

SHAPING POLICY AND PRACTICE ON PREGNANT GIRLS AND ADOLESCENT MOTHERS' CONTINUED ACCESS TO LEARNING IN UGANDA



POLICY BRIEF
MAY 2024

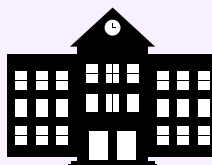
INTRODUCTION

A. Introduction

This policy brief highlights and examines the existing legal, policy and institutional frameworks and practices on access to continued learning by pregnant girls and adolescent mothers as part of the Adolescent Mothers' Education Initiative (AMEI). The Initiative is a human rights advocacy and social accountability programme that seeks to ensure the right of access to education of Pregnant Girls and Adolescent Mothers (PGAMs), without restrictions.¹ The policy briefs draw from research conducted by ISER as part of the AMEI, such as the RTEI questionnaire and the respective country briefs, household surveys, barrier analyses, applied political economy analysis, Citizens Voice and Action (CVA – is a local level advocacy methodology that transforms the dialogue between communities and government in order to improve services, like health care and education, which impact the daily lives of children and their families)² data and evidence collected from twelve (12) primary and two (02) secondary schools and communities³ and lastly from engagements with the community members, local leaders, heads of school and teachers, PGAMs in Ngogwe and Najja sub-counties, Buikwe district. Finally, it makes evidence-informed recommendations to ensure the protection of the right to education of PGAMs for consideration by the responsible authorities.



12 Primary
Schools



2 Secondary
Schools

¹ Under the lead implementation by World Vision UK, the Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER) in Uganda, World Vision Zimbabwe and Education Coalition of Zimbabwe (ECOZI) in Zimbabwe, World Vision DRC and Coalition Nationale de l'Education Pour Tous (CONEPT – DRC) in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

² World Vision, Citizen Voice and Action Field Guide at <https://www.wvi.org/sites/default/files/Citizen%27s%20Voice%20and%20Action%20Field%20Guide.pdf> accessed on May 10, 2024.

³ See for instance Initiative for Social and Economic Rights, The Policy And Behavioral Determinants Affecting the Continuity Of Education: An Analysis of the Barriers Pregnant Girls and Adolescent Mothers Face to Access Education at <https://iser-uganda.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Barrier-Analysis-to-PGAMs-Access-to-Education.pdf> accessed on March 7, 2024; Initiative for Social and Economic Rights, An Applied Political Economy Analysis (APEA) on girls' access to education in Uganda: A case study of Ngogwe and Najja sub-counties in Buikwe district, Uganda <https://iser-uganda.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/APEA-on-girls-access-to-education-in-Uganda.pdf> accessed on March 7, 2024

B. National trends in teenage pregnancy and adolescent motherhood and the status of their continued access to learning

Currently, Uganda is implementing the Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE). These are state-funded programs that aim to achieve equitable access to conducive, quality, relevant and affordable primary and secondary education for all children without discrimination.⁴ The two programs have contributed significantly to improved access to education, especially at primary with net enrollment for both boys and girls standing at 93.1%,⁵ with the survival rate for girls in upper primary schools being low at 40.3%.⁶

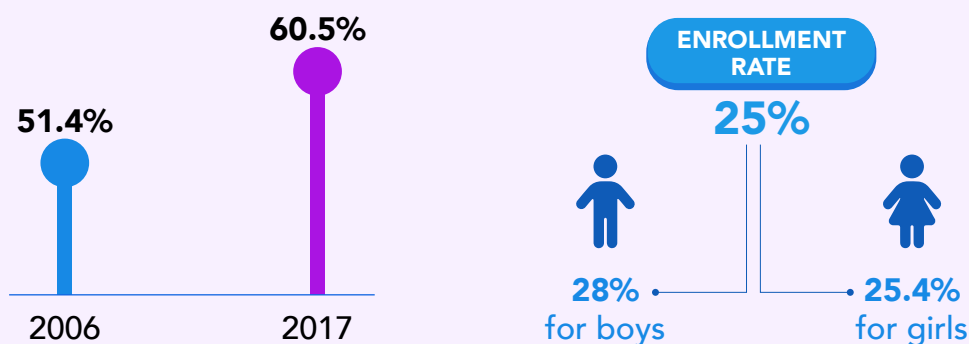


93.1%
at Primary



40.3%
Survival rate
for girls

Regarding secondary education, progress has been slower. The introduction of USE has increased the number of female learners transitioning from primary to secondary from 51.4% in 2006 before the introduction of the USE program to 60.5% in 2017,⁷ the enrollment rate is still low (25%), especially for girls at 25.4% compared to 28% for boys.⁸



Various factors contribute to the dropout, teenage pregnancy being one of the main factors which inhibits continued education for girls in Uganda.⁹

⁴ Section 2 of the Education Act, 2008

⁵ Ministry of Education and Sports, Education and Sports Sector Fact Sheet 2003 – 2017, Kampala, P. 6.

⁶ Ibid, P. 3.

⁷ Ministry of Education and Sports, Education and Sports Sector Fact Sheet 2003 – 2017, p. 6.

⁸ Ministry of Education and Sports, "Education and Sports Sector Analysis," 2019, Kampala, Uganda.

⁹ Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), 2021, "Uganda National Household Survey 2019/2020" at p. 29 available at https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/09_2021Uganda-National-Survey-Report-2019-2020.pdf [last accessed on March 7, 2024].

The teenage pregnancy rate stands at 24%, the highest among countries in the East African sub-region.¹⁰ Of the girls who became pregnant, 97% of them dropped out of school.¹¹



24% Teenage pregnancy rate



97% dropped out of school

C. Policy and structural weaknesses in the implementation of PGAMs access to continued learning

i. Prohibitive Policy Framework on PGAMs' continued access to learning that is non-compliant to human rights standards

Uganda's policy framework contains discriminatory provisions towards PGAMs' continued access to education. The Revised Guidelines on Prevention and Management of Teenage Pregnancy in School Settings in Uganda, 2020 provide for a mandatory leave of one year from the time a girl is three months pregnant until the baby is six months old.¹² However, the policy does not meet the test of domestic, regional and international human rights law that the State of Uganda is bound to. Article 34 (2) of the Constitution and Section 4(2) Education (Pre – Primary, Primary and Post – Primary), Act, 2008 entitles all children to the right to basic education. Additionally, Article 21 also prohibits discrimination on any ground. Article 13 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) requires state parties to adopt measures including legislation and policy formulation that promote the full development and advancement of women for purposes of enabling them to realize and enjoy their rights such as education.¹³ Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2030 requires states to ensure that all girls and boys can attain free, equitable, and high-quality primary and secondary

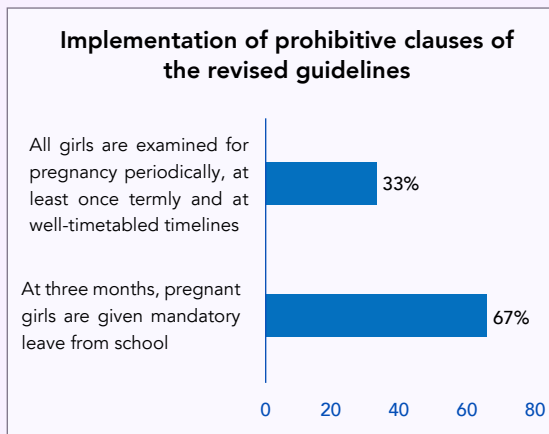
¹⁰ Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (UDHS) (2023) 2022 Key Findings, p. 10. Available at https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/09_2023UDHS_2022_Key_Findings_Presentation_B.pdf (Accessed 18 March 2024)

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ministry of Education and Sports, Revised Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Teenage Pregnancy in School Settings in Uganda, 2020 available at <https://www.ungei.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/Revised-Guidelines-Prevention-Management%20-Teenage-Pregnancy-School-Settings-Uganda-2020-eng.pdf> [last accessed on March 7, 2024].

¹³ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 18 December 1979, United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1249, p. 13, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b3970.html> [accessed March 7, 2024]

education by 2030.¹⁴ At the regional level, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child with respect to PGAMs, Article 11 requires States to take measures to encourage regular attendance at school and the reduction of drop-out rate; and adopt special measures in respect of female, to ensure their equal access to education.¹⁵ In the implementation of the Charter, in 2020, the Regional Court for the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) ruled against the Sierra Leone government's policy to ban pregnant girls from attending school for being discriminatory insofar as it denied pregnant girls their right to access education.¹⁶ It should be noted that Uganda has made strides in addressing the issue of continued access to education for PGAMs, for instance, it allows them to do promotional examinations and provides for ways of assisting them to re-enroll after giving birth among others. However, the Guidelines also contain regressive clauses on PGAMs' continued access to learning such as forced testing of pregnancy, and the above mentioned mandatory leave of one year. An indication that Uganda's policy on PGAMs' education does not comply with the established human rights standards in regional and international law that the country ratified which is negatively impacting their right to education as shown in the chart below.



CVA data also showed that the discriminatory clauses of the revised guidelines were being implemented and readily enforced by the schools. Teenage pregnancy is regarded as a morality issue, especially by those running schools that are religious in nature, and justifying discrimination based on the current policy framework becomes an incentive to discriminate against pregnant girls and adolescent mothers.

Subjecting girls to mandatory pregnancy examination, the ECOWAS court ruled, is a violation of the right to privacy. Even when the data shows 33% of schools conduct these examinations, those that are not doing it are only not able to test because they lack resources to conduct these examinations

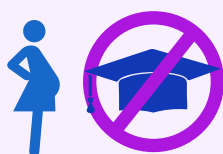
¹⁴ SDGs, Target 4.1

¹⁵ Article 11 (3) (e), African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 11 July 1990, CAB/LEG/24.9/49 (1990), available at <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b38c18.html> [last accessed on March 7, 2024]

¹⁶ Women Against Violence and Exploitation in Society (WAVES) v. The Republic of Sierra Leone, ECW/CCJ/JUD/37/19.

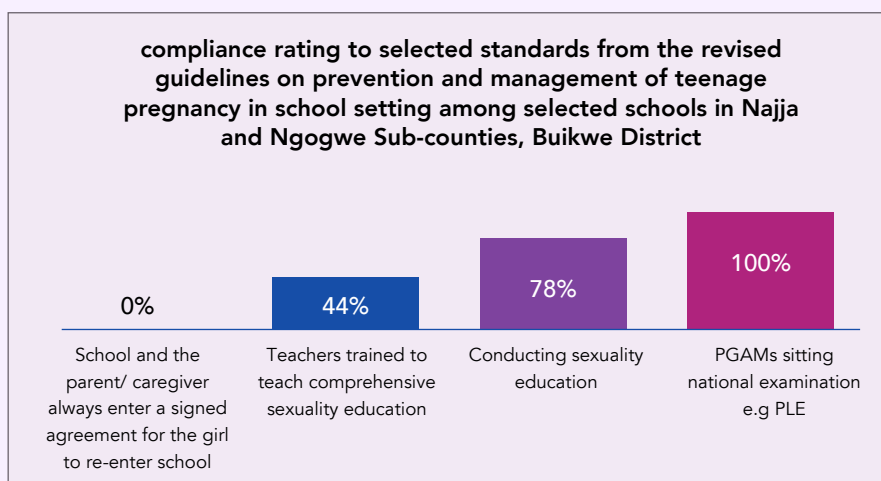
ii. Weak implementation of policy framework on PGAMs' access to education

Notwithstanding, the restrictive policy on continuity of learning and reintegration, the positive aspects are not being achieved because of the weak implementation of the policy regime. In a household survey conducted by the Ugandan Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) in 2020, which is the most recent data available on teenage pregnancy and education in Uganda, it is reported that teenage pregnancy accounts for **7.6%** of school drop-outs by girls aged 6-24,



7.6% of school drop-outs
by girls aged **6-24**

which is the second biggest factor after financial cost which accounts for **62.1%** of all drop-outs.¹⁷ The figure below shows the compliance rating of the Revised Guidelines on Prevention and Management of Teenage Pregnancy in School Settings in selected schools in Buikwe district.



Whereas CVA data collected from 14 schools in Najja and Ngogwe sub-counties show that there is total compliance to the guidelines on for example allowing PGAMs to write their national examinations like Primary Leaving Exams, Uganda Certificate of Education and Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education, the same data also points

¹⁷ Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2021) Uganda National Survey Report 2019/2020, p. 29. Available at https://www.ubos.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/09_2021Uganda-National-Survey-Report-2019-2020.pdf (Accessed 22 March 2024).

out some very serious gaps in adherence to other key guidelines. For example, with only 56% of schools visited reporting having access to the guidelines, the effect is that there will be low levels of compliance/ implementation due to ignorance of the guiding principles hence allowing some of schools to deal with PGAM as they individually feel. With only 44% of schools reporting having a competent teacher to conduct comprehensive sexuality education, this negatively impacts on the quality and effectiveness of the sexuality education provided in 78% of the schools as indicated below.



56% of schools visited
had access to revised
guidelines



44% of schools reported
having a trained teacher
to conduct comprehensive
sexuality education

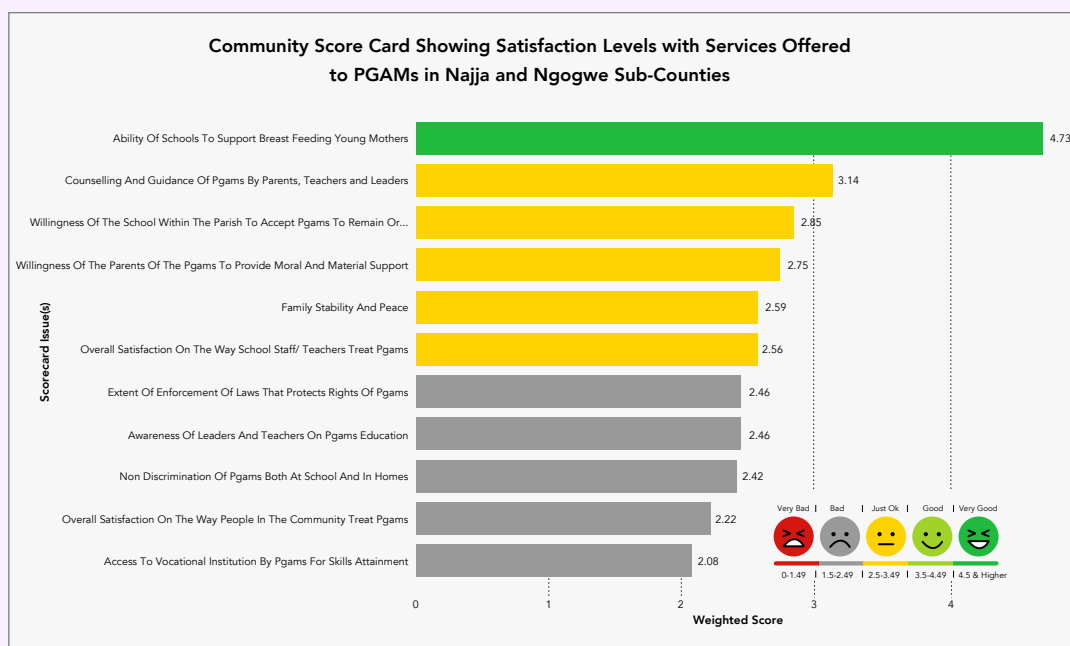


78% of schools visited
reported conducting
some form of sexuality
education

Data also shows that there were no commitment agreements signed with parents/ guardians of PGAMs who are sent on mandatory maternity leave. This implies that there are no planned exits for girls who are found pregnant at school and efforts to follow-up and ensure the eventual return of the affected girls after the expiry of their mandatory leave are all not being implemented. With such weak tracking and compliance mechanisms, a number of girls end up not returning to school leading to increased total drop outs from school due to teenage pregnancies.

The community scorecard reveals a spectrum of satisfaction levels regarding service delivery and the accessibility of education for PGAMs in Najja and Ngogwe Sub-Counties. Notably, there is commendation for schools that facilitate breastfeeding young mothers to balance their educational pursuits with motherhood, offer counseling services, and are open to re-enrolling teenage mothers. These factors are crucial in fostering continued educational opportunities for PGAMs. Conversely, the scorecard highlights significant areas falling short of community expectations that warrant urgent attention. In instances where formal education is discontinued, vocational training becomes a preferred alternative, particularly for girls who leave school due to teenage pregnancies. Nevertheless, the scorecard indicates community dissatisfaction with the availability of vocational training options. Additionally, it reflects concerns

over community attitudes towards PGAMs, including discrimination at educational institutions and within homes, and the lax enforcement of protective laws for these vulnerable individuals. Overall, the community sentiment underscores substantial deficiencies in creating a supportive environment that enhances sustained educational access for these young women.

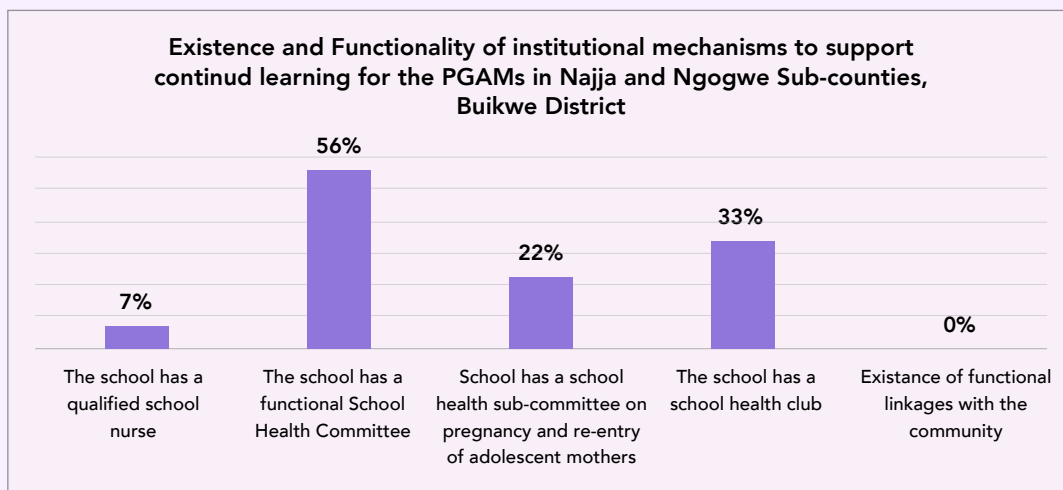


iii. Weak institutional mechanisms to support continued learning for the PGAMs

The Guidelines allocate various roles to the school governance structures. For instance, School Management Committees (SMCs) and Board of Governors (BoGs) which are the governing bodies of the primary and secondary schools respectively are responsible for handling issues of retention of pregnant girls at school and re-entry of adolescent mothers.¹⁸ However, monitoring reports by the Ministry of Education and Sports have indicated that governance structures in schools are largely dysfunctional.¹⁹

¹⁸ MoES, Revised Guidelines on Prevention and Management of Teenage Pregnancy in School Setting, supra, p. 22.

¹⁹ Ministry of Education and Sports, Field Monitoring Reports for the 23rd Education and Sports Sector Annual Performance Review.



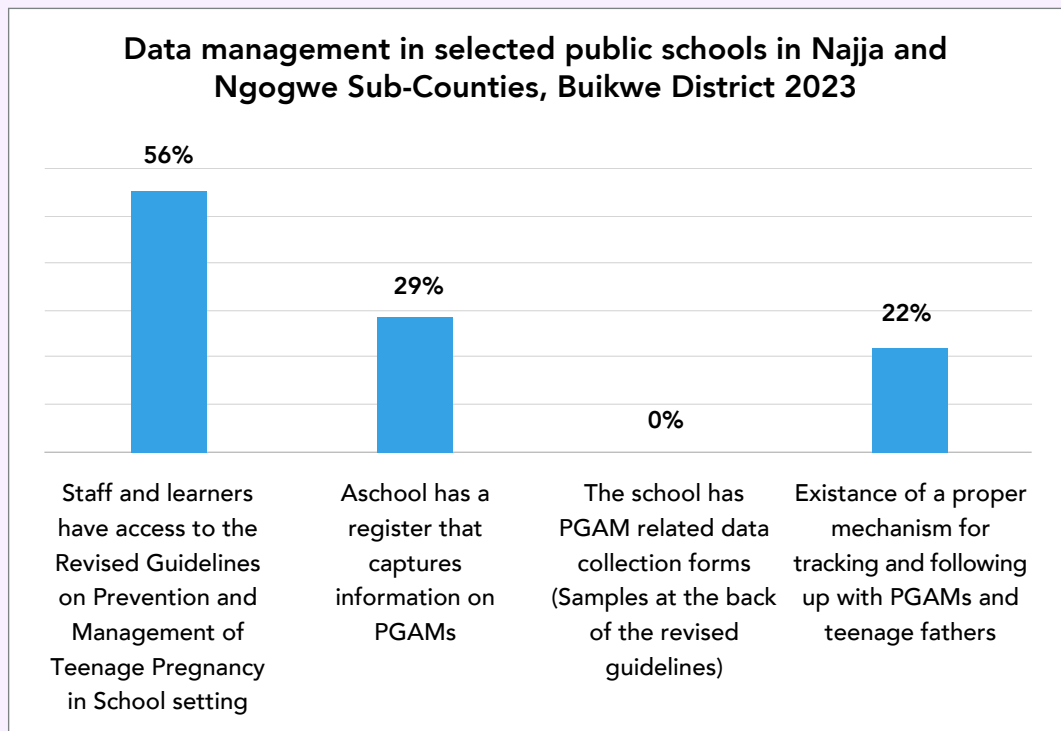
The dysfunctionality of the school governance structures is also reflected in the implementation of the policy framework on PGAMs' access to education. For instance, only 22% and 56% schools have functional School Health Committees and Health Sub Committees respectively. This has an effect on the implementation of the roles assigned to such structures under the Guidelines such as; undertake needs assessment and identify staff to be capacitated in the area of sexuality education; facilitate planning and resource mobilization for school health activities including the advocacy week; facilitate the formation of school health clubs; ensuring linkages with other SHCs in the district; initiating and enforcing school health by-laws and guidelines in the educational institution; protection of the rights of learners/students within and outside the educational institution. As a result of the dysfunctionality of the governance structures, key aspects in tracing and ensuring retention of PGAMs in school such as community linkages are absent.

iv. Limited data collection and management mechanisms

Availability and access to credible data mechanisms on enrolment, retention, completion and dropout rate remains a challenge in the country. The Ministry of Education and Sports has acknowledged that its Education Management Information System (EMIS) is yet to live up to its expectations on account of poor-quality data.²⁰

²⁰ Ministry of Education and Sports, EMIS Review Task Force Report 2017; Concepts, Issues & Recommendations for Re-Engineering and ReDevelopment of Education Management Information System (EMIS), p. 1 at <https://www.education.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/EMIS-REVIEW-TASKFORCE-REPORT.pdf> accessed on February 22, 2024.

The collection of data through EMIS is not backed up by a strong legal framework and as a result, some schools do not submit data and there are no repercussions for failure to report. Also, it is just of recent that the MoES commenced the digitalization of the EMIS but previously the data collection has been analogue through undertaking manual school censuses in schools. Additionally, the National Strategy to End Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy, 2022-2027 also acknowledges the challenges in data collection and management systems and lists proposals for improvement of data collection on teenage pregnancies in Uganda including developing an Information Management System (IMS) to record information on teenage pregnancies, developing a harmonized and centralized system for tracking school completion rates, and generating robust data and evidence to inform laws, policies and programming on teenage pregnancies across sectors. The poor quality of data affects the planning and policy formulation of issues in the education sector including PGAMs' access to education. Currently, the country has a good monitoring policy framework. As part of the Revised Guidelines, schools are required to have PGAM data collection forms like a school register that captures information on PGAMs and existence of a proper mechanism for following up on them. However, the chart below shows that only 29% of the schools have some form of register/ exercise books used to capture data on PGAMs.



Additionally, no school has PGAM data collection sample forms, the score stood at 0%. This shows weak data collection on PGAMs and it explains why tracking and follow-up mechanisms scored a paltry 22%. It therefore shows that majority of the PGAMs drop out of school without any trace. This can also be attributed to irregular and inconsistency manner in which Ministry of Education and Sports collects school data. The last school census was conducted in 2017. The Ministry is now revamping the EMIS to collect and provide timely statistics for policy development, planning, budgeting and evidence-based management practices in education system in Uganda.²¹ However, there is no mandatory compliance to EMIS which has bred irregular and inconsistent data collection. Some schools including those implementing UPE and USE do not consistently and regularly comply with EMIS and there are no sanctions for non – compliance. This is due to lack of a legal framework underpinning the implementation of EMIS.

D. The importance of PGAMs continued access to education and the impact being created by the AMEI project.

A pregnant teenager or mother experiences great hurdles in accessing education. It is estimated that teenage mothers are more likely than non-teenage mothers to attain only primary level education and on the other hand, teenage mothers are six times less likely to complete secondary education compared to non-teenage mothers.²² The most common individual level effect of teenage pregnancy is dropping out of school. After getting pregnant, teenage girls either decide to discontinue school, the parents or guardians kick them out of the home, or the school authorities formally expel them.²³ Definitely, this is a road to perpetual poverty as a result of low education level.²⁴ The implementation of the AMEI project in Najja and Ngogwe sub counties in Buikwe District has realized progress towards PGAMs access to continued learning as shown in the success story below;

²¹ See the various Ministry of Education and Sports, Education Abstracts from 2017 and backwards indicating the varying number of schools that responded to the Education Annual Census without any action against those did not comply.

²² National Planning Authority et al, The Cost of Inaction: The Economic and Social Burden of Teenage Pregnancy in Uganda, p. 10 at https://uganda.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/cost_of_inaction_report_on_teenage_pregnancy_final_print_ready_8.4.2022.pdf accessed on May 10, 2024.

²³ Ibid, p. 22.

²⁴ Ibid.

The success story of RK (A minor)

RK's Journey: A Teenage Mother's Fight for Education

RK is a 16-year-old girl who has overcome many obstacles to pursue her education. She is a student in Primary 7 at Masaaba Primary School and a mother of a one-year-old baby girl. She is also a survivor of sexual abuse and exploitation by a 26-year-old boy who works as a non-professional builder.

RK

"I got pregnant when I was 15, after being deceived by a man who was my friend. He convinced me to have sex with him and then when I got pregnant, he suggested that I should abort the pregnancy but I refused."

RK faced the wrath of her mother, who chased her away from home at the time. She had to stay with the boy's family until she gave birth. Her mother told her that she could not stay at her home because after getting pregnant she had now become an adult.

However, RK did not give up. She had earlier scored 24 aggregates in her first Primary 7 leaving exams and had a dream of becoming a lawyer. She wanted to get a scholarship from Educate Uganda, a non-governmental organization that sponsors learners from primary to university level. However, she needed to score at least 15 points to qualify for the scholarship. With the support of the headteacher, RK decided to go back to school and repeat Primary 7 to improve her grade and increase her chances of getting the scholarship.

The headteacher of Masaaba Primary School, who knew RK's potential, talked to her mother and convinced her to let RK return to school. He also supported RK and protected her from discrimination and stigma at school.

RK

"I have faced several challenges when I decided to come back to school." Says RK.

Having to balance life as a student and a mother is one of the greatest challenges RK Points out.

RK

"I leave the baby at home with my mother, who agreed to take care of her". I have to deal with some negative comments from some teachers and community members, who often question my decision to return to school. They say i came back to spoil other children and that i should go to my husband's place."

RK has not let all this negative talk to discourage her. She knows what took her back to school and does not give them much attention. She was determined to achieve her goal and make a better life for herself and her baby.



RK telling her story on how she has been able to return to school after giving birth at the age of 15years

AMEI Impact

AMEI visited Masaaba Primary school and had an engagement that brought together PGAMs, School management, parents and learners to discuss the policy environment on PGAM continued education and to encourage schools and parents to support them.

“

“When the Adolescent Mother’s Education Initiative (AMEI) Project, came to our school, they talked about continued education even after teenage pregnancy and birth. They also encouraged us to stay in school and complete our education. Those people also talked about alternative education such as skills development that pregnant girls and adolescent mothers can opt for if normal school fails. This made me happy, hopeful and more determined to pursue my education.” RK

”

Message for fellow young girls and teenage mothers

RK has a message for fellow young girls who are in similar situations or who are at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation. She calls upon her peers to be obedient to teachers at school and follow school rules. She also encourages other girls who have given birth to go back to school and continue with their education. Emphasizing that education is the key to girl empowerment.

“

“I call upon fellow girls who find themselves getting pregnant and giving birth while still attending school to stay in school and report all incidences of sexual abuse and harassment.”

”

For RK, getting back into school has helped her learn many new things in class.

“

“I am now more confident and have better self-esteem. I feel I can make it and achieve my dream of becoming a lawyer someday.”

”

RK is hopeful that she can perform well and get a scholarship from Educate Uganda to see her continuing with her studies. She is an inspiration to many girls and a success story of a teenage mother who returned to school.

ROSETTE (Not real Name) a mother of RK (a minor), a PGAM from Ndolwa shares her experience

“

“I am Rosette, a single mother of six children. My life has been full of struggles and hardships, especially since my husband passed away. I make a living by selling local alcohol, but it is barely enough to feed my family and pay for their education.”

”

Rosette's eldest daughter (RK) is 16 years old and in Primary 7 at Masaaba Primary School. She was doing well in school until she met a man who ruined her life by getting her pregnant while still young and at school.

“

“The boy is a casual worker who has no respect for women. He seduced RK and got her pregnant when she was only 15years. He also impregnated four other girls in this village.”

”

Rosette says that the sexual offender who got her girl pregnant did not take any responsibility for his actions and his parents supported him. They wanted RK to drop out of school and marry their son.

“

“I was furious when I found out what happened. I reported the boy to the police and had him arrested. But the community turned against me. They blamed me for being a bad mother and a bad woman. They said I should let RK go with the boy and stop causing trouble. They threatened me and my other children. I was scared for our safety, so I withdrew the case and let the boy go.”

”

RK gave birth to a baby girl who is now one year and three months old. She wanted to go back to school and continue her education. She even agreed to repeat Primary 7 in order to improve her grades and get a chance of scholarship from one of the not-for-profit organizations operating in the area which made the mother very proud of RK's courage and determination.

It's unfortunate that the family of the man who got RK pregnant never stopped harassing them.

“They kept harassing RK and telling her to come with them. They said she was their wife and they had the right to take her. They did not care about her education or her future. They only wanted to control her.”

For RK, getting back into school has helped her learn many new things in class.

“I have tried to protect RK and support her studies. But I have limited resources and no support from anyone. The school fees are too high for me and the school requirements are not met in time. The man's family refused to help us in any way. They said they did not ask me to send RK back to school. They said I was wasting my time and money.”

This trend of things is making the mother to almost give up on RK. With five other children to cater for, the times are extremely hard for the family. Where even the other sisters of RK dropped out of school due to teenage pregnancies and are now married to abusive men in the community.

The mother is worried about her other young daughters who too are at the risk of being preyed upon by the unforgiving men like the one who almost ruined RK's life.

“I feel like I have failed as a mother. I feel like I have no power or voice in this society. I feel like I have been disrespected and discriminated against because I am a woman and a single mother.”

“I do not know what to do or where to turn. I feel hopeless and helpless. I pray to God to help me and my children. I hope that one day, things will change for the better. I hope that one day, RK will achieve her dreams and be happy.”

The Head Teacher of Masaaba Primary School shares his experience in supporting RK a PGAM from Ndolwa parish

Masaaba Roman Catholic Primary School is a government aided catholic church founded primary school located in Ndolwa Parish, Ngogwe Sub-County, Buikwe district.

Stephen Isabirye is the headteacher of Masaaba Roman Catholic Primary School which is a government aided catholic church founded primary school located in Ndolwa Parish, Ngogwe Sub-County, Buikwe district. He is one of the few people who are championing girls' education in his community through mobilizing scholarships for children, offering career guidance and counselling to Pregnant Girls and Adolescent Mothers and community members within Ndolwa Parish.

"As the headteacher of Masaaba Roman Catholic Primary School, I have witnessed the plight of many teenage mothers who drop out of school due to teenage pregnancy and lack of support. One of them is RK, a 16-year-old girl who is in Primary 7."

At the age of 15 years, RK became a teenage mother while still attending primary school. This affected her performance in that year's primary leaving exams where she scored 24 aggregates.

"We had a community gathering of this parish convened here at our school by the Adolescent Mothers' Education Initiative (AMEI). During this gathering, one of the key messages was on allowing pregnant girls and adolescent mothers to stay in school and continue their education. I loved this message and it gave me more determination to support girls' education."

An organization called Educate Uganda has a scholarship program for girls' education. However, they require girls to first score 15 aggregates to qualify. The headmaster used this opportunity to persuade RK who is from a financially challenged family to return to school, repeat primary seven and if she scores better grades, get an opportunity to benefit from a scholarship.

"I have tried to protect RK and other girls from sexual abuse and exploitation by collaborating with the police. I have reported the cases of the boy and his parents to the Officer in Charge of Nkokonjeru Police Station and asked him to take action against them. I have also educated the girls and their parents about their rights and the laws against child marriage and defilement."

One of the biggest challenges faced by people like Isabirye is the lack of interest and support from the parents and the community for girl's education. Many parents do not value their daughters and see them as a burden or a source of income.

"Parents here prefer to marry their girls off early or make them work at home or in the fields. They do not understand the importance of education and the opportunities it can create for their daughters. They also do not cooperate with the school or the police when we try to help girls who are sexually abused and become pregnant."

Isabirye commits to continue his efforts to support RK and other teenage mothers who want to pursue their education. He believes that education is the key to empowering them and improving their lives.

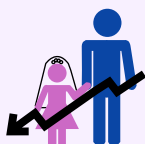
"I hope that RK will achieve her goals and inspire other girls to follow their dreams."

A. Conclusion and Recommendations

The value of educating a girl does not only accrue to her but also equally to society. At the Individual level, the return on one year of secondary education for a girl correlates with as high as a 25% increase in wages later in life.²⁵ At the society level, first, educated women play greater economic role in their families and communities, by reinvesting 90% of their earnings into their families.²⁶



90% of educated womens earnings are reinvested into their families



Child marriage reduced by 64%

Secondly, it is estimated that if all girls had secondary education in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia, child marriage would reduce by a significant 64%, from almost 2.9 million to just over 1 million.²⁷

Third and lastly, educated girls make a substantial contribution to their respective countries' economic growth, a 1% increase in female education raises the average gross domestic product (GDP) by 0.3% and raises annual GDP growth rates by 0.2%.²⁸ Therefore, countries such as Uganda should strive to put in place policy, legal and institutional frameworks that protect and promote PGAMs' continued access to learning to avert their dropping out of school.



1% increase in female education raises the average GDP by 0.3%

²⁵ Jo Bourne, Why Educating Girls Makes Economic Sense March 06, 2014 by at <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/why-educating-girls-makes-economic-sense> accessed on February 22, 2024.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

Ministry of Education and Sports;

- a. Ensuring that expulsion of PGAMs is explicitly prohibited in the Guidelines on Prevention and Management of Teenage Pregnancy in School Setting, and preferably in law.
- b. Ensuring that all schools are provided with copies of the Revised Guidelines on Prevention and Management of Teenage Pregnancy in School Setting, 2020.
- c. Capacity building sessions with District Education Officers (DEOs) to effectively monitor and support the implementation of the Guidelines at the school level.
- d. Undertake benchmarking with African Countries such as Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Sierra Leone among others with policy and legal frameworks without restrictive policies on continuity and reentry for PGAMs in school.
- e. Make it mandatory for all schools to comply with EMIS to facilitate the collection of timely education data, including on access to education by PGAMs. This will bolster the Ministry of Education and Sports' role of monitoring and better planning for education delivery in the country.²⁹

District Education Officers;

- a. Effectively monitor, enforce and support the implementation of the Guidelines at the school level.

Schools;

- a. Ensuring proper case management at the school level and the funneling up of data to the DEO.
- b. Establishing and strengthening School Health Committees.

²⁹ UN Economic and Social Council, General Comment No. 3: The Nature of States Parties' Obligations (Art. 2, Para. 1, of the Covenant), E/1991/23, UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), 14 December 1990, <https://www.refworld.org/legal/general/cescr/1990/en/5613> [accessed 22 February 2024].



A teenage mother participating in a score card session during community engagements at Kikusa Primary School



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