

# The Teenage Pregnancy Menace in Kenya

TEENAGE PREGNANCY IS DEFINED AS A TEENAGE GIRL, USUALLY WITHIN THE AGES OF 13-19, BECOMING PREGNANT

## THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF TEENAGE PREGNANCIES INCREASED BETWEEN 2009 AND 2014

The estimated number of teenage girls who begun childbearing

**755,000**  
in 2009

**843,000**  
in 2014

This is despite an increase in the use of modern contraceptives by sexually active adolescents

**20%**  
in 2009

**37%**  
in 2014

## WHY IS THE NUMBER OF TEENAGE PREGNANCIES NOT DECREASING?

### Adolescents are engaging in sex



Half of young women aged 20-24 years have begun engaging in sex

By age 18 years



Half of young men aged 20-24 years have begun engaging in sex

By age 17 years

### Inadequate access to contraceptive information and services

Adolescents have a high unmet need for contraceptives

**23%**

Of girls aged 15-19 years want to delay pregnancy or stop having children but are not using a modern contraceptive due to lack of access

### Inadequate access to education

Girls without education



Are 3 times more likely to start childbearing

**12%**

Of girls with secondary school or higher level of education have begun childbearing

**33%**

Of girls without formal education have begun childbearing

### Child marriage, defined as marriage under the age of 18 years, is prevalent in Kenya and predisposes adolescent girls to early pregnancy

**26%**

Of young women aged 20-24 years were married by age 18

**49%**

In rural areas

**18%**

In urban areas

### Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Is still very prevalent in some communities. Girls who have undergone FGM are more likely to get married and start childbearing early

**21%**

Of all women have undergone FGM in Kenya

**98%**

In North Eastern

**33%**

In Nyanza

## WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT REDUCING TEENAGE PREGNANCIES?

Adolescents who initiate sex early are more likely to have been forced and to suffer sexual and gender based violence

**22%**

Of women who had their first sexual intercourse below age 15 years were forced

**13%**

Of women who had their first sexual intercourse between ages 15-19 years were forced

**6%**

Of women who had their first sexual intercourse between ages 20-24 years were forced

Adolescents are more likely to suffer and die from pregnancy and delivery complications because they are physiologically underdeveloped

They are more likely to procure an unsafe abortion, suffer and die from complications from unsafe abortion

Pregnant adolescents and young mothers are more likely to drop out of school and not pursue higher education, diminishing their socioeconomic status

Adolescent mothers are more likely to give birth to babies with low infant weight, and at increased risk of death and malnutrition

## WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO REDUCE TEENAGE PREGNANCIES?



Ensure more girls attend primary and secondary school. Strengthen the implementation of the free primary education policy and structural interventions to prevent school drop-out



Increase access to comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents



Reduce poverty levels through effective implementation of poverty reduction policies



Eliminate child marriage and female genital mutilation through enforcement of existing laws (The Marriage Act & The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act)

## DATA SOURCES

Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2014

Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2008/09

Incidence and Complications of Unsafe Abortion in Kenya: Key Findings of a National Study (Nairobi, Kenya: African Population and Health Research Center, Ministry of Health, Kenya, Ipas, and Guttmacher Institute 2013)

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