

All Government Approach: Multi-sectoral approach towards ending Teenage Pregnancy

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Description of the Topic

The topic will describe Kenya's adolescent pregnancy in Kenya and what prompted the adoption of new strategies; describe the strategies; achievements and constraints so far and where the direction the county intends to take.

Theoretical Focus

Due to the complexity of adolescent pregnancy, and the fact that no single entity can manage to end, it will describe the various coordination mechanisms and assigning of various roles to organizations.

The data and Research methods

The paper will explore desk review on administrative and programme reports and government directives.

Expected findings

The paper will outline the achievements which has been documented and constraints encountered during the programme period

Background

In Kenya, adolescent pregnancy has remained both a health and development issue for many years due to the high association to high maternal and infant mortality, poor education outcome, life time opportunity to participate in skilled labour market, perpetuates cycle of poverty among girls and future generations, and further exposes girls to vulnerability such as HIV, Early marriage and gender based violence. Teenage pregnancy is also a development issue as large amount of resources are channeled towards eradicating the vice as well as mitigating the effects, which in turn slows down the attainment of national and global development goals.

Nationally, adolescent pregnancy declined to 14.5% in 2022 from 18% in 2014ⁱ. However, wide Sub-National (SN) variations exist from as high as 50% and a low of 4.5%. Drivers of adolescent pregnancy vary from one sub-national to the other but some drivers cuts across. It is mainly driven by cultural and religious practices in some parts of the country, poverty, education attainment, and individual behavior.

In 2020, during the COVID-19 outbreak, the government issued a directive that resulted to all schools in the country. The prolonged closure exposed adolescents to risks of teenage pregnancy, new HIV infections, and Gender-Based Violence. The reported figures were alarming and the Legislators enquired about comprehensive status of adolescent pregnancy in the Country. This is when it dawned on the country that teenage pregnancy is not anchored in any Government Entity as no single government

institution could respond with clarity to the situation of Adolescent pregnancy. Several government ministries, departments, and agencies were handling a small component of adolescent pregnancy in a fragmented manner. There were no official documented interventions, scope of interventions, and gaps yet the Non-governmental organizations were reporting several interventions on the ground.

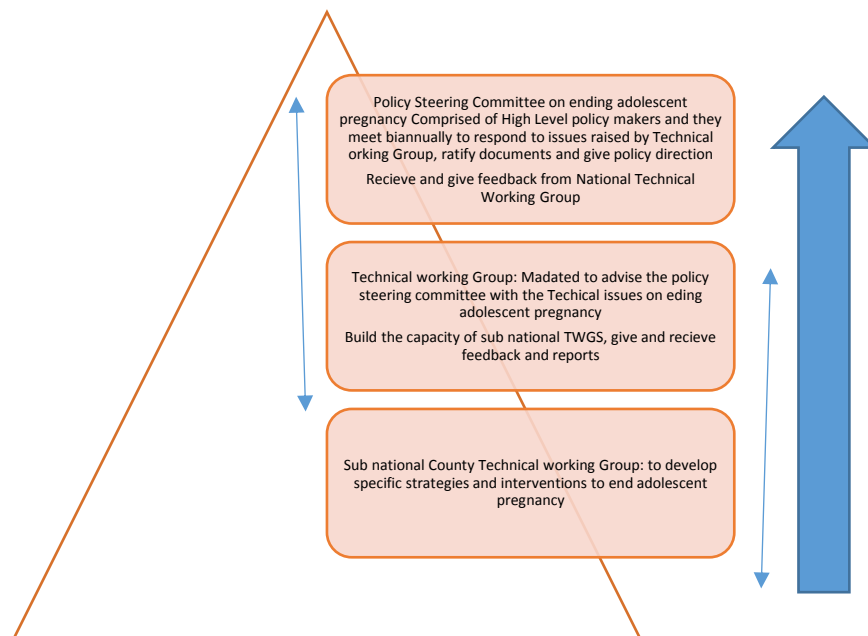
This necessitated convening an emergency meeting by High-level policymakers to give policy direction in dealing with adolescent pregnancy. During this meeting, it was resolved as a matter of urgency that a strong coordinated mechanism should be in place and the responsibility was placed on the National Council for Population and Development (NCPD). The NCPD was given the responsibility of coordinating all the adolescent pregnancy activities in the county.

Due to the magnitude of teenage pregnancy, Kenya committed to end teenage pregnancy by 2030 as contained in the ICPD25 Nairobi Summit.

A Coordinated Approach

The National Council for Population and Development was mandated to coordinate all activities on adolescent pregnancy and provide the secretariat. It also chairs the Technical Working Group meeting and provides the secretariat at the sub-national level. At the Sub National Level, the sub national head chairs the meeting and gives feedback to the National Technical Committee which escalates the issues to the policy steering committee.

Fig 1: Multi Sectoral Coordination



Multi-Sectoral Coordination Mechanism

The High-level policymakers directed the formation of various coordination levels with clear terms of reference and deliverables. Three levels of coordination were formed: Policy, Technical and

Implementation. The Policy Steering Committee meets bi-annually, and Technical and sub-national Technical Working Groups meet quarterly (illustrated in Fig 1).

Whole government approach

The whole government approach is identification of all relevant government departments, agencies and nonstate actors who have a role to play in ending adolescent pregnancy. This approach addresses any bottle neck and facilitates the finalization and settlement of various cases. It identifies and allocate specific role to different entities to unlock any bottleneck.

Methodology

The constitution of SNTWG, Developing of Terms of Reference (TORs), Disseminating of TORs and Commissioning by the a high-level policy maker. Identification, constituting, and commissioning of various level of coordination mechanism and clear line of reporting; defining roles and responsibilities at various levels: Mapping implementers and development partners at all levels to identify their geographic and programme scope in addressing teenage pregnancy: and identifying coverage gaps to ensure interventions are being carried out in the whole country. The

Theoretical approach

The Due to multifaceted nature of adolescent pregnancy, three levels of coordination were created and tasked with clear deliverables. Administratively, the 47 multi-sectorial Sub-National Technical Working Groups(TWGs) were tasked to have specific intervention to address the drivers, and challenges in their jurisdiction.

They are required to report to the National Technical Working Group (NTWG) which escalates the recommendations to Policy Steering Committee. The membership of the three committees are drawn from from government, Faith-based, Community gatekeepers and private sector, The 47 sub national report to the NTWG. The 47 Sub-national TWG are able to reach the whole country up to the lowest administrative level.

Achievements

- The three levels of coordination are strong 5 years down the line
- The debate on adolescent pregnancy is high on the agenda within Kenya's border
- There is buy-in by the High level leadership in the country
- Increased funding to adolescent issues

Challenges

- Negative cultural practices and regional variations, poverty
- Regional disparities thus compromising the national average
- Lean workforce
- High turn over of sub national heads who chairs th meetings at the county level

In conclusion, ending teenage pregnancy is still a major challenge as penetrating the culture of some communities is difficult

¹ Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2022