

PROJECT TITLE: SURVEY ON THE LEVEL OF CARE AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN BORN TO TEENAGE MOTHERS

Goal:

To determine the level of care and welfare of children born to teenage mothers

Objectives:

- To evaluate the wellbeing of children born to teenage mothers between the age of 13 to 20 years
- To identify the needs of teenage mothers and inform policy on the services required

Background and Rationale:

Parents are considered as the primary care giver of children. Being a parent is exciting and at the same time challenging. Good preparation before child birth and on entering into the journey of parenthood is beneficial and crucial to both parent and child. The birth of a child in a family brings additional cost and added pressure on relationship thus requiring strong interpersonal skills to cope with the added responsibility.

Given these intermingling complications, the birth of a child to a teenager, who is also a child, can put the young family at risk and can have negative social and health consequences. Teenage pregnancy and childbearing bring substantial social and economic costs with immediate and long-term impacts on teen parents and their children. The birth of a child at a young age can impede the young parent's academic and social success; they are more likely to have to drop out of school despite the policy allowing them to continue with their schooling; and they are less likely to be able to manage if they do not have strong support system. There is a high probability that teenage mothers end up as single parents. They face major challenges in raising their children alone, of not receiving the necessary support to bring up their child and having to rely on other family members or the State for basic provisions.

Studies suggest that primary child care and proper stimulation from an early age is crucial to children's cognitive and psychological development and wellbeing. Given the overall complications and challenges teenage mothers face, it is commonly said that children born from teenage mothers can turn up to be less privileged in terms of receiving proper care and guidance needed for their overall development and well-being, and are more likely to be exposed to risk of child abuse and neglect.

To date there has not been any similar survey to assess the scope of this problem. It is necessary to gain some understanding of the situation for both the teenage parent and the child to inform policy makers on the need to review existing policies or to introduce new ones to address issues related to teenage pregnancies.

Description:

The Social Services Division will oversee the implementation of the survey, which will target teenage mothers ranging from the age of 13 to 20 years with children aged 0 to 4 years old in 2019. The survey will be conducted within the District of Perseverance. The collaboration of the following related ministries and agencies will be needed:

- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development
- Ministry of Employment, Immigration and Civil Status
- Agency for Social Protection
- National Bureau of Statistics

The main instrument for the survey will be a questionnaire that will be administered to selected participants through one- to-one interview. This will be supplemented by observational data. The focus will be on aspects of health, nutrition, hygiene, financial and social care. Collection of data will be facilitated by professionals having a background in child care.

Budget Narrative:

The estimated cost of the project is SCR 200, 000, this will include: payment for consultant to work on the project, training/workshop for data collectors, payment for data collectors, input and analysis, report writing and printing and stationery.

Expected Outcomes:

- Information about the status of the children and their mothers for a sample of teenage parents
- Suggestions and recommendations on the needs of teenage mothers for policy decision

Performance Indicators:

- Number of participants targeted and their state of wellbeing
- Proportion of participants most at risk • Suggested intervention strategies