

Fatherhood Comparative Report

January 2022
Einurd



With the support of the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

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Key findings

The Gap analysis results highlight that fathers desire and require improved services and information to support their journey into fatherhood. Furthermore, the findings reveal that resources such as information materials and courses on childcare and childbirth are not consistently accessible to fathers and tend to prioritize mothers.

A significant portion of fathers across partner countries expressed the perception that mothers and women are better prepared for the parental role, leading to a perceived stronger connection and ability to care for the child.

In the past decade, significant changes have occurred in all countries regarding the involvement of fathers with their children. Fathers across partner countries are increasingly showing interest and participating more actively in their children's lives. However, these rapid changes highlight the importance for fathers to have access to courses or role models, as the contemporary role of fathers differs significantly from the past.

It's noteworthy that societal changes have not been reflected as much in government policies or custody systems, leading many fathers to perceive a bias towards women within the system. Custody arrangements across partner countries still tend to favour mothers over fathers.

Furthermore, research indicates that fathers aspire to be more involved in their children's lives, but face obstacles such as lack of support and economic constraints. In many partner countries, some fathers feel pressured to be the primary financial provider for their households, limiting their ability to spend quality time with their children.

This issue is exacerbated by labour market dynamics, where women are more likely to prioritize caregiving responsibilities at home and reduce their work involvement after having children. This trend was evident in both desk research and interviews, highlighting the need for broader societal support and policy changes to facilitate greater paternal involvement in childcare.

Men often don't feel less prepared than women to become parents, highlighting a notable lack of and necessity for improved services specially tailored to men.

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Desk research

The Gap analysis results highlight that fathers desire and require improved services and information to support their journey into fatherhood. Furthermore, the findings reveal that resources such as information materials and courses on childcare and childbirth are not consistently accessible to fathers and tend to prioritize mothers.

A significant portion of fathers across partner countries expressed the perception that mothers and women are better prepared for the parental role, leading to a perceived stronger connection and ability to care for the child. Men often feel less prepared than women to become parents, highlighting a notable lack of and necessity for improved services specifically tailored to men.

All partners conducted desk research on the status of parents and fathers in partner countries, resulting in a report divided into three chapters examining various topics.

The first chapter, "Parental Rights and Obligations," delved into parental rights, responsibilities, the allocation of parental rights, and custody processes across partner countries.

In the chapter addressing "Gender Participation in Children's Upbringing," topics included gender roles, participation in childcare and parenting, and the evolving role of fatherhood within partner countries.

The final chapter, "Situation and Environment of Parents," explored support networks available to parents, labour market dynamics, access to day-care and schools, and the financial circumstances of parents across partner countries.

Parental rights and obligations

In EU countries, parents bear numerous obligations concerning their children, including upbringing, education, and safeguarding their property. However, these obligations vary between genders, with women often automatically assuming responsibility for the child, while the extent of fathers' responsibilities depends on factors such as their relationship status with the mother and the country of birth.

All EU/EEA countries acknowledge the child's right to maintain a relationship with both parents (Your Europe, 2020). This chapter will explore parenting rights and obligations in partner countries, encompassing aspects such as custody, visitation rights, and parental responsibilities.

Parental rights

Parental rights vary depending on the cultural norms and legal framework of each country, often prioritizing the welfare of the child over the rights of the parents. For instance, parental rights may include the right to physical custody, day-to-day care, spending time with the child, disciplining the child, and instilling moral and ethical values (Hall, B., 1999).

Across all partner countries, parental rights concerning children exhibit similarities and are intrinsically linked to the child's right to maintain contact with both parents. Parents in partner countries possess the authority to make significant decisions in their children's lives, such as those regarding education, healthcare, housing, and discipline, provided these decisions align with the child's right to a safe environment.

The allocation of decision-making authority is closely tied to custody arrangements and the child's primary residence. In Spain, for example, both parents typically retain parental rights, but the parent with whom the child resides often assumes greater decision-making responsibility, unless determined otherwise by a judge. In Ireland, parental rights appear to be influenced by the family structure and adherence to traditional family ideals. Similar challenges are observed in Iceland, where custody and family laws have not fully adapted to the evolving societal norms and concepts of family in recent years.

Parental responsibility

The responsibility of parents seems to be fundamentally the same across partner countries. First and foremost, parents and guardians are responsible for the physical and physiological wellbeing of their children, and all that it entails. It is also important to note as they do in Greece that Parental responsibility is not only a right, but also a duty of the parents (Greece Report).

Responsibilities of parents:

- Safe home and environment
- Education
- Physical and Physiological Protection
- Legal responsibility

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- Financial responsibility

In Spain, in addition to outlining similar responsibilities as in other countries, there is also emphasis placed on the obligations children have towards their parents. This includes the duty to obey, respect, and contribute fairly, within their means, to the alleviation of family burdens if they reside with them.

Furthermore, it is significant to note that in most partner countries, both parents bear obligations towards the child irrespective of custody arrangements. It is considered the child's right to have access to both parents.

Who has parental responsibility? / Custody processes

Laws regarding parental responsibility and custody procedures vary across countries, as highlighted in the report. Custody processes emerged as a prominent topic throughout the report, based on stakeholder interviews and fathers' feedback, revealing disparities between mothers and fathers and a desire among fathers to be better informed about these processes.

In the desk research reports, similarities were noted between Iceland and Ireland. In both countries, women typically hold a stronger position regarding automatic custody, with married fathers automatically granted guardianship. However, unmarried fathers generally have a weaker position compared to their married counterparts.

In Iceland, fathers who are married to or cohabiting with the mother at the time of birth are granted automatic custody. In Ireland, only married fathers are automatically granted custody, while unmarried fathers who have lived with the mother for a specified period before and after birth may apply for custody.

In Spain, paternity is established at birth, and custody arrangements are determined either through parental agreement or by court decision, without emphasis on the relationship between parents prior to birth.

Greece has revised its custody laws to ensure that parents, regardless of marital status or lifestyle, have access to custody or visitation rights. This revision has particularly benefited non-traditional families, such as LGBTQ+ couples.

In Iceland, custody arrangements encompass three types: joint custody, sole custody by one parent, and temporary custody. Research conducted from 2006-2008 indicated that custody was more often awarded

to mothers during court proceedings, not necessarily due to gender bias, but rather based on the primary caregiver's role.

Overall, while custody laws and practices vary, there is a growing recognition of the need for inclusivity and fairness in custody processes, particularly regarding non-traditional family structures.

Gender participation in children's upbringing

Understanding individuals' roles in children's lives requires an examination of gender norms and how they shape parenting and fatherhood. In this chapter, we will delve into gender norms, roles, and the social barriers surrounding parenting and fatherhood.

Gender norms/roles

To grasp gender norms, it's essential to explore their origins. While researchers have long used the term "gender," its definition has evolved significantly with increased awareness of gender diversity. It's crucial to differentiate between sex and gender; while sex refers to a biological trait, gender pertains to socially constructed behaviours, and gender norms can vary across cultures and time periods (Rolleri, L. A., 2013). Consequently, gender behaviours are malleable and can be influenced by societal changes.

Gender norms often manifest through stereotypes, impacting not only how individuals are perceived by society but also how they perceive themselves (Ellemers, N., 2018). Consequently, societal gender roles serve as guiding principles dictating how individuals should think, act, and feel (Mahalik et al., 2003).

	Male	Female
Stereotypical domain	Agency	Communality
Relevant behavior	Individuals task performance	Care for others
Anticipated priorities	Work	Family
Perceived qualities	Competence	Warmth
Neglected needs	Interpersonal connection	Professional achievement

Table 1 – retrieved from. (Mahalik et al., 2003).

As depicted in Table 1, the cultural messages directed towards women and men differ significantly. Men are generally associated with traits such as agency, career focus, and self-reliance, while women are often viewed as primary caretakers (Ellemers, N., 2005). These cultural messages play a crucial role in shaping family dynamics and the roles of men and women within families. Women are frequently

encouraged to prioritize family and childcare over personal pursuits (Mahalik et al., 2003), while men are often lauded for their success as breadwinners (Crespi, I. & Ruspini, E., 2015). However, it's important to acknowledge that while these gender norms may be similar across EU countries, they also exhibit variations.

In Greece and Ireland, traditional notions of family and gender roles are deeply rooted in religion and history. Marriage holds significant cultural importance, influencing perceptions of family structure and women's roles within marriages. Despite societal changes, with women increasingly participating in the labour market, their roles have become more demanding and multifaceted. In both countries, fathers are typically associated with financial responsibility rather than other aspects of family life.

Spain has also witnessed shifts in gender dynamics, with women becoming more involved in the labor market and gaining greater agency. While occupational and educational disparities between genders persist, there is a societal push towards gender equality and equal opportunities.

Reports from Spain and Iceland highlight disparities in the fields of study chosen by men and women. Men tend to gravitate towards math and engineering, while women often pursue humanities and nursing, aligning with traditional gender norms. Research in Iceland indicates that men receive more encouragement from school counsellors to pursue higher-paying fields.

Both Iceland and Ireland boast high rates of female labour force participation, often viewed as indicators of gender equality. However, women in both countries are more likely to work part-time, with a significant portion of part-time workers being women. This suggests that women may opt for part-time work due to childcare responsibilities, further highlighting the unequal distribution of childcare responsibilities despite societal changes.

Gender participation in parenting

When examining gender participation across all partner countries, it's evident that mothers and women generally dedicate more time to childcare and household chores compared to fathers. However, parental involvement and roles within the household are also influenced by factors such as education, location, and the family's financial situation.

In Spain, labor market regulations and laws have been implemented to encourage both men and women to share equal responsibility in childcare. While these efforts have led to some progress, with men assuming more responsibility, the ultimate goal of achieving gender equality in childcare and family planning remains elusive, with women still bearing the bulk of these responsibilities.

Similarly, in Iceland, laws surrounding parental leave have impacted the roles of women in the labour market and men in the home. However, these changes have also resulted in increased responsibilities for women, who now face higher workloads juggling both their professional and domestic roles.

Research conducted in Greece indicates that women often discourage their husbands from participating in childcare activities, perceiving them as less capable caregivers. Fathers tend to engage more in leisure activities and playtime with their children, often taking a less active role in caregiving tasks such as feeding and bedtime routines.

In Ireland, significant shifts in gender roles have occurred, particularly with women's increased involvement in the labour market and fathers' participation in childcare. Despite these changes, women remain significantly more involved in childcare and household chores than men, mirroring trends observed in Spain and Iceland.

In Greece, women also tend to be more involved in parenting than men, with variations based on the education and status of men. Men in rural areas typically spend less time with their children compared to those in urban areas.

Parenting and Fatherhood

Despite this, the role of fathers and fatherhood has undergone significant transformations in recent decades, a topic we will delve into here.

In all partner countries, the role of fathers has experienced substantial changes. In Iceland and Greece, it was noted that navigating these new ideas and roles of fatherhood can be challenging, with a lack of role models to guide them. In Greece, fathers often rely on their own life experiences rather than conforming to traditional or contemporary models of fatherhood. In Iceland, men often feel discouraged as they perceive a lack of support for their evolving role compared to women/mothers, with societal and cultural changes in family roles not fully reflected at institutional levels.

In Ireland, despite societal shifts, economic factors significantly impact fathers' availability for their families. While women participate in the labour market, men are still more likely to work longer hours, both on weekdays and weekends, limiting their time at home with their children.

In Spain, changes in fatherhood are evident, with varying approaches from authoritative to more collaborative roles within the family. Fathers are no longer solely viewed as the authority figures of the family, reflecting shifts in societal perceptions of fatherhood.

Situation and environment of parents

Numerous factors play a pivotal role in shaping and influencing parenting dynamics. In this chapter, our aim is to explore the situation and environment of parents across partner countries. We will examine the support available to parents, particularly during the period of expecting a child, and whether this support varies between women and men. Additionally, we will assess the level of support and flexibility provided by the labour market to individuals with children. We'll also delve into the accessibility of daycare facilities for parents and how children's schooling impacts family dynamics. Furthermore, we'll investigate how the economic situation of families affects the lives of parents and analyse the financial conditions of families in partner countries.

Support networks

In Spain, financial benefits from social security are available to individuals with dependent minor children. However, eligibility for this support is contingent upon income and personal circumstances, with those exceeding a specified income threshold ineligible for financial assistance. Single-parent families, however, may benefit from tax deductions.

In Greece, paternity leave policies vary depending on the sector of employment. Public sector employees are entitled to 9 months of parental leave for full-time work, while part-time workers receive a daily deduction of 2 hours for children up to 2 years old and 1 hour for children aged 2 to 4. In the private sector, fathers receive only 2 days of paid leave but are entitled to 4 months of unpaid leave.

In Iceland, government support for parents is limited, with most assistance available under specific circumstances. Municipal health care centres offer childbirth and breastfeeding classes at reduced rates. However, parenting classes are often targeted towards specific issues and vary between municipalities. After children start kindergarten, municipalities provide materials and support for parents. Social workers offer a wide range of assistance if needed.

In Ireland, various social policies have been implemented to support parents, including childcare, education, and housing support. Changes to legislation regarding taxation and benefits, such as child tax credits, also impact families. The government provides means-tested medical cards to ensure access to healthcare regardless of financial status. Additionally, the Health Service Executive (HSE) offers parental supports, including prenatal and parenting courses and helplines. However, parental leave remains inaccessible for many families in Ireland despite legislative provisions.

The labour markets

The Icelandic labour market could improve its support for families and children. Despite Icelanders working longer hours compared to other Nordic countries, they are entitled to sick days for children (at least 1 per month) and parental leave. Parental leave in Iceland totals 12 months, equally divided between mothers and fathers, with the option to transfer 6 weeks between parents. However, research indicates that while employers are supportive of fathers taking parental leave, they may not be as enthusiastic about men utilizing the leave that can be shared between parents. The flexibility of the labor market largely depends on the employer and the sector in which the parents work.

In Spain, parental leave lasts for 13 days, with an extension of 2 days per child beyond the second child. Employers are required to grant parents 15 days of leave to care for their children and must offer 6 weeks of leave immediately following childbirth for both mothers and fathers.

In Greece, labour market rights differ between the private and public sectors. In the public sector, fathers are entitled to 4 annual sick days for their children, or 8 days if they are single parents. They may also be eligible for 22 days of annual leave if their child has a medical condition. In the private sector, fathers

receive 10 annual sick days for their children and up to 30 days of unpaid leave if their child is hospitalized.

In Ireland, parents have the right to time off to attend to family and childcare responsibilities, but employers are not obligated to provide compensation for this time off. Parents often use their vacation or sick days to cover childcare needs. Additionally, parents can take forced majeure leave in emergencies, amounting to 3 days in a 12-month period or 5 days in a 36-month period, which is paid leave. The flexibility of the labour market varies depending on the nature of the work and the employer's generosity.

Day-care and schools

In Ireland, childcare and early years education have posed significant challenges for families, with the cost of childcare being a major concern for parents. International comparisons reveal that formal childcare costs for preschool children in Ireland rank among the highest for lone parents and couple households in OECD countries. The government operates the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) program, available for children over 2 years and 8 months until they begin primary school. ECCE is subsidized by the state and provides part-time care through playschools and daycare providers. Additionally, parents in Ireland can hire childminders to care for up to 5 children under the age of 6 in their home. Ireland has faced criticism for its lack of affordable childcare, both internationally and domestically.

In Greece, the government offers childcare services for young children from 8 months to 2.5 years old, or until they are enrolled in kindergarten, particularly for working parents who require assistance due to work commitments.

In Spain, workers have the right to request a reduction in working hours to balance work and family life until their children reach 12 years of age. Preschool and nursery school enrollment is available for children in Spain, and public schooling is free for children aged 3 to 18, although parents are responsible for the first 3 years of schooling costs. Financial aid programs are available to assist parents with childcare expenses during these initial years.

In Iceland, there is no mandatory childcare provision for young children, and kindergarten attendance is not compulsory. Public kindergartens are subsidized by municipalities, with varying fees based on location. Discounts are available for parents who are students, single parents, receive disability benefits, or have multiple children in kindergarten. Despite this, many Icelandic parents face challenges during

the early years, particularly as most children do not enroll in kindergarten until age two. Following parental leave, self-employed parents can access subsidized daycare services with permission from municipalities.

Financial situation

In Iceland, there is a relatively low percentage of families with children living in poverty. However, in 2008, 9.1% of families with children were living below the poverty line, with each additional child in the family increasing the risk. Although this percentage is lower compared to the rest of Europe, it remains the highest among Nordic countries. Single parents, particularly single mothers, are at the highest risk of poverty in Iceland. Even among working single mothers, the risk of poverty is unusually high compared to other countries. While primary school education in Iceland is free and school meals are subsidized, after-school care is paid for by parents. Additionally, all parents receive a leisure grant from municipalities to use for sports, music, or other recreational activities. Child benefits, known as "barnabætur," are provided to parents with children under 18, with additional benefits for children under 7. These benefits are income-related and calculated based on tax returns, paid out in four installments over the year.

In Ireland, there is an ongoing housing crisis with rental prices at an all-time high, forcing many young families to relocate away from their support networks. One in five families in Ireland relies on the private rental market. The government operates the Housing Assistance Payments (HAP) program, where local authorities provide monthly payments to property owners based on household income. The poverty risk rate for single parents with children was 29.7% in 2019, although it has shown signs of improvement in recent years.

Greece ranks last among EU countries in the gender equality index, with economic disparities particularly pronounced for lone mothers, fathers, and individuals born outside the EU. The gender pay gap in full-time employment is six times larger between couples with children compared to those without.

In Spain, stakeholders in a recent study expressed concerns about the economic situation, with 85% considering it poor and 60% fearing it may worsen within a year. Job loss has affected 16% of families, while 40% have experienced a reduction in income. Looking ahead, three-quarters of families believe their economic situation will either remain the same or worsen. The COVID-19 crisis has led to decreased quality of life for 65% of families, with half reporting a decrease in purchasing power.

However, solidarity among relatives, friends, and NGOs remains strong. Additionally, single, separated, or divorced parents are entitled to assistance for dependent children or minors with disabilities through Social Security.

Stakeholders

In this chapter, we present a summary of the results obtained from interviews conducted with stakeholders from partner countries. Each partner country interviewed at least five experts or practitioners with experience in research or training related to parenting. The main criterion for selecting stakeholders was their involvement in working with families, fathers, and parents. The aim of these interviews was to gain insights into the situation of fathers in partner countries and to understand the important services or topics for fathers.

Introduction to the Stakeholders

In Iceland 7 individuals who have been working in research, counselling, government institution or education related to families or fatherhood were interviewed. All the participants had vast experience either working with families or research relating to families or fathers. Because of the diversity of the stakeholders, there were often mixed opinions on topics, especially regarding custody, the role of genders and family life.

In Spain the group of stakeholders was also diverse given and their approaches to topics were very diverse in terms of understanding the problems and how to solve them. All the stakeholders were in direct contact with fathers and mothers.

In Greece all stakeholders had been directly or indirectly involved in some form in the parent-child relationship, either working with families or through school. All the stakeholders are in direct or indirect contact with fathers and mothers, divorced parents, single parents, and single-families and their thoughts and information was insightful into the problems that parents may have and the vital role as parents in families.

In Ireland all the stakeholders have been involved in service or organization that focus on families. Some working for national organizations, others working with families that would not fall under the traditional family patterns, individuals that work in intervention and prevention, individuals that set up a community-based support group and more.

Fatherhood and father's participation

In Spain, stakeholders highlighted disparities in the legal framework regarding parenthood rights between women and men. They noted that single women have the option of artificial insemination to become mothers, while men do not have a similar avenue. Additionally, stakeholders pointed out the

lack of access for men to psychological counselling or orientation services, and the tendency for sole custody to be awarded more frequently to women.

In Ireland, stakeholders criticized the custody laws, particularly regarding unmarried fathers who often struggle to gain custody rights at the child's birth. They noted disparities in the requirements during custody processes, with men needing to demonstrate work commitments while mothers do not. Stakeholders also mentioned challenges faced by fathers in taking parental leave, as it may not be feasible for many families. They observed a trend of men working full-time while mothers stay at home, although this dynamic shifted somewhat during the economic downturn. Immigrant parents and those lacking extended family support were identified as particularly vulnerable. Despite fathers expressing a desire to be more involved in childcare, they often lack support, and institutions such as schools tend to primarily engage with mothers.

In Greece, stakeholders emphasized the traditional gender roles where mothers are primarily responsible for childcare, nutrition, and education. They noted a lack of fathers involved in school drop-offs and highlighted the societal expectation for fathers to be financially responsible for the family. Despite this, some stakeholders mentioned efforts by fathers to be actively involved in their children's lives, especially among younger fathers. Concerns were raised about fathers being disadvantaged in custody and divorce cases, with mothers often favoured.

In Iceland, stakeholders recognized significant changes in fathers' involvement in their children's lives over the past 30 years. However, opinions varied on the extent to which society has progressed towards gender equality in parenting responsibilities, with some believing Iceland has achieved parity while others disagreed.

Gender equality and gender norms

In Iceland, stakeholders noted that while gender norms continue to influence individuals, society has made significant progress. Young people today have a more flexible understanding of parenthood, with evolving notions of fatherhood. Present-day fathers face social scrutiny if they are not actively involved in their children's lives, a trend more pronounced than 30 years ago.

In Spain and Ireland, stakeholders observed differences in gender norms between urban and rural communities. In Ireland, the influence of the Catholic Church and organizations like the GAA remains strong in rural areas, shaping traditional gender roles. Similarly, in Greece, rural areas tend to uphold

more traditional views on gender. Additionally, stakeholders noted that socioeconomic factors, such as class and finances, play a role. For instance, in Ireland, middle-class families may find it easier to consider parental leave compared to lower-income households. Despite progress, stakeholders in Ireland highlighted the entrenched nature of gender roles in culture and tradition.

In Spain, women are disproportionately represented in part-time work, with 75% of part-time workers being women. Stakeholders identified significant hurdles to gender equality in both the labor market and social spheres. They emphasized that women are more protected than men in terms of legal safeguards against gender-based violence, highlighting ongoing challenges in achieving gender parity.

In Greece, stakeholders acknowledged some changes in gender norms but emphasized the long road ahead in reshaping societal views on gender. They highlighted disparities in treatment between men and women in both professional and social contexts. For example, one stakeholder cited discrepancies in parental leave entitlements between genders, reflecting broader inequalities entrenched in certain sectors.

Gender norms and parenting

In Ireland, stakeholders highlighted the legal disadvantages faced by fathers regarding guardianship and family law. Unlike mothers who have automatic guardianship, unmarried fathers must petition the court for guardianship, access, custody, or joint custody. Moreover, the court scrutinizes the fathers' work commitments while often overlooking those of mothers. Stakeholders noted that Ireland lags behind other countries in enabling fathers to take time off after childbirth due to financial constraints. While mothers are typically seen as primary caregivers, fathers express a desire for greater involvement in their children's lives.

In Spain, stakeholders lamented the lack of support available to fathers and the prevalence of sole custody being granted to women. They emphasized the need for a more flexible framework to address fathers' emotional needs post-separation and promote reconciliation. Regarding same-sex parent families, stakeholders praised Spain's pioneering integration of homosexual and bisexual individuals and their families, citing minimal discrimination and adequate support for children's needs.

According to a stakeholder in Greece, gender equality remains a taboo subject, particularly in regional units where women often lack paid employment and primarily tend to childcare and household duties. Greek society imposes multiple roles on women, including motherhood, work, household chores, and nurturing relationships with spouses. Some stakeholders suggested that women are inherently

predisposed to motherhood, while men gradually assume paternal roles over time. However, one stakeholder argued that both genders possess a natural inclination towards parenthood, albeit more pronounced in women.

In Iceland, stakeholders expressed varied opinions on parental leave. While some questioned the necessity of legislating parental leave, most agreed on its importance in facilitating women's participation in the labour market and fostering paternal bonding with children. Stakeholders also highlighted shortcomings in Iceland's custody laws, where joint custody is possible, but the child can only have one legal domicile. The parent with whom the child resides often enjoys more rights, although recent changes aim to address this disparity while still imposing regulations on joint domicile.

Fathers needs for support

In Spain, stakeholders noted the availability of programs and support for women but observed a lack of equivalent support for fathers. They emphasized the importance of implementing measures in companies to assist single or separated fathers, including training courses tailored to their needs, establishing support networks or public funding for male support organizations, and facilitating exchanges of best practices.

In Ireland, stakeholders identified a need for additional education and training for both fathers and professionals in the childcare sector. They emphasized the necessity for more support for fathers in the labour market and advocated for further legislation concerning fathers and parental leave. Single fathers require increased support with housing, as many may lack suitable accommodation for their children. Stakeholders stressed the importance of positive fatherly role models and the early education of boys about fatherhood to positively influence future generations. They also highlighted the importance of inclusive services that involve fathers in the birthing process and other related services.

Stakeholders in Iceland expressed the common belief that parents are often left to navigate their new roles without adequate support services, particularly fathers who may feel less prepared than mothers. While there is a perception that fathers require more support, stakeholders acknowledged that mothers may also feel unprepared due to societal expectations. They advocated for support services that cater to the needs of both parents, beginning before childbirth. However, they observed that the limited support available tends to focus more on mothers and children than fathers.

In Greece, stakeholders stressed the need for specialized support for fathers, including information about the changes they will experience in their daily lives, finances, and relationships. They emphasized the

importance of fathers as role models for their children and the need for them to manage their emotions effectively. Stakeholders called for state-supported initiatives such as childcare facilities with extended hours, summer and holiday camps, training programs for young fathers, psychological support during partners' pregnancies, and mutual aid groups for older fathers.

What services are available for fathers and how can it be improved

In Spain, one stakeholder emphasized the importance of parental leave and called for measures to make it easier for fathers to take time off. They also highlighted the need for a more balanced employment market that supports work-life balance for families. Additionally, they suggested promoting family-oriented activities and training in schools and launching a media campaign to portray motherhood and parenthood positively.

In Ireland, stakeholders focused on three key areas:

1. Empowering fathers through education: Providing both parents with education on child development, how to support their child, and how to address difficult issues.
2. Confidence building for dads: Emphasizing the importance of building confidence in men as capable fathers.
3. Inclusion of fathers throughout the lifecycle: Ensuring that fathers are involved from the early stages of pregnancy through postnatal care. Improved support systems are needed, especially as more mothers enter the labor market, to prevent parenting burdens from falling solely on mothers.

In Iceland, stakeholders unanimously agreed on the need for more family services and support systems. They emphasized the lack of available services specifically for fathers and suggested that dedicated programs and education for fathers would be beneficial. Some stakeholders also highlighted the importance of relationship education for parents after childbirth, as well as better support for families going through separation or divorce. Additionally, they stressed the need for improved involvement of fathers in the healthcare system during pregnancy, birth, and the postnatal period.

In Greece, stakeholders noted the presence of support networks for fathers, particularly those who are divorced, offering legal assistance. However, they mentioned that these networks are not always efficient. Additionally, small counselling centres operate at the local level, providing guidance and support for fathers interested in family-related issues. Stakeholders stressed the importance of promoting and enhancing these initiatives to better support fathers across the country.

Best – practices

In Spain, some schools offer workshops for parents focused on managing emotions, understanding their children's emotions, and improving time management. Stakeholders noted that communication between parents is evolving, and younger fathers may lack knowledge on developing their parental role due to changing societal models.

In Greece, stakeholders unanimously agreed on the urgent need for more support and guidance for fathers. Some suggested that schools should organize counseling conferences with special advisors and psychologists to address this need.

In Ireland, stakeholders mentioned several support mechanisms for fathers, including peer-to-peer networks and bespoke services tailored to individual needs. They also emphasized the importance of an open-door policy in support groups.

In Iceland, stakeholders highlighted the lack of available services for fathers and noted that many best practices were observed outside of Iceland. They mentioned independent courses for fathers but emphasized the need for more comprehensive support services.

Other topics

Other topics discussed include:

- In Spain, stakeholders stressed the need for materials to promote positive parent-child bonding.
- In Ireland, stakeholders called for education on brain development in secondary schools and a more gender-balanced approach in media targeting parents. They also urged national stakeholders and policymakers to promote gender-balanced parenting policies and emphasized the importance of peer-to-peer support.
- In Iceland, stakeholders emphasized the significance of parental dynamics and the Icelandic custody laws. They called for better support for childcare and highlighted the need for policy changes in the employment market to better accommodate family life.
- In Greece, several stakeholders emphasized the necessity for a change in mindset among both fathers and mothers regarding proper child-rearing, education, and access to information. They also highlighted the absence of a specific model for masculinity, indicating that the community is still evolving in this aspect.

Peer Interviews

In the peer interviews, the goal was to gain insight into the lives and experiences of fathers in partner countries. Interviews were conducted in all partner countries, with each partner selecting at least 5 young fathers for the interviews, aiming for diversity among the group of fathers. After the interviews, partners selected fathers to further participate in the project.

Introducing the fathers and their situation

The fathers participating in the research represented a wide range of occupations and situations, providing partners with diverse experiences across various socioeconomic backgrounds, custody arrangements, and relationships.

- In Iceland, the fathers came from varied backgrounds, some having stable homes while others faced early life struggles. Some fathers had dealt with addiction but were now clean. All the fathers had relatively young children, with two having children under one year old, making it challenging for them to answer some questions due to their limited experience.
- In Greece, they interviewed 5 fathers, all under the age of 35, with diverse living arrangements including living with partners, grandparents, or in different cities from their child's mother. Their experiences ranged from being married, divorced, having joint custody, or being single fathers.
- In Ireland, the fathers also had diverse situations, ranging from awaiting the birth of their first child to being fathers of five children.
- In Spain, two fathers were in relationships with the mothers of their children, with one living with them while the other faced challenges in spending time due to work. The other fathers were single fathers, with different custody arrangements including joint custody, shared residence, or living in a different city from their child but making efforts to stay connected.

Fatherhood and father's participation

In Ireland, most of the interviewed fathers expressed their active involvement in caring for their children, finding it immensely rewarding. They emphasized that childcare should be based on individual capabilities rather than gender, and they observed greater acceptance of fathers taking active roles compared to previous generations. However, they also noted challenges due to the high cost of living, feeling unable to spend as much time with their children as they would like, mainly assuming the role of provider. Fathers with multiple children mentioned a shift in their perception, where they initially viewed themselves primarily as providers but later embraced a more involved parenting role.

In Spain, fathers reported that childcare responsibilities were shared but predominantly fell on mothers. They found it challenging to balance family and professional life, with labour market regulations often favouring mothers. Few support groups for fathers were available, and most relied on family support. Despite their desire to spend more time with their children, the demands of the labour market constrained their ability to do so.

Fathers in Iceland acknowledged positive changes in fathers' involvement in parenting compared to previous generations. They believed parenting should be a shared responsibility, but societal expectations often pressured them to be primary financial providers. Some fathers highlighted disparities in custody laws, feeling vulnerable compared to mothers.

In Greece, all fathers interviewed described fatherhood as challenging, with societal expectations placing significant responsibility on them for managing the household. Despite some changes in the past decade, Greece still has progress to make in recognizing fatherhood. Young fathers face traditional role expectations, and divorced or unemployed fathers experience heightened demands in their parental role.

The changes between generations

In Spain, there is a noticeable increase in single fathers, with some grandfathers who may not have been involved in raising their own children now stepping in to help and learn how to care for and handle tasks related to childcare.

In Ireland, fathers interviewed shared diverse experiences regarding father figures during their upbringing. Some identified their mothers or siblings as their parental inspiration, while others who had father figures responded in two distinct ways. Some had positive parental experiences and approached fatherhood similarly to their own fathers, while others, who had negative experiences, were determined to ensure their children did not have the same.

In Iceland, discussions about generational changes were often tied to personal experiences and family life. Many fathers spoke positively about their upbringing and looked up to their fathers in some way. Interestingly, those who had positive experiences growing up often aimed to approach parenting more gently than their fathers did. Some noted changes in their fathers' parenting styles from their first child to later ones, highlighting cultural shifts in societal expectations of fatherhood.

All participants in Greece agreed that being a father today is not radically different from their fathers' experiences, considering the vastly different social standards and environments in which they grew up.

The evolving societal norms and new situations have influenced what parents wanted and sought in relation to their children, shaping their experiences of fatherhood.

Parent Cooperation

In all the Icelandic interviews, fathers emphasized the importance of cooperation between parents in parenting, regardless of whether the parents were together or not. They unanimously stated that this cooperation was crucial for the wellbeing of the child. Stepfathers also highlighted the importance of maintaining a good relationship with the father of their stepchild. Responses were categorized into two main themes: the importance of cooperation regarding the child's wellbeing and household rules, and the significance of parental roles and cooperation for maintaining a healthy relationship between parents and shared responsibility at home. Some fathers mentioned that lack of cooperation could negatively impact the child, leading them to feel the need to pick sides, which they found harmful and stressful for the child and their relationship with both parents.

In Spain, fathers emphasized in all interviews the significance of the relationship between parents, stating that it could either facilitate or hinder the father's ability to care for his child. They also noted that in cases of joint custody, flexibility is more likely if there is a good relationship between the parents. Many fathers mentioned instances where the mother would use the child to express frustration towards the father, recognizing it as a way to hurt them. Overall, fathers emphasized the importance of the mother's vision of the family unit, as well as the influence of extended family members, such as in-laws, on the dynamics of parental cooperation.

Similarly, in Ireland, there was widespread consensus among fathers that parental cooperation was essential for raising children. Regardless of the parents' living arrangements, respondents believed that children's welfare and cooperation were closely interconnected. Like in Iceland, fathers in Ireland also stressed the vital role of parental cooperation in maintaining stable relationships between themselves and their children. Cooperation was seen as crucial for preventing either partner from feeling isolated in childcare responsibilities, especially in cases where parents no longer live together and are juggling custody arrangements with work commitments.

In Greece, all fathers agreed that cooperation between parents is more than essential for successful child-rearing. They strongly believed that without cooperation, the upbringing of the child would be challenging. Fathers emphasized the importance of dividing time between work and family life,

highlighting the necessity for couples and parents to work together in balancing their responsibilities towards their children.

Becoming a father

In Ireland, there were limited responses to questions about becoming a father. Most fathers emphasized the profound emotional connection they felt towards their newborn child and their strong desire to actively participate in their upbringing and support their partner. They also expressed a profound sense of responsibility towards their new role as fathers. One father mentioned that the birth of his child marked a significant shift in his life, prompting him to "grow up" and find stable employment. Fathers felt that parenthood brought a deeper meaning to their lives and marked the end of a less mature phase.

In Spain, fathers often mentioned that many pregnancies were unplanned, highlighting the importance of communication with their partners. They noted that decisions about abortion were typically made by the mother, leaving little agency for fathers if she decided to proceed with the pregnancy. Fathers expressed anxiety and uncertainty, particularly during the early months of an unplanned pregnancy. They felt more involved in the process when they were in a committed relationship with the mother.

In Iceland, fathers discussed the initial weeks or months of parenthood as challenging. Some admitted to not feeling an immediate connection with their newborn child, leading to feelings of shame and guilt. A few fathers mentioned their partners' experiences with postpartum depression, stressing the importance of fathers being aware of this condition and providing support. Fathers also expressed overwhelming feelings of responsibility and fear of not being adequate caregivers for their children, as well as concerns about the impact of parenthood on their social lives.

In Greece, fathers acknowledged that becoming a father was a transformative experience that significantly altered their lives. They discussed experiencing anxiety about health issues, school exams, and other challenges related to parenting. While some fathers attempted to prepare themselves by reading books or articles, they found that the reality of fatherhood differed significantly from their expectations. The emotional and practical demands of parenting were far more intense than they had anticipated.

Gender Views

In Iceland, more than half of the fathers expressed the belief that mothers were more capable of caring for the child in the first few months after birth. They attributed this to factors such as breastfeeding and the physical connection formed during pregnancy. However, all fathers agreed that there was no

significant difference in parental capability in the long run. In some interviews, fathers admitted that their partners had thought more about having a child than they had.

In Spain, there was controversy surrounding the societal expectation that mothers should primarily care for children. Many fathers interviewed echoed this sentiment, feeling that childcare was primarily the responsibility of women, especially if they were the primary breadwinners. However, there was one case where both parents were working, and they considered paternity leave to share childcare responsibilities.

In Ireland, all fathers felt equally capable and prepared for parenthood as their partners. However, some acknowledged that their partners seemed to have a stronger emotional connection with the child, particularly if they were breastfeeding. Despite this, fathers believed they were fully capable of providing care and support for their children.

In Greece, participants noted a societal belief that women are naturally more prepared to become mothers compared to men. They observed that fathers gradually grow into their role over time and may not fully realize the significance of fatherhood at first. It was also mentioned that mothers often receive more encouragement and support in their parental role compared to fathers.

Prepared for Fatherhood

In Ireland, most fathers felt emotionally prepared for fatherhood, viewing it as something to dive into and learn on the job. Having a family member with a child provided practical experience in tasks like changing diapers and feeding, which was helpful. While some fathers read books in attempts to feel prepared, the consensus was that nothing fully prepares you for parenthood. Two fathers mentioned attending antenatal courses, but they noted a lack of support available after the baby was born, suggesting that postnatal support would be beneficial.

In Spain, fathers described caring for a child as challenging, especially for those without prior experience. Many felt intimidated by handling a newborn and expressed fears about hygiene and diaper changing. Some fathers delegated these tasks to the mother, feeling incompetent. Overall, most fathers classified themselves as moderately competent, except for a couple who felt manifestly clumsy in their parental duties.

In Iceland, fathers who were not in a relationship with the mother expressed feeling unprepared for fatherhood. Others admitted to feeling somewhat ready but acknowledged the difficulty of mental preparation. Those with stepchildren felt more prepared due to prior parenting experience. They noted

that parenthood profoundly changes one's life, particularly regarding social life and sleeplessness, which they were unprepared for.

In Greece, some fathers admitted feeling unready for fatherhood and did not personally prepare for parenthood, expecting everything to come naturally. They sought advice from friends, family, and the internet for parenting tips and information.

Role Models

In Spain, most fathers had male figures such as their fathers, brothers, or grandfathers as reference points. However, many preferred seeking advice from mothers when in need of childcare guidance. This shift was attributed to changes in the father's role over the past two decades, with mothers historically being the primary caregivers. In Ireland, many fathers bought books on childcare and sought advice from close friends, in addition to family members mentioned earlier.

In Iceland, most fathers looked up to someone in their family as a role model, such as fathers, grandfathers, or brothers. However, some didn't have a single role model but admired specific traits they aspired to embody as fathers. They highly valued spending time and giving attention to their children, prioritizing them above all else. They admired individuals who displayed love and care despite societal norms of masculinity. One father admired his brother's ability to set clear boundaries and maintain healthy communication with children.

In Ireland, fathers reflected on their relationship with their own fathers when considering role models. Many valued the advice received from their fathers, citing various traits they admired. One appreciated his dad's encouragement to try new things and not fear failure, while another admired his father's empathetic approach to parenting, which contributed to a strong family bond. Some fathers who grew up without fathers looked to mothers and siblings as role models, valuing their judgment and decision-making skills. One father even cited his neighbour as a role model due to his reliability and interest in his life and sports activities.

In Greece, fathers had diverse sources of guidance and role models. Some sought assistance from personal advisors or psychologists, while others relied on friends or family for advice on fatherhood.

Service for Fathers

In Spain, many fathers noted that society still views mothers as the primary caregivers, even to the extent that if a father becomes widowed, female relatives like grandmothers or sisters often assume caregiving roles. This matriarchal perception of childcare permeates various sectors, including business, family, public administration, and political governance. Consequently, there are no measures in place to encourage fathers to have autonomy in childcare responsibilities or spend quality time with their children. Additionally, while women have access to economic and psychological support from numerous institutions, men have less access to such assistance.

In Iceland, most fathers expressed a desire for childcare services to be more visible and accessible. Many fathers interviewed had not actively sought out such services, partly because they were unaware of their existence. Some emphasized the importance of free classes for fathers, given the evolving role and expectations of fathers over the past few decades.

In Ireland, fathers acknowledged the presence of various services for fathers but stressed the need for greater motivation among new fathers to seek out and utilize these resources. They identified cultural barriers that deter men from admitting their struggles and suggested a media campaign to normalize vulnerability in fathers. Support groups for fathers were deemed valuable, providing an open forum for discussing experiences and fostering mentorship among fathers with older children.

In Greece, participants highlighted the abundance of maternity programs and tutorials available for mothers but noted a lack of equivalent services for fathers. Existing services for fathers are either scarce or poorly distributed across the country. Participants expressed a desire for specialized schools or tutorials for fathers, although some questioned whether all men would be ready to engage with such services.

Information and Service

In Ireland, fathers emphasized that knowledge provided should focus on the end result: the baby. They emphasized that after nine months, their lives would change forever. They stressed that the experience of having a child should be cherished, and regardless of the relationship with the mother, being cooperative in the parenting role is crucial for the child's well-being. Overall, the advice was to seek support from family, friends, and the community and to keep the focus on the child, irrespective of the relationship with the partner.

In Iceland, fathers discussed the changes that occur when having a child, with many highlighting the challenges of caring for a newborn. One father mentioned that it's normal for fathers to take time to connect with their child, reassuring them that they're not alone in this experience. Another advised fathers not to dwell on potential challenges but to navigate through this period. They emphasized that children are resilient and suggested spending time outdoors with the child for the father's mental well-being.

In Spain, fathers provided mixed comments but emphasized that fatherhood is a learning journey, urging others to slow down and enjoy the experience. They stressed the importance of services catering to both parents, not just the mother. Mental health support services during pregnancy were deemed vital to help fathers prepare for the significant life changes after childbirth and to facilitate the transition into parenthood.

In Greece, fathers expressed a desire for more information and advice on mental health issues affecting mothers after childbirth and how to support them with the arrival of a new family member. They also highlighted how fathers develop a stronger emotional connection with their children over time, acknowledging the mother's initial bond but emphasizing the importance of their own role in the child's life.

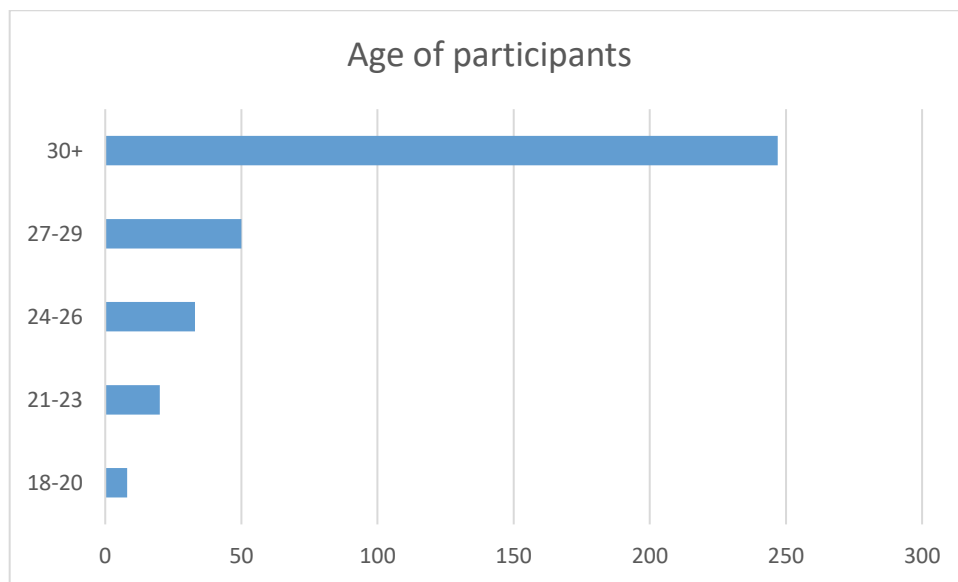
Questioner

In the final stage of the research, all partners distributed a questionnaire to gain a better understanding of the environment and situation of fathers in partner countries. The purpose was to gain insight into what fathers themselves wanted or needed most from the project in terms of information or education.

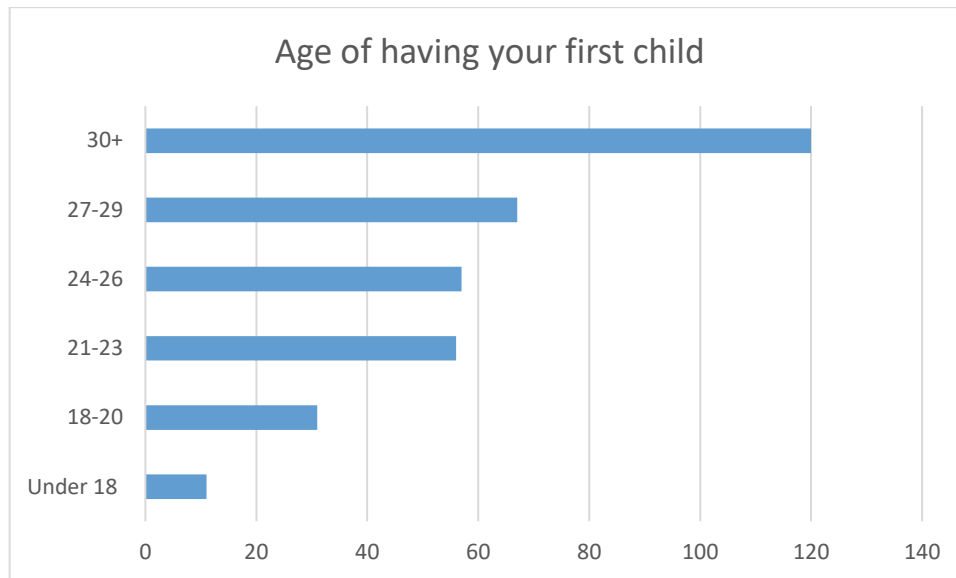
The target group for the questionnaire was fathers in partner countries, and a total of 360 fathers from Iceland, Ireland, Greece, and Spain participated. Due to variations in the number of participants in each country, it may be challenging to directly compare differences between countries. However, the responses provide valuable insights into the situation in each country. This chapter will present the results from the questionnaire.

The Participants

Background information on the participants in the questioner.



As can be seen on the graph above the age of participants was high or more than 30 years of age. In Iceland 76% of the participants were 30 years and over, in Greece 42%, in Spain 60% and in Ireland 85%.



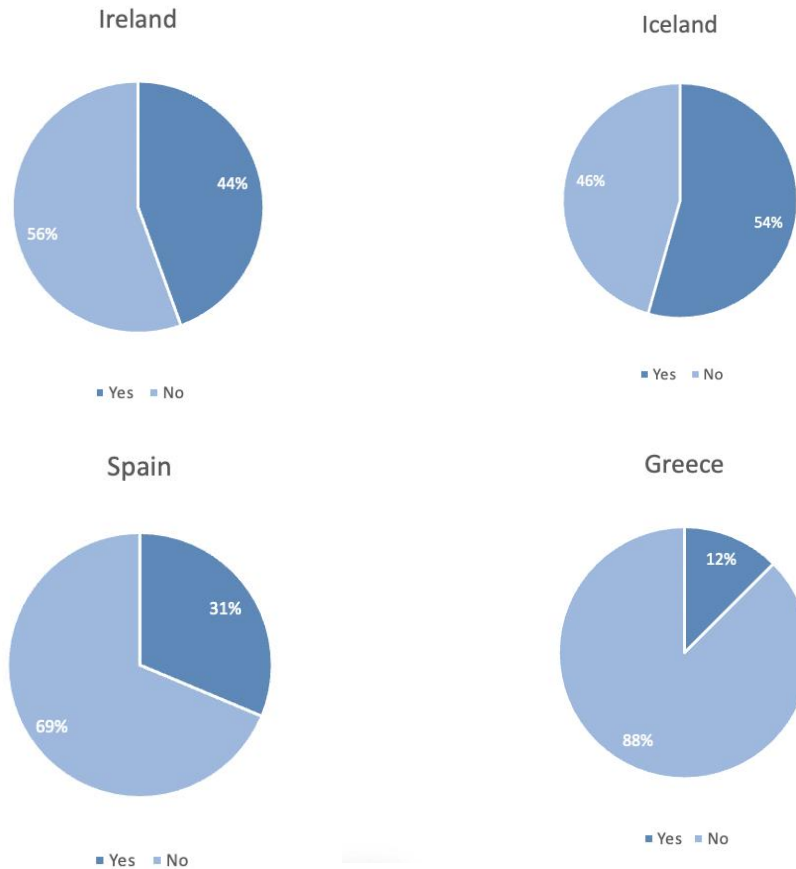
The fathers who participated in the questionnaire also commonly had their first child at the age of 30 or older, which aligns with trends in Europe where individuals are waiting longer to start a family compared to a decade ago. In Iceland, Spain, and Ireland, the results were similar, while in Greece, there seemed to be a deviation from the rest. The most significant age group in Greece was 27-29 years old, with less variability between age groups.

In all partner countries, the majority of fathers were married or living with the mother of their child/children, and it was most common, though narrowly, for the parents to have been living together for 1-4 years. There was a significant difference between countries regarding the highest level of education completed by the fathers, but in all countries, it was most common for fathers to be working full-time or to be full-time students.

Involvement with the child and the birth

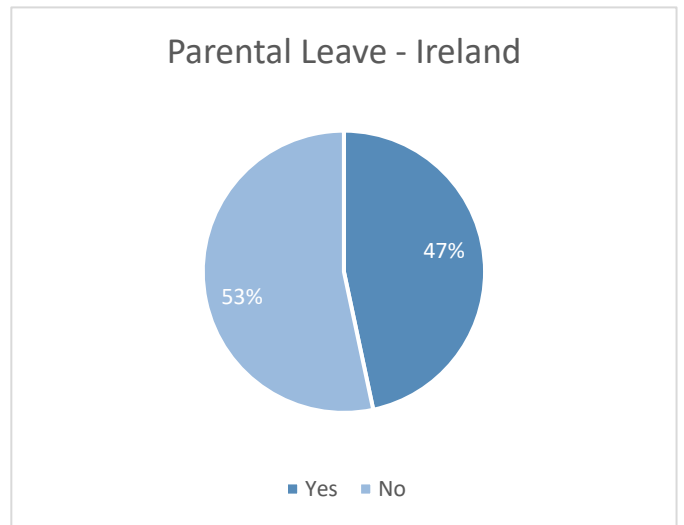
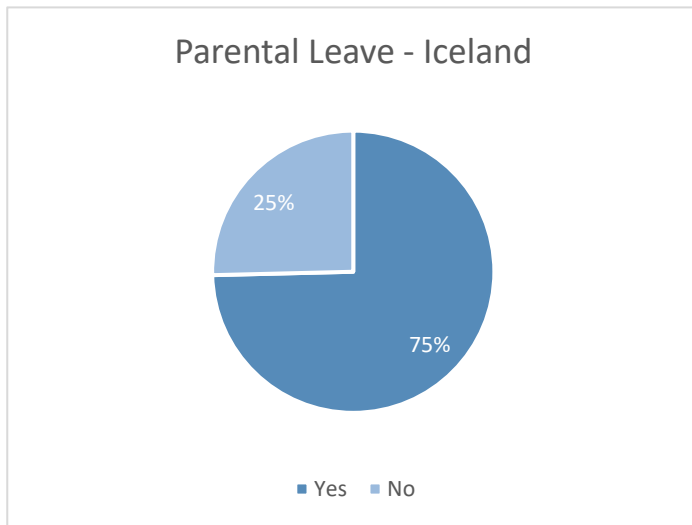
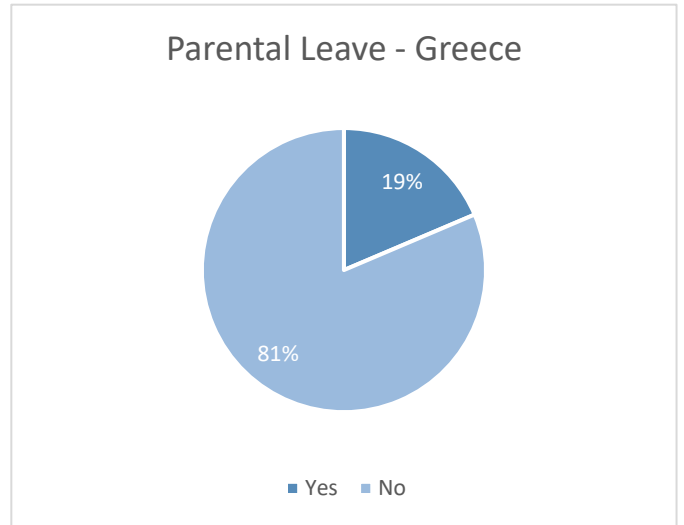
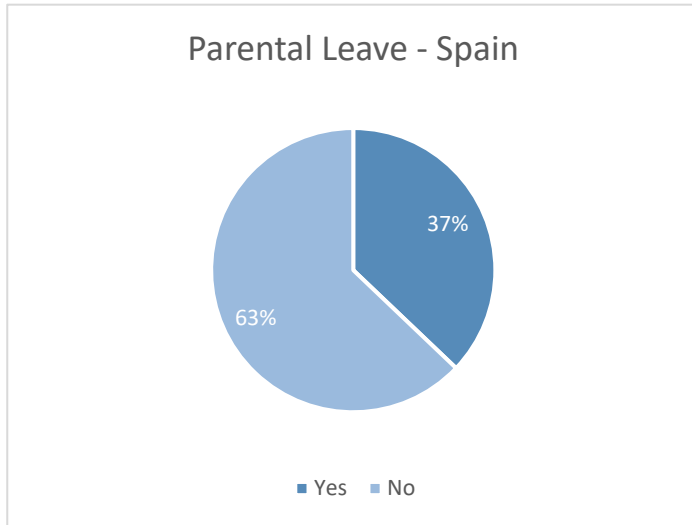
In the questionnaire, we aimed to assess the involvement of fathers during the first months of the child's life and throughout the pregnancy. As mentioned in the stakeholders' interviews and in the research, these periods are crucial for developing a connection with the child.

Below can be seen the answers to the question „*Did you attend any training courses as preparation for becoming a parent?* “



As observed in the results, there was a significant disparity between countries regarding attendance at parenting classes. Icelandic fathers attended classes 54% of the time, Irish fathers 44%, Spanish fathers 31%, and Greek fathers were the least likely to attend, with only 12% participating in classes. This discrepancy is also linked to the availability of opportunities for fathers to attend classes in each country.

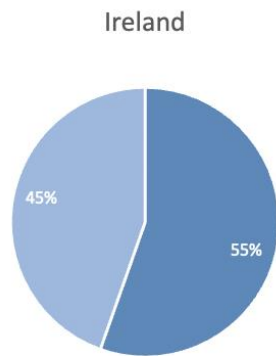
Regarding the question „*Did you take parental leave?* “ vast difference between countries was observed.



From the results above, we can see that in Iceland, 75% of fathers take parental leave after having a child, which is a trend that has been increasing in the last decade following changes made to parental leave in 1998, with fathers being entitled to 3 months. However, the results also indicate that fathers tend to spend less time with the child than the mother during the first year.

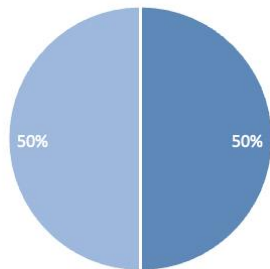
In the questionnaire, we also sought to understand how fathers perceived their role as parents and the level of involvement and support they experienced during the birth and the child's first year of life.

When asked the question, *"Did you prepare for the birth of the child by reading books, websites, or articles about the development and needs of a newborn?"* these were the responses in the four countries.

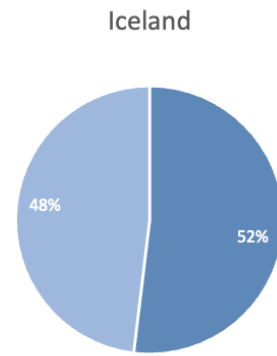


■ Yes ■ No

Spain

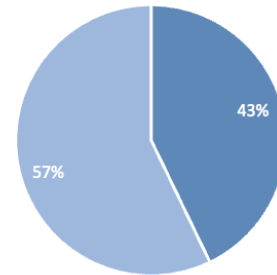


■ Yes ■ No



■ Yes ■ No

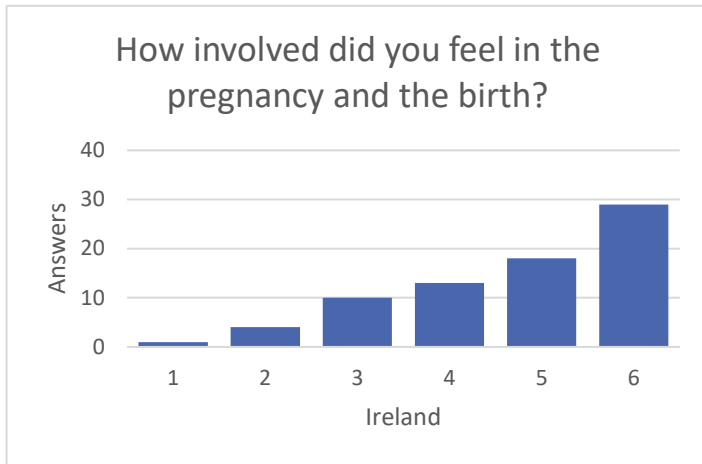
Greece



■ Yes ■ No

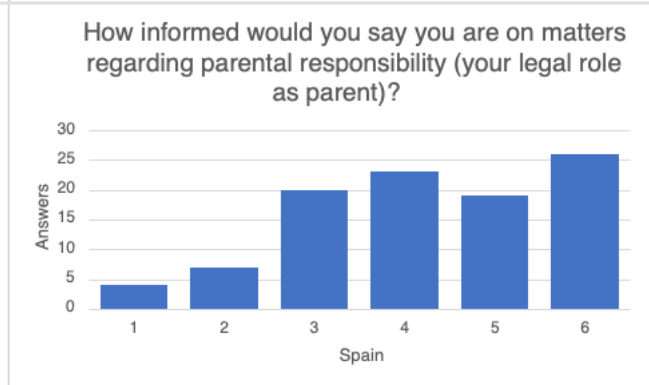
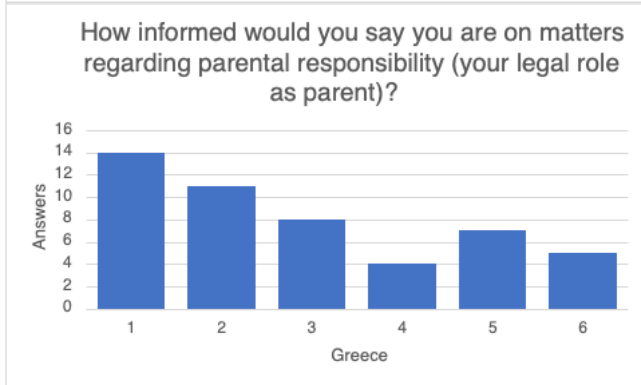
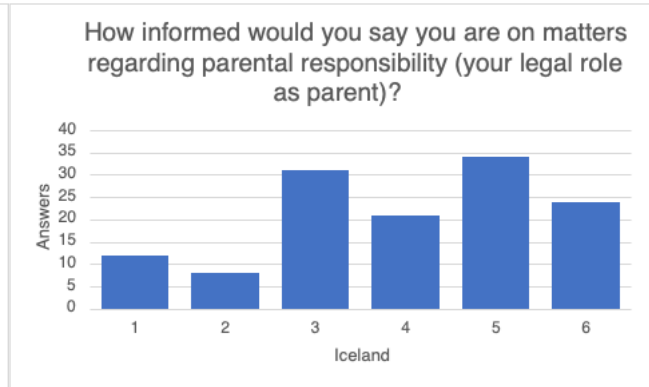
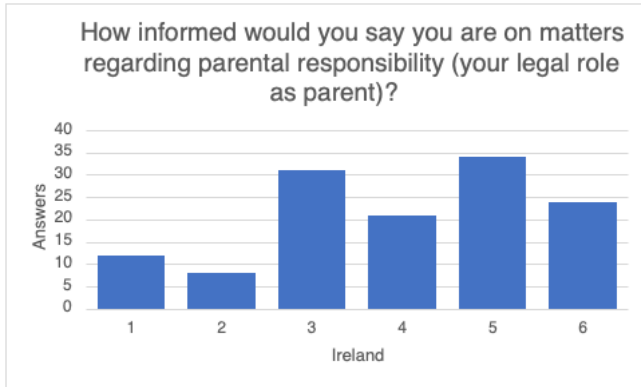
As can be seen from the results, there is a similarity between countries, with approximately half of the fathers preparing for the birth of their child by reading books or information materials about childcare before the birth.

The fathers were asked, “*How involved did you feel in the pregnancy and the birth?* “



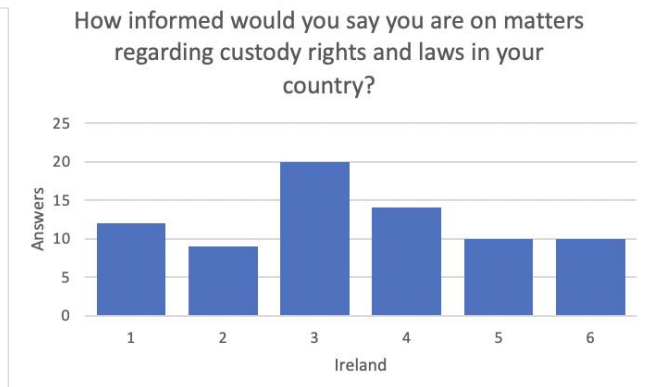
As observed from the results, there was a noticeable difference between the countries. While the results from Iceland were more evenly distributed, with the two mediums receiving the most answers, the others showed different patterns. Both Ireland and Spain had similar results, with the highest percentage of fathers feeling involved in the pregnancy and birth. On the other hand, fathers in Greece felt the least involved, with the highest percentage of fathers feeling they were not involved in the pregnancy and birth.

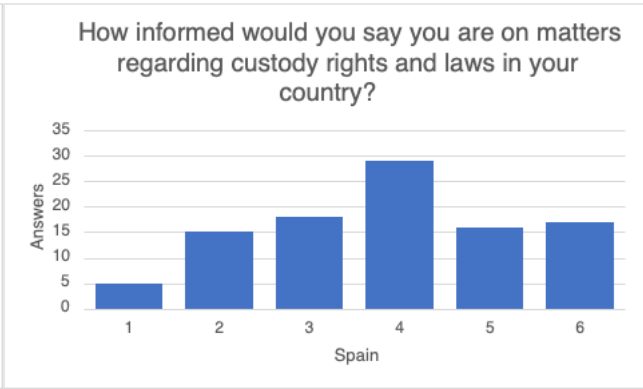
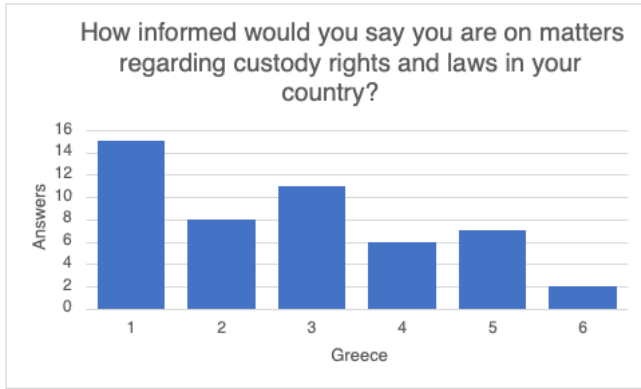
„How informed would you say you are on matters regarding parental responsibility (your legal role as parent)? “



The fathers in Spain appeared to feel the most informed regarding matters concerning parental responsibility, while fathers in Greece felt the least informed. It would be intriguing to delve deeper into this response to understand why fathers in Spain were more informed about parental responsibilities compared to those in other countries.

„How informed would you say you are on matters regarding custody rights and laws in your country?“



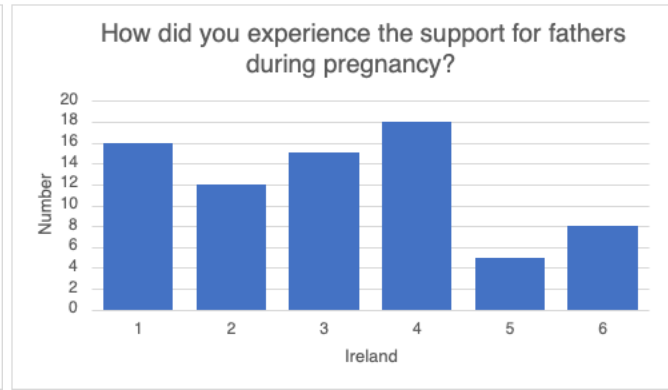
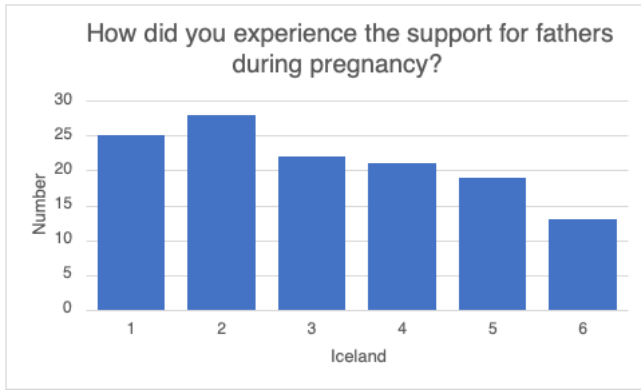


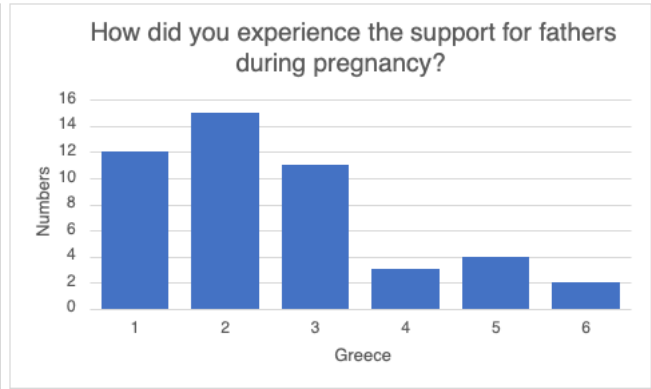
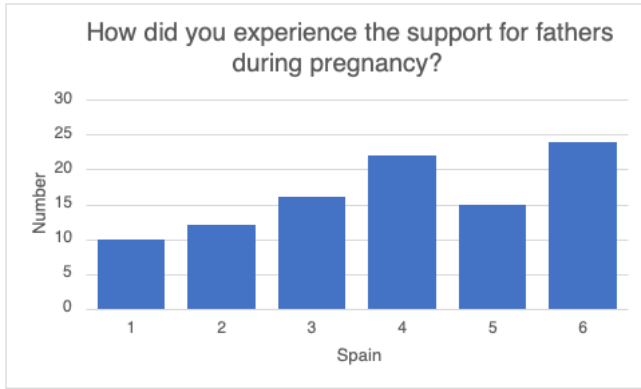
According to the results, many fathers are not well-informed about custody rights and laws in their countries. This lack of knowledge was also evident in responses where many fathers expressed a desire to learn more about these issues, as well as in interviews with fathers. Fathers in Greece seem to feel the least informed among the partner countries, while fathers in Iceland feel they are the most informed.

Support to fathers

The fathers were asked questions about the support available when having a child, and if there was any difference between women and men when it came to this support.

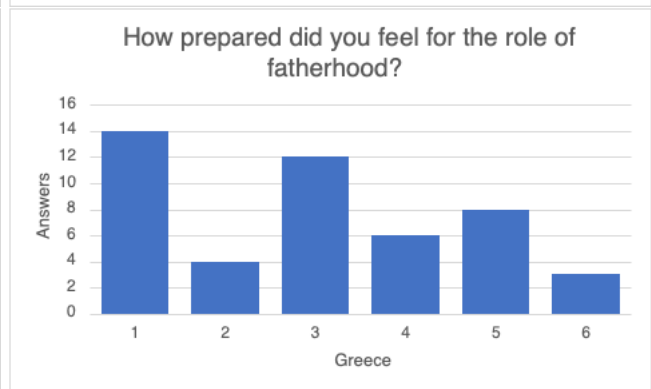
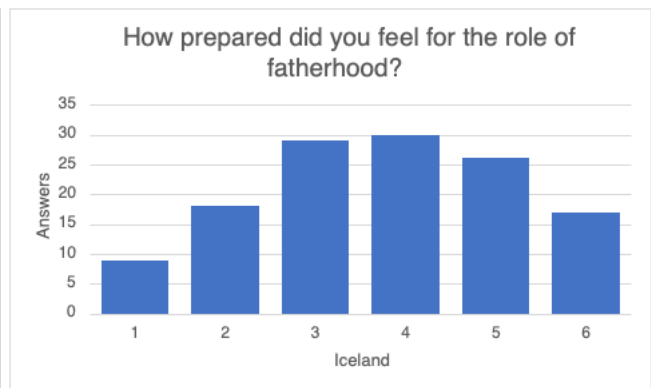
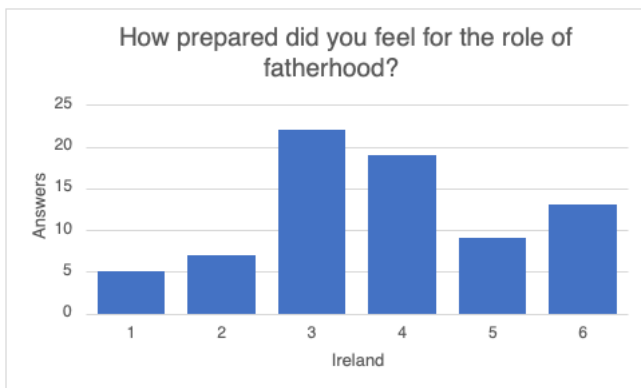
They were asked “*How did you experience support for fathers during pregnancy?*”





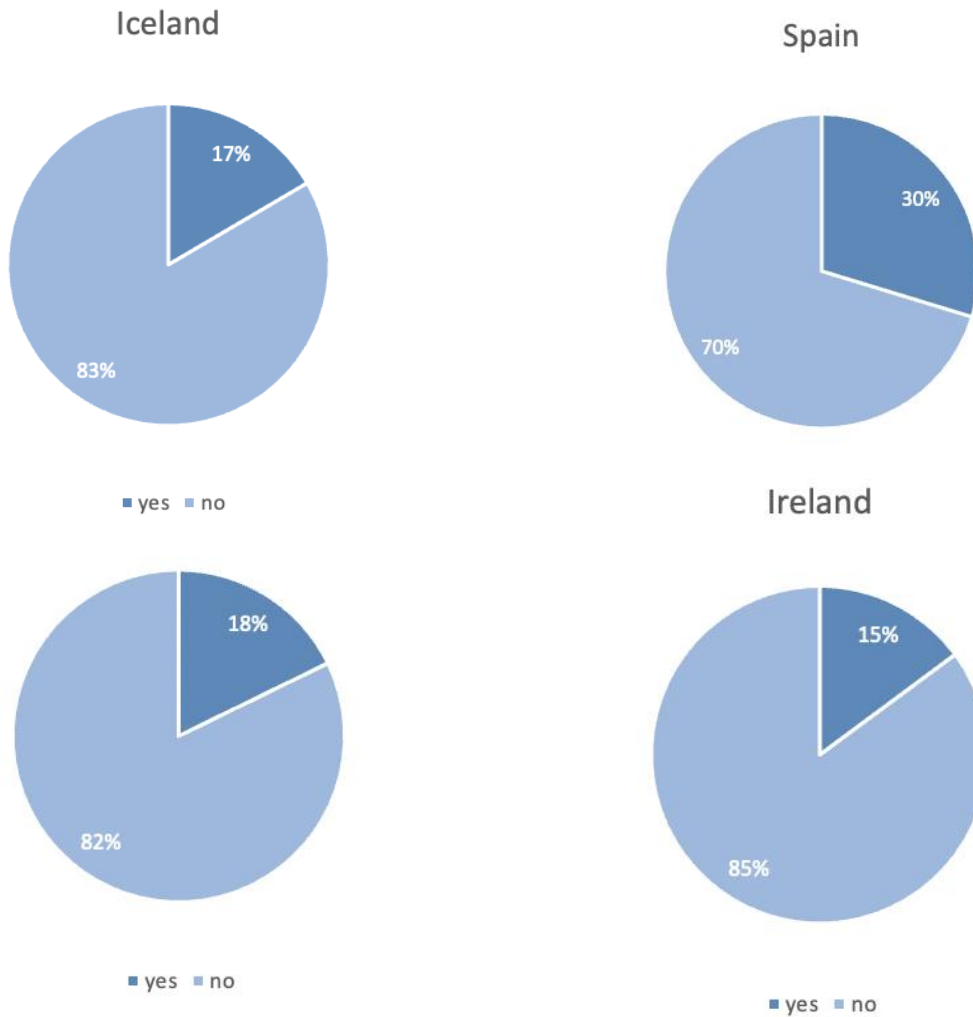
We can observe a difference in how the fathers felt supported in each country. In all the countries except Spain, fathers seem to experience the most support out of the partner countries, while fathers from Greece were least likely to feel much support during this time.

When were fathers asked, “*How prepared did you feel for the role of fatherhood?*”



As can be seen, fathers in Spain felt they were most prepared for the role of becoming a father, while fathers in Greece felt they were least prepared.

When asked “Do you feel that men and women have the same support as parents?”



In all countries, fathers feel that women receive more support than fathers. These results align with what was observed in the interviews with fathers, where fathers commonly thought that women received more support both during the birth and as parents.

Needs for services

The fathers were asked to name three or more topics that they would have wanted to know more about regarding childcare and parenting. The table below lists the topics mentioned:

Mothers need after pregnancy	Division of labour related to the child
Post-natal depression fathers and mothers	Emotional intelligence

Bonding with the child	Changes to the relationship
Child development	Boundaries
Attachment	Your role as a father
Breastfeeding	Emotional Care
Money management	Government aid
Housing	Vaccines
Future	Sex, sexuality, and gender education
Dietary Awareness	Divorce and children
Education	Puberty
Child behavioural training	Equality and diversity
Fathers' rights and custody	Information for separated parents
Parent support services available	Mental health care for children
Child general care	Childbirth
First Aid	Bullying / Cyberbullying
Sleep Training	Nutrition and Immune system
Rights to Parental Leave	Mental health – parents
Sleeping and the parents	Teething

Final words

What appears to be a crucial factor for fathers is gaining confidence in their ability to be effective caregivers and fathers to their child. Research indicates that while stakeholders may hold differing opinions, women have often received more encouragement and empowerment in childcare compared to men, despite not necessarily being better suited for parenthood. Conversely, men often feel they lack the capability to care for a child, especially during the initial months. Interviews reveal that fathers undergo changes after the birth of their first child and feel more prepared for subsequent children, highlighting the importance of men believing in their ability as competent caregivers, which can significantly impact their experience.

It is also essential to acknowledge that a father's role as a parent and their involvement in their children's lives is influenced by external factors. The labor market and the financial capacity of the family can significantly impact a father's ability to spend time with their children and be actively involved in their lives. Across all partner countries, fathers experience pressure to be the primary breadwinner, often leading them to work long hours outside the home to earn more, while women are more likely to spend additional time at home. This dynamic is influenced by societal gender roles and the gender pay gap in the labor market, where men typically earn higher wages and are thus more inclined to work longer hours than mothers. Additionally, the support provided by municipalities and the government, including maternity and paternity leave and financial assistance to parents, as well as custody processes, can affect a father's ability to be involved in their children's lives.

Furthermore, fathers in most partner countries expressed a need for more services and information tailored specifically for them. Many mentioned that existing services were either unavailable or focused more on mothers than on the role of fathers.

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