

Working women urged to embrace family planning

By Saudah Nakanda

As an employer, have you ever been in a situation where most of your female employees take leave at almost the same time?

Joslyn (not real name), a human resource officer (HR) in one of the prominent organisations in Kampala says it happened to her at one time.

"One was to take her leave in June and others in August and September. Their male colleagues thought my ladies were on a competition to give birth. They joked about it and it hurt me as a woman," she recalls.

"To make matters worse, they were in the same department and I thought their department would be under-resourced at the time of their leave. I was blamed for the way things were manifesting," she adds.

Joslyn is not alone. Many human resource personnel are facing similar problems in different companies.

However, experts believe that if family planning is taken up by working women, such



Participants chatting during the workshop on family planning in Masaka. Photo by Saudah Nakanda

issues would not arise.

"When you decide on using a particular family planning method that works well with your body, then your body will regain, stimulating the brain to think more. In most cases, the work you take on at this time will be a success as opposed to

a situation where your thoughts are divided between your work and the babies," Brenda Kiyingi, a Masaka district official, said during a recent advocacy meeting organised by the National Population Council and Engender Health in Masaka town.

She noted that failure to embrace family planning by a working person distorts their workplans, leading to inefficiency.

"Children are good but they need to be spaced and should not be a burden. For instance, if you have children year after year, all your attention is on them and not on the work," Kiyingi added.

Above that, family planning gives you peace of mind and more time with your partner — one of the reasons you may be motivated to work hard.

"A stable family is a mark of success. When you have unspaced children, more attention is given to children and less to your partner. This may result in conflicts, which leads to stress even at work," Ronald Luyera, a family planning expert, said.

According to Stella Kigozi, the director of communication at the National Population Council, family planning means deciding to have a particular number of children through the use of contraceptives.