

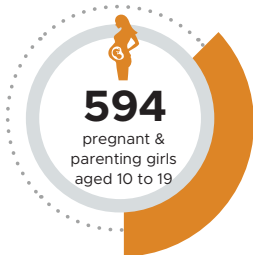
UNDERSTANDING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF PREGNANT AND PARENTING ADOLESCENTS IN KOROGOCHO, NAIROBI, KENYA

BACKGROUND

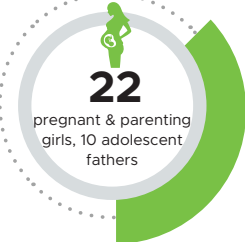
This factsheet is a summary of research on the lived experiences of pregnant and parenting adolescents in Korogocho, Nairobi, conducted by the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) in collaboration with Miss Koch Kenya and Directorate of Children Services, Nairobi County in 2022. We documented how early and unintended childbearing affects their health and social well-being and school re-entry gaps in policy and practice.

METHODS

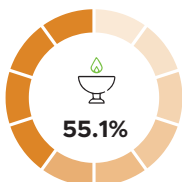
Quantitative Survey



Quantitative Interviews



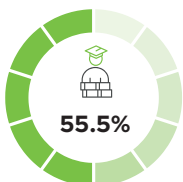
Socio-demographics of the Pregnant and Parenting Adolescents



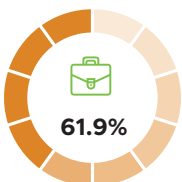
Most pregnant & parenting girls included in the survey were Protestant Christians



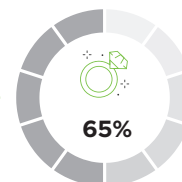
Ever attended school



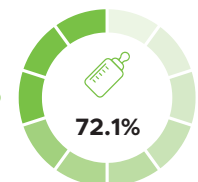
Had secondary education



Ever worked for pay



Never married

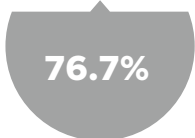


Had given birth once

KEY FINDINGS

The Context of Adolescent Pregnancy

Approximately four in five of the girls reported that their pregnancy was unintended.



Most of the girls were not married at the time they first became pregnant.



About half were in school at the time they first became pregnant.



Drivers of early pregnancy include curiosity about sex, low contraceptive knowledge, naivety, family conflict, limited parental support and supervision, poverty, sexual violence, and Covid-19-related school closure.



Experiences at the Health Facilities



34.6% Most accessed antenatal care (ANC) services during pregnancy; however, only one in three girls completed eight ANC visits as recommended by the World Health Organization.



Barriers to ANC access include lack of support from parents/guardians, limited information on ANC, social stigma, poverty, shame, ignorance, and fear of healthcare providers.



During childbirth, girls reported mistreatment and abuse, including physical and verbal abuse



Stigma & Discrimination



Neglect



Lack of privacy



Detainment

Livelihood Challenges

24.2%



Only one in four girls were employed. Those who worked for pay mainly engaged in menial jobs such as washing clothes, hairdressing, and casual work in companies. Many reported being unable to afford personal effects and food for themselves and their babies. An unemployed 17-year-old girl shared her experience of enduring hunger alongside her child at times when her mother did not find work.

"...it's just lack of a job because sometimes when my mother doesn't have money, we just stay hungry because there is nothing I can do."
(IDI participant 15, parenting girl, 17-year-old).



Mental Health & Exposure to Violence



40%, 35% and 25.3% of the girls reported mild, minimal, and moderate or severe depression symptoms.



Common depressive symptoms reported included suicidal thoughts, self-harm, stress, worry, fear, shame, self-isolation, guilt, loss of appetite, and sadness.



Nearly half (48.8%) of the girls experienced physical, emotional, and/or sexual violence.



25.6%

1 out of 4 girls experienced intimate partner violence (IPV).



Childcare



46%

Nearly 1 in 2 girls reported that they had no childcare support. Of those that received childcare support, it was mainly from their mothers.



74%

3 in 4 girls reported being unable to provide for their babies needs, including food, clothes, diapers, and medicine.



Schooling



Most of the girls were out of school at the time of the survey.



2 out of every 5 girls who were not in school reported that they would like to go back to school.



Nearly 4 out of 5 girls do not want to go back to their previous schools.

Key barriers to school re-entry include: individual (childcare responsibilities), family (parental opposition to schooling), and external (stigma and discrimination in schools) factors. For instance, a parenting girl stated:

"With going back to school, who will I leave my baby with? Sometimes my mum also goes to find work..." (IDI participant 2, parenting girl, 17-year-old).

Facilitators of school re-entry include: individual (desire for a better future, resilience in hostile school environment), family (childcare support, advice and encouragement), and external (financial support from the government, breastfeeding breaks in schools) factors.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Following consultations with selected study participants and stakeholders from the community, county government, and civil society organizations, we recommend that:

	<p>Government ministries, community leaders, teachers, and parents should provide in-school and out-of-school adolescents with accurate sexual and reproductive health information, including condom use and contraception to prevent early childbearing and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).</p>	<p>The government should establish youth-friendly desks to allow for reporting of mistreatment and abuse cases and provide psychosocial support for distressed pregnant and parenting adolescents.</p>	<p>The government should establish affordable daycare centers, safe houses for adolescent mothers, and cash transfer programs for childcare support.</p>
	<p>The government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based organizations (CBOs) should provide vocational training and support for adolescents to establish income-generating activities as a means of economic empowerment.</p>	<p>The government and community-based organizations (CBOs) should establish or strengthen existing emergency toll lines for reporting intimate partner violence (IPV) and create referral pathways for further assistance.</p>	<p>The national and county governments, alongside relevant stakeholders, should support the school re-entry of pregnant and parenting adolescents through financial (such as Constituency Development Fund bursaries) or in-kind support (school necessities).</p>
	<p>Schools should sensitize teachers and students against discrimination and stigmatization of pregnant and parenting adolescents. Schools also need to allow breastfeeding breaks for parenting girls.</p>		

Authors

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See the full report: Understanding the lived experiences of pregnant and parenting adolescents in Korogocho, Nairobi, Kenya.

