township)*

*I sit with her in the kitchen and help her out. (Indian area)*

Mothers are also seen by boys as the ones who look after their needs and give them advice about their lives.

- *They give boys milk to drink*
- *They encourage to do garden so that they can be hard workers*
- *Teach them not to smoke dagga*
- *Stop them to have friends who are smoking dagga and drinking alcohol*
- *Tell them not to walk at night*
- *Not to smoke*
- *They shouldn't say no when adult asks them to do something for them*
- *Not to smoke cigarettes and alcohol. (township)*

*Their mothers teach them that one day when they are older to help their mothers. (coloured area)*

Boys talked about their fathers teaching them things.

- *Their fathers teach them to work hard.*

- *They clean the yard and learn what it is like to struggle so that when they are older they know what it is to struggle.*
- *The fathers teach them not to hit women.*
- *My father teaches me how not to smoke. (coloured area)*
  
- *Teach them football*
- *Teach them boys' stuff*
- *Like what?*
- *To go to church*
- *To wash the car*
- *Helps me to do my homework*
- *Gives me task to do. (township)*

Much of what fathers teach boys is related to responsibilities they may have in the future.

*The father teaches him to be better than himself, because one day the boy will be a father. And one day when his father is dead that the son will look after his mother, and look after the house. (coloured area)*

Some of what fathers talk about is socializing boys into particular ways of behaving.

- *Some fathers tell them to act tough at school when they like fighting and sometimes the father encourages that because he's teaching him how to be a man.*
- *Some fathers tell their child that when they are afraid of their enemy, they must be responsible, don't be afraid.*
- *They teach you to stand up for yourself.*
- *Sometimes they tell you if someone hits you, hit them back. (suburban)*

Some boys described going to fathers for advice.

- *Their fathers advise them on girls and on how to treat girls. They tell them not to do things that are not appropriate when with girls or to girls. - That they should handle themselves well and be educated. Be something. Stay with your wife and have children*
- *Your father tells you what is expected of you after you've been to initiation school*
- *If you are a boy and want to have a girlfriend then you go to your father and ask if you can have a girlfriend at this age*
- *Ask your father if you can bring a girl in your room (rural boys)*

But most boys said they talked to their mothers more because their fathers were not always there.

- *Sometimes the fathers are not here. There is only a mother.*
- *The fathers are away at work. Or staying in the rural areas. (township)*



Boys describe how they often have no one to talk to as they do not talk to teachers either.

*If they go to someone, asking what do I do if I like this girl or I don't know what's happening to my body. They will feel scared to do that because if they go to a teacher, teacher might make them feel as if they're stupid. I don't think they would go to anyone. (suburban)*

In the group boys described other aspects of family relationships. One boy described how he was treated by his family.

*My mother and father are open and they love me to pieces. It is only me and them. I am the baby now and I get everything that I want. (Indian boy)*

Others talked about their sense of responsibility to their family.

*People differ. Others just lose themselves in alcohol. Some boys remember what they were told when they were young and get determined to do that. Taking care of their family. (township)*

*Boys can see for themselves that things are bad at home, there is no food. Therefore I need to work. (rural area)*

### **Analysis**

It is clear that boys and girls believe peer pressure is responsible for the negative behaviour of boys. It is also clear that for boys friendships are not generally a means of support. Boys seem to have few close friends but move around in larger groups.

It seems that boys' relationships with each other are influenced by their need to appear 'cool' and tough in front of friends for fear of being ostracised.

Mothers play a disciplining and nurturing role and they also seem to give advice. Fathers are involved in some of the boys' lives but often they appear to be absent. Fathers' advice often involves reinforcing stereotype roles and negative behaviour such as fighting back.

It seems that boys have few people to talk to and ask for advice.

### **Theme 3: Men's and boys' emotions**

#### **Girls**

Girls talked about what they thought may worry boys. These things fitted into three themes.

- Girls
- The future

- Fitting in with other boys
  - *How are they going to survive and live when they are grown up?*
  - *They worry about girls. If they see a pretty girl they want to talk to her and turn her head, so that she will choose them. (coloured area)*
  
  - *Boys get worried. If a girl is not willing to sleep with him. He will end up raping her.*
  - *Other boys worry when their family force them to do things. That he was not willing to do.*
  - *To be bullied by other boys. (township)*
  
  - *If they going to join the group and if they are going to take drugs, if they are going to smoke, what they are going to become when they grow up*
  - *How he's going to manage his career and how he's going to manage and only then who he is to marry.*
  - *He would feel that he's going to have a responsibility of having a job, and looking out for his family and that would worry him.*
  - *And before he get wife, he will start about a house, a car and education for his children, buy things for his wife, and when he get to plan his wedding, how much money he's going to use, I'm sure he doesn't want to get help from his parents, wants to do it himself. (Indian area)*

They also worry about their clothes and appearance

- *The label of the shoes*
- *They like to copy other people's clothes. (township)*

### **Boys**

Boys talked about similar things – girls and future responsibility. But they also talked about worrying about growing up and issues of puberty. Some boys also said they worried about initiation school and circumcision.

- *Like how they develop.*
- *They worry about what sort of changes are going to happen to their body when they are growing up like puberty stage or something.*
- *When they get circumcised, because they don't know about it. At home and at school, they didn't tell them about it.*
- *I also worry about that.*
- *Usually like worry like what people think of them.*
- *Tries to create an impression.*
- *Some worry what the girls think of them, maybe like when they mix different colours on their clothes, or maybe wear something that doesn't impress girls, maybe those guys will go and change their clothes especially for them (the girls).*
- *We do not always worry about what others think about us.*
- *Some boys worry about the girls more than their schoolwork*

- *Yah.*
- *They worry like if they didn't get the girl now, what are they going to do in the future.*

In the areas where gangsterism was rife, boys worried about gangs and violence.

- *He worries about if he stole something and then say someone finds out, then he worries. He worries about being caught after he has shoplifted.*
- *We worry about if we are gangsters and we kill someone, then our fathers worry about us. And that we can go home because then the gang will shoot you.*
- *If you are in a gang then maybe you can't get home because you are in the wrong territory.*
- *Boys that are younger than us are in gangs and maybe they will shoot us. And some that are younger than us get used by other people (gangsters), they get threatened to kill someone otherwise they will shoot you. (coloured area)*
- *What they will do when they grow up as work.*
- *They worry and wonder if the Lord will be gracious to them.*
- *If they will live. (coloured area boys)*

They also talked about HIV and AIDS.

*Boys worry about having sex with different women and then to get HIV. They only worry about it after sex.*

### **Girls**

Girls and boys also talked about how men express emotion. The quotes below are typical of the response from girls. Their descriptions of men differ in the different environments. Children living in more violent communities describe more violent behaviour than those living in suburban areas but in all areas there was evidence of alcohol abuse and violence and little evidence of men talking about emotions or communicating about them with family members.

*Researcher: What do men do when they are happy?*

- *Jump and dance.*
- *They buy alcohol and drink.*
- *They drink alcohol.*
- *They commit themselves to do things that they can't do.*

*Researcher: Like what?*

*They say I will buy you this and that – they make promises to make themselves look big.*

*Researcher: What do they do when they feel sad?*

- *They're always angry.*
- *They beat their wife.*
- *They don't cry.*

- *Drink lots of alcohol.*
- *Takes his anger to the children.*
- *They destroy things in the house.*
- *They kill themselves.*

*Researcher: What do they do when they are angry?*

- *Beat everybody they meet.*
- *Drink alcohol.*
- *Destroy things.*
- *Don't buy grocery in the house.*
- *Hit the wife with the bottle.*
- *Arrive late at home.*
- *He kill himself, (township)*

*Researcher? What do men and boys do when they are angry?*

- *They throw things.*
- *They sit alone and say leave me to work it out. (suburban)*

*Researcher: What do they do when they are angry?*

- *They do wrong things.*

*Researcher: Like what?*

- *Taking drugs and smoking.*
- *They drink beer.*
- *They hit their wives.*
- *Some will hit the children.*
- *They can stab someone.*
- *Take knives and stab each other.*
- *They'll scream and hit each other with axes.*
- *The other time there was this one who had killed himself near our home.*
- *Some men come home very angry and they fight everyone and they would hang themselves. (coloured area)*

Boys' responses are similar to girls' and are dominated by alcohol abuse and violence. The levels of violence differ from community to community but it is always present. For example, in suburban groups the violence was related less to the family context and more to interactions with other men.

*Researcher: If men are happy, what do they do?*

- *Celebrate like going to a bar and drinking beer.*
- *Or maybe talk about something with their friends, maybe their wife like gave them something for their anniversary*

*Researcher: Sad?*

- *Usually go out for drinks. Get drunk. Just be alone and get drunk.*
- *Take out their frustration*
- *Person that presses the sad person, then take their frustration out on someone else. Most of the time would be physical or violent*
- *Pick an argument. Maybe men who are angry go and pick on another then they do the same and so on and so on*

*Researcher: When men are angry, what do they do?*

- *When at a bar, someone asks them a blank question, he takes frustration out on him, and like "Shut up, just go away".*
- *Pick a fight. (suburban)*

In some areas household violence predominated.

*What do they do in their houses when they are angry?*

- *They fight with the woman and with the furniture.*
- *The husband and wife fight.*
- *They shout at the children for no reason and he messes the house up.*
- *Breaks the windows and the glasses.*

*What do men do at home when they are sad?*

- *They watch TV and do nothing.*
- *They are rude and sleep.*
- *Every now and then he drinks alcohol.*

*What do they do in their houses when they are angry?*

- *They fight with the woman and with the furniture.*
- (rural coloured boys)*

In township areas there was some evidence of positive behaviour but violence and alcohol abuse are still evident.

*Researcher: What do men do when they are happy?*

- *Play together.*
- *Talk to each other.*
- *Watch soccer together.*
- *Pour each other Bells.*
- *Buy colddrink to celebrate.*
- *Watch TV.*
- *Buy alcohol.*
- *Drive cars.*
- *Play soccer.*

*What do they do when they are sad?*

- *Fight.*
- *Beat people.*
- *Want to kill themselves.*
- *Drive their cars.*
- *Want to hang themselves.*
- *Shoot themselves on the railway station.*
- *Fight with their wife.*

*What do they do when they are angry?*

- *Fight.*
- *Beat their wife.*
- *Beat people who greet them.*
- *Abuse their children.*
- *They want to sell their furniture in the house (township)*

The research sought to find out how girls and boys thought men and boys handle conflict. A scenario was presented where a teacher shouted at a boy and the children were asked to say how a boy would respond.

### **Girls**

Girls' responses were similar. They all thought that the boy would respond with anger and also violence.

- *He hates the teacher.*
- *He swears at her.*
- *He talks about this teacher to the other children. He says he hates her.*
- *He beat the teacher.*
- *He twists his nose and shows anger on his face.*
- *He says bad things in his heart.*
- *He was going to wait for her at the bus stop. (township)*

When asked how a girl would respond the girls agreed a girl would cry.

- *She was going to cry.*
- *She was going to be ashamed. (township)*

The groups were then asked to say what people would say if the boy responded differently, without violence. Again the response was consistent.

- *They would think he is scared of him or is a coward.*
- *People will think he is a stupid.*
- *Some people will encourage him to fight instead of ask for apology.*
- *Some people will think he is not brave.*
- *People would say he has to fight. (township)*

### **Boys**

Boys said very similar things. They agreed the boy would respond with violence, though the degree of violence depended on the area the boys came from.

- *He walks out of the class.*
  - *He curses at the teacher and wants to throw a brick at the teacher.*
  - *He is going to shoot his tyres out.*
  - If he was a girl, what would he do differently?*
  - *She would have cried.*
  - *She would have sat still, or gone to get her mother and father.*
  - *She would have gone to get her father who would have kicked the teacher.*
- (coloured area)*

They agreed that if the boy did not fight back he would be considered weak.

- *They say the man is a moffie.*

- *That he is scared.*
  - *That he can't fight. (Indian boys)*
  
  - *They will say he is a 'moffie'.*
- Researcher: Why is that a problem?*
- *If people think you are a "moffie" they will say you are not a man, they will laugh at you. They say you are a girl. Your life will be bad. (coloured area)*

### **Analysis**

It is clear that boys worry about their future responsibilities they also worry about impressing and attracting girls.

The picture painted by children of how they see men coping with emotions is particularly worrying. Men do not seem to talk about their emotions in the communities and homes represented here. Alcohol and violence and withdrawal are common ways of dealing with problems. The important question in the context of this research would be how this example affects growing boys. What are boys learning from the men around them about how to deal with negative emotions like sadness and anger?

In terms of dealing with conflict it seems the consistent picture is that men need to respond with force or they will not be considered masculine. Again the question is how this example affects the strategies boys use in solving problem sin their lives?

### **Theme 4: What makes men and boys powerful?**

#### **Girls**

In the research groups children were asked to talk about what makes men and boys powerful. Girls related male power to physical strength most often. They also talked about responsibility and being brave.

- *When he is strong and responsible and takes action and also not running away from his problems and handsome and successful.*
- *By being brave and strong.*
- *Brave means if a dog comes, he won't run away.*
- *When you are not scared of other people.*
- *Brave means not running away from the problems.*
- *When he exercise and a fight. Be able to carry heavy stuff.*
- *He is powerful because he is not afraid of the death.*
- *Someone who can fight, not a coward, brave and one who look like a lion.*
- *He is confident.*
- *He is brave because is a man.*
- *He doesn't cry when he has problems.*
- *This man is a boxer, he is brave.*
- *Things that makes him to be brave is to exercise every day and respect others and being responsible. And carry heavy things.*
- *Brave man can fight, they have got muscles, good shoulders.*

- *This man is powerful because he eat healthy food and he do exercises. (township)*

Girls also talked about how boys get power from treating less powerful people badly.

- *I drew boys teasing the fat girl – ‘You’re so fat’ they are saying to her.*
- *Boys always do that – they think that makes them powerful to be horrible.*
- *Tease you whether you are either skinny or fat.*
- *Yes, they always tease me.*
- *They say things like you’re so skinny, you will fall in at toilet when you go.*
- *They get power by hurting someone.*
- *I drew a boy shouting at the teacher, when he does this his friends think it’s cool and this is how he gets power.*
- *I drew a boy when they shout at a little girl. (suburban)*

In addition they felt that boys wanted to win and lead as this gave them power.

- *I drew a boy winning a cup – they need to win and that makes them powerful.*
- *If they are a leader of the group, the role of leader makes him powerful. (suburban)*

## **Boys**

Boys also identified power in relation to physical prowess but they mentioned guns and violence. In most groups boys also mentioned positive things that made men powerful such as respecting other people and working hard. The two contrasting perspectives are particularly stark in the quote that follows.

- *He is powerful because he goes to gym.*
- *He is powerful because he can fight.*
- *He is powerful because he is tough.*
- *He is powerful because he can make peace and he loves people.*
- *He is powerful because he likes to shoots people.*
- *He is powerful because he always carries the gun.*
- *He is powerful because he has the gun and he kills people with his gun.*
- *He is powerful because he helps others.*
- *He is powerful because Jesus died for his sins.*
- *He is powerful because he can kill.*
- *He is powerful because he can kill someone.*
- *He is powerful because he can make peace. (township boys)*

In some areas where children were exposed to high levels of violence and gangsterism it was clear that power was linked to gang association and violence.

- *He shoots with a gun and he is a member of the Americans.*
- *He has tattoos and he is the leader of the Americans gang and he smokes.*
- *He is the man because he has a gun in his hands.*



- *He is 'the one' because he has killed people. He is part of the - Hollanders and is in jail.*
- *He thinks he is rough because he has a gun, but he is not.*
- *He bullies small children and rob drunk people. He shoots and kills people and now he thinks he is tough.*
- *But he is not really tough. (coloured area)*

What is interesting is that even in this area there is a contradiction in what the boys are saying.

### **Girls**

Children in the groups also discussed when a boy becomes a man. Responses ranged from culturally specific initiation ceremonies to informal rites of passage and milestones like marriage and having a child.

- *When he has children.*
- *When he is married*
- *When he has a beard*
- *When he is 15 years old*
- *When he has paid for the lobola*
- *When he has a family*
- *When he is old*
- *When he is married*
- *When he is responsible*
- *When he know all the rules (girls, township)*

Girls also talked about how boys use sex to prove they are men. Certain behaviours also signified that a boy was a man.

- *Others prove it wrong. Because he will force a girl to sleep with them and find out the girl is not ready to sleep with him.*
- *Yes, or forcing a girl to sleep with him. He can end up raping that girl.*
- *He will force because he wants to prove that he is the man. (township)*
  
- *They do the Hindu ceremony where they paint themselves white.*
- *With some of the boys they are doing the circumcision ceremony*
- *At the age of 21, they are doing them 21<sup>st</sup> birthday party*
- *They act more responsible and more matured and they might be wise with other kids*
- *At the age of 17 to 18 years, they say I want to get the license and want to get a car and their own room. (Indian)*

### **Boys**

Boys in the Eastern Cape were very clear that boys became men when they went to initiation school.

- *When he goes to initiation school*
- *When he is about 18 and is ready to initiate*
- *When he sees for himself that he is done with his boyhood. I mean if a young boy goes to initiation school, when still not ready, when he comes back he still does boy things. This does not give him dignity.*
- *Getting married*
- *Going to look for a girl and sleeping with it*
- *By asking to smoke. He does this by putting a bottle (brandy, whiskey) in front of the mother and father (parents)*
- *When you are a boy you are not able to do cultural do's at home but you can when you are a man. You can slaughter a cow for the ancestors. (rural area)*

Boys in other areas talked about more informal rites of passage. Alcohol and sex often played a role.

*At 18 when he has the right to drink, drive a car and smoke. And do what he feels he wants to do. My age, I'm not yet there and I still have got a lot of things to learn. I am still young. (suburban)*

*If you get completely drunk, now you become a man. (suburban)*

- *They fight.*
- *They can handle responsibility.*
- *Some smoke.*
- *Some drink alcohol.*
- *They break the virginity of girls and have sex.*
- *Some boys also smoke to show that they are boys too. (Indian area)*

### **Analysis**

Physical strength is consistently seen as making men powerful. Girls seem to place more store by men's ability to be brave and protect than boys do.

Boys, especially those in violent communities, focus on guns, gangs and violence as a source of power. But even in these communities boys also identify kindness and peace-making as a source of power. There is not complete agreement that guns make men powerful but rather that men who have guns think they are powerful.

When this information is placed alongside the material on role models it becomes clear that boys do not necessarily believe that guns and violence are signs of true power. Rather, they are describing the situation as they see it in their community.

This is important because it draws the distinction between what we really (privately) believe, and how social norms influence us.

### **Theme 5: Male role models in our lives**

Children talked about the male role models in their lives.

#### **Girls**

Consistently girls' role models were men who showed positive characteristics such as kindness and responsibility. Often these role models were men in their families.

*I like my father because he teaches me lots of things. He encourages me to keep the house clean all the time. (township)*

- *My grandfather – we live with him. He is 87. He takes care of us and cooks for us every single day. We only go home on weekends*
- *My father. Because he got us a place to stay and gives us food*
- *My father. Because he has a lot of patience and because he will do everything in his power to protect us.*
- *My neighbour. He can give me anything that I ask, took me to my father and helps out when we have problems. He is very kind. (township)*

Girls also talked about how boys model themselves on particular men. Girls agreed that these were not always positive role models.

*Researcher: How do boys learn to be boys?*

- *By their father. They see how the fathers do it.*
- *They see what the sirs do at school. The sirs teach them.*
- *Sometimes when boys are small, they walk around in their neighbourhoods, they see what men do, they swear and they also grow up with that. They see these from people in their environment*

*Researcher: Who are these people?*

- *Gangsters. (coloured area)*

The following quote is an example of how a young girl perceives boys learning from their fathers.

*Researcher: What do the fathers do? How do they teach boys?*

- *They see them (fathers) fight and they do the same.*
  - *I think mothers give girls more work than they give boys. A father just goes to work and he comes back and sits with a newspaper, doesn't help with the children, the food, the house. Things just come to them*
- What do mothers do when boys do not clean?*
- *They say you are very messy.*
  - *My mother would tell my brother, you're lazy, why don't you do this and that? But then he sees his father sitting and he also does that. (Coloured area)*

*Also teachers teach boys not to fight with girls. Teachers are always disciplining the boys because they walk around the school not doing their*

*work and just being naughty. They would jump over benches, open the windows and scream. (girl, Woodville)*

### **Boys**

Boys also talked about respecting fathers and people who look after them.

- *I respect my father because he take care of me when I'm sick, he looks after me*
- *My uncle gives me money and he buy school uniform for me*
- *My father because he brought me to this world. (boy township)*
  
- *I respect the priest and the church people, because he does not drink and get drunk and then shoot people.*
- *I respect my mother and father because they help me grow. And if someone wants to hurt you, then they will help you.*
- *My teacher, I respect him because he is a big man and he teaches me what is right.*

Often respect was linked to actions that made the boys lives better.

- *My father because I love him.*
- *I respect my father because he is doing everything for me.*
- *I love my father because he gives money every day.*
- *My grandfather because he like to send me to see the shows.*
- *I love my father because he gives me pocket money for school. (township)*
  
- *There is one man that we respect in the community. He does not do wrong things. He helps people in the community. He is a committee person. He got people toilets in the community.*
- *There is one person who is respectable in the community because he is old.*
- *I respect my father because he is the one who brought me up, who taught me, bad things from good things.*
- *Buti because he is initiated. (rural area)*

*I respect my father because he came from a poor family, see where he is today, the way he survived all that time. (suburban)*

- *There is a man in our area he has lots of money.*
- *He helps poor people.*
- *He helps people a lot.*
- *He is always kind to people.*
- *He gives them stuff on account.*
- *He lends them money when they need it.*
- *If someone's house has been broken into he comes and helps.*
- *He walks around at night and checks on people who mess other people around. (Indian area)*

*My father, because whatever we ask for he gets for us. Even in our schoolwork if we struggle with something he helps us. He has lots of patience with us. He loves children. He is always loving and caring for other children. (Indian area)*

In one group some boys said there was no one they respected.

*Researcher: Is there a man in your community that you respect?*

*- Everyone is terrible.*

*- No-one except Jesus.*

*- Yes, my parents, mother and father, the priest and the people that walk past you.*

*- The priest. He preaches to us, and he talks about the holy. He helps and he is friendly and he can't lie. (coloured area)*

### **Analysis**

The information from children under this theme is particularly interesting when seen in the context of the other themes.

Most of what children discussed in the groups was the perceived social norms around masculinity. However, in this theme, the men they refer to are good men, role models. Their perceptions of these men are quite different from the way they perceive men in general. Yet it is also clear that enough men in their communities (and homes possibly too) display negative characteristics for them to be able to talk about masculinity using negative criteria. It is worth noting too that when children in the groups talked about negative behaviour of men, such as drinking, they often laughed, which shows the level of acceptance of this kind of behaviour in their communities.

There is thus a sense that the boys and girls talking here are caught in the contradiction between the men they perceive as good and those who display negative characteristics. Between their direct or personal world, and the world defined in terms of social norms.

What is concerning is that while the children we interviewed were largely pre-adolescent, they will soon reach adolescence. This stage of life is associated with risky behaviour. The concern is that in adolescence these children are likely to adopt the (negative) social norm of 'being a man'.

## 5. References

Boyden J. and Ennew J. (Eds.) 1997, *Children in Focus; A Manual for Participatory Research With Children*. Stockholm: Rädda Barnen

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Ivan-Smith E. and Johnson V. 1998, The Way Forward. In E. Ivan-Smith and V. Johnson (Eds.), *Stepping Forward: Children and young people's participation in the development process*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications.

Kjørholt AT and Qvortrup J, 2000, Children's participation in social and political change - Western Europe. In *Children's Participation in Community Settings*, Childwatch International Research Symposium: University of Oslo.

## 6. Appendix 1: Statement of ethics

As participatory researchers with children we will:

- respect the rights of children as provided in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- ensure that the research is conducted in a way that benefits children's physical, psychological and social development;
- encourage children to speak, and listen to them;
- ask for informed consent of children, and their parents where appropriate, before involving them in research or in disseminating research information;
- honour children's priorities and interests;
- honour children's cultural values;
- treat children as adequate and capable social actors;
- not impose the researcher or the researcher's ideas on children;
- not use any form of abuse or exploitation for research purposes;
- not put children at risk for research purposes;
- not hide information from children;
- not discriminate against children on the basis of age, gender, socio-economic status, caste, religion, language, race, ethnicity, capacity;
- where appropriate, try to involve children in conducting the research;
- ensure research report ownership by children or where appropriate their parents or other related persons;
- not use material without the informed consent from the participants;
- not give out real names of persons or organisations without informed consent; confidentiality of all sources will be maintained;
- not use material that will be threatening to the children, even if they have given their informed consent;
- give appropriate weight and value to children's feelings;
- disseminate findings to the group(s) that contributed to the research, in media that they can understand;
- give materials gathered from research participants back to the participants, keeping copies only with their informed consent.

Adapted from a declaration during a course for researchers in participatory research with children in India/Nepal in 1995, as recorded in Boyden, J and Ennew, J (1997).