



Prevent adolescent pregnancies and keep girls in school!

“Tanzania needs skilled and well educated women and men to take part in the development of the country, so it cannot just stand aside while it is losing the most precious contribution of many young Tanzanian women to the development of the country because of early marriages and pregnancies.” The national guidelines on how to enable pregnant school girls to continue with their studies, MoEVT, March 2010

Current national situation

Young people between 10 and 24 years constitute more than a third of Tanzania’s population, and those under 30 years make up 75 percent of the population. Tanzania has one of the highest adolescent pregnancy rates in the world affecting the girls’ health, education, future employment and reaching their full potential in life. Every year more than 8000 girls drop out from school due to pregnancy. The most recent data shows that the drop outs due to pregnancy have increased from 2008 to 2009. (MoEVT 2008 & BEST 2010) There is no data on how many of these girls return to school and complete their education.

The new National Adolescent Reproductive Health Strategy 2010-2015 (draft stage) has noted the challenges. The new strategy will focus on strengthening policy, legal and community environment for sexual and reproductive health information, services and life skills for adolescents and increasing adolescent’s access and utilization of those services. The strategy will also aim at strengthening more effective and efficient coordination among various programmes dealing with adolescent friendly sexual and reproductive health.

Addressing the growing number of girls dropping out from school, the Tanzanian government has recently developed national guidelines that allow pregnant girls to return to school and continue their education after giving birth. Implementing these guidelines is essential to make young people’s rights a reality, to advance girls’ and women’s rights, attain gender equality and to allow girls’ and women’s to reach their full potential.

Fast facts

- Almost a quarter of all girls between the ages 15-19 are already mothers or have begun childbearing (THDS 2004/05).
- 23 percent of all maternal deaths are among young pregnant girls. Unmarried adolescent girls are far more likely to become pregnant unintended and thus pregnancies are more likely to end in induced abortion. (THMIS 2007/08)
- Every fifth Tanzanian girl has no education at all (THMIS 2007/08).
- Only 18 percent of girls have completed secondary school education (BEST 2010).
- For every 100 male students enrolled in higher education institutions there are only 73 female students enrolled (BEST 2010).

Why children have children?

Factors leading to teenage pregnancies are multiple and inter-linked. Poverty is one of the leading underlying causes. In order to meet their basic needs, upscale their living conditions, and/or get money, clothes or school fees young girls engage in sexual relationships with older men who do not want to have children with the young girls, but use them for their sexual enjoyment. These relationships often lead to unwanted and unplanned pregnancies, forcing girls often into unsafe abortions. There is no data on how many of the impregnators are teachers but it is a common understanding that also the teachers do impregnate the school girls.

Another leading factor for young girls to become pregnant is the lack of appropriate and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights education within the educational system. Currently only the secondary schools' curriculum includes topics such as HIV and the reproductive system. These topics are part of biology subject of the schools' curriculum. Life skills are taught as extra curricula subject. In addition, not all schools have teachers who have been trained in teaching the subject as most of the programmes are managed by NGOs or specific projects. There is a need to train the teachers to teach both the primary and secondary school students about appropriate and comprehensive sexuality and reproductive health and rights. Parents are also encouraged to discuss about sexual and reproductive health issues with their children.

Closely linked with the inadequate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights is the low (40%) coverage of youth friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services and adolescents' inadequate access to those services.

According to the Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS 2004/05, table 4.9) adolescent pregnancy is closely linked with the young women's education level, socio-economic status has no major significance. Hence, the girls who are not in school are the most vulnerable for unwanted teenage pregnancy.

Education	Percentage of women who are:		
	Mothers	Pregnant with first child	Percentage who have begun childbearing
No education	31.0	11.9	42.9
Primary incomplete	15.8	5.3	21.1
Primary complete	20.8	6.1	26.8
Secondary+	3.3	0.8	4.0

Other causes leading to teenage pregnancies are:

- Attitudes that a girl's main value is as a wife and/or a mother
- Lack of male involvement in family planning and belief that family planning is women's business while at the same time it is men who make the decisions regarding women's health (TDHS 2004/05)
- Inadequate understanding and appreciation of girls' health, benefits of postponed and planned marriage and pregnancy and appreciation of girls' education
- Lack of economic structures for adolescents to generate income to help protect them from sexual exploitation

How are the teenage mothers doing?

Pregnant teenagers have increased risk of maternal mortality as their bodies are not ready for pregnancy. Also children born to a teen mother have 50 percent higher risk to die.

Even if family planning services and information and contraceptives are available, adolescent girls may lack skills and negotiation and decision making power to use the services. Girls' lack of power is taken advantage of and girls are forced into sexual relations making them extremely vulnerable to HIV and other sexually transmitted illnesses. For example in Karagwe District 85 per cent of all secondary and primary school girls who fell pregnant in the last three years tested HIV-positive (AIDS Week in Review June 2010).

Regardless of the National Population Policy (1992) and the Family Planning Guidelines (1994) stating how all males and females of their reproductive age, including adolescents, are entitled to family-planning information, education and services 22 percent of Tanzania's population have unmet need for contraception (TDHS 2004/05). Even when almost all Tanzanians are aware of at least one *modern* contraceptive method, only 20 percent actually use one (TDHS 2004/05). Only half of the girls (15-24) used a condom during their last sexual intercourse (THMIS 2007/08). Lastly denying adolescents from accessing sexual and reproductive health information and services is a violation of their human rights.

Early childbearing not only has a negative impact on the health of young girls but often hinder girls' access to higher education. More than 8000 girls drop out of school every year due to pregnancy. The trend (TDHS 2004/05 & BEST 2010) shows that school drop outs due to pregnancy have been increasing especially in secondary schools.

A dire practise denying girls access to education is expelling pregnant and married girls who have already given birth to a baby from school. This practise is not based on a legal framework, but rather reflects the prevailing interpretation of teachers, other school and local authorities and sometimes also parents. Many times pregnancy is considered to be “the girl’s fault” and girls who have fallen pregnant are considered as immoral, needing punishment. In many cases pregnant school girls also face discrimination from class mates, teachers, parents and local leaders. According to UNICEF opinion poll (2009) 66 percent of Tanzanians think that girls only have themselves to blame if they get pregnant and 44 percent think that boys who get a girl pregnant are just being boys.

In primary schools the balance between girls and boys is at par, but deteriorates at government secondary schools and higher level education. The situation is worst in Morogoro region, followed by Pwani and Tanga (MoEVT 2008-2009 & BEST 2010).

According to the UNICEF poll almost a quarter (22%) of Tanzanians thinks that educating boys is more important than educating girls. The figure is even higher in Zanzibar: 52 percent. Girls’ and women’s access and right to education has been restricted for decades due to the traditional norms and values which see women as mothers and wives, not needing more education than is necessary to take care of the family and home. Men’s and boys’ education is not justified as girls’ and women’s – by contributing to the wellbeing of the family, community, development of the nation and reduction of poverty. Women’s and girls’ education should not be justified only by their contribution to those either but by their own aspirations and goals in life. In some cases it is also believed that educating pregnant girls will encourage more girls to become pregnant.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, which articulates every child’s right to education, makes expelling girls from school a violation of the child’s rights (Article 28). Right to educational and vocational information and guidance (Article 28) and right to seek, receive and impart information and ideas (Article 13) also emphasize the right to education.

In order to address the challenge and improve girls’ education, the new national guidelines allow pregnant girls to return to school and continue their education after giving birth. The girls, whether pregnant or given birth, can do their exams and proceed to higher education level as long as they meet the criteria for transition to such level. It is also crucial to allow girls continue their studies while they are pregnant so that their education needs and human rights are addressed at all times.

Take action!

To prevent teenage pregnancies adolescents need to have equal and easy access to quality youth friendly sexual and reproductive health and right information and services. Studies have shown that for example US \$ 1 million invested in family planning could avert 360,000 unwanted pregnancies and save the lives of 800 mothers and 11,000 infants (UNFPA 2004). Family planning slows the spread of HIV infections, promotes gender equality, reduces poverty and accelerates socioeconomic development. Appropriate and comprehensive knowledge about sexual and reproductive health and rights helps the young people to make informed decisions about their lives.

Education is first and foremost a human right. Every girl and boy, woman and man has a right to education and a right to pursue their own aspirations, their own goals in life, their own development, wellbeing and happiness. Education leads to wider employment and career opportunities and generates income. Education helps to plan for one’s life, family and often to participate more actively in society, its economy and cultural activities. Higher education should be open for every girl as their own right as individuals, not only because it will contribute to the development of the nation and wellbeing of the families and communities.

Economically, women in Tanzania are still most actively engaged in subsistence farming and other informal activities which bring low economic returns. Education provides women with better employment opportunities and thus contributes to a prospering economy and reduces poverty and equips people with the skills they need to participate fully in society. The combination of higher education, increased earning ability, political and social empowerment and enhanced capacity to participate in community governance is a powerful instrument for helping break the poverty cycle. Denying schooling to girls while enrolling boys, contributes directly to maintaining the inferior status of women and girls and their poverty cycle.

The increasing number of pregnancies in schools needs to be addressed. Getting girls into school, keeping them there and allowing them to return to school require an enabling and supportive environment. Girls with babies should be provided with baby care, alternative education and more flexible school time, if and when needed.

What is a girl friendly school?

- Close to communities so that parents are less worried about their daughters' safety
- Has several female teachers
- Teaches, as part of quality education and core curriculum, sexual and reproductive health and rights issues and life skills
- Provides in-school childcare facilities
- Punishes male teachers who seduce girl students
- Has available separate sanitary facilities, latrines and clean water for boys and girls

Key audiences, messages and channels

Generic key messages:

- Support adolescents' access to youth friendly sexual and reproductive health and rights information and services, including family planning.
- Keep girls in school and ensure teenage mothers return to school after giving birth.

Slogans:

- Keep girls in school!
- Real men don't have sex with children. Let children have their childhood

Key messages for Government, Parliamentarians and other policy makers through national symposiums, bunge sessions, media, fact sheets, women's and youth networks

- Operationalize the re-entry guidelines at all levels
- Enable adolescents to care for their babies without compromising education opportunities
- Ensure the enhanced penalties to persons who impregnate schoolgirls
- Train teachers to teach adolescents about sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Include sexual and reproductive health and rights education in primary *and* secondary school curricula
- Increase adolescents' access to appropriate and comprehensive youth friendly sexual and reproductive health and rights information and services, including family planning
- Provide health systems and workers with capacities to respond to the special needs of pregnant adolescents

Key messages for Opinion and Religious Leaders through existing partnerships (e.g. ZIADA), prayer sessions, media, women's and youth networks

- Protect and advise young people on sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Accept, guide and help the pregnant school girl as a process of strengthening her faith
- Educate daughters and keep girls in school. Every child has the right to education.
- Support pregnant school girls and new mothers to continue their studies
- Real men don't have sex with children. Let children have their childhood. (This message through opinion and religious leaders as channel)
- Men are agents of change and key allies in attaining gender equality in education.

Key messages for all School Children through existing school partnerships, radio, Femina HIP, youth alliances and youth groups, flyers, posters

- You have the right to know about your sexual and reproductive health and rights. Use that right and find out how you can make informed decisions.
- Unprotected sex can result in unwanted pregnancy and exposure to sexually transmitted infections including HIV
- Real men don't have sex with children. Learn to protect yourself against sexual abuse.

- You have the right to education. Attend school regularly.
- Every child has the right to education. Support pregnant school girls and welcome teenage mothers return to school after giving birth.
- PREGNANT GIRLS ONLY: You can still learn when you're pregnant. You have the right to education during pregnancy and after giving birth. Choose the kind of education you want to continue and complete your studies with.

Key messages for Academia through national symposiums, seminars, fact sheets, media

- Include comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights education in primary *and* secondary school curricula
- Support the training of teachers to teach adolescents about comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights

Key messages for Health Care Providers through posters, leaflets, seminars and dialogues, media

- Adolescents have the right to access youth friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services. Play your part in providing that!
- Support pregnant school girls and new mothers to continue their studies and care for their babies without compromising education opportunities.
- Teenage pregnancy is not the girls' fault.

Key messages for Police forces through trainings and peer discussions via existing programmes, posters, leaflets, media

- Ensure the enhanced penalties to persons who impregnate schoolgirls. Every child has the right not to be sexually abused and every child has the right to education.
- Teenage pregnancy is not the girls' fault.
- Play your part in building a safe and supportive environment for pregnant school girls to continue studies and teenage mothers to return to school. Every child has a right to education.

Key messages for Media (as audience) through media seminars, workshops, field visits, fact sheets, interviews, TAMWA, Femina HIP

- Initiate special media advocacy programme to raise awareness to the community on the importance of re-entry policy to pregnant girls.
- Adolescents have the right to access youth friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services. Play your part in providing that information.
- Pregnancy is not the girls' fault. Every child has the right to education. Support that right.
- Hold the government accountable for ensuring the rights of children to education and sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Monitor how the re-entry guidelines are implemented at all levels and report about successes and challenges.
- Ensure sensitive reporting on teenage pregnancies, protect the girls and raise support for them to return to school.
- Give young people, boys and girls equally, a voice.

Social change messages through community groups and committees, traditional media, community outreach, posters, billboards, radio

Men

- Stop teenage pregnancies, let children have their childhood.
- Real men don't have sex with children.
- Keep girls in school! Educate your daughter. Every child has a right to education.
- Men are agents of change and key allies in ensuring women's and girls' empowerment.

Parents and Mothers-in-law

- Meet your children's (/grand children's) information needs about sexual and reproductive health and rights. Support their access to comprehensive information and services, including family planning. Discuss with your children (/grand children's) about life skills and sexual and reproductive health issues.
- Educate daughters and keep girls in school. Every child has a right to education.
- Keep girls in school. Don't take your daughter out from school when household is facing a crisis.

- Accept, help and take care of the health of the pregnant school girl.
- Support teenage mother to return to school and care for the baby without compromising education opportunities.

Family and community decision makers

- Support young people's access to youth friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services, including family planning.
- Support teenage mother to return to school and care for the baby without compromising education opportunities.
- Task the Ward Social Welfare Officer to monitor the welfare of the pregnant school girl.

School leadership and Teachers

- Adolescents have the right to access youth friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services. Support their access to comprehensive information and services, including family planning.
- Pregnancy is not the girls fault. Every child has the right to education, whether they are pregnant or not. Support that right.
- Support the studies of a pregnant school girl and ensure she returns to school after giving birth.
- Support teenage mothers to care for their babies without compromising education opportunities.

Risks	Solutions
High level resistance and/or silence ahead of elections	Alliance with several pressure groups and media
Too straight forward and strong messages can be counter-productive.	Messages tested with TAMWA, different stakeholders and technical experts.
Blaming the girls for pregnancy	Messages tested with TAMWA, different stakeholders and technical experts. Sensitization of different target groups to the theme.
Low public understanding of importance of girls' and women's education and return to school guidelines	Sensitization of different target groups to the theme through seminar or work shop.
Low knowledge and capacity of the national media to report ethically and accurately.	Media seminars/workshops to enhance their knowledge.
Media's stereotypes of gender roles and myths about women's empowerment.	Media seminars/workshops to increase their understanding and to demystify women's empowerment.
Lack of male involvement	Bring along male advocates and offer practical entry points for male contributions.
Participation of several multi-sectoral stakeholders within a very limited timeline and finding common interests to carry a successful campaign.	Lead agency to collaborate closely with the lead Ministry in planning and seek collaboration of counterparts for implementation and commitment, UNCG and IAGG members to timely inform relevant staff members and partners for full commitment.

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