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KUALA LUMPUR: Compassion for teenage girls facing social ills motivated a government officer to personally initiate a programme called 'How sweet it is to be a girl' yesterday.

Education Ministry, Competency Development and Evaluation Department, assistant secretary, Jevartnam Baby, held a talk on HIV awareness for the girls of Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Convent Sentul.

His grave concern for the rising HIV rate, particularly among teenage girls, led him to conduct the programme, said Jevartnam.

"HIV among women is very high. According to statistics, 94,414 HIV cases have been reported in Malaysia since December 2010. Five per cent of this figure involved women and teenagers," he told Bernama after delivering his talk.

He also credited his effort to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak's encouragement during the recent 2012 Civil Servant Gathering, urging them to be more caring towards social problems faced by teenagers.

Jevartnam said he was assisted

by two of his contacts, a HIV patient who only wanted to be known as Maligai and facilitator Norazliza Abdul Aziz on the self-confidence module.

The programme aimed to help the students boost their self confidence and motivate themselves physically, emotionally and spiritually, in line with the national education philosophy, he added.

A total of 110 Form Four students from the school attended the talk and were automatically registered under the Peer Mentor programme. — Bernama