

Education sector response to early and unintended pregnancy: a review of country experiences in sub-Saharan Africa

STEP UP, UNESCO.

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Description:

In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), early and unintended pregnancy leads to a colossal loss of educational opportunities for girls: A high proportion of pregnancies among adolescent girls aged 15-19 years in the region are unintended, and nearly all adolescent girls who have ever been pregnant are out of school in most SSA countries. Existing studies that show associations between early/unintended pregnancy and school dropout lead to critical questions about how the education sector is responding to the issue in SSA. Conducted from August 2014 to April 2015, this review was devoted to an examination of such responses across six countries, namely: Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. The review focused on several key issues, including: Education sector policies for pregnant students and adolescent mothers; Integration of pregnancy prevention into sexuality education curricula; The school environment as it pertains to pregnant students and adolescent mothers; and Education sector efforts to improve gender equality. The study drew on a desk review of published literature and policy and programme documents from Ministries of Health and Education in the selected countries. In addition, supplementary qualitative data were gathered through in-depth interviews with 23 key informants in Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

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