



A Study on Linkage between Pregnancy and School Dropout in Uganda

Study Report

By

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents	iii
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background and Context	1
1.2 Conceptual Framework Guiding our Study	2
1.3 Research Objectives	3
2.0 METHODS AND PROCEDURES	4
2.1 Design and Study Area.....	4
2.2 Study Population	4
2.3 Sample Size and Sample selection for Quantitative Survey	4
2.4 Data Collection Methods.....	5
2.4.1 Desk review and Policy Analysis	5
2.4.2 Survey of Girls ages 14-18 years.....	5
2.4.3 Qualitative Data.....	5
2.5 Data Management and Analysis.....	6
2.6 Quality Control	6
2.7 Ethical Consideration.....	6
3.0 RESULTS	7
3.1 Sample Socio-Demographic Characteristics	7
3.2 School Dropout and Pregnancy	9
3.2.1 Girls' Stated Reasons for Dropping Out.....	9
3.1.2 Determinants of Schoolgirl Pregnancy	14
3.1.3 Schoolgirl Pregnancy: Offenders.....	17
3.1.4 Use of contraceptives among young girls.....	18
3.1.5 Predictors of pregnancy related dropouts	18
3.2 Enrolment and Completion Rates of girls in sampled districts	23
3.3 Gender Norms and Expectations and School Dropout.....	24
3.4 Gender Norms and Retention of pregnant girls in school.....	26
3.5 Barriers of school re-entry to after childbirth	27
3.6 Current school practice in relation to pregnant girls	29
3.7 Initiatives to support the school re-entry.....	30
3.8 The Pader Girls' Academy.....	31
3.8.2 Vocational Training.....	32
3.8.3 Formal Secondary Schooling.....	32

4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	33
4.1 Conclusion	33
4.2 Policy recommendations as per major findings	35
References	40
Appendix A1.....	42
Appendix A2.....	44

Table 1: Study Districts.....	4
Table 3: Sample characteristics	8
Table 4: Main reasons for school dropout and associated details	13
Table 5: Key drivers and circumstances of school girls' engagement in sex.....	17
Table 6: Attributes of households and dropouts during the year of dropout.....	21
Table 7: Differentials dropouts during the year of dropout at primary and secondary levels.....	22
Table 8: Percentage share of girls to the 2014 total enrolment in the sampled districts	23
Table 9: Community expectations of girls who fall pregnant at school.....	26

Figure 1: Relationships to be examined by quantitative research:	2
Figure 2: Relationship to be examined by qualitative research.....	3
Figure 3: Main reasons reported by the girls who dropped out of school between 2013 and 2015.....	9
Figure 4: Percentage of girls who ever got pregnant at school and % of dropouts.....	10
Figure 5: Key drivers and circumstances of school girls' engagement in sex	14
Figure 6: What happened after she got pregnant?	27
Figure 7: Reasons for not returning to school after child birth of the 488 girls who dropped out of school due to pregnancy related reasons	28
Figure 8: Reasons why girls should not return to school after pregnancy	28

Abbreviations

ASRH	Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health
BTVET	Business, technical, Vocational Education
CDOs	Community Development Officers
CPR	Contraceptive Prevalence Rate
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EMIS	Education Management Information system
ESSAPR	Education and Sports Sector Annual Performance Report
GEM	Girls Education Movement
FAWEU	Forum for African Women Educationalists Uganda
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ICF	Inner City Fund
IDI	In-depth Interview
IEC	Information Education and Communication
IPs	Implementing Partners
KII	Key Informant Interview
MoESTS	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology & Sports
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoLG	Ministry of Local Government
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
PEARL	Programme for Enhancing Adolescent Reproductive Life
PIASY	Presidential Initiative on Aids Strategy for Communication to the Youth
PTA	Parents teachers Associations
PSU	Primary Sampling Unit
UBOS	Uganda bureau of Statistics
UDHS	Uganda Demographic Household Survey
UK-AID	United Kingdom AID
UNEB	Uganda National Examinations Board
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNJPGE	United Nations Joint Programme on Gender Equality
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USE	Universal Secondary Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings of a study on the linkage between pregnancy and school dropout in Uganda. The study, commissioned by Ministry of Education, Science, Technology & Sports and UNICEF builds on previous studies that have been conducted on schoolgirl pregnancy and drop-out among school age girls in Uganda.

Methods

The study employed a mixed methods approach. Data was collected in 13 districts (namely, Amuru, Buliisa, Busia, Buyende, Dokolo, Kasese Kibaale, Kiboga, Nakapiripirit, Nebbi, Rakai and Zombo), between July and August 2015. For the quantitative component of the study, a school-linked sample of 2,147 girls, aged 14-18 years, and who dropped out of school in 2013, 2014 or 2015 were interviewed. In each of the 13 districts, at least 13 schools (8 primary and 5 secondary schools) were selected at random and girls who dropped out of school in 2013, 2014 and 2015 listed. For the qualitative component, 26 in-depth interviews (IDIs) with girls who had dropped out of school due to pregnancy, 26 key informant interviews (KIIs) with selected stakeholders at the district including the District Education officers (DEOs) and head-teachers, and 26 focus groups with community members were conducted.

Results

Respondent characteristics: The study was conducted among 2,147 girls selected using records from 173 schools in the 13 districts. More than three-quarters (76%) girls interviewed had dropped out of school before transitioning to secondary school out. Further, 54% reported to have ever had sex, of which 53% (i.e. 28% of all girls interviewed) initiated sex while still at school. Of the girls who dropped out due to pregnancy related reasons, only 28% are currently living with the men that made them pregnant (18% married and 10% cohabiting).

Girls' Stated Reasons for Dropping Out

About 43% of girls stated that economic factors (either “financial reasons” or “parents stopped paying fees”) were the primary reason they had to drop out of school. Pregnancy is the second highest single response given, with 22% of girls indicating this was the main reason they left school. The proportion of girls reporting school dropout due to pregnancy is higher in rural areas compared to urban areas (24% vs. 17%). Poor academic performance, as another reason for dropping out of school, was reported by 9% of the girls. Poor academic performance was strongly associated with a girl’s likelihood of becoming pregnant while enrolled in school, dropping out of school if she becomes pregnant, and not returning to school following a pregnancy-related dropout. Other reasons included illness (cited by 10%) and early marriages (cited by 4%).

Pregnancy and school dropout

School girl pregnancy was due to early initiation of sex and sexual coercion. Of the 28% girls who were sexually active while still at school, 78% got pregnant and dropped out. About 56% of these dropouts are still at their parents or caregivers’ homes and only 28% are married or cohabiting.

Factors that drive early sexual initiation include: need to satisfy material needs among girls from poor households (38%); lack of interest in education (15%) and interest in having own family (4%); lack of life skills and limited exposure to comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) (4%), low self-esteem (7%) and parental/caregiver neglect of providing guidance and support; peer pressure and sexual exploration (33%); and other hardships such as long distances to school and family breakdowns. Unfortunately, access and use of modern contraceptives use were as low as 36% among sexually active girls, and thus had a limited effect on school girls' vulnerability to pregnancy.

Our data also reflect the complexity of the relationship between pregnancy and dropout, and indicate that pregnancy is nearly as likely to be a cause as a consequence of dropout. School girl pregnancy is also strongly associated with several factors that influence school dropout for girls regardless of their pregnancy status. Such factors included household poverty, poor academic performance and lack of interest in academics by the girls (e.g. due to doubts of succeeding at school and achieving economic returns etc.). Adjusting for these factors through a simple linear decomposition model showed that only 10.8% of dropout would be attributable to teenage pregnancy. Unfortunately, poverty as a factor is pervasive and its effects cannot be fully corrected for in any decomposition model to generate a firm conclusion.

Further, data from the national Education Management Information System (EMIS) 2014 and Education and Sports Sector Annual Performance Report (ESSAPR) 2013/14 showed an absolute difference of 6% between the completion rate of the boys and girls (64% vs. 58%). Some of this difference could be explained by teenage pregnancy. *Unfortunately, for those girls who become pregnant while in school, dropout is nearly universal, and reflects the lack of a specific retention or re-entry policy in Uganda for pregnant schoolgirls.*

In general, factors such as household level poverty, poor academic performance, long distances to school and illness also affect the school dropout of the boys. However, the direct link of these factors to early sex and pregnancy make their influence stronger among the girls than the boys. Thus, to reduce their overall influence, strategies aimed at (a) stopping early initiation of sex, (b) stopping pregnancy, and (c) supporting young mothers to continue school are necessary.

Unfortunately, strategies for curbing early sex and pregnancy are not in place or are poorly implemented in schools and communities. For example, many of the girls interviewed had limited access to sexuality education, sexual reproductive health services and career guidance. In addition, many of the men who impregnated them were not punished. Further, there is no policy on school re-enrolment.

Gender norms and expectations and school dropout

The findings also highlight the role of gendered beliefs and expectations in determining girls' dropout: a heavy domestic burden alongside girls' and their parents' beliefs about the roles and expectations for girls, as compared to boys, profoundly constrain girls' education. For example, 66% of the girls cited doing substantial household chores, which affected regular school attendance in the

year they dropped out of school. Limitations due to household chores were significantly associated with dropout due to pregnancy ($p<0.05$). Similarly, parents, for the most part, insisted they supported and valued education equally for daughters and sons, yet also explained that girls, unfortunately, “as girls” had a higher domestic burden that sometimes interfered with their schooling. The higher domestic burden for girls reflects the belief and expectation that girls should be prepared in anticipation of their reproductive and care roles as good wives in the future.

In addition, traditional and religious practices, financial pressures and low gender equality often support norms of early marriage. Girls are seen as sources of wealth. In the current study early marriage contributed to 4% of the dropouts.

Further, in some communities, especially in the rural areas, women tend to depend on men since the men have more control over economic resources, and thus many young girls have been socialized in a way that make them believe that men or boys are the providers. Further, social approvals for beauty create more material needs for adolescent girls than boys. Thus, some girls from poor households are tempted to engage in sex to satisfy these needs and attain social approvals. This often leads to pregnancy and school dropout.

The study findings also support the hypothesis that gendered social norms and belief systems play a key role in pregnant girls staying at school or young mothers re-enrolling at school. Pregnancy and childbirth outside marriage, when the adolescent girl is living with her parents is still surrounded by social stigma. In the current study, only 8% of pregnant girls and young mothers returned to formal schooling. Reasons for not returning to school after childbirth included fear for judgments from the society (31%) and stigma and teasing from other pupils at the school.

In summary, girls are faced with early marriages, substantial household chores and high material needs in order to attain perceived social approvals for beauty. The higher domestic burden for girls reflects the belief and expectation that girls should be prepared in anticipation of their reproductive and care roles as good wives in the future. The social stigmatization of pregnancy and childbirth outside marriage force pregnant girls and young mothers abandon formal schooling. Consequently, some girls (28%) chose/forced to get married and other stay home (59%).

Best practices at school

There were no schools with best practices with exception that some schools help the parents to track down the men responsible for the pregnancy. In addition, all schools allow the girls who became pregnant while in Primary 7 or Senior 4 to return to school to sit for national examinations from Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEBC).

Conclusion: Overall, this study shows that pregnancy is associated with various other factors that would have otherwise led to school dropout of some girls even if they did not get pregnant. The findings highlight the challenges girls face and how they are related to early sex initiation, pregnancies and dropout from school. It underscores the need for more investments in girls' education in Uganda, especially in rural based schools.

Recommendations

The findings above raise several implications for policy and programming, summarized in the table below:

Key finding	Recommendation	Key aspects
No activities or strategies at school and in the communities aimed at curbing early initiation of sex and pregnancies	Implement an ASRH policy that also includes career guidance and professional counselling especially to young girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The policy should clarify the legal and policy framework of sexuality education and access to sexual reproductive services; should lead to massive scale-up of sexual and reproductive health information; and ensure services are available and provided by adolescent-friendly health workers. - The teachers should be trained to integrate career guidance and mentorship for young girls; and gender issues in their communications.
	Mobilize communities and individuals for social and behaviour change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Train teachers and community coaches to promote ASRH services through community dialogue and sensitization to counter socio-cultural resistance - Engage with local and religious leaders at the lower community levels through sensitization meetings - Strengthen peer-to-peer education where young girls who ever got pregnant while at school act as champions (and community coaches) of school re-entry; and sensitization of other girls - Men and boys should be targeted for sensitization about gender roles and equality, and the reduction of household chore burden on the girl child
	Support girl education and empowerment programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and ensure implementation of guidelines that assure gender responsive school environment - Promote programs that teach young girls life skills including mentorship and career guidance classes - Recruit female teachers as school coaches for young girls - MoESTS should ensure that no school should make the contribution of fees toward school specific projects

Key finding	Recommendation	Key aspects
		<p>compulsory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MoESTS should provide all scholastic materials as part of UPE and USE
No activities or strategies at school and in the communities aimed at supporting school going teens who get pregnant	Strengthening legal provisions, enforcement and awareness of child abuses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote inter-sectoral coordination and integrated approaches including enacting the district level ordinances and strict punishment of the child abuse perpetrators (pregnancies, early marriage, etc.) through coordination with other ministries, community development offices, police and justice system - Men and boys should be targeted for sensitization about gender roles and equality, and the reduction of household chore burden on the girl child
Pregnant girls are expelled from school and almost all do not re-enroll except when in P7 or S4. No school re-entry policy by the ministry	Develop a policy on pregnancy in schools and re-entry after pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The policy should provide a gender responsive/friendly school environment for the retention of pregnant girls or re-entry of the young mothers - In some schools in rural and semi-urban areas, provide daycare services for the children of teenage mothers i.e. schools should provide some basic child care services where babies can stay as their mothers study - Coordination of affirmative action by all ministries that deliver youth related services such as Ministry of Health (MoH0, Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development (MGLSD) - Support schools to form school clubs for nursing mothers/safe and friendly networks for psychosocial support of young mothers
No socio-economic support given to young mothers	Skill the young mothers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give priority to young mothers and support (including basic child care services) them at Business Technical Vocation Education and Training (BTJET) institutions - Support some schools to implement the Pader Academy Strategy for pregnant girls and young mothers

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

According to the Education and Sports Sector Annual Performance Report 2013/2014 (ESSAPR, 2014), school completion rates for primary and secondary school are 67% and 40%, respectively. In both primary and secondary schools, the completion rates of boys are higher than those for girls. In addition to factors that influence boys' dropout, teenage pregnancy has been identified as one of the major causes of girls' dropout (Ahikire & Madanda, 2011; Kyomuhendo-Bantebya, Muhanguzi, & Watson, 2014; Mbabazi-Mpyangu, Ochen, Olowo, & Lubaale, 2014; Stoebenau, Warner, Edmeades, & Sexton, 2015). In a survey by Ahikire & Madanda (2011), 34% of teachers and 65% of the students cited pregnancy as the main cause for high school dropout rates. More generally, teenage pregnancy in Uganda is as high as 24% according to the 2011 Uganda Demographic Health survey (UBOS and ICF Inc, 2012).

However, evidence from other Sub-Saharan African settings suggests that the relationship between pregnancy and school dropout is not straight forward. In some incidences, pregnancy is chosen as an alternative by girls who want to drop out of school. For example, a study in Kenya noted that many girls perceive early marriage as an escape from family poverty and getting pregnant is one of the ways to get married (Njau and Wamahiu, 1998). Other studies have observed that there are some specific characteristics of girls who drop out due to pregnancy: girls with poor school performance, girls from households with low economic status and family with migratory life style (Dunne Leach, 2005).

School careers of many girls are cut short because of pregnancy either by the girls withdrawing themselves from school or through expulsion from the education system with little or no chance of re-entry after delivery (FAWE 1994). Self-withdrawal from school is greatly influenced by societal norms. Pre-marital pregnancy among girls is stigmatized both in school and in most African communities mainly on moralistic grounds, without addressing factors that lead to pregnancy among school girls. Whereas, in Uganda, there is no legal or policy position that prohibits pregnant girls or young mothers from continuing with their education, the practice is that most girls who become pregnant at school are expelled. Re-entry to school after birth also remains a salient issue in Uganda unlike in Ghana, Zambia, Botswana and South Africa that have policies in place to ensure re-entry of the girls. Nonetheless, these countries have achieved varying levels of successes.

In Uganda, there is still inadequate information on the correlation between pregnancy and school dropout. Most of the studies that have been done have only provided some indication of the extent and magnitude of both school dropout and adolescent pregnancy but the direct relationship between pregnancy and dropout, and associated factors is not well understood. The current study aimed to fill some of these gaps and also to inform the development of the school re-entry policy.

1.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK GUIDING OUR STUDY

This study builds on previous studies that have been conducted on pregnancy and dropout among school girls in Uganda (Ahikire & Madanda, 2011; Grant & Hallman, 2008; Kyomuhendo-Bantebya, et al., 2014). Although, these studies have paid attention to the prevalence and correlation between teenage pregnancy and school girl dropout, they did not focus on the linkage between pregnancy and school dropout in Uganda, including the factors associated with school girl pregnancy. As illustrated in Figure 1, prior research in Sub-Saharan Africa has demonstrated that certain factors may jointly influence school dropout and pregnancy. This study aimed at estimating the extent to which pregnancy is a direct cause of dropout and also in assessing the influence of various socio-economic and cultural determinants on dropout due to pregnancy.

Evidence suggests that gender norms– social expectations of appropriate roles and behaviors for men, women, boys, and girls – directly influence family planning and sexual and reproductive health including unintended pregnancy and parenting practices (Barker 2005, Courtenay 2005, Marston and King 2006, IGWG 2011). For example, if social norms prescribe that a woman's primary role in a household and community is a wife and mother, she and her parents/community members may not attach much value her education beyond a certain point. Gender social norms and expectations regarding the girl's future fertility and reproductive intentions potentially influence their schooling experiences and expectations (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Relationships to be examined by quantitative research:

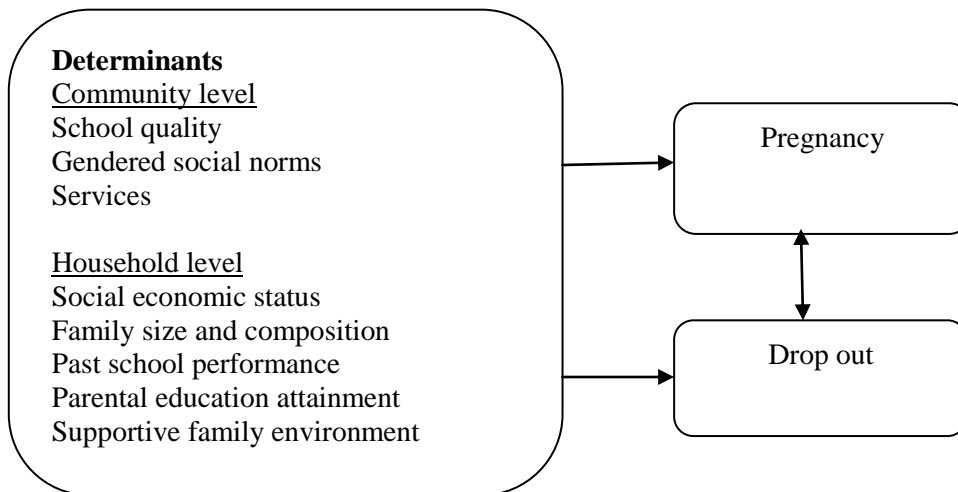
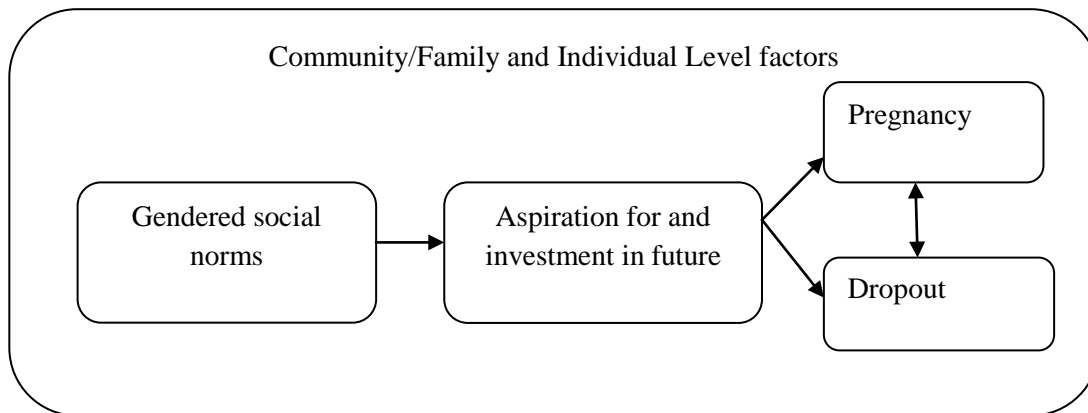


Figure 2: Relationship to be examined by qualitative research



1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study documented the magnitude of dropout due to pregnancy for school-age girls by establishing the linkage between pregnancy and school dropout. The overall objective was to establish the linkage between pregnancy and school girl dropout in Uganda. The specific objectives of the study were to:

- a. Determine the percentage of school dropouts that are due to pregnancy among girls of reproductive age
- b. Identify the gendered social norms and expectations related to reproduction and family formation that influence girls' school enrollment, retention and completion
- c. Document good practices that exist in schools when cases of pregnancy are reported
- d. Generate practical recommendations based on concrete data for development of the re-entry policy

2.0 METHODS AND PROCEDURES

2.1 Design and Study Area

The study used a mixed method approach. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected and analyzed. Due to financial and time constraints, data were collected from 13 districts out of the 20 districts proposed by the Ministry of Education Science, Technology and Sports (MoESTS). Two districts were randomly selected from each sub-region with exception of the North East sub-region where only Nakapiripirit district was selected (Table 1).

Table 1: Study Districts

Sub-region	Target Districts	Sampled districts
Central	Kiboga, Nakasongola, Rakai	Kiboga and Rakai
Northern	Kitgum, Amuru and Dokolo	Amuru and Dokolo
West Nile	Zombo, Nebbi, Yumbe	Zombo and Nebbi
North East	Kaboong, Nakapiripiriti	Nakapiripiriti
Eastern	Buyende, Busia, Palliisa	Buyende and Busia
South Western	Kanugu, Kasese, Kisoro	Kasese and Kisoro
Western	Kiryandongo, Buliisa, Kibaale	Buliisa and Kibaale

2.2 Study Population

The study targeted girls aged 14 to 18 years who had dropped out of school between 2013 and 2015, and (b) key stakeholders including school teachers and education officers at the district, and (c) adult community members. In this study, a school dropout is defined as a student or pupil who has not yet returned to any formal primary or secondary school to study for at least one year.

2.3 Sample Size and Sample selection for Quantitative Survey

A total of 2,275 dropouts; 175 from each of the 13 districts were targeted for structured interviews in school-linked survey. The sample was drawn through a three-stage cluster random sample stratified on 173 schools (104 Primary and 69 Secondary schools) in the 13 districts. The allocation ratio of the number of primary and secondary schools was based on UDHS 2011 data that showed that of all girls aged 14-17 years, 60% were in primary school. The sample size allocations were aimed at assuring a maximum of 10.5% relative standard error precision for district level estimates and a maximum of 5% relative standard error precision for the separate estimates of indicators and other parameters for the dropouts at the primary and secondary school levels.

In the first stage, 13 districts out of the 20 (at least one from each sub-region/stratum) were selected at random. At the second stage, 13 schools (8 primary and 5 secondary schools) were selected at random according to their population size (2015 enrolments) from each of the selected districts. Within a selected school, a list of girls who dropped out of school in 2013, 2014 and 2015 was generated with the help of the school teachers. From each list a random sample of 18 girls was selected. With the help of the teachers and local leaders, these girls were traced in the communities.

A total of 2,147 dropouts were interviewed; representing a response rate of 94 percent. The study achieved at least 85% response rate in the quantitative survey in all 13 districts except in Rakai¹. Details of the sample size determination and sampling procedure are provided in Annex A1.

2.4 Data Collection Methods

2.4.1 Desk review and Policy Analysis

The FAWEU study team, in collaboration with the MoESTS, identified and read pertinent documents on teenage pregnancy and school dropout- relevant to the Uganda context. Some of the documents reviewed are listed in Table A2 in Appendix A2.

2.4.2 Survey of Girls ages 14-18 years

Quantitative data was collected from a random sample of girls between the ages of 14-18 years using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire elicited information on their-demographic characteristics, schooling trajectories before and after girls become pregnant, previous or current pregnancies that the respondent has experienced etc. Data were collected on whether the respondent dropped out of school because of her pregnancy, and whether she was able to return to school elsewhere or plans to return to school.

2.4.3 Qualitative Data²

For the qualitative component, we conducted 26 in-depth interviews (IDIs) who had dropped out of school due to pregnancy to gain a better understanding of the individual experience of girls' dropout and schooling. In addition, we conducted 26 key informant interviews (KIIs) with selected stakeholders at the district including the District Education officers (DEOs) and head-teachers to capture school-level influences of dropout. Finally, 26 FGDs were conducted in each district with community members 18-49 years, to gain: (i) an in-depth understanding of girls' experiences and challenges around school, relationships with boys/men, their friends and their families, (ii) an understanding of community perceptions about the continuity and change in gendered social norms around education, marriage and family formation for girls as compared to boys.

¹ Anecdotal evidence indicate that most of school dropouts in Rakai move to Kampala, Masaka and Mbarara towns to work as house helps and were not easy to trace.

² Two In-depth Interviews, 2 KIIs and 2 FGDs were conducted in each district.

2.5 Data Management and Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed based on the study objectives:

- The qualitative data analyses were guided by the ‘framework approach’.³ All audio-recording of interviews and focus groups were translated into English. All transcripts were coded (both descriptively and analytically) using NVivo QSR, qualitative text analysis software. Transcripts were independently reviewed and coded and emergent themes discussed by the research team. Thematic and content analysis approaches as described by Berg (2004) and Ulin, Robinson, and Tolley (2004) were used for the analysis of data.
- Quantitative data were captured onto hand-held computers/phones and later downloaded to STATA v12 for analysis. Various reasons for dropout were summarized through cross-tabulations. The Chi-square test with Scott correction for sample survey design (clustering on schools and stratification on region) was used to explore for univariate associations.

2.6 Quality Control

The following measures were adopted for ensuring quality of data.

- All the data collection tools were pre-tested prior to the data collection exercise.
- Data was collected by a team of qualified and experienced field data collectors. The data collectors were trained in study methodology and the specifications of the data collection instruments for this study.
- Data collection tools were programmed into a handheld computer and used to check incompleteness, illogical entries, and inconsistent entries in the data. At the end of each day, the survey team met to review the data and develop action plans for community challenges

2.7 Ethical Consideration

The study team ensured that study participants are provided with informed consent and that all interviews are conducted on a voluntary basis. The information provided as part of these interviews and discussions was anonymized.

³Pope C, Ziebland S, Mays M: Analyzing qualitative data. In Qualitative research in health care.3rd edition.Edited by Pope CM. Maiden (USA), Oxford (UK) and Carlton (Australia): Blackwell Publishing; 2006.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Sample Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Of the 2,147 dropouts that were interviewed, 27% had dropped out of school in 2015 (i.e. have not returned to school since late 2014 or early 2015) and 34% had dropped out in 2013. Seventy-six (76%) percent of the girls interviewed reported Primary 7 as the highest level of education attained.

Further, 54% of the girls reported to have ever had sex, of which 53% (i.e. 28% of all girls interviewed) initiated sex while still at school (Table 3). The rate of 54% is higher than the national average of 45% of teenage girls (UBOS & ICF, 2012). Of the girls who dropped out due to pregnancy related reasons, only 28% are currently living with the men that made them pregnant (18% married and 10% cohabiting). Only 13% of the girls had mothers with secondary school education. Many girls (65%) started school when they were at least 7 years. About ten percent (10%) of the girls who dropped out of formal schooling were currently enrolled in a vocational training school.

Note: There were some NGOs in some communities such as Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) who were supporting young mothers in vocational training.

Table 2: Sample characteristics

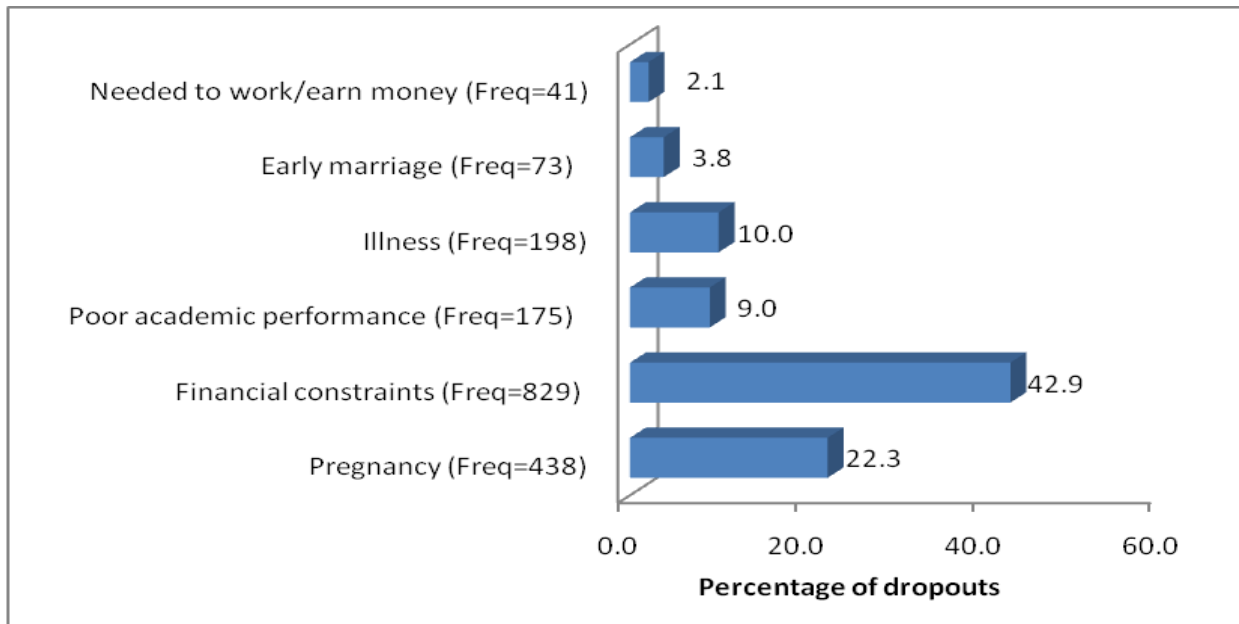
Characteristic	N	Percent
Year of dropping out		
2013	659	34.4
2014	746	39.0
2015	510	26.6
Current Age		
14	267	12.5
15	384	18.0
16	511	24.0
17	447	21.0
18	521	24.5
Age at dropout		
13-14	54	32.7
15-16	503	51.5
17-18	304	15.9
Highest education level attained by the girl		
P1-3	175	8.2
P4-5	676	31.7
P6-7	774	36.3
S1-2	309	14.5
S3-4	196	9.2
Currently in vocational school	213	10.0
Residence		
Peri-Urban	545	25.4
Rural	1,183	55.1
Urban	419	19.5
Marital status		
Never married	1,654	77.1
Married	208	9.6
Living together	155	7.4
Separated	129	6.0
Mother's education level		
No formal education	24	2.6
Incomplete primary	499	53.5
Completed primary	202	21.7
Secondary & above	121	13.0
Don't know	86	9.2
Age at which the girl enrolled in Primary One		
5-6	762	35.7
7-8	874	40.9
9+	499	23.4
Age at first sexual encounter		
Never had sex	991	46.2
10-14'	441	20.5
15-18'	715	33.3

3.2 School Dropout and Pregnancy

3.2.1 Girls' Stated Reasons for Dropping Out

About 43 percent of girls stated that economic factors (either “financial reasons”, ‘lack of money for school fees’ or “parents stopped paying fees”) were the primary reason they had to drop out of school. Pregnancy is the second highest single response given, with 22.3 percent of girls indicating this was the main reason they left school (see Figure 3 and Table 4). Other reasons include poor academic performance (9%), own or caregiver’s illness (10%), early marriage (4%) and need to work/earn an income (2%).

Figure 3: Main reasons reported by the girls who dropped out of school between 2013 and 2015



(a) Economic related reasons

More than 4 in 10 girls cited financial constraints as a reason for dropping out of school. Despite the existence of Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE), parents are still required to buy scholastic materials, cater for lunch for their children while at school, and contribute to some school projects such as renovations, etc. Many households, however, cannot afford to meet some of these indirect schooling costs. Consequently, children may be withdrawn from schools by their caregivers or decide to drop out on their own, as reflected in the voices below:

Lack of money for buying scholastic requirements is our major problem. We are poor, and our children cannot stay at school without meals; girls are more affected. (FGD, Kasese)

We are poor and we struggle alone to pay fees for the children, men in this community do not want to support the children with fees (FGD Women, Buyende)

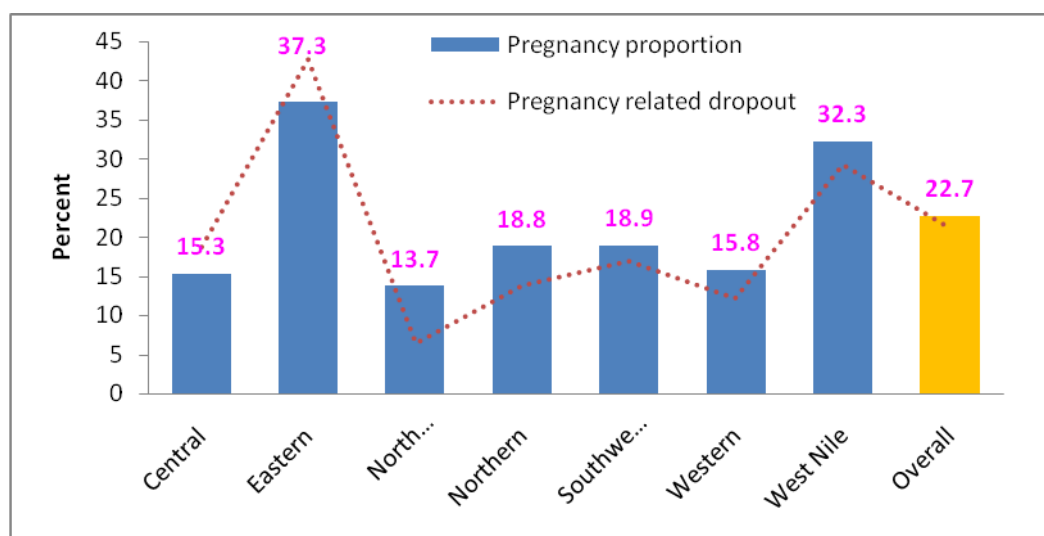
We were many children at home and our parents' being able to provide fees for all of us was not easy. I was not getting anything from them. They were struggling. (IDI with dropout in Amuru).

(b) Pregnancy-related school dropout

Pregnancy is the second highest single response given, with 22.3 percent of girls indicating this was the main reason they left school. There were more dropouts in secondary schools explained by pregnancy than in primary schools (29% vs 19%). Further, the proportion of girls reporting school dropout due to pregnancy is higher in rural areas compared to urban areas (24% vs. 17%). In addition, higher pregnancy-related school dropouts were reported by girls residing in districts in sub-regions where teenage pregnancy rates are comparably high (based on 2011 UDHS data) such as the Eastern and western sub-regions (see Table 4 and Figure 4).

Of the 28% girls (609) who were sexually active while still at school, 80.1% (488) got pregnant. Of this, 97% dropped out of school because of the pregnancy (i.e. 78% got pregnant and drop out of school). About 59% of these dropouts are still at their caregivers' homes and only 28% are married or cohabiting. The dropout was mainly due to self-withdrawal (66%); expulsion by teachers (32%); withdrawal and early marriage or forced marriage (28%); or caregivers' refusal to support the girls further (14%). Of the remaining 3% (15 girls); five (5) got pregnant while in P7 and were allowed to sit for the exams while nine (9) were allowed to continue at school but later on dropped out due to financial constraints and need to work. Further, only 8% of these girls returned after giving birth.

Figure 4: Percentage of girls who ever got pregnant at school and % of dropouts



Qualitative data reveals that, in most cases, if a girl becomes visibly pregnant, she is required by the teachers or caregivers to withdraw. In addition, some young women marry or move into their partner's home following a pregnancy. A few may decide to abort, often with the help of their peers, partners or parents.

Pregnancy is associated with 22% dropouts. However, School girl pregnancy is also strongly associated with several factors that influence school dropout regardless girl's pregnancy status. Such factors included household poverty, poor academic performance and lack of interest in academics by the girls (e.g. due to doubts of succeeding at school and achieving economic returns, focusing on future anticipation of being a good wife, lack of role models in the community, etc.). These are detailed in Section 3.3.5. Adjusting for these factors through a simple linear decomposition model, **shows that only 10.8% of dropout would be attributable to teenage pregnancy.** Unfortunately, poverty as a factor is pervasive and its effects cannot be fully corrected for in any decomposition model to generate a firm conclusion.

Unfortunately, girls rarely return to school following a pregnancy-related dropout. For example, data indicates that only 8% of girls who dropped out of school following a pregnancy and subsequently returned to school. Many of the same household and family characteristics that influence a girl like likelihood of dropping out of school in response to her pregnancy also influence her likelihood to resume schooling.

(c) Poor academic performance

Poor academic performance was reported by 9% of the girls as a reason for dropping out of school. Poor academic performance was strongly associated with a girl's likelihood of becoming pregnant while enrolled in school, dropping out of school if she becomes pregnant, and not returning to school following a pregnancy-related dropout. Poor academic performance is partially explained by domestic demands placed on girls, which sometimes increase school absenteeism.

"Lack of finances means that some girls have only one uniform. Unlike the boys who can put on one uniform throughout the week, girls experience menses and yet at the same time they want to be smart. They are thus forced to stay home and wash their uniforms. In the long run, this periodic absenteeism makes them miss school especially if in their absence some notable concepts are taught."

(d) Illness

Illness as the main reason for school dropout was cited by 10% of the girls but was considerably higher among the girls who dropped out in P1-P3 (17%) than in secondary schools. Majority of illness cases were the disabilities, mostly the poor eye sight.

(e) Other factors

Other factors that account school dropout include early marriages, refusal by caregivers for the girl to continue studying, long distances to school, etc.

- *Early Marriage:* Parents or Caregivers marrying off young girls or young girls choosing to get married explained 3.8% of the dropouts. Similar to pregnancy, this was closely related to household poverty and lack of ability to place value on education by the parents and in some cases the girls themselves. Sometimes, the girls choose to get married early for various reasons including lack of hope at progressing at school or unfavorable environment at home. Early marriages were more common among the girls who are orphans, particularly those without mothers.
- *Refusal of the caregivers to send children to school* was also cited by 3% of the girls as the main reason for dropout. This was most common in settings where the mother did go to school or only attained incomplete primary school education. Such parents are likely incapable of appreciating the value of education.

In summary, 97% of the girls who get pregnant while at school withdraw or are forced out of school by the teachers or the caregivers. Poverty is a pervasive factor that is hindering children retention and completion in schools. The communities have positive perceptions and their practices are favorable to the equality of education between the girls and boys.

Table 3: Main reasons for school dropout and associated details

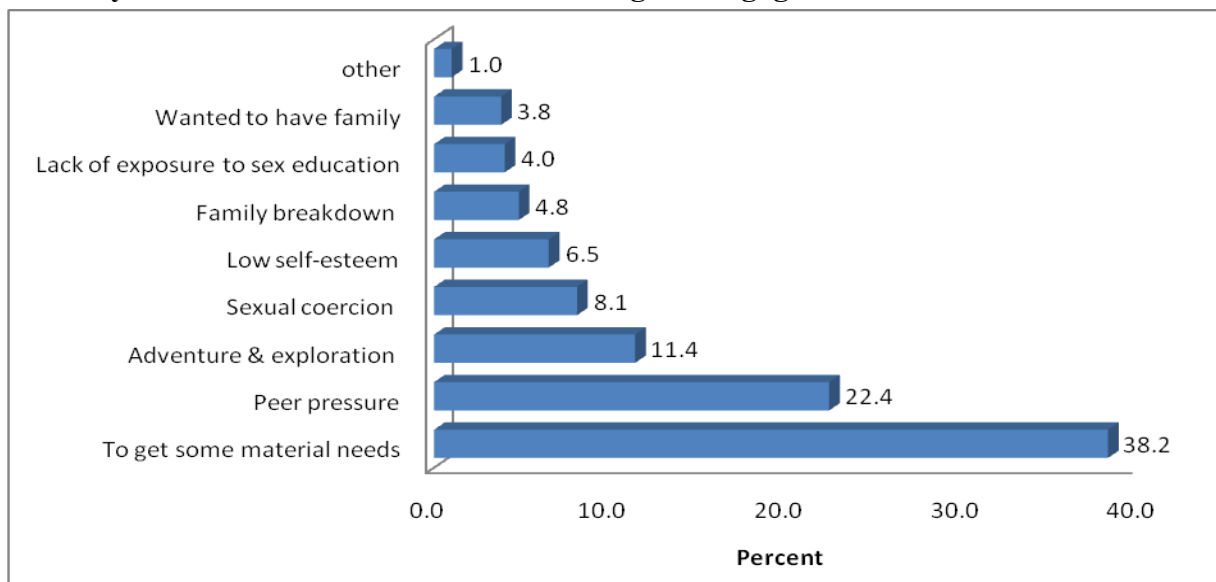
		Main reason for dropout							
		Pregnancy	Financial	Illness	Poor academic	Early	Needed to	Caregivers	Other
District	N	(n = 438)	constraints (n = 829)	(n = 198)	performance (n = 175)	Marriage (n = 73)	work/earn money (n = 41)	did not want (n = 55)	reasons (n = 152)
Central	207	18.8	42.5	10.6	8.7	6.8	1.4	1.4	9.7
Eastern	332	42.8	27.4	8.4	8.1	7.8	0.3	1.5	3.6
North East	156	6.4	75.0	5.1	0.6	0.0	1.9	1.3	9.6
Northern	319	13.8	58.6	12.5	4.7	3.1	0.9	2.8	3.4
Southwestern	320	16.9	27.2	11.3	15.6	5.3	5.3	5.0	13.4
Western	313	12.1	46.0	17.3	8.3	0.0	3.2	3.8	9.3
West Nile	287	29.3	40.1	3.5	13.2	2.1	1.4	2.8	7.7
Age of dropout									
13 – 14	627	14.8	45.8	11.2	11.0	2.4	2.6	3.0	9.3
15 – 16	985	23.2	40.4	10.7	8.5	4.5	1.8	2.8	8.0
17 – 18	304	28.0	45.4	6.6	6.3	4.6	2.0	2.6	4.6
Education level at dropout									
P1-P3	131	4.6	52.7	16.8	6.1	0.8	3.1	3.1	13.0
P4-P5	681	16.7	43.0	11.7	12.2	2.6	2.6	3.7	7.3
P6-P7	647	24.3	43.0	8.8	8.2	4.5	1.7	2.3	7.3
S1-S4	460	29.1	39.6	7.8	6.3	5.2	1.5	2.4	8.0
Biological parents alive									
No	197	22.3	38.6	18.8	5.1	4.1	2.5	2.5	6.1
Yes; Father only	148	21.0	37.2	12.2	7.4	5.4	4.1	4.1	8.8
Yes; Mother only	488	20.1	50.0	12.1	6.4	2.9	1.8	0.8	5.9
Yes; both parents	1,101	21.1	41.2	7.6	11.2	3.9	1.9	3.6	8.9
Total	1,934	22.3	42.9	10.0	9.0	3.8	2.1	2.5	7.5

3.1.2 Determinants of Schoolgirl Pregnancy

School girl pregnancy was closely linked to early sexual initiation and sexual coercion. The 609 girls (28% of all girls interviewed) who reported to have ever had sex while at school were asked about the key reasons or circumstances for their involvement in sex. The main reasons for initiation of early sexual activity reported by the girls were: ‘need to get money or support for material needs’ (38%), ‘peer pressure’ (22%), and ‘adventure and sexual experimentation’ (11%), and ‘sexual coercion’ (8%) (Figure 5). The distributions of these factors were similar among the girls who dropped out in primary and secondary school levels.

- *Material needs and household poverty:* 38% of the girls cited the need to satisfy their material needs as a reason for early sexual initiation. The need for material needs was similar for the girls who dropped out in primary and secondary school (Table 5). Qualitative data indicates that girls are enticed to engage in early sex, with promises of money and other material things. In West Nile, one head-teacher observed: “We are a government school. We lack lunch for the students which mostly affect the girls and end up with men who can cater for their lunch needs and other things.”
- *Peer pressure (e.g. engaging in sexual activities to be accepted/conform):* 22% of the girls reported peer pressure as a reason for engaging in early sex. Pressure to conform was mentioned as very critical.
- *Adventure, sexual experimentation:* 11% of the girls cited the need for ‘sexual adventure and experimentation’ as a reason for involvement in sex. This potentially points to lack of guidance at school and at home about values of education and dangers of early sex.

Figure 5: Key drivers and circumstances of school girls’ engagement in sex



- *Coercive factors:* For some girls (8%), first sex was the result of sexual violence including rape and other forms of coercion by older men (acquaintances, family friends, relatives and teachers). It has been noted by Wagner EA, et al (1998) that most are not equipped to identify situations and risk factors leading to abuse nor provided with the knowledge and resources to seek treatment and prevent recurrence of abuse. Unfortunately, coerced sex is often associated with pregnancy (Janet et al, 1997). It also debases the girl's human dignity and self-esteem and for some it leads to continued engagement in early sex. Low self-esteem was mentioned by 7% of the girls as the main driving for their engagement in early sex (Figure 4).

- *Girls' lack of interest in education:* Girls who have lost interest in education were more likely to engage in early sex than those who had not (46% vs 22%; $p < .05$). Further, as aforementioned, they were more likely to cite adventure and sexual exploration as reasons for engaging in sex. That, is, about 15% of the girls got involved in early sex when they lost interest in education. In other words, for some girls, getting involved in early sex is not necessarily related to poor judgment but rather to a sense of hopelessness about how education could help them to achieve a bright future. In such cases, the choice of short term gratification by receiving gifts from men is not a difficult one. Some of these low aspirations are related to poor education quality, lack of career guidance, lack of role models in the community, peer pressure and poor economic status of the households.

- Some community members in an FGD noted that: "Most teachers in schools here are very much involved in farming rather than teaching during class hours. They teach quickly for few hours and go for farming. This makes children loss interest and to engage in other activities."

- In an in-depth interview, one girl also noted: If I had studied it would have been helpful in my future. But the school curriculum had limitations on my career development. No girl in my class has completed education. It would take long to get a job.

- Closely related to loss of interest in education were the 4% girls (23 girls) who reported interest in having their own family as the reason for getting involved in sex.
- *Long distances to school:* Walking long distances to school makes it easy for girls to be lured into sex by older men or youth. This is particularly important for the girls from poor households. The problem of long distances to school was mainly mentioned by the community members in Buyende, Buliisa and Karamoja districts. One in-depth interviewee noted:

- "It was a problem of school distance being long, I got a man who was helping me; taking me to school, and he was a *boda boda* man. He helped me bambi, he used to find me along the road and give me a ride to school, so that I reach early. Because he

was giving me free lifts I had to pay back which is eventually I did willingly resulting into pregnancy”

-
- Lack of guidance at Home and at School
- Participants pointed to the fact that the majority of parents do not talk to their children, especially girls of issues of sex. Parents are apparently increasingly failing on the responsibility to provide the basic necessities and so the girls who are not strong hearted end up exchanging sex for money. Apparently, parents are not guiding children through the stages of life. Children end up being educated by their peers including those who left school and this hurts girls more as they become vulnerable to sexual abuse and hence premature pregnancy. Most teachers were of the view that the majority of the girls get pregnant during holiday time which indicates neglect and lack of guidance by parents. On the other hand, parents felt they have lost the grip on their children. One parent expressed frustration thus:

There is too much freedom, and at times girls do not listen to their parents. For example in the second term holiday, my daughter told me to give her a break when I advised her to stop running after a boda-boda man (female FGD, Kasese).

-
- In addition, lack of support and guidance from caregivers meant a girl was denied learning certain life skills. Indeed, of the girls who cited peer pressure or sexual exploration as a reason for engaging in sex, 69% reported that none of the caregivers ever checked or asked about their school, and hence offered no support or guidance.

There is also a lacuna noted at school level. There is no clear structure for guidance and counselling, and sex education in schools. In most cases guidance and counselling is done in a haphazard manner, depending on the interests of the head teachers and the senior woman/man teacher. Consequently, such guidance is not able to consistently guide young people, girls in particular in making life choices.

One teacher noted that: *“We are not teaching them well, some do not understand on how to protect themselves and are confused by young men in the community promising them a lot but giving nothing”*

One girl also noted: *‘A man just influenced me and lured me into sleeping with him promising to do a lot for me and my family’*

Table 4: Key drivers and circumstances of school girls' engagement in sex

Factor/circumstance	Level of dropout	
	Primary school	Secondary school level
Number	427	182
Peer pressure	23.0	21.4
Adventure & exploration	11.5	11.5
Sexual coercion	8.7	7.7
Low self-esteem	6.3	7.7
To get some material needs	37.5	37.9
Family breakdown	5.9	3.3
Lack of exposure to sex education	3.5	4.9
Wanted to have own family	3.0	5.5
Other	1.0	0.0

Summary: 28% of school dropouts reported to have ever had sex while still at school. Of these 78% got pregnant and dropped out of school. With exception of direct sexual abuse, the factors that drive girls to engage in early sex are not only due to lack of correct judgment but also due to hard circumstances (poverty and substantial household responsibilities), inadequate life skills and lack of hope of achieving a better future through education. About 44% of the girls potentially engage in early sex unwillingly. Young girls are “forced” into sex due to material needs (38.2%) and sexual coercion (7%).

3.1.3 Schoolgirl Pregnancy: Offenders

Qualitative data revealed that several categories of men are responsible for schoolgirl pregnancy. These include: *boda-boda* men, fellow students, teachers, young boys who drop out of school and other older men in the community especially those with some form of income. Most of these men take advantage of the girls' situations, the lack of life skills or manipulates societal perceptions. One girl observed:

'A man just influenced me and lured me into sleeping with him promising to do a lot for me and my family'

In Buliisa district, the community members and teachers also noted that there are many school boys who have children but unlike girls, they are not expelled from school. The community members also reported that some of these men are known and some are arrested and released. Many caregivers prefer settling the cases of defilements and pregnancies locally rather than reporting to

police. Of the 11 girls who disclosed the men responsible for impregnating them, 1 was a teacher, 1 a boda boda cyclist, 1 fellow student, 4 young out-of-school boys (similar age to the girls), 3 older men in the community.

3.1.4 Use of contraceptives among young girls

Contraceptive use among sexually active girls was low. Of the 609 girls who have ever had sex, only 36% (29% in primary and 50% in secondary school) had ever used contraceptives. Although, this is slightly higher than the Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) of 29% in this age group that was observed during UDHS 2011 (UBOS and ICF Inc, 2012), it is still very low. This CPR was fairly similar between the rural and urban areas. This is potentially an indication that these young girls have not learnt the key life skills including negotiation, assertiveness and effective communication. These skills could allow her to seek for contraceptives or ask the sexual partner to use a condom. The main reasons cited for lack of use included; lack of access or knowledge about the contraceptives (36%); and misconceptions about contraceptives (32%; e.g. contraceptives harmful to young girls; more side effects in young girls, etc.).

3.1.5 Predictors of pregnancy related dropouts

- Our findings reveal several factors associated with pregnancy related drop outs, including residence, academic performance, interest in education, girl's mother's education, perceived parental support among others (see Table 6 and 7). These are discussed in turn below:
 -
 - *Rural residence:* A high proportion of girls dropped out due to pregnancy related reasons in rural areas as compared to urban areas (22% vs 16%; $p < .05$). Possible reasons for this include: low economic status of the households in the rural areas; long distances walked by girls to home and hence getting tempted by men along the way home; few educated women who act as role models in rural areas; and little exposure to issues of sexuality as compared to the urban counterparts. In urban areas, children have more exposure to information and therefore are more educated in issues of sexuality.
 - *Poor academic performance:* There were higher pregnancy related dropouts among the girls with poor academic performance (27%) as compared to those girls performing well at school (16%) ($p < 0.05$). Essentially, the girls are making logical assessments of their future and possibly perceive that education is not working out well for them and hence perceive their chances at long-term economic success due to education as being sufficiently low. Thus, they might be less careful in avoiding pregnancy. The influence of poor performance on drop out is almost twice among the girls in secondary as compared to the primary schools.
 -
 - *Girls' lack of interest in education:* Overall, of the 438 girls who dropout out of school due to pregnancy related reasons, 390 (80%) reported an above average academic performance. However, of these 390, 51% reported either little value placed on education or a high interest

in settling in their own families. There were higher pregnancy related dropouts among the girls who had placed little value on education (32% vs. 17%; $p < .05$); and girls interested in settling in their own families (24% vs. 16%). The effect of lack of interest in education leading to pregnancy related dropout was higher at the primary school level as compared to secondary school level. The girls who reported substantial household responsibilities were also more likely to lose interest in education than those who were not ($p < 0.05$).

- One dropout in Buliisa district noted the following in an in-depth interview: My friends are all married and they have dropped out of school. One friend advised me to also get pregnant. I got pregnant and my uncle who pays my fees, said I stay home now.

- *Lack of parents or caregivers' support* e.g. by checking on the child's school progress. Girls whose caregivers did not check on their school work were likely to drop out of school due to pregnancy as compared to those whose caregivers checked on their academic work (27% vs. 17%; $p < .05$). In other words, when a parent or caregiver is not involved or interested in her/his child's education there is a greater chance that she might not be interested in her own education. Over time, some of the girls without guidance and support (material, emotional or financial) lose interest in education and some choose pregnancy as a way out of school. This is especially common at primary school level.

- *Girl's mother's education:* High proportion of girls whose mothers lacked formal education or did not complete primary school was likely to drop out due to pregnancy related reasons as compared to the girls whose mothers attended at least the secondary school education ($p < 0.05$). Mothers not only act as role models but also the higher the education level they attain the higher the likelihood that they value their daughters education. Hence, support and guide their daughters through school. The influence of the low level of the mother's education was particularly a limiting factor to retention in secondary school education level (Table 7).

- *Household Social Economic Status:* Girls from poorer households were more likely to engage in early sex, partly to fulfil their material needs, increasing the risk of unwanted pregnancy. This would not be the case if the girls had adequate financial support from their families. Indeed, of the girls who dropped out of school due to pregnancy related reasons, 49% stated that they were very much interested in the education.

One girl who dropped out due to pregnancy noted in the in-depth interview that: "My parents were not interested in my schooling; they could not give me scholastic materials or encourage me when faced with challenges at school; I chose to get pregnant so that I could marry. I did not want to really but I had to." IDI

Overall, the **22%** girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy related reasons are likely to be from poor families, rural areas, lack guidance from their parents or their mothers have low formal education. The aforementioned characteristics reflect the fact that pregnancy is function of both the girls' engaging in sex by poor judgment, forced by circumstances, lack of adequate skills training/support or by lack of hope in attaining a bright future through education. In addition, the foregoing discussion illustrates that the caregivers or parents are more responsible for their daughters' pregnancies during school than the girls themselves.

In general, factors such as household level poverty, poor academic performance, and long distances to school also affect the school dropout of the boys. However, the direct link of these factors to early sex and pregnancy make their influence stronger among the girls than the boys. Thus, to reduce their overall influence, strategies aimed at (a) stopping early initiation of sex, (b) stopping pregnancy, and (c) supporting young mothers to continue school are necessary.

Whereas the community members, teachers and education officials noted the critical impact of pregnancy on girls' education, the strategies for curbing early sex and pregnancy are not in place or are poorly implemented in schools and communities. For example, many of the girls interviewed had limited access to sexuality education, sexual reproductive health services and career guidance. There were also few role models in the community to motivate the girl child's education aspirations. In addition, many of the men who impregnated these girls were not appropriately punished. Some teachers reported parents working secretly with these men for a payoff. Further, there is no policy on school re-enrolment and schools act in the interest of discipline instead of supporting the pregnant girls and young mothers.

Table 5: Attributes of households and dropouts during the year of dropout

Characteristic	Dropout related to pregnancy			X²-value; p-value
	N	Yes (%)	No (%)	
Location				12.56; 0.029
Peri-Urban	510	22.1	77.9	
Rural	1,093	24.7	75.3	
Urban	331	15.7	84.3	
Guardians checked or asked about school				4.27; 0.017
No	1,080	27.4	72.7	
Yes	847	17.1	82.9	
Household have problems paying for basic needs				0.06; 0.829
No	474	23.2	76.8	
Yes	1,453	22.6	77.4	
Financial status of the her household relative to others in the community				6.39; 0.002
Better	156	21.8	78.2	
Same	870	26.5	73.5	
Worse	901	19.2	80.8	
Academic performance				6.18; 0.003
Poor	321	26.5	73.5	
Average	1,099	24.6	75.4	
Well	507	16.3	83.7	
Value she placed on education				22.58; <.001
Much	1,255	17.0	83.0	
Not much	278	32.0	68.0	
Neither	394	33.7	66.3	
Interest in starting her own family				36.49; <.001
Not interested	1,320	16.1	83.9	
Little	456	41.7	58.3	
Much	151	23.8	76.2	
Schooling was limited by household responsibilities				3.92; .022
Not at all	648	19.2	80.8	
A little	660	26.8	73.2	
A lot	619	22.1	77.9	
Mother's education level				2.68; .045
No formal education	715	19.1	80.9	
Incomplete Primary	455	26.2	73.8	
Completed primary	179	30.2	69.8	
Secondary & above	103	18.4	81.6	

Table 6: Differentials dropouts during the year of dropout at primary and secondary levels

Characteristic	Primary school level				Secondary school level			
	Dropout related to pregnancy			X ² -value; p-value	Dropout related to pregnancy			X ² -value; p-value
	N	Yes (%)	No (%)		N	Yes (%)	No (%)	
Location								
Peri-Urban	380	19.7	80.3	3.31; 0.043	130	29.2	70.8	0.89; 0.391
Rural	804	21.5	78.5		289	33.6	66.4	
Urban	290	16.6	83.4		41	17.1	82.9	
Guardians checked or asked about school				26.85; <0.001				0.99; 0.406
No	810	25.6	74.4		270	32.6	67.4	
Yes	657	13.8	86.2		190	28.4	71.6	
Household have problems paying for basic needs				0.13; 0.721				0.99; 0.462
No	349	21.2	78.8		125	28.8	71.2	
Yes	1,118	19.9	80.1		335	31.6	68.4	
Financial status of the her household relative to others in the community				3.067; 0.049				2.98; 0.479
Better	117	18.8	81.2		39	30.8	69.2	
Same	628	23.4	76.6		242	34.7	65.3	
Worse	722	17.6	82.4		179	25.7	74.3	
Academic performance				4.14; 0.018				4.70; 0.020
Poor	279	24.4	75.6		42	40.4	59.6	
Average	828	21.1	78.9		271	35.1	64.9	
Well	360	14.7	85.3		147	20.1	79.9	
Value she placed on education				18.18; <0.001				2.62; 0.088
Much	961	14.2	85.8		294	26.2	73.8	
Neither	210	28.1	71.9		68	43.9	56.1	
Not much	296	34.1	65.9		98	32.4	67.6	
Interest in starting her own family				29.38; <0.001				16.15; <0.01
Not interested	987	13.3	86.7		333	24.3	75.7	
Little	355	37.5	62.5		101	56.4	43.6	
Much	125	25.6	74.4		26	15.4	84.6	
Schooling was limited by household roles				3.52; 0.033				0.52; 0.579
Not at all	513	16.4	83.6		135	29.9	70.1	
A little	499	24	76		161	35.4	64.6	
A lot	455	20.2	79.8		164	27.4	72.6	
Mother's education level				2.32; 0.081				2.91; 0.049
No formal education	587	18.4	81.6		128	22.2	77.8	
Incomplete Primary	360	22.8	77.2		95	38.9	61.1	
Completed primary	114	25.4	74.6		65	38.5	61.5	
Secondary & above	58	6.9	93.1		45	33.3	66.7	

3.2 Enrolment and Completion Rates of girls in sampled districts

Overall, the percentage share of girls to total enrolment in both upper and lower primary school was close to 50/50 mark with that of boys in the sampled districts except in Nakapiripiriti, Nebbi and Zombo (Table 8). However, the percentage share of girls to total enrolment in S3 and S4 was still as low as below 40% in 7 districts. In Rakai, however, the percentage share of girls in 2014 enrolments was higher than those of boys.

These statistics are similar to the national statistics for both the primary and secondary schools summarized in ESSAPR 2013/14. However, in many of the sampled districts the completion rate (the ratio of the total number of pupils who successfully complete (or graduate from) the last year of primary school in a given year to the total number of children of official graduation age in the population) was lower for girls compared to the boys. This is potentially due to reasons such as early marriage and teenage pregnancy.

Table 7: Percentage share of girls to the 2014 total enrolment in the sampled districts

District	Percentage of girls to the total enrolment in 2014				Level of primary completion	
	P1-P3	P4-P7	S1-S2	S3-S4	Boys	Girls
Amuru	49.8	46.0	36.7	34.7	86	41
Dokolo	49.9	49.2	43.7	38.3	90	66
Busia	49.7	50.5	45.3	45.4	89	77
Buyende	50.4	51.8	43.6	39.9	72	73
Buliisa	48.3	46.7	35.0	35.1	89	62
Kibaale	49.6	50.6	46.0	46.3	53	50
Kiboga	48.5	51.0	50.4	47.8	52	66
Rakai	50.2	52.2	53.3	54.8	60	70
Kasese	50.3	51.2	49.2	47.2	57	54
Kisoro	50.5	53.0	49.9	49.4	61	66
Nakapiripiriti	44.1	38.5	39.1	38.8	20	24
Nebbi	50.2	44.5	33.0	32.2	61	32
Zombo	48.3	44.1	32.9	33.1	47	27
Total	49.8	49.7	46.3	45.5	64	58

Source: EMIS 2014 database and ESSAPR 2013/2014 report

Many of the schools visited had also made an effort to have a girl child friendly environment including the girl washrooms and “talking compounds” with messages that promote girls’ education such as “*Avoid Early marriage, it blocks your future*”.

The low completion rates of the girls, especially in primary schools, relative to the boys are related to various factors. Notably, 22% dropouts were due to pregnancy and 4% due to early marriage. In the previous sections, factors and reasons relating to initiation of early sex and early marriage were noted. With exception of 8% of the girls who were directly sexually abused (sexual coercion), it was noted that girls get involved in sex while at school due to:

- Need to satisfy material needs (38%)
- Lack of interest in education (15%) and interest in having own family (4%)
- Lack of life skills including lack of exposure to sexuality education (4%); low self-esteem (7%) and parental/caregiver neglect of providing guidance and support
- Peer pressure and sexual exploration (33%)
- Other hardships e.g. long distances to schools and family breakdown

Unfortunately, the rates of modern contraceptives use were low to reduce on the unwanted pregnancies associated with early initiation of sex.

Some of these reasons or factors have underlying gender social norms and some are related to the societal expectations of reproduction and family formation. Many girls are influenced by family and societal expectations, often based on stereotypes of women as underachievers and home makers. These likely cause girls to doubt their chances for academic and career success and hurt their self-esteem and may hinder their motivation and engagement in school especially after pregnancy.

3.3 Gender Norms and Expectations and School Dropout

There is currently a great deal of interest in social norms because of the role that norms can play in underpinning practices that are seen as problematic in some way. The term ‘norm’ or ‘behavioral norm’ can be used simply to mean a common practice, what most people do in a particular context. Gender norms are social norms that relate specifically to gender differences. In this study, we use the term ‘gender norms’ to refer to informal rules and shared social expectations that distinguish expected behavior on the basis of gender. Overall, our findings highlight the role of gendered beliefs and expectations in determining girls’ dropout. These are discussed below.

Substantial household responsibilities of girls relative to boys: a heavy domestic burden alongside girls’ and their parents’ beliefs about the roles and expectations for girls, as compared to boys, profoundly constrain girls’ education. For example, 66% of the girls cited doing substantial household chores, which affected regular school attendance in the year they dropped out of school.

Limitations due to household chores were significantly associated with dropout due to pregnancy ($p < 0.05$). Similarly, parents, for the most part, insisted they supported and valued education equally for daughters and sons, yet also explained that girls, unfortunately, “as girls” had a higher domestic burden that sometimes interfered with their schooling. The higher domestic burden for girls reflects the belief and expectation that girls should be prepared in anticipation of their reproductive and care roles as good wives in the future.

Early marriage: In addition, traditional and religious practices, financial pressures and low gender equality often support norms of early marriage. Girls are seen as sources of wealth. In the current study early marriage contributed to 4% of the dropouts.

Conformity to social approvals: Further, in some communities, especially in the rural areas, women tend to depend on men since the men have more control over economic resources, and thus many young girls have been socialized in a way that make them believe that men or boys are the providers. Further, social approvals for beauty create more material needs for adolescent girls than boys. Thus, some girls from poor households are tempted to engage in sex to satisfy these needs and attain social approvals. This often leads to pregnancy and school dropout.

- Lower aspirations for girls’ future on the part of caregivers also influenced their dropout. Qualitative data also reveals that some parents view girls and their marriageability as an ‘asset’ to be traded at the appropriate time; significantly affecting the resources invested in their education. Sometimes the girls choose to drop out of school or get married early, due to perceived lack of support from their parents.

I felt so disappointed with my parents for not supporting me while at school, not buying requirements. I got pregnant and married ...not willingly but just because of that.

The lower aspirations for girls’ futures on the part of parents sometimes lead to gender-bias in parental investment in children’s education. The gender bias occurs particularly when parents have limited/lower income and resource, causing girls to leave school earlier than boys. (Key informant, Kasese)

- *Finding also indicates some girls attach low value to education.* Low value placed on education by girls themselves indirectly contributed to at least 15% of the girls getting involved in early sex and 4% getting married early.
- *Lack of girl child school friendly and responsive environment:* The negative social norms are often exacerbated by the lack of girl child friendly school environment and gender-responsive school system. During focus group discussions, some community members perceived the school system to be unfair to the girls. For example, the school system in many districts does not recognize the fact that girls perform extra household roles. In addition, girls who miss

school during their menstruation periods rarely receive special support from teachers. In particular, no remedial assignments or home-work exercises are given.

- *The availability of well-maintained girls' washrooms in the school and teachers with positive attitudes* to support girls and boys equally are very important factors in creating conducive environment for learning. Properly maintained wash-rooms for girls were missing in many schools visited. Similarly, less than 20% of the dropouts reported to have ever had a formal career guidance session while at school. Parents blamed this on teachers' absenteeism at school.
- *Parental preference for boys' children.* This problem is as a result of the social and cultural setting in most parts of the country. Most communities and rural and un educated parents regard the position of the girls low and attach less value and preference to their education compared to boys. While both male and female children are valued as children, the value of the girl lies in her ability to offer labour for household survival, get married, give birth and earn her family material wealth. Deliberate withdrawal of girls from school by parents and guardians even when they are not pregnant or denying them total access to education and the girls being valued in terms of economic gains have all together kept the position of the girl-child in a vulnerable position regarding their education.

3.4 Gender Norms and Retention of pregnant girls in school

The current study findings do support the hypothesis that gendered social norms and belief systems are contributing to girls' dropout from school when they get pregnant and their failure to re-enter into the school after child birth. The girls interviewed in this study reported that the society thinks of those who fall pregnant while at school as bad examples to other girls (54%) and failures who cannot make it at school even after the birth of their children (38%). Nonetheless, there were some few (26%) that thought that the community expects the best out of them. This was more common in Eastern Uganda and West Nile (Table 9).

In general, the girls who fall pregnant are not expected to re-enter school but rather should get married or do something else. Over 43% of the girls stated that the community thinks of the re-entry to school as wastage of parents or caregivers' money. Among the 488 girls who dropped out due to pregnancy related reasons, 28% were married off. This was most common in Buyende (30%), Kasese (28%), Kiboga (22%) and Zombo district (14%).

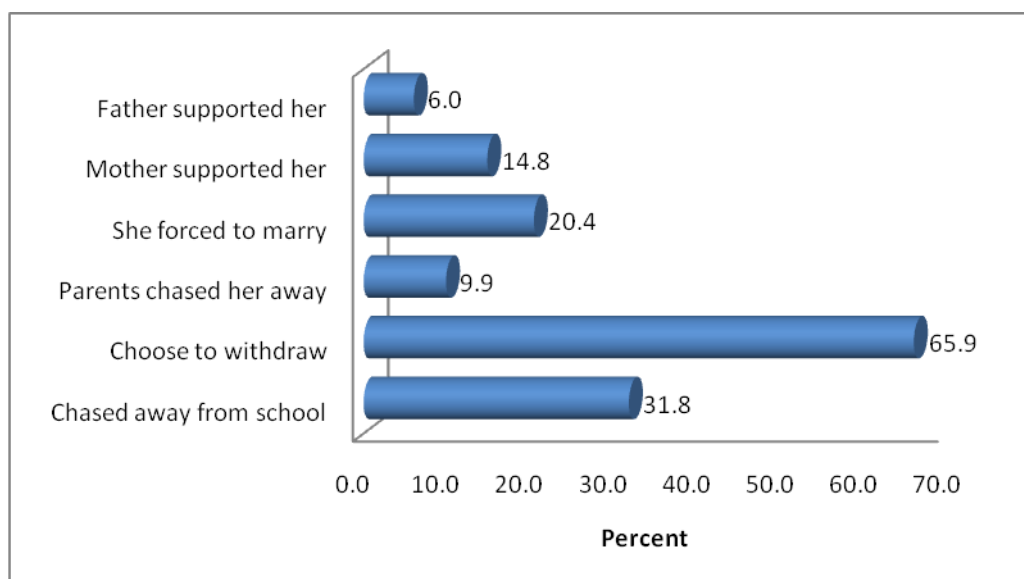
Table 8: Community expectations of girls who fall pregnant at school

	Will make it at school/ capable of passing	Bad examples to other girls	Will not manage school	Will conceive again	Other expectations
Central	59 (22.5)	148 (56.5)	84 (32.1)	6 (2.3)	1 (0.4)
Northern	98 (29.2)	219 (65.2)	176 (52.4)	9 (2.7)	0 (0.0)
Eastern	56 (42.1)	48 (36.1)	35 (26.3)	2 (1.5)	11 (8.3)

North Eastern	88 (27.0)	169 (50.0)	204 (60.4)	9 (2.7)	8 (2.4)
Western	50 (18.9)	113 (42.6)	63 (23.8)	24 (9.1)	31 (11.7)
Southwestern	44 (13.3)	194 (58.6)	129 (39)	10 (3.0)	1 (0.3)
West Nile	111 (32.4)	199 (58.0)	73 (21.3)	1 (3.0)	3 (0.9)
Total	526 (26.2)	1,090 (54.3)	764 (38.1)	61 (2.4)	55 (2.7)

The actions that follow after the girl gets pregnant show how the girls themselves or caregivers react to these societal expectations. Of the 488 girls who fell pregnant when still at school, 98% dropped out of school. Sixty-six percent of these girls cited choice to withdrawal from school; 32% cited being chased out of school and 20% reported to have been forced to marry (Figure 6). The discussion described above on the gendered norms is paralleled in the report by Ahikire & Madanda, (2011).

Figure 6: What happened after she got pregnant?



3.5 Barriers of school re-entry to after childbirth

Only 8% (5% primary and 10% secondary) of the girls ever returned to formal schooling after giving birth. As mentioned before, reasons for not returning to school after childbirth fear of judgement (31%) and fear of stigma and teasing from other pupils at the school (31%) (Figure 7); and being married off (28%). However, lack of childcare services and low economic statuses of households where these girls come from are also very strong barriers to the girls returning to school. In some households, the girls had to work to support their babies (16%) or had to stay home to look after their babies (40%). Thus, the same reasons that predisposed the girl to pregnancy are the same factors that might limit her going back to school.

Many of the dropouts (60%) were of the view that girls who fall pregnant should not be allowed to stay at school (Figure 8). The reasons mentioned include young mothers being bad examples to other young girls (40%), the likelihood that they cannot manage school since they have many demands including feeding the baby, sometimes worries about insults in the community, etc.

Figure 7: Reasons for not returning to school after child birth of the 488 girls who dropped out of school due to pregnancy related reasons

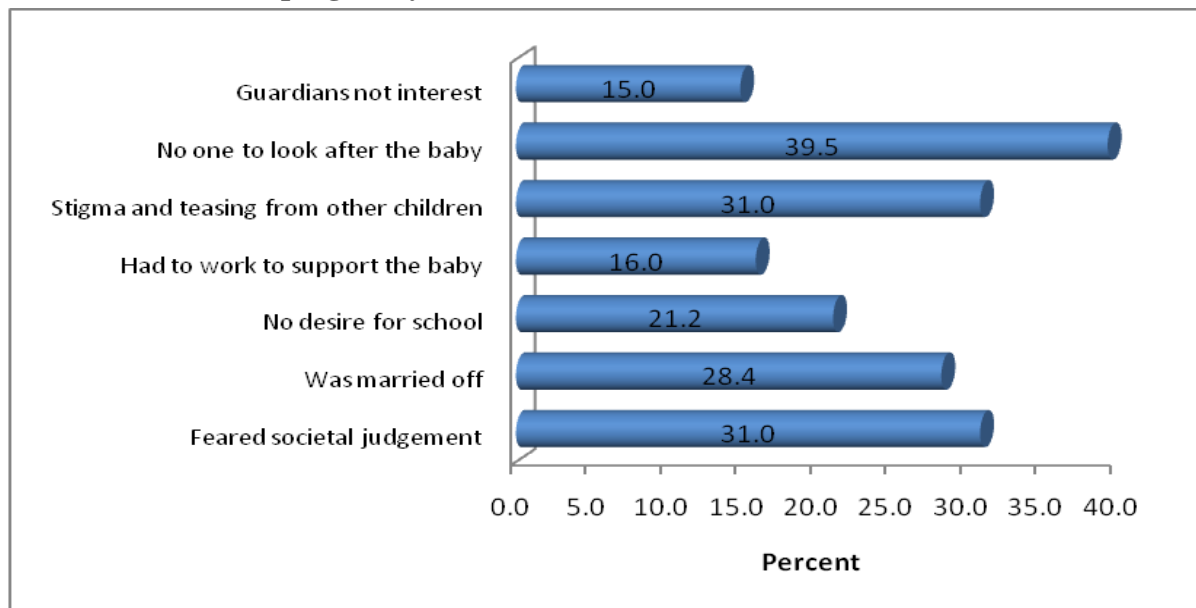
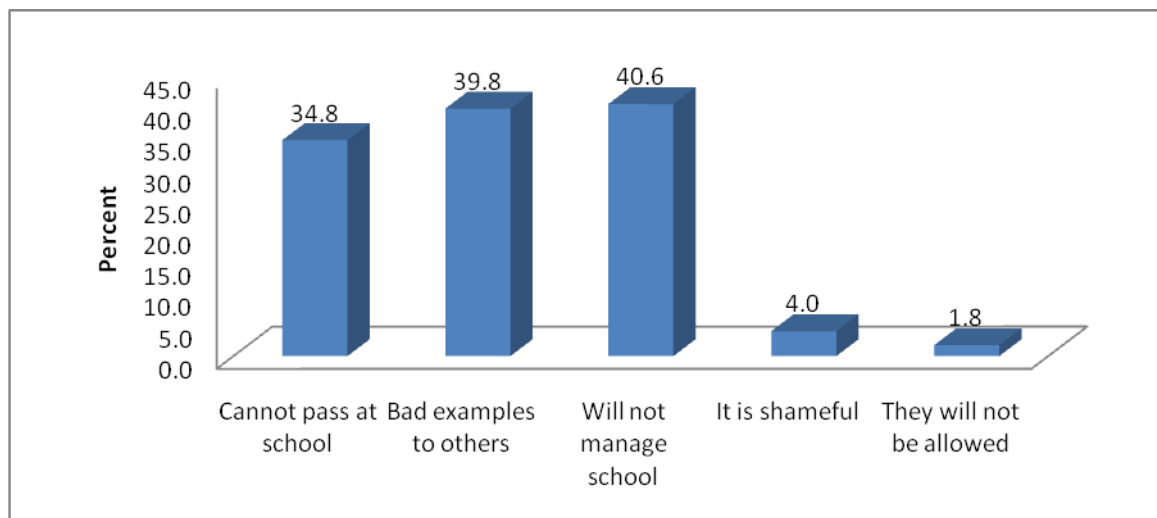


Figure 8: Reasons why girls should not return to school after pregnancy



A further analysis of focus group discussions showed that the community was divided among individuals who support girls staying at school and those who want them out of school. Those who want them out of school argue that these pregnant girls are bad examples for the other young girls. Those who support the retention at school argue that some of these girls are bright and can make it to Primary Leaving Examination certification or to Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE). While others argued that it is wastage of resources to return pregnant teens to school. They cited challenges of teenage pregnancies and lack of school capacity – both physical and technical to help the pregnant girl. In addition, having a baby places constraints on an already economically struggling household. Thus, staying at school or re-entry at school will require external support. Overall, there was no agreed position.

Girls who went back to school cited desire to study further and the confidence that they will make it; support from the teachers or NGOs; and encouragement from the caregivers. Examples of what motivated the girls to re-enter school after delivery included the following quotes.

“My parents gave me courage to go back; my friends and neighbours gave me advice to continue”
“I admired our neighbour’s daughter who graduated with a diploma in public administration.”
“A NGO helped and supported me to go back to school and because I had seen other girls make it at school, I decided to go there”

In summary, girls are faced with early marriages, substantial household chores and high material needs in order to attain perceived social approvals for beauty. The higher domestic burden for girls reflects the belief and expectation that girls should be prepared in anticipation of their reproductive and care roles as good wives in the future. The social stigmatization of pregnancy and childbirth outside marriage force pregnant girls and young mothers abandon formal schooling. Consequently, some girls (28%) chose/forced to get married and other stay home (59%).

Further, properly maintained wash-rooms for girls were missing in many of the schools visited. Similarly, career guidance was not given.

3.6 Current school practice in relation to pregnant girls

The main practice by the school administration is the expulsion of the pregnant child while some of pregnant girls also choose to withdraw from school. In the 16 schools visited in this survey for key informant interviews with teachers, only one school had a visibly pregnant girl at school. She had to wear a different uniform to serve as an example to other young girls.

In one school a teacher was providing support to a girl who had delivered to return to school. She allows the baby and babysitter to stay at her home (near the school) during daytime for easy

breastfeeding during lesson breaks. However, this was a personal initiative. In six schools that were visited during this study, the teachers reportedly provide support to the girl's parents or caregivers in tracking down the man responsible for pregnancy. As required by the ministry, pregnant girls in candidate classes are allowed to stay at school to prepare for the examinations.

The teachers interviewed stated that they rarely follow-up on the girls who drop out due to pregnancy. Some teachers noted that follow-up is sometimes a waste of time as parents marry off the girls.

'When the case is taken to the police, the parents discuss with the police and they realize the man and they marry off their daughter' KII – Teacher Buyende

Some teachers believe that some girls return to school after giving birth. However, in the current study we found that most of the girls who dropped out due to pregnancy are still at their parents/caregivers' homes but some few were married off.

3.7 Initiatives to support the school re-entry

In Uganda, a number of policy developments and reviews have happened in the recent years that have incorporated provisions for the prevention of teenage pregnancy and early marriages by committing to increase adolescents access to sexual and reproductive health information and services – another driver of teenage pregnancy. The Adolescent Health Policy, the National Youth policy 2011, the School Health Policy, 2013 and 2007 National Gender Policy all aim for protection of adolescents including girls from early marriage and teenage pregnancies as well as promote their re-integration in school after pregnancies to inhibit early marriages and provide opportunity for their growth and development. In Uganda, therefore, the gap is not so much due to absence of appropriate legal regime and policy frameworks. Rather it is more of a gap between existing policy and the effective execution of such policies. The gap between policy and programme is largely due to weak inter-sectoral collaboration and inadequate financing of interventions and limited capacity for effective delivery of services.

Mobilization of communities and individuals for social and behaviour change has ever been done before albeit with varying levels of success. This intervention included communication for social change as well as individual behaviour change. For example, the Presidential Initiative on AIDS Strategy for Communication to Youth (PIASCY) launched in 2002. Other programs include Straight Talk Foundation and also reach out-of-school youth through the community outreach radio programmes broadcast in different local languages including the Programme for Enhancing Adolescent Reproductive Life (PEARL); UNICEF flagship Girls Education Movement (GEM)

Programme; the African Youth Alliance etc. The implementation of these interventions achieved some success but the dropouts due to teen pregnancy remain unreasonably high.

An alternative would be to ensure re-entry of the pregnant girls and young mothers to school. This has been very successful in South Africa where pregnant girls are allowed to stay at school and young mothers are allowed to continue (Hallman and Grant 2006). However, this requires that the girls are well prepared and are able to withstand the stigma and teasing from fellow children. In Kenya, some head-teachers were not comfortable with pregnant girls staying at school due to the fear that the society will view teachers that allow re-entry as condoning sexual immorality. Potentially, the parents can withdraw their children from such a school that condones sexual immorality. Thus, re-entry is not a school issue but also requires community sensitization. Further, re-entry will require that the schools are well prepared with trained teachers to provide guidance and counseling to receive such pregnant girls or young mothers and change the perceptions of taking them as mothers and offer support and acceptance. The schools should also be able to provide textbooks, learning materials and some form of child support to the mothers.

3.8 The Pader Girls' Academy

Pader Girls Academy (PGA) was established in 2007 by the Christian Counseling Fellowship (CCF) aimed at offering support to these victims of Lords resistance Army war (i.e. child-mothers and pregnant) girls by counseling and promoting Christian values to help them overcome the immense trauma they suffered. The Pader Girls Academy runs a formal Secondary section, vocational and the day care center. The PGA was a legally licensed by Ministry of Education and Sports, and renamed Pader Girls Secondary School (PGSS- registration certificate No ME/22/4847) in 2010.

In 2012, FAWEU commissioned a study to specifically look at the Pader Girls' Academy (PGA) look at community perceptions towards pregnant and parenting students and explore what supportive services existed to address the peculiar needs of this category of students and their babies so that the findings could be used for policy advocacy as well as be adapted for replication in other parts of Uganda outside of the post-conflict Northern region.

According to the 2012 survey FAWEU (2012), and is still the practice to date, PGA caters for the basic needs of the babies offering basics such as baby potties, play materials, mattresses among other things in a day care centre. The child mothers sleep on the same beds with their babies, have breakfast with them and drop them at the day care/nursery before going for classes. During class time, if some of the babies are crying a lot they can be taken to their mothers, otherwise the next reunion is at break and lunch times. The re-union is quite relaxed and the mothers can sit anywhere with the babies and enjoy the meals together. They can sit on the verandah, under a tree or even in the dormitory.

The next grand reunion is in the evening where they have dinner and finally retire to bed. There is a night matron to help out with the children while the students in the secondary school section do their night preps. There seems to be a smooth transition from one phase to another. Evidently there is a lot of work that goes into this rhythm of caring for baby and schooling the mother/child at the

same time. At once it is web of efforts- the teacher, the care taker, the cook, the matron, the nurse and the administrator.

The findings in the 2012 study maintained that the Day Care Centre was indeed a good innovation although the following areas were recommended for improvement in line with Uganda's Early Childhood Development Policy. It was noted that the four care-givers looking after forty six children was over stretched and there was need to recruit more care-givers. These also needed to be trained in ECCD. It was also noted that the centre did not have enough age-appropriate play materials for caregivers to use to play with children and enhance early stimulation. It was also noted that while the baby were given meals, there was need to have them nutritiously balanced in terms of quantity and quality. With regard to health and hygiene, it was noted that the ECD could not cater for all health issues and clear mechanisms needed to be put in place to cater for screening for babies with HIV/AIDS. The resting room for the babies was too small for forty-six children and yet numbers could swell to as many as 70 babies.

3.8.1 Cream land Day care center

Since then, CCF and FAWEU have worked together to close many of these gaps. The day care and nursery school has since then recruited staff for both the secondary and day care center with basic training in child care, procured and distributed play materials. Due to the improved standards at the day care centre and nursery school, members of the community expressed the desire to have babies who do not have mothers at PGA stay at the centre at a fee and this was granted by the school management.

3.8.2 Vocational Training

The school runs vocational skills' training as one of the basic courses offered specifically targeting Catering and Hotel Management, and Tailoring. As of February 2012 the school had a total enrolment of 245 girls in the vocational section. In 2015, two lots of vocational students did modular assessment administered by Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) for both tailoring and catering courses. Under the first lot, 23 students were assessed (8 students for catering and 15 students for tailoring) and under the second lot, 46 students were assessed (8 students for catering and 38 students for tailoring). It is expected that the 50 current girls who have enrolled under vocational section in 2016 will also undergo the same kind of assessment to certify their qualification.

3.8.3 Formal Secondary Schooling

The school runs ordinary level secondary education i.e. from senior one (1)-senior four (4) and follows a national curriculum as of 2011. The Secondary section began with a population of 45 girls but in 2016 it stands 300 girls at the Pader campus. The students, who sit senior four (S.4), do relatively well and a number of them cross to secondary institutions like Primary Teacher Education institutes and the nursing profession. Some have opted for advanced level education. According to the Director CCF, PGA girls are often connected to secondary schools in the region such as Lakwai Seeds Secondary and Kitgum High School for Advanced level learning. In order to improve academic performance, FAWEU provided both teaching and non teaching materials and constructed a three classroom block.

According to the available records, the completion rate is good at over 80%. In terms of performance, an analysis in comparative terms show that PGA students perform well and

performance has continued to improve. As opposed to previous years when there were no students scoring first or second grade. In the year 2014, the school registered 2 students in first grade, 15 in second and 10 in third grade out of 27. In the year 2015, the school registered 1 first grade, 9 in second and 12 in third out of 22. As a way of improving the secondary section,

The model has been scaled up to Nwoya district with support from development partners as a way of reaching more girls but should continue to be scaled up to other parts of the country though funding is a big challenge. In fact, the community members express that if the re-entry for pregnant girls and breast feeding mothers was totally free like other government programme of Universal Secondary Education, there would have been more girls joining the school and therefore fulfilling their dreams. This can only be possible with full government in terms of conducive policy environment as well as funding.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusion

This study confirms that pregnancy-related school dropout among adolescent girls is very prevalent in Uganda: 22% of the girls we surveyed had left school cited was the main reason they left school, with most of these leaving school before transitioning to secondary school. School girl pregnancy was closely linked to early sexual initiation and sexual coercion.

Consistent with other studies, our findings also reflect the complexity of the relationship between pregnancy and dropout. Schoolgirl pregnancy is also strongly associated with several factors that influence school dropout regardless girl's pregnancy status. Such factors included household poverty, poor academic performance and lack of interest in academics by the girls (due to doubts of succeeding at school, and achieving economic returns etc.). Poor academic performance was strongly associated with a girl's likelihood of becoming pregnant while enrolled in school, dropping out of school if she becomes pregnant, and not returning to school following a pregnancy-related dropout. Our findings also highlight the role of gendered beliefs and expectations in determining girls' dropout: a heavy domestic burden alongside girls' and their parents' beliefs about the roles and expectations for girls, as compared to boys, profoundly constraints their access to education and retention in school. As a consequence, limitations due to household chores were significantly associated with dropout due to pregnancy.

Unfortunately, for those girls who become pregnant while in school, dropout is nearly universal, and reflects the lack of a specific retention or re-entry policy in Uganda for pregnant schoolgirls. The study findings can be contrasted with those from South Africa where policies are highly inclusive, and where studies have found between one- to two-thirds of adolescent girls who have

had a pregnancy return to school.⁴ In Uganda, the lack of childcare services, emotional support and low economic statuses of households where these girls come remain very strong barriers to the girls returning to school.

In general, factors such as household level poverty, poor academic performance, long distances to school and illness also affect the school dropout of the boys. However, the direct link of these factors to early sex and pregnancy make their influence is stronger among the girls than the boys. Thus, to reduce their overall influence, strategies aimed at (a) stopping early initiation of sex, (b) stopping pregnancy, and (c) supporting young mothers to continue school are necessary.

Further, girls are faced with early marriages, substantial household chores and high material needs in order to attain perceived social approvals for beauty. The higher domestic burden for girls reflects the belief and expectation that girls should be prepared in anticipation of their reproductive and care roles as good wives in the future. The social stigmatization of pregnancy and childbirth outside marriage force pregnant girls and young mothers abandon formal schooling. Consequently, some girls chose/forced to get married and other stay home.

There were no schools with best practices with exception that some schools help the parents to track down the men responsible for the pregnancy. In addition, all schools allow the girls who fall pregnant while in Primary 7 or Senior 4 to return to school to sit for national examinations from Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB).

⁴ Marteleto L, Lam D, Ranchhod V. Sexual Behavior, Pregnancy, and Schooling Among Young People in Urban South Africa. *Stud Family Plann* 2008;39:351-368.

4.2 Policy recommendations as per major findings

Some of the key recommendations include in the matrix below. They are a responsibility of the MoESTS with support from other actors.

Key finding	Recommendation	Key aspects	Responsibility	Other actors
No activities or strategies at school and in the communities aimed at curbing early initiation of sex and pregnancies	Implement an ASRH policy that also includes career guidance and professional counselling especially to young girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The policy should clarify the legal and policy framework of sexuality education and access to sexual reproductive services; should lead to massive scale-up of sexual and reproductive health information; and ensure services are available and provided by adolescent-friendly health workers. - The teachers should be trained to integrate career guidance and mentorship for young girls; and gender issues in their communications. - Positive voices in schools and communities aimed at curbing early initiation of sex and pregnancies should be promoted. - Develop IEC materials on pregnancy in school and widely disseminate them through social marketing campaigns, educational and entertainment approaches, religious leaders and other one-way communications. - Help schools to provide sexuality education early; starting in P4 	MoESTS	MoH, CSOs/IPs, community development officers
	Mobilize communities and individuals for social and behaviour change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Train teachers and community coaches to promote ASRH services through community dialogue and sensitization to counter socio-cultural resistance - Engage with local and religious leaders at the lower 	MoESTS	CSOs/IPs, community development officers, Media,

Key finding	Recommendation	Key aspects	Responsibility	Other actors
		<p>community levels through sensitization meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen peer-to-peer education where young girls who ever got pregnant while at school act as champions (and community coaches) of school re-entry; and sensitization of other young girls - Use success story or role models to promote education for the girls in the schools and during PTA meetings - Men and boys should be targeted for sensitization about gender roles and equality, and the reduction of household chore burden on the girl child 		religious leaders
	Support girl education and empowerment programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop and ensure implementation of guidelines that assure gender responsive school environment - Promote programs that teach young girls life skills including mentorship and career guidance classes - Recruit female teachers as school coaches for young girls - Support the formation of school clubs and teachers - Puberty provides an opportunity to promote dialogue and reflection around issues that are broader than physical development such as gender roles, peer pressure, feelings of isolation and unwanted sexual advances. - Policy should provide strict implementation of punishment for child abuse perpetrators through coordination with other ministries and justice 	MoESTS	CSOs/IPs, community development officers, media

Key finding	Recommendation	Key aspects	Responsibility	Other actors
		<p>system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MoESTS should ensure that no school should make the contribution of fees toward school specific projects compulsory - MoESTS should provide all scholastic materials as part of UPE and USE 		
No activities or strategies at school and in the communities aimed at supporting school going teens who get pregnant	Strengthening legal provisions, enforcement and awareness of child abuses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting inter-sectoral coordination and integrated approaches including enacting the district level ordinances and strict punishment of the child abuse perpetrators (pregnancies, early marriage, etc.) through coordination with other ministries, community development offices, police and justice system - Men and boys should be targeted for sensitization about gender roles and equality, and the reduction of household chore burden on the girl child 	MoESTS	CSOs/IPs, Media, CDOs, police and justice system
Pregnant girls are expelled from school and almost all do not re-enroll except when in P7 or S4. No school re-entry policy by the ministry	Develop a policy on pregnancy in schools and re-entry after pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of clarity at policy level coupled with strong social and religious norms and taboos about maintaining pregnant girls at school and re-enrolment of young mothers has constrained re-entry of girls and young mothers. Thus, the ministry should develop a policy on pregnancy in schools - The policy should provide a gender responsive/friendly school environment for the retention of pregnant girls or re-entry of the 	MoESTS	CSOs/IPs, Media, MoH, Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development

Key finding	Recommendation	Key aspects	Responsibility	Other actors
		<p>young mothers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enlist and support the households for young mothers with income generating activities to their caregivers/mothers. - In some schools in rural and semi-urban areas, provide daycare services for the children of teenage mothers i.e. schools should provide some basic child care services where babies can stay as their mothers study - Use role models – girls who have returned to school and made it; community leaders, religious leaders, celebrities, etc. should be encouraged to play a role in promoting re-entry to schools - Coordination of affirmative action by all ministries that deliver youth related services such as MoH, Ministry of Gender, Labour & Social Development - Support schools to form school clubs for nursing mothers/safe and friendly networks for psychosocial support of young mothers - Train community coaches to counsel caregivers and young mothers - Schools should be required to trace their pupils or students who fell pregnant to encourage them 		

Key finding	Recommendation	Key aspects	Responsibility	Other actors
		<p>to come back to school after delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MoESTS should coordinate efforts by other ministries and NGOs, CSOs to help pregnant girls and young mothers 		
No socio-economic support given to young mothers	Skill the young mothers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give priority to young mothers and support (including basic child care services) them at Business Technical Vocation Education and Training (BTVET) institutions - Support non-formal vocational education for the girls that drop out without any qualifications - Support some schools to implement the Pader Academy Strategy for pregnant girls and young mothers 	MoESTS	NGOs, CSOs/IPs

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APPENDIX A1

Sample Size Determination and Sampling Procedure

Sample Size determination: We targeted to interview a sample 2275 adolescent girls, aged 14-18 years, who dropped out of school between 2013 and 2015. Specifically, based on the assumption that 35% of the girls drop out due to pregnancy related reasons (see Ahikire & Madanda, 2011) and a design effect of 2, a sample of 175 girls, who had dropped out of school between 2013 and 2015, was targeted per district⁵. This was deemed sufficient to ensure 10.5% precision in the estimate of the proportion of girls who drop out due to pregnancy related reasons with 95% certainty in each district.

Sample size allocation: The sample was drawn through a three-stage cluster random sample stratified on 173 schools (104 Primary and 69 Secondary schools) in the 13 districts. The allocation ratio of the number of primary and secondary schools was based on UDHS 2011 data that showed that of all girls aged 14-17 years, 60% were in primary school and 40% were in secondary school. In addition, in terms of absolute numbers of school dropouts, there are more girls who drop out of primary schools than secondary schools. Further, the sample size allocation was to assure a within 5% relative standard error precision for the separate estimates of indicators and other parameters at the primary and secondary school levels.

Sampling Procedure: A multi-stage sampling approach was used. In the first stage, 13 districts out of the 20 (at least one from each sub-region/stratum) were selected at random (see Table A1). At the second stage, 13 schools (8 primary and 5 secondary schools) were selected at random according to their population size (2015 enrolments) from each of the selected districts. Within a selected school, a list of girls who dropped out of school in 2013, 2014 and 2015 was generated with the help of the school teachers. From each list a random sample of 18 girls was selected, and their details taken for tracking in the communities. With the help of the teachers and local leaders, these girls were traced in the communities for interviews.

⁵ Allowing for failure rate to trace the dropouts of 10%, a total of 175 dropouts was targeted per district.

Table A1: Sampled respondents per district and response rates

District	Quantitative survey		IDI with dropouts	KII with leaders/ teachers	FGDs with community members
	No. sampled	Response rate			
Amuru	171	97.7	2	2	2
Buliisa	167	95.4	2	2	2
Busia	176	100.0	2	2	2
Buyende	178	100.0	2	2	2
Dokolo	164	93.7	2	2	2
Kasese	168	96.0	2	2	2
Kibaale	149	85.1	2	2	2
Kiboga	154	88.0	2	2	2
Kisoro	176	100.0	2	2	2
Nakapiripirit	175	100.0	2	2	2
Nebbi	174	99.4	2	2	2
Rakai	115	65.7	2	2	2
Zombo	170	97.1	2	2	2
Total	2,147	93.9	26	26	26

APPENDIX A2

Table A2: Documents identified for review

Studies	Author(s)	Document type
1. Survey on Re-Entry of Pregnant Girls in Primary and Secondary Schools in Uganda (2011)	Ahikire, Josephine Madanda, Aramanzan	Study report
2. Adolescent girls in the balance: Changes and continuity in social norms and practices around marriage and education in Uganda, 2014	Grace KyomuhendoBantebya, Florence KyoheirweMuhanguziandCarol Watson	Study report
3. “Girls are like leaves on the wind”: How gender expectations impact girls’ education - A closer look from West Nile, Uganda. Washington: International Center for Research on Women, 2015.	Stoebenau, K., Warner, A., Edmeades, J.D., Sexton, M	Study report
4. Out Of School Children Study In Uganda- <i>Commissioned by UNICEF, Save the Children and Stromme Foundation, 2014</i>	Christine MbabaziMpyangu (PhD), Eric Awich Ochen (PhD), EriaOlowo Onyango (PhD), Yovani A Moses Lubaale (PhD)	
5. A report on Gender responsiveness in Primary Schools, 2013, 2014	Ministry of Education and sports	Monitoring report
6. Documenting Best Practices in Retention and Re-entry of Pregnant Girls in School: The Christian Counseling Fellowship (CCF) Founded Pader Girls Academy (PGA) Model, Pader District, 2012	Josephine Ahikire On behalf of Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Uganda	Study report
7. Assessing the current status of post primary education for girls in Uganda and the great lakes region	FAWEU, 2012	
8. Uganda Demographic and Health Survey 2011. Kampala, Uganda	UBOS and Calverton, Maryland: ICF International Inc.; 2012	
9. Factors associated with adolescent pregnancy and fertility in Uganda: Analysis of the 2011 Demographic and Health Survey data	Gideon Rutaremwa	Journal article
10. Adolescent Pregnancy and Policy Responses in Uganda	Ashley Wallace	Working paper
11. National strategy for Girls’ Education in Uganda, 2013	Ministry of Education and sports	
12. The Education of Girls and Women in Uganda. <i>Journal of Social Development in Africa 2001;16.</i>	Atekyereza PR.	Journal article
13. Implications of Formal Schooling for Girls’ Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries.	Lloyd C, Mensch B.	

National Academy Press, 1999.		
14. Concept paper on a Sector policy on pregnancies in schools. Kampala: Ministry of Education and Sports, 2009	Ministry of Education and sports	
15. Pregnancy-related School Dropout and Prior-School Performance in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. <i>Stud Family Plann</i> 2008;39:369-382.	Grant MJ, Hallman KK.	Journal article