

In Uganda, a boy child has been left behind in terms of empowerment and this has caused them hard life. According to Uganda's culture, when a boy grows up is expected to take on the roles of a man which include, marrying and taking care of his family. Even before marrying, there are a lot of expectations from them like paying bride price to the girl's parents, before being allowed to marry their daughter. Due to limited resources available to them especially those who are orphans, those from poor backgrounds and refugees face a lot of hardships in achieving this something that delays other activities that could be crucial and very developmental in their lives.

RUTNAK Pearl Development Foundation (RPDF) a non-profit organization based in Kampala Uganda highly emphasizes the empowerment of a boy child through physical, emotional and psychological support. RUTNAK Pearl Development Foundation (RPDF) aims at achieving this through education, health care, life skilling, economic empowerment like vocational training, and community servicing.

The funding will be a driving force towards achieving boy child empowerment effectively through;

- ❖ Providing emotional support and mentorship to the young boys by agreeing on a shared responsibility with all key actors and stakeholders like politicians, educationists, religious leaders and cultural institution leaders.
- ❖ Facilitating access to educational opportunities and skills training for the boy child in order to improve their future prospects and break the cycle of poverty.
- ❖ Raising awareness and promoting gender equality, challenging harmful stereotypes and societal norms that marginalize boys and limit their potential.
- ❖ Strengthening community and family support systems for vulnerable boys, fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion.
- ❖ Empowering boys to make informed decisions about their physical and mental health, including addressing issues such as trauma and substance abuse.
- ❖ Advocating for the protection of the rights of the boy child, ensuring they are treated with dignity and respect in all aspects of their lives.
- ❖ Thorough assessment to understand local challenges and develop local solutions.
- ❖ Facilitating private sector engagements in supporting accessibility.

There's a growing sentiment that something is fundamentally wrong with society today. It's a shared frustration, but many struggle to pinpoint exactly where things started to go awry.

From my perspective and I emphasise, these are my personal views—it all began when we started heavily promoting women's emancipation and advocating for women's rights in a way that has unintentionally sidelined men.

It's not that advocating for women is wrong, but somewhere along the way, we lost balance, and the boy child has been left behind.

The rise of women's rights movements and feminist activism has undeniably empowered countless women and girls. These efforts, through clever language and strategies, have rightly addressed many issues facing women.

However, one unintended consequence has been the neutralisation of men's masculinity and the marginalisation of boys and men in key societal spaces.

Let's talk about the core of society—family. Charity begins at home, and a lot of what is wrong with society today stems from homes where children are growing up without strong father figures.

Fathers play a crucial role in shaping their children's moral compass, providing discipline, and grounding them.

Research has shown that children raised in single-parent homes, particularly by financially successful single mothers, often grow up entitled and without a sense of accountability.

The absence of a father figure can lead to boys and girls lacking the discipline and moral guidance that a balanced parental structure provides.

In today's society, we've normalised the idea that women don't need men, proclaiming that they are strong and independent.

But this narrative has consequences. By pushing the empowerment of women without a similar focus on men, we've created an imbalance in homes.

A woman with more financial power and independence might feel she doesn't need a family, children, or a partner. As a result, marriages suffer, conjugal relationships break down, and families fracture.

When a father loses his role as a provider and leader, even his own children might begin to see him as irrelevant.

While advocating for women's rights, society unintentionally started to erode men's rights. Policies and campaigns that encourage women to apply for jobs have, in some cases, left men feeling discouraged.

What happens when women rise to the top? While this in itself isn't a problem, it becomes problematic when it leads to the exclusion of men from leadership roles, creating a power vacuum at home and in society.

We've witnessed a growing number of women choosing not to have children or pursue traditional family structures, instead focusing solely on their careers. This shift has fractured traditional family models.

Furthermore, the explosion of NGOs and advocacy groups promoting women's issues has amplified the trend. These organisations, often well-funded, have unintentionally sidelined the boy child.

As these NGOs lift women out of traditional roles, they inadvertently push men into the background. And this would be fine—if the approach was more balanced.

Today's society, run increasingly by women in various spaces, is a stark contrast to the past, where men held the reins. And while empowering women is a positive and necessary step, we must also consider the cost of leaving boys and men behind.

We remember older societies with nostalgia because they were more balanced men and women had defined roles that complemented each other. Now, many once-respected institutions seem to be losing their strength, and one could argue that this is linked to the disempowerment of men.

So, what's the solution? We can elevate women without disempowering men. Advocating for the boy child doesn't mean we stop supporting women's rights it means creating a balanced approach where both boys and girls are empowered to lead.

When we invest in the boy child, we are cultivating the next generation of responsible fathers, husbands, and leaders.

Empowering the boy child is about restoring balance in society, ensuring that both genders grow strong, supportive, and united.

It's not about going back to the past, but rather building a future where men and women stand together, lifting each other up, and making homes, communities, and society better for everyone.

In essence, as we continue to support women's rights, let's also focus on nurturing and empowering boys. Because, ultimately, empowering the boy child means empowering a future leader who will shape not just the home, but the world around him.