Stichting Gentle Boys Club

Policy Plan '25 - '28

a) The institution's objectives and activities

Gentle Boys Club is a Dutch 'stichting' (foundation), a non-profit organization, dedicated to fostering emotional intelligence, healthy masculinity, and holistic consent education among young boys in India, working at the root level to combat male-led domestic and sexual violence in relationships, in homes and communities, and the rising global manosphere.

In India, boys grow up navigating a deeply patriarchal society, where rigid gender norms often shape their understanding of emotions, gender, power, and relationships. These social structures discourage vulnerability, normalize violence, and rarely equip young boys with emotional and relational education to regulate themselves in a healthy way. Most Indian sex education (when it exists) is limited, biological, and shame-laden. Consent is almost never taught. The consequences are stark, ranging from self-detrimental emotional suppression, to bullying and gender based violence. Data shows that domestic and sexual violence in India predominantly male led and affects women and girls, with a significant portion experiencing physical, emotional, or sexual abuse.

At Gentle Boys Club, we believe that creating safer homes and healthier relationships can start with supporting the emotional and mental well-being of young people, especially young boys before the damage is done.

Why Boys and Their Communities?

A lot of support work focuses on helping women and girls after abuse or violence has occurred and this is essential. But Gentle Boys Club works from a different angle: we focus on prevention.
We reach boys just as they are forming their values, their identities and ideas about the world. Through storytelling, theatre, art, sport and popular culture, we gently guide them to think about what it means to be "a man", both for themselves and for others around them.

We do not frame the program as a reaction to violence or blame boys. Instead, we empower them to grow into kind, emotionally resilient individuals who lead with respect and care.

Why India?

While the aforementioned issues are global, the situation in India needs special attention. In addition to growing global trends that promote harmful ideas around masculinity, India also carries a deep-rooted history of patriarchy and normalized harm within homes and communities. Domestic and sexual violence is often unspoken and accepted, making it hard for those affected to seek help, report or even name what's happening to them. Social stigma, victim blaming, family pressure, harassment from police, economic dependence, weak legal enforcement, fear of retaliation, all add to the reasons why so many domestic and sexual violence cases are not reported in India

The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5) provides the most credible nationwide data that shows that 1 in 3 married women (age 18–49) in India has experienced spousal violence (emotional, physical, or sexual). Over 75–80% of domestic violence cases go unreported. National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019–21) also found that only 1 in 100 women who experience sexual violence ever report it to the police. This implies 99% of sexual violence cases go unreported. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), in 2021, 31,677 rape cases were registered across India, averaging 86 cases daily and this is when the percentage of rape cases that go unreported in India is alarmingly high, by most estimates, over 90% of cases go unreported. Approximately 89% of rape cases involved perpetrators known to the victim. NCRB data also reveals that the rate of crimes against women has been steadily increasing.

The numbers are overwhelming, the situation is alarming, but change has been insignificant. Through Gentle Boys Club, we want to implement inclusive, culturally vetted, creative, scalable solutions to solve these issues in India.

How do we Work?

Level A Opening the Conversation : Short, engaging school sessions introducing ideas about gender inequality and gender privilege

Level B Growing Together : Small group workshops where boys explore friendships, peer influence, online culture, and boundaries through activities and guided discussions.

Level C Sharing the Story : Creative projects through theatre, storytelling, art, etc, that helps boys put their learning into their own words and actions.

b) Fundraising - the method of acquiring income

To achieve its objectives, the foundation will raise funds through a combination of grant applications, donations, sponsorships, and strategic partnerships with individuals, organizations, and institutions that share similar values and social goals.

The foundation will actively apply for national and international grants from public and private bodies that support social, educational, and cultural initiatives. In addition, it will seek voluntary contributions from individuals and corporate donors who wish to support its mission.

To ensure sustainability, the foundation will also explore collaborative partnerships with NGOs, cultural organizations, and community groups, as well as fundraising events that align with the foundation's purpose and values.

All funds raised will be used exclusively to advance the foundation's mission, and detailed financial records will be maintained and made publicly available in accordance with ANBI transparency requirements.

c) The management and expenditure of the institution's assets

The Foundation's assets shall consist of:

1. Subsidies, grants, and other financial contributions;
2. Donations, testamentary dispositions, and bequests;
3. Any other lawful acquisitions and benefits that support the Foundation's objectives.

The Foundation's assets and income will be managed with transparency, prudence, and accountability. All funds will be used solely to advance the Foundation's stated mission and objectives. The Foundation's purpose does not include profit generation; rather, any surplus funds will be fully reinvested into programs, projects, and activities that further its social goals.
The Management Board shall ensure that the Foundation does not retain more assets than are reasonably necessary to secure the continuity and sustainability of its work. A financial reserve may be maintained only to cover ongoing operational costs and future program commitments.
Allocation of funds will follow a clear and responsible process:

- Program-related expenditures will include costs of projects, events, and educational or community activities directly contributing to the Foundation's mission.
- Operational expenditures will include administrative expenses such as basic salaries, accounting, communication, and logistics, kept minimal and proportionate to ensure that the majority of resources benefit programmatic work.

No individual or external entity shall have any personal claim to, or benefit from, the Foundation's assets. The assets will always remain dedicated to the public benefit as defined in the Foundation's statutes and in accordance with ANBI regulations.

d) The board has formulated the following policy plan for the next three years:

Following is the list of activities to be undertaken:

1. **Development of Gentle Boys Club Program**

As a starting organization, the foundation will work with qualified experts to further develop the program and modes of implementation to ensure a safe, effective, and culturally relevant program and teachings.

The Gentle Boys Club Program has three pillars of teaching. These are: Emotional Intelligence, Healthy Masculinity, and Consent Education.

I. **Emotional Intelligence**: Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and express one's emotions while also being sensitive to the emotions of others. Boys are often taught that anger is the only "acceptable" emotion for men, while sadness, fear, or empathy are labeled as weak and "unmanly." This suppression leads to frustration, aggression, and an inability to communicate effectively.

For teenage boys in India, developing emotional intelligence means:

- Learning to name and process their emotions instead of bottling them up.
- Understanding that vulnerability is strength, not weakness.
- Recognizing that violence, rage, or silence are not the only responses to stress.
- Practicing self-awareness, empathy, and active listening, whether in friendships, romantic relationships, or family dynamics.

II. **Healthy Masculinity:** "Masculinity" in India is often associated with dominance, toughness, and control, reinforced by cultural figures, Bollywood narratives, and even family expectations. Healthy masculinity, on the other hand, challenges these harmful ideals and promotes a version of manhood that is based on kindness, respect, self-confidence, and responsibility, without the need for aggression or control.

For teenage boys in India, healthy masculinity means:

- Breaking free from "*mard ko dard nahi hota*" (Men don't feel pain) conditioning. It's okay to seek help, to feel deeply, and to express emotions beyond anger.
- Redefining strength: real power lies in standing up for what is right, showing kindness, and being emotionally secure, rather than asserting dominance.
- Rejecting misogyny and objectification: understanding that respect for women is not a "favor" but a basic human value.
- Embracing friendships beyond ego: learning that healthy male friendships can exist without competitiveness or suppressing emotions.

III. **Consent Education**: Consent is rarely taught in Indian households or schools, leading to blurred boundaries in relationships, peer pressure, and a lack of respect for bodily autonomy. In a society where traditional gender roles still place the burden of "saying no" on women, teaching boys about consent from a young age is crucial to dismantling entitlement and unhealthy masculinity.

For teenage boys in India, consent education means:

- Understanding that "no" always means no, without excuses, pressure, or coercion.
- Knowing that silence or hesitation is not consent, only an enthusiastic "yes" counts.
- Recognizing that consent is not just about sex, it applies to physical touch, personal space, and even emotional boundaries in all relationships.
- Learning that peer pressure is not an excuse for violating boundaries, being "one of the boys" should never mean disrespecting others.
- Acknowledging that men, too, can be victims of non-consensual behavior and that consent applies universally.

3. Implementation of Gentle Boys Club Program

- Safe, non-judgmental spaces (especially for boys from conservative or patriarchal homes)
- Male role models/mentors who embody healthy masculinity
- Storytelling and cultural references they can relate to (films, cricket, pop culture)
- Interactive formats such as art, theatre, games, role-play: Through schools, safe and trusted settings, qualified stakeholders who have received the Gentle Boys Club teacher training, will work with groups of boys and young men to foster Emotional Intelligence, Healthy Masculinity and an understanding of and practice in Consent.

4. Open source sharing of Gentle Boys Club Program, Tools, Knowledge

As the Foundation develops, its knowledge and resources will too. This will be valuable material for any organization or family looking to support boys and young men in these aspects. The Foundation will actively share and spread these materials and work with organizations with similar goals.

e) Three-Year Anticipation

2025
Setting up foundation.
Obtain basic funding
Develop program
Launch and testing 2-3 pilots in Kerala, India

2026
Building partnerships with stakeholders in India.
Refine program with lessons from pilots, impact measurement tools
Social Media presence.
Sharing toolkit.

2027
Scale up program.
Develop programs for parents & teachers.
Campaigns & PR in India, using creative resources from NL.

2028
Further develop program & scale up impact.

f) Governance Structure & Accountability

Founder & Managing Director (salaried)
Priyamvada Mehra

Head of Operations (salaried)
Jesse van ‘t Hull

The Board Members

1. Sanaa Aesha, Chair
2. Thomas Wheeler, Treasurer
3. Jesse van ‘t Hull, Secretary
4. Diksha Sanyal, General Board Member

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