

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

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Early and Unintended Pregnancy:
Policy & Legal Barriers

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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 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)

Continuation

- Allowed to remain in school for as long as they would like; no compulsory leave

Re-entry

- Compulsory leave of absence before a student may re-enter school

Expulsion

- Immediate removal from the school system with no prospect of returning

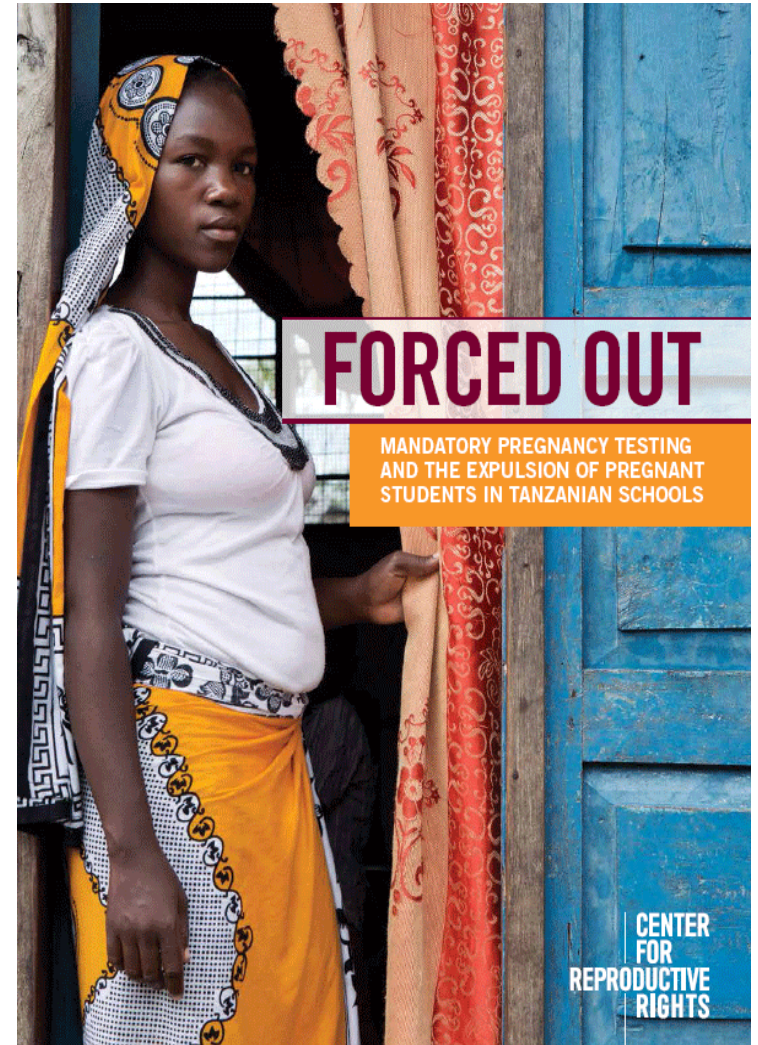
What we found ... (policies & practices)

Education sector policies & practices

Country	Relevant Policies	Pregnancy Screening	Policy Practices	Re-entry Practices	Pregnant Girls Allowed in School?	Policy Status
BOT	Botswana Education Regulations (1978)	YES	Re-entry	12-month leave of absence	NO	Established
MAL	MOEVT Readmission Policy (1993)	UNKNOWN	Re-entry	12-month suspension; re-entry into next academic year	NO	Revised re-entry guidelines in draft form
TZ	No official policy (currently)	YES	Expulsion	N/A	NO	N/A
	Draft re-entry guidelines (awaiting approval)	YES	Re-entry	After 6 to 12-month suspension	NO	Draft
ZAM	MOE Re-entry Policy (1997)	YES	Re-entry	12-month leave of absence	YES – until 7 mo. pregnant	Established

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 ...

Country	Ever pregnant (%)	% out of school among ever pregnant
Botswana	n/a	n/a
Malawi	26	97
Tanzania	23	99
Zambia	28	95

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)

(Source Guttmacher Institute 2009; Levandowski et al. 2009; Mirembe 1996; Rasch and Kipingili 2009; Republic of Kenya 2013).

Country	Unintended Pregnancy (%)
Botswana	n/a
Malawi	44
Tanzania	39
Zambia	58

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

- B. Chilisa. 2002. National policies on pregnancy in education systems in sub-Saharan Africa- The case of Botswana. *Gender and Education*. 14(1):21-25.
- Harriet Birungi, Chi-Chi Undie, Ian MacKenzie, Anne Katahoire, Francis Obare, Patricia Machawira. 2015. Education Sector Response to Early and Unintended Pregnancy: A Review of Country Experiences in Sub-Saharan Africa. STEP UP and UNESCO Research Report. http://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2015STEPUP_EducSectorResp.pdf.

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