

CHURCHILL 2000 FELLOWSHIP REPORT

ANDREW CHUDLEIGH

Programs and Services for Young Fathers
in the U.S., U.K. and Ireland,

THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA

Report by - ANDREW CHUDLEIGH - 2000 Churchill Fellow

THE SIR WILLIAM KILPATRICK CHURCHILL FELLOWSHIP
to study young fathers programs in the US, UK and Ireland

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Signed Andrew Chudleigh

Dated March 31st 2003

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INTRODUCTION

Working with men and fathers in a counseling, group and community development capacity over the past 10 years has enabled me to gain valuable insights into the needs and issues that affect fathers, particularly young fathers, in Australia. As a young father myself, I am only too aware of the struggle many young men face as they endeavour to raise a family.

Until very recently, this experience of men has been relatively silent in the Australian community, and services, programs and information to support fathers has been minimal. However fatherhood has been becoming a growing focus of family and community services internationally and I was granted a Churchill scholarship to explore how fatherhood, particularly for young fathers, was being supported overseas.

The Churchill 2000 Tour of young fathers programs in the US, UK and Ireland took me to many services and programs which provided valuable information on strategies to encourage the long term participation of young fathers in their children's lives.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Churchill Fellowship Trust for the opportunity to further progress this important work.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Grant recipient:

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Project description:

The Churchill 2000 Tour was granted to build upon Andrew Chudleigh's work with men and fathers by exploring programs and services for young fathers in the U.S., U.K. and Ireland. Tour sites were selected to gain insights into strategies, structures and implementation styles that successfully engage and support young fathers to take a long term, healthy and active position in their children's lives.

Highlights:

Visits and discussions with leaders and staff at:

- The National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership (NPCL), U.S., including attendance at the **International Fatherhood Conference 2000** and a three day training - **Fatherhood Development: A curriculum for Young Fathers**.
- The National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families, Inc. (NPNFF), U.S.
- MELD for Young Dads, U.S..
- Navajo and White Mountain Apache Fathers Parenting Project Training, U.S.
- Fathers Plus, U.K.
- New Mexico Young Fathers Project

Major lessons:

Significant lessons may be taken from the Tour. Key lessons include:

- The importance of basing work with fathers on a generative fatherhood model
- The need for capacity building support for services
- The need for dedicated, skilled male workers
- The importance of a comprehensive approach to service provision
- The significance of long-term social, political and financial support
- The need to change the culture of fatherhood.
- The need for fatherhood organisations that specifically do the function of networking, training and capacity building.

Disseminating and implementing Tour outcomes:

Andrew Chudleigh has shared his learnings with service providers, workers, fathers and community leaders through workshops, conferences, forums, consultations and skills development programs. He is also currently implementing fatherhood and young fatherhood programs based on models gathered from the Tour, in West Sydney, South West Sydney and the Blue Mountains. His service, FatherWork, works in consultation with government and non-government agencies to assist them build capacity in Australia to develop and deliver programs for fathers.

PROGRAMME DETAILS AND KEY LESSONS

U.S. PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES FOR YOUNG FATHERS

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR STRATEGIC NONPROFIT PLANNING AND COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP (NPCL)

“We do more than help people move from welfare to work. We help people move from welfare to life...”¹

Washington D.C.

The National Center for Strategic Nonprofit Planning and Community Leadership (NPCL) is a nonprofit organisation established in 1996 to help build the capacity of organisations to serve people and communities. It is funded by private foundations and public service grants, individual contributions and client fees.

Created for charitable and educational purposes, NPCL serves community-based organisations, nonprofit groups, faith-based organisations, and government agencies that work in low-income communities serving families and youth. It aims to improve the governance and administration of nonprofit, tax-exempt organisations and strengthen community leadership through long-term family and neighborhood empowerment.

NPCL achieves this through managing national and state research projects, policy analysis and development, and technical assistance and training activities based on best practices. A particular focus of the organisation is fragile families – young, low-skilled, never married, under-educated couples with children.

In 1996 NPCL established its *Partners for Fragile Families* (PFF) project in partnership with the Centre on Fathers, Families and Public Policy (CFFPP). This multi-million dollar demonstration project is designed to show how partnerships between community-based organisations and child support enforcement agencies can help secure the long-term involvement of non-custodial ‘fragile’ fathers in their children’s lives. PFF helps to build and increase the range of services provided by community-based fatherhood programs and promote the development of family-friendly policies, programs and cooperative agreements between service providers and public agencies.

Over 1998 - 2001, NPCL coordinated ten demonstration PFF projects across the country designed to produce systematic changes that strengthen the capacity of fragile families to take legal, financial and emotional responsibility for their children.

Projects provided support to young fathers in:

- Establishing paternity
- Meeting child support obligations
- Gaining jobs suitable for child support payments
- Team parenting – including counseling and conflict resolution

In 2000, NPCL supported another father-specific pilot project, the *Fathers At Work Initiative* (funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation), through the provision of technical expertise, logistical support and best practice strategies. This project spanned six demonstration sites and aimed to support low income fathers aged 16 – 30 years, over a period of 3 years, to increase their earning potential and parental engagement (including child support compliance) and

¹ NPCL promotional slogan

decrease incarceration and recidivism. The evaluation of the project is due for completion in 2005.

NPCL is strongly focused on building the capacity of services through the training and development of workers and community leaders. NPCL hosts an annual International Fatherhood Conference and regular workshops for the skilling and development of practitioners and community participants. The Churchill 2000 Tour included attendance at the **International Fatherhood Conference 2000** and a three-day training - **Fatherhood Development: A Curriculum for Young Fathers**.

International Fatherhood Conference 2000

A wide range of sessions were offered at this conference which was sponsored by NPCL, The C.S. Mott Foundation, The Ford Foundation and a number of state and government departments. Examples of sessions included:

- Developing Common Ground: community-based Organisations, Fathers and Domestic Violence
- Parents Behind Bars: Programs for Incarcerated Fathers and their Families
- The Role of the Faith Community in Strengthening Fragile Families
- Fatherhood Programs Around the World
- Perspectives of Fatherhood from Low Income Women
- Fatherhood Development Programs and Health Care Delivery Systems
- Fatherhood Programs and Community Collaboration
- Funding Fatherhood Programs
- Fathers Parent Differently
- Innovative Child Support Enforcement Programs
- Responsible Fatherhood Programs in Public and Assisted Housing
- Non-custodial Fathers and Employers – Making the Connections

Fatherhood Development: A Curriculum for Young Fathers

This three-day training focused on the effective use of curriculum materials that aim to provide support, information and motivation in the areas of parenthood, relationships, sexuality and responsible manhood, for young fathers.

It involved 25 sessions held in a mixture of discussion, experiential and conceptual formats, which covered the following topics –

- Personal development - team building, values, manhood, self-sufficiency
- Life skills - communication, dealing with stress and discrimination
- Responsible fatherhood - roles and responsibilities, child development, children's needs, discipline, negotiating the child support system etc.
- Relationships – effective communication, managing anger, resolving conflicts and negotiating relationships
- Health and sexuality –taking charge of health, understanding sexuality, dealing with substance abuse, reducing sexual risks

The training was attended by approximately 35 people from government and non-government agencies, health and community services, child support agencies, new fatherhood practitioners in training etc.

An interesting learning from the training was that the young fathers' curriculum used covered a wider range of topics and areas of life than fathering curriculums used in Australia (for example *Hey Dad!*). This enables the course for young fathers to act as a template for a comprehensive approach to service delivery. Exploring the various issues within an educational framework allows

young fathers to identify some of the barriers they face to effective parenting and what they may be able to do about them.

Further useful information was gained on recruitment strategies for engaging young fathers into services. These included a strong emphasis on peer leadership development efforts to harness and develop the enthusiasm and experience of young fathers to encourage others to access support services.

THE NATIONAL PRACTITIONERS NETWORK FOR FATHERS AND FAMILIES, INC. (NPNFF)

Washington DC

The National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families Inc. (NPNFF), was formed in 1994 (as a response to needs expressed at a Father Re-engagement Roundtable led by Al Gore), to provide professional support for those working with fathers and their families. NPNFF is a national individual membership organisation whose mission is to build the profession of practitioners working to increase the responsible involvement of fathers in the lives of their children.

Network activities, such as development of publications, conferences, training events, technical assistance, advocacy, collaboration with other fathers and families organisations, and networking, are supported by funders such as the Ford Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Freddie Mac Foundation, the General Mills Foundation and the Head Start Bureau.

NPNFF links many of the organisations in America that support fathers and promotes and supports collaborations and information and resource sharing between them. It aims to strengthen practitioners in their day-to-day work with fathers and their families. Like NPCL, this organisation also targets 'fragile' fathers and their families and works to influence public policy development and change the societal perception of fatherhood.

MELD

Minneapolis

MELD (originally Minnesota Early Learning Design) began working with families in 1973 and has assisted more than 50,000 families in more than 70 cities across the U.S.. MELD boasts outstanding results from its educational and support programs in helping parents become informed, effective and self-reliant.

MELD provides know-how, training and curriculum support to community initiatives and services which want to run educational / support groups for parents who share particular challenges. In this way, it helps to build the capacity of communities to support parents and families. These groups then become MELD sites that receive ongoing professional support.

Critical elements of the success of the MELD strategy include that MELD groups:

- Bring together groups of parents who share similar needs or circumstances to develop peer learning and support opportunities.
- Include experienced parents, especially from similar backgrounds or circumstances, to share their learnings and to act as role models.
- Provide support for parents immediately after the birth of a child, to encourage the early development of healthy patterns of parenting.

- Meet for a period of two years. This enables exploration into areas other than immediate parenting issues and forms supportive communities which participants can resource after the completion of the group.
- Provide a sense of community for participants that is often lacking for families.
- Provide a quality education in child development and parenting through carefully tailored curriculums.

The MELD for Young Dads program targets fathers aged 15 – 25 years and aims to address the many roles fathers can play in their children’s lives and to prevent and reduce the barriers they face to effective parenting. The program assists fathers by:

- developing awareness and skills of community professionals about the needs of young fathers
- supporting workers to engage young fathers in support services
- helping workers to establish ongoing education and support groups
- providing a MELD for Young Dads curriculum
- providing ongoing support and expertise

The Churchill 2000 Tour included attendance at the MELD for Young Dads curriculum training for workers interested in program delivery.

The MELD for Young Dads curriculum includes sessions on the following topics:

1. Becoming a father – roles, expectations, role models
2. Taking care of your child – safety, health, comfort and needs
3. Growth and development – physical, intellectual and emotional
4. The other people in your life – the child’s mother, family, partners, support & relationships
5. Look at now and the future – paternity, custody, child support, guardianship
6. Where you live – your home, your neighbourhood
7. Taking care of business – the future, education, work, money

NATIONAL FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE

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The National Fatherhood Initiative (NFI) was founded in 1994 to lead a society-wide movement to confront the problem of father absence. It aims to affect the attitudes and behaviours of fathers by implementing nationwide public message campaigns, public education activity, state and local fatherhood projects and direct assistance to community fatherhood leaders.

NFI equips fatherhood initiatives with curricula, training and technical support and assistance in the development of strategic alliances and partnerships.

NFI has implemented numerous campaigns to promote the message of responsible fatherhood using television, radio, print and online media channels. Its publications have included resource catalogues, newsletters, brochures, skill building materials and research documents. Activities include conferences, forums and trainings. NFI is funded by foundations, grants and corporate and private sponsorships.

The Churchill 2000 Tour included attendance at NFI’s *Third Annual National Summit on Fatherhood*, June 2-3, 2000 in Washington, D.C..

Session examples include:

- Update on Fatherhood Legislation
- Creating Local Fatherhood Initiatives
- Funding Opportunities in Private Philanthropy
- Are you Father Friendly? An Agency Audit
- Legal Issues for Fathers
- School-Based programs for Fathers

THE JOHN HOPKINS FATHERS PROJECT

The John Hopkins Centre for American Indian Health has developed a program model designed to re-engage Indian fathers with teen-formed families. The project works in partnership with the Navajo and White Mountain Apache tribes and received research and planning funding from the C.S. Mott and Ford Foundations.

This project involved a 2-year formative evaluation into the communities' visions of fatherhood. Initial research into barriers faced by young Indian fathers showed that the Native pilot sites, Navajo and Apache Reservations, did not have adequate resources or capacity to support job placement programs and that the fathers were not primarily disengaged from their families due to socio-economic factors. This gave the project a slightly different content than previously developed young fatherhood programs. As such, the focus of the project was on barriers that were more immediately relevant for participants. These include:

- Psychosocial barriers to fathers involvement, including lack of self-efficacy to parent
- Insufficient parenting and emotional support from their families and communities
- Inadequate skills among fathers and teen parents to pursue needed support services in the areas of education, housing, employment, income security, legal assistance or substance abuse counseling.

The Program Model developed incorporates four key components.

1. Home visiting program – trained Indigenous outreach and field workers counsel and educate fathers in their homes. Visits will aim to address psychosocial barriers, provide parenting, conflict resolution and domestic relationship counseling, and case management to link fathers with other support services.
2. Mass media campaigns –tribal partners work with John Hopkins communications experts to develop communication campaigns which raise public awareness about the program and other support services, reinforce behavioural objectives of home visiting program, and promote a community vision for responsible parenthood.
3. Work force development –national consultants work with tribal leaders to explore strategies that expand employment opportunities.
4. Program sustainability – collaborative efforts to design strategies to transfer autonomy and fiscal management of the program to tribes.

The Churchill 2000 Tour included attendance at the ***Navajo and White Mountain Apache Fathers Parenting Project Training*** for staff and field workers.

This training covered implementation of *The Fathers Project curriculum*.

The curriculum included the following topics:

- Game plan – where you are and where you want to go
- Culture and history – of Navajo / WMA tribes
- Before the baby – about pregnancy and sexuality
- Getting ready for the baby – physical things, paternity
- Labour/deliver – stages, traditions, family planning
- Basics of infant care – feeding, sleeping, comfort etc
- Building blocks of parenting – stages, routine, reinforcements

- Revisiting Game plan
- Accessing community resources – school, job, work, health etc
- My health and family health – exercise, substance abuse, sexual health, violence
- Communication/ healthy relationships
- Planning for the future

NEW MEXICO YOUNG FATHERS PROJECT

The New Mexico Young Fathers Project (YEP) is a non-profit partnership project that operates with 8 teen parent sites in New Mexico. The project provides support for young fathers (aged 15 – 25 years) through services such as training, education, mentoring, outreach, case-management and support groups. Services provide educational and vocational support, guidance and referral, parenting skills, life skills training, sexuality and contraceptive education and peer education training. Funding for the project comes from various Federal and State government departments.

The project follows a *Young Fathers Group* curriculum which assists young fathers to explore their role, manage emotions, parent, discipline, manage sexuality, define values and make future plans. Over the 3 months from January to March 2000, the project had worked with 120 participants and gathered research data on its target group to guide further activity.

* * *

As well as services and programs listed above, The Churchill 2000 Tour visited and/or met with and/or researched many other fatherhood initiatives. These include:

- The Fatherhood Project[®], a national research and education project of The Families and Work Institute.
- Center on Fathers, Families, and Public Policy (CFFPP), a nationally focused public policy organisation conducting policy research, technical assistance, training, litigation and public education in order to focus attention on the barriers faced by never-married, low-income fathers and their families.
- The National Head Start Association (NHSA)'s Male and Father Involvement Initiative, aimed at supporting Head Start workers to engage fathers in programs.
- National Centre on Fathers and Families (NCFF) that promotes the conduct and dissemination of basic, applied and policy research in regards to the positive involvement of fathers.
- National Centre for Fathering, a research and education support organisation.
- Centre for Fathers, Families and Workforce Development (CFWD)'s STRIVE program, an intensive job readiness and placement program.
- The Fathers' Resource Centre, providing support, education and advocacy services for fathers.

Key learnings from all these programs and services have been incorporated into the next section of this report. Resources and materials from these sites were collected and now form the basis of a significant library of resources that are being showcased to services in Australia.

U.S. Highlights and Key Learnings

"If we are to help move people from public assistance to self-sufficiency, we are going to have to include fathers. But it's hard to pay child support if you don't have a job. And many fathers have told me that if they can't be involved financially, it's hard to be involved emotionally. If you can't afford to give your child shoes – you don't feel worthy to give them advice. That is why programs which focus on non-custodial fathers are so important. By partnering together, by investing in common sense solutions, we can help give fathers the skills they need ... employers the workers they need...communities the role models they need... and, most importantly, children the fathers they need."

Alexis Herman, U.S. Secretary of Labour (1998)

Fatherhood as an issue and organisational focus is thriving in the U.S.. With specific fatherhood programs and initiatives gathering momentum since the mid 1980's, the U.S. offers many insights into the running of successful fatherhood programs and fatherhood development strategies. During the Churchill 2000 tour, it was evident that fatherhood was a key focus of government and non-government organisations which included both traditional family and health services and new father-specific organisations.

Addressing issues faced by fathers was seen not only to improve the circumstances of children, but also to potentially address a wide range of community issues such as unemployment, poverty, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, violence and crime. Helping children out of poverty is a leading priority for many American services. This view of fatherhood as a key element for social development, was spurred on by the support of a strong mandate handed down by the Clinton Administration that all federally funded family programs engage and include fathers in meaningful involvement with their children. Later further drivers supported the focus on fathers as the Welfare to Work program linked large scale funding with services who could support fathers to take legal, emotional and financial responsibility for their children.

A snapshot of the American experience

(Taken from National Fatherhood Initiative 1998 Annual Report)

- *Nearly 40% of children in America live separately to their fathers*
- *40% of children who live in fatherless homes have not seen their fathers in at least a year*
- *62% of African-American children live in father absent homes*
- *almost 75% of American children living in single-parent families will experience poverty before they turn 11 years old (compared with 20% in 2 parent families)*
- *violent criminals are more likely to have grown up in fatherless homes (Research has found that 60% of rapists, 75% of adolescents charged with murder and 70% of long term inmates grew up in fatherless homes)*
- *girls who live in single parent families are more likely to begin sexual activity at a younger age and are more likely to have a child out of wedlock as a teenager*

The Churchill 2000 Tour included visits to father specific and traditional services that had incorporated father-specific programs. These visits identified the following key points in the U.S. experience.

A generative fathering perspective

Fatherhood in the U.S. is largely being considered within a 'generative fathering' model (a model developed by Dollahite and Hawkins). The principle view of generative fathering is one of a non-deficit model where the birth of a child is seen as a developmental step for men. With the new role, men are 'called to action' to address issues in their lives and develop a nurturing attitude to themselves. It assumes that fathers want to be good fathers and that poor results in fathering are largely due to barriers placed in the way of them being able to participate successfully.

The American experience has found that men are more likely to improve their circumstances for their children than they are for themselves and that from this motivation, men will often address a range of issues in their lives such as unemployment, lack of suitable housing, alcohol and drug abuse, criminal activity and relationship problems. These issues are primary factors in a man's ability to father effectively – i.e. they are barriers to good parenting. Gender issues that traditionally affect men; such as the view that earning income is a primary role and identity of manhood; compound the effect of barriers such as unemployment, often to the extent that joblessness can stop men being involved in their children's lives. In such a case, getting a job may be essential to re-engaging a man as a father and may need addressing before any other issues, including fathering, can be approached. Generative fatherhood supports the notion that nurturing fathering can be achieved from any circumstances and that men do not need to have all their issues dealt with in order to be a good father. It also supports that fathering consists of a range of activities which include domestic, income earning, emotional, physical work etc.

The key points of this approach are that:

1. The underlying assumption of work with fathers is that fathers want to be good fathers if given the opportunity
2. Fatherhood is seen and promoted to be a positive experience that is highly valued
3. Father specific programs are tailored to engage men around their kids
4. Fathering is used as an entry into gaining support and motivator for men to address other issues
5. There are a number of issues that act as 'barriers' to being a good father which may cover a wide spectrum and are often different from man to man

The view that fathering is an overlay issue in this way (i.e. relating to many aspects of a man's life), rather than a stand-alone issue (i.e. relating specifically to parenting) is a notable difference with how fathering is currently perceived and addressed in Australia.

Comprehensive 'wrap around' services

As workers became increasingly aware of the linked issues emerging for fathers, the need to support men across these issues became more apparent. In 2000, it was clearly evident that services were increasing their service range, or forming collaborative networks so they could provide a comprehensive support structure for fathers and 'hold' them across traditional and new service barriers. The needs of men are often identified as different from those traditionally experienced by women and as such have involved innovative approaches to developing useful supports. For example needs expressed by men are more likely to include the need for support in meeting child support obligations, gaining access to children, finding work etc. Common service links in U.S. programs were between family and health services, education and employment agencies, housing services, prisons, drug and alcohol counselors, cultural support mechanisms and peer leadership initiatives.

In a comprehensive 'wrap around' service, men may enter a program to address parenting issues, identify related issues such as housing and employment and then be referred to appropriate support mechanisms to help them find employment and suitable housing. This may be within the service's scope or through partnership agencies. This way, once fathers enter a

service, they are supported to address the barriers that affect their lives and subsequently limit their ability to parent effectively. Experience has shown that, when fathers are supported only in 'fathering' matters (i.e. parenting skills etc), without addressing the barriers they face, then little changes, as their ability to be an effective father is still limited by circumstances.

Other support initiatives noted in comprehensive services for fathers included training, counseling, crisis intervention, legal assistance, domestic violence programs, mediation, paternity establishment, separation/divorce education, home visitor services, supervised visitation, family planning and social and recreational activities – all with a view to meeting the needs experienced by the male involved.

This comprehensive nature of service provision has meant that organisations need to focus not only on the delivery of programs and face-to-face services, but also on a systematic approach to service provision which spans agencies across a region and caters to the male experience.

In the U.S. this dual focus is illustrated by the objectives of father-specific services and organisations, i.e. those that focus on service and face-to-face program delivery, and those that focus on building the capacity of organisations to deliver services.

Capacity building as a long-term, strategic approach to service provision

The significant presence of organisations and services that focus solely on building the capacity of a region to service fathers, is notable in the U.S.. These organisations provide resources and expertise to help communities get fatherhood programs going. The focus of capacity building is long-term strategic development and is in marked difference to short-term project outcome focus common to Australian initiatives.

Capacity building organisations generally focused on building national networks (for example the National Practitioners Network) that provide professional and systemic support (i.e. lobbying, promoting fatherhood, professional development, development of best practice standards etc) or on a regional level to develop referrals across services within the region. Many nationally focused organisations were also involved in localized pilot projects as part of their developmental research.

Typically, capacity building services visited during the Churchill 2000 Tour, shared the following characteristics:

Employment of full time, mostly male, fatherhood practitioners

An objective of capacity building is to ensure that skilled workers are available to provide leadership in fatherhood programs. This has involved specific training and development and resulted in practitioners who specialize in the area of fatherhood development.

The availability of staff on a full time basis (usually between 3 – 10 staff) enables these organisations to provide consistent support and ongoing development focus for fatherhood services and programs.

The training and development of male and male friendly workers and the up-skilling of young male leaders is an important strategy in the resourcing of programs. With support mechanisms being traditionally dominated by women, it is seen to be essential to increase male direction and involvement in service provision if men are to be encouraged to participate. Peer support, leadership development and male role modeling have proved to be critical elements in increasing male involvement in programs and in generating nurturing models and supportive services for men.

Working with community, government and non-government bodies to support collaborations and partnerships

Capacity building organisations support services to develop and access networks and partnerships that will enable them to provide clients with comprehensive support. While some organisations that focus on face-to-face services have the resources to network or provide additional services for clients, many do not. In this case the support of these capacity building organisations is critical in developing suitable client referral mechanisms. Often capacity building organisations included a Developmental Worker who would specifically focus on the development of referral systems and networks in a region and assist in transitioning clients through services.

Identifying and developing suitable partnerships for project implementation is another important aspect of capacity building. An innovative approach to developing partnerships has been required in order to meet needs that are particular to men, that promote access to services and assist in encouraging participation.

Funding for exploration not short term outcomes

The funding of fatherhood programs and organisations in the U.S. presents another notable difference to the Australian experience. Most initiatives tend to be supported financially by a combination of government social services grants and funding from foundations such as the Ford, C.S. Mott and Amy Casey Foundations. Increasingly, programs are gaining funding through the government's Welfare Reform TANFF initiatives. Fee for service is another common income stream.

The priority of funding is most often for the development, exploration and pilot study trials of long-term strategies and solutions rather than measurable outcomes from one-off programs, as is most often the case in Australia. As such, funding typically supports program development, worker trainings, consultation work with services and partnership exploration and development. Program delivery is often funded through partnership initiatives.

This approach to funding has promoted the following outcomes:

- Development of effective strategies such as provision of comprehensive services, capacity building initiatives, best practice standards in working with men
- Development of long term support mechanisms such as trained workers, fatherhood resources, leadership development in fatherhood, collaborative partnerships
- Addressing of systemic issues that face fathers and their families
- Holistic, collaborative approach to supporting fatherhood and high level interaction between programs and services
- Greater awareness and understanding of issues fathers face and the resources and support mechanisms that are available
- Greater capacity for fatherhood initiatives to work with other social support initiatives

The evaluation requirements for funding tend to be more formative and process based and focused on process rather than on outcomes evaluation. This has allowed programs and services to take exploratory risks to gain and to develop new know-how and skills that are specific to the experience of men and fathers.

Service provision for fathers through traditional and male-specific service structures

Male-specific programs are commonly delivered through existing family services. More often than not, these services have developed a male specific program. The most successful of these programs were not developed as an 'add-on' to existing family services but developed as autonomous 'father and families' services in their own right. Fully independent male specific

initiatives have also been established to provide targeted services for men and fathers, for example Baltimore Men's Healthy Start Service and the Father's Resource Centre.

Involvement of men, either voluntarily or as workers, is also an important factor of these programs and considered critical in helping to encourage men to access support services. Engaging men in programs is a primary focus of these services and is often achieved through community leadership, peer support and referral mechanisms. Promotional efforts are also important and often supported by high quality brochures and promotional materials.

Services tend to offer educational / parenting programs that initially assist fathers to identify their fathering barriers. From this fathers may participate in specific issues-based groups or other referral options. Many organisations promote their links with other services to indicate their comprehensive nature.

Dads Connection (Maryland), a support service for non-custodial parents helps dads to 'Connect with kids' through a 16 week parenting education course and support to gain visitation rights; 'Connect with work' through job readiness support and employment placement assistance; 'Connect with skills' by assisting to identify and organize educational opportunities and to 'Get connected' through its support and referral service.

Knowledge in best practice strategies for engaging and working with men and fathers are widely implemented in face-to-face services. These practitioners will often be providing information for best practice strategies and standards that are further developed and or promoted by capacity building organisations.

U.K. PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES FOR YOUNG FATHERS

FATHERS PLUS

Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Fathers Plus was established in 1997 by the Children North East organisation with an aim to increase the skills and confidence of fathers and to ensure that their role is valued and represented in policy development. Fathers Plus began in response to multi-layered social issues arising in the North East of England, where employment decline had resulted in intergenerational unemployment. The Fathers Plus model was established after significant research and development and is financially supported by the Bernard van Leer Foundation (Netherlands).

During research, a forum of fathers' group workers was established to share and develop good practice, establish a network and develop foundations for work with fathers. Fathers Plus has now been involved in running fathers groups, a school participation program, policy development, dissemination of good practice, research and hosting of an international conference '*Fathers Pride – personal issue – political agenda*'. Fathers Plus is the only capacity building type of service for fathering initiatives in the U.K. at the time of the Tour.

The Churchill 2000 Tour included attendance at the conference 'Fathers Pride – personal issue – political agenda' plus a session presentation on fathering initiatives in Australia.

The conference included workshops on:

- Sure Start Programs – networking and partnerships for fathering programs
- Working with fathers – the North East Forum
- Muslim Men's Parenting Project
- After divorce – what?
- Are fathers welcome beyond the school gate?

WORKING WITH MEN

London

Working with Men is a not-for-profit organisation that supports the development of men through resources, publications, training, consultancy and advice. It heads a network of trainers and consultants who are experienced in working with men to assist in the formation and delivery of programs for men.

Specific products include posters, booklets, books, photo-packs, directories, essays, newsletters and videos etc. Working with Men is very active in providing development and implementation support to government and non-government agencies wanting to establish programs for men.

NEWPIN FATHERS CENTRE

London

NEWPIN is a national voluntary organisation, set up in 1982 to help parents (targeting mothers) under stress break the cyclical effects of destructive family behaviour. It operates through a network of 16 local centres which offer home visiting and befriending schemes, family play, group-work, counseling and personal development programs. NEWPIN is funded primarily through Trusts and donations then government grants. It also generates income from fees.

An Australian NEWPIN, modeled on the U.K. NEWPIN service, was launched within a Bidwell (NSW) family centre in 1998. A NEWPIN service also exists in Northern Ireland.

NEWPIN established a support program for fathers in 1997. It took considerable effort to develop referral mechanisms with community services not used to prioritizing the needs of men in their daily work. Today the fathers' program has referral procedures and networks in place to support the program.

The program aims to support men in their role as fathers so that they can make permanent improvements in their family relationships. The program offers an intensive 9-month group program, and shorter 8-week groups (to allow fathers to trial the group before making a longer commitment). Weekly sessions involve a structured discussion followed by an informal group therapy session. Topics covered include: Children's needs, 'good enough' parenting, effective communication, cultural aspects of fathering, valuing oneself as a father, play skills, boundary setting, assertiveness, support networks etc. The group aims to develop and use honest and trusting relationships. Participants have the opportunity to develop as coordinators of later groups.

U.K. Highlights and Key Learnings

Fatherhood programs and services in the U.K are more similar to the Australian experience. That is, fatherhood issues are still mostly in exploration mode with only a few initiatives for father-specific programs actually operational. The number of skilled workers was minimal, as were resources to support them. Similarly, those initiatives that were running (excepting the Fathers Plus program) were mostly aimed at parenting education and not addressing linked issues in a comprehensive manner.

At the time of the Tour, NPCL had recently developed, in partnership with U.K. partners, a localized version of the Fatherhood Development Training Curriculum. Five demonstration sites were being established to implement the program. This would significantly advance the U.K. model in line with the comprehensive nature of U.S. programs. It is a useful consideration for Australia, to look at the tailoring of available resources for the Australian context. During the Tour, the procedure for using the NPCL program was explored and negotiated.

IRISH PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES FOR YOUNG FATHERS

Fatherhood programs in Ireland were significantly more minimal than in U.K. and Australia. Initiatives were still at a grass roots level and work with fathers was conducted by interested individuals. However interest was strong, as was the growing recognition of the issues faced by fathers.

One notable fathers' program in Dublin was situated within a housing commission complex providing estranged fathers with counseling, advocacy and support groups. While a low-budget, highly targeted program (servicing only fathers who live in the complex), the positioning of the operation within its target client area, seemed to have a strong effect on its ability to attract and engage fathers.

CONCLUSIONS

The major conclusions reached from the Churchill 2000 Tour include that:

- Programs for fathers are most effective when they explore barriers to good fathering
- Comprehensive service provision is needed to make long term improvements to a father's ability to parent effectively
- Fathering programs are most effective when based on a generative fathering model
- A long term approach is necessary to change to the culture and perceptions of fathering within communities, agencies and society generally
- Capacity building support structures/organisations are essential to enable the development of skills, evaluation and resources necessary to deliver fathering programs
- Fatherhood work needs funding for long-term developmental programs, not just short term project outcomes
- Men need to be employed in fatherhood work in order to legitimize and progress father participation in programs
- Partnerships and collaborations are an important component of successful programs to maximize resources and access
- Political support and prioritizing of fatherhood programs will increase the focus and prioritizing of services to include fathers
- Fatherhood is an entry into tackling many social issues affecting children and families
- Workers need training to gain information and skills particular to working with men and fathers
- Leadership development and mentoring initiatives increase participation of fathers in programs

DISSEMINATING INFORMATION:

Disseminating information gained from the Tour has included the following:

- Talks at forums, conferences and workshops
- Showcasing of resources, manuals and materials
- Consultation with community services on how to develop and implement programs for fathers
- Interviews on television, radio and major metropolitan newspapers
- Development and implementation of 2 regional programs (in Nepean and Macarthur regions) based on the Fathers Plus model from the U.K.
- Facilitation of professional development groups for workers who work with men
- Negotiations to establish a young fathers group based on modified U.S. curriculums

RECOMMENDATIONS

Please see the section on 'Disseminating Information' in this report for activities engaged with the aim of improving conditions in Australia.

Further activity is being undertaken to lobby for more substantial commitments to the funding of capacity building structures. This is seen as critical if Australian workers and services are to be able to provide services for fathers.

It is also seen as essential that trained male workers be employed to work with fathers and that male-specific services be developed to encourage the participation of men and to adequately target services.

Further recommendations include that funding is given to capacity building organisations that support the face-to-face work, which has already been started via Men and Relationships and Families First funding.

The setting up of a peak body that is a fatherhood practitioners network to support workers, the development of know-how and sharing and distribution of information and resources.

For more information on current activity in Australia and overseas, and for further details on organisations and networks which can assist in the development of fatherhood activities, please contact:

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