Lockdowns & learning possibilities:
Reflections on unintended pregnancy and school re-entry for girls in sub-Saharan Africa

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About **one-fifth** (19.3%) of adolescent girls in sub-Saharan Africa experience pregnancy

Kassa, Arowojolu, Odukogbe, Yalew (2018)
In sub-Saharan Africa, nearly half (45%) of all pregnancies among girls aged 15-19 are unintended.

Obare, Kabiru, Chandra-Mouli (2018)
Pregnancy spells the end of education for almost all girls

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Ever pregnant (%)</th>
<th>% out of school among ever pregnant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Demographic and Health Surveys
## Education sector policies and practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Relevant Policies</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Re-Entry Regulations</th>
<th>Policy Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Return to School Policy (1994)</td>
<td>Re-entry</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National School Health Policy (2009)</td>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>Re-entry 6 months after childbirth</td>
<td>Established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>MOEVT Readmission Policy (1993)</td>
<td>Re-entry</td>
<td>12-month suspension, re-entry into next academic year</td>
<td>Revised Re-entry Guidelines in Draft Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>No official policy</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Draft Re-entry Guidelines</td>
<td>Re-entry</td>
<td>Re-entry after 6-12 month suspension</td>
<td>Yet to be approved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>No official policy</td>
<td>Suspension</td>
<td>Left to the discretion of Head Teacher</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Draft National School Health Policy</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>MOE Re-entry Policy (1997)</td>
<td>Re-entry</td>
<td>Re-entry after 12-month leave of absence</td>
<td>Established</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Birungi, Undie, MacKenzie, Katahoire, Obare, Machawira (2015)
Barriers to school re-entry

Lack of support
- Policy-level
- School-level
- Community-level
- Parent-level

Lack of policy awareness

School-based stigma

Child care & school expenses

Photo by SDE Kenya

Undie et al. (2015); Undie, Birungi, Odwe, Obare (2015); Undie, Birungi (2016)
Dreams and determination
Homa Bay County, Kenya
Out-of-school girls ages 13-19 who left school due to pregnancy

91% (n=427) would like to go back to school someday

76% (n=427) intend to go back to school someday

Undie, Birungi, Odwe, Obare (2015)
How lockdowns have changed the face of schooling in SSA

- Home-based, radio-based
- Homework packages
- Virtual learning
- Community-based learning
- Mapping of learners
- Etc.

Photo by Uwezo Kenya
What opportunities does the pandemic present for school re-entry?

- Schooling ‘without school walls’ in the time of COVID-19: How it changes things:
  - Support issues
    - School
    - Community
    - Parent
  - School-based stigma
  - Child care & School expenses
Seizing the opportunities presented by COVID

- Influencing
  - government learner mapping exercises
  - government-led learning programs
  - program monitoring and documentation

- Preparing for transitions: school re-entry post-COVID
Worth a thousand words
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