

KANAWHA INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH & ACTION (KISRA)
FATHERHOOD PROGRAM EVALUATION
2008

INTRODUCTION

This report provides a documentation of the achievements and status as of September 2008 of the Fatherhood Program implemented by the Kanawha Institute for social Research and Action (KISRA).

To date, the Program has enrolled at total of 273 participants. This report details the status of the participants, i.e., graduated, active, left for positive reasons, dropped out for negative reasons, and dropped for unknown reasons. The report likewise enumerates the services received by the participants, as well as information on the employment outcomes of the Program. When relevant, information is provided according to the participants' gender and training site. The report also discusses financial knowledge gained by participants; specifically, it presents partial results of pre- and post-tests for 10 modules that comprise the course series on Money Management.

METHODOLOGY

Results discussed in this report are based on information gathered through the following:

- Weekly quantitative monitoring reports on participant status and services received (submitted by Program Staff)
- Periodic (weekly to bi-weekly) qualitative summaries of implementation highlights and challenges (submitted by Program Staff)
- Weekly quantitative pre- and post-test results of the Money Management course series (submitted by Course Trainer)
- Annual focus group discussion with participants (conducted by Evaluator)
- Informal discussions with Executive Director and Program Staff (conducted by Evaluator)

Training site-specific quantitative information was initially entered in Excel spreadsheets by the Program Staff and Course Trainer, and sent to the Evaluator. The Evaluator consolidated the information first in Excel, and then imported data to a statistical software (SPSS) for analysis and data reduction.

RESULTS

As of the end of September 2008, KISRA's Fatherhood Program has enrolled a total of 273 participants. Each participant completed an intake form and attended at least one class. Individuals who filled out an intake form but never showed up for any class are not included in this report.

Almost half of the 273 participants (47%) were registered at the Charleston site. This is followed closely by the number of participants registered at the Dunbar site. Table 1 lists the number and percentage of participants per training site.

Table 1: Training Site

	Frequency	Percent
Charleston	127	47
Dunbar	102	37
Huntington	44	16
Total	273	100

In terms of gender distribution, a vast majority of the participants are male (85% or 231 participants). Females comprise the remaining 15% of the participants. Gender distribution is consistent across training sites, as shown by Table 2.

*Table 2: Gender * Training Site Crosstabulation*

Gender	Training Site			Total
	Charleston	Dunbar	Huntington	
Male	82	88	84	85
Female	18	12	16	15
Total	100	100	100	100

Almost a quarter of the participants successfully graduated from the Program, while 11% are currently active. Around 44% left the Program for known reasons (either positive or negative), while the remaining 21% dropped out for reasons not known by the Program. Table 3 provides a percentage breakdown of the participants' status per training site.

*Table 3: Participant's Status (percentage) * Training Site Crosstabulation*

Participant's Status	Training Site (%)			Total (%)
	Charleston	Dunbar	Huntington	
Graduate	25	29	7	24
Active	16	9		11
Left Program because of a positive or neutral reason	26	25	34	27
Dropped out of Program because of a negative reason	14	20	20	17
Dropped out; reason unknown	19	17	39	21
Total	100	100	100	100

Given that the Program works with a population that is vulnerable to life-changing events (e.g., unemployment, family instability, substance abuse, crime, and the like), it is remarkable that almost two-thirds of participants do/did not drop out of the Program for negative or unknown reasons. The succeeding discussion provides detailed information on the participants' status.

Table 3 indicates that a higher percentage of participants from the Charleston and Dunbar sites graduate from the Program. Conversely, the Huntington site has a higher percentage of participants dropping out of the Program. A similar distribution is presented in Table 4 below. Instead of percentages, the table presents frequencies per training site.

*Table 4: Participants' Status (frequency) * Training Site Crosstabulation*

Participant's Status	Training Site			Total
	Charleston	Dunbar	Huntington	
Graduate	32	30	3	65
Active	20	9	0	29
Left Program bec. of a positive or neutral reason	33	26	15	74
Dropped out of Program bec. of a negative reason	18	20	9	47
Dropped out; reason unknown	24	17	17	58
Total	127	102	44	273

In terms of gender, there is no noticeable difference in participant status between male and female participants. The only exception is the percentage of people dropping out because of a negative reason, i.e., males tend to do so more than females. This is shown by Table 5 below.

*Table 5: Participant's Status * Gender Crosstabulation*

Participant's Status	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
Graduate	24	21	24
Active	10	12	11
Left Program bec. of a positive or neutral reason	26	31	27
Dropped out of Program bec. of a negative reason	19	7	17
Dropped out; reason unknown	20	29	21
Total	100	100	100

One of the goals of the Program is to promote employment among the participants. This is based on the belief that having a dependable source of income contributes to a participant’s ability to be a responsible parent and spouse. Table 6 shows that a slight majority (51%) of the 65 graduates of the Program landed a job after graduation. There is a possibility, though, that the number of participants getting a job after graduation is higher; unfortunately, it is difficult for staff to follow up on graduates because of the relatively mobile nature of the Program population.

Table 6: If a graduate, have job?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	33	51
don't know/no answer	32	49
Total	65	100

Results of a focus group discussion with 15 participants (graduate and active) underscore the direct link between their participation in the Program and their ability to land a job. One participant said,

“it is better to go through KISRA first before going for a job ... because [the Program] gives me good knowledge.”

Some participants said that they found the computer courses and job interview classes (i.e., mannerisms, how to enter and exit the interview, what questions to anticipate) to be very helpful. More importantly, one participant said that the Program made him go *“from clueless to having a goal.”*

Table 7 above indicates that at least one-third of currently active participants have a job. Again, there is a possibility that the actual number is higher due to underreporting.

Table 7: If active, have job?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	10	34
don't know/no answer	19	66
Total	29	100

A significant number of participants did not complete the Program. It must be noted, though, that some of those who left did so for a good reason. For instance, 56 participants left the Program because they

found a job. Four of them left because they decided to attend school, while seven had no choice but to leave because they had to move out of town. This is shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Left Program; main positive or neutral reason

	Frequency	Percent
Got a job	56	76
Attend school	4	5
Moved	7	9
Other	7	9
Total	74	100

A large majority of those who left the Program because they got a job were able to do so because of the job referrals provided by Program staff. Similarly, the participants who left the Program because of schooling got assistance from Program staff in the form of college-related information.

Table 9 below provides a similar set of information on positive or neutral reasons why some participants left the program that is broken down per training site. All three training sites have similar percentages of participants who left the Program because of the availability of work.

*Table 9: Left Program; main positive reason * Training Site Crosstabulation*

Left Program; main positive reason	Training Site (%)			Total (%)
	Charleston	Dunbar	Huntington	
Got a job	79	69	80	76
Attend school		8	13	5
Moved	6	19		9
Other	15	4	7	9
Total	100	100	100	100

On the other hand, some participants dropped out of the Program because of non-positive reasons. Thirteen did not complete the program because they were incarcerated, while four participants left because of financial or family issues. More significantly, 25 participants decided to drop out due to a change in the Program’s stipend policy and the strict implementation of drug testing for participants. Table 10 provides a frequency and percentage distribution of the main negative reason why participants dropped out of the Program.

Table 10: Dropped Out; main negative reason

	Frequency	Percent
Incarcerated	13	28
financial issues	3	6
family issues	1	2
stipend/drug testing policy change	25	53
Other	5	11
Total	47	100

During the focus group discussion, participants were asked if the Program should increase the stipend amount in order to lessen the number of dropouts -- the participants unanimously disagreed. Below are reasons given by some of the participants.

“The money is helpful, but it is not the thing for me.”

“We should recognize the end-goal [of the Program], and it is to get a job.”

“Maybe nothing should be done for those who are after the money. You can bring the horse to the water, but you cannot have him drink it.”

When asked to identify possible reasons why people drop out of the Program, the focus group participants were hard-pressed to come up with answers. The Evaluator followed this up with probe questions.

- When asked if the schedule and pace of classes are a factor, the participants said “no”. They said that the four-hour period is not a problem because there are breaks in between. Furthermore, participants agree that the classes are structured such that they are self-paced.
- When asked if there is a need to hand-hold participants during the early stages of the Program, the participants said that “KISRA already ease people in.”
- When asked if the Program staff and instructors need improvement, the participants responded to the contrary. They said that Program staff are highly professional and provide individual attention.

As part of the Program’s multi-pronged approach, participants are offered by KISRA with a number of services. In the last two years, all 273 participants availed of training services; this is true for all training sites. Two-thirds of the participants were given stipends; again this is fairly consistent across training

sites. However, a lower percentage of participants from the Charleston site were provided with job referrals. Also, the Charleston site did not report any provision of legal support and linkage to KISRA's housing program. Overall, the Dunbar site provides the most number of services to its participants, especially when it comes to legal support and linking participants to KISRA's housing program.

Table 11 provides a percentage distribution of services availed of by the participants.

*Table 11: Service Received * Training Site Crosstabulation*

Service Received	Training Site (%)			Total (%)
	Charleston	Dunbar	Huntington	
Training	100	100	100	100
Stipend	68	62	70	66
Job Referral	24	48	48	37
GED Referral		3		1
Legal Support		54	18	23
Housing Program		32	5	13
Other	2	9	16	7

The participants' status seems to be partially associated with the services they receive(d). As expected, all graduates and active participants received stipends; on the other hand, only around half of those that left or dropped out received stipends. In terms of job referrals, graduates, active participants and those that left for a positive or neutral reason outnumber the rest of the participants when it comes to availing of job referrals. A detailed crosstabulation is presented in Table 12 below.

*Table 12: Participant's Status * Service Received*

Participant's Status	Services Received (%)					
	Stipend	Job Referral	GED Referral	Legal Support	Housing Program	Other
Graduate	100	58	0	37	20	2
Active	100	41	0	7	24	10
Left Program bec. of a positive or neutral reason	46	38	0	27	4	11
Dropped out of Program bec. of a negative reason	53	19	2	32	23	9
Dropped out; reason unknown	47	24	3	3	2	3
Total	66	37	1	23	13	7

There seems to be an association between availing of job referral services and the participants' chances of landing a job. For instance, Table 13 shows that a high percentage of participants who had a job right after graduation (73%) availed of job referral support from the Program.

*Table 13: If a graduate, have job? * Service Received: Job Referral Crosstabulation*

<i>If a graduate, have job?</i>	<i>Service Received: Job Referral (%)</i>		<i>Total (%)</i>
	<i>no</i>	<i>Yes</i>	
Yes	27	73	100
don't know/no answer	56	44	100
Total	42	58	100

Similarly, Table 14 indicates that a high percentage of participants who has a job while maintaining active status in the Program (60%) also availed of job referral support from the Program.

*Table 14: If active, have job? * Service Received: Job Referral Crosstabulation*

<i>If active, have job?</i>	<i>Service Received: Job Referral (%)</i>		<i>Total (%)</i>
	<i>no</i>	<i>Yes</i>	
Yes	40	60	100
don't know/no answer	68	32	100
Total	59	41	100

Lastly, Table 15 shows that a high percentage (46%) of participants who left the Program for a job was provided with job referral support.

*Table 15; Left Program; got a job * Service Received: Job Referral Crosstabulation*

<i>Left Program; got a job</i>	<i>Service Received: Job Referral (%)</i>		<i>Total (%)</i>
	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	
No	88	12	100
Yes	54	46	100
Total	62	38	100

In terms of training benefits, pre- and post-test results of the Program's Money Management's course series indicate significant improvement in the participants' knowledge and skills in managing finances. Table 16 clearly shows this. For example, the participants' average percentage score went up from 64%

(pre-test score) to 89% (post-test score). This translates to a 25 percentage-point increase in the participants' average score. The highest percentage-score increase was in Module 9 (32% increase). Overall, the average pre-test score for all 10 modules is 63%, while the average post-test score for all modules is 86%. This means that the average percentage scores for the 10 modules increased by 23%.

Table 16: Pre- and Post-Test Results

	Average % Score	No. of Test Takers
Money Mgmt. Module 1: pre-test % score	64%	24
Money Mgmt. Module 1: post-test % score	89%	24
Money Mgmt. Module 1: pre- post-test % difference	25%	24
Money Mgmt. Module 2: pre-test % score	73%	25
Money Mgmt. Module 2: post-test % score	90%	25
Money Mgmt. Module 2: pre- post-test % difference	16%	25
Money Mgmt. Module 3: pre-test % score	71%	20
Money Mgmt. Module 3: post-test % score	86%	20
Money Mgmt. Module 3: pre- post-test % difference	16%	20
Money Mgmt. Module 4: pre-test % score	63%	22
Money Mgmt. Module 4: post-test % score	84%	22
Money Mgmt. Module 4: pre- post-test % difference	21%	22
Money Mgmt. Module 5: pre-test % score	73%	20
Money Mgmt. Module 5: post-test % score	95%	20
Money Mgmt. Module 5: pre- post-test % difference	22%	20
Money Mgmt. Module 6: pre-test % score	60%	19
Money Mgmt. Module 6: post-test % score	83%	19
Money Mgmt. Module 6: pre- post-test % difference	23%	19
Money Mgmt. Module 7: pre-test % score	63%	21
Money Mgmt. Module 7: post-test % score	84%	21
Money Mgmt. Module 7: pre- post-test % difference	21%	21
Money Mgmt. Module 8: pre-test % score	60%	30
Money Mgmt. Module 8: post-test % score	86%	30
Money Mgmt. Module 8: pre- post-test % difference	27%	30
Money Mgmt. Module 9: pre-test % score	52%	27
Money Mgmt. Module 9: post-test % score	84%	27
Money Mgmt. Module 9: pre- post-test % difference	32%	27
Money Mgmt. Module 10: pre-test % score	54%	18
Money Mgmt. Module 10: post-test % score	83%	18
Money Mgmt. Module 10: pre- post-test % difference	29%	18

Aside from employment and money management skills, the focus group discussion yielded results that highlight significant benefits gained by the participants.

Participants unanimously agree that the Program improved their parenting skills that, in turn, are allowing them to be more responsible parents and better spouses. The participants were very aware of one of their main (if not the main) objective in joining the Program. The group agreed with participants who said the following:

“My main goal is to prepare myself to be a good father.”

“I want to be a good father.”

“I want to regain the trust [of my kids] that I lost by going to prison.”

“I wanted a better relationship with my spouse.”

Results of the focus group discussion show that the Program is contributing to these goals. For instance, one participant said that he was able to improve his relationship with his two children and even his grandchild. He said that the Program allowed him to learn how to use his time better. He said,

“My kids and grandson started communicating with me. We are doing things together. ... This Sunday, I’m going to [attend grandson’s] first football game. ... You divorce your wife, not your kids.”

Statements by other participants attest to their improving relationship with their children, to wit:

“It’s a slow process, but a sure process of reuniting with my kids.”

“Anyone can be a daddy, but it takes a real man to be a father.”

The participants’ relationship with their spouses also improved. As one participant said,

“I have a better relationship with my spouse. I control my anger better; I express my self better. ... She sees how I have changed ... I get a hug and pat in the back.”

Participants were quick to point out ways that contributed to having a positive relationship with their children and spouses. Through the classes and informal discussions with the Program staff and instructors, participants learned a number of things, to wit:

“Change [happens] within oneself – how to identify bad things you do, and how to identify alternatives.”

“Earn trust by doing good things.”

“Positive brings positive.”

“Accountability has to be applied to everyday life.”

The legal support provided by Program staff is highly appreciated by the participants; more importantly, it seems to yield positive results. As two participants put it,

“Because of knowledge and awareness I gained on child custody, visitation and paternity tests, I am closer to having a legal relationship with my kids.”

“I learned more about the courts and being a father.”

“It is helpful when I go to Court. ... The staff can back me up that I have changed.”

The participants were also appreciative of other services provided by KISRA. For instance, one participant said that the Fatherhood Conference sponsored by KISRA last August provided him with skills in grants writing and networking. They also enjoyed the Father’s Day celebration because it allowed them to bring their children. As one participant puts it,

“I was very happy. Father’s Day felt like my birthday.”

An unanticipated benefit that the participants claim to have gained from the Program is the development of positive social relationship among themselves and with the Program Staff. This is evident in statements made by some participants, to wit:

“We came in at the start as strangers, but we were immediately befriended by the staff.”

“We became friends because of the group sharing, and we have the same goals.”

“The staff and teachers are very respectful and professional. ... They treat you like a human being, and do not judge you.”

“KISRA became part of my family.”

Needless to say, the focus group participants attest to the effectiveness of the Program in attaining their goals. Thus, it is not surprising that they believe that the Program should be continued, and that it can do a better job in recruiting new participants. They said that they learned about the Program mainly through word-of-mouth. Specifically, they heard about it from people who graduated or took part in the Program, or from people who knew the Program Staff and/or KISRA. Some also said that they heard about the Program through flyers and the radio. The participants suggested other ways of informing the public about the Program, e.g., newspapers, internet, television, street signs/posters. They also suggested that the Program should approach social service programs/agencies, area churches, and the

prison system. Some even suggested the creation of an alumni group that could help in recruiting potential participants.

In terms of suggestions related to the structure and format of the Program, the participants came up with the following suggestions:

- Longer class time for money management and computer courses
- More venues for discussion on being a parent
- More events and venues where parents can bring their children (other than Father's Day)
- More information on transportation assistance

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. On its second year of implementation, the Program is partially successful in attaining one of its outcomes, i.e., to increase employment. About half of Program graduates (33 out of 65 individuals) have a job right after graduation, and one-third of participants who are currently active in the Program (10 out of 29 individuals) already have a job. Furthermore, 56 individuals who left the Program did so because they got a job. Overall, 99 of the 273 individuals involved in the Program have a job either currently or upon graduation. It is important to note, though, that in all likelihood, the number is significantly higher. For instance, 32 of the 65 graduates are reported as not having a job; however, the Program does not know for a fact if this is indeed true. More so, the Program does not know if the 58 individuals who dropped out of the Program for unknown reasons ended up getting a job. It just happens that it is difficult to follow up on them, mainly because of the transient nature of the population. This notwithstanding, the Program Staff should exert more effort in knowing the employment status of participants, especially the graduates.
2. Still on employment, the evaluation results show that participants who availed of the job referral service provided by the Program are more likely to have a job compared to those who did not receive the said service. Thus, the Program might want to enhance its efforts in providing job referral support to its participants.
3. It is too early to assess with certainty the effectiveness of the Program in attaining its other main outcome, i.e., to increase the participants' ability to be more responsible parents. It has only been less than a year since the Program produced graduates, and it takes more than that period of time to transform non-custodial parents into more responsible parents. The evaluation plans to assess this during the third year of the Program. Anecdotally, though, there is evidence to support the claim that a number of participants have attained this outcome. All focus group participants said that they have a better relationship with their child(ren) and/or their spouses. To ascertain this in a more systematic manner, the Program should prepare ahead of time to put in place a system to evaluate this outcome. For instance, exit interviews must be administered

to all graduates and, if possible, to those who dropped out of the Program. Needless to say, it might not be possible to conduct follow-ups with some graduates or dropouts because of their transient nature. Nevertheless, efforts have to be made to reach as much graduates and dropouts as possible.

4. The Program is effective in increasing the participants' knowledge and skills in managing their finances, as evidenced by significant increases in post-test percentage scores. Thus, the Program should continue providing this service.
5. The Program is partially successful in minimizing Program dropouts. A significant number of participants dropped out either for unknown reasons (58) or because they did not agree with the stipend and/or drug testing policy. Given the latter, it is important that participants are provided with a comprehensive orientation of the various elements of the Program so that stipend and drug testing policies are fully understood at the very beginning of their participation.
6. The Program Staff and instructors are major assets of the Program. Thus, staff support should be sustained, if not further enhanced.
7. There is anecdotal evidence for the desire to have more family-oriented activities, i.e., those that allow parents to bring and engage their children and spouses. If resources allow it, the Program should consider offering more of this type of activities.
8. There are indications that the Program is successful in creating a social relationship between and among its graduates and active participants. It might be a good idea to further explore initial thoughts voiced by both Program Staff and participants to create an alumni group. An alumni group can potentially sustain the gains of the Program. For instance, the group could be a positive social venue for participants to learn from and support each other beyond the classroom setting. It can also be a venue for networking and peer counseling among participants. Equally important, the group can be a good tool for recruitment and Program marketing.