

Stakeholders' Roles in Implementing the Readmission Policy on Adolescent Mothers in Public Secondary Schools in Kikuyu District, Kiambu County, Kenya.

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Abstract

Although the Government Readmission Policy on girls who get pregnant while in schools was launched officially in 1999 and clear implementation guidelines formulated by March 2011, there are still challenges in regard to effective and active participation by adolescent mothers in schools. Explored literature shows that previous studies on the policy have not considered adolescent mothers already in schools, their aspirations and challenges involved, but focussed on whether readmission was taken seriously. Therefore, there was a need to fill this gap with a study on stakeholders' roles in implementing the Government Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers in public secondary schools in Kenya. In order to carry out an in-depth study, the researcher focussed on one district, Kikuyu, in Kiambu County. The key questions that guided the study sought information on: the extent to which the key stakeholders in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District are aware of the Readmission Policy Guidelines; the extent to which the stakeholders are prepared to implement the policy effectively; ways in which stakeholders use the policy to raise aspirations of the adolescent mothers in their studies; the key stakeholders' response to the Readmission Policy Guidelines; challenges faced in the process of promoting effective implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines and lastly, how best the policy could be implemented. Qualitative approach emanating from phenomenological perspective provided the dominant paradigm. A limited use of descriptive research survey design was used as a supplementary component of the study. The study targeted the girls' and mixed secondary schools in Kikuyu District, their principals, deputy principals, school counsellors, teachers, adolescent mothers and their parents/guardians, the District Education Office (DEO) and Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI). All the 22 public girls' and mixed secondary schools' principals and their deputies in the district were involved in the study. Purposive sampling was used to select 8 counsellors, 10 teachers, 11 adolescent mothers, 5 parents and 1 guardian, 2 DEOs and 2 KEMI officials. Data collection involved use of interview guides, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guide, and a questionnaire. Data collected were analysed using mainly qualitative, and to some extent, quantitative methods. The study found that although many girls who became pregnant in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District continued with their studies, to a large extent the Readmission Policy Guidelines were not used by the key stakeholders. The factors that hindered effective implementation of the policy included: lack of preparedness of the key stakeholders; lack of qualified counsellors; poor co-operation by parents; shortage of medical facilities near the schools; poor monitoring by the MOE; understaffing in schools; poor facilities for counselling services and ridicule of adolescent mothers by other students. Additionally, lack of healthy relationships in most schools contributed to rampant

sexual activity among students. The main recommendations arising from the study include: equipping schools with relevant materials like Policy Guidelines; strengthening Guidance and Counselling Departments; training the key stakeholders in order to implement the policy effectively; monitoring the implementation to identify challenges faced and empowering boys and girls in order to help them become more resilient in making informed decisions/choices.

Key words: Stakeholders' roles, Implementing the readmission policy, Adolescent mothers in public secondary schools, Kikuyu District, Kiambu County, Kenya.

Full text: <http://ir.cuea.edu/jspui/bitstream/1/85/1/Naomi%20W%20Mbugua.pdf>