

Guide for Teenage Mother's Support Groups



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Acronyms

CCI - Charitable Children Institution **CHEW** - Community Health Extension Worker **CHP** - Community health promotor **CP** - Child Protection **DCS** - Directorate of Children Services **FGM** - Female genital mutilation **GBV** - Gender Based Violence **HIV/AIDS** - Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome

LSD - Lysergic acid diethylamide

MDMA - Methylenedioxymethamphetamine

MHM - Menstrual Health Management

MoH - Ministry of Health

MOU - Memorandum of understanding

NCDF - National government Constituency Development Funds

PEP - Post Exposure Prophylaxis

SRH - Sexual Reproductive Health

STI - Sexual Transmitted Infection

STD - Sexual Transmitted Disease

ToR - Terms of Reference

VAC - Violence Against Children

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE TEENAGE MOTHER'S SUPPORT GROUPS

Lack of comprehensive sex education and limited access to contraceptives contribute to the high rates of teenage pregnancies.

Teenage mothers face numerous challenges, including limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, leading to a higher risk of poverty and marginalization. Social norms and stigma surrounding teenage pregnancy often result in social isolation and discrimination. Moreover, early motherhood can disrupt the personal development and aspirations of teenagers, hindering their potential for a brighter future. The objective of the “Teenage mother’s support groups” is to empower teenagers by gaining knowledge on gender equality, child rights, sexual and reproductive health and life skills. This is achieved by engaging them in dialogues aimed at demystifying negative social norms and amplifying the protective beliefs. By challenging those norms and beliefs that make them shy off from accessing health and education services, the groups support their members in achieving their full potential. The support groups are moreover:

- a safe space for pregnant adolescents and teenage mothers to share their experiences and offer peer-to-peer emotional support;
- a space of exchange for their members to access other services such
- as health services, education in schools (for those who want to

re-enrol), child protection services through the Directorate of Children Services (DCS), bursaries through the NCDF (National government Constituency Development Funds).

The groups comprise teenagers' mothers and pregnant adolescents aged 13-17 years, who are willing to participate in empowerment activities and cascade the learnings to their peers within the community. The support groups have young mother's ambassadors selected by the members. Each support group consists of at most 25 teenagers that are from the same village or sub-location. Participation in the support group is voluntary and once a member attains the age of 20 years can leave the group, hence membership might change after 2 years. One mentor - a Community Health Promoter (CHP) - is assigned to each support groups: this is a volunteer, committed to the protection of children

The CHPs are trained on the guide, which has 16 modules addressing gender equality and children rights, sexual and reproductive health, and girls' life skills. After the training, the CHP organize bi-monthly meetings with the support group members and, through participatory activities, facilitate discussion on the topics of the 16 modules. The mother's ambassadors also conduct peer-to-peer sessions in other youth forums on topics such as reproductive health, non-violent behavior and attitude, protective practices and gender equality.

This document is to be used as a guideline by implementing partners who are training selected Community Health Promoters on the teenage mother's support group methodology. It will also serve as a guide for the trained CHPs, when training teenage mother's group members and overseeing peer-to-peer activities in the community. It will help the CHPs ensure that key information is understood and passed to the members of the support groups in a systematic way. The guide is divided in 16 modules/topics: one or more activities per module are proposed to facilitate the transfer of concepts, allow reflection and discussion among the teenagers. This guide adheres to all key human rights principles and peaceful practices such as gender equality, child participation, adherence to positive norms, non-violent behavior and attitude, and stress management.