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The education sector response to early and unintended pregnancy (EUP): A review of selected SADC countries

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The Education Sector Response to Early & Unintended Pregnancy (EUP)
A Review of Selected SADC Countries

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SADC Women Parliamentarians Roundtable on Early and Unintended Pregnancy: Policy & Legal Barriers

August 24-25, 2015
Cape Town, South Africa
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 btw education and health
  – Upholding of rights (‘Education For All’)
  – Interventions, etc.
Speaking of opportunities ... 

- 2013 ESA Commitment
- UNESCO’s Four-Pillar Response to EUP

✓ good quality CSE (including pregnancy, prevention, and contraception)
✓ the right to education (development & effective implementation of re-entry policies)
✓ increasing adolescent access to health education & services (incl. contraception) through establishment of referral system btw schools & health facilities
✓ eliminating stigma & discrimination toward pregnant/childbearing girls in schools & communities
Aim

- Examine education sector response to EUP in 6 East and Southern Africa Countries (Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia), with a focus on:
  - Education sector policies for pregnant and parenting learners
  - Integration of CSE into life skills education curricula
  - School environment as it pertains to pregnant students (health facility linkages, stigma/disc)
Methods

• Secondary analysis of DHS

• Desk review of existing literature
  – Documents provided by UNESCO staff
  – Internet searches using relevant key words

• Interviews and focus group discussions with key informants (Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia)

• Study duration: August 2014-April 2015
What we hoped for … (‘continuation’)  

- Different policies & practices directed toward pregnant learners (Chilisa, 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continuation</th>
<th>Re-entry</th>
<th>Expulsion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Allowed to remain in school for as long as they would like; no compulsory leave</td>
<td>• Compulsory leave of absence before a student may re-enter school</td>
<td>• Immediate removal from the school system with no prospect of returning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What we found ...
(policies & practices)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOT</td>
<td>Botswana Education Regulations (1978)</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Re-entry</td>
<td>12-month leave of absence</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAL</td>
<td>MOEVT Readmission Policy (1993)</td>
<td>UNKNOWN</td>
<td>Re-entry</td>
<td>12-month suspension; re-entry into next academic year</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Revised re-entry guidelines in draft form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TZ</td>
<td>No official policy (currently)</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Draft re-entry guidelines (awaiting approval)</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Re-entry</td>
<td>After 6 to 12-month suspension</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZAM</td>
<td>MOE Re-entry Policy (1997)</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Re-entry</td>
<td>12-month leave of absence</td>
<td>YES – until 7 mo. pregnant</td>
<td>Established</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Policies & practices in summary

• None of the 4 countries utilize a ‘continuation’ approach to EUP in schools

• 2 of the 4 countries (Botswana, Zambia) have established ‘re-entry’ approaches

• 2 countries have draft policies using ‘re-entry’ approach

• Pregnancy screening occurs in all (?) countries
No surprise, then, that ...  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Ever pregnant (%)</th>
<th>% out of school among ever pregnant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Demographic and Health Survey; n/a: Most recent data not available.

Early pregnancy among girls aged 15-19.

... ALMOST ALL EVER PREGNANT ADOLESCENTS ARE NO LONGER IN SCHOOL
No surprise, then, that a large proportion of clients seeking post-abortion services at health facilities are <19 YEARS

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Unintended Pregnancy (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Demographic and Health Survey; n/a: Most recent data not available.
What we found ... 

(comprehensive sexuality education [CSE])
CSE: not so ‘comprehensive’

- None of the countries are offering CSE in schools in line with UNESCO’s four-pillar approach (pregnancy, prevention, contraception)

- Curriculum dev’t is essential, but not sufficient

- When offered at all, pregnancy prevention covered at secondary school level alone – too late and inadequate
What we found ...
(school environment)
Stigma & discrimination
A pervasive barrier for pregnant/childbearing adolescents

• Absence of continuation approach contributes to this
• Few existing interventions
  – Even fewer documented, institutionalized, scaled-up interventions
  – Lack of school-health facility linkages and other school-level structures to support affected girls
  – A need to acknowledge the contribution of sexual violence to EUP
Emerging & promising approaches to strengthening the Education Sector response

- Policy awareness interventions
- School-grown, school-led, informal interventions
  - Nursing zones
  - Extended break periods
  - Permission to attend FP clinics
  - Teen mothers as peer mentors
  - Etc.
What can SADC Women Parliamentarians Do?

This is an opportune time:

– ESA commitment

– Some countries’ revised policies are in draft form; others are overdue for re-examination and revision

– Opportunities for South-South exchange

– More evidence now on the plight of adolescent girls in the region due to EUP
Recommendation

- Call for and ensure alignment of education policies and practices with the ESA commitment to effectively address EUP in the SADC region
References


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