

Parents urged to embrace counselling for teenagers

KAMPALA

By Wilson Manishimwe

Parents have been urged to embrace parental counselling as a measure to address teenage pregnancies.

The call was made by The TFK Read-Write club members recently at Fairway Hotel in Kampala during the launch of a book titled: *It Might Be You*, that brings a tale of a young girl who became sexually active at a tender age of 16 years, but due to lack of counselling, got pregnant and contracted HIV.

Frank Kabushenga, the TFK Read-Write club president, said parental counselling is paramount in curbing the current high rate of teenage pregnancy.

"We need to bring our children closer, make them our friends as parents, guide and counsel them, tell them the truth about their body changes to avoid getting in trouble with early pregnancies and other sexually transmitted diseases," he said.

Kabushenga asked parents

to disclose information that affects children's love life.

"When the children have grown into youth or teenage stage, they engage in relationships, without the knowledge of differentiating between real love and lust. Some are lured by peers or men, who entice them with money," Kabushenga said.

Emmanuel Nsubuga, the author of *It Might Be You* and a youth counsellor based in Kampala, said many children become sexually active and are unable to control the situation.

Statistics

According to the Uganda's 2011 demographic and health survey, one in every four girls aged 15 to 19 was found to have had a baby or was pregnant. As a result, many drop out of school.

Secondary school enrolment rates were lower among girls than boys.

The survey conducted by Uganda Bureau of Statistics in mid and late 2016 indicated a slight increase in teenage pregnancy to 25% from 24% in 2011, most common in rural areas.