CHALLENGES FACING TEACHER COUNSELLORS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA

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Acknowledgement

This research was supported by Moi University-VLIR-UOS-Gender Equity Project
INTRODUCTION

• Research carried out in Wareng District, Rift-valley on challenges facing teen mothers in secondary schools in Kenya reflected that the teen mother challenges emanate largely from lack of professional counselling.

• Though guidance and counselling departments exist in schools with at-least one teacher counsellor per each school, counselling in schools continues to pose challenges to teacher counsellors.
BACKGROUND

• Studies in counselling reflect teen mothers as special children belonging to special populations that require special counselling (MOE, 2003; Archer J. and Cooper S., 1998)

• For effective counselling, teacher counsellors should be trained adequately to handle these special populations (Hough, 2002)

• Teacher counsellors however, lack professional preparedness to handle them.

• Focus is also mainly on normal children with normal school problems like academics.
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- Consequently, counselling in schools does not adequately address teen mothers’ challenges despite their re-admission.

- Therefore, teen mothers in schools continue suffering emotionally, socially, academically and psychologically.

- The teen mothers become traumatized and sometimes drop out of school again or they end up as social misfits leading to poor performance.
Methodology

• Descriptive survey was used with questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussion

• The research targeted teacher counsellors, one per every sampled school, head teachers and teen mothers.

• There was a respondents’ ratio of 58% male to 42% female and 75% of total respondents had a counselling experience of six years and above.

• None had a degree or diploma in counselling
FINDINGS

• That in each school, there was between one and five teen mothers and 70% of them had dropped out of school.

• That no counselling mechanisms were in place in schools to ensure retention of the teen mothers in school before and after delivery.

• That the few who attended counselling had very unique problems while majority of them avoided counselling altogether.
• That teacher counsellors are not aware of special populations like teen mothers or policies like the teen mother return-to-school policy
• They face opposition from head teachers in their counselling endeavours
• They lack avenues like legal procedures that should assist them address sensitive matters related to their clients’ challenges
• They cannot reach out to those who drop out of school
• All the teacher counsellors claimed that they had difficulties dealing with teen mothers and other special children
• Teen mother support groups and welfare clubs and related activities are non existent in the schools
• That counselling departments have not adequately handled the students’ challenges adequately
Teen mother challenges

• Parents deny them a second chance
• Temptation to abortion of the baby
• Fear and anxiety before and after delivery
• Withdrawal from peers for feeling ‘too old’
• Rejection and discrimination in school
• Denial for re-admission in former schools
• Gossip, rumours and propaganda
• Sexual harassment by teachers and peers
• Fatigue and absenteeism
• Challenges of parenting
TEACHER COUNSELLOR CHALLENGES

• They lack professional preparedness
• Clients are inaccessible due to ignorance, fear and intimidation
• There is lack of support from head teachers, parents and colleagues
• Facilities for counselling are sometimes inadequate and or inappropriate
• Effective counselling fails due to faulted counselling processes
• Undermining by colleagues
• Gossip and rumours
CONCLUSION

• Teacher counsellors are not adequately prepared to handle special cases
• Collective responsibility in counselling is lacking
• Refresher causes and workshops to boost counselling are hardly available
• Teacher counsellors remain isolated
• Change and management of change should be effected in students’ challenges
• If professional counselling is not put in place in schools, education goals and vision 2030 cannot be realized
RECOMMENDATIONS

• Rigorous training and in-service for teacher counsellors is necessary
• Professional counsellors should oversee counselling
• School managers should enhance counselling by recognition and support of teacher counsellors
• Support groups and clubs should be established to sensitize and support special groups
• Motivation and incentives for successful counsellors
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