



Students celebrate with MP Judith Nabakooba (in green gomesi) after graduating Photo by

Sh1.1b to keep girls HIV free

By Violet Nabatanzi

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has injected sh1.1b in Mityana and Mubende districts to keep vulnerable adolescent girls and young women HIV negative through a USAID programme.

The two-year programme dubbed 'Determined Resilient Empowered AIDS Free Mentored Safe' (DREAMS) is being implemented by Mildmay Uganda in partnership with Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL) and the Ministry of Health. DREAMS' entry point for enrolling the girls is HIV testing.

The project aims at reducing the HIV incidence among girls in the two districts.

Speaking during a graduation ceremony where over 100 girls completed a one-year course in business skills in Mityana, the project co-ordinator, Victoria Kabasomi said the programme targets 10 and 24 year olds to prevent them from getting HIV/AIDS.

"The programme enrolls only girls who have tested HIV negative. Our focus is to empower them to be able to protect themselves against sexual

BETWEEN THE LINES

■ Nearly 1,000 adolescent girls and young women are infected with HIV every day in sub-Saharan Africa.

gender-based violence and by the end of the project we expect to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS among girls by 40%," Kabasomi said.

The girls were trained in hairdressing, tailoring, catering, bakery and snack making among others.

Kabasomi said the project focused on different categories – girls who became pregnant at 15 years of age, girls in schools and those engaged in transactional sex.

The project is being implemented in nine countries in sub-Saharan Africa, including Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Girls and young women account for 74% of new HIV infections among adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa and nearly 1,000

adolescent girls and young women are infected with HIV every day.

The number of Ugandans who got infected with HIV dropped to 52,000 in 2016 from 99,000 in 2014.

The executive director of UYDEL, Rogers Kasirye, said girls are given information on HIV prevention and at the end of the course, they are given business start-up kits and this has motivated many of the vulnerable ones to join the programme.

Mityana Woman Member of Parliament Judith Nabakooba appealed to graduates to train other girls who have not had such opportunities to get the skills.

She commended CDC for sponsoring the project, saying it would reduce unemployment.

Mityana district Police Commander John Bosco Serunjogi said having such kind of skills helps the girls because most of the parents in the districts are broke and, therefore, fail to take their children to tertiary institutions.

Meanwhile rape and defilement cases are high in Mityana. Serunjogi attributed this to negligence of parents who do not take care of the girl-child.

Kibanzanga returns

State minister for agriculture in charge of production Christopher Taban Kibanzanga returned to Kampala recently after getting first aid. Kibanzanga collapsed on Saturday while presiding over the World Heritage Day at the Mayor's Garden, the former Boma Grounds, Kasese. He collapsed towards the end of the function after a brass band had started playing the Obusinga bwa Rwenzururu anthem. Kibanzanga is the Rwenzururu chief prince and younger brother of Rwenzururu leader Charles Wesley Mumbere.

Lwanga shuns murder

Dr Cyprian Kizito Lwanga, the Archbishop of Kampala, has decried increased domestic violence, poverty, sickness and witchcraft. Lwanga was also concerned about the escalating human trafficking, rampant kidnap, murder, abortion, promiscuity, land grabbing and conflicts in the country. He urged all Ugandans to love one another and always follow the country's motto 'For God and my country' as a guiding factor in whatever they do. He said this at Mpala Catholic Parish, Entebbe where they marked four years of existence.

University takeover

Residents of Kabarole district have welcomed the move by the Government to take over Mountains of the Moon University "We are happy the government is coming in to help our students because we didn't have any public university in the Rwenzori region," said Elizabeth Mugisa, a resident of Karangura. Richard Rwabuhinga, the LC5 chairperson for Kabarole, said the district local government had allocated more land at Ssaka to the university to expand.