

“Super dads” meet to commemorate Father’s Day in Namibia

Windhoek, 18 June: To mark the commemoration of Father’s Day, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), together with partners from Government, the European Union and City of Windhoek, met for a community dialogue session with 30 fathers from the Katutura community. The dialogue session was an opportunity to equip fathers with information on the role of father’s in the physical and mental development of children.

The event, was part of the #EarlyMomentsMatter Campaign, which contributes to ensuring that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for education, health and protection are realised.

During the session with fathers, the ‘Super dads’ were reminded that when they nurture their little ones in their earliest years of life – by providing love and protection, playing with them, and supporting their nutrition – their children will learn better, have less behavioural issues, and become healthier and happier.

Providing the material needs of his child, playing, communicating and being a positive role model to his child, were some of the lessons which young father, Israel Samuel (29 years), says he picked up from the session.

Israel, who is separated from Theofilus’ mother, says one of the greatest lessons from the session was that it is important for both parents to always support and care for their child to ensure their optimal development.

“I am hoping that Theofilus will understand that I am always thinking of him, even when I am not there, and that I have great hopes that one day he will become a pilot,” says Israel.

Often times, society forgets about the important role that fathers can play in the physical



and mental development of their child. Absence, due to divorce or work commitments was highlighted by fathers as one of the greatest impediments to spending time with their children. In the cases of divorce, hostile relations with the mothers also makes it difficult for fathers to spend meaningful time with their children.

The Namibia Inter-censal Demographic Survey of 2016 shows that 46.4% of households in Namibia are headed by females, an increase of 2.6 percentage points between 2011 and 2016. Anecdotal accounts also highlight that some of the children in female headed households, are among the ones who are most affected by poverty and among those who fare poorly on a number of educational and social dimensions.

Through the dialogue session, fathers were also reminded on the importance to break down some of the cultural barriers which prevent fathers from spending quality time with their young children. These include cultural beliefs that children belong to the mother and not to the father, particularly when the child is not performing well in school.

“Through the #EarlyMomentsMatter campaign, we are reminding parents that both the mothers and fathers have the power to create real and lasting change for children,” said UNICEF Representative, Rachel Odede. “By engaging with fathers during Father’s Days, we have created awareness among the fathers on the need for quality time and investments in the early years of their children’s lives.”

Under the leadership of Government, the #EarlyMomentsMatter campaign in Namibia will continue to focus on strengthening parental involvement in children’s overall development.