

INFLUENCE OF THE 2016 NATIONAL GUIDELINE FOR THE PROVISION OF ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH FRIENDLY SERVICES IN REDUCING TEENAGE PREGNANCY IN SIAYA COUNTY

Literature Review.

Teenage pregnancy, defined as pregnancy in girls between the ages of 13 - 19 years continues to be a challenge in Siaya county and even in Kenya. Over the years, there has been a raft of measures and interventions intended at reducing teenage pregnancy in Kenya by the national government, county governments and also by partners both at national and sub-national level. One of the most notable measures was the coming to life of the National Guidelines for Provision of Adolescent and Youth Friendly Services in Kenya, 2016. This was an attempt at addressing among other reproductive needs, the issue of teenage pregnancy by aligning adolescent reproductive health service provision in Kenya to international standards.

One of the objectives of the National Guidelines for Provision of Adolescent and Youth Friendly Services in Kenya, 2016 was to standardize the provision of quality AYSRH Services at all levels by ensuring reproductive health service provision for adolescents and youth are equitable; accessible; acceptable; appropriate and effective as outlined in WHO et al. (2019). This would then, among other things, translate to a reduction in teenage pregnancies. A study in Western Kenya by Wafula et al. (2022) investigating the availability and readiness of health facilities to deliver sexual and reproductive health services for young people found that only a small proportion of healthcare personnel providing SRH to young people have actually received training on the same. This would make the guidelines less effective as a significant proportion of healthcare providers lack skills to handle young people. The results of this study may not however mirror the true picture in Siaya county because it was conducted in the larger Western Kenya.

The second objective of the National Guidelines for Provision of Adolescent and Youth Friendly Services in Kenya, 2016 - defining the essential package of health services to be provided to

adolescents and youth at service delivery points; Ochieng' et al. (2022) investigating availability and readiness of health facilities to deliver sexual and reproductive health services for young people in Western Kenya, including Siaya county, it was established that only a quarter (26%) of the total personnel surveyed were trained on youth-friendly services; up to 17% of the health facilities did not provide information on SRHR services and this means that young people are not aware of the available services. The same report also found that almost half (47.83%) of the health facilities surveyed had no plan of conducting outreach for young people, which is an important ingredient in getting services to the most vulnerable teenagers according to Denno, Hoopes, and Chandra-Mouli (2015). There is therefore potentially a chance that some youth are aware of the available services because of these gaps. Additionally, the result of this investigation was a generalization of the larger Western Kenya and not Siaya county specifically, consequently, it is not possible to get a clear picture of the influence that the National Guideline for provision of adolescent and youth friendly services, 2016 has had in Siaya county from this investigation.

The other key objective of the National Guidelines for Provision of Adolescent and Youth Friendly Services in Kenya, 2016 - increasing access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and services among adolescents and youth, appears to have been achieved; Tshombe et al. (2020) while investigating Utilization of adolescent reproductive health services in Bondo sub-county, Siaya county found that majority of teenagers have received information on Reproductive health in their schools thus implying that teenagers are aware of sexual and reproductive health information. This finding does not however necessarily apply to the entire Siaya county as it was limited to only one sub-county in Siaya, Bondo sub-county.

Despite the positive progress reported by various studies, KDHS(2022) indicated that 20.9% of girls between 15 - 19 years had begun child bearing in Siaya county. This is an increase from a figure of 17.2% that was reported in KDHS(2014). This increase in the proportion of teenagers who have begun child bearing thus implies that the National Guidelines for Provision of Adolescent and Youth Friendly Services in Kenya, 2016 was not effective in curbing teenage pregnancy in Siaya county. However, it should be noted that this statistic did not include the entire age bracket that defines teenagers, 13 - 19 years old. As such, it cannot therefore be concluded whether or not the National Guidelines for Provision of Adolescent and Youth Friendly Services in Kenya, 2016 was effective with regard to Siaya county.

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