

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING



**CROSS CUTTING ISSUES TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP
(CCITWG)**

**GUIDELINES ON HOW TO ENABLE PREGNANT SCHOOL
GIRLS TO CONTINUE WITH THEIR STUDIES**

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Abbreviations

BEST	-	Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania
COBET	-	Complementary Basic Education and Training
COSET	-	Complementary Secondary Education in Tanzania
CEDAW	-	Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DNA	-	Deoxy-ribonucleic Acid
IPPE	-	Integrated Post Primary Education
MOEVT	-	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training
PEDP	-	Primary Education Development Plan
SEDP	-	Secondary Education Development Plan

Definitions

- Education System** - Education system categorized into:
 - Formal education; and
 - Informal education
- Famous person** - A respected person in the society whose opinions is accepted and respected by the community around him
- Pupil** - A learner who is yet to finish formal primary education
- Student** - A learner who is yet to finish formal secondary education
- Government** - All levels of public governance
- Village/ward leadership** - Village/ward chairperson and respective village/ward committees
- School leadership** - School head teacher/master, teachers and school committees/boards
- Religious leaders** - Leaders who administer religious responsibilities amongst different religions and denominations

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Education and Training Policy (ETP) of 1995 which is currently under review among others things, emphasizes on access and equity to quality education to all so as to have Tanzanians who are highly educated, knowledgeable, skilled and culturally mature to handle national and international challenges in various political and social economic fields and as well as empower them to contribute in growth of national economy. Thus, the policy acknowledges, promotes and advocates deliberate moves which aim at assuring that girls are not denied the right of access to quality education. This is due to the fact that they are among the disadvantaged groups due to customary and cultural constraints and stereotypes.

In spite of the efforts being taken by the government to ensure provision of quality education to girls, there are obstacles which hinder girls to fully benefit from these efforts. One of the obstacles is expulsion from school because of pregnancy. This situation greatly affects the girls themselves, borne babies, parents/guardians and the national at large. Statistics shows that, about six percent (6%), (BEST, 2008) of girls enrolled in primary schools, end up being expelled from school due to pregnancy. Secondary school girls face similar plight.

Besides hindering national initiatives and strategies of ensuring equity to all Tanzanians, expulsion of school girls due to any reason is also contrary to several Regional and International conventions ratified by the country that emphasize on equity and refutes any kind of discrimination. Such conventions include; the 1990 Jomtien declaration on Education for All (EFA), African Protocol on the Right of the Child, International Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW - 1979) and Dakar framework of Action 2000. All these conventions focus on the right to quality education to all children particularly girls. The government is committed and strives to implement the ratified conventions. The Primary Education Development Plan (I) 2002 - 2006, Primary

Education Development Plan (II) 2007 - 2011 and Secondary Education Development Plan 2004 - 2009 strategies realization of gender equity and access to quality education in Tanzania.

The government is alarmed at the rate in which the number of school girls who have been forced to terminate or being expelled from schools, just because of early marriages and/or pregnancies. Tanzania needs skilled and well educated women and men to take part in the development of the country, so it cannot just stand aside while it is losing the most precious contribution of many young Tanzanian women to the development of the country because of early marriages and pregnancies.

In the process of addressing the problem of early marriages and pregnancies of school girls, experience was sought from neighboring African countries which have addressed the problem by developing a mechanism of enabling impregnated school girls to get back to school after giving birth to continue with their studies. These countries are Zambia, Kenya, Botswana, Guinea and Malawi. Also, open public discussions in eight educational zones in the country were organized and conducted to allow educationists and stakeholders to deliberate on the fate of impregnated school girls. The educational zones are eastern, western, northeastern, northwestern, southern, highlands, lake and central zones. Generally, stakeholders agreed that, impregnated school girls be allowed to get back to school.

It is from the above arguments that, the government is developing guideline/ procedures on how to enable impregnated school girls go back to school to continue with their studies. This document will also dwell on how to reduce/eliminate the problem of pregnancies of school girls.

2.0 PROCEDURES THAT WILL ENABLE IMPREGNATED SCHOOL GIRLS GET BACK TO SCHOOL TO CONTINUE WITH THEIR STUDIES

Procedures that enables impregnated school girls get back to school to continue with their studies includes responsibilities and actions to be taken by respective actors/stakeholders

in the process of facilitating the achievement of the whole idea of enabling impregnated school girls get back to school. The following are actors and responsibilities:

2.1 Impregnated school girl

- Should provide evidence from a recognized doctor indicating duration (age) of the pregnancy;
- Should acquire suspension letter which indicates date of reporting back to school after giving birth;
- Should acquire guidance and counseling on her health, future development and how to protect herself from other school pregnancies;
- Should report back to school within the period of six to twelve months after giving birth;
- Shall have a choice to a kind of education (formal or informal) she would like to continue with, under the advise from parents/guardians and teachers;
- Shall be required to disclose the identity of the person responsible for the pregnancy;
- Forced marriages should be reported to school leadership, religious and/or ward leadership; and
- Shall have only one re-admission opportunity.

2.2 School leadership

- Shall require a doctors' evidence for respective girls' pregnancy;
- Shall issue a suspension letter to respective impregnated girl, showing the date in which the girl should report back to school. Doctors' evidence shall be enclosed;
- Shall offer guidance and counseling services to the girl on her health and future development;
- Shall offer guiding and counseling services to parents/guardians of the impregnated girl;
- Shall give strict warning to the impregnated girl if realized she wilfully got pregnant;
- Communicate with parents/guardians on the dates of reporting back to school;
- Shall allow the impregnated girl to make a choice of her own on which mode of education (formal or informal) and school she would like to continue with, after giving birth;
- Shall show empathy and cooperate with the pregnant girl;
- Shall keep correct records on impregnated girls to ensure re-admission process is not missed;
- Shall allow impregnated girls to sit for their national exams if diagnosed within exam timeframe;
- Shall suspend from school a boy responsible for pregnancy and will be re-admitted to school together with the impregnated girl. The boy's parents/guardians will be responsible for the care of the girl and the baby.

2.3 Parents/Guardians

- Shall be counseled and guided by the school leadership on the pregnancy of the school girl;
- Shall show empathy and accept to take care of the pregnant girl;
- Shall be guided and counseled by the school leadership concerning maternal health of the pregnant school girl;
- Shall be informed and required to fulfill re - admittance requirements;
- Shall be required to update the school leadership on the health condition during pregnancy and after birth; and
- Shall be involved in deciding on which mode of education (Formal or informal) and school the pregnant girl would like to continue with, after giving birth.

2.4 Society

- Shall accept and help the pregnant school girl;
- Shall monitor the welfare of the pregnant school girls;
- Shall be involved in protecting, teaching and advising school girls on how to protect/avoid from pregnancies; and
- Shall task the Ward Social Welfare Officer to monitor the welfare of the pregnant school girl.

2.5 Religious leaders

- Shall accept guide and counsel impregnated school girls as a process of strengthening their faith; and
- Shall not wed school girls.

2.6 Government

- Shall educate and sensitize the society/community on the importance of re – admitting impregnated school girls;
- Shall educate and sensitize the society/community on the process of re – admitting impregnated school girls; and
- Shall empower school leadership on the issue of re–admission of pregnant school girls; and
- Shall task the ward social welfare officers to monitor the health welfare of the impregnated school girls.

3.0 How to take care of the born baby

Pregnancy amongst school girls is a social problem which also affects innocent unborn and born babies. It is therefore the responsibility of the society to ease the suffering of these innocent people. The following are the actors and their responsibilities of taking care of the babies:

3.1 Parents/Guardians

- Maternal and paternal parents/guardians shall cooperate in taking care of the baby/infant.
- Shall accept and show love to the born baby.

3.2 Society

- Shall see to it that, ward social welfare officers monitor the progress of health of the baby/infant; and
- Shall accept and show love to the born baby.

3.3 Government

- Shall see to it that procedures for adequate care the girl and the baby are followed and hold responsible those who act contrary to that;
- Shall ensure that social welfare monitor the health development of the girl and the baby; and
- Shall encourage Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to be involved in taking care of the born babies.

4.0 Reducing/eliminating early marriages and pregnancies

The government intends to reduce and ultimately eliminate the problem of early marriages and school pregnancy so as implement initiatives and strategies of offering equal quality education to its citizen. In order to achieve this, the following are actors and their responsibilities:

4.1 School girls and boys

- Shall be encouraged to participate in peer group education programmes;
- Shall be advise to build a habit of advising each other and give information to school leadership/parents/guardians and religious leadership on any misconduct that could lead to pregnancy at school;
- Shall be encouraged to concentrate on their studies;
- Shall be encouraged to be involved in different kinds of sports and extra-curricula activities; and
- If impregnated, the girl shall be required to disclose the man responsible with her pregnancy.

4.2 Parents/guardians

- Shall be required to enroll school girls in nearby schools;
- Shall be required to ensure good procedures are in place to offer food in schools;
- Shall avail time for discussion on life skills and reproductive with their children;
- Shall ensure that children are protected against vulnerable environment;
- Shall encourage their children to observe religious ethics which in most cases are against pre-marital sexual relations;
- Shall monitor the children's' school progress and performances; and
- Shall be role models to their children.

4.3 School leadership

- Shall monitor school girls attendance and give periodical medical examinations;
- Shall strengthen provision of services of guidance and counseling;
- Shall be role models to students;
- Shall introduce different life skill clubs like FEMA, TUSEME, debates, sports;
- Shall invite prominent women to motivate girls; and
- Shall strengthen religious classes.

4.4 Society

- Shall introduce committees which will develop and implement strategies of eliminating pregnancy problems facing school girls;
- Shall identify and prohibit norms and cultures that encourage early marriages sexual relations;
- Shall strengthen ethical behavior to children, youth and parents;
- Shall encourage potential people to discuss and voice their opinions against school girl pregnancies; and

4.5 Religious leaders

- Shall ensure that religious classes are carried out in neighboring schools; and
- Shall educate their followers on consequences of school pregnancies.

4.6 Government

- Shall facilitate construction of hostels;
- Shall facilitate construction of boarding schools for girls; and
- Shall motivate transporters to ferry students so as to involve them in transportation of students; and
- Shall prepare and air programs on school pregnancies.

5.0 WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO IMPREGNATED SCHOOL GIRLS WHO REFUSE TO DISCLOSE RESPONSIBLE PERSON FOR THE PREGNANCY

If strategies of reducing/eliminating school pregnancies are to succeed, to a great extent, cooperation from impregnated girls in volunteering to name culprits responsible for their pregnancies can not be over emphasized. However, a number of actors as well need to cooperate for the ultimate success of the exercise. The following are actors and responsibilities:

5.1 Impregnated school girl

- Shall be guided and counseled.

5.2 Parents/Guardians

- Shall guide and counsel the impregnated girl;
- Shall apply investigative tactics; and
- Shall cooperate with the school and ward leaderships.

5.3 School leadership

- Shall guide and counsel the impregnate school girl and her parents/guardian
- Shall apply investigative tactics; and
- Shall cooperate with parents/guardians, ward and religious leadership.

6.0 MEASURES AGAINST THE SPHERE OF INFLUENCE FOR SCHOOL GIRL PRENANCY

In the sphere of influence for school girl pregnancy, main actors happen to be; the girl, parents, society and the men responsible for pregnancy. It has been proved under reasonable doubts there are parents who are pro early marriages of their school girls. The society also contributes by maintaining customs and cultures which encourage sexual relations.

In the process of reducing/eliminating marriages and/or impregnate of school girls, deliberate initiatives are to be taken to make sure that, stern measures are taken against men and women who in one way or another, are responsible in facilitating marriage to a school girl on in impregnating the same. The following are actors and steps to be observed:

6.1 Impregnated school girl

- Shall be required to disclose the culprit; and

- Shall have to cooperate with parents/guardians and school, ward and religious leaderships.

6.2 Parents/Guardians

- Shall cooperate with the impregnated girl and ward and school leaderships
- Shall report case of pregnancy to the police
- Maternal and paternal parents /guardians shall ensure that the impregnated school girl and the baby are taken care of.

6.3 School leadership

- Shall cooperate with the impregnated girl , parent and ward leaderships;
Shall report case of pregnancy to the police;

6.4 Society

- Shall cooperate with the impregnated girl, parent and school leadership;
- Shall report the case of pregnancy to the police; and
- Shall take disciplinary measures against parents/guardians who are responsible for early marriage of school girls.

6.5 Religious leaders

- Shall persuade culprit follower to accept the responsibility caused by impregnating a school girl.

6.6 Government

- Shall ensure that, legal actions are taken against responsible persons for impregnating school girls;
- Shall ensure that, persons responsible for early marriages to school girls are taken to court ;
- Shall ensure that the properties of persons responsible for early marriages and pregnancy of school girls are used to take care of the impregnated girl and the child;
- Shall review the current Education Act of 1978 to address school girl pregnancies; and
- Shall review the Marriage Act of 1971 to address school girl marriages.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made:

1. The government should review the education regulations on penal code; [The Education (Imposition of Penalties to Persons who Marry or Impregnate a School Girl) Rules 2003 – GN No. 265 of 2003] as the penalty is so light to bring effect to offenders.
2. The government should review the Education Act of 1978 to enable the operationalization of the re-entry procedures for the impregnated schoolgirl to continue with studies and ensure effective implementation of the improved penalties to persons who marry or impregnate a schoolgirl.
3. De-boarding of O-Level Girls' secondary schools should be reviewed for the sake of schoolgirls who suffer from uncondusive learning environment at home due to domestic chores.
4. COBET, IPPE and Vocational training centers should be strengthened to provide education opportunity to learners who go for non formal education system.
5. The government should collaborate with education stakeholders to purchase school buses to lessen transport problem for the school children.