

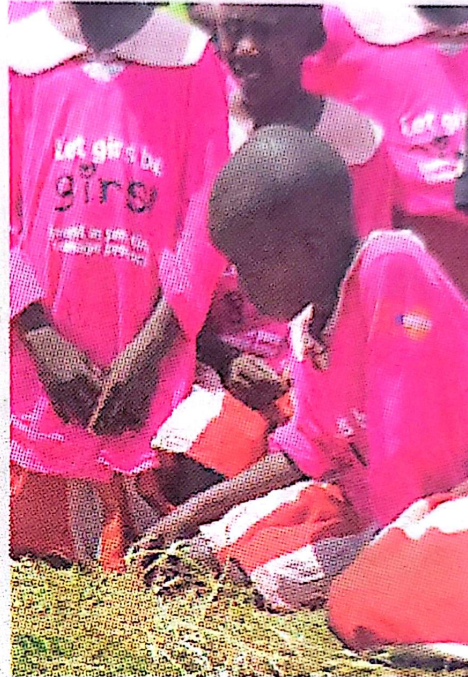
Saying no to irresponsible sex is a life skill our children need

I have been following what one daily has described as 'the war of words' between those for and those against the provision of contraceptives to teenagers.

According to the National Policy Guidelines and Service Standards for Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights, girls as young as 15 years should be granted access to contraceptives in a bid to prevent unwanted pregnancies that lead to many health complications for the girls.

Those in favour of giving contraceptives to children overlook two fundamentals about sex. First, it takes two people - a male and a female - for pregnancy to occur. What interventions have been put in place to deter the males from having irresponsible sex?

Secondly, pregnancy is only one of the outcomes of sexual union. Others include regret (later in life), STIs and STDs. And while preg-



nancy can only happen once in nine months, the other outcomes can occur at every intercourse - outcomes that child should not be exposed to.

A 15-year-old girl is still a child. I think it is high time we asked, what our responsibility to our chil-

dren is? As adults, we should not run away from our responsibilities and massage our shame in finding unhealthy, quick-fix solutions to symptoms of a generation that has abdicated their parenting responsibilities to schools, social media and television.

A 15-year-old girl is a child with a right to enjoy her childhood fully as she grows to attain adulthood. It is not right to introduce her to drugs as powerful as contraceptives when there is a far better and healthier option - saying no to sex until marriage.

In any case, self-control - saying no to irresponsible sex - is a life skill children need, not just for their teen years, but also for a lifetime lest their lives come to total ruin.

Let us all nurture this lifetime skill in our children.

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