

LEARNERS CAUTIONED AGAINST PEER PRESSURE

By Agnes Kyotalengerire

Learners have been advised to steer clear of peer influence and stick to the advice of their parents and the Church if they are to succeed and live healthy lives.

Speaking during a youth conference at Namugongo Martyrs Church of Uganda on Friday, Mary Namuyomba, the Uganda AIDS Commission zonal coordinator, told the students to focus on studies and stay out of sexual relationships.

She said sexual relationships are unhealthy for young people because they expose them to unwanted pregnancies and infections such as HIV.

She advised them not to stigmatise their peers who are living with HIV but, instead,



PHOTO BY AGNES KYOTALENGERIRE

Matovu (centre), Bukenya (centre) and Namuyomba (sixth-left) with some of the parents and learners who attended the conference in Namugongo on Friday

to support them to take and adhere to their medication. "If we do not point fingers at people battling with HIV, they will come out and take

their medication and live a productive life," she said.

Namuyomba's message was echoed by the Rev. Edward Bukenya, the youth chaplain of

Namugongo Martyrs Church of Uganda, who advised young people to shun peer influence and listen to their parents.

"Given that you are still

TEENAGERS
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young and in school, do not involve yourselves in any sexual relationships. Instead, they should focus on studies and the advice of you parents and the Church," the Rev. Bukenya noted.

The youth conference was held under the theme: *Life at Crossroads*.

The annual event, which is organised every first term holiday, attracted over 100 young people from different

schools across Uganda.

The Reverend Solomon Matovu, assistant vicar of St. Stephens Church, Luzira, said the main objective of the conference is to offer mentorship to the young people, especially teenagers.

"We are providing spiritual support and guidance to them on how they can make the right choices in life, but also sharing with them our experiences," he said.

Matovu said most young people require guidance because today's world is full of temptations.

"Some of them have just joined Senior Five and are switching combinations, not sure of what to do or what to become in the future," he said.