Addressing pregnancy prevention needs of adolescents in East and Southern Africa through education and health sector partnerships

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Addressing Pregnancy Prevention Needs of Adolescents in East and Southern Africa through Education and Health Sector Partnerships

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What’s so special about the education sector?

• It’s where the adolescents are (or should be!)
  - Policies of Universal Primary Education in the region
• It’s where we begin to lose many adolescent girls
• It’s a place of opportunities
  - Links between education and health
  - Upholding of rights (‘Education For All’)
  - Sustained behaviors, interventions, etc.
  - It’s important for SDG 4 & 5
Education sector response to UP – the current picture
We are seeing a regional crisis in ESA--
High unintended pregnancy rates (40-60%) among girls 15-19 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Unintended Pregnancy (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A LARGE PROPORTION OF CLIENTS SEEKING POST-ABORTION SERVICES AT HEALTH FACILITIES ARE BELOW 20 YEARS Y

- 17% (Kenya),
- 21% (Malawi),
- 49%-58% (Tanzania),
- 60% (Zambia),
- 68% (Uganda)


KENYA: 47% STUDENTS EXPERIENCE SEVERE UNSAFE ABORTION COMPLICATIONS

(Source: MOH. 2013 Incidence and complications of Unsafe abortion in Kenya)
How is the education sector responding?
Life Skills Education (LSE) is inadequate

A six country review (Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia) shows that LSE:

• Lacks basic aspects of sexual health and gender issues
• Pregnancy prevention (including condoms & contraceptives) not a central feature of the content
  - Condoms taught in Botswana, Malawi & Uganda
  - LSE content on contraceptives
    - Included in Zambia (new), No information on contraceptives (Kenya, Malawi).
    - Unclear whether LSE includes contraceptives (Botswana, Tanzania)
    - Included in Uganda (only in Islamic Religious curriculum)
• When offered at all, pregnancy prevention happens when its too late – at secondary school level alone
• Pregnancy prevention information poorly or not delivered at all in most schools
A six country review of policies and practices ......

- None of the countries utilizes a continuation policy for school re-entry for pregnant girls
- Countries have re-entry policies, but with varying degrees of implementation and adherence
- Mandatory pregnancy screening happens in all countries, without clear links to schooling continuation or pregnancy prevention
- None of the countries keeps track of girls who drop out of school

Kenya, Botswana, Malawi, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia
No surprise, then, that.....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Ever pregnant (%) 15-19 YEARS</th>
<th>% out of school among ever pregnant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>97</td>
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<td>Tanzania</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Demographic and Health Survey;

EARLY PREGNANCY MEANS END OF SCHOOLING
Early and unintended pregnancy main reason for dropping out of school
Out-of-school teen girls in Homa Bay, Kenya (n=728)

- Most left in primary school (80%)
- 1/3 married: 92% due to pregnancy
- Dropout reasons: pregnancy (66%), fees (23%)
- 16% were currently pregnant
- Most would like to return to school (91%)
- Boyfriends responsible for most preg (89%)
- 93% said their pregnancy was unintended
Building strong partnership

Closely articulating

- Shared policies
  - Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health
  - School Health Policy
- Share human resources
- Shared outcomes - wellbeing

But
- Different approaches
Foster awareness of School health
School policy and shared responsibilities

We need to spell it out ....
CSE delivered by teachers is ineffective & costly
- Education sector needs the health sector to deliver on pregnancy prevention in schools including access to services
- Health sector needs education sector to reach out to new users and sustain the behavior

Talking about rights – mandatory pregnancy screening without preventive information is unacceptable
Re-thinking our approaches....

Compelling evidence that ‘speaks to’ end-users

1) **How many girls are out school because of pregnancy?**

2) **Documentation of repeat pregnancies in schools**

3) **Can school nurses deliver pregnancy prevention information and services in schools**

4) **Evidence-based model for school health linkages**
The **STEP UP (Strengthening Evidence for Programming on Unintended Pregnancy) Research Programme Consortium** is coordinated by the Population Council in partnership with the African Population and Health Research Center; icddr,b; the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; Marie Stopes International; and Partners in Population on Development. STEP UP is funded by UK aid from the UK Government.