

New Vision

Uganda: Men urged to engage more in HIV fight

<p>Vision Reporter</p>

January 28, 2013

Men have been asked to engage in the prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) initiatives in a bid to reduce the accelerating rates of HIV/AIDS infections in the country.

Men are more active at the last minute of the pregnancy, yet they have a great responsibility from the onset since it is a couples duty to have a healthy mother and child, said Gideon Badagawa, the director Private Sector Foundation Uganda. He was speaking at the launch of the Menengage Network in Kampala on Thursday.

He added that social-cultural barriers continue to widen the gap of gender inequality, thus increasingly making women more powerless in decision making.

It is unfortunate that women are not at liberty to go for HIV tests without the consent of their husband. They also run a risk of losing their husbands, when the results come out positive, Badagawa said.

Badagawa also said the country needs a healthy workforce, but if homes are broken due to HIV, then the quality of the human resource is affected.

The Menengage Network Uganda is part of the international Sonke Gender Justice Network that advocates mens engagement in HIV/AIDS prevention mechanisms.

If men do not take part in reproductive health programmes with their partners, it makes the whole initiative useless as some sexually transmitted infections, even when treated, keep re-occurring, said Dr. Lydia Mungherera, the director of the Mamas Club that organised the workshop.

Gender-based violence is a catalyst to HIV infections, but if we involve men and boys in these interventions, the return will be a more informed and HIV free society, said Annet Kyarimpa, the special grants coordinator at Reproductive Health Uganda.

[See the topic on aegis.org](http://aegis.org)