

Parenting classes for young fathers is a good initiative

In Buyende District, thousands of men have been trained under a family transformation programme aimed at reducing domestic violence, defilement, and early parenthood. The initiative known as Responsible, Engaged and Loving (REAL) Fathers Project is being implemented as part of broader efforts to rebuild family values and promote positive parenting in Busoga Sub-region.

The programme, which targets young fathers aged between 16 and 25, trains them in gender-equitable practices, childcare, communication, and responsible fatherhood.

It is public knowledge that any form of crime that plagues our country usually has a number of underlying causes, one of which is social and family breakdown. Efforts to mend the family unit are, therefore, a good route to take. And while the preference would be to have young people stay in school, graduate, and get gainful employment before becoming parents, realities often fall short of such expectations. It would therefore be foolhardy to ignore the presence of young parents and their struggles.

The issue:

Parenting

Our view:

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While the police and the justice system must continue to play their role in maintaining law and order and ensuring that the rule of law is respected and justice is dispensed, it is important that values be instilled in individual members of society to curb crimes. One way is ensuring that parenting is done the right way. However, like many other key aspects of community, parenting is learnt, improved, and polished over time. Programmes and initiatives that promote informed parenting are a good addition to the strengthening of the fabric of our society.

The project, which is implemented by the Holistic Initiative for Community Development (HOLD) Uganda, with support from Impact and Innovations Development Centre, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, and funding from LEGO Foundation, uses mentorship sessions, home visits, group discussions, and community outreach to promote responsible parenting and reduce violence.

It is reported that because of this programme, a number of young men who participated have become responsible, loving, and engaged with their families. They are reported to now be more involved in childcare, communicate better with partners, and there is an evident reduction in violent behaviour. It is such little known moves that help to holistically deal with the problems that society grapples with, which, if not dealt with at the grassroots, catapult into more complicated cycles of crime that can hardly be unravelled.

While training young fathers about responsible parenting might not directly solve the country's most pressing needs, such as unemployment, poor infrastructure, corruption, disease, poor healthcare, etc., it is a small but undeniably important part of the multi-pronged approach to improving livelihoods and breaking destructive cycles at the smallest unit of the community, the family.

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