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SEYCHELLES

GENDER SOCIALIZATION IN THE HOME:
ITS IMPACT ON BOYS' ACHIEVEMENT IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABO	Anse Boileau
ADB	African Development Bank
CARE	Committee For Awareness, Resilience & Education Against Substance Abuse
ECA	Extra Curricular Activities
EFA	Education For All
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HBS	Household Budget Survey
HDI	Human Development Index
HFC	Household Finance Corporation
HOD	Head of Department
IGCSE	International General Certificate of Secondary Education
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
MEHRD	Ministry of Employment and Human Resources Development
MHSD	Ministry of Health and Social Development
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MERP	Macro Economic Reform Programme
MOE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NSB	National Statistics Bureau
NYS	National Youth Service
PE	Physical Education
PSE	Personal and Social Education
PSO	Public Service Order
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SIDS	Small Island Developing State
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Executive Summary

1.   Background, Method and Rationale

Seychelles is a Small Island Developing country with a population of roughly 86,000 and the highest standard of living in Africa. Women have achieved almost full empowerment in public life. Although political representation is relatively low at 24%, women have many advantages over men exemplified by a life expectancy that exceeds that of men by 10 years. Women head 57% of all households, and 54% of them are not in a steady union with a man. Seventy-nine percent of all children are born out of wedlock, and divorce is on the rise. Some of the problems facing the Seychelles are domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse by men and teenage pregnancies.

The purpose of the study was to investigate and understand the process of gender socialization in a variety of Seychellois families from different socio economic and educational backgrounds and to identify those elements that could be impacting negatively on boys in schools. A second objective was to generate data which could guide schools, social workers, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other service providers. Research questions were framed to collect data on differential patterns of socialization of boys and girls in the home, conceptions of motherhood and fatherhood in Seychellois families, relevance and efficiency of parenting programs and parents' involvement at home and school and pupils' achievement and participation at school level.

The research project was conducted in two primary and two secondary schools in two districts on Mahé, the main island of Seychelles, during a three month period from end of March to end of June, 2009. It generated both qualitative and quantitative data through application of a questionnaire, focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with key informants. The scope and the results of the study were discussed with stakeholders on several occasions.

2. Exploring Boys' Underachievement in Schools

Over the last 8 to 10 years a consistent pattern of underachievement and under participation of boys as compared to girls in primary and secondary state schools has been highlighted in national examination reports and school behaviour and participation statistics. Manifestations of this malaise are evident in high rates of alcoholism and drug consumption among men, a growing incidence of domestic violence with men being the main perpetrators, and a lower life expectancy rate due to neglect of health issues. Seychelles lacks studies on socialization in gender role behaviour and construction of gender identities in the home. This study tries to fill the gap and complement a study of the Commonwealth Secretariat which looked strictly at in-school factors influencing performance.

3. Gender Socialization in the Home

Results of the study suggest that although boys appear to enjoy considerably more 'physical' freedom than the girls, they were more constrained to conform to 'masculine' gender identities which limited their academic and social development. Girls, except where careers are concerned, appeared to have wider choices to develop to their full potential. Girls are advantaged in having a greater number and selection of toys including those thought of as male specific, while very few boys possessed or played with dolls, for example. Girls also did a larger proportion of household chores and were less inhibited than boys in performing the whole range of chores including sweeping outside in the yard and going to the shop. Care giving tasks and washing clothes were not considered appropriate for boys and few boys engaged in those activities. It appears that girls find it easier to cross gender divides, while boys were restricted by homophobic fears.

Parents were more protective of their girls, because they feared their girls were vulnerable to sexual abuse, rape and pregnancy. Boys were considered more independent and they spent considerably more time away from home playing with friends. Boys generally had more leisure time. While parents were in favour of both boys and girls participating in sports and cultural activities at school level, they were more reluctant to allow girls' participation activities way from the school.

Interestingly, mothers stood out as being the main disciplinarians in the home. Data revealed that mothers were the dominant figure in the family and were heavily involved in household chores and child care. They participated to a fuller extent in all the child's activities and consequently had a closer relationship with their children and the school environment than the fathers. Gender roles are still divided along traditional lines. The emotionally distant father and the loving caring mother figures were very predominant images which were accepted by both parents.

Anger, hurt and antagonism marked descriptions of the opposite gender and relationships appeared to be tense and antagonistic. Women in dual career families seemed unable to negotiate more equitable sharing of responsibilities in the home because of cultural norms. Men interpreted themselves as helpless victims whose power had been eroded by women, government and society. Social services and the family tribunal were all considered to be pro-women. Interviews with parents and key informants and discussions with major stakeholders revealed that parenting programmes did not attract men, and men felt that both the methodology and content were more geared to the needs of women.

Correlation of achievement data with different dimensions of parenting suggests that in families where the biological father is present, students perform better. Children of parents who held egalitarian views and those who were better informed about the child and the school curriculum also performed better.

4.   Recommendations

The study makes recommendations including those proposed by stakeholders themselves. Major recommendations include dissemination of research findings; gender sensitization and training

for different target groups including teachers, parents, teacher trainers and service providers; integration of gender into all teacher training programs; review of parenting programs to respond to men's identified needs; gender audits of social and probationary services and a review of Personal and Social Education Programs (PSE) to challenge gender stereotypes in early stages of schooling. Recommendations to the Bank include further and more extensive research on causes for men's disempowerment both in the Seychelles and in other countries with similar problems, inclusion of the findings of this study in the new Seychelles education strategic plan and the on-going ADB supported study on the new university of Seychelles; awareness raising towards boys' under-achievement as a gender inequality that requires programmatic interventions, cooperation with other partners and other countries.

1. Background, Objectives and Method

1.1   Background

1.1.1 The research project entitled 'Gender Socialisation Socialization in the Home: Its Impact on Boys' Achievement in Primary and Secondary Schools' was conducted in two primary and two secondary schools in two districts on Mahé, the main island of Seychelles, during a three month period from March to June, 2009. As early as 2006, the Gender Secretariat in the Ministry of Health and Social Development (MHSD), had requested the Bank's assistance to address a perceived problem of men's disempowerment in Seychelles presumably linked to the great strides women had made in social and economic life. The project did not materialize but it is hoped that this small scale study which looks at early socialization patterns in the home will identify some of the risk factors for boys and provide early pointers of what may be happening to men in society at large. It will lay the foundation for a larger study on men's disempowerment and perhaps lead to project interventions to redress gender imbalances.

1.1.2 The present study complements an on-going Commonwealth Secretariat funded action research project which looks at in-school factors influencing boys' performance. Extending the study into the family will provide a richer understanding of gender dynamics at home and explore the interface between home and school.

1.2   Objectives of Study

1.2.1 The purpose of the present study is to investigate and understand the process of gender socialization in a variety of Seychellois families from different socio-economic and educational backgrounds by examining differential treatment of boys and girls in the home, and linking parents' beliefs, behaviours and parenting styles to boys' achievements. A second objective is to generate data which can guide schools, social workers, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other service providers in the development of quality parenting programs which will impact positively on schooling. A major assumption of the study is that educational processes and relationships might be intersecting with boys' position and upbringing within families, communities and society to perpetuate the reproduction of disempowered, gender identities.

1.2.2 Three major principles have guided the research; (i) the research is action-orientated and integrally linked to social change and seeks to improve the lives of the people researched; (ii) it is participative and seeks to involve all major stakeholders from the start and ensure that the results of the research are adequately disseminated; and (iii) the research uses a gender analysis framework which aims to transform gender identities and relations and promote greater gender equality and equity.

Box 1: Stakeholder Consultation

Prior to the start of the research, a workshop was organised for major stakeholders. The objectives of the workshop were to brief participants on the objectives and design of the research study, to gather information on challenges faced by parents and families, to explore their understanding of problems related to boys' underachievement and under participation in schools, to gather information on parenting activities and to assess how research findings could engage their interest and help them to improve their interventions. The stakeholders' workshop was held during half a day and drew together some 30 participants of mixed genders representing several organisations working with families and involved in developing parenting programs. The meeting commended the methodology of the study while acknowledging its complexity and limitations. Stakeholders' views were incorporated in the design of the study wherever appropriate.

The presentation of the Preliminary Findings of the Gender Socialization Project was held on Tuesday 9th June, 2009. Almost 100 participants including the Ministers for Education, Employment and Human Resources, and the Principal Secretaries for Education and Social Development as well as the Mayor of Victoria attended suggesting substantial stakeholder and public interest in the research findings. Plenary Discussions on 'Taboos, Homophobia and Boy's Achievement' and on 'Absent Fathers: Myth or Reality' led to a lively discussion and to recommendations such as the call for a review of parenting programs; public education programs, starting with family planning and antenatal services; promotion of public debates and the portrayal of positive fathering models; review of the life skills program taught in schools; the inclusion of issues raised in the research in teacher training; further research and sensitizing women towards giving men more fathering space.

1. 3   Methodology

1.3.1 This study focused on two primary and two secondary schools in two districts of the main island Mahe: Anse Boileau and Mont Fleuri. In both cases, the study focused on Primary 1 and Secondary 1 students. The two grades represent the beginnings of primary and secondary education respectively and are two important milestones in a child's life where identities are formed and negotiated and decisions about career choices are starting to be made. The same schools and grades were the subject of a school based study on boys' underachievement funded by the Commonwealth Secretariat which concentrated on in-school factors (see 3.1.8). While small in scope this study is meant to complement and add value to the Commonwealth study by carrying the study results of the pupils and teacher based research into the families.

1.3.2   The major part of the data was obtained through student, parents and resource persons. Students provided school-based achievement data and 377 parents responded to a questionnaire taken home by the students addressing the following themes: home-based patterns of rewards and punishment, children's career choices and expectations, parent-children relationships and children's

involvement in school and recreational activities. (see Annex 1 for details on the research process and the socio-economic characteristics of the sample.)

1.3.3 Understanding home gender socialization processes is a relatively complex issue and this is the first such study conducted in the Seychelles. To ensure a high degree of validity and reliability in the study and to triangulate evidence, the following methods were adopted: (i) focus group discussions with other parents (120) who had children in the four schools; (ii) in-depth interviews with key informants (19) to gather broader viewpoints as a means of explaining common perceptions, myths and stereotypes. The key informants were selected from among political and church leaders, people holding key posts of responsibility in government departments/agencies dealing with family and social affairs and representatives of NGOs and civil society with hands on experience of working with families at grass root level.

1.3.4 The study was largely qualitative in nature but the parent questionnaire and the students' achievement data provided some quantitative data. Validity of the research data was ensured through the selection of a fair balance of parents who have children in the school. For the focus group discussion, they were selected on the basis that they had both boys and girls to allow comparison to be made in their responses. In addition, the piloting instruments allowed amendments to be made and triangulation of instruments was used as a means of verifying and cross checking evidence.

1.3.5   The study had three main limitations. The first one relates to the small sample size. The fact that only four schools were involved limits the possibility of generalising the findings. Having targeted *all* parents of P1 and S1 however ensures that a good cross section of the parent population from different socio economic backgrounds is included in the study. Secondly, since it was not practical to live and participate in families, most of the data were generated by parents' themselves. This threatens the validity of the results to some extent. A third limitation is that this study lacks the students' perspectives.

1.4   Structure of Report

1.4.1 The report is structured as follows: Chapter one explains the background, objectives and methodology of the study. Chapter 2 places the study in context: It gives information on demographic characteristics of households and families in Seychelles and highlights some of the challenges being faced by families. It also describes some aspects of Seychellois gender relations. Chapter 3 explores the issue of boys' underachievement and the wider issue of men's disempowerment. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study in relation to the four research questions by drawing on all sets of data. Chapter 5 makes a series of recommendations to the government and the Bank.

Chapter 2: Country Context

2.1   Country Profile

2.1.1 Seychelles is a Small Island Developing State situated 1,600 km east of mainland Africa. It has a total land mass of 455 square kilometres and consists of an archipelago of 115 islands

spanning a vast 1, 340 000 square kilometres across the Exclusive Economic Zone in the Indian Ocean. With a population estimated to be only 86, 956 in 2008 (approx. 49% female and 51% male), Seychelles is the smallest sovereign state of Africa. The most heavily populated islands are Mahé, Praslin, and La Digue, with the vast majority of the national population residing on the largest island of Mahé (approx. 87%). The Seychellois population is of mixed origins from Africa, Asia and Europe with approximately 87% of the population of Roman Catholic faith.

2.1.2 The people of Seychelles enjoy one of the highest standards of living in Africa and have a generous social protection and welfare system, which provides free education and health benefits. Seychelles has achieved a high human development status according to the UNDP Human Development Report 2007/8, with a HDI value of 0.843 and a ranking of 50/177 countries, making it the highest ranking of African countries. However, it is important to note that following the recent economic recession this value will undoubtedly fall as the GDP per capita which stood at US$ 11, 067 up until 2005 fell to an indicative value of US$ 10, 671 in 2008, after recording a negative growth of -0.9% for the first time since 2004. Additionally the floatation of the local currency since November 2008 resulted in an approximate devaluation of 69% of the value of the Seychelles Rupee.

2.2   Position of Women

2.2.1 Seychelles is one of the best examples of a country where women have met most of their basic needs and have achieved almost full practical empowerment in the public sphere, with constitutional and equal rights to work, education, health, vote, land ownership and inheritance. In fact, it can be said that Seychelles is a country where women and girls have many advantages over men and boys. The significant difference in life expectancy at birth for women (77.7 years) and men (68.9 years) is an indication of this. Gender gaps are perhaps particularly glaring in the education sector, where while girls and boys have almost equal and full primary school enrolments ratios with excellent completion rates, major discrepancies have been recorded in academic performance. Differences in completion rates of girls and boys at secondary level have also been recorded, with more than twice as many boys than girls dropping out of school before the completion of their fifth (non-compulsory) year at secondary level.

2.2.2 The Seychelles economy is focused primarily on service sector industries which are female dominated. For example, as the largest employer, Government was in December 2008 made up of 62% female public servants. However, despite their comparative advantages within the education system, women continue to be concentrated in lower cadres (secretaries, clerks, cleaners) as well as in certain fields (nursing, teaching and social work). The Public Service Order upholds an equal pay for equal work policy, however.

2.2.3 Women appear to be highly visible in public life because of the smallness of the country but their full participation in decision-making processes at political and administrative levels has not yet been achieved in spite of academic achievements, greater economic independence and the facilitative environment provided by government. In 2009, only 24% of Members of Parliament were women (8 out of 34) and 28% of the Ministers (2 out of 7) below target of the SADC countries of 30% by 2005 and 50% by 2015. However, women constitute 35% of the Principal Secretaries, 60% of District Administrators and 55% of Directors in the public service.

2.3   Demographic Characteristics of Households and Families in Seychelles

2.3.1 The character of Seychellois families has changed significantly in the last fifteen years. With contributing factors such as the provision of free family planning services and access to free education, the rise in female labour participation, the growth of the service led economy, as well as the rising cost of living, women have been choosing to have fewer and fewer children. Since the 1970s, the Total Fertility Rate has dropped from 5.6 children per woman to only 2.24 in 2007. This is supported by statistics from the Household Budget Survey 2006/07, which established that of the estimated 26,215 households in Seychelles, the average household size has now decreased to only 3.7 persons in 2007 compared to 4.1 and 4.3 in 2000 and 1993 respectively, indicating a downward trend in family size. The average family type has now moved from the traditional large extended family to nuclear and single-parent family units while families of 3 to 4 members have increased from 32.0% in 1993 to 40.5% in 2007.

2.3.2 Along with the declining household size, there has also been a steady increase in the number of female-headed households, from 51% in 1993 to 57% in 2007. Furthermore, statistics indicate a predominance of single female-headed families, with 54% of female household heads reporting to be *not in union*, compared to male household heads (66%) who were reported to be *in union.* A significant proportion of extended families are headed by elderly women. As of 2008, one in three marriages ends up in divorce and many women choose never to marry.

2.3.3 Another trend is that 79% of children in the Seychelles are born to parents who are not married and 18% are not acknowledged by their fathers (2007). A significant proportion of children live within families where the head of the family is not married (66.4%). The growing numbers of married couples seeking divorce has more than tripled in the past 20 years from 34 to 145 registered divorces in 1998 and 2008 respectively. Only a little over than half (53.1%) of children live with both of their biological parents. Single-parent families are predominantly female (93.1%) compared to children who live with their father only (2.7%). A significant number of children do not live with either of their biological parents (7.7%). Shifts in family structures and the increase in the number of working mothers has led to and will continue to lead to a dependence on outside support networks for the caring of children. The move away from extended family structures results in the potential loss of readily available free childcare and the moral and traditional values passed down from grandparents.

2.4   Challenges facing the Seychelles

2.4.1 The implementation of the second Macro-Economic Reform Programme (MERP) in November 2008 has impacted heavily on families as the cost of living has risen sharply as a consequence with an inflation rate of 44.1% in April 2009. This has and will continue to exacerbate poverty, domestic violence, alcohol/drug abuse and prostitution. The newly established Social Welfare Agency has between November 2008 and January 2009 allocated 37% of its budget to supplementary benefits, 21% to unemployment benefits, and 42% to medical benefits. The majority of applicants (68%) are female, and single-parents.

2.4.2 Statistics from various service providers prove that domestic violence is a significant and growing problem faced by many families in Seychelles. Research conducted by the MHSD in 2006 estimated that in Seychelles one in four women and two in nine men have experienced

moderate physical violence by an intimate partner at some point in their life. Whilst the findings highlighted a surprising number of male victims of domestic violence, analysis showed that the consequences of violence were more serious for female victims. Risk factors of domestic violence included presence of children, infidelity, violent past/childhood, full-time employment, alcohol consumption, unmarried co-habitation and personal beliefs.

2.4.3 Alcohol abuse (particularly locally brewed alcohol) amongst older men and drug abuse (particularly heroin) amongst younger men are common problems crippling many families in the Seychelles. A study on vendors and users of *Baka* and *Lapire* conducted in 2005 by the MHSD confirmed that these local home brews were preferred by low-income, less educated, single, older men with children, who visit local sheds to drink and socialise on a daily basis. The Drug and Alcohol Council has reported that drug consumption trends are changing from the use of marijuana to heroin and poly-drugs (cocktails of ecstasy, heroin, cocaine and phencyclidine). The records of the Mont Royale Rehabilitation Centre recorded primary substance abuse shifting from 47% cannabis in 2006 to 50% heroin in 2008 amongst male patients, with a minority of female patients (12% and 14% respectively). In addition, alcohol and drug abuse have also recently become a concern for children, with children representing at least 10% of the centre's patients.

2.4.4 Even though progress has been made in tackling HIV/AIDS, (national policy, National Council and Trust Fund, National Strategic Plan, and Committee), prevalence rates continue to grow at an alarming rate. In 2008, the Communicable Disease Control Unit recorded 45 new HIV infections (27 males and 18 females) cumulating the total to 378 (214 males; 164 females) since the first case was discovered in 1987. The majority of infections are recorded within heterosexual intercourse.

2.4.5 Teenage pregnancy is a priority area for the MHSD. High prevalence of teenage pregnancy has been related to the lack of harmonisation of laws regarding the age of consent for sex (15 years) and the age of consent for reproductive health services (18 years). This means that youth aged 15 to 17 can legally consent to sex but cannot access contraception and reproductive health advice without parental consent, leaving them vulnerable not only to unwanted pregnancies, but also to STIs and HIV/AIDS. Despite education campaigns, the TFR among teenagers aged 15 to 19 increased in the past twenty years from 0.052 in 1998 to 0.06 in 2008. The total number of abortions has also increased. According to a study carried out by the MHSD, at least 10% of young women have had an abortion by the time they reach 20 years of age, and over 20% had one by the time they reach 24.

2.4.6 The unemployment rate has increased from 1.0% in December 2008 to 4.4% in February 2009. As of April 2009, 57% of the 1,876 active job seekers were women, with the majority younger than 30 years and with junior to senior secondary level of education from service, production and clerical occupational groups. According to the 2006/7 HBS, women made up 23% of government employees against 11.9 % of men and they close to doubled male employees as service, market and sales workers. Women dominate among clerks (83%), while men dominate agriculture and fisheries work, craft and related trades workers and machine and plant operators (69.4, 83.7% and 87%) respectively. The labour force survey of 2005 suggests that women dominate in the tertiary sector while men dominate the primary and secondary sectors. In the government sector women make up almost twice the number of male employees and in the

education, health, social and related sectors 5790 female employees dwarfed 1089 male employees in 2007.

2.4.7 Despite their better school performance women tend to concentrate in expendable positions, earning less pay and receiving less prestige and job security. Men outnumbered women more then fourfold among the self-employed and three times as many men as women are employers in 2002. Seventy percent of the participants in the Voluntary Departure Scheme as part of the government downsizing exercise were women and since the service sector is predominantly female the global financial crisis and declining tourism figures in the Seychelles affect mostly women.

3. Exploring Issues of Boys' Underachievement in Schools

3.1   The Education System and Gender Inequality

3.1.1 Education is a high government priority. Free education is available to all children for a period of ten years. Pre-school is of two years' duration for all children aged 3½ to 5½ years. Although it is not compulsory, almost all children in this age group attend. Primary education lasts six years (P1 – P6) and is compulsory for all children. A system of zoning makes it compulsory for children to attend school in the family's district of residence. Secondary school is of five years' duration (S1-S5) and is compulsory up to S4. Further education and training are also free and provided in a number of institutions. Plans are underway to set up the first University of Seychelles and the first undergraduate degree courses in education have been launched. Sending students overseas for studies places a heavy burden on Seychelles balance of payments.

3.2.2 The total number of students in full time education in 2009 is 21, 141. Almost equal numbers of boys and girls attend school. Girls continue to be grossly under-represented in the technical and vocational areas in spite of their good academic performance and the open-door policy. Equality of access to education for boys and girls at both primary and secondary levels of education has been achieved in Seychelles. Gender equality does not only imply that girls and boys have equal access to schooling. It also means that the processes of schooling must ensure that boys and girls are able to access the full range of opportunities and experiences that are available to expand their capacities and develop their potential so that they can contribute to the development of a more just and compassionate society. This dimension of gender equality is less explored and raises questions about the role of education and schooling processes in promoting gender equality.

3.2.3 The Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report 2003/2004 highlighted the fact that the achievement of full gender equality in education implies: (i) equality of opportunities in the sense that girls and boys are offered the same chances to access school, i.e. parents, teachers and society at large have no gender-biased attitudes in that respect; (ii) equality in the learning process, i.e. girls and boys receive the same treatment and follow the same curricula, enjoy teaching methods and teaching tools free of stereotypes and gender bias, are offered academic orientation and counselling not affected by gender biases, profit from the same quantity and quality of appropriate educational infrastructures: (iii) equality of outcomes, i.e. learning

achievements, length of school careers, academic qualifications and diplomas would not differ by gender; and (iv) equality of external results, i.e. job opportunities, the time needed to find a job after leaving full time education, the earnings of men and women with similar qualifications and experiences must be equal. Having achieved the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of equal access to education, it is this second dimension of equality as described in UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report that Seychelles now needs to turn its attention to.

3.2.4 The issue of boys' relative underachievement and under participation at both primary and secondary levels in state schools has been a growing concern for a number of years. National examination results and gender studies conducted in primary and secondary schools in Seychelles revealed that girls outperform boys at school in all subjects across the curriculum, participate more actively in extracurricular activities and occupy leadership positions such as prefect roles more readily than boys. In general, girls appear to be more adapted to schooling while boys have a higher dropout rate, higher levels of truancy and a greater incidence of discipline problems in secondary schools especially (Pardiwalla, 2007).

3.2.5 Figure 1 shows the difference in means of girls and boys in six examinable subjects in the primary six national examinations from the years 2000 to 2008. The graph reveals a consistent mean difference of almost 10% and more in exam marks over the last eight years with the year 2005 only recording a narrowed gap of 8.5%.

Figure 1: Mean Difference in P6 National Examinations from 2000 - 2008
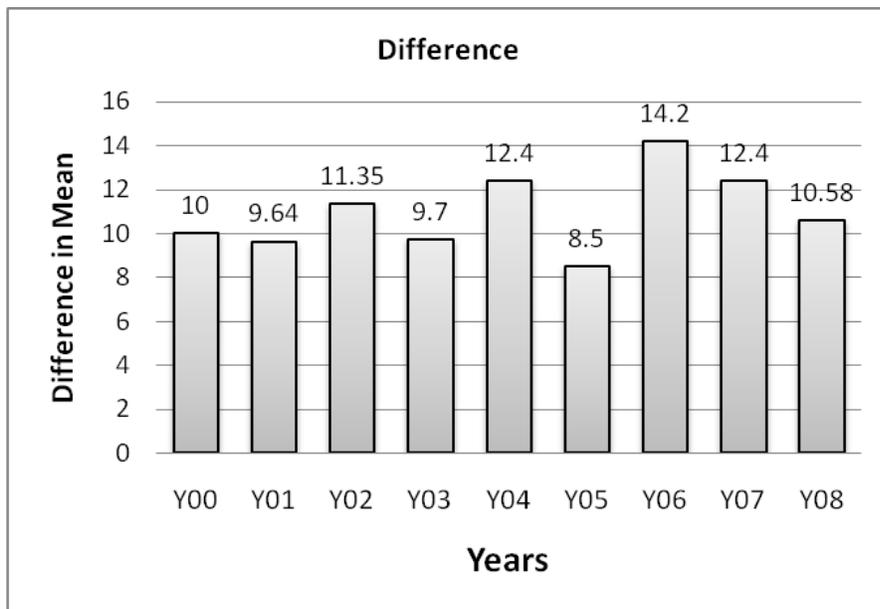
Girls also outperform boys in all subjects across the curriculum. The gap is wider in the language subjects such as English, French and Creole but is also apparent in subjects like Mathematics and Sciences, which are considered to be traditionally male subjects.

Figure 2: Mean Difference between Boys and Girls in P6 National Examinations
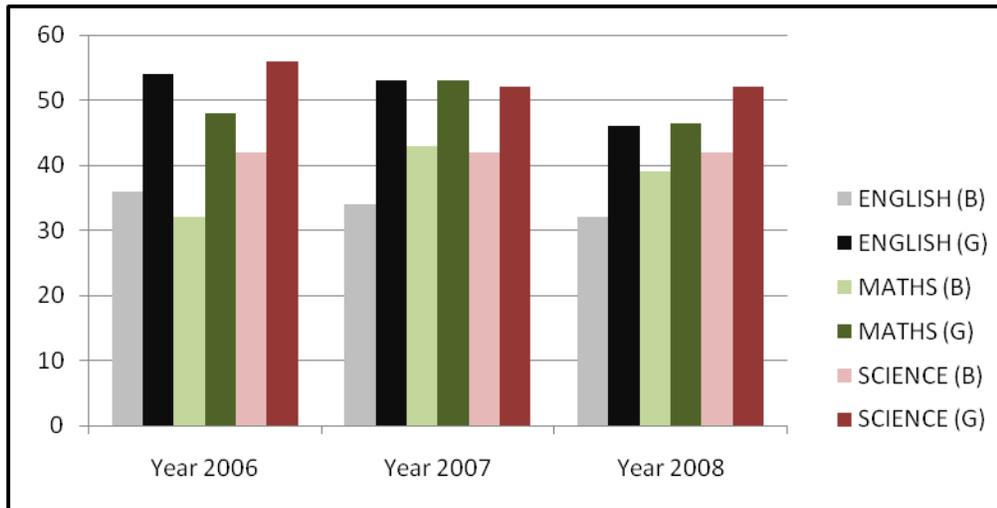
3.1.6 This pattern of under-participation and under-achievement of boys is repeated at the secondary level. Girls record higher rates of participation and better performance in the Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examinations which students sit for at the end of the secondary cycle (3.48 passes for girls against 2.89 for boys in 2007). The mean number of subjects in which the girls achieved principal passes is higher than that of the boys in all cases. Girls also achieved higher results. In 2007, thirty percent of girls achieved principal passes in 4 or more subjects against only 17% of the boys. Boys have been observed to have an overall reluctance to participate in school activities. In 2009 in Anse Boileau Primary School, only 115 boys against 160 girls participated in clubs, and they participated in sports related clubs only. This pattern is similar in almost all schools.

3.1.7 Some attempts have been made to understand the reasons for this relative underachievement. In 2002, the Ministry of Education conducted a short research study 'Gender differences in Educational Achievement of Boys and girls in primary Schools in Seychelles' in selected primary schools to explore the issue. The study revealed differential treatment of boys and girls in schools and higher expectations for girls on the part of teachers. In 2006, Seychelles participated in a Commonwealth Secretariat funded qualitative research project on gender analysis of schools and classroom processes designed to explore the extent of gender bias in secondary schools in six Commonwealth countries of diverse backgrounds with gender disparities both in favour of boys and girls. A detailed analysis of classroom and school processes was carried out in three out of the ten secondary state schools and one private school in Seychelles. Four areas of school were identified for in-depth analysis 1) attitudes 2) school environments 3) curriculum and materials and 4) teaching, learning and classroom processes.

3.1.8 The results contained in a Commonwealth Secretariat publication entitled 'Exploring the bias: Gender and Stereotyping in Secondary schools' revealed that many school processes and procedures, teacher attitudes and expectations were heavily gendered and were seen to be working against large numbers of boys thus affecting their participation and outcomes at secondary school level. The study revealed for example that girls were the preferred gender at school, that boys were considered lazy and irresponsible and lacking in motivation. Teachers

held high expectations of girls while boys were systematically stigmatized and labeled as being lazy and irresponsible. Many boys were clustered in the low ability classes because of ability streaming practices. Secondary schools it would appear reinforced gender stereotyping instead of actively challenging the existing status quo.

3.1.9 Although the study was restricted to in-school factors, students were questioned about study and leisure patterns at home, parental support for homework and parental expectations of school and careers. Students pointed out that parents tended to be more protective towards the girls, and although they held high expectations for both girls and boys, girls received more supervision and help with homework. Boys had more freedom, did less work at home and had a more lenient and unstructured environment. The overall impression was that girls in Seychellois homes were being better prepared for schooling.

3.1.10 These findings are also confirmed in a recent Child Well-Being Study (2008) published by the MHSD. The study was initiated as part of the activities for the 2005 national theme "Our Children, Our Treasure, Our Future" and confirms that parents are more protective of girls than boys, with 69% of girls reporting that their parents know where they are all the time compared to 57% of boys. Interviews held with students in the Commonwealth study also revealed that the students themselves had very stereotyped notions of masculinity and femininity. The image of the man as the provider and protector was deeply entrenched in boys and girls. Girls were positioned as weak and dependent despite the positive image projected by the girls in school. Moreover, while girls described themselves using a wide range of attributes, the boys appeared to be more limited in their choice of acceptable roles (see Annex 2, Table 1).The findings also suggested that the home may be an important agency for early socialization and the construction of male and female identities.

3.2   Research on Socialization in the Home

3.2.1 As part of the Commonwealth study, an action research pilot project aimed at reducing some of the disparities and creating more gender friendly school and classroom environments showed encouraging results. The strategies employed included more gender responsive teaching and learning, a more boy friendly school ethos and mentoring programs for boys. Attempts were also made to engage parents in the project. However, research to guide school parenting programs is lacking and teachers tend to blame the home for the underachievement of boys. Home-school links are very weak. Nonetheless, a number of international research studies have shown that although school is an important socialising agent, it is in the family where boys and girls learn values and norms which will determine the way they experience and define masculinity and femininity. Children of different sexes are socialised into their gender roles from birth and parents are the first socialisation agents. Different societies have their own cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity. Research into socialization patterns in the home thus is a natural extension of the research project commissioned by the Commonwealth Secretariat. Extending the study into the family provides a richer understanding of gender dynamics at home and the interface between home and school.

3.2.2 Some older research attempted to study families from historical and anthropological perspectives. Maiche (2003), CEFRAD (2002) and Chang-Him (2000) relate weak family structures to Seychelles' history of slavery. The authors claim that slavery prevented healthy family values, and constructed a culture of irresponsible sexual attitudes, weak paternal responsibility and a weak culture of marriage. Bwana and Bwana (1996), suggested that the "culture" of casual relationships can be traced back to slave masters having children with female slaves. Moreover, marriage between slaves was forbidden giving rise to cohabitation or '*concubinage*'. Even after the abolition of slavery, women living in poverty were often forced to have multiple partners in order to sustain their families' needs. Unfortunately, the already mentioned recent Child Well-being study does not look at gender role socialization patterns at all.

3.3   Masculinity Crisis?

3.3.1 The wider issue of men's disempowerment has become a growing concern amongst service providers and the society at large. Apart from the academic underachievement of boys, the growing problem of domestic violence which affects both women and men as victims, alcoholism amongst older men, substance abuse (especially heroin) amongst young men and a rising incidence of male suicide are some manifestations of a growing malaise among men that give cause for concern. The 10 years difference in life expectancy between men and women suggests that men live unhealthy lifestyles and neglect health care. These factors are seen as aspects of a growing crisis of masculinity which might be related to the great strides women have made in social and economic life.

3.3.2 Seychellois men have been portrayed as irresponsible fathers, living on the margins of family life and uninvolved in the lives of their children (Benedict & Benedict) and they have been identified as the main perpetrators of domestic violence. This image has persisted over 30 years and has fuelled negative media portrayals showing them secondary to woman in care-giving roles. Recent political speeches and church messages have called on men to become more responsible fathers. The need to 'reconstruct' fatherhood has been echoed by government agencies and numerous NGOs working with families. More understanding of men's disempowerment and its repercussions on society is urgently needed.

4. Gender Socialization in the Home

This chapter gives an account of the major findings of the study under three themes defined by the research questions. The three themes are (i) differential treatment and parental beliefs about boys and girls and their effects; (ii) conceptions of motherhood and fatherhood; and (iii) relevance and efficiency of parenting programs. Quantitative data derived from the questionnaire were compared with and complemented with qualitative data from focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. Findings and recommendations are working hypotheses which need to be tested with further research based on a more inclusive and representative sample.

4.1 Parental Beliefs/Expectations about Boys and Girls

Toys
4.1.1 Parents were asked to indicate the kind of toys possessed by their sons and daughters from among a selected list of eight toys with some like dolls and cars considered to be gender specific in the local culture. While boys have more toys at primary level, this trend reverses at secondary level. Overall, parents are more generous with girls who possess more toys than boys (6.0 mean for girls as opposed to 5.8 mean for boys). With regard to the types of toys, books (97%), balls (93%), and Lego (88%), appear to be the most popular toys in the home. However, dolls are very gender specific and strictly offered to girls only. Only 16% of respondents said their sons possessed a doll and just 0.5% indicated that their girls never had a doll. None of the only toys are the exclusive domain of boys or girls although toys like videogames and mp3 players are more popular with boys. Sixty per cent of parents said their girls had a toy car. Books, Lego, musical instruments and bicycles are popular both with boys and girls.

Table 1: Distribution of Chores between Girls and Boys

Chores	Boys	Girls
Sweep inside the house	0.88	0.94
Sweep outside the house	0.88	0.87
Dust the furniture	0.67	0.87
Clean the windows & louvers	0.52	0.71
Look after the younger kids	0.40	0.59
Go to the shop	0.80	0.76
Take care of animals	0.64	0.47
Wash own clothes	0.32	0.59
Wash clothes for the others in the family	0.07	0.29
Look after an elderly person	0.16	0.27
Help with the cooking	0.59	0.64

Distribution of Household Chores
4.1.2 Parents were asked to indicate whether their child did each of the following household chores on a regular basis, rarely or never. The majority of both girls and boys participate in various household chores. Fifty nine percent of respondents indicated that their child was highly involved in chores. Only 6 children did not do any household work. Girls did a significantly larger proportion of the household chores (6.8 mean for girls and 5.9 mean for boys).

4.1.3 When distribution of chores is compared, we find that the most common household chores for girls is sweeping inside the house and for the boys sweeping inside and outside in the yard. Girls do the major dusting and cleaning tasks as well and in addition occupy themselves with care giving activities like looking after siblings and to a lesser extent looking after the elderly. Boys look after animals presumably because it is an outside chore. Boys and girls participate to a more equal extent in chores like going to the shops, sweeping outside in the yard and helping out with cooking. Doing laundry is considered to be a very feminine task with only 8 boys doing it on a regular basis.

4.1.4   Household tasks appear to be quite heavily gendered with the larger share of the responsibility being delegated to girls. The inside/outside divide is not strongly evident and girls participate in the whole range of household chores as compared to the boys. Boys are more restricted in the choice of household tasks. Focus group discussions confirm this finding. Both fathers and mothers concurred that boys are valued because they can 'help with hard physical work like lifting heavy loads' and doing 'repair work on the roof'. They were active and adventurous and could fend for themselves ('*debrouyer'*). Boys tended to imitate their fathers.

4.1.5   Girls were valued because they were more responsible and they 'tended to stay at home'. They were helpers and frequently acted as 'substitute' mothers. One mother explained that 'the day a daughter is born, you see a mother'. Girls were also said to have a "special homely role as stated in the bible". Girls were considered to be more sensitive and considerate towards the elderly, for example, and they were the first to arrive home after school compared to boys who roamed around. Parents thought that girls did not fight like the boys and were more obedient. They listened to their mothers. They were also more hard-working than the boys who tended to take a laid back attitude and avoid work ('*kale'*). Key informants confirmed that a traditional division of labour was very prevalent in many homes with boys expected to do the outside work like sweeping the yard, and heavy work around the house, while the girls did most of the inside work including cleaning the house, cooking and washing for the family as well as caring for the siblings. Girls were also given a larger proportion of household chores.

4.1.6   Attitudes that value girls and that might cause parents to protect and cherish them might be related to the fact that in this matrifocal society, girls will stay much longer close to their mothers. Girls form a life-long bond with their maternal family and they are for many elderly women, the most reliable source of support.

Table 2: Involvement in after School Activities by Gender

After school activities	Male	Female
Watch Television	93	90
Do Homework	85	94
Play alone or with friends	92	77
Go to a friend's home to play	44	31
Do household chores	57	56
Go to a teacher for private lessons	4 (16)	15 (30)
Do community work	6	6
Participate in sports activities	36	29
Talk to friends on mobile	12	12

Involvement in After School Activities
4.1.7   Parents were asked to indicate the type of activities in which their children were involved in after school.   Both leisure and study activities were included in the list. Questionnaire data show that both girls and boys are involved in a range of after school activities. The most popular after school activities are doing home work and watching television both for girls and boys. Doing community work is the least popular. Only 6% of parents claimed their children are involved in community work. Boys go out to meet friends more often than

girls and more boys are involved in sports activities. Girls spend more time doing school related activities such as homework and private lessons than do boys. Significantly more boys are involved in leisure activities after school, 2.7% compared to 2.3% for girls.

4.1.8   Key informant data support the finding that boys spend more time outside the home. Both parents were felt to be more protective of their girls believing them to be more fragile and 'vulnerable'. Stricter curfew times were imposed on girls while boys were allowed to hang out with friends until late with no supervision. Parents believed nothing could happen to boys; they were treated like 'little men' or adults. It was only recently that parents had become more worried about boys because of the increase in drug abuse among young males. Their greatest concern was that girls could fall pregnant or be persuaded into prostitution for material gain. For those reasons girls were expected to spend more time indoors studying, reading, or dialoguing with mother. Boys had a freer, less structured timetable with fewer obligations to do household chores. Mothers were more tolerant of boys' unruly behaviour. As one informant said:

"Girls are more protected. Parents (mostly mothers) make sure they are well taken care of and are busy. They are careful when giving girls permission for church and club outings. They will request signed letters and find out about people doing the activity to make sure girls are safe. Their one great fear is that the girls will get pregnant – [this is] not the case for boys. From 4-7 pm, you will not see many girls on the streets by the roadside. Boys are not kept busy. The problem is compounded in flats – boys are left to [their] own devices".

4.1.9   Informants also stated that mothers spent more time counselling girls because of concerns for their safety. Consequently girls were given better guidance on sexuality issues. Boys were brought up to think they should be strong and brave and not to cry in front of others or to show emotions. After the age of five, many mothers did not believe that boys should be hanging around in their *'zip'* (skirts) and disapproved of outward shows of affection like hugging. One informant mentioned that this suppression of emotions produced men who were 'poor communicators and weak in emotional strength' while another informant explained that the fact that boys stayed behind in camps to hug you was proof that they lacked affection at home. One informant went further to consider the home environment as being unfriendly to boys and men:

"Homes are not boy friendly since they are cluttered with frilly stuff and ornaments. Boys are not allowed to touch them in case they break them. Not enough attention is given to boys' personal hygiene and therefore mothers don't allow boys to sit in the sitting room. There is no space for boys - they are pushed out into the street. They are not allowed to bring friends home because of 'bad influences'. Parents are glad to have them out of the way. They get rid of the boys. There is no supervision."

Feelings about Children's Involvement in Extracurricular Activities
4.1.10 Parents were asked their feelings about boys' and girls' involvement in a range of sporting and cultural activities at school and district level. Table 3 shows their reactions. The large majority of parents are favourable to both girls and boys participating in sports (92%) and cultural activities (84%) at school level. They are also not averse to children joining social (63%) and religious groups (83%) in the community. Fewer parents however were in favour of allowing their children to participate in sports (47%) and cultural activities (43%) at district level.

Table 3: Percentage of Parents Agreeing to Children Participating in Activities

Agreement of participants	Male	Female
Sports activities at school	95	89
Cultural activities at school	89	81
Religious activities in the community	84	84
Sports activities in the district	54	42
Cultural activities in the district	45	41
Social groups/movements	67	59
Religious groups/movements	85	79

4.1.11   Parents also had more reservations about participation in after school activities for girls presumably because of concerns for their safety. This is more evident at Primary 1 level. It would appear that parents are much more protective of girls even at the early age of 5 to 6. Fifty eight percent of parents with girls disagree to them participating in sports at district level compared to parents with boys (46%). 59.4% of parents disagree to their girls taking part in cultural activities at district level compared to 54.1% of parents with boys. In focus group discussions, mothers and fathers expressed anxieties about not being able to give girls the required protection because of strong outside influences and consumerist temptations. This may explain the strong wish to keep girls within the home.

Use of Rewards and Punishments
4.1.12 Parents rewarded their children through verbal praise, hugging, buying gifts and fulfilling special wishes. Both girls and boys were rewarded in all the above ways and there did not appear to be major differences in rewards given to boys and girls. Financial rewards were a slightly less popular way of rewarding children, buying gifts and hugging the most popular.

Table 4: Parents responding 'Not Applicable' to the following types of Rewards (%)

Rewards	Male	Female
Verbal praise	10	10
Hug of caress	2	7
Financial reward	31	29
Buying gift or present	6	4
Fulfil a wish	10	7

4.1.13   Table 5 below shows that both fathers and mothers are involved in giving rewards but mothers appear to be more lavish in the giving of rewards. Buying gifts and fulfilling wishes are the two rewards which both parents tend to do often. When the task is not shared by both parents, it is the mothers who do more of the rewarding. The fathers' most popular way of rewarding is financial reward and hugging. Mothers are strong on hugging and giving verbal praise and weak on giving financial rewards.

Table 5: Parents' Rewarding Style

Rewards	Both	Fathers	Mothers
Verbal praise	70	4	16
Hug or caress	71	8	18
Financial reward	48	11	7
Buying gift or present	76	3	17
Fulfil a wish	77	3	13

Table 6: Parents' style of punishment

Punishments	Both	Fathers	Mothers
Verbal reprimand	53	10	16
Ban a TV	29	10	21
Grounding	33	9	14
Locking up in room	2	2	5
Confiscating something valuable	10	3	8
Discontinue pocket money	6	3	6
Shouting	32	10	25
Slapping/Beating	30	4	22
Giving extra work	12	5	15

Punishments

4.1.14 The most common punishments as shown in Table 6, are verbal reprimands and shouting, and to a lesser extent banning of TV and slapping/beating. Very few parents use locking up in a room as a form of punishment. Confiscating valuables, discontinuing pocket money and giving extra work were not commonly meted out as punishments.

Parents' Choice of Careers for Boys and Girls

4.1.15 Parents' choices reflect very stereotyped attitudes about appropriate jobs for men and women and mirror the current labour market trends. Over 80% of parents disagree to their girls taking up careers in engineering and construction. Other career choices not acceptable to girls are fishing, sailing and labouring. Being a Captain and a pilot are also not considered desirable for girls. Care giving jobs are considered more appropriate for women and over 65% of parents would not like their sons to become nurses or primary school teachers. The perception in Seychellois society is that early childhood and primary education are closely associated with nurturing and care giving and thus not appropriate for men.

Parental Beliefs and Expectations

4.1.16 Parents were also questioned on the qualities they admired in boys and girls in FGDs to determine whether parents valued one gender over the other. Data from FGDs reveal that parents placed a very high premium on traditional qualities such as obedience, respect, politeness and hard work for both girls and boys. These seem to be strongly influenced by strict Christian religious upbringing and doctrine. References to Christian values and morality were evident in all group discussions. Qualities which parents admired in boys were independence, strength,

courage and open-mindedness. Fathers and mothers stressed qualities related to physical strength in boys and mothers appreciated it when boys helped with heavy work at home like cleaning the garden and the fish. Some mothers also admired the boys for their close bonding to mothers, their sense of 'protectiveness 'towards mothers and the fact that they replaced the father in the home. Girls were admired for their responsibility, respectfulness, obedience, caring and affectionate temperament, their attachment to family and their serious attitude to studies. Girls were more open and communicated better with their parents. Girls were also described as being more fashionable, neat, clean and orderly. Girls were valued around the house 'because it was expected that they did the domestic tasks.'

4.1.17 When asked to what degree they would be discouraged if their child did not achieve a number of life goals, parents appeared to have greater ambitions for their boys and would be more disappointed if they did not do university studies, get a career of their choice, get married and have a family. This result can be interpreted in two ways. One that parents are more ambitious for their boys and do not consider university studies and careers to be important choices for girls preferring to have the girls close to them at home or secondly that since girls are more goal oriented and hardworking than the boys, they are consequently more worried for their boys knowing that the girls will do well in any case.

Table 7: Parent discouragement if their child fails to achieve certain goals

	Boys	Girls
Get a career of their choice	2.37	2.33
Earn a lot of money	2.59	2.49
Live a luxurious life	1.79	1.78
Get married	1.65	1.74
Have a family	1.95	1.91
So university studies	2.34	2.12

4.1.18 It is clear from FGDs that parents are more worried for the boys' future. Parents had similar wishes for both girls and boys. The majority of parents wanted their children to study hard at school, have a good education and career, a happy family life and personal happiness. A major preoccupation was that their children should aspire to 'have a better life than they had'. They would push both girls and boys to do their maximum and take responsibility. Many parents wished their boys especially to lead respectful and spiritual lives, to be more serious in their studies and to be able to fight negative influences and bad company. They wanted their children to respect their parents and stay within the law.

Egalitarian Views
4.1.19 Parents were asked a series of questions on whether boys and girls should receive the same punishments and rewards, follow the same rules, do the same chores, and later in life same work. An 'egalitarian views' index was composed from five items (see table 8) below and the mean variable obtained. Results show that both parents claim to be rather progressive in their views with mean scores of 3.75 for fathers and 3.83 for mothers. Fathers are more conservative than mothers. Table 8 shows that parents have more reservations about boys and girl doing the same work and being punished in the same way. They are more in agreement with boys and girls doing the same chores, following the same rules and being rewarded in the same manner.

Table 8: Mean Variable for Egalitarian Scores

Equality scores (Based on 5 items)	Fathers	Mothers
	3.75	3.83
Same chores	.78	.76
Same work	.62	.72
Punishment	.63	.70
Reward	.80	.74
Same rule	.91	.89

Relationships between socialization and boys' achievement

4.1.20 As noted above, parents have an impact on their children's gender identity in many ways. The impact of other sources of socialization especially among adolescent children also has to be noted and acknowledged. The media, peers and school are powerful socialization agents. The fact that a child's self concept is influenced by several sources needs to be taken into account in any discussion of parental influence on achievement.

Table 9: Comparison of Performance by Family Structure

| Family structure | Secondary 1 | Primary 1 | |
	Achievement	Academic	Attitude
Both parents	571	3.54	4.09
Single parents	536	3.47	3.76
Step parents	500	3.17	3.94

Table 10 clearly shows that the students' performance both at Primary one and secondary one is better in families where there are both parents. This observation may be supported by the fact that boys in two parent families apply themselves better and get the support of both parents.

Table 10: Comparison of Boys' Performance by Parents' level of Education

| Parents' level of education | Secondary 1 | Primary 1 | |
	Achievement	Academic	Attitude
Primary	246	3	3.7
Secondary	489	3.5	4.0
Post Secondary	577	3.5	3.9
University	749	3.8	4.2

Boys' performance at school improves with parents' level of education. This implies that to some extent better educated parents provide additional input into their children's education.

Conclusion

4.1.21 Data from all three sources concur in showing that boys and girls are socialized differently at home. Although parents claim that they make no distinctions between boys and girls at home when asked the direct question, their responses to a number of subsequent, more subtle questions reveal deep seated stereotyping and gender role expectations for boys and girls.

4.1.22 Seychellois parents appear to value both girls and boys. They do not show preference for one gender. Children in Seychelles are appreciated for immaterial gains such as family bonding and 'completeness'. Love for children appears to be quite selfless. Parents appreciate the company of children and feel a great sense of pride when children follow in their footsteps and grow up to be respectable citizens. Boys and girls are equally appreciated but for different reasons and different qualities; boys for their physical strength and independence and girls for their family bonding and caring attitudes. Traditional qualities of obedience, respect, responsibility and hard work are admired. These seem to be strongly influenced by strict Christian religious upbringing and doctrine. No mention of more progressive values such as assertiveness, autonomy, or critical thinking was made. Parents therefore seem to operate within a very conservative framework. Girls appeared to possess more desirable qualities and were more versatile. Such values can subconsciously influence parents' attitude and treatment of boys and girls at home.

4.1.23 Girls have an advantage over boys both in quantity and choice of toys and opportunities to develop more rounded personalities. Many parents do not approve of their boys possessing or playing with dolls because of homophobic fears. Girls, on the other hand, suffer no such restrictions and parents are comfortable allowing their girls to play with cars, Lego, and bicycles which are traditionally considered to be male toys.

4.1.24 Girls also do a larger proportion of household work and are engaged in the full range of household chores. Boys do a limited number of tasks mostly outside chores and going to the shops. Some tasks like washing clothes are considered taboo for the boys. The allocation of household chores to girls rather than boys again sends a strong gendered message. It reinforces the stereotype that household tasks and care giving are feminine activities and makes the boy dependent on women for these tasks. It perpetuates a 'learned helplessness' in domestic chores (Duerk 1975). Boys may be receiving an early message that child rearing and care giving are exclusively female activities.

4.1.25 The home environment is considered to be friendlier towards girls. Boys are not allowed enough space to expand and feel at home. They are pushed outside and spend less time dialoguing and interacting with parents. This places them at a disadvantage making them more prone to negative peer and societal pressures. Girls face a distinct disadvantage as far as career choices are concerned.

4.2.26 Overall, it may be concluded that boys are subjected to more restrictions in their upbringing and are more neglected by parents while girls are more protected and provided with opportunities to develop all their potential. Although it is widely acknowledged that boys do not achieve as well as girls because of unrestricted freedom, the results of this study show the reverse to be true. Boys may be underperforming because of the restrictions and taboos imposed on them and the innate belief that they are more independent and do not require to be protected. Research carried out in the Caribbean where the social fabric and the island environment bear certain resemblances to the Seychelles also shows how certain notions of masculinity work to the disadvantage of boys in schools. Plummer (2005) noted that the 'constant social policing of masculinity becomes a straight jacket for young men who are caught in a narrow space of authorized masculinity while simultaneously being cut off from vast fields of social life'.

4.2.27 If we are to make real progress towards achieving gender equality, boys and men must be supported to challenge strict gender divisions at home, at work and in the community (Stocking in Ruxton, 2004). Insufficient attention has been paid to 'liberating' boys and men, as well as girls and women, from the constraints of gender roles and expectations: "Why can't men cry? Why must they be strong and silent? Why can't boys love the smell of flowers or the smell that little babies carry with them? Until we break this idea of 'girls should be like that' and 'boys like this' a harmonious world will remain out of reach" (Karkara 2005). Some of the reasons given by key informants for parents' differential treatment of boys and girls can shed light on the cultural, religious and societal beliefs which condition parents. These reasons must be understood if they are to be challenged.

4.2   Reasons for Differential Treatment

Most parents are unaware of the problems of boys' underachievement because they take poor performance of boys as normal. Yet the parents hoped that their own boys would prove to be hard working students. What then are their attitudes to men and women?

Culture and Tradition
4.2.1 The reasons why boys and girls are treated and defined differently can be traced back to tradition and is exemplified in popular sayings such as '*mwan larg mon kok, ou amar ou poul'* ('I am letting my cockerel loose, it is your responsibility to protect your hens.') Vestiges of this belief are still strong particularly among lower income groups and less educated parents. Some informants also mentioned the strong influence of religious teachings which stressed women's inferior position and status '*madamn I sorti dans lezo msye'* ('women come from the bones of men').

4.2.2 Many respondents also still subscribed to the belief that boys are 'naturally" less disciplined and more turbulent and independent than girls. The poor attitude boys displayed towards schoolwork is seen to be linked to their lack of clear goals and their playful attitude. Parents consider it normal for boys to go off to play after school whereas girls would be required to stay in to do homework. Fathers mentioned that school achievement didn't matter too much for boys because they would find jobs anyhow in the harbor. In the view of the parents, there was nothing parents or teachers could do to discipline boys: 'If you cannot change them, just leave them'. This thinking has affected both parents' and teachers' relationship with boys. The belief that boys are naturally stronger and tougher than girls, in fact encourages parents to affirm their masculinity.

Table 11: Different Living Arrangements of Children in the Sample

Parents	N	Percentages
Both parents	221	58.3
Single parent	92	24.3
Others	66	17.4

Living Arrangements
4.2.3 Table 11 above shows that only 58% percent of the children in the sample live with their two biological parents. Since many of the households are women headed, it can be assumed that

the majority of the remaining 42% live with mothers only. Biological fathers are not physically present in those homes.

Knowledge of the Child
4.2.4   The data for children living with both biological parents establishes the parents' knowledge of their children. Questions sought to find out if parents knew their children's teacher, friends, school curriculum and the contents of the Personal and Social Education Programme (PSE).[1] A comparative mean and an index of parents' knowledge of the child were compiled from the four items.

Table 12: Parents' Knowledge of their Child

Parents	N	Mean
Father	164	2.73
Mother	181	3.03

$p - value < 0.05$

Table 12 above shows that mothers are significantly better informed about their child and about the school curriculum than are fathers. Only 48% and 54% of fathers and mothers are aware of the contents of the PSE programme and only 69% of fathers know who their child's friends are.

Involvement in Household Chores
4.2.5   Parents were also questioned about their involvement in household chores. Table 13 shows that the mothers are considerably more involved in household chores ($P-value < 0.05$). Boys appear to reproduce the patterns established by fathers in the home.

Table 13: Parents' Involvement in Household Chores

Parents	N	Mean
Father	164	13.7
Mother	181	17.1

Fathers are also conspicuously absent from a number of activities of importance in the child's life such as doing household chores with the child, helping the child with personal hygiene, and talking to the child about school performance. They are more involved in activities such as visiting the school on open days, giving permission for outings and playing with the child.

The meaning of motherhood
4.2.6   Mothers were considered by the fathers as being closer to the children. They were conceptualised as the problem solvers, peace makers and the ones largely responsible for keeping

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[1] The PSE programme deals with relational issues, life skills, and sex education.

a happy home. There was a perception that women were naturally capable while fathers had to learn the qualities of fatherhood: *"They have a maternal instinct which fathers do not have- they have responsibility for the children and the family."* Respondents also suggested that because children spend more time with their mothers, they are better able to discuss their problems with them. Respondents also believed that *"The love they give cannot equate that of men"*.

4.2.7 The mothers accepted these views as perfectly appropriate. They admitted to carrying most of the burden for care-giving and child rearing. They gave the impression of being very accommodating and never questioning the status quo: *"I feel I am both the father and mother as the father."* Mothers appeared to take pride and derive satisfaction from these roles although complain of the extra burden.

The meaning of fatherhood
4.2.8 Fathers had difficulties describing their roles in the home either because they are unused to talking about and articulating fatherhood or because they consider themselves backups of the mothers. Respondents suggested that the primary responsibility of parents is to act as spiritual guides and role-models for the children. Other duties were to nourish, educate and protect the family. Fathers stressed the disciplinarian role while mothers emphasized the care giving and loving aspects of the parenting role. Mothers also spoke of the need to be good communicators and engage in shared decision making. It was important for parents to gain respect as a family within the community.

4.2.9 Fathers saw themselves primarily as financial providers and guides who maintained order and discipline and had the final say. Fathers spoke of themselves as the 'pillar of the house' and 'the strength behind the family' to provide for all its needs, '*lafors deryer sa famiy pou anmenn bann bezwen'*. They oversee the operations of the home while the mother takes care of the day-to-day running. She fills the house, '*remplir lakaz'*. Power, however, is in the hands of the father while the mother plays a supportive role. In the view of men, women assume fathering roles only during the absence of men. Both father and mother are held to be important, but only men are said to be able to be in command. Although many fathers claimed that there was equal sharing of responsibilities at home, they were at pains to explain what these responsibilities involved.

4.2.10 The model of father as bread-winner is clearly still the dominant discourse and while career families cause strains on traditional gender roles within the family few men had taken the opportunity to reassess the meanings of fathering and mothering. Fathers who had reassessed gender roles, held their wives to be equal partners in the home and help with domestic chores and child care. They defined themselves as the 'back-up' of mothers and showed financial and emotional commitment to their children. More generally men elaborated on the need for caring and involvement in the life of the children. Fewer men put emphasis on the sharing of household tasks and care and support for the partner.

4.2.11 Respondents felt that boys' underachievement is strongly linked to deficit father models caused by absent, uninvolved and poor role model fathers. Having multiple fathers in some homes (each child having a different father) was also identified as a contributing factor, since it seems to destabilize boys more than the girls. Many boys were ill treated by stepfathers. Some were in situations of rivalry with stepfathers vying for the mothers' attention. This might lead to

withdrawal, aggression and underperformance at school. Lack of alternative fathering models was related to the fact that men as boys had been abused themselves. Influences of a macho culture in which 'you have to drink to be a man' or to have multiple wives to prove your masculinity also violated against being a good father.

4.2.12 Other respondents interpreted men's disengagement from the family as a backlash against the public portrayal of men as inadequate and irresponsible. This overgeneralization discouraged many men and caused them to lose interest in their families: *'Men have given up, they have been given the message of being ineffective as fathers,'* and *'Women have taken over, they want to be in the drivers' seat, let them be, we stay out'*. Related to this is the argument that men feel incapacitated and disorientated because the government and society emphasise the rights for women and children which is interpreted as implying an erosion of men's authority. Similarly, greater emphasis on girls' education is seen as being at the expense of boys. Men feel that women are taking over as providers and *"they don't need men anymore"*. Men blame women and the government for the breakdown in discipline and happiness in the home.

4.2.13 Social services agencies and the 'family tribunal' were also accused of discrimination against men. Attempts to make claims before these bodies were "cases lost in advance" since those who decide are said to have a preconceived idea of men as losers. Some men felt the women abused the legal and social resources made available to them thus setting up new inequalities. NGOs were seen to provide support to women only and the one existing fathers' association was largely invisible. Arguments such as these were used by men to sanction and explain domestic violence by men against women in retaliation for perceived injustices. Men also felt that the mothers of their children did not allow them to take care of the children, that they threw men out and made men feel humiliated and ridiculed.

4.2.14 Gender hostility is evident in the language used by both men and women when they talk about the opposite sex: women express anger, hurt and disappointment at having to shoulder the major part of the responsibilities at home after a full day's work and they feel frustrated and unable to negotiate more equitable sharing in the home, while men blame women for distancing fathers from home affairs and being interested in their financial contributions only. A male victimization discourse is apparent and is potentially as dangerous as a female victimisation.

4.3   Parenting Programs

4.3.1 Parenting programs are currently run by NGOs, schools, churches and the government and are potentially a useful vehicle to challenge outdated fathering concepts and foster more engagement of fathers in the education of their sons. However, parenting programs have been unattractive to men for practical, pedagogical as well as psychological reasons. The term 'parenting' is considered to be problematic because it is used synonymous with women and therefore off-putting for men. In addition it conjured feelings of inadequacy and provoked resentment in men. Moreover, many courses were held during working hours which made it difficult for working men to attend. Men also felt that employers were more considerate towards women and granted them permission to attend family and child related activities more readily. Employers, men felt, were not father- friendly enough.

4.3.2 In addition parenting programs lacked consideration of men's views and feelings: Limited consideration was given to what was meant by fathers' involvement and how men could get involved. Parenting programs needed to be grounded in reality and address issues of absent fathers/divorced parents and stepfathers instead of clinging to an ideal image of two parent families. The style and classroom setting were also threatening men: *'Men do not want to come in to sit at a desk in a community centre and listen to a whole lot of babbling''* To make matters worse both the majority of facilitators of parenting programs and participants were women further discouraging men: *'We have a feeling of not being understood by woman at home and then having to face more women in parenting sessions can be a put off'*. Some fathers were afraid of being singled out and branded as ineffective or "bad" i.e. absent and un-involved fathers. Most of all they feared being made fun of by friends: *'Only weak men admit to needing help with parenting.'*

4.3.3 Parents have little understanding of the school and family roles in gender construction and role expectations of boys. All respondents fully agreed that boys and girls have equal chances at school, and the playing field perfectly level since they had access to the same facilities, teachers and curriculum. Parents appeared to have full confidence in the school's delivery of equitable learning conditions and seemed at a loss to explain boys' underachievement. There was little attempt to question or challenge school practices.

4.3.4 Suggestions for the improvement of parenting programs were rather pedestrian in form and quality, probably because they had been used to accepting what the school provided in terms of parenting sessions. Very few referred to gendered practices at school or socialization patterns in the home. There were a few isolated references to teachers' biased attitudes towards boys and their inability to cater for different ability groups and socialization patterns. Parents also seemed unaware that it was their right to be informed about what was happening in schools. Parents were willing to participate in school activities but they were in no hurry to be pro-active. Overall parents have great trust and confidence in schools and they pointed to the importance of maintaining good home-school relationships and partnerships and strengthening communication channels.

5. The Way Forward

5.1   Recommendations to Government

This section highlights some of the recommendations and actions needed to improve boys' achievement in schools and to increase awareness of the problem among parents, school staff, pupils, service providers, stakeholders and the wider community. It also contains broader recommendations to ensure gender equality and equity as a means of promoting harmonious relationships and sustainable development of both men and women in Seychelles.

Gender Sensitization and Training
5.1.1   Gender should be integrated into all teacher training programs so that education becomes transformative and lays the foundation for a more just and compassionate society

5.1.2   Gender sensitive training programs for parents need to be developed which increase awareness of how gender is constructed in the home and how it impacts on learning, behaviour and career chances;

5.1.3   All organisations and services providing parenting programs need to review the gender responsiveness of courses offered, and introduce gender components into all parenting programs. The content, methodology and delivery of all parenting programs need to be made more men friendly and respond to the diversity of models of fatherhood;

5.1.4 Schools need to ensure that pupils are sensitised on gender differences and gaps and helped to challenge stereotypes especially through PSE and Careers Education Programmes.

Home - School links
5.1.5   Selected school staff need to receive appropriate training in developing and maintaining effective links with parents;

5.1.6   Schools must work individually and collectively with parents in innovative ways to improve student performance. The opportunity is provided in the Ministry's new plan for decentralisation of schools which includes greater parental and community participation.

5.1.7   Successful examples of home school links in the Commonwealth pilot project should be disseminated in all schools and assistance should be given to institutionalise them in all schools. A new pilot study should be implemented in one community to strengthen home-schools links and increase participation of boys in extra-curricular activities at school and district level.

Public Awareness Campaigns and image boosting
5.1.8   Findings of the current research needs to be widely disseminated to all stakeholders, e.g. parents, teachers, parliamentarians, health workers, social workers etc. Best practices of 'fathers groups' such as the Roman Catholic Church groups be given wide publicity

5.1.9   Public education programs and public debates on good parenting need to be disseminated on the mass media to help men and women understand changing gender roles and responsibilities. These should also identify historical, cultural, societal structures and political strategies which might assist in changing attitudes.

5.1.10 Country wide initiatives involving NGOs should be launched to strengthen the role of fathers in families.

5.1.11 Social policies and Family Tribunal rulings urgently need to be reviewed to emphasize the father's role in the nurturing of their children, instead of just focusing on financial support.

Support to NGOs and Voluntary Organisations
5.1.12 Coordinating mechanisms need to be established to create more synergy and exchange among various family related organisations.

Integration in New Education Reform Plan

5.1.13 The issue of boys' underachievement needs to be integrated in the new education strategic plan by defining clear targets and strategies and taking on board the recommendations of this study. This can best be achieved in the relevant reforms relating to school governance and the review of teacher training.

Further Research
5.1.14 A larger scale study of home socialization processes needs to be carried out with periods of real 'immersion' in the home. The study should also make more efforts to identify the causes of men's disempowerment through interviews with diverse groups of men and women. The study also urgently needs to identify trends in dominant family forms and their implications for policy.

5.2   Recommendations to the Bank

This section gives more general recommendations to the Bank, both with regard to its dealings with the Seychelles and with regard to boys' education in general. Currently bank efforts to increase gender equality in education are geared towards supporting girls. This work will still be necessary in many countries to enable girls to obtain the same opportunities and results as boys. However, many countries, Seychelles included face increasing problems with educational achievements of boys and measures need to be put in place in such countries to reverse the trend which carries with it many other direct or indirect effects such as rising male unemployment, gender based violence, and male alcohol and drug abuse.

In the Seychelles
5.2.1   The Bank should use the results of the study and mainstream support to boys' education in all its present and future interventions in the Seychelles, including the on-going study on the new University System. The study will review the teacher training curriculum which might include as recommended above gender training for teachers. Aspects of that study which deal with the quality of secondary education might also want to take recommendation of this study on board.

5.2.2   The Bank should consider financing, with the agreement of the Government of Seychelles, and perhaps with financial and/or technical support from the Commonwealth Secretariat a much broader pilot study which involves a review of the PSE curriculum and upgrading of teachers skills as well as a review of parenting programs.

In other affected countries
5.2.3   It is important that Bank staff is open to the possibility that gender gaps in education might be in favour of girls and that such situation needs to be redressed in the name of gender equality– examples of such cases exist in North and Southern and Eastern Africa. In this respect the ability of staff to identify such gender gaps and to address them needs to be strengthened. In this context the results of the study should be disseminated widely.

5.2.4   The capacity of Bank staff to raise issues related to boys' achievement in school with our RMC and to conduct advocacy in the same manner as happens with regards to girls under achievement.

5.2.5   It is important that our knowledge with regard to boys' underachievement in schools increases and that similar studies be carried out in other African countries where problems have been identified. This would enable us and our partners to identify both common and specific causes and effects that need addressing.

5.2.6   The Bank should link its efforts with its partners active in the field in Africa, such as the Commonwealth Secretariat, and with other actors who are conducting research and implement programs in other parts of the World, such as the Caribbean, Europe and Latin America.

5.2.7   It is important that in broader context the Bank seeks to better understand and address aspect that have been termed the "crisis of masculinity" which might be happening in a number of African countries and which might be directly or indirectly be related to the rapid progress that has been made with regard to women's social and economic empowerment. It is important to understand that – as this study shows – male role models do not necessarily change as rapidly as do female realities and that misalignments between reality and ideology may cause frustration and anxiety in men which might lead to increased GBV and alcohol and drug abuse. Men need to also find new gender roles to complement the new roles of women and the Bank needs to contribute to such process..

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Methodology

1   Design

1.1   Previous studies on disparity in boys' and girls' achievements looked at in-school related factors. This current study sought to explore home-related factors, in particular, gender socialization patterns. Of concern was the nature of home gender socialization processes and their association with pupils' achievement in school in order to derive additional factors that could account for variations in pupils' achievements.

1.2   This study focused on two primary and two secondary schools in two districts on the main island of Mahe. The two districts are Anse Boileau and Mont Fleuri. In both cases the study focused on Primary 1 and Secondary 1 students. These two grade levels are the beginnings of primary and secondary education respectively. They represent two important milestones in the child's life where identities are formed and negotiated and decisions about career choices are starting to be made.

1.3   The major part of the data was obtained through the students. They provided school-based achievement data and their parents responded to a questionnaire addressing the following themes: home-based patterns of rewards and punishment, children's career choices and expectations, parent-children relationships and children's involvement in school and recreational activities. Understanding home gender socialization processes is a relatively complex issue. To ensure a high degree of validity and reliability in the study and to triangulate evidence, the following methods were adopted: 1) Focus group discussions with other parents who had children in the four schools; 2) In-depth interviews with key informants to gather broader viewpoints as a means of explaining common perceptions, myths and stereotypes. The study was largely qualitative in nature but the parent questionnaire and the students' achievement data provided some quantitative data.

2   School Background

2.1   Anse Boileau Primary and Secondary schools are considered to be rural schools situated close to each other on the west coast of Mahe some 40 kilometres from Victoria, the capital. Mont Fleuri Primary and secondary schools are located in the town area opposite the Ministry of Education. All the state schools, regardless of their geographical location, are largely homogeneous and operate under similar conditions and structures.

2.2   Anse Boileau and Mont-Fleuri are medium sized secondary schools consisting of 27 and 25 classes respectively and a total student population of 733 and 630. As can be seen from table 8, there are almost equal numbers of girls and boys at Anse Boileau School but 30 more girls at Mont-Fleuri school indicating a higher drop-out rate for the boys in secondary schools.   The two primary schools Anse Boileau and Mont-Fleuri are also medium sized schools with student enrolments of 649 and 721. There are 37 more boys than girls in Mont-Fleuri primary school. Mont-Fleuri primary has 19 classes at primary and ten classes at crèche level.

2.3   A typical state primary school is led by the head-teacher and assisted by coordinators namely for Early Childhood, Special Education Needs, Mathematics & Science, Languages, and a Senior Crèche teacher. At secondary level, a school is led by the head-teacher who is assisted by two deputies; one responsible for curriculum and the other for pastoral care. Other members on the management team include Heads of Department. A Department relates to a particular curriculum area such as Science, English or Design Technology.

Table 1: School Statistics

	Primary Schools		Secondary Schools	
	Anse Boileau	Mont Fleuri	Anse Boileau	Mont Fleuri
No. of male students	320	379	364	300
No. female students	329	342	369	330
No. of male teachers		38	23	21
No. female teachers		3	30	31

All the four schools under study recognized the issue of boys' underachievement and their respective development plans included strategies to address the problem. Most schools were also targeting pupils' achievement in mathematics and reading as one of their major priorities. A school development plan cycle is three years.

3   Research Initiation Activities

Stakeholders' Workshop
3.1.   Prior to the start of the research, a workshop was organised for major stakeholders. The objectives of the workshop were to brief participants on the objectives and design of the research study, to gather information on challenges faced by parents and families, to explore their understanding of problems related to boys' underachievement and under participation in schools, to gather information on parenting activities and to assess how research findings could engage their interest and help them to improve their interventions.

3.2   The stakeholders' workshop was held during half a day and drew together some 30 participants of mixed genders representing several organisations working with families and involved in developing parenting programmes. The stakeholders responded positively. Their responses suggested that the study could generate substantial data for informed decision making and policy formulation in relation to parenting programmes and projects, curriculum innovations and improvement. The meeting commended the methodology of the study while acknowledging its complexity and limitations. Stakeholders' views were incorporated in the design of the study wherever appropriate.

Collection of Household Data
3.3   A Household Data Form was developed to gather background information on the students. Its main aim was to determine students' distribution in terms of gender, their family

structure and member composition, and the type of homes they lived in. The form also sought information regarding the child's parents; whether or not they were living with their child, and information on their employment status.

3.4   The form was completed by the class teacher over a two-week period. Data obtained were used as a basis for sampling the parents who were to complete the questionnaire. Some important data from the Household Data Form are summarised in the subsequent tables. The first of the four tables, Table 2 shows the number of students per school. The children are segregated by grade level, primary and secondary, and by gender to illustrate the ratio. The second table, Table 3, presents a summary of the types of houses the children live in while the third table, Table 4 gives information on the family structure.

Table 2: Students' Distribution by School and Year Level

	Primary			Secondary			Total		
School	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
1	38	35	73				38	35	73
2	50	47	97				50	47	97
3				71	73	144	71	73	144
4				57	61	118	57	61	118
Total	88	82	170	128	134	262	216	216	432

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of the Students by Type of House

Sex	Flat	Detached	Semi Detached
M	8.5	34.1	7.1
F	8.8	35.3	6.3
Total	17.3	69.3	13.4

Table 4: Percentage Distribution of Parents' Employment Status

Sex	Primary students' parents		Secondary students' parents	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
Employed	68.2	77.6	67.2	76.7
Self Employed	17.1	5.3	18.7	4.2
Unemployed	2.4	14.1	2.7	16.0
Unknown	12.4	2.9	11.5	3.1
Total	100	100	100	100

3.5   The number of boys and girls both at primary and secondary level are almost equal. The total population of the four classes consists of 216 boys and 216 girls. The data also indicated

that most students (69%) lived in detached houses. Although not portrayed in the table, the raw data shows that the distribution of primary students by house type is consistent with that of the secondary students. This means that most students lived in detached houses, followed by flats and semi detached houses.

3.6   Data about the parents' employment status revealed that the majority of the students' parents in this study are employed or self employed. However, it is appropriate to highlight the fact that more students are unaware of their fathers' employment status than that of their mothers. Also the data revealed that the proportion of mothers who are unemployed is more than the proportion of fathers in the same category. The last observation is that 56% of the students in the study are living with both parents. This proportion is higher amongst the primary students (62%) than amongst the secondary students (51%). A relatively high percentage (33%) lives with only their mother. The percentage of students living with both biological fathers in this sample is slightly higher than the national norm.

4   Instrumentation and Pilot

Parents' Questionnaire

4.1   In view of the fact that immersion in families in their natural setting was beyond the scope of this study, a questionnaire was developed to capture some of the occurrences in the home specific to gender socialization. The questions sought the parents' views on a) the choice of toys, recreational, social and sporting activities, b) distribution of household chores & career opportunities for their child; and c) patterns of punishments and rewards. To some extent, the questionnaire challenged the parents' stereotypes or belief systems with regards to gender socialization through assessing the child interactions with the mother or father and the extent to which both of them were involved in raising the child. The questionnaire consisted of 27 major question areas. Each area further consisted of sub-items. Kreol and English versions of the questionnaire were produced. The items of both versions were piloted with a group of 20 teachers who had both boys and girls at home. The respondents were given 4 days to complete the questionnaire. After the pilot there were very few amendments made to the questionnaire. Both versions were relatively clear and generated the anticipated responses.

Focus Group Discussion

4.2   To obtain a broader picture of gender socialization in the home, it was felt necessary to generate views of other members of the community, in particular, parents who had children in the schools under study. The discussion schedule had eleven leading questions addressing the following points a) conceptions of parenthood and perceptions of boys and girls, b) roles of mother and father in the homes, c) expectations of their children, d) parents' wishes and fears for their children, and e) suggestions for improving parenting programmes.

4.3   The questions to be administered in the group discussion were piloted with a sample of eight workers from one organization during an afternoon session. Participants found the exercise to be enjoyable and non-threatening. They were more at ease answering in kreol so a kreol version of the instrument was also produced. Following the pilot, amendments were made to the questions and the process.

Interviews with key Informants

4.4   An interview guide and protocol were developed for in-depth face to face interviews with key informants. All informants were asked the same set of seven questions with prompts for more in-depth questioning. The questions were generated from the feedback obtained at the Stakeholders Forum held on 23rd March and findings from the gender action research carried out in schools.

4.5   The first two questions on the interview schedule sought viewpoints on the differential treatment of boys and girls in the Seychellois family and their possible impact on schooling and boys' achievement. Informants were asked reasons for boys' underachievement and possible solutions for the problem. The next two questions sought to gain a clearer understanding of the nature of men's 'irresponsibility' in the wake of calls from the Roman Catholic Church and political leaders for men to become more responsible in the home, church and society. Participants' conceptions of fatherhood and models of good fathers were explored as well as the barriers preventing men from participating in parental programs and fulfilling their fathers' roles. The third set of questions focused on the relevance and effectiveness of government and NGO programmes in providing support to men/families and a concluding question asked participants to rate on a scale of 1 to 5, the agencies having the most powerful influence on the child.

Data Collection

4.6   Data for the study were collected over one month period. In the first instance a letter describing the study was sent to all the participating schools followed by a school visit during which the teachers of the different classes were briefed. The Data Household Form was issued at this point. The teachers completed the details about each student over two weeks and forwarded their completed forms to the research team.

4.7   The nature of the data to be collected enabled the researchers to administer the instruments in a parallel mode meaning that, it was possible to conduct the focus group discussion during the time the parents were completing the questionnaire. The subsequent sections which follow describe how each instrument was administered with a clear indication of how the participants were sampled in each case.

4.8   The schools were asked to select parents who had children in the school to participate in the ***focus group discussions***. The parents were selected on the basis of their gender, employment status and age group. The need of a representative sample was important. The parents to be included needed to have sons and daughters at home so that they could make comparisons during the discussion. Within each school the participants for the focus group discussion consisted of: a) a male group, b) a female group, and c) a mixed group. Each group was expected to have ten participants making a total of fifteen (15) men and 15 women per school. A sample of 120 parents was being targeted for this activity. Table 5 shows the actual number of participants who turned up for the FGDs.

Table 5: No of Participants in the Focus Group Discussion per School

| School | Type of Groups | | | |
| | Female Group | Male Group | Mixed Group | |
			M	F
Anse Boileau Primary	6	3	5	6
Mont Fleuri Primary	4	4	1	7
Anse Boileau Secondary	5	5	2	5
Mont Fleuri Secondary	3	7	5	4
Total	18	19	13	22

4.9   A total of 40 females and 32 males took part in the FGDs which gives a 60% turn out rate. Five moderators/reporters were recruited and trained. The data collectors worked in groups of two, one person facilitating the discussion and the other acting as the recorder.   A focus group guide consisting of 13 questions was developed. Notes on the procedures for FGD were produced. A typical session lasted about one and a half hours.

4.10   The *parent questionnaire* generated some quantitative data. The parents who answered the questionnaire were sampled to ensure that a fair number of mother and father participated and responded about their boy or girl. The questionnaire was forwarded to the school. They distributed them to the students who in turn took them home. The name of the parent who would be answering the questionnaire was indicated on its cover. On average the schools allowed one working week for the parents to return their completed questionnaire. Using the household data it was possible to stratify the parents by gender, and by the sex of their child. The resulting sample is distributed as follows:

Table 6: Percentage Distribution of the Parents who responded to the Questionnaire

| Parent | Students' gender | | |
	Boys	Girl	Total
Father	46.2	53.8	100
Mother	47.9	52.1	100
Total	47.1	52.9	100

4.11   Altogether 173 fathers and 194 mothers responded to the questionnaire. The parents' responses were entered in SPSS over 10 working days. Table 7 shows parents' level of education. Parents in the sample are generally well educated. 65% of them have post-secondary and above levels of education.

Table 7: Highest Level of Education of the Students' Parents

	Primary	Secondary	Post Secondary	University
Fathers	10	43	86	21
Mothers	11	55	107	10

Total	21	98	193	31
	(6%)	(29%)	(56%)	(9%)

4.12 Structured face to face interviews were held with a group of 19 key informants selected from among political and church leaders, people holding key posts of responsibility in government departments/agencies dealing with family and social affairs and representatives of NGOs and civil society with hands on experience of working with families at grass root level. The informants were selected on the basis of their expert knowledge of the subject gained through their work experience and key positions held, their writings and research interest in family issues, and their grass root knowledge of working with children and dysfunctional families at national and community levels. Steps were taken to ensure a balanced group of male and female informants. The table below gives the composition and gender profile of the key informants

Table 8: Composition and Gender Profile of Key Informants

	Male	Female	Total
Political Leaders/MNAs	1	2	3
Church Leaders	2		2
Govt. Agencies (Social Affairs, Probation Family tribunal)	2	3	5
Reps. of NGOs with links to families	3	3	6
Fathers' Associations	2	0	2
Min. of Educ. Rep	0	1	1
TOTAL	**10**	**8**	**19**

4.13 Invitation letters were sent to the selected key informants giving details of the study and requesting their participation in the interview. Phone contacts were made to schedule suitable times and location for the face to face interviews. All key informants responded positively. An interview guide and protocol were developed for the exercise. All informants were asked the same set of seven questions with prompts for more in-depth questioning. The interviews lasted between one to two hours each and were conducted largely in English interspersed with Kreol when participants wanted to bring home a point or use examples of imagery/proverbs from the local context.

4.14 Data generated from the interview with key informants and focus group discussion were analysed qualitatively. Data generated from the parent questionnaire were analysed quantitatively using the SPSS version 10.0.1 version..

Validity, limitations and ethical considerations

4.15   The question of validity and reliability is important in any study. In this research validity was ensured through a) selection of a fair balance of parents who have children in the school. For the focus group discussion they were selected on the basis that they had both boys and girls to allow comparison to be made in their responses; b) piloting instruments to allow amendments to be made; c) triangulation of instruments as a means of verifying and cross checking evidence.

4.16   The study had three main limitations. The first one relates to the small sample size. The fact that only four schools were involved limits the possibility of generalising the findings. Having targeted *all* parents of P1 and S1 however ensures that a good cross section of the parent population from different socio economic backgrounds is included in the study. Secondly since it was not practical to live and participate in families, most of the data were generated by parents' themselves. This threatens the validity of the results to some extent. A third limitation is that this study lacks the students' perspectives.

4.17   Since the study relates to questionnaires, interviews and discussion data, in other words responses from people and students' personal achievement data, a high level of confidentiality was necessary. Many measures were taken to ensure proper ethics in the data collection and management practices. The objectives of the study were explained to all the parties involved and their agreement to participate in the research obtained. Approval to conduct the study was sought from the Ministry of Education. Although names of schools and participants were indicated on the various forms and instruments, ID numbers were used to report the results. The data are being kept safely with the principal investigators and will be used solely for the purpose of this current study.

Additional Tables and Data Relating to Chapter 3 and 4

Table 1: Notions of Masculinity and Femininity

How do girls see themselves?	*How do boys see girls?*	*How do boys see themselves?*	*How do girls see boys?*
Mature	Weaker sex	Strong	Proud
Hardworking	In need of protection	Dominant partner	Stubborn
Responsible	Vulnerable to rape	Bread winner	Macho
Role models for younger students	Not free	Provider	Will not admit to being wrong
Respected	Burdened by menstruation and childbirth	Head of Household	Hide emotions
Disciplined	Easily influenced	Have more prestige	Have more freedom
Able to express themselves well	Change minds easily	Proud	Lazy
Attractive	Orderly	Socialiser	Easily influenced by peers-
Fashionable		Brave	If you don't drink and
Outgoing		Free	smoke you are not a man
Friendly		Intelligent	
Sensitive/fragile		Self-reliant	
In need of protection		Good politicians	
Treated like princesses at home		Serious	
Limited freedom		Emotionally and mentally stable	

Table 2: Mean for Possession of Toys

	Student's sex	
Primary 1	Boys	Girls
Secondary 1	6.16	5.9
Total	5.5	6.0
	5.8	6.0

Table 3: Popularity of Toys by Gender

Toys	Male	Female
A ball game	93	93
A doll	16	99
A toy car	98	60
A video/IPOD/CD	63	43
Set of books	96	99
A bicycle	68	54
Lego	86	90
A musical instrument	71	66

Table 4: Percentage of Parents responding 'Not Applicable' to the following types of Rewards

Rewards	Male	Female
Verbal praise	10	10
Hug of caress	2	7
Financial reward	31	29
Buying gift or present	6	4
Fulfil a wish	10	7

Table 5: Percentage of Parents responding to the following types of Punishments

Punishments	Male	Female
Verbal reprimand	21	23
Ban a TV	35	45
Grounding	39	50
Locking up in room	92	95
Confiscating something valuable	68	84
Discontinue pocket money	86	84
Shouting	25	37
Slapping/Beating	34	49
Giving extra work	66	78

Table 6 : Parents' Career Choices for Boys and Girls

For boys	For Girls
More than 65% of the parents disagree with: • **Primary teacher** • **Secretary** • **Nursing**	More than 65% of the parents disagree with: • Pilot • Captain • Sailor • Labourer • Fishing job • Mechanic (82.6%) • Construction (81.0%) • Agricultural

Table 7: Different Living Arrangements of Children in the Sample

Parents	N	Percentages
Both parents	221	58.3
Single parent	92	24.3
Others	66	17.4

Table 8: Percentage of Parents who know about their Children's Teacher, Friends and School Curriculum

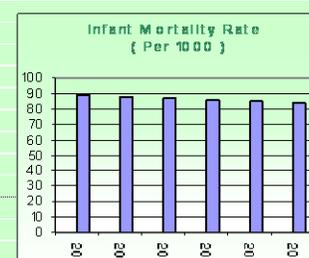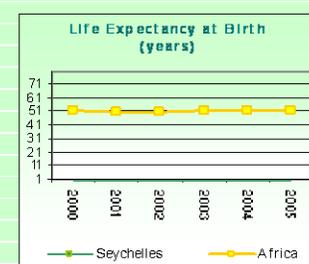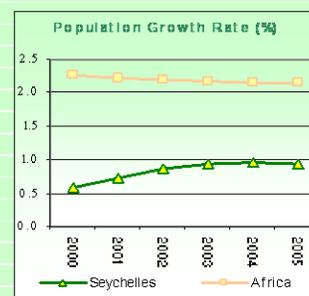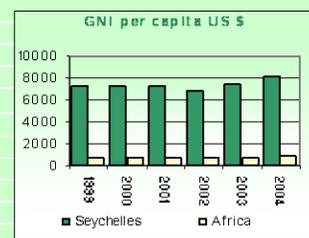| Knowledge of child	Fathers	Mothers
Do you know your child's teacher?	80	92
Are you familiar with your child's school programme	78	80
Do you know the contents of the PSE programme?	48	54
Do you know the child's friends?	69	78

Table 9 : Percentage of Parents indicating who between Mother, Father or the two together do each of the activities with their Children

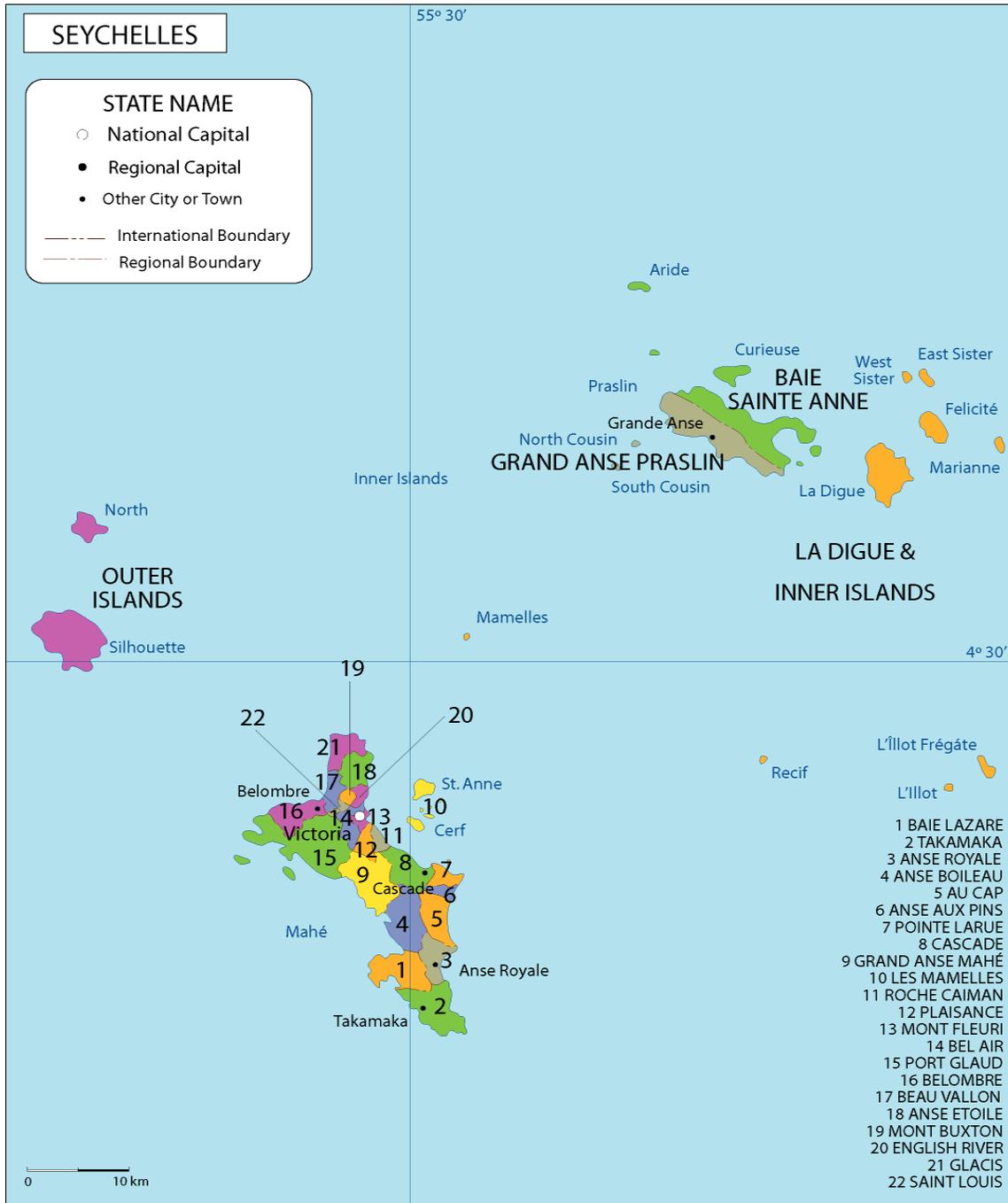|	Both Parents	Only father	Only mother
Help with homework	64.0	3.7	24.8
Visit school on open days	49.8	6.9	41.0
Discuss the child performance with the teacher	47.0	7.8	42.4
Talk with the child about sex education[1]	29.7	2.4	32.1
Talk about life issues	71.8	2.3	21.8
Give permission for outings	68.7	6.9	13.8
Accompany the child to the doctor	58.9	2.7	37.9
Comfort the child	73.9	3.2	19.7
Advise the child on his or her future	79.6	3.2	13.9
Talk to the child about school performance	80.7	0.9	17.4
Go on outing with the child	80.7	1.8	15.6
Play with the child	72.9	6.5	10.3
Do household chores with the child	62.8	0.5	27.1
Help the child with his or her personal hygiene	60.4	0.9	35.5

Seychelles
COMPARATIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS

	Year	Seychelles	Africa	Develo-ping Countrie	Develo-ped Countrie
Basic Indicators					
Area ('000 Km²)		0.46	30 307	80 976	54 658
Total Population (millions)	2005	0.1	904.8	5 253.5	1 211.3
Urban Population (% of Total)	2005	50.8	38.9	43.1	78.0
Population Density (per Km²)	2005	177.3	29.9	60.6	22.9
GNI per Capita (US $)	2004	8 090	811	1 154	26 214
Labor Force Participation - Total (%)	2003	48.1	43.4	45.6	54.6
Labor Force Participation - Female (%)	2003	46.2	41.1	39.7	44.9
Human development index (HDI) value	2004	0.842	0.460	0.694	0.911
Human Develop. Index (Rank among 174 countrie:	2003	51	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Popul. Living Below $ 1 a Day (% of Population)	2003	…	45.0	32.0	20.0
Demographic Indicators					
Population Growth Rate - Total (%)	2005	0.9	2.1	1.4	0.3
Population Growth Rate - Urban (%)	2005	1.0	3.4	2.6	0.5
Population < 15 years (%)	2005	…	41.5	32.4	18.0
Population >= 65 years (%)	2005	…	3.4	5.5	15.3
Dependency Ratio (%)	2005	…	81.4	57.8	47.8
Sex Ratio (per 100 female)	2005	…	99.8	102.7	94.2
Female Population 15-49 years (% of total populatic	2005	…	26.7	27.1	25.0
Life Expectancy at Birth - Total (years)	2005	…	51.2	64.1	76.0
Life Expectancy at Birth - Female (years)	2005	…	52.0	65.9	79.7
Crude Birth Rate (per 1,000)	2005	…	36.8	22.8	11.0
Crude Death Rate (per 1,000)	2005	…	15.0	8.7	10.4
Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000)	2005	…	83.6	59.4	7.5
Child Mortality Rate (per 1,000)	2005	…	139.6	89.3	9.4
Total Fertility Rate (per woman)	2005	…	4.8	2.8	1.6
Maternal Mortality Rate (per 100,000)	2005	…	622.9	440	13
Women Using Contraception (%)	2005	…	26.6	59.0	74.0
Health & Nutrition Indicators					
Physicians (per 100,000 people)	1996	132.2	38.2	78.0	287.0
Nurses (per 100,000 people)	1990	387.2	110.7	98.0	782.0
Births attended by Trained Health Personnel (%)	1998	47.0	43.7	56.0	99.0
Access to Safe Water (% of Population)	2002	87.0	64.5	78.0	100.0
Access to Health Services (% of Population)	1985	99.0	61.7	80.0	100.0
Access to Sanitation (% of Population)	2002	97.8	42.4	52.0	100.0
Percent. of Adults (aged 15-49) Living with HIV/AID	2003	…	6.4	1.3	0.3
Incidence of Tuberculosis (per 100,000)	2003	65.0	406.4	144.0	11.0
Child Immunization Against Tuberculosis (%)	2004	99.0	78.2	82.0	93.0
Child Immunization Against Measles (%)	2004	99.0	68.8	73.0	90.0
Underweight Children (% of children under 5 years	2003	6.0	39.0	31.0	…
Daily Calorie Supply per Capita	2003	2 484	2 439	2 675	3 285
Public Expenditure on Health (as % of GDP)	2002	3.9	2.7	1.8	6.3
Education Indicators					
Gross Enrolment Ratio (%)					
Primary School - Total	2002/03	114.0	96.7	91.0	102.3
Primary School - Female	2002/03	114.0	89.3	105.0	102.0
Secondary School - Total	2002/03	111.0	43.1	88.0	99.5
Secondary School - Female	2002/03	111.0	34.6	45.8	100.8
Primary School Female Teaching Staff (% of Total)	2002/03	86.0	44.1	51.0	82.0
Adult Illiteracy Rate - Total (%)	2005	4.0	35.0	26.6	1.2
Adult Illiteracy Rate - Male (%)	2005	…	26.9	19.0	0.8
Adult Illiteracy Rate - Female (%)	2005	…	42.9	34.2	1.6
Percentage of GDP Spent on Education	2000	7.58	4.7	3.9	5.9
Environmental Indicators					
Land Use (Arable Land as % of Total Land Area)	2005	2.2	6.0	9.9	11.6

Chart: GNI per capita US $ — Seychelles, Africa (1999–2004)

Chart: Population Growth Rate (%) — Seychelles, Africa (2000–2005)

Chart: Life Expectancy at Birth (years) — Seychelles, Africa (2000–2005)

Chart: Infant Mortality Rate (Per 1000)

Annex 4: ADMINISTRATIVE MAP OF SEYCHELLES

Disclaimer: This map has been provided by the ADB Group's staff exclusively for the convenience of the readers of the report. The denominations used and the boundaries shown on this map do not imply, on the part of the Bank Group and its affiliates, any judgment on the legal status of any territory or any endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.