



Teenage mothers and their babies lining up to receive treatment during the NSSF health camp in Bududa district. Photo by Paul Watala

Bududa grapples with teenage pregnancies

BUDUDA

By Paul Watala

Bududa district health workers and local leaders are grappling with a high rate of teenage pregnancies.

They say this has increased cases of unsafe abortions, which have left scores of young girls with damaged uteruses.

The Bududa district health officer, Imelda Tumuhairwe, said this during a function at Bukhalasi sub-county in Bududa district as National Social Security Fund (NSSF) handed over medical equipment worth sh62m to Bukhalasi Health Centre III.

"Out of 45 deliveries conducted at Bududa Hospital per month, half of them are of girls below 18 years," Tumuhairwe said.

She was also worried that the high number of unsafe abortions would

increase barrenness among women because many get complications and their uteruses are removed.

Tumuhairwe said teenage pregnancies are common in Bugisu sub-region during the circumcision season.

"Young people move long distances following *kadodi* (traditional dance performed during circumcision time) processions even at night where men take advantage of the situation to lure young girls into unprotected sex. Some of them get exposed to diseases such as HIV," Tumuhairwe said.

Edward Senyonjo, NSSF's head of risk, who represented the managing director, appealed to stakeholders to take good care of them and use them to save lives.

"We have handed over 10 beds, 10 mattresses, 10 mosquito nets, a solar system to provide light during the time of deliveries and given

them a cheque of sh10m. We shall construct an incinerator so that the facility can have where to burn waste," Senyonjo said.

"We want the equipment and facility to bring value to our communities. We also had two weeks of other activities that included a blood donation drive at Mbale NSSF head office and people responded positively," he said.

The Bamasaba cultural leader, Bob Mushikori, hailed NSSF for the support extended to communities. He said he is going to use the cultural institution to root for better health and education services.

"It is painful that girls are getting involved in early sex without being warned of the consequences by parents. We are going to use the institution to compel the parents and other stakeholders to spread the gospel against early sex and tell them to stay in school," Mushikori said.

Tree planting campaign launched

Following the increasing negative effects of climate change in Kigezi region, Milton Kwesiga, the executive director of Africa Disaster Reduction Research Emergency Mission, has embarked on a move to promote environmental conservation in the region. The campaign will encourage people to plant trees in schools prone to floods. Kwesiga launched the campaign last week in Rubanda district at Nyamweru Secondary School and Kyokyezo Primary School in Nyamweru sub-county. He donated over 40 trees to the schools to encourage tree planting. "There is need for our children to be raised with a sense of environmental protection because with this approach, we can solve the existing climate change challenges," Kwesiga said.

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