

**STAKEHOLDERS' ROLES IN IMPLEMENTING THE READMISSION POLICY  
ON ADOLESCENT MOTHERS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN  
KIKUYU DISTRICT, KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA**

**BY**

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**2013**

**STAKEHOLDERS' ROLES IN IMPLEMENTING THE READMISSION POLICY  
ON ADOLESCENT MOTHERS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN  
KIKUYU DISTRICT, KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA**

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**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Post Graduate Studies in Education  
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of Doctor of Philosophy  
Degree in Education**

**THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA**

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned declare that this dissertation has not been presented in any other university and that its contents are my original work.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to all boys and girls striving to achieve their education goals and dreams in spite of the challenges around them.

## 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.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

BOGs	Board of Governors
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSA	Centre for the Study of Adolescents
DEO	District Education Office
ECAW	Education Centre for Adolescent Women
EFA	Education for All
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FAWEK	Forum for African Women Educationalists, Kenya Chapter
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GCN	Girl Child Network
GEM	Girl Education Movement
IEL	Institute of Educational Leadership
KARHP	Kenya Adolescent Reproductive Health Project
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KEMI	Kenya Education Management Institute
KESSP	Kenya Education Sector Support Programme
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KIE	Kenya Institute of Education
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	Ministry of Education

MOEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MOH	Ministry of Health
NASCOP	National AIDS/STD Control Programme
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NWLC	National Women Law Centre
PTA	Parents Teachers' Association
QASO	Quality Assurance and Standards Officer
TSC	Teachers Service Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WERK	Women Education Researchers of Kenya
YWCA	Young Women Christian Association

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background to the Problem**

Adolescence pregnancy in schools and Readmission Policy are part of gender issues in education (Ministry of Education (MOE), 2011, 2007). Studies have shown that adolescence pregnancy has affected education of girls worldwide (Meece & Daniels, 2008; Hubbard, 2008; Chigona & Chetty, 2007). According to research findings in the United Kingdom, Kenya and other countries, very few women who have given birth during their teens complete secondary level of schooling (Elimu Yetu Coalition, 2003; Forum for African Women Educationalists, Kenya Chapter (FAWEK), 2001; Reid and Frank, 2001). In other words, there is a high correlation between early pregnancy and failure to pursue higher education. That is why conferences on gender and education have included campaigns for readmission of girls who get pregnant when they are in school (Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), 2008; MOE, 2007; UNESCO, 2005; FAWE, 1995a). The role of this chapter is to set this research study into context. It starts by introducing Kikuyu District which is the focus of the study.

#### **1.1.1 Description of Kikuyu District**

Kikuyu District is in Kiambu County (see Appendix X). It is one of the districts created in Kenya in 2011. Kikuyu town is the headquarters. According to the 2009 Census (Republic of Kenya, 2010), out of Kiambu county's total population of 1,623,282, Kikuyu has 265,829 people. The statistics show that the district is the second largest in population in Kiambu County after Thika West District with 486,121 people. Kikuyu District is on the outskirts of Nairobi City, the capital of Kenya. It is in the Kenya Highlands.

The most common occupation of the people in Kikuyu District is peasant farming. The majority have two to five acres of land. That is why livestock especially cows and pigs are kept on zero-grazing basis in order to leave room for subsistence farming. To meet needs such as payment of school fees, most families rely on sale of milk to the co-operative society. Additionally, since the district is near Nairobi, some families have built rental houses on their farms. Workers who use them are from different ethnic groups in Kenya. There are also members of families who earn their living by engaging in small scale businesses like operating kiosks, tailoring, carpentry and shoe repair.

In addition to the above facts, it is important to note that there is a large youthful population in Kikuyu District. Statistics from the 2009 census show that this is the trend in the whole country (Republic of Kenya, 2010). In Kikuyu District the persons between ages 10 to 24 are 80,054, ages 25 to 39 are 73,348, ages 40 to 54 are 30,976 and 60 to 80 and above 13,483. However, most education levels are standard eight, forms two, three and four according to information from the District Education Office (DEO). The 2009 census also shows that 11,257 persons in the population had secondary school education. The same source also indicates very low transition from form four to higher institutions for both boys and girls in the district. As a result, very few have attained university education. According to the 2009 census only 275 women and 415 men had attained university education in Kikuyu District. This is despite the fact that there are more than two universities in Kiambu County. Two of these universities, University of Nairobi, Kikuyu Campus and The Presbyterian University of East Africa, are in Kikuyu District. This reality was one of the factors that motivated the researcher to carry out this study.

Records from the DEO also indicate that there are 26 public secondary schools in the district. Table 1 shows the various categories of these public secondary schools.

**Table 1: Public Secondary Schools in Kikuyu District**

Educational Zones	National		Provincial		District Schools			Total
	Schools		Schools		Girls	Boys	Mixed	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys				
Thogoto	1	1	1	-	-	1	3	07
Kabete	-	-	1	1	-	-	7	09
Muguga	-	-	-	-	1	1	3	05
Karai	-	-	1	-	-	-	4	05
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>26</b>

**Source: sourced by the researcher from Education Management Information System Unit (EMIS) DEO's Office Kikuyu District (May, 2012)**

Table 1 shows that most of the schools (17) are mixed day; 5 are for girls only while 4 are for boys only. Only national and provincial schools are boarding. The focus of the study was the public girls' and mixed secondary schools in the district. With subsidised Secondary Education (Republic of Kenya, 2011) in addition to the Government Readmission Policy, retention of students including adolescent mothers was expected to improve. In fact, the records from the DEO Kikuyu show increased enrolment of girls in schools over the last seven years (since 2005) as illustrated in Table 2.

**Table 2: Kikuyu Secondary School Enrolment 2005-2011**

Year	Form 1		Form 2		Form 3		Form 4		Total		G.
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
2005	863	837	867	896	935	935	856	979	3521	3647	7168
2006	946	893	967	976	893	899	870	907	3676	3675	7351
2007	1159	1040	1096	1032	978	987	865	886	4098	3945	8043
2008	913	1338	853	1324	879	1291	727	1239	3372	5192	8564
2009	1399	1341	1413	1411	1205	1182	1114	1029	5131	4963	10094
2010	1417	1431	1429	1417	1228	1214	1092	1045	5166	5107	10273
2011	1594	1549	1568	1422	1462	1499	1365	1337	5989	5807	11796

**Source: sourced by the researcher from Education Management Information System**

**Unit (EMIS) Kikuyu District (May, 2012)**

Table 2 shows that the number of girls who enrolled in form one in 2005 was 837. In form two they had increased to 976, in form three to 987 and in form four (2008) to 1239. One of the factors leading to increased enrolment is readmission of girls who get pregnant while in school. Other contributing factors according to the DEO are transfers from other districts and appreciation of the girl-child education. However, it is also important to note from Table 2 that the increase in enrolment over the years is not consistent. For example, the number of girls who enrolled in form one in 2007 was 1040. In form two, the number had increased to 1324 girls; in form three the number had dropped to 1182 and in form four the number of girls was 1045. A similar trend can be observed in the 2008-2011 enrolments. Further scrutiny of Table 2 shows that trends for enrolment for both boys and girls in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District are the same. Factors contributing to this inconsistency according to EMIS officials include: drop outs among adolescent

mothers who give up in the middle of their studies; withdrawal from school by girls after discovering they are pregnant; lack of financial support due to poverty in many families; transfers of students to and from other districts due to various reasons such as land and political clashes; loss of interest and enthusiasm in academic work. This information was corroborated by teachers' and counsellors' comments during interviews. The situation of inconsistency in student enrolment has an impact on planning by the school management and on academic performance in most public schools in Kikuyu District.

Since the district schools are day, most girls and boys are from the local area where each particular school is located. This means that the majority of adolescent mothers who continue with their studies also take care of their babies after school. This implies that parenting students are also continuously in touch with their parents or guardians. The findings of the study showed that the home environment has a lot of influence on how the adolescent mothers fared in their double roles as students and mothers. The geographical and socio-economic description of Kikuyu district gave the study a useful background from which the main participants were drawn.

### **1.1.2 Research Context**

Before the launching of the Readmission Policy, girls who became pregnant were expelled immediately from school without giving them a second chance to continue with their studies (Hubbard, 2008; FAWE, 1995b). This was the situation worldwide. In most cases the father of the baby was not punished (Hubbard, 2008). Such treatment was viewed as gender discrimination and had to be dealt with like all the other gender issues such as access. One of the conferences that expressed the need to allow girls to continue with schooling even after getting pregnant was held in Mauritius in 1994 with the theme "Counting the Cost." It was organised by FAWE with support from the Government of

Mauritius. It was attended by representatives from the Ministries of Education in various African countries and members of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that supported girl-child education. During the conference, the Secretary of State for National Education in Mauritius Hon. Isabelle Tokpanou expressed the sentiments of many delegates. She stated, “If we have means, we do not want to lose these girls in the streets. Pregnancy is an error of youth. We must do everything in fact it is the duty of society to recuperate them” (FAWE, 1995a, p.13). The delegates agreed to put pressure on their governments to give second chances in education for girls who get pregnant while in school.

Various national conferences on education have been held in Kenya since independence (1963) especially between 1990 and 1995. Those that focused on gender and education were held in Nyeri (1992) and Machakos (1994). As a follow-up of the Machakos conference, a national task force on gender and education was established in 1995 to monitor gender issues and provide advice to the MOE. One of these issues was to allow girls who get pregnant while in school to continue with their studies (MOE, 2007). Since then, it has been government policy to allow readmission of these girls in order to reduce the high female drop-out rates in secondary schools (EMIS 2002-2008). The Readmission Policy is based on the emphasis that education for all is paramount. Both boys and girls should have equal access to education without discrimination on gender. According to the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP) Report (2005), the MOE has been working hand in hand with other stakeholders such as FAWEK, Girl Child Network (GCN), Girl Education Movement (GEM), Kenya Adolescent Reproductive Health Project (KARPH), Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) and Women Education Researchers of Kenya (WERK), to put measures in place for promoting girls’



education in Kenya. This includes readmission of adolescent mothers in schools. It was hoped that allowing readmission would also discourage abortion by school girls (Chege & Sifuna, 2006). MOE circular on the policy was sent out to schools in 1999 through the Provincial, District and Municipal Education Officers. One of the conditions of the policy was that pregnant girls should stay at home for one year before resuming their studies or until the baby was weaned. Other countries in Africa such as Malawi, Namibia and Zimbabwe with the Readmission Policy had a similar condition.

Allowing readmission of adolescent mothers to school in and outside Kenya was received with mixed reactions as shown by writers and studies conducted on girl education and Readmission Policy (Oywecha, 2008; Mulama, 2007; Chigona & Chetty, 2007; Kibogy, 2005; Mwale, 2005; Omwanacha, 2004; FAWE 2004b; FAWE, 1996). Many teachers and heads of schools in various countries were opposed to the idea of readmitting adolescent mothers. The blame was put on the girls. Some believed they would be of negative influence to other girls (Bhana et al, 2010; Chigona & Chetty, 2007; Njau & Wamahiu, 1995). For example, Njau and Wamahiu (1995) cited in FAWEK (2001) reported how teachers “argued that the retention of pregnant girls will set a bad example and negatively influence other girls to become pregnant” (p. 58). When the issue was discussed in Parliament, a member was reported saying that “allowing pregnant girls to remain in school was like contaminating good potatoes with rotten ones” (FAWE, 1995a, p.60). Examples of negative reactions towards readmission by stakeholders that have been reported by researchers in other countries include: South Africa (Bhana et al., 2010; Chigona & Chetty, 2007), Namibia (Shaningua, 2007), USA (Smith Battle, 2007) and Zambia (FAWE, 2004b). In some cases, reaction depended on the community’s culture. In some communities, childbearing is traditionally associated with adult status (Kyalo &

Yunguny, 2001; Njau & Wamahu, 1994). As a result girls who get pregnant would be encouraged to marry rather than go back to school. Additionally, some parents view going back to school as wastage of scarce resources since they assume pregnancy would affect academic performance (Oywecha, 2008). Ignorance about the policy has also been reported (Oywecha, 2008; Omwancha, 2004; Elimu Yetu Coalition, 2003).

In spite of the negative reactions against the Readmission Policy, some success stories and positive attitudes towards the policy have been reported in Kenya. Examples are Nyakach Girls High School in Sondu and the African Inland Church (AIC) Girls' School in Kajiado. Heads of such schools make deliberate efforts to carry out strategies that make the policy popular (FAWE, 1995c). Examples of such strategies according to FAWE (2001) include: vigilance to detect cases of pregnancy, informing and counselling parents, counselling the girls affected, giving guidance and counselling talks to all students by teachers and guest speakers and assisting the girls affected to continue with studies either in the same school or in a sister school.

Criticisms of the Policy by stakeholders included the one year rule as a condition for readmission and lack of clear policy guidelines. The one year rule came to be seen as a punishment for the girls affected. Such girls felt stigmatised and often gave up going back to school. Additionally, arguments such as encouragement of immorality and indiscipline in schools (Omwancha, 2004) should not be justification for refusal to allow pregnant students to continue with education (FAWE, 2008). Today, girls who get pregnant are not sent home immediately. This is evidenced by numerous cases where girls give birth during examinations in Kenya especially Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). Due to the various reactions and criticisms, the Government has reviewed the whole Gender and Education Policy and

come up with clearer implementation guidelines for each section (MOE, March 2011). The following is a summary of the guidelines on student pregnancy and adolescent mothers in schools as stated in the Government Readmission Policy (MOE, 2011, pp. 17-21):

1. Appropriate guidance and counselling services must be available and offered to all boys and girls in schools in order to help them feel proud of their bodies. Aspects covered should include various areas such as academic, career, boy-girl relationships, sexuality awareness, living values and life-skills education.

School girls who get pregnant and their parents or guardians should be counselled appropriately. The school counsellor should offer as much support and counsel the girl carefully in order to deal with psychological disturbance caused by the pregnancy. Adequate consultation should be made between the parents, school and the students to facilitate schooling.

2. There is no specified period of leave of absence; the girl should join school as soon as possible. At no time should a girl be coerced to leave school because she is pregnant. She shall leave school at an appropriate time so as to give birth. As much as possible, little time should be wasted outside school before and after delivery; the girl should join school at an appropriate time after giving birth. The parents/guardian should be on constant communication with the school management on the progress of the girl. The girl can be readmitted in the same school or another one. If the girl is registered for the national examination, she must be allowed to sit for the examinations, unless she prefers otherwise.

3. The school management should create awareness among the teachers, parents, boys and girls on the Readmission Policy. The awareness could be created through various forums such as school assemblies, school clubs and societies, Parents

Teachers' Association (PTA) meetings, prize giving day, staff meetings and during open forums of student-teacher interactions. The school management should also build capacity of the guidance and counselling department and the school medical personnel on their role in implementing the policy. The head teacher should emphasize to the parents the need for the girl to continue with studies. A schoolboy who makes a girl pregnant in the same or different school should also be counselled.

4. Teachers should give support to girls who get pregnant. A teacher who is aware of such a case should handle it with utmost confidentiality to avoid stigmatisation of the student affected. The girl should be encouraged to continue with school even before the birth of the child. Cases that cannot be handled by teachers should be referred to the guidance and counselling specialist in the school. Where necessary a teacher should give remedial classes. Teachers should make use of life skills education, class meetings, school clubs and societies and other forums to create awareness among the boys and girls on the re-entry policy.
5. Girls and boys also have responsibilities. They should engage in healthy boy-girl relationship and participate in peer mentorship. Peer mentorship is where boys and girls are able to talk to each other on matters affecting them. Girls who get pregnant (or a boy who makes a girl pregnant) should confide in a trusted adult or counsellor. The girl should continue with learning. After delivery, she can go back to the same school or transfer to another school. She should receive proper medical services for antenatal and postnatal care.
6. Parents or guardians should encourage their daughters who get pregnant to continue with school and offer moral support. The parents should also ensure appropriate

medical attention is given in addition to needed resource for the girl and the baby. They should also be involved in making decisions about returning to the same school or transfer to another one.

7. The Ministry of Education should monitor implementation of the policy in schools. Reported cases of pregnancy should be followed. The MOE should also mobilise parents, PTAs, School Management Committees (SMCs) and Board of Governors (BOGs) to follow-up on students who drop out from schools/or who are adversely affected by pregnancy. Additionally, the Ministry should capacity build school management and teachers on the policy and mobilise resource for provision of medical services (clinics, sanatoriums, school nurses and school open day for free medical check-up).
8. Teachers Service Commission (TSC) should recruit guidance and counselling specialists to provide required services in schools. Stern disciplinary measures should be administered to teachers who are involved in sexual misconduct with boys and girls.
9. Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI), formerly Kenya Education Staff Institute, has a responsibility in capacity building of the guidance and counselling department and the school medical personnel on their role in implementing the policy. KEMI should also capacity build school management and teachers on the same.

Some major observations can be made from the outlined Readmission Policy Guidelines. First, after thorough scrutiny of the revised policy on girls who get pregnant while in school, the researcher is of the opinion that there is need to revisit the title “Readmission Policy”. When the policy was launched in the 1990s, the girls had to stay at

home for one year before seeking readmission in school. Currently, if a girl gets pregnant she should continue with learning for as long as it is reasonably possible before birth of the child (MOE, 2011). The same document points out clearly that “as much as possible, little time should be wasted outside school before and after delivery – the girls should join school as soon as possible” (p.18). In view of such instructions, in reality the girl who gets pregnant is out of school only temporarily. She goes back to school to continue with studies, not to be readmitted. The term admission could be applied to those girls who continue with studies in other schools.

Secondly, from the Readmission Policy Guidelines, the roles of the main stakeholders in the implementation come out very clearly. It is also clear from the guidelines that the policy on student pregnancy goes beyond mere readmission of girls who get pregnant in regular schools and eventual completion of their basic education. The stakeholders are expected to ensure that pregnant and parenting students are able to cope as students and as mothers. Additionally, there should be continued support for the affected students. Thirdly, effective implementation of the guidelines should lead to reduction of student pregnancy in schools as a result of involving the whole school community in healthy relationships, living and mentorship among the members of the school. Studies have established a reduction of teenage pregnancy in schools where sexuality education is handled properly (FAWE, 1995b). In a book on *“Dynamic African Headmistresses in East Africa”* by FAWE (1995c), the headmistress at Weruweru Secondary school in Moshi, Tanzania is reported saying, “Seminars on morality and sexuality awareness have contributed to the radical reduction of unwanted pregnancies in the school” (p. 9). As indicated in various reports, sexual health issues are crucial and relevant for the young people (Meece & Daniels, 2008; Kiragu, 2007; Centre for the Study of Adolescents (CSA), 2004; CSA &

UNICEF, 2003; Ministry of Health (MOH), 2003). Further, encouragement of participation in peer mentorship among boys and girls is seen as one way of reducing adolescence pregnancy in schools (MOE, 2011).

In consideration of all of the above, the study sought to find out the roles the stakeholders are playing to ensure effectiveness of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on student pregnancy and adolescent mothers in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District with a view to determine the strengths, weaknesses and challenges in regard to its implementation.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The focus of the study was to find out how the stakeholders are carrying out their roles in the implementation of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on adolescent mothers in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District. In spite of increased enrolment of girls in secondary schools (Table 2) which include readmission of adolescent mothers, the transition in education for girls and women to higher levels such as university has remained very low according to the reports by the District Education Officers. In view of this and especially on the implementation of the Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers, most studies and surveys on girl education in Kenya have focussed on the problem of drop-outs among girls due to pregnancy and other reasons (Kibogy, 2005; Marete, 2005; Kyalo & Yungunyu, 2001; Wamahiu, 1995; Njau & Wamahiu, 1994). Other studies are based on whether girls who get pregnant in school are readmitted or not (Oywecha, 2008; Omwancha, 2004). Interactions with the DEO, teachers and school administrations in Kikuyu District showed that there are no known cases where adolescent mothers are denied readmission. The motivation behind this study was a need to establish

how the adolescent mothers in schools are able to cope with their double roles as students and as mothers especially considering that they are in a crucial phase of their lives.

Information on the kind of expectations and dreams these adolescent mothers have when they decide to continue schooling, in addition to the kind of support they get to encourage them not to give up should help to identify the challenges involved . Provision of support is cited by researchers as key to empowerment for adolescent mothers and pregnant girls in schools (Bhana et al, 2010; Chigona and Chetty, 2007). Steps taken and decisions made in relation to students who get pregnant and adolescent mothers in schools are crucial in determining the kind of future they will have. That is why the study sought to establish whether these girls are self-motivated or whether they are coerced to complete their studies, in addition to the extent to which they are coping. Additionally, the study also intended to find out the extent to which the Readmission Policy Guidelines on creation of sexuality awareness, self-respect, self-esteem and healthy relationships among boys and girls are being implemented in order to reduce pregnancy in schools. Literature review showed that studies on Readmission Policy have not taken this guideline into consideration (Oywecha, 2008; Omwancha, 2004). Further, there is a great challenge in relation to sexual activity among boys and girls in schools, and rising cases of teenage pregnancy in Kikuyu District according to the DEO and other community leaders. The extent to which this behaviour was contributing to student pregnancy was also a concern in this study. Therefore, the key question that was addressed in this study was: “To what extent are the stakeholders carrying out their roles to implement the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on adolescent mothers in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District?”



### **1.3 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent are the stakeholders in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District aware of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on adolescent mothers?
2. To what extent are the key stakeholders in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District prepared to implement Readmission Policy Guidelines effectively?
3. In what ways are the key stakeholders using the Government Readmission Policy to raise aspirations of the adolescent mothers in their studies?
4. In what ways do key stakeholders in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District respond to the Readmission Policy Guidelines?
5. What challenges do stakeholders in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District face in the process of promoting effective implementation of the Readmission Policy on student pregnancy?
6. How best can the stakeholders' roles in implementing the Government Readmission Policy be improved?

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

Cases of girls getting pregnant while in school present challenges to all stakeholders in education and to the community as a whole. The Government Readmission Policy is an attempt to meet these challenges. The study should not only be beneficial to researchers interested in further investigation on adolescent mothers in schools, but it should also have a great contribution to theory. As researchers carry out further studies on the issue of student pregnancy they are likely to come up with a theory that explains the phenomenon. As stated by Kerlinger and Lee (2000), a theory explains phenomena “by specifying which

variables are related to which variables and to certain other variables” (p. 11). In the same vein, various stakeholders are likely to benefit from this study.

First, the policymakers in the area of gender and education especially in relation to the Readmission Policy should find the study useful in the preparation of field officers, the school management, teachers, and school counsellors for effective implementation of the policy guidelines. It is important to note that challenges are expected in any programme implementation as explained by Rossi, Treeman and Lypsey (1999) cited by Mbugua (2008). They assert:

No matter how well the programmes are planned, unexpected results and unwanted side effects often surface in the course of programme implementation. Programme designers and managers need to know rapidly and fully about these problems so that changes can be made as soon as possible in the programme design (p. 14).

As Kothari (2004) indicates, through research, we can devise alternative policies as well as examine the effectiveness of each. Any changes made should involve planning strategies for follow-up by field officers in order to achieve more effective implementation. In relation to policy making, the findings of the study should also help the policy implementing agencies such as the MOE, TSC and KEMI to see the urgent need to collaborate to ensure that schools are staffed with qualified counsellors, teachers, school managers and medical personnel. The MOE should be influenced to work closely with KIE in order to produce materials that would guide teachers in mainstreaming important messages from the guidelines in the course of their teaching various courses such as Life Skills Education, Home Science, Religious Studies, Language and Literature in addition to co-curricular activities.

The school managers should find the findings of the study a useful guide in evaluating the approaches they use to have the guidelines implemented by the various stakeholders of the school. In their efforts to empower the boys and girls in school to face life challenges such as those related to sexuality, pregnancy, relationships, moral integrity and career choices, teachers and counsellors should find the findings of this study handy as they critique what they do and make meaningful adjustments. The Readmission Policy shows clearly the crucial roles of counsellors and teachers in the school. In the same vein, the findings of the study should cause the school sponsors to take more interest in what is happening in their schools and play a more active role than they are doing.

The study should also contribute in making parents and the community appreciate the need to instil moral values in the youth in addition to the need for girls to continue with schooling and achieve their dreams even after getting pregnant. Parents are expected to give more support and encouragement to their children when they are faced with challenges. As Mulama (2007) states, “Pregnancy of a school girl should not be the end of the road to education.”

NGOs with concern for gender inequalities and committed to gender and education such as FAWE, GCN, GEM and WERK would likely benefit from the findings of this study especially in their work of advancing education for both boys and girls. They would seek to work more closely with the Government to achieve more effective implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines.

### **1.5 Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

The study focused on the public girls’ and mixed secondary schools in Kikuyu District. Implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on student pregnancy covers different aspects such as preparation and creation of awareness among stakeholders

both in and outside schools, catering for individual's differences among the adolescent mothers, monitoring and meeting challenges that might arise. However, this study was specifically on how the stakeholders directly related to schools respond to the Readmission Policy Guidelines to make implementation effective. These stakeholders include: the school principals and their deputies, school counsellors, teachers, adolescent mothers in school, their parents/guardians, the DEO in Kikuyu and KEMI officials in charge of training. All were found to be in the best position to provide useful information on how the implementation of the policy is being carried out including any concerns and challenges involved.

Use of mainly naturalistic approach influenced the choice of one district in Kiambu County and small samples of the adolescent mothers, parents/guardians and counsellors. This choice enabled the researcher to gather in-depth data in regard to experiences of adolescent mothers through use of interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). According to Saitre (1981) cited by Denzin and Lincoln (2000), "any case studied intensively bears the traces of the universal; the assumption is that readers will be able to generalise subjectively from the case in question to their own personal experiences" (p. 202). The implication of this view is that there is a possibility of identifying experiences that could be applied elsewhere from cases studied in detail. Additionally, use of descriptive research survey to access the public schools in the district helped to supplement data obtained through interviews and FGDs, making transferability of the findings possible to a certain extent.

Girls' schools are very few in the district. To some extent this limited comparison of the phenomenon between mixed and girls' schools. However, this is a characteristic found in most districts of Kenya. It is also important to note that various categories of public

secondary schools found in other districts are also in Kikuyu. These are national, provincial, district, girls only, boys only, mixed and boarding schools. As a whole, schools in Kenya have a lot of similar characteristics. Additionally, the Government Readmission Policy and related issues would apply to all of them according to the DEO personnel. In view of these observations, it was hoped that revelations from the findings of this study would be helpful in coming up with strategies to ensure more effective implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines not just in Kikuyu but also elsewhere in Kenya.

### **1.6 Assumptions of the Study**

First, the study was based on the assumption that adolescent mothers in school face many challenges due to what is expected from them as mothers, students and as adolescents. The fact that they have become mothers when they are too young or before they are adults presents a great challenge. Findings from the data collected confirmed this assumption. Secondly, it was also assumed that the ability of the adolescent mothers to face the challenges and become motivated to do well in their studies largely depends on the support they get at home and in school. Lack of support would hamper their aspirations to cope with schooling. Thirdly, the study assumed that if the Readmission Policy Guidelines were implemented effectively, apart from empowering students affected by early pregnancy, there would also be a reduction of adolescence pregnancy in schools. Lastly, the researcher assumed that all the participants used in the study gave honest information about their experiences and what they knew.

### **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

It is important to recognise that various theories of human development and ecological systems proposed over the years help to provide explanation of children's behaviour as they go through different stages of development. However, some theories

may provide more adequate explanation than others especially when considering a particular stage of development such as adolescence which is related to this study. Examples include biological, behavioural, psychoanalytic, psychosocial and ecological theories. These will be explained briefly then the one considered most relevant to the proposed study will be discussed in more detail.

### **1.7.1 Some Theories Relevant to the Study**

Steinberg (1993) cites G.S. Hall (1904) as one of the most important biological theorists. According to Hall, biological factors play the greatest role in shaping the experience adolescents go through. In other words, going through stress and emotional turbulence at this stage is biologically determined and thus unavoidable. The individual is “hardly influenced by the environment” (Steinberg, 1993, p.460). The situation becomes complex for adolescents who become pregnant. That is why those around them should be ready to help. On the other hand, behaviourists believe that children acquire new behaviours through the processes of observation and imitation (Meece & Daniels, 2008). According to Bandura (1989) cited by Meece and Daniels, observational or social learning theories have been used to explain social skills, sex-role behaviour, attitudes, moral judgments and standards of conduct. The environmental inputs in behavioural theories are viewed as important; these could be positive or negative. In this regard, stakeholders in the Government Readmission Policy should be aware of their influence on the students affected by pregnancy.

Psychoanalytic theories focus on developmental changes in the self and personality (Meece & Daniels, 2008; Steinberg, 1993). According to Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic theory, development is best understood in terms of psychosexual conflicts that arise at different stages of development (Teklemariam, 2008; Steinberg, 1993). He advances five

psychosexual stages of development. Freud views the adolescence/genital stage as a period of upheaval. As pointed out by Dobson (1984), “it is this period of self-doubt that the personality is often assaulted and damaged beyond repair” (p. 192). The adolescent’s ability to adjust and resolve conflicts is thought to be determined largely by her early childhood experience (Ruch & Zimbardo, 1971). The psychoanalysts stress the importance of childhood experience on later personality development, adjustment and decision making. Closely related to psychoanalytic theories is Erik Erikson’s model of Eight Stages of Development and their corresponding psychosocial crises. The theory indicates that children resolve new issues as they mature. This theory would guide researchers to identify measures taken by stakeholders to establish caring relationships and understanding with adolescent mothers.

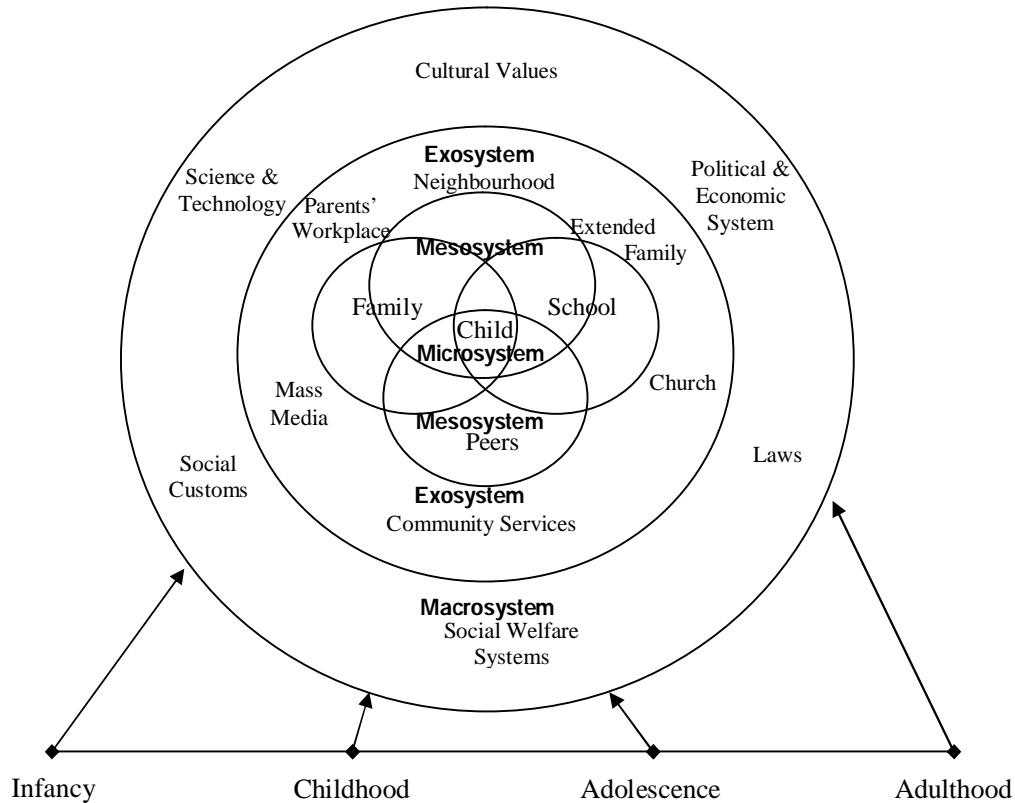
Lastly, ecological theorists explain child development from a systems perspective. According to this, “educators, parents, policy makers and other professionals working with children, youth and families are together capable of creating school environments that nurture students’ development and potential as human beings” (Meece & Daniels, 2008, p.499). Below, the ecological systems theory/model according to Bronfenbrenner (1979) is discussed in detail as it was considered most relevant in guiding the researcher in this study.

### **1.7.2 Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory**

The study was guided by Bronfenbrenner’s contextual model of development which in a way has some similarities with behavioural and psychoanalytic theories which emphasise social influences on the individual. The Ecological Systems Theory looks at a child’s development within the context of the system of relationships that form his or her

environment. The complex “layers” of environment as shown in Figure 1 are defined. Each has effects on a child’s development and behaviour.

**Figure 1: Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory**



**Source: Bronfenbrenner (1979) cited by Meece and Daniels (2008, p. 500). The arrows are used to illustrate that the various environmental contexts have tremendous influence on individuals during each stage of development.**

As illustrated in Figure 1, the microsystem is the layer closest to the child; it encompasses the relationships and interactions a child has with her immediate surroundings. These include the family, school, peers and neighbourhood. According to Bronfenbrenner, influences are strongest and have greatest impact on the child at the microsystem level or inner layer. The theory focuses on the quality and context of the child’s environment. The crucial role of those around the child in meeting physical and emotional needs is emphasised. As far as the implementation of the Government



Readmission Policy is concerned, parents, school managers, the school counsellors and teachers fit in well in the microsystem level according to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. The level of support given to the girls by these stakeholders will determine the effectiveness of implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines. Adolescent mothers with sources of unconditional love and support at home, in school and the neighbourhood are more likely to cope with their situation and are in a better position to make the right decisions (Steinberg, 1993).

In view of the above observations, the responsibilities of each stakeholder are outlined clearly in the Readmission Guidelines. For example, parents are expected to accept all their children unconditionally and help to empower them to complete their studies irrespective of their condition. According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, relationships within immediate environment (microsystem level) are meant to last a life-time and thus very crucial in contributing to effective implementation of the Readmission Guidelines. Breakdown in relationships at this level would have great negative impact on the girls who become pregnant while in school. If not given support, it is easy for the adolescent mothers to become withdrawn, to be filled with self-doubt and to feel valueless and unworthy (Banks and Thompson, 1995). That is why the Readmission Policy Guidelines emphasise need for effective guidance and counselling services in schools (MOE, 2011). A girl who might find it difficult to make a crucial decision like continuing with education requires a lot of guidance.

The mesosystem level according to Bronfenbrenner provides the connection between the structures of the child's microsystem. A good example is the connection between the school and the child's parents. This relationship has a great implication in effective implementation of the Readmission Guidelines. It is important for counsellors,

teachers and the school administration to encourage active involvement of the parents. They should be made aware of the importance of the policy on education of both boys and girls. Schools and teachers according to Bronfenbrenner should work to support the relationships at the microsystem layer and create an environment that welcomes and nurtures families (Berk, 2000). It is important for the school counsellor to find out what is happening in homes. Bronfenbrenner suggests that if there is a breakdown at home, schools can provide the missing bond by creating stable relationships through teachers and counsellors.

The exosystem defines the larger social system in which the child does not function directly. The structures in this layer impact the child's development by interacting with some structures in her microsystem (Berk, 2000). Examples are influences brought about by the extended family, parents' workplace, the church, mass media and community services. It is also important to note that, behaviour among children today could significantly be affected by the emerging social groups such as movie stars, musicians, leaders in addition to the new technological developments (Teklemariam, 2008). According to Bronfenbrenner, all these structures could be enhanced for positive development of individuals in the microsystem level. Apart from the stakeholders featured in the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines there could be other influences such as religious organisations, members of the extended family who can contribute to effective implementation. In fact the findings of the study revealed that in most cases where parents do not accept what has happened, it is older sisters, aunts and grandparents who have become handy in providing the needed support. At times, parents have been influenced by relatives and religious groups to embrace their daughters after getting pregnant.

Macrosystem is the outermost layer in the child's development. There is no specific framework of the structures in this level. Examples include cultural values of the communities, laws and customs, political and economic systems. These can affect all the other layers directly or indirectly. For example, Bronfenbrenner sees the instability and unpredictability of family life created by the economy as the most destructive force to a child's development (Addison, 1992). Such a situation could have a lot of implication on the retention of girls who get pregnant in the school system. Due to limited resources, many parents are faced with the challenge of inability to support their daughter's education and also cater for the needs of the baby.

As a whole, Bronfenbrenner's ideas in his theory were very useful in guiding the study as it contributed to the framework of approaches that were used to gather relevant data from the participants. The idea of relationships and their importance came out clearly. These were viewed as crucial in this study if effective implementation of the guidelines is to be realised. The implication of Bronfenbrenner's theory is that if the boys and girls (especially the latter) affected by pregnancy in school are not well counselled, they might easily develop emotional, psychological anxiety and stress leading to inability to make the right decisions like continuing with studies, coping with motherhood and taking their work seriously.

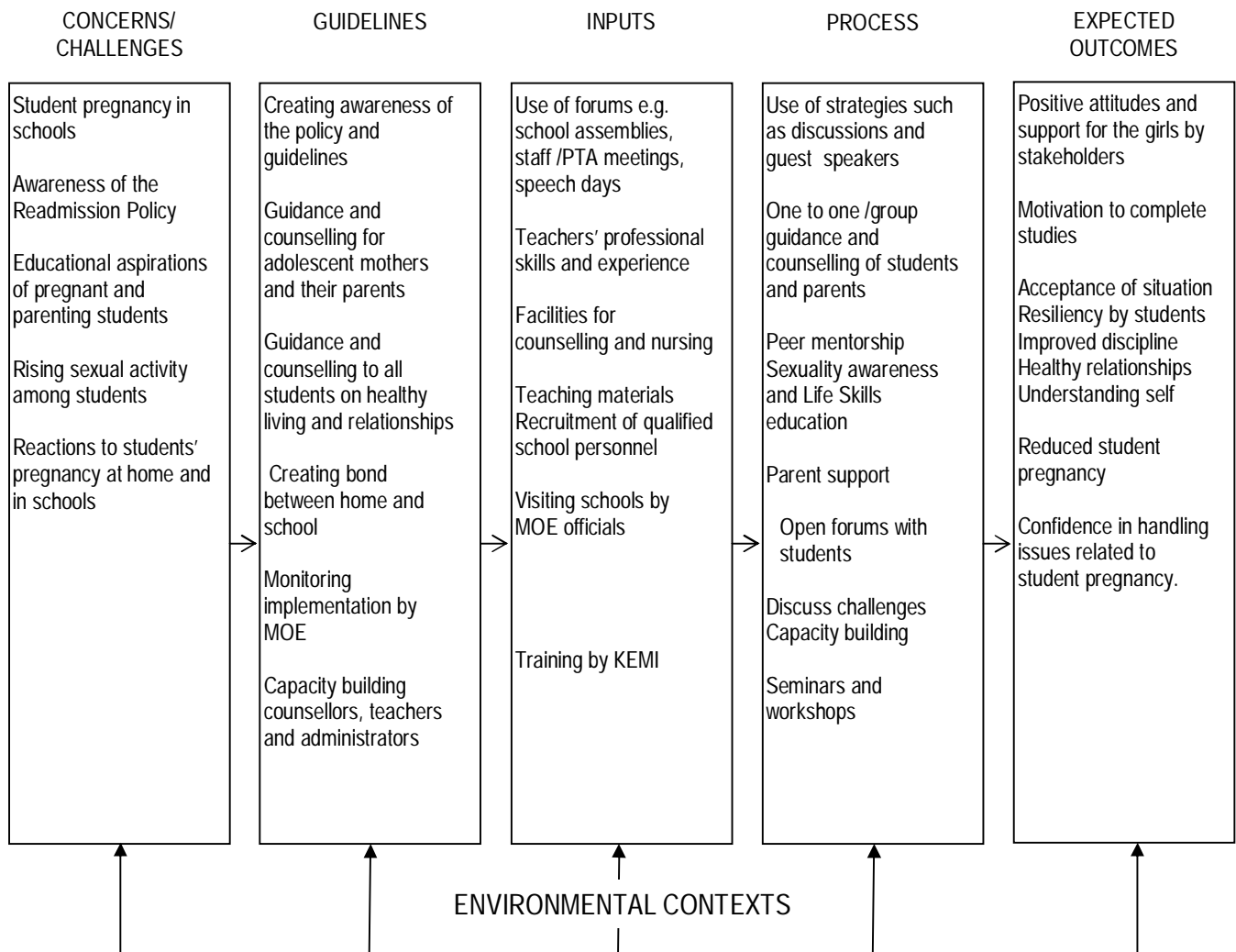
### **1.8 Conceptual Framework of Implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on Adolescent Mothers in Secondary Schools**

The study was based on the concerns and challenges related to implementation of the Government Readmission policy on adolescent mothers in Public Secondary schools in Kikuyu District. The conceptual framework that gave the study direction is closely related

to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory that explains how development of individuals is influenced by multiple contexts (Meece & Daniels, 2008).

The framework portrays the relationship between the independent variables (reflected by inputs and processes involved) and dependent variables (reflected by the expected outcomes). Effective implementation of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines depends on various factors. These factors include: effective strategies for creating awareness of the policy; guidance and counselling skills; support given to adolescent mothers by the school and parents; commitment by education officers to prepare stakeholders and monitor the implementation; and collaboration between all the stakeholders in the process of implementing the policy. Requirements for effective implementation are clearly reflected by the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on student pregnancy in schools in Kenya. Responsibility of making the guidelines clear to the stakeholders lies mainly with the school administration/management. All the stakeholders concerned should be in a position to appreciate the outcomes of effective implementation of the guidelines. These include improved student retention in schools, positive attitudes among stakeholders towards adolescent mothers, motivation of adolescent mothers to achieve the best for their future, healthy relationships between boys and girls, resiliency by both in their decision making leading to reduced pregnancy in schools. This realisation should motivate the stakeholders to participate fully in their roles as stipulated. These interrelationships are portrayed in the conceptual framework in Figure 2:

**Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of Implementing Government Readmission Policy  
on Adolescent Mothers in Public Secondary Schools in Kikuyu District**



**Note: the arrows between the columns illustrate the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The effectiveness of the Government policy on student pregnancy is determined to a large extent on the environment of the student as indicated by the arrows pointing upwards.**

### 1.9 Operational Definition of Key Terms

**Adolescence** is a term derived from the Latin word “adolescere” which means to grow into maturity (Getui & Theuri, 2001). It is a stage in one’s life between childhood and adulthood. Adolescents are also referred to as teenagers.

**Basic Education** refers to agreed level of Education for All (EFA). This study considers basic education as completion of primary and secondary school cycles (MOE, 2007).

**Drop-outs** are students who leave school prior to completion of a cycle or before fulfilling the requirements for a certain level of education.

**Empowerment** is a process through which men, women, boys and girls acquire knowledge and skills and develop attitudes to critically analyse their situations and take appropriate action to improve their status. It is “about everyone taking control of their lives, setting their own agenda, building self-confidence, solving problems and becoming self-reliant” (UNESCO, 2005, p. 4).

**Gender** is used to spell out the socially determined male and female differentiation in roles, functions, power relations and entitlement.

**Gender Discrimination** refers to unequal or preferential treatment to individuals or groups based on their gender resulting into reduced access or control of resources and opportunities (MOE, 2011).

**Gender Equity** is the practice of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits, access to and control of resources, responsibilities, power, opportunities and services. It leads to elimination of all forms of discrimination based on gender.

**Gender Responsiveness** is action taken to correct gender imbalances.

**Guidance and Counselling** is the process of assisting an individual to understand herself/himself and her/his environment and adjust to various situations such as adolescence pregnancy.

**Peer Educators** in a school are trained mature students involved in mentoring and guiding their fellow students or peers on various issues.

**Peer Mentorship** is a situation where boys and girls are able to positively influence each other on matters affecting them. It involves creating an environment where mature and understanding students or peer educators are able to encourage fellow students facing challenges.

**Readmission Policy** is the document prepared by the MOE to ensure that girls who get pregnant in school continue with their studies. Such students are allowed to break their studies temporarily to give birth.

**Reproductive Health** is defined as a complete physical, mental and social well-being in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes (MOE, 2011). Adolescence Reproductive Health Education should help adolescents find their personal and sexual identity.

**Resiliency** refers to resolution to get over difficult circumstances and continue with ones plans. Resilient students are able to face challenges and adapt to different situations.

**Roles** are responsibilities or functions that different persons in an institution or stakeholders are expected to carry out in order to achieve the set objectives.

**Sexuality** is the state of being male and female. It includes body, mind, feelings, emotions, will and spirit, as men and women. In other words it is the total makeup of a female and the total makeup of a male (Wachira, 2000).

**Sexuality Awareness** means understanding of one's sexuality (being a girl or a boy). One needs to be especially aware of the physical changes and the secondary sexual characteristics that occur at puberty (about 10-14 years) and the whole adolescence period. Sexuality/self-awareness, self-knowledge by boys and girls should help them to make informed choices.

**Stakeholders** refer to persons or organisations that have interests, concerns, share in responsibility, contribution or obligation towards an institution such as a school.

**Teenage Mothers** refer to girls who become pregnant when they are 13-19 years old. The alternative term is adolescent mothers.

**Wastage in Education** is used in reference to a situation where education objectives have not been achieved in spite of numerous resources having been used. Failure to complete a school cycle is seen as wastage in education.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In order to understand the factors and challenges facing implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on student pregnancy in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District, it is necessary to discuss various aspects of literature. The categories of literature reviewed are from relevant government reports, journal articles, books, theses and various studies carried out on Readmission Policy in and outside Kenya. These guided the researcher to identify the knowledge gaps left in order to be more objective and focused in responding to them.

First, the chapter reviews literature on gender concerns worldwide over the years before introduction of the Readmission Policy on girls who get pregnant in schools. The second part of the chapter contains reviewed literature directly related to the readmission of adolescent mothers. The following are the sub-topics used to guide the review: Importance of Gender Equity in Education; International Conventions and Conferences on Gender in Education in and Outside Kenya; Challenges of Adolescence Pregnancy in Relation to Gender in Education in and Outside Kenya; Gender Policy in Education in Kenya; Readmission of Adolescent Mothers in Schools; Studies on General Reactions of Stakeholders to Government Readmission Policy on Adolescent Mothers; Guidance and Counselling Services in Relation to Adolescence Pregnancy and Readmission in Schools; Other Essential Factors for Effective Implementation of Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on Adolescence Pregnancy in Schools; Available Studies on Implementation of the Readmission Policy: an International Perspective; Available Studies on

Implementation of the Readmission Policy: a Kenyan Perspective. The chapter ends with Summary of Reviewed Literature and Research Gaps.

## **2.2 Importance of Gender Equity in Education**

One practice of fairness recognised by gender equity is the right to education for both boys and girls. Adolescence pregnancy and issues related to it are part of gender in education. The issue has been one of the major challenges in education in and outside Kenya. It has taken decades for countries particularly in Africa to realise the loss incurred by discrimination in education and other areas of development on the grounds of gender. To achieve holistic development for both boys and girls it is crucial to create awareness of human rights which include gender equity in education. This is because when individuals are ignorant of their rights they are likely to be subjected to discrimination in matters related to education, development and empowerment (MOE, 2007).

The International Human Rights Law guarantees all people equal rights irrespective of any pre-condition. This is shown clearly by articles 1, 2 and 26 of the United Nations (UN) Declaration of Human Rights (UNO, 1948):

Article 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

Article 2: Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language, birth or other status.

Article 26:(i) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible on the basis of merit.

- (ii) Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. (<http://www.un.org/en/documents/undhr>)

The implication of these articles is that all are entitled to education simply based on the fact that they are human beings. Access to and completion of education is a key determinant to the accumulation of human capital and economic growth (MOE, 2011). Other wide range of benefits such as better health and high self-esteem are also associated with completion of education. It has been internationally accepted that the future of the African continent and the world as a whole depends on the relationship between the sexes in development (Chege & Sifuna, 2006; UNESCO, 2005; FAWE, 2001).

In his discussion on preferential treatment of boys, Summers (1992) refers to girl education as having a multiplier effect. He argues that recognition of educating girls is very crucial especially in the developing world. He warns against statements such as “boys are more intelligent than girls,” “girls are less successful than boys,” because they are just myths. As noted by Maluwa-Banda (2003), today there is a realisation worldwide that education for both boys and girls is crucial. He states:

Education of boys and girls with a gender-based framework is widely acknowledged as being a single, most powerful vehicle of self-advancement. In a more specific way, education of the girl-child is acknowledged to be the foundation of any national development and plays an important role in ensuring a safer, healthier and more environmentally solid world (p. 20).

Similar sentiments were expressed by the President of the United States Barack Obama when addressing women's rights in his speech in Egypt on 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2009. According to him, a woman who is denied education is denied equality. He argued:

It is not coincidence that countries where women are well educated are far more likely to be prosperous. Our daughters can contribute just as much to society as our sons and our common prosperity will be advanced by allowing all humanity – men and women – to reach their full potential (Obama, 2009 – <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/04>).

During the plenary address at the 'Dakar Framework for Action' conference, Nafis Sadik, executive Director of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), expressed the same view when he explained why educating girls must be a priority. Like Obama, he said that 'countries which have invested in education for girls as part of their education priorities and as part of an integrated approach to social development have seen excellent results' (Bhaskara, 2003 p. 14). He urged the countries to put aside any doubts and fears they might have about educating girls and women. PLO Lumumba, a former Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission (KACC) Director, alluded to the same sentiments when he spoke during the re-launch of the Business and Professional Women Club of Kenya, 2010. He told women they are capable of transforming the country economically. He advised:

As professional women, you must set the pace by doing things differently and that is the spirit that must guide you always if you want to realise your potential... You must be guided by wisdom of doing things in the right way at the right time and by doing that you will soar high like the eagle and attain your intended targets (Daily Nation, December 7, 2010).

Lumumba also added that women had a great role in making Kenya realise its Vision 2030 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). To support this, observations made by studies indicate that when both boys and girls study in a conducive environment they perform equally well (Kimani, 2006; Wambua, 2005; FAWE, 2001, 1995; Barngetuny, 1999). A woman or a girl who believes in herself has the power to create a new community since she is entrusted with a lot of responsibility in character building of those around her right from infancy (Ayanga, 1999). The fact that a student becomes pregnant while in school should not stop her from being proud of her uniqueness and potential as a woman and from developing her interests and talents to the highest level possible.

The adolescent mother who lacks support in order to cope with both studies and parenting or one who has dropped out of school would not realise her potential the way expressed by President Obama, Nafis Sadik, PLO Lumumba, Maluwa-Banda and Ayanga. In this regard, the ideas of Paulo Freire (1993) in this study are considered relevant to anyone who is denied or not helped to use opportunity of participation in transforming the society. In his studies on philosophy of education, Freire (1993) expressed his concern for those submerged in a 'culture of silence' which is encouraged by the banking concept of education. This is the situation where students are not given room to develop critical consciousness which should help them discover themselves and their potential, as well as adapt to challenges in their lives. This is normally the case in countries like Kenya where marks and grades are emphasised in Basic Education. Pregnant and parenting adolescents who have gone through such a system might not be able to reason out what is beneficial for them. That is why support by stakeholders especially parents, school counsellors and teachers is very crucial as outlined by the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines.

One of the eight MDGs, to be achieved by 2015, is promotion of gender equity and empowering of women (MOE, July 2007). The Vision 2030 development process launched by His Excellency former President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2006, also includes gender equity in power and resource distribution between the sexes. In part the document points out the aim: “to increase opportunities all-round among women, youth and all disadvantaged groups. Specific strategies will involve increasing the participation of women in all economic, social and political decision-making processes” (Republic of Kenya, 2007, p. 2). Such strategies are born in mind when girls as well as boys affected by pregnancy while in school are encouraged to develop high self-esteem and confidence in order to be motivated to complete and perform well in their studies.

While promoting education of both boys and girls, men and women, it is important to bear in mind the large number of women in the country. Results of the population census in Kenya (2009) released by Planning Minister Wycliffe Oparanya showed that females are slightly more than males by 225,181 (Republic of Kenya, 2010). The same statistics also indicate that there are more women in rural areas (13,209,675) than male population which stands at 12,913,647. Additionally, most of the country’s population consists of young people between 1 and 39 according to the census statistics. Girls who become pregnant while in school fall into this age bracket. That is why the MOE Readmission Guidelines should be taken seriously. Benefits of educating boys and girls, men and women have been highlighted by educationists all over the world. The benefits would not be only for individual development and fulfilment but also for the family, community and country’s development. As indicated earlier, countries have realised the loss incurred by discrimination on the grounds of gender. Holistic development is affected (MOE, 2007; Kimani, 2006; UNESCO, 2005; Maluwa-Banda, 2003; Summers, 1992).

### **2.3 International Conventions and Conferences on Gender in Education in and Outside Kenya**

Years after the UN declaration and emphasis on Education for All (EFA), girls and women continue to be denied equal opportunities to education and participation in development. Discussions on gender and education are based on the International Human Rights Law (Chege & Sifuna, 2006; UNESCO, 2005; Bhaskara, 2003). Realisation of challenges girls and women world-wide were facing brought various countries together to discuss the gender issues contributing to the situation. These included: denial of education for girls and women in the name of cultural practices and traditions; dropping out of school due to pregnancy with no chance of going back while the boys responsible continued with their studies; gender stereotypes encouraged through career aspirations, treatment by teachers, treatment by employers, boy-child preference in families, choice of courses in schools influenced by belief that some are easier for boys while others are easier for girls (Onsongo, 2010; Hubbard, 2008; MOE, 2007; Chege & Sifuna, 2006; FAWE, 2005; UNESCO, 2005; EYC, 2003). Therefore, several international conferences and conventions held on education since 1970's have taken gender issues as one of the main considerations in the agenda. This has led to the generation and adoption of documents related to the concerns. These include: Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1979, Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989; Jomtien World Conference in Thailand 1990; Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action 1993; Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action 1995; World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen 1995; The Dakar Framework of Action on EFA and MDGs 2000 in addition to The Solemn Declaration on Gender Equity in Africa

by the Africa Union's Heads of States and Government in Addis Ababa 2004, (MOE, 2007). In this latter declaration, the African countries agreed to take specific measures to ensure the education of girls and literacy of women especially in rural areas where there has been a lot of discrimination.

It was at Jomtien that the countries came up with the Education for All (EFA) policy. Signatories were required to set goals and targets to be achieved by 2015. Under article 3, "Universalising Access and Promoting Equity" of the Jomtien World Conference, it was noted that the most urgent priority was to ensure access to and improve the quality of education for girls and women, and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation. Further, gender stereotyping in education should be eliminated (UNESCO, 2003). This undertaking would help to put into reality the goals of CEDAW (1979). However, by 2000, countries were far from achieving EFA. Therefore, renewed commitment was called for in order to make the vision a reality. This need led to adoption of the "Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments" (2000)

Two specific EFA goals stand out:

- Goal two of the MDGs aims to ensure that by 2015 all children particularly girls... have access and complete free and compulsory education of good quality.
- Goal six explains the commitment to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education and to achieve gender equality by 2015 with focus on encouraging girls' full and equal access to and completion of basic education (UNESCO 2005, 2003).



Achievement of these goals would help to eliminate the various aspects of gender stereotyping that have contributed to low access to education and high drop-out rate for school girls. Kenya is a good example where gender stereotyping has been noted by findings from various studies on drop-outs (Kibogy in Keiyo, 2005; Marete in Meru, 2005; Mbai in Homa Bay, 2005; Kyalo & Yungunyu in Uasin Gishu, 2001). Findings included perception by many parents that education for boys has higher returns for the family. The result is gender inequality in education in some areas of Kenya.

The international conventions including the documents they have generated show that gender equity, disparity, equality and other related issues in education are among the major concerns for the world governments. However, the same conferences over the years have also indicated concern over the failure by governments to fulfil promises made to face the challenge. According to Chege and Sifuna (2006) and Onsongo (2010), part of the failure is attributed to lack of political will and commitment by the same governments. They argue that in most cases, political declarations including those related to gender in education tend to serve political ends; thus they become difficult to monitor and evaluate. For example, referring to the National Task Force on Gender set up in 1994, Chege and Sifuna (2006) note:

The little known National Taskforce on Gender, Education and Training has remained moribund since it was set up in 1994...The handicap to the realisation of goals is neither the lack of knowledge nor of the necessary policy options, but rather the challenge seems to be one of bringing the necessary political commitments, expertise and resources in order to respond to the task (p. 139).

That is why governments are pressurised to come up with clear policies, strategies with clear targets and dates by which to measure success. Onsongo (2010) has observed that if the declarations made during the international conferences and conventions were taken seriously and used to the best advantage, the various hindrances to girl education would be overcome. Retention and readmission of girls who get pregnant while in school is one of the steps taken by various governments in and outside Africa to deal with gender issues such as stereotyping, equity, access, parity, equality, empowerment and responsiveness.

Being a signatory to the international declarations, the Government of Kenya has especially since the 1990s developed various programmes, sectors and departments through the MOE to address gender issues that affect development. Examples of these are the Ministry of Gender, a gender desk, the ministerial task force on girls' education, the National Plan of Action on EFA, 2003-2015, the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme 2005-2010, The Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2006-2011, Session Paper No. 1 of 2005 and the Ministry of Education Readmission Policy (MOE, 2007). Social justice and equal opportunities with regard to education are emphasised by all these programmes. The Government of Kenya's commitment to gender equality as envisioned in international and regional instruments on human rights has been captured in the new constitution launched in August 2010 under the Bill of Rights (Chapter Six, Number 37 and 38):

No. 37: The state shall not discriminate directly or indirectly against any person on any ground including race, sex, pregnancy, marital status...or birth.

No. 38: Girls and women have the right to equal treatment including the right to equal opportunities in politics, economic, cultural and social activities.

These sections in the new constitution should be used to address gender inequalities in Kenya. Gender issues are deliberately included in the constitution. For example, the issue of discrimination on the ground of pregnancy is addressed for the first time in the new constitution. This fact should have a bearing to the girls who get pregnant while in school.

If women are to be economically stable, the empowerment of both girls and boys must be addressed. This is supported by the chairperson of the Foundation for Women Rights, Nakuru County. She noted with concern:

As the country moves towards attaining Vision 2030, it is prudent that women's untapped skills should be utilized...it will be fruitless to take advantage of what the new constitution provides for women and at the same time fail to address issues on how to uplift and sustain women in all the spheres of life (The Standard, March 30, 2011: Opinion p.15).

Since the MOE Readmission Policy is one of the commitments by the Government of Kenya towards achievement of the gender equity in education, the study focused on investigation of the extent to which the Readmission Policy Guidelines are implemented in order to achieve quality education for adolescent mothers.

#### **2.4 Challenges of Adolescence Pregnancy in Relation to Gender in Education in and Outside Kenya**

Adolescence pregnancy is a global phenomenon. In the United States of America (USA) survey on adolescence pregnancy by Office of Technology Assessment (1991) cited by Steinberg (1993) indicated that nearly one fourth of American young women

experience pregnancy before the age of 18. Studies carried out in various parts of the USA and other countries such as the UK show a continued rise in teenage pregnancy (Vincent, 2009; McNeeley, 2006; Duncan, 2007; Smith Battle, 2006; Pillow, 2006). Findings from a demographic survey of 11 African countries indicated that 50% of teenage girls between 15 and 19 have had one or more children (Getui & Obeng, 1999). Kenya is one of the leading countries in these statistics. Youngest mothers reported in the country have given birth when they were 9-11 years (Wachira, 2000). One of the adolescent mothers in this study gave birth at the age of 12. A survey carried out by Family Planning Association of Kenya (FPAK, 2003) cited by CSA/UNICEF (2003) reported that more than 390 babies were born to teenage girls everyday in Kenya; this means more than 142,000 babies every year. Pregnancy accounts for more than 30% of all school drop-out cases among girls in Kenya according to surveys carried out by FAWEK (2001). Cases of childbearing during national examinations in Kenya (especially KCPE and KCSE) are proof of the challenge. For example during the release of the 2009 KCSE results it was reported that more than 144 girls wrote their examinations in maternity wards (Daily Nation, March 3, 2010). That is why the Readmission Policy Guidelines are also intended to encourage healthy boy-girl relationship and peer mentorship as attempts to reduce pregnancy in schools. None of the studies accessed by the researcher has taken this guideline into consideration, thus creating a knowledge gap.

According to some studies on adolescents there is a strong relationship between adolescence sexual activity and adolescence pregnancy (Meece & Daniels, 2008; Taffa & Omollo, 2003; Ukweli, June 2002; National Council for Population and Development (NCPD, 1994). A study by Taffa and Omollo (2003) is a good example. Their survey on *“Teenage Pregnancy Experience in Rural Kenya”* covered 3,137 households from 32

randomly selected communities. 1247 adolescents 12-19 years old were interviewed. Results showed that 572 (45.9%) adolescents had had sexual intercourse; of these 245 (42.8%) had been pregnant at least once. A significant majority of those who had children were not attending school. Mean age for sexual intercourse was 16 years. In most cases, findings showed that most of the teenagers were not prepared for the possible consequences of their sexual behaviour (MOH, 1988, 2003). This situation is noted in the Ministry of Health Adolescence Reproductive Health and Development Policy (MOH, 2003). The same trend has also been observed by Dellinger (2004), Cunningham (1994) and D'souza (1994). The Government of Kenya and particularly the Ministry of Health is aware that sexual activity among Kenyan young people begins early (MOH, 2003). The major characteristics manifested by the sexual behaviour include: serial monogamy or having one partner after another; brief liaisons that are easily replaced; several young people have already experienced sex with many partners by the time they are ready to get married. The concern is that such sexual behaviour among young people is leading to early pregnancy as well as sexually related diseases including HIV and AIDS. Both the MOE Policy on student pregnancy and MOH Adolescent Health and Development Policy are partly intended to deal with the challenge of sexual behaviour among the youth.

A continued trend of sexual activity among students has been reported by writers and studies in and outside Kenya (Oywecha, 2008; Omwancha, 2004; Hubbard, 2008; Dellinger, 2004; Cunningham, 1994; D'Souza, 1994). It is also noted that young girls have sex with people of different ages and categories such as peers, older or younger partners (Ukweli, 2004). As noted by the National AIDS/STD Control Programme, the majority become pregnant "before their bodies are fully grown, before they finish their education and before they are old enough to marry" (NASCOP, 1997 p. 5).

Like in Kenya, there is a large number of adolescence mothers in Namibia (Hubbard, 2008). According to Demographic and Health Survey conducted by the Ministry of Education in Namibia (2006-2007), 13% of women aged 15 to 19 were already mothers excluding those pregnant at the time. Intention to reduce adolescence pregnancy in schools is reflected in one of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on student pregnancy in Kenya. It reads:

Appropriate guidance and counselling services must be available and offered to all boys and girls in schools. These services should be on various aspects such as academic, career and subject choices, personal issues and health. Both boys and girls must be made to feel proud of their bodies. Boy-girl relationships, living values and life skills education should be imparted to both boys and girls from an early age (MOE, 2011 p. 17).

Additionally, through use of opportunities in schools such as informal student-teacher interactions, co-curricular activities, teaching life skills and other subjects, the MOE recommends creation of sexuality awareness among students (MOE, 2011). This is implied in the Readmission Policy Guideline cited above. The study intended to establish whether it is being implemented in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District.

According to the Audit Commission (1999) in the UK cited by Vincent (2009), one group that can easily lose out in their education is pregnant school girls and school girl mothers. This is because these girls are not just at risk of being early school drop-outs but they are also at risk of low levels of educational participation and poor educational outcomes. Studies have established that teen pregnancy has affected education of girls/women not just in Kenya but worldwide as many of them fail to complete their basic education. In 2007, MOE in Namibia (cited by Hubbard, 2008), reported that a total of

1465 learners dropped out of school due to pregnancy related reasons. Cases included girls as young as 14 and 15. The scenario in Kenya is similar as indicated by findings from various studies on dropouts (Kibogy, 2005; Marete, 2005; FAWE, 1995). As Steinberg (1993) points out, disruptions of studies normally have serious long-term consequences. In most cases worldwide, girls involved come from poor backgrounds; as a result they are more likely to remain poor. In such a situation children born to adolescent mothers are also more likely to suffer various types of deprivation such as health, education, balanced diet and self-reliance in addition to the negative impact of development (Dellinger, 2004; Ministry of Health, 2003). Such a situation should raise concern among educators.

Most girls who become pregnant while in school agonise in their desire to continue with education (Vincent, 2009; Smith Battle, 2007, 2006; Pillow, 2006). In the USA the “stand up girl” programme “Dear Becky” encourages adolescents who have become pregnant to express their experiences and how they feel. Below are two examples of girls who have written letters to “*Dear Becky*” (2007).

Letter one:

Dear Becky,

I am 15 years old and I am pregnant. My aunt and granny want me to keep the baby. My dad and brother said no. I don't know what I want to do. I need some help on what to do. I want to finish high school and go to college. I don't think I can do the baby thing. Please help.

Letter two:

Dear Becky,

I got pregnant at 13. I cannot bear the judgment from my colleagues, loss of friends and even my boyfriend. I have gone back to school, but I am so

stressed due to loneliness, exams, night feeds and the physical demands of motherhood.

The experiences of girls who become pregnant while in school show that even those who go back to school can be affected socially and academically due to psychological trauma, in addition to parenting roles. The Readmission Policy Guidelines stress the importance of helping such girls to deal with the psychological trauma experienced. The study was keen to find out the extent to which available counselling services in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District help pregnant and parenting students to cope with their situation. Pregnant school girls are referred to as a vulnerable group in the USA. The National Women's Law Centre (NWLC, 2007) has noted with concern that when girls drop out of school, their future, economic security, wellbeing and their families are seriously jeopardized. The organisation explains:

The more education a woman receives, the more her employment prospects improve; a woman with a university degree is many times more likely to be employed than a woman who did not complete high school. When girls stay in school the societal benefit should be recognised (p. 88).

Upchurch and McCarthy (1990) cited by NWLC (2007) point out that studies of female students have shown that dropping out of school becomes a multi-generational problem; daughters of girls who drop out also drop out and suffer similar consequences, while those of women who complete their studies are less likely to drop out of school.

Adolescence pregnancy has been associated with wastage in education since a lot of resources have already been used on girls who become pregnant while in school. Failure to continue with education implies that such resources become wasted. The Government of Kenya allocates the highest percentage of the budget to the education sector. For example,



according to the 2009 budget, education was leading with KSh.134.65 billion far above the next in rank, Roads with KSh.71.9 billion (Republic of Kenya, 2009). Additionally, the Government and other stakeholders such as parents, NGOs and church organisations spend much more in trying to cater for those who do not continue with their studies. As Abagi and Odipo (1997) point out:

These are wasted resources and could have been used to develop other sectors. Drop-out constitutes a serious drain and wasted national resources, not only because education consumes a large proportion of the national resources, but because the government and the society continue to look upon education as a productive investment (p. 3).

Districts where attitude to girl-child education is negative the impact is more serious. Marakwet is a good example. In a meeting by stakeholders in the district, the district Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (QASO), Stephen Mkolwe told the gathering that by 3<sup>rd</sup> term 2009 the district had recorded 120 cases of girls dropping out of secondary schools due to pregnancy. These cases were out of 300 girls in all the public secondary schools in the district (Weekly Citizen, September 21-27, 2009). As a result the area has continued to lag behind in development. One of the issues that have led the Government to review the Gender in Education Policy and include clear guidelines is the challenge of teenage pregnancy and the impact it has on education. That is why effective implementation of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines which are part of Gender in Education policy in Kenya is very crucial. This study was focused on the extent to which the Readmission Policy is being implemented in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District.

## **2.5 Gender Policy in Education in Kenya**

Gender Policy in Education provides “a framework for the planning and programming of gender responsive education at all levels” (MOE, 2011 p. v). The policy is a sign of commitment to the implementation of the various international declarations and goals set up during conferences and conventions. As shown by various MOE documents, the Government of Kenya is determined to achieve the EFA goals (EMIS, 2003-2007; 2002-2008; MOE, 2007; Republic of Kenya, 2005).

The major role of the Gender and Education Task Force set up in 1995 was to monitor gender issues and provide advice to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST). In part this was a sign of Kenya’s international commitment to gender equity and equality in education (Chege & Sifuna, 2006). Since independence, the constitution of Kenya has outlawed discrimination on the basis of gender. It emphasises social justice and equal opportunities with regard to education (MOE, 2007). In 2003, the need for a comprehensive gender and education policy was prompted by MOE recognition of failure to meet the various challenges related to gender in spite of the programmes and departments so far developed. These included a National Task Force for Gender and Education and a Gender Desk. Education in Kenya continued to be characterised by gender disparities in favour of males (FAWEK, 2001; Kyalo & Yungunyu, 2001; FAWE, 1996, 1995a, 1995b). Gender gaps were most evident at the higher education levels (Chege & Sifuna, 2006).

The process of developing the policy started in 2003 and was finalised in 2006 (MOE, 2007). The general objective of the Gender in Education Policy is “to establish mechanisms to eliminate all gender disparities in education, training and research in relation to access, enrolment, retention, completion, performance, transition, quality and

outcomes” (MOE, 2007, p. 7). In order to achieve this objective, a comprehensive framework of the principles and strategies were provided. The policy identifies special measures to be taken by the Government and other stakeholders to address different gender inequalities. A good example is the readmission of girls who become pregnant while in school; this is steered by the MOE with the support of the schools in the country, the MOE officials, parents and the community as a whole. According to the Gender in Education Policy and girls’ education in Kenya, the government’s efforts are carried out through collaboration with partners (MOE, 2007). These include UN agencies like UNESCO and UNICEF; international and local NGOs such as FAWE, FAWEK, CSA, GCN, GEM and WERK; church organisations such as National Christian Council of Kenya (NCCK) and Kenya Catholic Secretariat (KCS); other government ministries such as Gender and MOH; community leaders and parents. The implication of this is that all these partners can be called upon to ensure that both girls and boys benefit from government programmes and policies in education. For example FAWE and UNESCO have been very keen in following up the resolutions made in various documents (UNESCO, 2005, 2003; FAWE, 1996). While remembering 15 years of FAWE’s efforts to advance girls’ education in Africa, the report by FAWE (2008) emphasised the importance of collaboration to ensure gender empowerment. The report reads:

The lives of African girls can be changed if there is a strong voice articulating their concerns and continuously reminding educationists of their responsibilities in education. While parents, local communities, governments and the international community have repeatedly shown commitment to supporting girls schooling since 1990 World Conference on

Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand, they must be reminded of the promises made since then (p. 1).

The KESSP (Republic of Kenya, 2005) has recognised the role played by various stakeholders to empower, mobilize and sensitize the community on inhibitive cultural practices to girls' education such as early marriages, child labour and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Some of the strategies outlined by the Gender Policy in Education in order to address the challenges in participation, retention and completion especially of basic education by girls include: lobbying parents and communities to support girls' education, sensitizing them against negative socio-cultural practices, facilitating re-entry of girls who drop-out of school due to pregnancy and early marriage, and supporting in-service training of teachers in gender responsive strategies. In addition to the MOE Readmission Policy, other specific policies and programmes play a great role in the achievement of the national Gender in Education Policy objectives and strategies. These include Kenya National Commission on Gender and Development (KNCGD) under the Ministry of Gender Affairs, the Kenya National Plan on EFA, 2003-2011 and the MOE Strategic Plan, 2006-2011 (MOE, 2011). All these policies and programmes are also part of the effort by the Government to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

Some improvement of the education status of girls and women has been noted. For example, the gender gap in access to higher education in 2007 was wider than that in 2010. According to the Joint Admission Board (JAB, 2010) female students comprised 39% (7,820) of the 20,073 students selected to public universities in February 2010 compared to 31% (5,228) of the 16,629 students selected in 2007. The Joint Admission Board secretary expressed positive achievement towards gender equity. He said that the Board members

were encouraged by the gains made by females which meant that a campaign to have girls stay in the formal education system was becoming effective (JAB, 2010). However, it should be noted that this observation could be very misleading as far as girls dropping out from secondary schools due to pregnancy is concerned. It is possible for the improvement to be attributed to other reasons such as lowering the cut off points for university entry for girls by one point. That is why research is crucial to establish whether more girls are completing the secondary school cycle and whether those who are mothers are helped and supported to face challenges hence contributing to increased admission of females to public universities. As already indicated, the concern of this study was not just whether the girls continue with studies, but also whether the policy guidelines intended to help them cope with double roles as mothers and students are effectively implemented in order to achieve quality education, while at the same time helping to reduce pregnancy in schools.

The Government of Kenya has realised that the Gender in Education policy lacked clear guidelines and that boys in some regions were affected negatively by too much focus on girls. In view of this realisation, the revised Gender in Education implementation standards guidelines (MOE, 2011) gives attention to both boys and girls. The objective of the Gender in Education guidelines “is to ensure that the school learning environment is gender responsive to both boys and girls including learners with special needs” (MOE, 2011,p. 4). The guidelines provide strategies to enable all the stakeholders to participate effectively in the implementation of the Gender in Education policy in order to enhance quality education for all learners. The Gender in Education Implementation Guidelines include the following areas:

1. Gender in Governance and Management Guidelines: the objective is to involve schools in developing gender balance in leadership.

2. Guidelines on gender equity in participation and performance in Science, Mathematics and Technology (SMT) subjects.
3. Guidelines on gender responsive teaching, learning and work environment.
4. Guidelines on dealing with Gender Based Violence (GBV) and sexual harassment in schools.
5. Guidelines on gender responsive management of the sexual maturation process.
6. Guidelines on readmission of girls who get pregnant in school.
7. Guidelines on gender education and policy on HIV and AIDS.
8. Gender, Education and Information and Communication Technology.
9. Partnership and collaboration in Gender and Education.

(MOE, 2011, pp. ii-iii)

Implementation of all the various gender standards guidelines is intended to make the total Gender in Education policy effective. Since it is not possible to carry out a research on all the gender standards guidelines outlined above, this study focused on the effective implementation of Readmission Policy Guidelines in relation to girls who get pregnant in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District.

## **2.6 Readmission of Girls who get Pregnant While in School**

Before the Readmission Policy was launched in countries both in and outside Africa, the girl was normally expelled as soon as the school authorities “discovered” she was pregnant (Vincent, 2009; McNeely, 2008; Hubbard, 2008; SmithBattle, 2007; Shaningwa, 2007; NWLC, 2007; Pillow, 2006; FAWE, 1995a). In most African countries including Kenya, this was the trend before 1994. No serious investigation was made to discover who the father of the baby was; as a result, only girls were punished (Hubbard, 2008; FAWE, 1995a, 1995b). As in most countries, “pregnant and parenting adolescents were expelled

from school in the US until Title IX of the Educational Amendments Act in 1972 prohibited public schools from discriminating against pregnant or parenting students. This Act declared expulsion illegal” (Pillow, 2006, p. 59).

Before pregnant girls were allowed to continue with their studies, programmes for rehabilitating those who were dropping out due to pregnancy were set up in various countries (Senderowitz, 1997). Examples include, Jamaica Women’s Centre founded in 1978, Adolescent Pregnancy Drop-out Programme at the Vocational Centre in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, established in 1986, Maria House for Women by the Roman Catholic Church in Kenya founded in 1987, Crisis Pregnancy Ministry by Youth for Christ Ministries in Kenya in 1989. Some were established later as girls continued to drop out from school due to pregnancy even after the launch of the Readmission Policy. Examples are Shelter Trust in Zimbabwe in 2003, Educational Centre for Adolescent Women (ECAW) and a Young Women Christian Association (YWCA) project in Botswana in 2006. These programmes have provided various services such as income generating, Family Life Education, Counselling, health and academic programmes. Maria House for Women and Crisis Pregnancy Ministries are good examples of centres that have continued to cater for adolescent mothers who drop out from school in Kenya.

One great challenge that programmes for adolescent mothers have faced has been the high cost involved to run them (Senderowitz, 1997). USA, Australia and other countries have experienced the same challenge (NWLC, 2007; Dellinger, 2004; Institute of Educational Leadership (IEL), 1997). This means that all girls affected by pregnancy could not be accommodated. Additionally, stakeholders such as women and church organisations and government departments are convinced that formal schooling is the best for everybody (IEL, 1997; Senderowitz, 1997; FAWE, 1995a). To support this sentiment,

a survey by The Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) in the USA found that programmes that reach girls who get pregnant while they were still in school have a greater chance of achieving outcomes than efforts made to rescue them after they have dropped out of school. The corporation reported: “Apparently, it is more difficult to work with teens after they have dropped out of school. Therefore, it is important to develop interventions and policies that prevent pregnant teens from dropping out in the first place”(IEL, 1997, p. 9).

Findings from studies on student pregnancy have shown that a long absence after having a baby weakens the teen mothers’ ties with school and desire for continuing with education (Dellinger, 2004; IEL, 1997). Concerns for outcomes related to increasing cases of pregnancy and drop out from school by girls led to campaign for readmission of these girls worldwide. As a result, countries have come up with policies that encourage girls who get pregnant to continue with studies.

Under Title IX passed in 1972 and implemented in 1975, public schools in the US are charged with providing equal educational access and opportunity to pregnant and mothering students. This law mandated that a pregnant student regardless of marital status, has the same rights and responsibilities as any other student. Accordingly, pregnant students cannot be expelled from any program (Zelman, 1981).This legal obligation is made clear in the “Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act” and reinforced by “No Child shall be Left Behind” section of Act 346 (Dellinger, 2004). Such amendments are in line with gender conventions that prohibit discrimination at all levels of education on the basis of sex. According to Sadker and Sadker (1991) deliberate steps must be taken by schools to respond to this legal obligation. These steps include:

- Early intervention as soon as a girl becomes pregnant.



- Identifying strategies such as guidance and counselling and other services which could be utilised to respond to personal needs.
- Restructuring institutional practices that include ways of increasing student self-esteem, useful skills needed for life.
- Promoting positive interactions between teachers and students.
- Linkage between schools, parents and community in order to promote retention (Sadker & Sadker 1991, p. 48).

UK, Australia and Canada have also come up with legal obligations in relation to girls who become pregnant while in school. The strategic plan by the South Australian government is intended to ensure that “all young people irrespective of status or pregnancy complete full basic cycle which takes twelve years”(Shine, <http://www.shinesa.org.au>). Clear guidelines on how to handle issues related to girls who become pregnant while in school are spelt out in the Sex Discrimination Act 1984, Section 21 (Boulden, 2000). According to the Act, it is unlawful for an educational authority to discriminate against a person on the grounds of the person’s sex, marital status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy by refusing or failing to accept the person’s application for admission as a student, expelling the student and subjecting the student to any other detriment. The law in Australia has also stipulated clear responsibilities of all the main stakeholders. These stakeholders include the education authorities, schools, principals, teachers, student counsellors, pregnant and parenting students and parents. Like Australia, the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on student pregnancy in schools in Kenya have spelt out clearly the roles of the various stakeholders (MOE, 2011, 1999). The focus of this study was to investigate the extent to which the stakeholders are playing their roles for effective implementation of the guidelines.

In UK, the Department for Education Skills issued a circular to schools and local authorities on the education of school age parents in 2001 (Vincent, 2009). The circular states clearly that “the school should ensure that the young women continued learning” (Vincent, 2009, p. 226). Other documents from the government in the UK (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007; Department for Education and Skills, 2005, 2003, 2001) cited in Vincent (2009) have reiterated that pregnancy is not a reason for exclusion from school.

Unlike African countries, in the USA, Canada and Australia, pregnant and parenting adolescents who are not able to continue in formal schools, have an alternative of doing home tuition where the students are assisted with learning materials (Vincent, 2009; Duncan, 2008; SmithBattle, 2007; Pillow, 2006). Another alternative is to do part of the curriculum in school (Vincent, 2009). These alternatives provide limited access to the curriculum especially for adolescent mothers who find the full curriculum too demanding. In Kenya, the Government does not have such specific programmes for girls who get pregnant while in school. The ones available are those organised by church organisations such as Crisis Pregnancy Ministries and Maria House for Women.

In Africa, NGOs such as ECAW of Botswana, FAWE and YWCA have influenced government policy related to teenage pregnancy and completion of each education cycle. They have also made efforts to sensitize the public on the importance of girl education (FAWE Annual Reports, 2005, 2004; FAWE, 2004; FAWE, 1995a, 1995b, 1995c). Welfare of girls who become pregnant while in school is discussed during various consultations at different fora. A good example, as already noted, is the Ministerial Conference convened by FAWE in Mauritius in September 1994 (FAWE 1995a). The conference emphasised the need to have a comprehensive policy to allow girls who

become pregnant while in school resume their studies. Botswana was the first African country to adopt the policy in 1994 (FAWE, 2008). Others that have come up with the Readmission Policy in Africa since then include Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Most of the countries initially indicated that the girl would be allowed to return to normal school only after spending at least a year with the baby. Basing his support for this arrangement on the Rights of the Child, the Permanent Secretary, MOE in Namibia stated:

The small child has the right to be taken care of by his/her parents and time spent with her little baby is to the benefit of such a baby and his/her future development. It is incumbent on the parents of the young teenage scholar to ensure the young teenage mother spends quality time with her infant (Hubbard, 2008, p. 233).

The Permanent Secretary went on to explain that the youth should not be taught to just transfer responsibility to grandparents as it would contribute to the erosion of moral and parental obligations. This argument is based on the fact that the girl had taken on other responsibilities by becoming pregnant which could not be ignored. However, organisations in and outside Africa such as CEDAW and FAWE criticised the idea of readmitting girls after spending at least one year with the baby. Since such a step was not taken against boys involved, this clause in the policy was seen as discriminative (Shejavali, 2009; Hubbard, 2008). The Legal Assistance Centre (LAC) in Namibia also argued that there was a contradiction in this law since working mothers are not given a full year's maternity leave. Girls who become pregnant in school should therefore not be treated differently (Shejavali, 2009). In 2007, a committee of CEDAW cited in Hubbard (2008) noted that the one year rule "could be a deterrent for girls to resume their studies after birth" (p. 232). A revision

of the policy was therefore recommended. The argument was based on Article II (6) of the Charter on the “Rights of and Welfare of the African Child” to which African countries are signatories. It states that African governments must ensure that “children who become pregnant before completing their education shall have an opportunity to continue with their education on the basis of their individual ability” (Hubbard, 2008, p. 233). Various organisations were therefore in agreement that it was wrong to generalise the one-year rule. This sentiment was earlier implied in Article III of the World Declaration on EFA in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. In this article, ensuring and improving the quality of education for girls and women, in addition to removing every obstacle that hampers their active participation were regarded as the most urgent priorities (UNESCO, 1990).

Countries were therefore expected to revise their policy guidelines. Apart from addressing only the pregnant and parenting students, the policy in most countries is also expected to place a very strong emphasis on reduction of pregnancy cases in schools (MOE, 2011, 2007; Hubbard, 2008; NWLC, 2007; Dellinger, 2004). This can be done through: addressing all students and make them understand the need for self-respect and values of delaying pregnancy; dealing with behaviour that encourages immorality such as drug abuse by students; encouraging peer counselling; creating sexuality awareness and spelling out clearly roles of all stakeholders who include school management, teacher counsellors, all the teachers, the students, parents, MOE officers and community leaders.

The Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on student pregnancy in Kenya are very clear. The one-year rule is no longer applicable. It is stated very clearly that “at no time should a girl be coerced to leave school because she is pregnant; she shall leave school at an appropriate time so as to give birth” (MOE, 2011, p. 18). Further, the same document states that if a girl who gets pregnant is registered for any of the national

examinations, “she must be allowed to sit for the examination unless she prefers otherwise” (p. 18). As noted earlier, many such girls are able to do examinations in Kenya as evidenced by reports on incidents of childbearing among girls each year during national examinations (KCPE and KCSE). The document goes on to state that “there is no specified period of leave of absence and the girl should join school as soon as possible” (p. 18). The procedure for dealing with pregnancy in schools is also clearly explained as far as the school management, the head teachers, the teacher counsellors, the teachers, girls and boys are concerned. All the school stakeholders are expected to work as a team to achieve effective implementation of the guidelines. Roles of each stakeholder including those of parents and guardians are outlined clearly. Such roles include: encouraging the girl to continue with school as long as reasonably possible before birth of the child; offering moral support; involving the girl in decision making about the education and providing needed resources (MOE, 2011).

The Ministry of Education has the responsibility of following up the implementation and mobilising the stakeholders. The TSC and KEMI are also involved. While the TSC recruits Guidance and Counselling Specialists, the KEMI is in charge of capacity building the guidance and counselling department, school management, teachers and medical personnel on their roles in implementing the policy. Studies on the Readmission Policy have based success of its implementation on whether girls who get pregnant are readmitted in schools or not. Roles of various stakeholders such as counsellors, MOE and KEMI officials, as spelt out in the guidelines have not been considered, thus creating room for further investigation.

## **2.7 Studies on General Reactions of Stakeholders to Government Readmission Policy on Adolescent Mothers**

Most of the countries in Africa including Kenya had already come up with the Readmission Policy by 2001. The reactions to the readmission of girls who get pregnant in schools have been mixed according to various studies. A lot of reactions by stakeholders tended to be negative especially soon after the policy was launched. Some examples are highlighted in this sub-section.

In South Africa the policy that allowed pregnant girls and mothering teens to continue schooling was formalised in 1996 (Chigona & Chetty, 2007). However, some schools “were unwilling to allow the girls to continue attending classes for fear that they may contaminate other girls and encourage them to become pregnant” (Wolpe et al., 1997) cited by Chigona and Chetty (2007, p. 4). A report by the Ministry of Education, South Africa in 2000 also noted complaints of mistreatment of pregnant and adolescent mothers in schools (Chigona & Chetty, 2007). Suspension from classes by teachers and head teachers was one of the major complaints. Fear and belief by stakeholders especially teachers and school administrators that adolescent mothers in school would be a bad influence, have been noted by other studies in various countries including Kenya (Oywecha, 2008; Shaningwa, 2007; Omwancha, 2004; FAWEK, 2001).

Another study was carried out in South Africa by Bhana, Morell, Shefer and Ngabaza (2010) to establish the reactions of teachers to adolescent mothers in schools. The researchers used focus group interviews with 79 teachers to collect data. The study found that many teachers did not support the Readmission Policy. Some teachers were quoted saying, “Girls who get pregnant in school should be punished for sexual defilement” (Bhana et al., 2010, p. 874). Getting pregnant was seen as violation of morals. As a result,

adolescent mothers were not given support in many schools in South Africa. However, not all the teachers interviewed by Bhana et al. condemned the adolescent mothers in schools. Some teachers recognised the possibility of instances where pregnancy could be the result of rape and inability of young girls to be aggressive enough to resist male pressure. Other teachers noted a connection between teenage pregnancy and poverty. Bhana et al., like other researchers such as Duncan (2009), Shaningwa (2007) and SmithBattle (2006), argue that it is important to understand the issues related to adolescence pregnancy in order to come up with support structures. Additionally, failure by the government to sensitize the stakeholders about readmission of teenage mothers could have contributed to the negative reactions by the teachers. Some of the issues reported by the researchers in South Africa came up during interviews with participants in this study.

The Readmission Policy in Zambia was formalised in December 1997 (FAWE, 2004b). Individuals, organisations and other groups in the country reacted either for or against the decision according to the survey carried out by the Zambian Association for Research and Development in 2001 (FAWE, 2004b). Reactions by various stakeholders in Zambia at the time were not different from reactions found in other countries. Support for allowing pregnant and parenting students in schools in Zambia mainly came from UNICEF, women non-government organisations, the adolescent mothers, and most of the politicians (FAWE, 2004b). Negative reactions came mainly from the church, the Zambia Union of Teachers, some students, parents and some teachers. Table 3 shows some reactions on readmission of pregnant and parenting girls in schools in Zambia.

**Table 3: Views on Readmission of Pregnant and Parenting Girls into Schools in Zambia in 2001**

Groups	For the Policy	Against the Policy	Total
	%	%	%
Church leaders	28	72	100
Individual church members	58	42	100
Teachers	31	69	100
School boys	42	58	100
School girls	52	48	100
Parents	47	53	100
Adolescent mothers	91	09	100
Politicians	73	27	100

**Source: FAWE (2004b). Readmission of Pregnant and Parenting girls into Schools in Zambia (<http://www.fawe.org/files/>)**

From Table 3 it can be seen that the highest support for the Readmission Policy came from the girls affected (91%) followed by politicians (73%). The highest opposition came from the church leadership (72%) though a large number of individual church members supported the policy. Reasons given for supporting the policy included: everyone has a right to education; it will reduce women’s literacy levels; it will bridge the gender gap in education; women will get a chance to contribute to national development; punishment will not help the girls to grow spiritually; forgive and give them a second chance; some girls are victims of rape and should not suffer for criminal actions of others. Reasons given against the policy included: there will be loss of discipline in schools; it will lower the standards of education; girls will regard themselves as adults and see teachers as equals thus losing respect for them; it will encourage immorality; it will increase HIV and AIDS;



parents were not consulted; sex before marriage is a taboo and should not be encouraged. The negative reactions might have contributed tremendously to poor implementation of the policy in Zambia by 2001. Similar reactions to the Readmission Policy were experienced in Kenya as we have already noted (Oywecha, 2008; Omwancha, 2004; FAWEK, 2001; FAWE, 1995a). After more than ten years of the policy implementation in Kenya, it was important to find out whether arguments used for or against the policy are still prevailing.

Mixed reactions and feelings towards readmitting girls who get pregnant in school have been identified by studies in other countries. As in South Africa and Zambia, findings from most studies show that girls who fall pregnant while in school have a desire to continue with their studies (Vincent, 2009; McNeely, 2008; Shaningwa, 2007; SmithBattle, 2007, 2006; Duncan, 2007). The main reason the adolescent mothers give is that they would like to have a good future for themselves and their children. When asked about her reaction on opportunity to get another chance, one participant responded:

I think the idea of coming back to school is good. It will help me to achieve my career because after birth of my child I'm so motivated to study hard. I want to complete my Grade 12 and pursue my education at a higher level (Shaningwa, 2007, p. 103).

SmithBattle (2007) carried out a study on "Teen Mothers' Rise in Educational Aspirations, Competing Demands and Limited School Support" in the US. Six districts were represented in the study. The participants included 19 teen mothers and their parents. In-depth tape recorded interviews were used to collect data. The study found that most of the teen mothers saw school as the answer to good future prospects, future economic security which included their child's future. It was made clear that "most teens who failed to return to school expressed regrets and concerns about their future" (SmithBattle, 2007,

p. 364). These reactions were also found in studies by Vincent (2009) and McNeeley (2008). In fact, most of the teen mothers forced themselves to study though their aspirations were not supported by the schools or when caring for baby was very demanding. One of the aims of this study was to establish the extent to which the aspirations of the adolescent mothers to study have been raised by the schools in the process of implementing the Readmission Policy Guidelines.

Parents and teachers also react differently to the Readmission Policy. Findings from the study by Shaningwa (2007) and Omwancha (2004) showed that some parents reacted against the policy because they did not want to use more resources on their daughters; going back was seen as a waste of resources. Some teachers felt that the policy was a “passport” that would encourage teenage pregnancy and immorality in schools (Shaningwa, 2007). In most cases, lack of sensitization and lack of clear guidelines made stakeholders interpret the policy and make decisions according to their own understanding. Even more than five years after the policy some heads of schools refused to re-admit teen mothers who applied (Oywecha, 2008; Shaningwa, 2007; Chigona & Chetty, 2007). Due to the negative reactions brought out by various research findings, some organisations such as FAWEK, FAWE Zambia Chapter (FAWEZA), FAWE Namibia Chapter (FAWENA) and WERK made concerted efforts to popularise the Readmission Policy on teenage pregnancy (EYC, 2003). Coming up with clear guidelines on student pregnancy is a deliberate move by MOE (2011) to overcome any negative reactions against the policy. The major objective of this study was focused on whether the stakeholders appreciate the significance of the policy and the extent to which they play their roles as expected by the policy guidelines.

## **2.8 Guidance and Counselling Services in Relation to Teenage Pregnancy and Readmission in Schools**

The MOE Readmission Policy Guidelines have emphasised the crucial role of the counselling department for effective implementation to be achieved. First, counselling should help pregnant and mothering students to accept their situation, second, to continue with their studies, third to help them formulate their plan as they assess options that are available in order to make realistic choices and goals (MOE, 2011). Guidance and counselling services are also for the rest of the students. The ultimate goal of a programme of guidance and counselling in general is to assist the individual become a fully functioning person capable of self-direction (Olusakin & Ubangha, 1996). Major purposes of guidance and counselling outlined by Zeran and Riccio (1962) cited in Olusakin and Ubangha (1996) include aiding the individual to: identify his or her abilities, aptitudes, interests and attitudes; recognise his or her aspirations; develop his or her value senses; obtain experiences which will assist him or her in making free and wise choices; become more and more self-directed. The programme involves both group and individual counselling. A professional counsellor knows when to carry either of these. Guidance and counselling services in relation to Government Readmission Policy Guidelines require both individual and group counselling. There are occasions where school counsellors need to address the whole school on issues that are crucial for holistic development; there are occasions when they need to address all the girls and boys who have issues related to pregnancy, and there are occasions when individual students with problems are addressed on one to one basis. Individual counselling refers to one to one relationship between a professional counsellor who renders specialised help to the individual students for her to know and understand herself better and be able to cope with challenges (Olusakin &

Ubangha, 1996; Oladele, 1991. Rickey, 1990; Williams, 1973). Oladele (1991) explains that when the student concerned is able to understand herself, and accept her situation, she will eventually be able to stand on her feet without help.

Olayinka (1993), cited in Olusakin and Obangha (1996), defines group counselling as “an inter-personal process led by a professionally trained counsellor and conducted with individuals who are coping with typical developmental problems” (p. 150). Major characteristics of group counselling are: “common problems the group members wish to discuss; all members identify with this common element; an atmosphere is provided that favours free expression; interactions and natural helping among members come out naturally” (Olayinka, 1993, cited in Olusakin & Ubangha, 1996, p. 150). Major advantages of group counselling include: saving time and money thus making it more economical than individual counselling; students understand themselves and others going through the same phenomenon; members get encouragement from other members with similar challenges; they also become a source of help for others undergoing similar experiences. One main disadvantage of group counselling is failing to address intense problems of the individuals. However, a professional counsellor should be able to encourage such individuals to seek further help through one to one counselling (Williams, 1973).

Since guidance and counselling services are crucial in schools, the points that have been noted above are meant to show that both one to one and group counselling should be essential for effective implementation of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on teenage pregnancy in schools. A student who agonises after discovering she is pregnant (Vincent, 2009; Shaningwa, 2007; SmithBattle, 2007; Dear Becky, 2007) and wonders what to do next requires immediate one to one counselling. This should help the girl come to terms with the situation and enable her to move on. Those adolescent mothers who want

to complete their studies against competing demands and responsibilities (Vincent, 2009; SmithBattle, 2007, 2006; Shaningwa, 2007; Pillow, 2006) might be faced with similar challenges and thus might require group counselling that encourages sharing of ideas and experiences. It is clear that for such services to be effective, professional and experienced counsellors are required in schools. Additionally, as Olusakin and Ubagha (1996) have reiterated, guidance and counselling in schools is a co-operative activity by the school management, counsellors, teachers, school nurses, parents, students and the community. This means the whole school community should be sensitized on the crucial role of guidance and counselling services especially in relation to student pregnancy. One of the objectives of the study was to establish how the various stakeholders co-operate in order to achieve effective implementation of the Readmission Policy in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District. The study found that in schools where there was co-operation between the stakeholders, adolescent mothers were more inclined to do well in their studies.

Studies carried out on Readmission Policy in Kenya have focused mainly on whether adolescent mothers are re-admitted in schools or not and why (Oywecha, 2008; Omwancha, 2004). Assessment of effectiveness of guidance and counselling in schools, if it is available, is negligible. By carrying out in-depth interviews with school counsellors, findings from the data collected showed the extent to which counsellors are contributing to effective implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines. Are they playing their role as stipulated by the policy? Factors that promote or hinder carrying out these roles were investigated and reported.

## **2.9 Other Essential Factors for Effective Implementation of Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on Teenage Pregnancy in Schools**

The first factor considered essential for the implementation of the Readmission Policy on student pregnancy in schools is prior preparation of the main actors (Rein, 1983). Rein specifies three types of primary actors in policy implementation. These are: the guideline developers who in this study are the officials who are given the task by the Ministry of Education; then there are the interest groups, who in this case are the girls who get pregnant while in schools at the same time taking all the other students into consideration. Finally, Rein specifies the programme administrators. These include the school managers who are responsible for developing strategies to make sure the guidelines are effectively implemented by the stakeholders who comprise head teachers, counsellors, teachers, students, parents and nurses. However, according to Rein (1983) there are cases “where the main implementers do not know what they are supposed to do, where resources are insufficient and where implementers lack the knowledge and skills to take action” (p. 117). Studies have concurred with these observations by Rein (Omwancha, 2008; Shaningwa, 2007; Omwancha, 2004; Zelman, 1981). According to Rein (1983) and Elmore (1980), normally with most policies, there is a gap between theory (what the policy says) and practice (what is happening on the ground). This is evidenced by studies on policy implementation (Adhiambo, 2010; Mbugua, 2008; Oywecha, 2008; Duncan, 2007; Omwancha, 2004). In some cases, the implementers are not even aware there is a policy in question (Oywecha, 2008). Elmore (1980) asserts that one of the vital features of policy implementation is the process by which policies are translated into action. He points out that in most cases policy makers fail to consider demands placed on the school administration, teachers, parents, students and other stakeholders. Further, Elmore notes

that there is a general failure to carry out sensitization on understanding the policy and how to make the policy guidelines become beneficial to those affected.

In view of what Rein (1983) and Elmore (1980) have observed about policy implementation, institutions tend to contextualise when putting the Policy into practice. This would be in accordance to their power structure, principles, values and decision-making procedures (Rein, 1983). In some cases girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy and other reasons are refused entry for fear of bad influence on other students (Vincent, 2009; Shaningwa, 2007; Mwale, 2005). Findings from a study by Mwale on “School Factors Affecting Participation of Turkana Girl Child in Primary Education in Ngara Mara Division of Isiolo District” indicated that:

Most heads of schools were reluctant to admit a girl who had dropped out of school for fear that re-entry of these girls to school would poorly influence their peers, contribute to indiscipline and other forms of inconsistent behaviour that might result in increase of drop-out rate (Mwale, 2005, p. 95).

Such reactions could be a result of poor monitoring system and sensitization of stakeholders by the Ministry of Education in order to understand and appreciate the Readmission Policy Guidelines. Similar cases of negative reaction were noted by findings of a field study carried out by the Rand Corporation on behalf of the US Government (Zelman, 1981). From the findings of the study, it was concluded that those who return to regular school after delivery cannot expect moral support in “coping with the multiple roles as students, parents and teenagers” (Zelman, 1981, p. 53). There are also cases where guidelines are not spelt out clearly as in the case of Namibian Readmission Policy (Shaningwa, 2007). As a result, the implementers at times feel helpless when dealing with

girls who get pregnant in school. In most cases, new policies need to be simplified and modified in order to suit the internal structures of each environment (Powell, 1999). This study sought to analyse the extent to which the various stakeholders are aware, and prepared to implement the Readmission Policy on student pregnancy in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District.

In reference to the Legal Guide on pregnant and parenting adolescents in public schools in the USA, Dellinger (2004) says that deliberate steps must be taken to encourage young mothers to complete their education. She notes with concern that “at 13, 14, 15 and 16 years, girls may be mothers, but they are not yet women” (Dellinger, 2004, p. 8). With this in mind, the Institute of Educational Leadership (1997) in the USA recommends several factors to ensure effective implementation of the Readmission Policy. These include: “need for a hospitable learning environment which can make a huge difference in motivating adolescent mothers to complete high school; encouraging the girl to continue with education immediately pregnancy is discovered; effective guidance and counselling services; programmes put in place to reach all the teens while they are still in school in order to instil values; encouraging mentoring relationships between teen mothers and peers, teachers and counsellors” (p. 9). Lastly, the IEL suggests that in order to keep the teen mothers linked to school, the time taken outside school before and after having the baby should be as short as possible. There are a lot of similarities between these factors and the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on student pregnancy in Kenya. As noted in Chapter One, in schools where positive attitudes towards the policy have been encouraged, implementation of the policy has been effective. Nyakach High School in Sondu is a good example. The principal is quoted urging other heads to take deliberate efforts to carry out strategies that would make the policy popular. She appealed:



I would like to advise fellow head teachers to examine the Nyakach experience and enforce the new policy. It enables the unfortunate girls to complete their education and regain hope in life. I would advise parents of the girls affected to be constructive and positive in handling such situations (FAWEK, 2001, p. 6)

All the girls in Nyakach High School are encouraged to participate in activities such as discussions, drama, writing poems to popularize the idea of giving girls who become pregnant a second chance to education and to encourage good moral behaviour. A research was crucial to establish whether both the policy and guidelines are effectively implemented in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District. The study focussed on the attitudes and responses of the school administration, counsellors, adolescent mothers, their parents, the MOE and KEMI officials in regard to the guidelines related to their roles and responsibilities.

## **2.10 Available Studies on Implementation of the Readmission Policy**

The researcher in this study located some studies directly related to effective implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines on student pregnancy in schools. This section reviews relevant studies outside Kenya and those in Kenya that the researcher was able to access.

### **2.10.1 Available Studies on Implementation of the Readmission Policy: An International Perspective**

Shaningwa (2007) investigated the educationally related challenges faced by teenage mothers in their coming back to school after delivery. It was a Namibian case study using two senior schools, one urban and one rural in the Kavongo Education Region. The study looked at how teenage pregnancy is perceived as a social problem and examined

its impact on the education aspirations of the young mothers. Purposive sampling was used to select the two schools, four teenage mothers from the last classes in secondary school (Grades 8-12), their parents (four), four teachers, and two school principals of the two schools. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The findings of the study indicated a major lack of moral, emotional support in schools especially from the teachers and other students. The teachers' attitudes were reflected in their views that the young mothers could not perform academically and therefore they should seek other vocational training. Schools also took too long to readmit the young mothers making some of them take more than one year before they could be re-admitted. Lack of clear Teenage Pregnancy Policy guidelines was another weakness. As a result the policy was misunderstood by participants. As a whole, the study showed poor understanding of the policy which affected effective implementation.

Although the sample used by Shaningwa was very small and thus cannot be used to generalise on experiences in the whole of Namibia or the whole region, the researcher finds it useful in the proposed study. First it is an eye opener on how parenthood at a young age has an impact on the young girls' personal, family and school life. Additionally, the role of the school in the life of the adolescent mother cannot be ignored. Apart from the fact that the study was conducted outside Kenya, there are gaps in knowledge concerning the roles of teacher-counsellors and the part played by the Government to support schools through Education personnel in the field. Capacity building given to stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Readmission Policy was also not investigated. One of the aims of this study was to establish the extent to which the teacher counsellors and other stakeholders were prepared to implement the policy in regard to help given to pregnant and parenting students, their parents and other members of the school

community. This preparation is viewed as crucial by the Ministry of Education (MOE, 2011).

Vincent (2009) carried out a study on “Responding to School Girl pregnancy: the Recognition and Non-recognition of Difference” in one local authority in the UK. The study aimed to deepen understanding about educational experiences of girls who became pregnant in school and factors that helped or hindered educational engagement and outcomes. The focus of the study was participants’ experiences and perceptions of those experiences. The researcher adopted a qualitative interview approach with 14 young women who were students in one local authority in the English Midlands between March 2007 and May 2008. They attended nine different secondary schools in an area where teenage pregnancy rates are very high. Six participants were interviewed three times, six were interviewed twice and two were interviewed once. The age range was fifteen to eighteen. Nine students were already mothers, five were pregnant. The researcher concentrated on how schools recognised the difference brought about by the pregnancy and the impact such recognition had on the individuals selected. The findings of the study portrayed three types of experiences. One was of total acceptance by the school of the girls affected. Pregnant and parenting students in this case felt valued and cared for. Although pregnancy made them different from other students since they doubled as mothers and as students, they were made to feel part of the school community. What they had in common with other students was recognised. Their academic and other needs were also catered for. The second experience was total rejection by the school. Pregnant and parenting students were made to feel they did not belong. “The pregnant student’s rejection was justified by highlighting the way in which she was different from her non-pregnant peers while ignoring the ways in which she was similar” (Vincent, 2009, p. 235). As a result the girls

who faced such experience would lose interest in education. The third experience was of mixed reactions. The pregnant or mothering student would be allowed to continue but treated differently. Though accepted, she did not feel comfortable among other students.

While giving useful hints for this study, Vincent's study interacted with only the girls affected. All the other stakeholders were left out. The researcher viewed this approach as important for the purpose of the study Vincent carried out, which was to illustrate the concept of a differentiated recognition of difference in regard to student pregnancy in school. However, while analysing effective implementation of Government Readmission Policy Guidelines using different stakeholders, research carried out by Vincent was useful in this study. Like the study carried out by Shaningwa (2007), it shows that effectiveness of the implementation of the Readmission Policy largely depends on the support given to the adolescent mothers by the school.

### **2.10.2 Available Studies on Implementation of the Readmission Policy: A**

#### **Kenyan Perspective**

Available research on implementation of the MOE Readmission Policy in Kenya is very scanty. Most of the studies on girl education are based on school drop-outs in general, female adolescent health and sexuality, and education of girls in general (Kibogy, 2005; Marete, 2005; Mbai, 2005; Mwale, 2005; Wambua, 2005; CSA, 2004; Taffa & Omollo, 2003; EYC, 2003; Kakonye & Kirea, 2001; Kyalo & Yungunyu, 2001; Deabster, 1995; FAWE (a), 1995). Studies on drop-outs have concentrated on factors leading to dropping out; teenage pregnancy is one of them, but no serious reference is made on the Readmission Policy. They thus create a big gap in knowledge. The studies on the MOE Readmission Policy that the researcher was able to access are reviewed in detail.

Omwancha (2004) sought to establish factors that affect the MOE's Readmission Policy for girls who become pregnant while in public secondary schools of Getembe Division, in Kisii Central District, Kenya; 11 schools were used. 11 principals of these schools, 120 adolescent mothers and their parents were used in the study. These were selected using random sampling. The study included different types of public secondary schools/mixed, girls only, boarding and day. To trace families with unmarried adolescent mothers who could be either back to school after delivery, or those who remained at home, the researcher used 52 village elders as informants. Data were collected using questionnaires for the parents and their daughters, and interview schedule for the principals. The findings of this study showed that pregnancy was a leading cause of school drop-outs, and that as a whole the implementation of the policy was poor. Additionally, factors such as family size, attitudes of parents, age of the girls when they become pregnant, the family socio-economic background were important determinants on the number of girls who went back to school after delivery.

Although the study carried out by Omwancha identified a number of challenges facing implementation of the policy, focus was mainly on whether the girls who became pregnant resumed their studies. The experiences of those who continued with education were not analysed. Further, the teacher counsellors who play a crucial role in the implementation of the Readmission Policy (MOE, 2011; MOE, 1999) were left out. The study left a lot of room for further research. Finally, lack of funds to pay school fees was established as the greatest barrier to readmission of girls in Getembe division. The study was carried out in 2004. With the current subsidized secondary school education, the economic status of parents might not be a major determinant of whether pregnant and parenting students complete their basic education. Therefore, this study focussed on the

adolescent mothers already in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District, in order to establish how they coped with their double roles as students and mothers, in addition to the extent of support they got in both school and at home.

Oywecha (2008) investigated effectiveness in the implementation of the Readmission Policy on girls who become pregnant in secondary schools in Gucha District (before the new boundaries creating smaller districts were drawn). The study used descriptive survey design. The target population was 150 secondary schools in the district, principals and guidance and counselling teachers of the schools and the DEO. Simple random sampling was used to select 30 out of 43 secondary schools in two divisions of the district, Sameta and Ogembo. The sample consisted of 30 principals, 30 guidance and counselling teachers and the District Education Officers of the district. One major tool, questionnaire, was used to collect data from respondents in the school. Only education officers were interviewed. According to the principals and school counsellors, challenges facing the Readmission Policy included: almost half of the girls failed to continue with their studies after becoming pregnant; only eleven out of 30 principals were aware of the policy; most of the parents were illiterate; most of the teachers and some principals did not support education of young mothers; girls in the schools were very sexually active contributing to the rising cases of student pregnancy. However, the girls affected by pregnancy were left out in the study. Their participation could have served to confirm the information given by the principals and counsellors. Like Omwancha (2004), the study by Oywecha was focused on awareness of the policy and whether the girls who got pregnant while in school completed their studies. Guidelines which specify policy roles of various stakeholders were not given attention.

It is clear from the findings of the study by Oywecha that the Government Readmission Policy was not effective since the majority of girls who got pregnant were dropping out from school. However, the study leaves a lot of room for further research to fill the gap in knowledge created. First, the nature of the phenomenon requires a more holistic view (Rudestan & Newton, 2007; UNESCO, 2005) in order to obtain the root of the problem. That is why a qualitative approach is recommended for understanding aspects of Gender in Education (UNESCO, 2005). Tools such as in-depth interviews in real world setting could be more fruitful. Secondly, the individuals mostly affected by pregnancy, the girls and their parents did not participate in the study. Thus lack of methodological and source triangulation weakened the study by Oywecha. Though counsellors in schools were used, there was no investigation on the guidance and counselling services carried out in the schools with regard to requirements of Readmission Policy Guidelines thus widening the knowledge gap. This study went deeper into the extent to which the Readmission Policy Guidelines are creating impact in relation to student pregnancy in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District.

## **2.11 Summary of Reviewed Literature and Research Gaps**

According to literature review, a number of issues related to this study were established. Literature provided valuable information on the impact of adolescence pregnancy on girl/women education in and outside Kenya. Issues on gender and education have included readmission of girls who become pregnant while in school (MOE, 2011, 2007, 1999; Republic of Kenya, 2005; FAWE, 2004, 2001, 1996, 1995). Studies on experiences and challenges of readmitting pregnant and parenting students in various countries provided important basis for this study. Findings from these studies have pointed out several important factors in relation to Government Readmission Policy on student

pregnancy. First, the school plays a very crucial role in determining continued quality education for pregnant and parenting students (Vincent, 2009; SmithBattle, 2007; Shaningwa, 2007; Dellinger, 2004; Omwancha, 2004; Zelman, 1981). Effectiveness of this education depends on efforts made by the school personnel to raise the aspirations of student mothers in their studies (Vincent, 2009; SmithBattle, 2007). The role of the Government through the Ministry of Education (as the policy maker) is also very crucial.

In Kenya, studies on policy implementation that the researcher was able to access focused on whether the girls who become pregnant in school were able to continue with education or not. This study focused on analysis of efforts made by stakeholders to help adolescent mothers cope with their double roles as mothers and students. The study involved a lot of interaction with the stakeholders to find out the challenges of motherhood faced by adolescent mothers while still in school, aspirations they have to continue with studies and the support given in school and at home to encourage such aspirations. This filled the knowledge gap left by the previous studies. The policy guidelines demand intensive guidance and counselling services, not just for the girls who become pregnant but also for the other students in the school. The studies accessed did not pay attention to these factors.

It was also noted that previous studies were based on the 1999 Readmission Policy Guidelines which were not clear on the roles of the key stakeholders. Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to use the revised Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on student pregnancy (MOE, 2011) as a base to establish the extent to which various stakeholders are carrying out their roles as outlined, to meet the needs of the pregnant and parenting students as well as the other students in the school. Further, it has been noted that most studies on student pregnancy and readmission in Kenya mainly used quantitative



approach to collect information and descriptive statistics to analyse data collected (Oywecha, 2008; Wambua, 2005; Omwancha, 2004). Use of in-depth interviews and FGDs in this study allowed personal involvement of the researcher with the participants in their natural environment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Kerlinger & Lee, 2000; Howard, 1988). These approaches helped to enrich the study by getting to the root of the issues affecting implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines on adolescent mothers. Finally, the fact that no known study on readmission of girls who get pregnant in school has been carried out in Kikuyu District was also taken into consideration.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

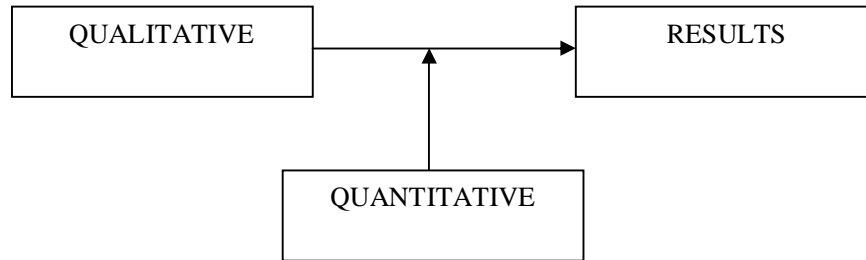
This chapter describes systematically the procedures that were used to conduct the study. These include the design, the target population, sample and sampling procedures, description of the sample, description of the research instruments, procedure for pilot testing and revision of instruments, validity and reliability, dependability and credibility of the instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis procedures. The chapter concludes with a description of the ethical considerations taken in conducting the study.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The nature of the study called for a mixed research design, which includes both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Current researchers view the two as highly compatible in the same phenomenon within the same study (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Robson, 2002; Rudestan & Newton, 2001). Consideration in this study was the fact that “reality is multiple and complex” (Robson, 2002). This influenced the making of this choice. Again, such combinations are common in social research (Singleton & Strauss, 1999). Additionally, researchers have recognised that the approach is a good way of triangulating data sources (Creswell, 2003).

In this study, qualitative approach provided the dominant paradigm while the quantitative approach was a supplementary component of the study. As illustrated in Figure 3, this is in line with one of the four mixed-method designs outlined by Creswell (2002).

**Figure 3: A Model Where Quantitative Approach is used to Embellish a Primarily Qualitative Study**



**Source: Tashakkori & Teddlie (2003), Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social Behavioural Research. Thousand Oaks, Sage Publishers. Figure 3 shows clearly that qualitative approach was dominant in this study whereas the quantitative approach was used as a supplementary component.**

The design selected in this study is in the category of dominant, less dominant studies where either qualitative or quantitative approach provides the dominant paradigm and the other approach becomes a supplementary component of the study. Qualitative research is used to refer to social and behavioural approach based on unobtrusive field observations that can be analysed without using numbers or statistics (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). It is conducted in the field where the participants behave naturally.

In view of the foregoing, the study was mainly based on participatory research which is one of the major strategies in the qualitative approach. It was preferred because it aimed at covering depth rather than breadth. This implies that the researcher had planned to spend a lot of time in a setting and become acquainted with the participants in order to collect and keep detailed confidential information (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Sommer & Sommer, 1997). Although each case of the girls and parents affected by pregnancy tended to bear similar experiences with others in the phenomenon

being studied such as psychological trauma and confusion, any given instance was proved to be particular and unique (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Since known studies on readmission in Kenya (Oywecha, 2008; Omwancha, 2004) have mainly used descriptive research survey design, the study required an approach that would enable the researcher to go deeper into the world of pregnant and parenting adolescents and other stakeholders. The phenomenological research also allowed flexibility and spontaneous exploration of the participants' experiences (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). The study dealt with processes that were taking place and their interrelationships (Kothari, 2004).

One of the concerns in the study was to find out how various stakeholders interrelate as they play their roles in the implementation of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on student pregnancy. This required building of rapport with the participants in order to listen to the individual's story and experience (Howard, 1988). That is why the term "participants" is deliberately used instead of the term "respondents" in reference to those who were used in the study.

There was also a limited use of descriptive research survey design in order to supplement the qualitative data. According to Vogt (1999), descriptive research describes phenomena as they exist. In support of this explanation, Kothari (2004) says it is description of affairs as they are at present. He continues to point out that "the main characteristic of the design is that the researcher has no control of the variables; he can only report what has happened or what is happening since variables cannot be manipulated" (p. 3). By enabling some statistical analysis to be performed from the quantitative data collected, the study was able to establish the magnitude of girls benefiting from the Readmission Policy Guidelines and the extent to which the principals and deputy principals are helping the girls to cope with their situation. Use of both

qualitative and quantitative research designs enabled the researcher to have a holistic view regarding effective implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines on student pregnancy in Kikuyu District. In other words, the designs used facilitated triangulation of data collection and analysis which strengthened the dependability and credibility of the findings.

### 3.3 Target Population

According to information from the DEO (May, 2012), the number of public secondary schools in Kikuyu District is 26. This study targeted all the twenty two public girls' and mixed secondary schools in the District as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4: Girls' and Mixed Public Secondary Schools Used in the Study**

Educational Zone	National Girls Only	Provincial Girls Only	Girls Only	District Mixed	TOTAL
Thogoto	1	1	-	3	5
Kabete	-	-	-	8	8
Muguga	-	-	1	3	4
Karai	-	1	-	4	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>22</b>

**Source: sourced by the researcher from EMIS, DEO Office, Kikuyu, in May 2012**

Table 4 illustrates the distribution of schools involved in the study. The choice of girls' and mixed secondary schools was influenced by the focus on pregnant and parenting adolescents in schools. It also targeted all the principals and their deputies in these schools. These participants were crucial stakeholders since they are responsible for deliberately putting measures in place to ensure the guidelines are implemented in their schools. Additionally, they were in the best position to liaise with the MOE and to communicate directly with the District Education personnel and other school managers in case of any

required assistance. The principals and their deputies were able to provide information on contributions made by the parents, teachers, sponsors, BOG and PTA members in the implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers. They were also in a position to determine whether the recruitment of teacher counsellors by the TSC met the requirements of the Policy. Teacher counsellors in the twenty two schools were targeted because the policy categorically identifies their position as crucial in effective implementation of the guidelines. Class teachers were also key stakeholders in this study because they are more likely to be the first to detect girls who get pregnant in the school. Information on how they handle such girls was important for this study.

Effective implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines on student pregnancy is for the benefit of adolescent mothers. Therefore, their perceptions, experiences, challenges they face in relation to the guidelines were crucial in the study. Parents/guardians of the girls who have become pregnant while in school were also targeted in the study. Like their daughters, their perceptions in relation to the policy, in addition to their relationship with their daughters and schools have a great role to play in the effective implementation of the guidelines. The Kikuyu District Education personnel were also part of the population of the study as they are responsible for disseminating any information related to the Readmission Policy and the guidelines to schools. They are also supposed to monitor the implementation process, get feedback and assist accordingly. The study also targeted the KEMI personnel responsible for capacity building the school personnel. The aim was to assess the extent of training and preparation given to the stakeholders in relation to the implementation of the Readmission Policy. In summary, the specific stakeholders targeted in this study are principals, deputy principals, school counsellors, teachers, adolescent mothers, parents of adolescent mothers, DEO personnel

and KEMI personnel. All these participants should be able to give information on the role played by other stakeholders such as the BOG, sponsors, TSC and NGOs to ensure effective implementation of the Government Policy on students who get pregnant in schools.

### **3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedures**

A sample is a group of participants selected from a larger group or population in the hope that after studying the smaller group important factors concerning the larger population would be established. Sampling procedure is the method used to select the samples (Vogt, 1999). Since this study was mainly qualitative, the researcher worked with small samples of the population in order to study them in-depth (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

#### **3.4.1 Selection of Schools**

The focus of the study was on all the 22 public girls' and mixed secondary schools in the district. Therefore, no sampling procedure was used. Since these schools are typical of the public schools in other districts in Kenya in relation to the study being undertaken, to a certain extent, they could be considered representative of the whole (Kothari, 2004). The study attempted to compare the challenges related to pregnancy and readmission of adolescent mothers in mixed and girls' schools (see Table 4).

#### **3.4.2 Selection of Principals and Deputy Principals**

All the 22 principals and their deputies were involved in the study because they met the requirements of the research (Corebetta, 2003). In this case, no sampling procedure was applied. As indicated earlier, principals/their deputies are in the best position to provide information on the roles played by various stakeholders. Since two schools were used for piloting purposes, 20 principals and their deputies were finally used.

### **3.4.3 Selection of Teacher Counsellors**

Quota sampling which is one of purposive sampling strategies was applied to get 8 counsellors who were included in the study based on the school category. “A purposive sample targets the individuals thought to be most central to the research questions” (Sommer & Sommer, 1997, p. 240). The selection was done in such a way in order to create a sample that covered the one national boarding school for girls only (1 counsellor), 2 provincial boarding schools for girls only (1 counsellor), one day district school for girls only (1 counsellor), and 16 mixed day schools (5 counsellors from different zones). As pointed out by the MOE, teacher counsellors are crucial implementers of most of the guidelines (MOE, 2011).

### **3.4.4 Selection of Teachers for In-depth Interviews**

To a great extent, the procedure used to select teacher counsellors was also used to select teachers used in this study. Information from the school administration showed that class teachers continue with their classes right from form one up to form four unless there are cases of transfer. In view of this situation, all the teachers selected for in-depth interviews in this study were among the form four class teachers. This is because they were more likely to be familiar with cases of student pregnancy and adolescent mothers in the schools. Additionally, the Readmission Policy Guidelines demand a lot of co-operation between the administration, counsellors and class teachers in cases of student pregnancy.

As with the counsellors, the selection of the teachers used was done in such a way as to create a sample of 10 teachers that covered the one national boarding school for girls (1 teacher), two provincial boarding schools for girls (1 teacher), one district school for girls (1 teacher) and sixteen mixed day schools (7 teachers from 5 schools) from different zones. From two of the five mixed secondary schools used, a male teacher and a female



teacher was selected from each. The aim was to find out the extent to which gender would affect handling of pregnant students and adolescent mothers in schools. Simple random sampling was used to select the form four class teachers for in-depth interview from each school. According to the Readmission Policy Guidelines, a teacher who is aware of cases of pregnancy and adolescent mothers in the school is expected to offer support to those affected, ensure Guidance and Counselling is offered in addition to give remedial sessions where necessary (MOE, 2011).

#### **3.4.5 Selection of Adolescent Mothers Used for In-depth Interviews**

Six individual adolescent mothers were also selected purposively from some of the schools. Informants such as the principals and counsellors used in the study helped to identify and access pregnant and parenting students. Some members of the community were also used to identify some of the adolescent mothers in school. The small number selected enabled the researcher to get detailed information with the use of in-depth interviews.

#### **3.4.6 Selection of Adolescent Mothers used for Focus Group Discussion**

Purposive and snowball sampling was used to select the focus group participants. “Snowball sampling involves use of informants to identify cases that would be useful to include in the study” (Kemper, Stringfield & Teddlie, 2003 p. 283). In order to get detailed information the study involved two small groups of five parenting students each. Five out of six adolescent mothers interviewed individually were part of the groups. They were used to identify others willing to be included in the study. The purpose of using these FGDs was to provide an atmosphere where the participants could freely discuss their aspirations, fears, challenges as students and mothers.

### **3.4.7 Selection of Parents/Guardians of Adolescent Mothers**

Five parents and one guardian of adolescent mothers in public secondary schools were interviewed in relation to the support they give to ensure effective implementation of the Readmission Policy. Some were identified through their daughters. Others were introduced to the researcher by members of the community. Hence purposive sampling was applied. Through in-depth interviews, these parents and the guardian were able to provide information related to challenges they and their daughters face at home and in school.

### **3.4.8 The District Education Office Personnel**

One QASO and one EMIS official were also purposively selected because of their relevance to the study (Sommer & Sommer, 1997). They play a very crucial role of making sure the stakeholders are prepared to implement the MOE policies. Experiences of field officers in disseminating and monitoring the Readmission Policy Guidelines in schools were sought through interviews.

### **3.4.9 The Kenya Education Management Institute Personnel**

Purposive sampling was also used to select two KEMI officials in charge of capacity building. The aim was to assess the extent of training/capacity building given by KEMI to the school personnel in relation to the implementation of the Government Readmission Policy.

The summary of the sampling design is shown in the matrix in Table 5:

**Table 5: Summary of the Sampling Designs Used in the Study**

SN	Target Group	Sampling Design	No. Sampled
1	Principals and deputy principals in 40 schools	No sampling – all were used	40
2	Teacher counsellors in the 20 schools	Non-probability sampling – purposive	8
3	Form four class teachers	Simple random sampling and purposive sampling	10
4	Individual adolescent mothers already in schools for interviews	Purposive sampling	6 ( 5 also in FGDs)
5	Focus Group participants (adolescent mothers)	Purposive and snowball sampling	Two groups of 5 each (Total = 10)
6	Parents/guardians of adolescent mothers	Purposive sampling	5 parents and 1 guardian
7	District Education Office personnel	Purposive sampling	2
8	Kenya Education Management Institute Personnel	Purposive sampling	2
Total Number of Participants			79

**Source: prepared by the researcher from the information given by the school administration and various informants.**

Table 5 shows the target population and the sampling procedure used to get the number of participants who were involved in the study. The sampling designs indicate clearly that the qualitative approach provided the dominant paradigm of the study.

### **3.5 Description of Research Instruments**

Three categories of instruments were developed. These were: interview guides for different stakeholders, Focus Group Discussion Guide for adolescent mothers and a questionnaire for the principals and their deputies.

#### **3.5.1 Interview Guides**

There were six interview guides comprising semi-structured items. They were developed to collect data from pregnant and parenting students, their parents/guardians, school counsellors, teachers, District Education Officers and KEMI officials. According to Sommer and Sommer (1997), “Face to face interviews provide an excellent way of exploring complex feelings” ( p. 105). That is why the format of all the interviews was not rigid. This catered for the participants who might have very different stories, hence need for flexibility to give room for probing further through additional questions during each interview (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Bailey, 2007). Reasons for using this approach include: ability to pursue questions that would elicit detailed responses, ability to observe different non-verbal behaviours, personality and general appearance of each participant. Such observations helped to understand individual participants. Time spent with each participant varied in order to cater for individual differences among participants. The researcher also made sure there was room for development of trust and confidence between each participant and the researcher. The range of time spent with each was between forty five and one hour. As Bailey (2007) puts it, a researcher who would like “some level of flexibility regarding how an interview is administered but also wishes to maintain some structure over its parameters might prefer a semi-structured interview” (p. 100). This approach proved to be very useful in this study.

### **3.5.1.1 Interview Guide for Adolescent Mothers**

In order to allow flexibility, in-depth and spontaneous exploration of experiences adolescent mothers go through, an interview guide comprising semi-structured items was developed. Since teenage pregnancy is among subjects that are emotionally loaded and sensitive, the use of in-depth interviews which allow building of trust and rapport, was a particularly useful approach. The guide was intended to give room for further probing where necessary in order to get in-depth information on the situation adolescent mothers are in.

Part one of the interview guide sought information on the background of the adolescent mothers which included their age when they got pregnant, the class they were in then and the class they were currently in, their school and where they stayed. Part two sought information on adolescent mothers' reactions to their pregnancy in addition to the reactions of the persons closest to them at home and in school. Part three questions related to their goals and challenges they faced both at home and in school in addition to the kind of support they got. The last questions aimed at getting their suggestions and comments in regard to student pregnancy and how adolescent mothers should be supported.

### **3.5.1.2 Interview Guide for Parents/Guardian of Adolescent Mothers**

Parents of adolescent mothers were interviewed on their marital status, education and economic background, their awareness of the Readmission Policy Guidelines and their attitudes to girl education. Questions also sought information on their reactions to their daughter's pregnancy and the support they give to them. The last questions aimed to find out the challenges parents face in relating with the school and their daughters in regard to implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines. One guardian was also interviewed.

### **3.5.1.3 Interview Guide for the School Counsellors**

The counsellors were interviewed in order to get information on their professional qualifications, experiences, their role, perceptions about implementation of Readmission Policy Guidelines, challenges they face, how they try to cope, in addition to their suggestions for improvement. Part one of the guide sought background information of the counsellors in regard their counselling experience, training, responsibilities other than counselling and preparation given in order to implement the Government Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers in schools. Questions that followed aimed to find out how the counsellors handled cases of student pregnancy and the extent to which they collaborated with the school administration, teachers and parents of adolescent mothers. Lastly, the guide sought information on the challenges faced by the Guidance and Counselling Department and the counsellors' suggestions for strengthening Guidance and Counselling in schools.

### **3.5.1.4 Interview Guide for Teachers**

Part one of the guide sought information on the background of teachers in regard to their gender, counselling and teaching experience in secondary school and whether they were members of the Guidance and Counselling Committee in the school. Part two contained questions on the teachers' awareness of the Government Policy on girls who get pregnant in school and on any training and preparation given in order to carry out their roles in implementing the policy. The interview also sought information on how they handle student pregnancy in school and challenges faced by the school in relation to student pregnancy and adolescent mothers. They were also asked to give suggestions on how best issues related to student pregnancy should be handled.

### **3.5.1.5 Interview Guide for the DEO Personnel**

An interview guide was also used for the QASO and the EMIS official. The guide helped the researcher to probe broad concerns of the study related to plans, preparation given to stakeholders and monitoring the implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines in all schools in Kikuyu District. The researcher was able to get information on any feedback from schools, challenges faced in addition to efforts being made to make girls who become pregnant in schools benefit from the Readmission Policy.

### **3.5.1.6 Interview Guide for the KEMI Officials**

Items in this interview guide were used to interact with the KEMI officials in charge of capacity building the school personnel. One of the Readmission Policy Guidelines states clearly that KEMI has a responsibility to “capacity build the guidance and counselling department, medical personnel, teachers and school management on their roles in implementing the policy” (MOE 2011). Data on awareness of the policy on student pregnancy, the type of training given, personnel involved, frequency and challenges faced, were sought. Success of the Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers highly depends on preparation given to stakeholders. The guide also sought suggestions on effective implementation of the Policy from the KEMI officials interviewed.

### **3.5.2 Focus Group Discussion Guide for Adolescent Mothers**

Like the in-depth interviews, FGDs are qualitative in nature. Krueger (1988 ) explains that FGDs “allow for group interaction and greater insight into why certain opinions are held” (p.15). The guide used had open-ended questions. These were almost similar to those developed for in-depth interviews for individual adolescent mothers, although they were phrased differently to address a group. The main objective was to gather detailed data from small groups whose members had similar characteristics. This

strategy enabled the study to capitalise on group dynamics, which encourage members of a group to build on ideas of others, as they become co-participants. The strategy also helped to reinforce or supplement data collected through questionnaires and in-depth interviews. As a result of the use of this guide, the data collected provided deeper insight of the roles played by stakeholders in implementing Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District. The questions in the guide enabled the researcher to get more detailed information on reactions to their pregnancy from people around them and how these reactions affected them socially, emotionally and academically. The Guide encouraged the adolescent mothers to discuss the challenges they faced as student mothers and in their interactions with other students in the school. Questions in the guide also enabled the researcher to get information on how adolescent mothers in schools coped in spite of the challenges, and the role played by their members.

### **3.5.3 Questionnaire for Principals and Deputy Principals**

Quantitative data were collected using a questionnaire for principals and their deputies in mixed and girls' public secondary schools in Kikuyu District. The statistics that will be generated helped to establish the magnitude of the phenomenon. Additionally this tool was preferred in the study in order to gather information that could not be observed such as opinions and future plans. This method is also relatively cheap and economical since preparation and sending questionnaires to the participants does not require a lot of funds (Kothari, 2004). Further, questionnaires allow some degree of privacy. Participants do not need to worry about what the researcher thinks of the answers since the tool is anonymous as compared to face-to-face interviews. Respondents are therefore likely to give their honest opinions (Singleton & Straits, 1999).



The questionnaire consisted of three sections. Part one was utilised to obtain data on demographic information. Measures used to involve various stakeholders in the implementation of the guidelines, how they co-ordinate those involved, extent to which implementers are prepared, are in part two. Part three was utilised to obtain data on opinions in regard to the Readmission Policy, challenges experienced and attempts made to face them. There was also room for suggestions to make implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines more effective.

### **3.6 Pilot Testing of Research Instruments**

A pilot study was used to test suitability of procedures in order to revise the instruments and ensure methods chosen would collect relevant data. The pilot testing was carried out in two schools in the target population with two principals, two deputy principals, two counsellors and two teachers. One provincial girls' school and one mixed secondary school, each from different zones, were used. These schools and participants did not take part in the actual study.

Pilot testing of the interview guides for adolescent mothers and parents was carried out using one girl and a parent identified with the help of the principals, deputy principals and the counsellors in the schools used. They were also not part of the main study. Redefined and modified interview guides helped the researcher to modify the Focus Group Discussion Guide since the issues probed were similar. Data collected were analysed in order to determine whether the study would be feasible. After the instruments were rectified and modified, the researcher was ready to embark on the final collection of data for the study.

### **3.7 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments**

A researcher must ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments used in the study. According to Kerlinger and Lee (2000), the meaning of validity of research instruments is best “epitomised by the question: are we measuring what we think we are measuring?” (p. 666). The researcher must bear in mind what is being measured. When the content of the instrument is scrutinised, the degree to which the items therein represent what it is designed for is crucial (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). On the other hand, reliability refers to the quality of measurement methods that suggest the same data would be collected each time in repeated observations of the same phenomenon under similar circumstances (Rudestan & Newton, 2007; Babbie, 2004). In other words, “when repeated measurements in the same study give identical or very similar results, the measurement instrument is said to be reliable” (Vogt, 1999, p.245).

#### **3.7.1 Validity**

In regard to this study, measures were taken to ensure that all the items of the research instruments used to collect data were validated. Selection of the experts used to check the content validity of the instruments was deliberately done to specifically include three professionals in the fields of gender, curriculum and research. All the items in the instruments used to collect data were scrutinised systematically in order to identify any vague and unclear instructions. Consultations with the experts yielded their opinions regarding the quality of all the items incorporated in the questionnaire, interview and the focus group guides. By the time the researcher was ready to go to the field, the efficiency of the instruments had been checked in order to collect data that met the requirements of the research questions.

### **3.7.2 Reliability**

Most of the research instruments used to collect data in this study were qualitative in nature. Therefore, the best practical way of improving reliability was to ensure the items were clear and understood by the participants. Similar items addressed to different participants were also added in order to generate more accurate data. Methodological and source triangulation were also viewed as useful in improving the reliability of the study findings. As Meece and Daniels (2008) point out, “it is best not to rely on one single source of data but to use multiple sources of information to identify common themes across data sources” (p. 36). Creswell (2009) shares a similar view when he explains that results of a research become more accurate when shared experiences are identified. The researcher ensured that errors that could arise due to ambiguous instructions in the instruments used were dealt with in order to yield consistent results. At the same time, patterns and themes were used in ways that another researcher could understand and arrive at similar conclusions.

### **3.8 Dependability and Credibility**

The terms dependability and credibility are associated with naturalistic inquiry which to a large extent is able to generate details about the experiences of the participants through in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions. As Babbie (2008) explains, “being there is a powerful technique for gaining insights into the nature of human affairs in all their rich complexity” (p. 343).

Credibility in this study was determined by the extent of the accuracy of the accounts in regard to the participants’ realities of the social phenomena. To ensure credibility of the study, prolonged engagements in the field are essential (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Howard, 1988) in order to collect detailed data. In this regard, the researcher in this study met most

of the participants more than once. This applied mostly to interviews with adolescent mothers and heads of Guidance and Counselling departments. The participants were also free to contact the researcher if they had any relevant information they had forgotten to give during the interviews. Two adolescent mothers and one counsellor actually took the cue. Another example is where the researcher had to revisit one boarding school to clarify the extent to which nurses were involved in student pregnancy and readmission of adolescent mothers. Some interviews took longer time than others especially in cases where adolescent mothers were still traumatised. There was one case where the interview took almost two hours as the adolescent mother kept on being overcome by emotion as she recalled the events behind her pregnancy. As a result of such engagements, the time in the field became prolonged.

It is also important to note that in order to develop patterns and themes, some analysis of data collected in the field had to be carried out in the field. To maintain and enhance credibility and dependability of the findings, data narratives and direct quotations from interviews and discussions were read and checked several times before doing the interpretation to ensure reality was reflected (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

### **3.9 Data Collection Procedures**

The first step was to get research permission from Catholic University of Eastern Africa and then the Ministry of Education. Clearance to conduct research in Kikuyu District was obtained from the District Commissioner's and the District Education offices. Appointments with the education office at Kikuyu, the school administration and school counsellors were made prior to the visits to collect data from them.

The purpose of the research and issues of informed consent were explained to the participants. Venues convenient to them were used to conduct interviews and FGDs. Prior

appointments were made with each participant. After classes and during the weekend, schools and church compounds were most appropriate. Most of the participants were rather shy. Therefore, interview responses were written down. The same procedure of data collection with all the participants for in-depth interviews was used. In order to give room for individual responses, the format was not rigid. Flexibility was necessary because participants had different stories to tell (Peil, 1995). A room where there would be no distraction was used. Interviews and FGDs took between forty-five and ninety minutes.

The researcher chaired discussion in each focus group. In order to make members of the group feel as comfortable as possible, effort was made to create a conducive environment. The researcher was also the facilitator of the discussion, establishing rapport with the group members. After the introductions, the researcher introduced the general focus of the study and areas to be discussed, and then the consent of the group was sought first. The participants were not forced to follow the guide strictly but the discussion was conducted in ways that ensured important points were covered by the end of the FGD. The research assistant helped in recording what was discussed. Due to the sensitive nature of the experiences adolescent mothers had gone through, a tape recorder was not used. There was fear they might not feel free to discuss personal issues. Data collected during FGDs became very useful in supplementing information collected during interviews with individual adolescent mothers, parents, school counsellors and through questionnaires for principals and deputy principals.

Questionnaires were accompanied by authorisation letter from the District Education Office in order to encourage the participants to respond. Since the district is not large, questionnaires were distributed to the participants by hand, answered, and collected personally by the researcher.

Collection of data from different participants using different tools provided the necessary conditions required for triangulation purposes (Creswell, 2003).

### **3.10 Data Analysis Procedures**

The researcher first obtained data with the use of tools described in this chapter. Most of the data were collected through qualitative approach. The researcher first perused the collected data in order to identify information that was relevant to the research questions (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). This included editing, summarising and labelling to get data reduction. A coding system was developed in order to single out significant data in the study. Responses by the young mothers were recorded using pseudo names such as Susy, Patty, Dolly, Rosa, Betty. Responses by the parents/guardian of young mothers were recorded using the pseudo names for their daughters, for example Susy's mother or father or Patty's guardian. Major issues that emerged were identified in order to indicate theme categories. All the materials relevant to a certain theme were placed together. The researcher then developed a summary report making a deliberate move to write the narrative with the use of excerpts, descriptive statements, and direct quotations from the raw data in order to reflect the real situation of the setting. The frequency with which an idea appeared was used to interpret the significance of the findings in order to make the final meaning in relation to the research questions. The researcher made an effort to use tables where appropriate to serve as visual representations of the findings. According to Bailey (2007), this technique is useful in various ways. The ways include means in which a researcher can show the results of the study clearly. The reader can also "grasp the relationships among items more quickly when presented in a visual form than when described in the text" (Bailey, 2007, p. 152).

Quantitative data were coded and organized for analysis using SPSS package. To describe the participants, descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used. Descriptive statistics is concerned with organising and summarising the data at hand to make them more intelligible (Singleton & Straits, 1999).

### **3.11 Ethical Considerations**

Upholding ethical expectations throughout the study was taken into consideration. The researcher was aware that most of the participants especially the pregnant and parenting students can be very sensitive. This is because the subject is personal and touching on privacy. In this regard, being non-judgemental was very crucial (Silverman, 2000). Therefore, breaking any barriers of mistrust or suspicion was essential. In a study of this nature, the researcher is likely to run the risk of injecting personal experience and judgement. The researcher therefore made effort to avoid any personal judgements in order to allow the essence of experiences to emerge from the participants. As far as the participants were concerned, the researcher sought consent from them to ensure they participated without coercion. Their freedom in case one would have liked to withdraw was allowed (Creswell, 2003; Peil, 1995). They were assured that personal issues would be kept confidential. In reporting, their names would not appear. They were also treated with respect and dignity they deserved. As Corebetta (2003) emphasises, “each subject has her own dignity and worth as a human being, and safeguarding her welfare, at least as regards her participation in the research process is one of a researcher’s paramount responsibilities” (p. 15). In this regard a bond was created between the researcher and the participants.

The researcher also made deliberate efforts to uphold ethics of data collection and analysis and ethics of responsibility to society (Reese & Fremouw, 1984 cited in Singleton

& Straits, 1999). In this regard, the researcher ensured truthful data collection, analysis and reporting of findings. Researcher's responsibility to society was based on the social scientists' belief that the researcher "has a responsibility to assess the possible uses of scientific findings to promote their beneficial application and to speak out against their destructive application" (Singleton & Straits, 1999, p. 514). Recommendations made were based on the research findings. It is hoped that they will lead to more effective implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines in order to achieve quality education not just for the girl-child but also for the boy-child, for the common good of all.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

The chapter presents data and discusses the research findings. The first part entails an analysis of the demographic data of the participants. The chapter is arranged in various parts according to the research questions that sought information on: the extent to which the key stakeholders in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District were aware of the Government Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers; extent of preparation given to stakeholders in order to implement the Readmission Policy Guidelines effectively; ways in which the stakeholders use the Readmission Policy Guidelines to raise aspirations of the adolescent mothers; ways in which the stakeholders respond to the Readmission Policy Guidelines; challenges faced in the process of promoting effective implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines on adolescent mothers in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District. The sixth question sought suggestions from the stakeholders on how best the Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers could be implemented. The findings were mainly based on qualitative data collected through interviews and focus group discussions. To some extent they were also based on limited quantitative data collected with the use of a questionnaire. Each research question is dealt with taking into consideration the main items of interview guides, FGD guide and the questionnaire with relevant information. Responses have been analysed simultaneously. The summary of the findings are given using summary tables, verbatim quotations, descriptions, narratives, frequency and percentages.

The return rate of the various responses to research instruments administered was almost 100 percent. The researcher was able to interview 6 adolescent mothers as planned. However, only 10 instead of 12 adolescent mothers were willing to join the two FGDs (5 members each). The number of these participants did not have any negative effect on the study. Participation of five parents and one guardian of adolescent mothers enabled the researcher to get the information required. The plan was to select 6 parents, 8 heads of Guidance and Counselling Departments and 10 class teachers in public secondary schools willingly participated in the study as planned. One QASO and one EMIS official from the DEO, two officers in charge of training at KEMI were ready to give the information required. However, the researcher had to visit their offices on different days because they were not available on the same days. The return rate for all the 40 questionnaire forms given to the principals and deputy principals in 20 public girls' and mixed secondary schools in Kikuyu District was 100 percent. Individual schools were identified by pseudo names given by the researcher. Examples include: Gachinga, Gatarakwa, Kahinga, Kahua, Kazuri, Kiema, Kirima, Maridadi, Meta, Muiiri, Murangi, Mutati, Mutu, Mutune, Mwihoko, Neema, Nginduri and Thayu.

#### **4.2. Demographic Data**

This section gives background information about the participants in this study. These participants represent the key stakeholders expected to implement the Government Policy on girls who get pregnant in school.

##### **4.2.1. Students' Enrolment and Distribution of Teachers by Gender in Mixed Public Secondary Schools in Kikuyu District**

The Government Readmission Policy Guidelines call for commitment to give guidance and counselling to both boys and girls. It was therefore important to establish

the enrolment of students and how teachers were distributed by gender especially in the mixed secondary schools. Studies on adolescence pregnancy have reported cases where girls have been reluctant to discuss their personal issues with male teachers (Elimu Yetu Coalition, 2003). Findings from information collected from various stakeholders in this study showed there were complaints related to having either too many female or too many male teachers in some mixed secondary schools. Responses of the principals and deputy principals to the question on student enrolment in mixed secondary schools indicated that the number of boys was higher than that of girls except in Meta where there were 30 girls more and in Kirima with 47 girls more than the boys. Table 6 shows students' enrolment and distribution of teachers by gender in mixed secondary schools in Kikuyu District according to responses from the principals and deputy principals.

**Table 6: Student Enrolment and Distribution of Teachers by Gender in Mixed Public Secondary Schools in Kikuyu District**

SCHOOLS	BOYS	GIRLS	MALE TEACHERS	FEMALE TEACHERS
Gachinga	87	83	5	4
Gatarakwa	86	88	5	7
Kahinga	187	200	6	10
Kahua	183	173	11	3
Kiema	123	107	6	5
Kirima	109	156	11	5
Meta	190	240	5	16
Muiiri	258	109	5	10
Murangi	193	145	3	15
Mutati	560	300	15	17
Mutu	161	154	10	7
Mutune	127	103	6	5
Mwihoko	123	117	8	8
Neema	212	159	10	7
Nginduri	300	200	5	14
Thayu	190	110	10	6

Table 6 shows that in some schools the gap between boys and girls was very wide. For instance in Mutati, Muiiri, Nginduri and Thayu there were 260, 149, 100 and 80 more boys than girls. The main explanation for this discrepancy was that there are more girls' schools in the district: one national, three provincial and one district. Due to reports

concerning sexual activity among boys and girls in schools, there is a great demand by parents and teachers to have more boys' only and girls' only schools in the district. From Table 6, it is clear that gender balance has not been taken into consideration in the appointment of teachers in some schools. Examples of such schools include: Murangi High School with 193 boys and 145 girls has only 3 male and 15 female teachers; Muiri High School with 258 boys and 109 girls has 5 male teachers and 10 female teachers; Kahua with 183 boys and 173 girls has 11 male and only 3 female teachers; Kirima with 109 boys and 156 girls has 11 male and 5 female teachers; Mutati with 560 boys and 300 girls has 15 male teachers and 17 female teachers. In such a scenario, mentorship for either boys or girls is likely to be affected not just in relation to pregnancy in schools but also in relation to other issues affecting male and female students. In fact, the principal of Murangi High School had already requested the TSC to transfer five female teachers and replace them with a similar number of male teachers. This is because male role models are lacking in the school. It is the other way round in Kahua High School which needs more female role models among the teachers. Further, not all the three female teachers in Kahua are committed to giving guidance and counselling according to the head of the department.. As a result, she has been forced to seek support from male teachers when dealing with adolescent mothers in the school.

#### **4.2.2. Background Information about the Principals and Deputy Principals**

The gender of principals and deputy principals in addition to their administrative experience should have implication on implementation of Government Policy on girls who get pregnant in school.

#### 4.2.2.1. Principals and Deputy Principals by Gender

In line with the MOE guidelines on governance (MOE, 2011), effort has been made to have gender balance in the appointment of principals and deputy principals as shown in Table 7.

**Table 7: Principals and Deputy Principals by Gender in Public Secondary Schools**

Participants	Male		Female		TOTAL	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	N	Percentage
Principals	10	50	10	50	20	100
Deputy Principals	9	45	11	55	20	100

The normal trend of appointments has been that a mixed school with a male principal would have a female deputy principal or vice versa. However, in four out of the sixteen mixed secondary schools used in the study, both the principals and their deputies were male. It is interesting to note that three of these four schools are in Karai Zone and are neighbours to each other. Information gathered also revealed that the heads of Guidance and Counselling departments in two of the three schools were also males. Only one mixed school in this zone had a male principal and a female deputy principal. Among the mixed secondary schools used in the study, only one had a female principal and a female deputy principal. This finding on gender distribution would likely have implications especially in the implementation process as far as the Government Readmission Policy on student adolescent mothers is concerned. As indicated earlier there are many cases where the extent of help sought by students is largely determined by the gender of the teachers, counsellors, principals and deputy principals (Elimu Yetu Coalition, 2003).

#### 4.2.2.2. Administrative Experience of the Principals and Deputy Principals

Information on the administrative experience of principals and deputy principals was obtained through the questionnaire. The experience has a great role to play not only in the management of schools but also in dealing with various issues such as pregnant and parenting students. Table 8 illustrates the administrative experience of principals and deputy principals in girls' and mixed secondary schools in Kikuyu District.

**Table 8: Administrative Experience of Principals and Deputy Principals**

Administrative experience of Principals and Deputy Principals in years	Frequency	Percentage
1 - 5	13	32.5
6 - 10	14	35
11 - 15	06	15
16 - 20	02	5
21 - 25	05	12.5
Above 25	00	0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 8 shows that the least experienced principals/deputy principals had served between 1-5 years. . The average administrative experience of the principals was between six and ten years. This is an indicator that these participants were familiar with what goes on in secondary schools as far as student pregnancy and the Government Readmission Policy are concerned.

### 4.2.3. Background Information About the Adolescent Mothers

Eleven adolescent mothers were involved in the study. They were given pseudo names: Rosa, Lisa, Essy, Patty, Dama, Euny, Betty, Susy, Dolly, Becky and Jenny. Six were interviewed individually as explained in Chapter Three. Five of the six interviewed individually were also part of the two FGDs. Each group had five members. One of the six interviewed could not be part of the FGD because she was in a boarding school. Table 9 illustrates the homogeneity of the adolescent mothers. They were between ages twelve and eighteen when they became pregnant.

**Table 9: Age When Adolescent Mothers Became Pregnant**

Age when the girls became pregnant	Frequency	Percentage
12 years	01	9.1
14 years	03	27.27
15 years	02	18.18
16 years	02	18.18
17 years	02	18.18
18 years	01	9.1
TOTAL	11	100

Calculations from Table 9 show that the average age when the girls became pregnant was fifteen years. Other studies carried out in and outside Kenya have indicated the same average age. Examples are Kibogy (2005) and Marete (2005) in Kenya; Vincent (2009) in UK; Hubbard (2008) in Namibia; Dellinger (2004) in USA. One of the major concerns in and outside Kenya has been that girls were becoming mothers when they were too young



to handle parenting roles. As Dellinger (2004) puts it, “at 15 these girls are not yet women”. That is why the Readmission Policy Guidelines have put a lot of emphasis on professional counselling. Information gathered during interviews established that most of the girls gave birth when they were either in form one or when they were about to be enrolled in form two. Some of the adolescent mothers had just completed their KCPE when they got pregnant. Others were in form one and only two were in form two. Such girls require a lot of guidance and support. Findings from interviews and FGDs also showed that the age of their children ranged between three months and three and a half years. Some of the mothers in schools were still breast-feeding. Due to different reasons, some of the adolescent mothers go back to school immediately after birth, while others do so after one or two years. As one of the counsellors interviewed commented:

Not all adolescent mothers are readmitted immediately after giving birth. Some come back immediately after giving birth. Some come back after staying at home for even three to four years due to various reasons. That is why each case is handled independently.

Although the adolescent mothers who participated in the study were from different educational zones and schools in Kabete District, they shared similar social and physical environments. Three of the adolescent mothers were from Kabete zone, three from Muguga and four from Thogoto zone. Information on the classes the adolescent mothers are currently in is shown in Table 10:

**Table 10: Current Classes of Adolescent Mothers**

Current class of adolescent mothers	Frequency	Percentage
Form 1	2	18.18
Form 2	4	36.36
Form 3	2	18.18
Form 4	3	27.27
TOTAL	11	100

From Table 10 it is clear that most of the adolescent mothers [8] are in Forms One to Three. This implies that there is still time for most of them to adjust in relation to their interactions and environments in school and at home before they complete the secondary school cycle. It is not too late for intervention measures in what they might be going through to play a great role in their welfare and academic performance.

#### **4.2.4 Background Information about Parents/Guardians of the Adolescent Mothers**

Five parents of adolescent mothers and one guardian were involved in the study. The researcher was able to access four parents through their daughters. One parent and one guardian were introduced to the researcher by members of the community. All the parents and the guardian were identified with their daughters' names: they were Lisa's mother and father who were interviewed separately and at different times; Rosa's mother who had separated with the father; Susy's mother, a single parent; Jenny's mother and Patty's guardian. Jenny's father could not be available for interview because of the nature of his work that included a lot of travelling and night duties.

Education levels and occupations of parents of the adolescent mothers involved in the study were very different. Studies carried out in and outside Kenya have shown that parents' education level has a lot of implication in their attitude towards their children's education as well as in their ability to support them financially (Oywecha, 2008; Shaningwa, 2007; NWLC, 2007; Pillow, 2006; Dellinger, 2004; UNESCO, 2003; Sadker & Sadker, 1991). In this regard the researcher found knowledge about education levels of the adolescent mothers' parents significant in the discussion of the findings in this study.

Education level for Lisa's parents was primary school. The mother practised small scale farming while the father operated a small shop in a market near their home. Rosa's mother had reached form four and was a trained cashier in a firm but had retired from employment on medical ground. Susy's mother was working in a government office as a trained secretary. She had completed secondary school education. Jenny's mother was educated up to form four. She was working as a beautician. Patty's parents did not go beyond primary school. According to Patty, they did casual work when it was available. Patty and her siblings depended on well wishers for their education. Patty's guardian was a widow and a retired primary school teacher. She was doing intensive farming. Adolescent mothers in FGDs also gave information about their parents' levels of education which ranged from primary to secondary school cycles. In most cases the parents' reactions and attitudes to their daughters' pregnancy depended on their economic status and level of education. As a whole, information gathered from the parents during interviews was very significant in enriching what the adolescent mothers said during both interviews and FGDs.

#### **4.2.5 Demographic Information About Heads of Guidance and Counselling Departments**

Effective implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers in schools largely depends on the roles played by school counsellors. According to MOE (2011), counselling is expected to help pregnant and parenting students not just to continue with their studies, but also to accept their situation and be able to cope with the challenges involved (Olusakin & Upangha, 1996; Oladele, 1991; Rickey, 1990). When the adolescent mother is able to understand herself, and accept her situation, she should be able to develop high self-esteem, confidence and stand on her feet without help (Oladete, 1991).

All the 20 girls' and mixed secondary schools used in the study have four male and 16 female heads of Guidance and Counselling Departments. Quota sampling strategy was applied to get 8 counsellors, one from the only national school in the target population, one from one of the provincial boarding schools, one from the district day school for girls, and five to represent the 16 mixed day schools from different zones. The eight were interviewed individually. Two were males and six were females. Only one of the eight selected was appointed by the Teachers' Service Commission. The other seven were internal appointments.

In order to understand the role played by the counsellors in implementing the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on student pregnancy, it was necessary to have detailed information about them. Qualifications of the counsellors, seminars attended, their experience and what they do apart from counselling are illustrated in Table 11. As pointed out earlier, pseudo names were used for their schools.

**Table 11: Information About Heads of Guidance and Counselling Departments in Public Girls' and Mixed Secondary Schools in Kikuyu District**

School	Qualifications and Training Duration	Adequate or Inadequate	Other Courses Taken	Counselling Experience (in years)	Other Roles Apart from Counselling	Work-load: Heavy Enough Light
Kahinga	Higher Diploma	Adequate	1-3 days seminar	5	Teaching/ Patron/ YCS	Heavy
Kazuri	Certificate (1 week)	Inadequate	2 day seminar	14	Teaching/ Technical Procurement	HOD Heavy
Mahua	Diploma (2 years)	Inadequate Good for basic skills	1 day seminar	5	Teaching/ Movement/ teacher Scouts' Class	Heavy
Maridadi	Diploma (2 years)	Adequate for basic skills	None	15	Teaching/ Patron CU	Heavy
Meta	Certificate (1 month)	Inadequate Only main skills	1 – 3 days seminar	9	Teaching/ Patron/ teacher Club Class	Heavy
Murangi	None	-	1 day seminar	4	Teaching/ Drama/Class Teacher	Heavy
Mutati	Diploma (2 years)	Adequate	1-3 days seminar	9	Teaching/ Technical HOD	Heavy
Neema	Certificate (2 weeks)	Inadequate	1 day seminar	9	Teaching/ Club Patron	Enough

Information given in Table 11 indicates clearly that although most of the counsellors have had a long experience in their roles (ranging between 4 and 14 years), they are hardly qualified for the job. The highest qualification is Higher Diploma in counselling (1 counsellor) and Diploma (3 counsellors). One of the counsellors had attended only a one day seminar throughout her 4 year counselling experience. Three counsellors had attended seminars with a duration ranging between 2 weeks and 1 month after which they obtained certificates. Information from the table also indicates that all the counsellors except one are overworked. This detailed information about the counsellors has a lot of implication in regard to effective implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District.

#### **4.2.6 Background Information about Teachers**

Teachers have a great role to play to ensure effective implementation of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines. According to MOE (2011), like the school counsellors, teachers are required to facilitate the process of Guidance and Counselling to girls who get pregnant and other students as well. A teacher who is aware of any girl who is pregnant and adolescent mothers in the school should offer support to those affected and the remedial sessions where necessary. The matter must be treated with confidentiality to avoid stigmatisation (MOE, 2011). If a teacher is unable to deal with the situation, he/she should refer the student affected to the Guidance and Counselling Department. Teachers are also required to “create awareness among boys and girls on the re-entry policy” (MOE, 2011. P.19). issues related to student pregnancy should be handled through forums such as class meetings, school clubs and societies and sessions on life skills education. The study involved interviews with ten class teachers. Counsellors and teachers used for interviews were drawn from the same schools.

The background information about the teachers interviewed helped the researcher to understand the extent to which they played their roles in implementing the Readmission Policy Guidelines on student pregnancy. The teachers’ teaching experience, counselling experience, membership in Guidance and Counselling Committee and training they had in counselling skills are portrayed in Table 12.

**Table 12: Information about Teachers in Public Girls' and Mixed Secondary Schools in Kikuyu District**

School	Teaching experience in years	Courses in Counselling	Adequate or Inadequate	Counselling experience in years	Member of Guidance /Counselling Department
Kahinga (F)	15	None	-	3 as a team	Yes
Kahinga (M)	19	None	-	10	No
Kazuri (F)	10	None	-	None	No
Mahua (F)	17	None	Inadequate	13	Yes
Maridadi (F)	20	2 weeks seminar	Inadequate	10	No
Meta (F)	6	2 weeks seminar	Inadequate	2	Yes
Murangi (F)	25	Higher Diploma	Adequate for general counselling	1	No
Mutati (F)	16	2 weeks seminar	Inadequate	1	Yes
Mutati (M)	8	None	-	None	No
Neema (M)	4	None	-	None	No

**NOTE: F = Female teacher; M=Male teacher. Female teachers or male teachers selected are shown against the name of each school.**

Information given in Table 12 shows clearly that most of the teachers have had a long experience in teaching which ranges between 4 and 25 years. However, five (50%) have never had any training in counselling although two of the five said they had counselling experience. These two teachers explained during interviews that they read a lot of materials and books on counselling which is one of their interests. They never get time or chance to go for training. Those teachers who had attended seminars with a duration ranging between 1 week and 6 weeks found the seminars inadequate in getting them

acquainted with skills required for Guidance and Counselling. Only one teacher had Higher Diploma in Counselling. However, none of the 10 teachers interviewed had attended any seminar related to student pregnancy in schools. This background information about the teachers helped the researcher to understand their reactions to the readmission of girls who get pregnant in school.

#### **4.3 Extent to Which the Stakeholders in Public Secondary Schools in Kikuyu**

##### **District are Aware of the Government Readmission Policy on Adolescent**

##### **Mothers**

According to MOE (2011), effort must be made to use all opportunities to create awareness of the Readmission Policy to all the stakeholders. Some of the statements in the guidelines read:

- The school management should create awareness among the teachers, parents, boys and girls on the re-entry policy.
- Teachers should create awareness among boys and girls on the re-entry policy.
- The Ministry of Education should visit schools to monitor implementation of the policy.

Findings from information gathered through interviews, FGDs and questionnaire revealed that most of the stakeholders were aware of the Readmission Policy in general but they have never seen the guidelines. The responses to the question on awareness from most of the participants were almost similar. For example, one of the officials in charge of training at Kenya Education Management Institute explained:

Yes, we are aware of the policy but we have never received a copy of the guidelines. In fact, I have never read them. You see, here at KEMI, we deal



with Gender in Education policy in general. The Government Readmission Policy is just one of the issues in the Gender in Education Policy.

It was interesting to note that even the DEO officials who are more directly connected to the MOE were not aware of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines. Without the guidelines both monitoring and implementing the Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers in schools would be affected.

Information from the interviews and FGDS with the adolescent mothers revealed that most of them were not aware of the Readmission Policy although they knew girls who continued with their studies after giving birth. However, like the KEMI and the DEO personnel, none of the adolescent mothers interviewed knew there were even guidelines to guide the implementation of the Readmission Policy. Information gathered from the adolescent mothers indicated that the Readmission Policy Guidelines had no influence in their decision to continue schooling. Factors that influenced them to continue with their studies were obtained during interviews and Focus Group Discussions. These factors are shown in Table 13:

**Table 13: Factors that Influenced Adolescent Mothers to Continue with their Studies**

Adolescent Mothers	Awareness of the Policy	Parents' encouragement	Motivated by their children to achieve personal goals	Encouraged by relatives/ friends	Encouraged by teachers and school administration	Able to get donors/ sponsors	Having educated parents
Lisa	✓		✓	✓			
Rosa	✓		✓	✓			
Essy		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Patty			✓		✓		
Dama	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Euny			✓	✓	✓		
Betty	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Susy		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Dolly			✓	✓	✓		
Becky			✓	✓	✓		
Jenny		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

Table 13 shows that the awareness of the Government Readmission Policy on student pregnancy was not the main reason why adolescent mothers continued with studies. All of them were motivated by a strong desire to be self-reliant not just for their own sake but also for the sake of their child. They were also too young to marry in addition to handle a baby. It is also important to note from the table that the administration and other stakeholders in the school play a great role in influencing those who get pregnant to continue with their studies. Some of the girls indicated during interviews that they might not have continued schooling without the intervention of a certain teacher or counsellor or

principal. In cases of the girls who became pregnant when they were too young decision to go back to school was made by their parents. A good example is that of Jenny who got pregnant at the age of 12. Since the adolescent mothers are largely motivated by their children to continue with their studies, awareness of the Readmission Policy requirements would not only give them assurance that they had made the right choice, but they would also be more ready to seek support from the school counsellors or any other authority in the school immediately they discovered they are pregnant. Findings from interviews with teachers showed that most girls withdraw from school immediately they discovered they are pregnant thus missing the opportunity to be counselled.

The way stakeholders react when a school girl becomes pregnant is a strong indicator of a general lack of awareness about the Readmission Policy Guidelines. The following are some of the indicators given during the interviews, FGDs and in the questionnaire. One of the deputy principals commented: “Sponsors are very uncomfortable when they learn that the girl they support is pregnant. Most of them are unwilling to support such a girl in her studies after giving birth”.

One of the counsellors expressed her sentiment: “Some administrators and teachers do not want the school to be associated with pregnancy and immorality”.

The Readmission Policy has been misinterpreted. The counsellor from Kazuri Secondary School reported:

Parents do not seem to have understood the Readmission Policy well. They fail to understand that their daughters have still the potential to realise not just their dreams but also the dreams of the family. If they were not ignorant, many girls who get pregnant would do well without stress.

Findings from data collected from the principals showed that some stakeholders were of the view that encouraging adolescent mothers to go back to school would encourage more pregnancies among the students. According to these stakeholders, readmission of adolescent mothers was like saying that getting pregnant while in school was okay.

One of the counsellors made the following observations about parents' reactions when they discover their daughters are pregnant:

“Most parents are very difficult. Immediately they discover their daughter is pregnant, they do not want to talk about it. They quietly withdraw the girl and many of them encourage their daughters to carry out abortion”.

Awareness of the guidelines among the parents might have reduced the constrained relationships with their daughters when they became pregnant.

“Girls normally leave school without telling anyone”. This is what most principals, deputy principals and counsellors said. The interviews with adolescent mothers portrayed this happened a lot. Later, some of them regretted why they suffered alone. One adolescent mother remarked during interview: “I wish I knew I could get support from someone in school. I suffered a lot when I discovered I was pregnant. How would be my future?”

Most principals and deputy principals did not talk about the readmission of adolescent mothers during assembly. They did not see the need in involving all the students in support of pregnant and parenting students. The school administration also does not encourage talking about it during other activities such as clubs or speech days. If the principals were familiar with the guidelines, they might have made use of available opportunities to create awareness of the Readmission Policy. One of the Readmission Policy Guidelines clearly reads:

The school management should create awareness among the teachers, parents, boys and girls on the re-entry policy. This awareness should be created through the following forums:

- School Assemblies
- School Clubs and Societies
- PTA Meetings
- Prize Giving Day
- Sports Day
- School Closing Day
- Open forums for student-teacher interaction
- Staff meetings (MOE, 2011, p. 18)

It was also noted that the BOG has not fully embraced the Government Readmission Policy, according to some of the participants. As with the other stakeholders, it is a great possibility that the members are not aware of the guidelines.

The principals, the deputy principals and the counsellors explained that it is very difficult to comment on the rate of pregnancy among girls in their schools and the number of pregnant and adolescent mothers who continue with studies over the years. Additionally, they did not have a clear picture of the number of adolescent mothers who might have transferred from other schools. As a result, it was not easy to keep accurate records on student pregnancy and readmission cases. One of the principals explained:

Commenting about pregnancy in the school is very tricky. It is not easy to tell whether girls who transfer to the school can be associated with pregnancy. Normally, we are told about cases of pregnancy by other students. Sometimes we have to carry out pregnancy tests when we suspect

a girl is pregnant. Most of the girls want to keep everything associated with pregnancy secret. Maybe being exposed to the readmission policy and the guidelines might help the girls who get pregnant and their parents to open up.

The schools are struggling so hard trying to convince the girls and their parents to accept what has happened, to continue with studies and to discourage abortion. When all the participants were asked about the Readmission Policy Guidelines during the interviews, and when handing in their completed questionnaires, they were excited. As one of the participants remarked:

If we had these guidelines and understood what each of us is expected to do, we might not have struggled so much to implement the policy. We do what we do through trial and error. Otherwise we are making effort to implement the policy.

As a whole, the way the participants were responding to various questions in the questionnaire and during the interviews and FGDs showed clearly that the stakeholders were not aware there were guidelines that specified roles of all the stakeholders in order to facilitate implementation of the Readmission Policy on student pregnancy in schools. The only document in schools, KEMI and the District Education offices is the “Gender in Education Policy” which is too general.

#### **4.4 Sensitisation and Preparation of the Key Stakeholders Involved in the Implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on Adolescent Mothers in Schools**

Some of the stakeholders in schools were aware of the Government Readmission Policy (1999) version that did not have clear guidelines. This study was based on the revised Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on Student Pregnancy (MOE. 2011). It was therefore essential to find out the extent to which the key stakeholders were familiar with the revised guidelines and the extent to which they were prepared to use them in implementing the Readmission Policy.

##### **4.4.4 Significance of Special Preparation for the Key Stakeholders**

The Government Readmission Policy Guidelines emphasise the importance of capacity building all those involved in implementing the policy (MOE, 2011). Examples of references related to preparation and capacity building are:

- a) The school management should capacity build the guidance and counselling department and the school medical personnel on their role in implementing the policy.
- b) The Ministry of Education should capacity build school management and teachers on the policy.
- c) Kenya Education Management Institute should capacity build the guidance and counselling department and the school medical personnel on their role in implementing the policy. It should also capacity build school management and teachers on the policy.

The above statements show that special training and preparation of the stakeholders are essential. This was supported by officials at DEO's and KEMI's offices. The QASO interviewed noted:

A lot of capacity building of administrators, counsellors and teachers is very important. Parents, especially, can be a great obstacle to implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines if not handled carefully. Ways of capacity building the stakeholders must be sought.

Studies on student pregnancy and teen mothers in school corroborate with sentiments expressed by the QASO. For example, Bhana et al (2010) and Chigona and Chetty (2007), reported that teachers and heads of schools complained of not being able to handle teen mothers in school.

One of the KEMI training officers interviewed had similar views. She explained:

Due to stigma experienced by a teenager who becomes pregnant in school, the immediate reaction might be a desire to drop out of school. Convincing her to continue with studies requires somebody with counselling skills in order to use an appropriate approach. Also, parents are known to have rejected their daughters when they became pregnant. Schools should therefore be prepared on how to counsel them in order to continue supporting their daughters.

The responses on the significance of special training for the key stakeholders concurred with the emphasis made by Rein (1983) and Elmore (1980) concerning prior training of the stakeholders before implementation of any policy. The principals, deputy principals and school counsellors also indicated that they needed special training to implement the Readmission Policy due to its delicate nature. Even if one had done an intensive course in



Guidance and Counselling, sensitisation on the requirements for dealing with sexuality issues and adolescence pregnancy was very crucial. Need for skills to help adolescent mothers deal with stigma attached to pregnancy and motherhood is expressed clearly by Chigona and Chetty (2007). They explain why teen mothers require support:

Because girls have become mothers while still young and in school, they are stigmatised and tend to have low self-esteem. Addressing this requires support, particularly proper counselling. Without going through proper counselling to deal with their stigma and schooling they usually get overwhelmed and eventually stop attending school as they fail to cope with the situation (p. 11).

#### **4.4.5 Extent to which the Key Stakeholders Involved in Implementing the Government Readmission Policy are Prepared**

Intensive Guidance and Counselling Course refer to the training leading to a degree or Diploma in Counselling Psychology. In-service training, seminars and workshops refer to an on-going training to keep the school personnel oriented to any new requirements and strategies in order to implement them effectively. Table 14 illustrates principals' and deputy principals' rating of general training given to counsellors in their schools.

**Table 14: Principals’ and Deputy Principals’ Rating of Training Given to Counsellors in Public Secondary Schools in Kikuyu District**

Training given	Good		Fair		Not Given		TOTAL	
	Freq	Percentage	Freq	Percentage	Freq	Percentage	No.	Percentage
Intensive Guidance and Counselling course	8	20	14	35	18	45	40	100
In-service training Seminars and workshops	6	15	14	35	20	50	40	100
	15	37.5	20	50	5	12.5	40	100

Table 14 shows that most of the counsellors are not equipped with skills for effective guidance and counselling services in public schools in Kikuyu District. In response to the question on whether the counsellors were prepared for roles in implementing the Government Readmission Policy, the answer “not prepared” was unanimous. This situation was corroborated by the demographic information about heads of Guidance and Counselling Departments illustrated in Table 11. Counsellors who had certificates and diplomas in counselling still found themselves ill-equipped to handle cases related to adolescent mothers and pregnancy Responses by the counsellors, principals and deputy principals portrayed only very few counsellors who had done any intensive course (mostly diploma) in Guidance and Counselling. As indicated earlier, some counsellors had not attended any training apart from a one-day seminar or workshop. This was indicated by information collected during interviews. That means there are a number of counsellors who do not have any certificate in Guidance and Counselling and yet they are heads of departments. In response to a question why counsellors were heading the departments without any training, one counsellor replied:

You know, most of the appointments are done internally by the principal. There are certain qualities in an individual that he/she looks for. I think counselling is like a ministry. One has to have interest in people, must be committed and have to be patient. You can't be in a hurry with counselling. Although I am not trained, my school was ranked the best in guidance and counselling in the zone. This gave me more confidence. But it has not been easy. I had to buy books on counselling to train myself.

This counsellor did not imply that training is not important. She explained, "The principal could not accept my refusal to head the department. I had no alternative but to equip myself. Also, the school did not have funds for training the counsellors".

In all the girls' and mixed secondary schools used in the study, only two counsellors were appointed by the TSC according to one of the counsellors interviewed and who happened to be the co-ordinator of guidance and counselling seminars/workshops in the district. The QASO and the EMIS officer interviewed admitted that no capacity building of administrators, teachers and counsellors in schools had been given. The QASO lamented:

Right now there is more on paper. Implementers need to be brought on board through seminars and workshops. Most of the policies by the Ministry of Education are very good in raising standards of education in this country, but implementation has been very mechanical. Stakeholders are rarely prepared for their roles and responsibilities.

According to these officers, lack of enough personnel and shortage of funds were the main reasons for failure to capacity build and sensitise implementers of the Readmission Policy. The Government has not allocated any budget for in-service courses, seminars, workshops

and monitoring in relation to the Readmission Guidelines on student pregnancy in schools. In response to the same question on capacity building school personnel in relation to the implementation of the Government Readmission Policy, one of the KEMI officials interviewed remarked:

Funds allocated to the Institute are for education in general, not just gender in education. There is no budget allocated to enable us to focus on a specific area like readmission of girls who get pregnant in school. We only discuss the issue briefly during our sensitisation on gender issues. However, KEMI is ready to capacity build the school management and counsellors, but the MOE should allocate substantial amount of funds in order to be effective.

This response shows that KEMI has not had any involvement in planning how to capacity build implementers of the Readmission Policy. The Institute does not even have the document (Readmission Guidelines) that outlines what is its role in the implementation process. This was a very serious omission. The suggestion made by the official interviewed was that ways of training stakeholders should be sought through the District Education Office.

Initiative to train counsellors and peer-educators has been taken by NGOs and individual schools. Life Skills Promoters has been the most active for the last five years according to information collected during interviews with the counsellors. Information from one of the counsellors who is also the co-ordinator of teacher counsellors in Kikuyu District showed that Life Skills Promoters is a Christian NGO established in 2006 to empower the youth in Kenya and their teachers with life skills. The NGO is funded by organisations in and outside Kenya such as Tear Fund. For five years the organisation used Kikuyu District to pilot its activities which included one day and 1-2 weeks seminars

and workshops for heads of schools, teacher counsellors and peer educators. Life Skills Promoters will be remembered for pioneering peer education in the district. For five years up to 2011, several boys and girls from different schools were trained by the organisation. As a result, these students are useful in impacting positive values and skills among their fellow students. Since Life Skills Promoters moved out of Kikuyu District in 2011 to work in other districts in Kenya, no seminars and workshops have been organised for teacher counsellors by January 2013. However, from information given by participants, it is important to note that these seminars and workshops had nothing to do with preparation for implementing the Readmission Policy. They were very general since they aimed at equipping the schools with basic skills in guidance and counselling.

In view of the foregoing findings, it is clear that the key stakeholders have not been prepared and sensitised to carry out effective implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on girls who get pregnant in school. Further, no materials prepared by the government or KIE have been sent to schools to guide the administrators, counsellors and teachers on how to handle pregnant and parenting students, their parents in addition to other students in school on sexuality and other issues. Information gathered through administrators' questionnaires and counsellors' interviews showed that although the Government Readmission Guidelines were officially ready by March 2011, by June 2013, schools were yet to receive them. The stakeholders were therefore carrying out their roles through trial and error. As Shaningwa (2007) reported in the case of Namibian Readmission Policy, due to lack of training most of the stakeholders in this study have no confidence in dealing with girls who get pregnant in school. Translating policies into action has often been the major handicap to implementation as observed by Rein (1983) and Elmore (1980),

#### **4.5 How the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines are Used to Raise Aspirations of Adolescent Mothers in their Studies**

Various studies on student pregnancy have portrayed desire by adolescent mothers to succeed in their studies and life in spite of the challenges they face (Vincent, 2009; McNeeley, 2008; Duncan, 2007; Shaningwa, 2007; SmithBattle, 2007, 2006; Chigona & Chetty, 2007). Responses by adolescent mothers during interviews in this study corroborate the girls' aspirations portrayed by these studies. Effective use of the Readmission Guidelines in Kenya should help adolescent mothers to keep up their aspirations to succeed.

##### **4.5.1 Requirements by the Policy Guidelines**

The Government Readmission Policy states clearly that the learners' right to education must be upheld in all cases including the right of a girl who gets pregnant while in school (MOE, 2011). The Policy Guidelines indicate that:

- a) At no time should a girl be coerced to leave school because she is pregnant. She shall leave school at an appropriate time so as to give birth.
- b) There is no specified period of leave of absence. As much as possible, little time should be wasted outside school before and after delivery and the girl should join school at an appropriate time after giving birth.
- c) On readmission after the pregnancy, the girl should be counselled to enable her settle down quietly and quickly.
- d) If the girl is registered for the national examination, she must be allowed to sit for the examination, unless she feels she is inadequately prepared.
- e) A girl who drops out of school due to pregnancy should be readmitted in the same school or another one (MOE, 2011 p. 18).

The Ministry of Education and the policy implementers especially the school administration, have a great role to play to ensure the guidelines cited above are adhered to in order to keep the students affected by pregnancy focused to the achievement of their educational goals. To raise aspirations of the adolescent mothers in their studies, the implementers should be committed to cater for their special needs as it is done in other countries such as UK, USA and Australia (Vincent, 2009; Duncan, 2008; Dellinger, 2004; Boulden, 2000). Such involvement include: offering assistance with learning materials to help adolescent mothers to catch up with other students; offering intensive counselling as many of them take time to overcome their traumatic experience; establishing ways of raising their confidence and self esteem.

#### **4.5.2 Strategies Used by the Ministry of Education**

For the implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines to have impact on educational aspirations of the adolescent mothers, the Ministry of Education through the DEOs should “visit schools to monitor implementation of the policy, follow on reported cases of early pregnancies in schools and mobilise parents, PTA, school management committees and BOGs to follow up on students adversely affected by pregnancy” (MOE, 2011 p. 20). Further, the MOE is expected to mobilise resources for provision of medical services for both boys and girls in school. According to this Guideline “such services include school clinics, school nurse and school open days for free medical check-ups” (MOE, 2011, p. 20).

Asked about the role of the District Education Office in relation to implementation of the Government Readmission Policy, the officials interviewed were in agreement with the stipulated expectation of the Guidelines. The main aim was to ensure the schools were facilitating continuation in education by girls who get pregnant while in school. In

response to the question on the extent to which this role has been carried out, both the DEO and the KEMI officials admitted that the Ministry of Education has not shown much commitment in the implementation of the policy. It was with some sense of guilt that the QASO interviewed remarked:

Just like lack of preparation of stakeholders to implement the Readmission Policy, I am sorry to say that monitoring and supervision have not been done. It is clear that the MOE has failed to show its commitment to the implementation in schools. As I said earlier, the requirements are more on paper. This trend should be rectified as soon as possible for the policy to be more effective and meaningful to the stakeholders.

It is clear from most of the responses by the DEOs that apart from the Government Readmission Policy document, no strategies have been laid down by the Ministry of Education to follow up in the schools to assess how the stakeholders are using the guidelines to raise aspirations of the adolescent mothers in their studies.

The shortcoming by the Ministry of Education was corroborated by findings from the data gathered during interactions with the counsellors, teachers, principals and deputy principals through the interviews and the questionnaire. These participants complained of being ignored by the Ministry of Education as illustrated by the response of one counsellor:

The MOE should be more involved in the programmes sent to schools. There is virtually no monitoring of implementation of the policy by the DEOs. They tend to give more attention to primary schools than to secondary schools. They should visit schools to find out what is happening



on the ground. That is the only way of getting to know the challenges we face.

Some principals and deputy principals also commented that there was no follow-up by the MOE to ensure effective implementation of the policy. If there was, some of the negative reactions by some stakeholders might not have risen. Follow-up of any policy implementation is cited as very crucial (Rein, 1983; Elmore, 1980). Lack of follow-up on implementation of policies has been noted in other studies on adolescent mothers in schools. For example, although the policy to allow teen mothers in South Africa to continue schooling was launched in 1996, by 2010 teachers were operating without knowing what to do (Bhana et al, 2010). The teachers were just told to keep the teenage mothers in school. No one followed afterwards to find out what was happening. Shaningwa (2007) and Chigona and Chetty (2007) reported similar sentiments from the findings from their studies.

However, the findings from responses by most stakeholders showed that there are some positive measures taken by the MOE to ensure that no adolescent mother seeking readmission either in the same or another school misses a place. Information from the QASO, EMIS official, principals and deputy principals indicated that there is a lot of co-operation by these offices in cases related to transfer of students who get pregnant in school. Additionally, the DEO ensures that a girl who gets pregnant and has registered for the national examination, is allowed to sit for the examination unless she prefers otherwise, which is in line with one of the Readmission Policy Guidelines (MOE, 2011). This co-operation between the DEO and the school administration could have contributed to the increased enrolment of adolescent mothers at various levels in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District. This trend is portrayed by responses from the principals and

deputy principals to the question on the rate of pregnancy among girls in their schools and the adolescent mothers who continue with their studies between 2008 and 2011 (Table 15). Table 15 shows the average rate of cases of pregnancy and adolescent mothers that principals and deputy principals are aware of in their school.

**Table 15: Average Rate of Known Pregnancy and Number of Adolescent Mothers in Each Public School in Kikuyu District Between 2008 and 2012**

Year	Rate of Pregnancy	Adolescent Mothers in school
2012	5	5
2011	4	4
2010	4	3
2009	3	2
2008	3	1

Table 15 shows that there has been some positive response to the readmission of adolescent mothers in public secondary school in Kikuyu district. Five of the schools had a record of between five to eleven adolescent mothers in 2011 and 2012 although some had only one or two cases. In view of this development, girls who get pregnant in school should be able to have their dreams realised unless they refuse to use the opportunity provided. However, the participants emphasised that it was not easy to have accurate records because many girls who get pregnant and their parents tend to be very secretive about the pregnancy. Additionally, students who come from other schools do not give the real reasons for the transfer. In fact, most of the adolescent mothers in schools are identified to the principals, deputy principals, the counsellors or to the teachers by other

students who in most cases are their neighbours at home. Therefore, the number of adolescent mothers in schools is very likely to be higher according to the participants. Findings from data collected from various participants showed that schools that provided a lot of support for adolescent mothers recorded a higher enrolment. Examples were Maridadi, Murangi, Kahua and Kazuri.

#### **4.5.3 Strategies Used by Schools to Enhance Implementation of the Government Readmission Policy**

Findings from information gathered from principals, deputy principals, counsellors and adolescent mothers using different tools revealed that all the public girls' and mixed secondary schools in Kikuyu District were admitting girls who get pregnant in school, even without the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines. In response to the question whether the school is implementing the policy, one principal wrote:

As a school, we are quite comfortable with the Government Readmission Policy because this is what we have been doing long before the policy came into place. We have always ensured that any girl who becomes pregnant is counselled and encouraged to continue with her studies.

The following are various strategies used by schools to enhance implementation of the Government Readmissions Policy in order to raise aspirations of adolescent mothers in their studies.

##### **a) Efforts Made to Involve Various Stakeholders in the Process of Implementing the Readmission Policy on Student Pregnancy.**

The Government Readmission Policy Guidelines have stated that the school management should maximise on using any available opportunity to create awareness of the policy among school stakeholders (MOE, 2011). Such opportunities are school assemblies,

school clubs, PTA meetings, staff meetings, and school open days. Table 16 illustrates the responses of principals and deputy principals to the question on the levels of involvement of stakeholders and various groups in the implementation of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines.

**Table16: Efforts Made by School Administration to Involve Stakeholders in Implementing the Readmission Policy in Public Secondary Schools in Kikuyu District**

Groups/ Individuals/ Forums	Very Involved		Somewhat Involved		Not Involved		TOTAL	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	N	%
Guidance and Counselling Department	22	55	13	32.5	5	12.5	40	100
Career Guidance	8	20	14	35	18	45	40	100
Peer Mediation Groups	8	20	18	45	14	35	40	100
PTA	5	12.5	11	27.5	24	60	40	100
Board of Governors	10	25	8	20	22	55	40	100
Clubs & Societies	1	2.5	8	20	31	77.5	40	100
Individual Parents	22	55	14	35	4	10	40	100
Pregnant and Parenting Students	31	77.5	8	20	1	2.5	40	100
School Assembly	3	7.5	9	22.5	28	70	40	100

The results from Table 16 show that 87.5 per cent of the participants were involving the Guidance and Counselling Department in the implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on girls who become pregnant in school. The 12.5 per cent that did not involve the department comprised the schools that did not experience serious challenges related to adolescent mothers. Most of the schools did not make use of the school assembly (70%), Clubs and Societies (75%), PTA (60%), BOG (55%) and career guidance (45%). 45% somewhat involved and 35% did not involve peer mediation groups. As noted earlier, only a few schools saw the need to train and involve peer educators. The main reason for not involving various groups or taking opportunities provided such as school assembly could be lack of awareness of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines. As noted from various participants, the guidelines had not been sent to schools. Without them, it would not be easy to view certain situations and groups such as PTA and BOG as important players in the implementation of the policy. Due to the narrow view towards the policy as just to readmit adolescent mothers, the need to guide boys and girls on matters related to sexuality, peer/boy-girl relationships, self-esteem and self-respect is not seen as a priority by most schools hence failure to make use of situations and groups such as school assembly and PTA. Table 16 helps to illustrate the concerns by schools are mainly the pregnant and parenting students and the individual parents affected. Obviously, according to the participants, Guidance and Counselling Department would be handy to counsel both the girls and their parents. If the guidelines were made clear it is very likely that stakeholders would appreciate that support for pregnant and adolescent mothers is a co-operative effort by all persons involved in implementation.

**b) Involvement of Stakeholders When the School Learns a Girl is Pregnant.**

The Government Readmission Guidelines have outlined clearly the actions various stakeholders should take in dealing with pregnancy in school. In response to the question on what happens when the school learns a girl is pregnant, principals and deputy principals indicated the roles played by key stakeholders. The steps taken include:

- i) In most schools, the principal, deputy principal and the head of Guidance and Counselling Department play significant roles when the school learns a girl is pregnant. In all the provincial girls' schools, the school nurse is very involved in the known cases of pregnancy from the beginning. Each of these stakeholders encourages the girl to accept the situation and assures her it is not the end of the road to education. In most schools the girl is sensitized on advantages of continuing with studies. The affected girl has an option to go to another school after giving birth. Utmost confidentiality on the pregnancy is observed. However, some schools send the girl home immediately, but in most cases the girl remains in school as long as the pregnancy is not visible. Additionally, some principals go out of their way to request other schools to readmit the affected girls after giving birth. However, information given in various interviews indicated that due to trauma, some girls do not want to continue learning when they discover they are pregnant. Such girls apply for readmission after delivery.
- ii) Some schools are very particular especially through the counsellor and/or the nurse in discouraging the girl against abortion.
- iii) Although Parents/guardians are invited by most schools to discuss the situation concerning their daughters the response is very poor. Instead some

parents withdraw their daughters from school secretly. Parents who respond are counselled, made aware of the Readmission Policy and advised to support their daughter by taking care of the baby and by encouraging her to continue with school. There are cases however, where some schools do not involve the parents unless the girl supports the idea.

- iv) In most schools, only the class teacher of the girl was informed “to avoid stigma”. Findings from interviews actually showed that many girls did not want their teachers to be informed about their pregnancy because they were afraid of being “put on the carpet” in the staffroom. From the interviews held with class teachers, the administration rarely involves the teachers in cases of pregnancy. Class teachers normally deal with cases they have discovered themselves in the course of their teaching.
- v) Other students are not informed about cases of pregnancy in schools. In a situation where other students are aware of a case of pregnancy, some schools take a deliberate move to sensitise them about the policy and encourage them to give moral support to the girl affected.
- vi) Only 15 principals and deputy principals indicated involvement of the PTA and BOG in cases of pregnancy/adolescent mothers in the school in order to emphasise parents’ support.

Most schools encourage continued support of the adolescent mother in their studies through the Guidance and Counselling departments. Findings from information collected from counsellors showed cases where schools assist adolescent mothers who cannot continue with studies due to lack of support at home. The counsellor of Mahua Secondary School explained:

In this school, the administration makes appeal to the PTA and Old Students' Association to contribute towards the account that was created for needy students. This has become a source for funds to support the students whose parents cannot afford to cater for both the girl and the baby. The school also looks for sponsors for the same. One adolescent mother who was assisted financially by the school did KCSE in 2010. She obtained an A plain and realised her dream of studying engineering at the university. Such a case encourages us to support girls who get pregnant.

This counsellor also referred to cases where girls are rejected by parents after becoming pregnant. The school also takes such girls into consideration for financial support.

It is clear from the findings of the study that there are schools in Kikuyu District that are committed to effective implementation of the Readmission Policy. There are three good examples from Thogoto Zone, two from Kabete Zone, two from Muguga Zone and one from Karai Zone. The findings also showed that although they are readmitting adolescent mothers, some schools lack structured programmes to assist them to do well in their studies. In such schools, the grades of adolescent mothers continue to go down after readmission. Poor performance by adolescent mothers in school was given by teachers interviewed as one of the challenges of implementing the policy.

#### **c) Programmes Organised by Guidance and Counselling Departments.**

Three of the public secondary schools in Kikuyu District had well-organised programmes where almost everyone in the school is involved. According to information collected from the counsellors, principals and deputy principals, such programmes are organised by Guidance and Counselling Departments and supported fully by the administration. The main aim is to deal with various issues such as reproductive health,



sexuality, living values, life skills, boy-girl relationships, peer pressure, understanding self, academic issues, career choices, assertiveness training and self-esteem. Some of these issues are highlighted in the Policy Guidelines. Table 17 illustrates a sample of what is happening in one of the girls' boarding schools.

**Table 17: A Format of a Programme Organised by Guidance and Counselling Department in One Girls' School in Kikuyu District**

**Term One 2012**

Topic	Class or Group	Date and Time	Speaker/s	Venue	Teacher in charge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adolescence Reproductive Health</li> <li>• Sexuality Awareness</li> </ul>	Form Ones		The school nurse	School Hall	

This school had eight such sessions in a term. Two other schools had regular sessions every Tuesday. Such programmes were introduced in some schools after realizing that most students who are admitted in form one are very ignorant on many issues especially those related to sexuality awareness and relationships. All the teachers in the schools were involved although members of Guidance and Counselling Department and class teachers played a greater role in organising such meetings. Speakers were drawn from both inside and outside the school. Examples of speakers from the school are the school nurses, the principal, deputy principal, school chaplain, head of Guidance and Counselling Department and some teachers. Speakers from outside included: professional counsellors, psychologists and professionals from other organisations. The outcomes from these programmes included reduced rate of pregnancy in the school, improved discipline, healthier boy-girl relationships and rise of standards in academic performance. One of the

counsellors explained what happened when the Guidance and Counselling programme was introduced in her school:

Before the current principal came, there was a lot of indiscipline in the school, thefts and fighting amongst students, a lot of school drop-out cases due to different factors including pregnancy. There was a lot pairing among boys and girls. Having boyfriends/girlfriends in the school was the norm. The new principal came with new ways of doing things such as meeting with students to discuss various issues every Tuesday. Teachers who resisted were transferred. Now everyone is comfortable with the new arrangement. We are rewarded by improved discipline in the school and improved performance in KCSE. We have also observed that there are healthy boy-girl relationships in the school.

According to Sadker and Sadker (1991), deliberate steps that must be taken by schools to respond to student pregnancy include ways of increasing self esteem and useful skills needed for life. One of the challenges in organising such programmes was lack of funds especially to meet the cost of involving outside speakers. Good professionals charge a lot of money. One counsellor gave an example of a qualified counsellor who charged not less than KSh 10, 000 whenever she gave talks to schools and other groups. Another challenge was fitting such programmes in the already congested time-table. Lastly, teachers who were not in Guidance and Counselling Department were reluctant to contribute or be involved in the programme. As a result, in most cases, the activities related to guidance and counselling were left for the department where the members were usually three to four. However, the school administration had always been very supportive whenever these departments came up with programmes and suggestions. In some schools,

principals were able to convince other members of staff to respond willingly when asked to contribute.

Programmes organised by Guidance and Counselling Departments in most schools did not include issues specifically related to the Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers. This trend is illustrated by a programme in one of the mixed secondary schools as portrayed in Table 18.

**Table 18: Guidance and Counselling Tentative Programme in 2011/2012 in One School**

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<b><u>TERM ONE</u></b>	<b><u>TERM TWO</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Prefects' induction</li> <li>➤ Planning/Evaluation</li> <li>➤ Form one induction</li> <li>➤ Parents' meeting</li> <li>➤ Retreats</li> <li>➤ Lobby for liberation of the boy-child</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Peer Educators Training</li> <li>➤ Sensitisation meeting</li> <li>➤ Visiting schools by counselling officials</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>TERM THREE</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Graduation</li> <li>➤ Teachers' workshop/ Evaluation</li> </ul>

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The programme shown in Table 18 is rather general and not related to the Readmission Policy. Further discussion with the Head of Guidance and Counselling Department in this school showed that the Readmission Policy is not taken into consideration in planning programmes. The areas included are also very vague and too generalised. Although girls

who get pregnant in school are readmitted, responses from the counsellor indicated lack of follow-up with them and their parents by the school. The school did not have any copy of the Readmission Policy document to guide the stakeholders. The study found that most of the schools did not have any programmes related to the requirements of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines. This scenario indicates lack of monitoring by MOE. Such supervision would help stakeholders to be more effective in the implementation of the policy.

#### **d) Peer Education.**

Findings from information given by counsellors through interviews showed that some schools have supported education and counselling by peers. There are regular workshops and seminars in the district organised by NGOs and supported by the School Heads Association. During the training of peer educators, basic skills in guidance and counselling fellow students are given. Peer education has been taken seriously in some schools. For example, a counsellor in one school in Kabete Zone explained:

The students in the school are divided into families. Each family has a teacher and some peer educators. The school saw the need to do this because the students were very sexually active and there was lack of positive mentorship at home. Many students were offering sex for money. Clients were mostly men, young and old, running small businesses such as kiosks, butcheries, charcoal selling and shoe vendors around the school. Some parents, especially single parents are encouraging their girls to have sex. With the help of trained peer educators, we are able to carry out intensive guidance once a fortnight.

In some schools, some adolescent mothers who have accepted their situation and are determined to excel in their studies as well as change their behaviour, are encouraged to join peer educators. The study found one adolescent mother who was not embarrassed to talk about her experience. She is one of the peer educators and is having a lot of positive impact among the students in the school. However, not all schools take peer education seriously. Shortage of funds needed for training is said to be a challenge in most schools.

**e) Efforts Made to Detect Cases of Pregnancy.**

Information collected from counsellors, teachers, principals and deputy principals indicated that some schools are very vigilant to detect cases of pregnancy by carrying out regular pregnancy tests. All the girls' secondary boarding schools carry out this procedure once a term with the help of the nurses. Although no day secondary school had a school nurse, some principals took the initiative to detect any cases of pregnancy with the help of doctors from nearby hospitals and clinics. This is usually done when reports of suspected cases of pregnancy are made to the administration through teachers, students or any other members of the school community. According to the counsellors from such schools, there is fear that if they do not do this, such girls disappear and carry out abortions. Reports from various studies indicate that many teen mothers leave school and never return due to their predicament (Shaningwa, 2007; Chigona & Chetty, 2007; Shine, 2007; SmithBattle, 2006). As a result of this exercise, the schools make use of the opportunity to counsel and guide girls who are pregnant.

#### **4.6. Ways in Which the Key Stakeholders Respond to the Government Readmission Policy**

This section presents and discusses the opinions, reactions and sentiments of the key stakeholders in regard to the readmission of adolescent mothers in schools. Their reactions have significant implications to the effort they make in carrying out their roles in the implementation of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines.

##### **4.6.1 Significance of the Government Readmission Policy According to the School Principals and Deputy Principals**

In order to determine opinions and understandings of the school administrators concerning the importance of the Government Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers in schools, the principals and deputy principals in all the 20 public schools in the study were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each of the listed statements. Their responses are shown using frequency and percentages in Table 19. Percentages were computed for all the participants' responses for each of the 14 items.

**Table 19: Opinions of Principals and Deputy Principals Concerning the Significance and Implementation of the Government Readmission Policy**

	STATEMENTS	STRONGLY AGREE		AGREE		NOT CERTAIN		DISAGREE		STRONGLY DISAGREE		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	N	%
1	The Government Readmission Policy Guidelines are very clear	05	12.5	08	20	05	12.5	16	40	06	15	40	100
2	Allowing girls who get pregnant to continue in school increases immorality and indiscipline among students	0	00	07	17.5	03	7.5	13	32.5	17	42.5	40	100
3	Effective implementation of the policy guidelines will raise educational aspirations of pregnant/parenting students	24	60	13	32.5	03	7.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	40	100
4	The government should have alternative institutions for teenage mothers	06	15	02	05	05	12.5	10	25	17	42.5	40	100
5	After getting pregnant the girls perform poorly in most academic work	04	10	08	20	04	10	12	30	12	30	40	100
6	I feel competent to plan for effective implementation of the guidelines in the school	03	7.5	14	35	10	25	08	20	05	12.5	40	100
7	I use any available opportunity to create awareness of the policy guidelines among school stakeholders	06	15	16	40	06	15	10	25	02	5	40	100
8	The guidelines are too demanding to be implemented effectively	01	2.5	05	12.5	15	37.5	12	30	07	17.5	40	100
9	School counsellors are too busy with class and other students to be able to meet with pregnant and parenting students and their parents	05	12.5	12	30	03	7.5	10	25	10	25	40	100
10	The parenting students will be able to have a bright future when they continue with their studies	26	65	08	20	06	15	0	0.0	0	0.0	40	100
11	Effective implementation of the guidelines will contribute to reduced pregnancy in schools	06	15	07	17.5	15	37.5	05	12.5	07	17.5	40	100
12	I do not feel competent enough to organise for effective implementation of the readmission guidelines	02	5	05	12.5	05	12.5	15	37.5	13	32.5	40	100
13	I support regular guidance & counselling in the school	25	62.5	15	37.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	40	100
14	There is no need to involve all the students in support for pregnant and parenting students	15	37.5	04	10	05	12.5	08	20	08	20	40	100

It is evident from Table 19 that the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines are not clear to more than half of the school principals and their deputies as 40% disagreed, 15% strongly disagreed and 12.5% were not certain. In their comments, they indicated that they knew about the policy in general but they had not received the guidelines. The 13 (32.5%) who indicated the guidelines were clear actually meant the Readmission Policy in general according to their reasons for their response. As indicated earlier, all the principals and the deputy principals were aware of the policy on pregnancy in schools. They were even making efforts to implement it. Responses to Item 2 show that most of the principals and deputy principals (75%) do not believe that adolescent mothers in schools would lead to increased immorality and indiscipline among students. Some of the comments made actually indicated that the adolescent mothers might contribute positively by strengthening peer education in schools. This is a good indicator of a great change in attitude by principals. Previous studies have reported negative response by most schools towards the Readmission Policy (Oywecha, 2008; Mwale, 2005; Omwancha, 2004). The participants who indicated that immorality and indiscipline among students would increase with readmission of adolescent mothers (17.5%) were also the ones who strongly agreed that the government should have alternative institutions for teenage mothers (Item 4). The reason given was that they would be more comfortable on their own. However, the majority (70%) did not support this argument. The general opinion was that the adolescent mothers would view separation as discrimination and isolation which are not healthy. They should be encouraged to integrate with the other students.

Responses to items 3 and 10 show that most of the principals and deputy principals (37 in item 3 and 34 in item 10) regard the Readmission Policy as very useful in the realisation of educational aspirations of adolescent mothers. The policy helps to ensure a



bright future for the girls who get pregnant while in school. Again these reactions by school administrators indicate points of departure according to revelations from findings in earlier studies where many heads of schools did not support the policy as shown by their refusal to readmit some adolescent mothers with great desire to continue with their studies (Oywecha, 2008; Omwancha, 2004). That is why NGOs such as FAWE had to continue with their campaigns to popularise the Readmission Policy (FAWE, 2008). However, Table 19 shows that a big number of participants (38%) were not certain whether effective implementation of the guidelines would contribute to reduced pregnancy in schools. This uncertainty was expressed by their comments which included:

“Not sure”

“Debatable”

“We’ll wait and see”

“Maybe”

“It is too early to know”

More than half of the participants (60%) indicated that girls perform poorly in most academic work after getting pregnant. In their comments, they suggested that depression, interruptions and failure to adjust after giving birth might be contributing to the poor performance. 30% however believed some of them perform better than before becoming pregnant because they have a strong desire to be self-reliant. When asked to comment about the academic performance of adolescent mothers, eight of the ten teachers interviewed responded and corroborated with the views expressed by the principals and the deputy principals. Discomfort in class, ridicule by the other students, indifference shown by parents and some teachers, trauma and anxiety about their babies contributed to poor concentration in class leading to poor grades according to class teachers. It was also

noted in the teachers' responses that adolescent mothers missed several classes and catching up with other students was difficult.

The way responses in Table 19 are scattered in items 6 and 12 show that most of the participants were not certain of their competence to organise effective implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines. However, they were all united in their agreement in regard to their support for regular guidance and counselling in the school as 62.5% strongly agreed and 37.5% agreed. Responses to item 9 suggested that the school counsellors are overworked and they should be given less work to be effective. All the same, they should be able to cope with counselling in cases of student pregnancy since the adolescent mothers are not many. Half of the participants expressed strongly that there is no need to involve all the students in support for pregnant and parenting students. The main reason given is that most adolescent mothers want their status to be kept secret to avoid ridicule. In this regard, all students do not need to know them. On the other hand, the 40% who agreed that all the students should be involved said that they should be encouraged to give support to the adolescent mothers. In fact some of the teachers interviewed shared this view: "If all the students were involved in sexuality awareness education and made aware of the predicament of parenting students, the adolescent mothers might feel more comfortable in class".

Information given in Table 19 shows clearly that the principals and deputy principals are in support of the Government Readmission Policy on student pregnancy since they indicate that it was beneficial to those affected. This support is portrayed in their responses to question 15 where they are asked to give a general comment on the significance of the Readmission Policy. They were in agreement that the policy was noble

because it gave a second chance to the affected girls to realise their dreams. One principal wrote:

Students who get pregnant are human beings. They should not be victimised because of falling pregnant. They represent maybe what is happening in the society. They should be given a second chance and be encouraged to continue with education and improve their lot.

Another participant noted the importance of the policy when she wrote that “if the Readmission Policy Guidelines are implemented fully, the policy should empower the girl-child despite what happens”. In fact, responses of all the adolescent mothers interviewed concurred with the positive views given by the administration. During interviews and FGDs, some parenting students said that in their schools, the principals and deputy principals were very supportive. Rosa and Essy reported that in their school, students were not allowed to talk negatively about students who are mothers. However, the principals and deputy principals need special training on how to implement the Readmission Policy Guidelines more effectively.

#### **4.6.2 Response by Teachers to Student Pregnancy and Adolescent Mothers in Schools**

Due to the various challenges faced by adolescent mothers in schools, support by teachers is crucial. Most of the challenges these students face are manifested mostly in the classroom and during the outdoor activities such as games and sports, field work, clubs and societies. Challenges faced by adolescent mothers include: harassment by other students; missing classes from time to time due to various reasons; failure to complete homework and to concentrate in class contributing to their poor academic performance; dozing in class; low self-esteem and loneliness. Since teachers are constantly in contact

with the students, they are well placed to observe and understand the adolescent mothers' situation in addition to the position of a student who gets pregnant in school. Further, teachers are also well placed to carry out sexuality awareness education by mainstreaming various issues and messages in the course of their teaching different subjects and during class meetings and co-curricular activities. The class teachers selected in this study could also easily call the parents to discuss any issues affecting their sons and daughters. Most of the issues are normally reported to the class teachers by other teachers, students, the school counsellors and the school administration. In some cases, such issues are reported by other members of the school community such as watchmen, nurses (girls' boarding schools), school clerks and cleaners.

The researcher in this study was keen to find out the extent to which the teachers understood their roles in implementing the Government Policy on student pregnancy in addition to their reaction towards the idea of allowing adolescent mothers and pregnant students to continue schooling. Information gathered from other stakeholders such as adolescent mothers and school counsellors indicated different reactions by teachers whenever a student got pregnant or when they found out that there were adolescent mothers in their classes. Reactions were both positive and negative. There were teachers who were indifferent. Such teachers treated all the students in the same way without paying any attention to adolescent mothers. Studies have found that "lack of support from teachers may impeded adolescent mothers' ability to succeed" (Bhana et al, 2010 p. 874).

When asked about their views on the idea of allowing pregnant students and adolescent mothers to continue schooling, all the class teachers agreed that they should be allowed. One of the male class teachers was very supportive of the idea as reflected by his comments:

A growing percentage of our students are becoming pregnant. Unless they are assisted to continue and excel in their studies a significant population of our people will be poorly educated and unable to take care of their children. I strongly support the idea, but it should not be mechanical. Those around the students affected should give them encouragement otherwise they might give up.

Five of the teachers interviewed suggested that as soon as the school discovered a girl is pregnant, she should be advised to go home immediately and then be readmitted to a school of her choice after delivery. These teachers expressed their concern about the way members of the school community especially other students would react towards a pregnant student in their midst.

You know madam, immediately a girl discovers she is pregnant, she is traumatised and very sensitive to stigmatisation. That is why usually her reaction is to withdraw as soon as she realises that other people know about her condition. To minimise the shame and judgment by colleagues, the best thing would be to advise the girl to go home and come back to school after the birth of her baby. She can even go to another school where she is not known. That way the embarrassment is reduced.

Studies on teenage pregnancy have reported on how adolescence motherhood and pregnancy are framed as moral problems and sexual defilement (Bhana et al, 2010; Chigona & Chetty, 2007). “Boys and girls often verbally abuse these girls making their participation in class to seem unwelcome” (Chigona & Chetty, 2007, p. 9). If the teachers were sensitised about the Readmission Policy Guidelines, they would be more prepared to deal with the situation of pregnancy and adolescent mothers in schools. The guidelines are

very clear on the steps to be taken by the teachers, counsellors and the school administration as soon as they discover a girl who is pregnant. As indicated in the demographic information about the teachers, the document with the guidelines had not been sent to schools.

According to some class teachers, there were teachers in their schools who feared that girls who got pregnant were poor role models and they might influence other girls to fall in the same trap. With this attitude, it becomes very difficult to get teachers to assist in encouraging adolescent mothers in their classes. One class teacher explained the situation:

When I have adolescent mothers in my class, as a class teacher I do my best to encourage them to continue working hard especially when they miss classes. When there are issues I cannot handle, I encourage the girl concerned to talk to the school counsellor..... But I find it very difficult to collaborate with other teachers. Most of them are indifferent and are of the view that adolescent mothers do not need any special attention or treatment.

The study found that the way the teachers reacted depended very much on the support given to adolescent mothers by principals, deputy principals and counsellors. The study findings indicated that secondary schools in Kikuyu District differed a lot in the way adolescent mothers were incorporated in the school. Some schools went out of their way to identify pregnant and adolescent mothers then devise mechanisms of supporting them. Maridadi, Mahua and Meta are good examples. In these schools, the principals encouraged the teachers, counsellors and even other students to accept the adolescent mothers.

Studies have shown that adolescent mothers in schools where they are accepted develop high self-esteem and are able to perform well in their studies (Bhana et al, 2010;

Vincent, 2009; Chigona & Chetty, 2007; Shaningwa, 2007). Teachers in such schools portray more support for students who get pregnant. The tendency among the teachers was to put more blame on the parents and the society rather than on the students affected. During the interviews, this view was expressed by one of the teachers:

Students who get pregnant should not be condemned but rather encouraged and given a second chance to continue with education. They might have been coerced to have sex due to peer pressure and lack of role models in the society. Parents are also too busy to educate their children on moral issues. They assume teachers will do everything.

There are many teachers who would like to guide and counsel the students who get pregnant but find it difficult to do so due to various reasons. First, it is not easy to create time to interact with the girls affected because of heavy teaching load. Secondly, most teachers have not been trained on how to handle such situations, neither are they qualified in professional counselling. That is why they usually refer girls who get pregnant to Guidance and Counselling Department or alert the principal to take up the issue. Only a few are able to help the girls to deal with both the trauma and the stigma. Thirdly, teachers are not aware of the guidelines that would help them on steps to follow when dealing with student pregnancy issues. For example, no teacher was aware that they are expected to assist adolescent mothers to catch up with the other students after missing a number of classes. Lastly, teachers' readiness to support adolescent mothers largely depended on the enthusiasm of the principals to do the same.

### **4.6.3 Reactions by the Adolescent Mothers**

Most of the girls were in denial when they discovered they were pregnant. None of the adolescent mothers who participated in the study thought they could become pregnant when they had sex. Most of them had been given misguided information on sex mostly by their peers and the men who lured them to sex. For example, statements like “A virgin cannot get pregnant the first time” and “if a girl makes love and washes immediately she cannot get pregnant” are very common. Such statements have been noted in various studies on teenage pregnancy and sexual activity among the youth (Babendreirer, 2000). Information collected during interviews and FGDs showed that the men who had sex with the girls convinced them that nothing would go wrong. In fact, most of the adolescent mothers took more than six months before they discovered or believed they were pregnant. In this section, some stories told during interviews and FGDs describe the experiences of the adolescent mothers that partly explain why they reacted the way they did.

Rosa discovered she was pregnant towards the end of term three in form one. She was in a boarding school. During the interview, she tearfully narrated what happened:

When I missed my periods three times, I tried to dismiss the idea of pregnancy. I panicked and continued to be haunted. I could not sleep. I was not talking to anybody. It must have happened when my cousin took me to a party during August holiday. I hardly knew the man. It was my first time ... we were just having fun. I decided to drop out of school without telling anyone about it. I said I was sick. Actually, I looked very sick.

Having sex “as a way of having fun” and due to ignorance came up often during interviews and FGDs. Findings from studies on challenges of teenage pregnancy have come up with similar experiences (Cunningham, 1994; D’ Souza, 1994; Njau, 1993).



When Rosa came home, she told her mother she was very sick. Probed by the researcher, she continued with her story:

I could not tell mum that I was pregnant. How could I tell her? You see, she is disabled and uses crutches to walk. My father had left us but he continued to pay my fees. My grandfather stayed with us. How were they going to react? I was so afraid. I was sick, tired and depressed. I did not want to go back to school. My grandfather was concerned about my poor health. He took me to a counsellor who helped me to accept the situation and tell my parents and my grandfather about it. When I told them, they were furious and angry. My grandfather was the first to accept and later my mum.

Rosa had given up hope of going back to school and believed her future was destroyed. She stayed at home for one year after giving birth. A BOG member in one of the secondary schools near her home talked to the grandfather and her mother about going back to school. The father, grandfather and the mother discussed the idea and agreed to support Rosa and her baby. She is now in form three in a day mixed secondary school near her home in Thogoto Zone. Someone is employed to take care of the baby. However, the mother confided during interview that Rosa is not putting a lot of effort in her studies. She commented: "I think Rosa has not yet overcome the trauma she went through during her pregnancy. She keeps on giving excuses for not going to school. I have tried to encourage her but I have given up". During the interview, Rosa's mother undertook to persuade her to talk to the school counsellor because her performance was going down. When asked who her mentor in school was, Rosa said she did not have any in particular, not even the school counsellor.

The study found that adolescent mothers who had mentors and were ready to interact freely with either the principals, or the deputy principals, or counsellors or teachers, found it easier to face their challenges. They also performed better academically. Rosa seemed to have been very reserved in school. This was evidenced by the fact that the counsellor from her school did not seem to know her when she introduced the other adolescent mothers to the researcher. The researcher was able to access Rosa through a neighbour. The school Rosa attends is well known for supporting adolescent mothers as indicated by one participant during one of the FGDs. She remarked: “In our school, the counsellors keep on telling us that pregnancy is not the end of education. The principal also tells us to ignore negative remarks by other students especially boys”. Another participant added that they were advised by their mentors to complete their homework in school. Such responses indicated that adolescent mothers who were reserved like Rosa were missing something important.

Information gathered from the other adolescent mothers during the interviews and FGDs portrayed similar reactions. It was not easy for them to accept the reality of what had happened. The seriousness of their traumatic experiences depended largely on the circumstances that led to their pregnancy. For example, Essy who was in form three did not know she was pregnant until after seven months. According to her, changes in her body such as increased weight were just a part of normal growth. She explained:

The discovery that I was pregnant came after I felt some pain in the stomach. I was in form one and living with my grandmother since my mother died when I was in standard five. I continued living with her even after my father remarried. When I complained of something in my stomach,

my grandmother took me to Kikuyu Hospital where the doctor announced that I was pregnant and that it was very advanced.

Asked about her reactions, she said she denied. She knew menstrual periods are signs that one is mature and therefore can become pregnant. She was too young to understand what was happening. Essy went on to explain:

You see Madam, since I was born, I had never experienced any period. No one had told me facts about sex. I remember that December after I had done my KCPE there was this young man who used to visit our shop. One day, he took me out. Up to now, that is the only time I have slept with a man. To me it was nothing serious although I hated the experience. The doctor had to explain how it could happen. Up to now, I have not told the person involved about what happened; I have never seen him again and I don't want to see him ever. He used my ignorance.

The memory of the experience has continued to haunt Essy. Both the father and grandmother were shocked but they accepted what had happened. As she recalled, "they must have seen how hurt, bitter and traumatised I was. My grandmother gave me a lot of assurance and promised she will never abandon me. You see, I was so young". Essy's stepmother agreed to take care of the baby. Essy wanted to go back to school. She was determined to pursue her educational goals and was encouraged by her father and grandmother. She was told of young mothers who had completed their studies after giving birth. Someone helped Essy to seek readmission in the present school. "I still stay with my grandmother. My baby, my stepmother and my father are in another county where my father works," she says. At least she can focus on her studies. Asked what her dreams were, Essy said she is working very hard in order to be a lawyer.

All the other adolescent mothers in the study talked of how they kept pregnancy secret until someone suspected or until tests were done. Asked why they were so secretive about it, various reasons were given especially during the FGDs. Dolly was the first one to explain:

“Parents are the ones to blame. They never tell us anything. I was always afraid to ask questions”.

“As for me, I was afraid I might be sent home. I did not want the principal to discover,” Euny added.

Such comments indicated lack of sensitization in regard to the Readmission Policy Guidelines. During the interview with Euny, she had told of how she discovered she was pregnant during the first term in form one. She did not know that the Government allowed girls to continue schooling when they were pregnant. Since she did not want to drop out from school, she suffered silently. Many times, the principal punished her because of failing to do her duties well. At times she was found sleeping in class. She gave birth at the end of April holiday and reported to school late. She was forced to come with her mother to explain why she came late. When the principal learnt the truth about Euny, she understood her behaviour the previous term. Euny told the researcher with a lot of regret:

I wish I knew about the policy. I would not have suffered so much trying to hide my pregnancy. The principal was so kind and understanding when she discovered I was a mother. She introduced me to the deputy principal and the head of counselling department. I am still breastfeeding. My baby is now three months. My best encourager in this school is the deputy principal

In her contribution during the FGD, Euny said that most girls hide their pregnancy because of ignorance about the Readmission Policy. Other adolescent mothers said that

they get most of their support from the school especially from the counsellor. One adolescent mother remarked,

In our school, the principal meets with those who are mothers from time to time. She assures us of support especially if we are harassed by classmates or when we need permission to go home. Many students know that we are mothers, but we are not affected by what they say.

The name of the school is Maridadi. Two other adolescent mothers from the same school agreed with her. Most of the participants wished they had known they would be supported by the school from the beginning. Girls like Rosa and Lisa would not have run away from school without telling anyone. Due to panic, Lisa, one of the participants in the FGD explained how she dropped out of school:

When I discovered I was pregnant, I decided I was not going to tell anyone. In my seventh month of pregnancy, I did not report to school. I never went to collect my books until the baby was born. But it was too late. I never found them. It is now so difficult to catch up in my present school because I don't have most of my notes.

The school that Lisa left is also one of the best known schools in the district for providing a warm environment for adolescent mothers. Yet Lisa decided to keep her pregnancy a secret. May be if she had known about the Readmission Policy Guidelines, she would not have left that school so abruptly without telling either the principal or the school counsellor. From her expression as she told the story, Lisa might not have known how the school supported the adolescent mothers because of keeping to her-self. She expressed her regrets during the interview. She is now in form four in another school. She is motivated by desire to be self-reliant and be able to support her child.

Some adolescent mothers keep their pregnancy secret because they are afraid of their parents. This was made clear by information gathered during interviews and FGDs with the adolescent mothers. For example, Dama had never been close to her parents. During the interview, she talked of how her mother favoured her sister by not giving her chores to do at home. Both parents used to return home drunk and threaten to beat her for not doing things like washing dishes. Dama was in form two in a boarding school when she discovered she was pregnant. With tears in her eyes, she recalled her first reaction:

I did not want my mother to know. She would kill me. I was so afraid. I did not want the school to call my parents. So I asked permission to go home and then went to my auntie's place. She is the one who later told my mother.

Dama also indicated during the interview that it was her mother to blame for her pregnancy. She had forced her to seek comfort from her boyfriend after she threatened to kill her with a knife because she had not washed the dishes. Dama spent one night with him before going to her grandmother's place. That is how she got pregnant. The parents had to come to terms with what had happened after the aunt and the grandparents talked to them. She wanted to continue with studies but she would not be comfortable in her former school. Dama is now in form two in another school that gives a lot of support to adolescent mothers. Her mother has employed someone to take care of the baby. Her performance is good in spite of the challenges because she is determined to become a lawyer.

Due to the early experiences related to pregnancy, the girls affected have a great desire to achieve their educational objectives because they want to be self-reliant. They especially see themselves as a burden to those educating them and taking care of their

babies. There are a few who are so motivated that they actually perform better than before they became pregnant, according to information gathered from the counsellors. Studies by Vincent (2009) and by Chigona and Chetty (2007) found that adolescent mothers who develop high self-esteem were able to excel in their studies.

Conclusions made from the major findings that emerged from information collected from adolescent mothers during interviews and FGDs included the following:

- a) Most of the adolescent mothers lacked helpful information about sex before they got pregnant. They rarely discussed the issue with parents, relatives or teachers. As one participant recalled:

“Things happened so quickly one was carried away before thinking of what could happen”.

In reference to those who make them pregnant, another participant remarked with emotion:

“They blind you with love and give assurance that pregnancy can’t happen”

These responses concur with reports on findings from studies on adolescence pregnancy. According to surveys by MOH (2003, 1988), boys and girls rarely consider the possible consequences of their sexual behaviour. When the girls are warned against moving with boys, they are not told about emotions, their seductive powers and how to handle them (Babendreirer, 2000; NASCOP, 1997). Further, research has shown that adolescents are often unsure about how to respond to sexual proposals by boyfriends (MOE, 2011). Various reports on Family Life Education (FLE) indicate that parents and teachers are too embarrassed to talk about sexual subjects (Njau, 1993; Howse, 1988). As a result, a void on sexual information for the youth is created. Therefore, friends have become the main and most trusted source of information on reproductive health and sex from an early age.

According to one of the teachers interviewed in this study, “boys and girls seem to enjoy sex information from peers, television and internet”.

As Shorter and Onyancha (1997) have noted, parents do not seem to be aware of the power of various forces over their children. Some of the adolescent mothers were virgins before they had sex that changed their lives. Findings from this study showed that the Readmission guideline on provision of sexuality education has hardly been implemented. Studies on sexuality education in both primary and secondary schools have indicated that teachers have not been equipped with skills on how to go about the subject (Vincent, 2007; Kiragu, 2007; Chege & Okumu, 1993). Therefore, sexual behaviour among boys and girls could be attributed to lack of effective sexuality education in schools in spite of having reproductive health education in the curriculum. This omission could be associated with the subjection to hurt and trauma caused by early pregnancy.

- b) Information from the adolescent mothers also showed that the schools did not create awareness of the Readmission Policy among all the students, otherwise the girls would not have kept their pregnancy a secret for so long. One of the guidelines states very clearly that awareness of the policy must be created among the teachers, parents, boys and girls (MOE, 2011).
- c) The bond between the adolescent mothers and their parents was weak. That is why they were not able to discuss their situation in addition to sex matters. As noted by various studies on the youth and family matters in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the youth and parents worldwide seem to have drifted apart from each other (McNeelely, 2008; Hubbard, 2008; Duncan, 2007; NWLC, 2007; Chadran, 2004; CSA & UNICEF, 2003).



d) Most girls want to achieve their educational goals after getting pregnant irrespective of the knowledge about the Readmission Policy. They have a strong desire to become self-reliant. Studies reviewed in chapter two had recorded such desire and aspirations by adolescent mothers in schools (Vincent, 2009; Shaningwa, 2007; SmithBattle, 2007). However, adolescent mothers are faced with challenges posed by new demands due to their multiple responsibilities. That is why effective counselling services are essential in schools.

#### **4.6.4 Reactions by the Parents of Adolescent Mothers**

Information gathered from adolescent mothers during the interviews and FGDs showed different reactions by parents after discovering their daughters were pregnant. Although all of them received the news with shock and disbelief, some of them recovered after a while and were easily persuaded to continue supporting their daughters' education. However, there were others who gave their daughters a very rough time. For example during one of the interviews, Becky narrated the cruelty she experienced from her mother who was a single parent. She was sobbing as she recalled what happened:

My father died when I was very young. I was the only child. Mother was very strict. When I became pregnant I was afraid to tell her. At first I tried to commit suicide but changed my mind. A friend told me of a doctor who could help me to abort. When I went to his clinic, the doctor convinced me why I should not do it. That is when I told the boy responsible. We both agreed to tell mum about it. When we did she was furious. She called the police immediately and had both of us arrested. We were locked up in the police cells for a whole week.

Becky stopped talking and actually cried saying, “I will never forget; it was terrible” several times. Then she continued her story:

It is the police who helped mother to accept what had happened and have us released. After the release she said I was too young and did not want to see or hear of that boy again. My aunt who stays with us said she would help to take care of the baby if mother allowed me to resume my studies after giving birth.

Although the mother and the aunt are supporting Becky’s education, she has not been able to forget the experience she had to go through before the birth of her baby. The school counsellor was her best mentor.

Dolly also had a traumatic experience when her parents discovered she was pregnant. She was brought up by her mother and step-father after the death of her father. She became pregnant when she was in form one. The first person to tell was her mother who broke the news to her step-father. She narrated his reaction:

The first reaction from my step-father was a very heavy beating that scared my mother. He said I had brought embarrassment and shame to the family, and that I had to marry the man immediately. I wanted to kill myself but had no courage. Mother gave me a lot of support. My step-father did not want to hear about going back to school. He insisted on me getting married. The whole thing was very bad. It was then that my mother secretly made arrangements for me to stay with my aunt who gave me a lot of support when I got the baby. She takes care of the baby while I attend school which is near her home.

Dolly was in form four. Though the step-father has not changed his attitude, she was determined to do well. Her average performance was between grades B and B+. She was in a school that gives a lot of support to adolescent mothers especially through the principal and the counsellor. In her contribution during the FGD, Dolly said, “In most cases, parents were to blame for their daughters’ pregnancies. They do not prepare us about life. I do not understand why they are so cruel when a daughter gets pregnant”.

Four parents and one guardian of five of the adolescent mothers who were also participants in the study were interviewed in regard to their reactions to their daughters’ pregnancy, awareness of and reaction to the Government Readmission Policy on girls who get pregnant in school. Parents interviewed were: Rosa’s mother and Susy’s mother who were single parents; Lisa’s mother and father; Jenny’s mother and Patty’s guardian. The mothers were more available than the fathers. Jenny’s father travels a lot and Patty’s parents live very far outside the district. Patty lives with her guardian.

Rosa’s mother was living on her father’s farm since separation with her husband. Rosa and her brother, who was in primary school, lived with them. The mother was educated and she knew the value of education. Before her retirement due to sickness, she was working as a cashier. Her major challenge is walking as a result of polio she had when she was young. In answer to the question of awareness of the Government Readmission Policy, Rosa’s mother responded that she knew girls who continued with their studies after giving birth but she did not know about the policy or what it entails. Her daughter was in form one when she became pregnant but she did not know about it until very late. She recalled what happened:

When Rosa came home at the end of third term, she told us she was very sick. She did not talk much and was in her bedroom most of the time. I did

not know what to make of it – it looked more psychological than physical.

She told us she was pregnant after visiting a counsellor.

In response to the question on her reaction, Rosa's mother explained she was shocked. First she had a lot of hope in her and secondly she was too young. She could not believe it until a doctor confirmed she was pregnant. With sadness written on her face, she tried to recall how she felt:

I did not say much, but my heart was troubled. Rosa knew I was disabled. How? Was it a curse? I questioned God why He allowed it to happen. A friend helped me to come to terms with the situation. Rosa's grandfather was more supportive. He is the one who helped me to accept. You see, Rosa was acting crazy. It was not easy but I had to be strong for her and accept her as she was.

Rosa's mother also explained that the pregnancy was not easy. The stress and depression she was going through humbled them. After giving birth, she had to stay home for a whole year because she was very weak. The baby's health was also a challenge. A neighbour promised to get a school for Rosa as soon as she was ready. The father also agreed to continue paying fees for her as before. She is now in form three in one of the public mixed secondary schools. The positive factor in Rosa's situation is that she has a lot of support at home. However, she is facing three major challenges. First, her own health was affected during delivery. Occasionally, she experiences pain and discomfort around her hip bone leading to irregular school attendance. Secondly, her child is asthmatic and Rosa has to take her to hospital. Thirdly, the family is often forced to look for another worker to take care of the child. Due to her mother's disablement, in such circumstances Rosa is forced to remain at home.

Lisa's parents were aware that girls who become pregnant could continue with their studies, but they were not sensitised about the expectations. The mother never suspected Lisa of being pregnant because she had always been very active in the house after school and during the weekends. Her moods never changed. She explained:

One day Lisa's grandmother told me she had noticed something about Lisa. Her legs looked swollen and she suspected she was pregnant. Lisa denied. We all went to a nearby clinic where the doctor confirmed that Lisa was seven months pregnant. It was hard for me to accept. The doctor helped me to overcome the shock.

The mother had no problem with Lisa going back to school after giving birth but she had no means to support her. The father was the only bread-winner in the home. It was not easy for the father to accept what had happened. Lisa had to stay home for one and a half years after giving birth. During the interview, the father said it was very hard to continue supporting Lisa's education. He remarked:

I was very disappointed. The whole family depends on my small business (a shop). I have to pay fees for two other children. My other daughter who was married has come back to us with two small children. I was very troubled. Suppose Lisa became pregnant again. This will be wasted money. After some time, I agreed to support her education.

Information from Lisa and the mother indicated that neighbours close to the family persuaded the father to allow Lisa to continue with her studies. During the in-depth interview with Lisa's father, it was clear that he was not against Lisa continuing with her studies. His greatest fear was spending his meagre resources on her and her baby then end up being disappointed again. Lisa had to promise to behave well. Research on

Readmission of girls who get pregnant in school has shown that parents who do not support the policy are not ready to use more resources on their daughters (Shaningwa, 2007; Omwancha, 2004)

Susy's mother was a single parent who worked as a secretary. Susy was the only child. They lived with her mother ( Susy's grandmother). She was ready to sacrifice for her daughter's education. She also prayed to God that Susy would never be like her, having a child out of wedlock. The news of Susy's pregnancy when she was in form three came with a bang. She recalled her reaction:

I pretended not to hear what my mother (Susy's grandmother) was telling me. You see, Susy was afraid of my reaction. That is why she told her grandmother. I could not be persuaded to accept the situation. In fact, my daughter had to move in with her cousin for some time. Later, my mother persuaded me to accept the reality.

This mother admitted that the person who was really there for her daughter was the grandmother. Susy actually had all praise for her grandmother during the interview with her. She had remarked that she did not know what she would have done without her. When she became pregnant, she had confided in the school counsellor who promised to assist her continue with studies in another school. By the time she was ready to go, the mother was ready to support her. The grandmother was ready to take care of the baby. This mother said she has always regretted the way she had treated Susy in her time of need.

Information collected during interviews with the adolescent mothers and some of their parents showed that many parents especially mothers were very remorseful about the way they treated their daughters after receiving news of their pregnancy. Their reaction

might have been different if they were aware of the Policy Guidelines and had discussed the issue with the school authorities. In his ecological theory, Bronfenbrenner cited by Henderson (1995) appeals to schools and teachers to encourage stable relationships between students and their parents in order to ease family conflicts especially when faced by challenges. Adolescence pregnancy is a good example of such challenges.

Patty's guardian was a widow who also knew the value of education. Someone brought Patty to work for her as a house girl two and a half years ago (December 2009). Patty had left her baby with her parents. The guardian explained:

Patty told me she became pregnant when she was in form one and had to drop out of school which is around. Her parents would have liked her to go back to school but they were very poor. She had to work to support her baby and herself. Patty was very remorseful about the pregnancy. I gave her a lot of encouragement. As a Christian, I assured her of God's forgiveness and care. When she told me she would like to continue with her studies, I decided to support her not just financially but in everything including residing with us. In November 2011, I personally went to see the principal of the school which is next to my home and he accepted to admit her. She re-joined form one in January 2012.

Information gathered from Patty through in-depth interview confirmed what her guardian said. The latter treated her like her own daughter.

The experience that Jenny and her parents went through was unique in the study. Jenny is an adolescent mother in form two in a boarding school. She gave birth when she was in standard six. She was about 12 years old. The mother will never forget that day

when she and her husband received a phone call from Jenny's school and telling them they were required urgently. She said with emotion:

“When we reached the school, one of the teachers took us to the hospital where our daughter had been taken. By the time we arrived, she had given birth to a baby girl”.

Asked how she reacted, she continued with the story:

I almost fainted with shock. I never suspected that my daughter was pregnant. May be it is because she used to wear “baggy” cardigans since she was very small. I was so overwhelmed with my crying that I did not notice my daughter was also crying and shouting “Take it away! I don't want it!” repeatedly. I had to gather strength to calm down.

When the parents sobered up, they noted that the birth had been normal in spite of the age of their daughter. She continued with the story:

The worst was yet to come. When we asked Jenny who was the father of the baby, the answer was another shock. It was one of the relatives. I almost fainted again. Let me tell you, it was not easy to come to terms with what was happening. All of us were traumatised.

After gathering strength, this couple had to make crucial decisions. First they reassured their daughter of their support. The mother decided to bring up the child on her own since the daughter was too young to know anything. She immediately put the baby on bottle milk and the daughter was immediately transferred to a primary boarding school. She was counselled and given support. Her KCPE grades were so good that she was able to get a place in one of the best public girls' boarding schools. The parents are still proud of her performance. The mother concluded:



“It was by God’s grace that we had courage to offer unconditional love and support for our daughter when she needed us most. There are signs Jenny will realise her dreams in spite of what happened”.

When the researcher met Jenny briefly during half-term, she was full of praise for her parents:

If it were not for them, I think I would have killed myself. The whole thing was like a nightmare. Up to now I cannot remember exactly what happened. I was too young. There is no bond between me and the child. My mum is in full control. At least I can focus on my studies for the sake of my child, my parents and my own sake.

This adolescent mother was very positive and highly motivated. She knew what she wanted, and how to go about achieving it. She owes her strength to continue with her studies to the understanding, encouragement and counselling she had from everybody around her including the neighbours. Since Jenny got the baby she had never had any negative reaction from anyone. Her advice to girls is to be careful in their interactions with men, relatives or not, and to put education first in spite of what happens. To parents, she says, “ Show love and understanding to your children at all times”.

As Wachira (2000) advises:

It is devastating to parents when their daughter becomes pregnant outside marriage, but whatever happens, the daughter and the baby need love and understanding. This will help the young person go through the experience and learn from it (p. 78).

Since Jenny got pregnant when she was in Standard Six, her going to secondary school was a case of admission not readmission. Such cases should be considered as the MOE reconsiders the title of the policy.

Information from counsellors portrayed a general lack of co-operation by parents when they discovered their daughters were pregnant. One of the guidelines states clearly that if a girl becomes pregnant while in school, “adequate consultation should be made between the parents, the school and the student to facilitate schooling”. However, parents do not go to school when asked to do so. Instead, they withdraw their daughters secretly as indicated earlier. As a result, they miss guidance and counselling that schools are ready to offer. Lack of sensitization about the Readmission Policy Guidelines could be contributing to the parents’ negative reactions towards their daughters when they want to continue with their studies after getting pregnant.

#### **4.6.5 Reactions by Other Students to Readmission of Adolescent Mothers**

Information collected from school counsellors and principals and deputy principals showed that some students shy away from the adolescent mothers and regard them as people of bad character. In some cases, there are those who support and encourage them especially in catching up with studies. Some schools have even recruited a number of adolescent mothers as peer educators according to information from the principals and deputy principals. In most cases, adolescent mothers would like to keep their status a secret. Students who are their neighbours at home are the ones who betray them.

In response to the question on how the other students react when they discover they are mothers, a member of one of the FGDs had this to say:

“Sometimes it can be very bad. Immediately they discover you are a mother, there are whispers and fingers pointing at you especially during assembly. Boys keep on calling you ‘mama’ and make fun of you”.

Another participant added:

“It is very uncomfortable in a class where your classmates ridicule you. If it were not for my friend I would have given up. But now I have decided to ignore them and focus on my studies”.

Other participants had similar experiences. They said that the boys tend to abuse and harass the girls more. Some of the adolescent mothers said that the principal in their school has warned students against such harassment.

During the interview with individual adolescent mothers, one of them narrated how her classmates continued to ridicule her and call her names implying how immoral she was. They also avoided her. The memory of the ridicule brought tears in her eyes. One day, after a student called her “mathy” (mother), she decided to take a bold step. She explained what she did:

Before the teacher came that morning, I went in front of the class and told them I was tired of their whispers and ridicule. I said: “You must stop whispering about me. I’ll tell you the truth. Yes, I am a mother of a baby girl.” I saw the teacher standing at the door but I continued, “Yes, are you shocked? But I am better than you. Most of you are just hypocrites. You get pregnant, kill your baby and pretend to be holy. You are murderers. Better me who did not abort. I did not want to be like you - a group of pretenders. Just leave me alone.” I would have continued if the teacher did not stop

me. She was able to express her sentiments to the class. From that day, a number of my classmates became my friends.

Ridicule of adolescent mothers by other students has been experienced worldwide according to various studies and reports by parenting students (Vincent, 2009; Smith Battle, 2007; Dear Becky, 2007; Shaningwa, 2007). During both interviews and FGDs, the participants added that ridicule was not only in school. Sometimes neighbours talked negatively about them. Such reactions in schools and in the community have hindered effective implementation of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on student pregnancy. Although people know girls are allowed to go back to school after giving birth, they have not been sensitised on how to handle or treat such girls in their midst.

#### **4.7 Challenges Faced in the Process of Implementing Government Readmission Policy on Girls who Get Pregnant in School**

Each group of participants in the study responded to the question on challenges faced in the process of promoting effective implementation of the Government Readmission Policy.

##### **4.7.1 Responses of Principals, Deputy Principals, School Counsellors and Teachers on Challenges Facing the Implementation**

There is a lot of similarity in the responses by principals, deputy principals, school counsellors and teachers on challenges facing the implementation of the Readmission Policy. The following are the major challenges according to their responses:

###### **a) Attitudes of Parents and Home Environments.**

Lack of co-operation by parents when their daughters get pregnant was cited by principals, deputy principals, counsellors and the teachers as a major hindrance to the implementation of the Readmission Policy. Olaskin and Ubangha (1996) have

emphasised that counselling in school is a co-operative activity by various stakeholders. As already observed very few parents came to school when asked to do so by the administration. One of the counsellors interviewed remarked:

If parents responded positively, we would take the opportunity to help and counsel them in regard to the pregnancy of their daughters. A lot of conflicts that arise between the girls who become pregnant and their parents would be avoided. We would also tell them that pregnancy should not be the end of their education.

As a result of failure to consult with the school, most parents do not support their daughters after giving birth. They fail to provide a warm environment at home for both their daughter and the baby. This was corroborated with information collected from the adolescent mothers during the interviews and the FGDs. Most of the teachers interviewed attributed poor performance by some adolescent mothers to failure of the parents to co-operate not just with their daughters' desires to continue with studies but also with the school. One of the teachers made the following comment about the issue:

Most parents take too long to accept the reality about their daughter's pregnancy. Since such parents reluctantly allow their daughters to continue with studies, they tend to give up on them when their academic performance goes down. Support from home is usually lacking.

Studies and reports have shown that adolescent mothers who are valued and cared for in both school and at home were able to adjust and perform well in their studies (Vincent, 2009; Hubbard, 2008; Shaningwa, 2007; FAWE, 1995c)

**b) Poverty in Most Homes in Kikuyu District.**

Most parents cannot meet all the requirements of their children. Findings from information collected from counsellors and teachers indicated that poverty has led to low self-esteem especially among girls leading to offering sex for money leading to pregnancy. According to one of the teachers:

Clients are both young and older men who run small businesses such as kiosks, butcheries, charcoal selling and shoe vendors. The men involved buy these girls things like perfume, books and give them money. This situation has made guidance and counselling on values very difficult.

The study found that some girls who get pregnant in school were not able to continue with studies because parents were not able to cater for the needs of their daughters and their babies in addition to their other children. Only a few schools are able to get sponsors for such students. Various studies in and outside Kenya have found that poverty plays a great role in determining the extent to which adolescent mothers can continue with their studies (Bhana et al, 2010; Oywecha, 2008; Chigona & Chetty, 2007; Shaningwa, 2007; Omwancha, 2004).

**c) Lack of Positive Mentorship and Role Models at Home and in the Community**

Most of the participants especially counsellors complained of how parents and relatives encourage abortion, use of contraceptives and early marriages. This encouraged sexual activity among boys and girls in schools making the services of guidance and counselling department very difficult. This situation was made clear by one of the deputy principals:

Pairing of students (boy- friends and girl- friends) in mixed secondary schools has become a major challenge. In our discussions, students have admitted they have sex but say they find it hard to stop. We have tried to deal with this challenge and some boys and girls change their behaviour. It is not easy to deal with it until there are positive mentors at home and in the community. Boys and girls tend to copy what is happening outside the school and in the media.

The counsellors also expressed concern over activities that encourage sexual activity among boys and girls in the district while the community leaders do nothing about it. One counsellor explained:

Mushrooming unlicensed video halls in most of the shopping centres in the district are attracting the youth of both sexes. Most ideas on sex are obtained from there contributing to sexually active students in secondary schools. Students also talk of all night parties called “bash” that are also exposing young people to sex.

During the FGDs, the adolescent mothers corroborated this observation by the counsellor. They said that “bash parties” are very popular. Two of the adolescent mothers interviewed told of how they conceived during such parties. One participant in the FGD explained what “bash parties” were:

“Bash” parties are get together celebrations held regularly especially during holidays. Older young men volunteer their bachelor quarters for the parties. To attend, one must be 15 to early 20s. Boys pay KSh 100 while girls go free. If girls were made to pay, they might not attend. Parties start at 7 pm and go on until morning. Some people left the party early. Refreshments

which included drinks – juice, sodas, beer and junk food were provided. Activities included music and dancing. The intention is not to have sex but in the course of interactions with boys, dancing and drinking, some are not able to resist especially on their way home.

During the interview, Patty narrated how she left the party early but was escorted by a man who had been introduced to her. One thing led to another and they ended by having sex before she went back home. That is how she became pregnant by someone she hardly knew. She was still traumatised. Patty was shedding tears as she recalled what happened. Such activities and experiences were posing a great challenge for the Guidance and Counselling departments in schools as well as the school administration. Information given by different participants showed that most of the men who make girls in secondary schools pregnant are out of school running small scale businesses, employed or pursuing further studies in universities and colleges. These men lure the girls with money. As discussed earlier, it is most likely that poverty at home has made the girls vulnerable to exploitation by such men. These experiences influenced the researcher to support observation made by various reports that most adolescents were left unguarded at a time when they are exposed to high reproductive risks (Shejavali, 2009; Dellinger, 2004; MOH, 2003, 1988; Sadker & Sadker, 1991).

**d) Lack of Trained and Committed Counsellors.**

Demographic information about the school counsellors and teachers showed that most teachers in the public secondary schools are not professionally qualified to carry out counselling effectively. The majority had attended one to three days seminars which were of a general nature. Others had not attended any training.



Therefore, most of the members of the Guidance and Counselling departments are not trained. Additionally some of them are not ready to sacrifice their time to help students. The head of Guidance and Counselling Department in Murangi Secondary School explained:

You know, counselling is like a ministry. Following up with a student in crisis requires a lot of commitment and sacrifice especially considering the fact that most counsellors complain of being unrewarded. A few are able to follow up because they have passion to help in spite of heavy workload. These are usually the ones that are trained. The other counsellors tend to give up very easily.

This challenge was corroborated by the principals, deputy principals and teachers who emphasised need for professional counsellors.

The findings in relation to this challenge also indicated that counsellors appointed by the TSC are not necessarily effective. The principals usually ended up appointing someone else. Some of the counsellors appointed by the TSC are only qualified on paper but in practice they are not the most committed. Responses from the principals also established another concern in the TSC appointments. The concern is related to the gender factor. For example, one of the girls' schools had a male Head of Guidance and Counselling Department appointed by the TSC. Not all the students were comfortable with him. This forced the principal to make an internal appointment of a female counsellor who had played the role for more than ten years. This male counsellor was one of those interviewed in this study. He honestly pointed out that most girls in the school preferred to get help from female teachers. He mostly dealt with cases of a general nature usually referred to him by

the school administration. As Head of Guidance and Counselling Department, he could only receive reports on student pregnancy from the teachers and members of the department or from the principal. In the presentation of schools' student enrolment and appointment of teachers by gender under the demographic data it was noted effective counselling is likely to be comprised where gender balance was not taken into consideration. Other studies have also found that gender issue in relation to counselling is a challenge (EYC, 2003).

**e) Lack of Facilities for Guidance and Counselling Department**

Out of the 20 schools in the study, only the three girls' boarding schools had suitable physical facilities for Guidance and Counselling services according to information collected from the principals, deputy principals and the counsellors.

Out of the 8 counsellors interviewed:

- i. Only two had offices which could have some privacy. These were from the two girls' boarding schools selected for the study.
- ii. One counsellor used the store of the subject she teaches to counsel students. There was only a small space for a desk and two chairs. To interview one of the adolescent mothers in the school, the counsellor struggled to create space.
- iii. Two counsellors had offices with timber walls and no ceiling. They were not sound proof. The researcher could actually hear what people were saying in the neighbouring classroom and other offices. The counsellors and counselees in these schools were never comfortable in their sessions according to the responses from the participants. Partitioning walls for most offices and classrooms were not soundproof in most of the schools.

iv. The other three counsellors interviewed shared offices with other heads of departments who had to leave the room whenever students came for counselling. This actually happened when the researcher visited one counsellor. After introductions the other teacher who was the head of Languages Department said as she stood to go:

“I know you have something to discuss. I should leave so that you can talk”.

Any counselling session should be “in a very private place or in a room without disturbances” (Lutoma & Sikolia, 2002, p. 80). This is because most issues that require attention of the counsellor or teacher are so personal that they cannot be expressed in a common room or staffroom.

**f) Lack of Documents/Materials to Guide the Implementers**

Information from the participants showed that whatever they did to implement the policy was through common sense and trial and error. The only document in the school that refers to readmission of girls who become pregnant in school was Gender in Education Policy. The Readmission Policy document and guidelines were not available. That is why all the participants said they were aware of the policy but not aware of the guidelines in response to the question on awareness. Studies on implementation of the Readmission Policy in other African countries have found the same challenge (Bhana et al, 2010; Shejavali, 2009; Shaningwa, 2007). Bhana et al (2010) reported teachers complaining of being told to allow adolescent mothers in their classes but without any document to guide the implementation process.

### **g) Heavy Workload**

Responses from all the counsellors in reference to their workload indicated they were overworked. In answer to the question, “How would you rate the staffing in your school in regard to teacher counsellors?” all the principals and deputy principals indicated their schools were understaffed. Heavy workload was also among the challenges given by the counsellors interviewed. Some heads of Guidance and Counselling department were also heads of other departments. For example, one of those interviewed was not just teaching and heading the department, but was also a patron of a club, member of disciplinary, admission and procurement committees. The heavy workload was contributing to lack of effective implementation of the Government Readmission Policy in the schools. It is important to point out that during the interview with the counsellor cited above, it was noted that it might not be in the best interests of the students for one to be a counsellor and at the same time to be a member of disciplinary committee due to a likely conflict of interest. The role of the counsellor would not be clear and hence might discourage students to seek guidance and counselling when they have issues due to fear of punishment. As pointed out by Lutomia and Sikolia (2002):

It is a great mistake to make the teacher in charge of guidance and counselling to be a member of the disciplinary committee. If a counsellor is placed on this committee, students will run away from him/her and will be unable to confide in him/her since members of this committee are feared in most institutions (p. 16).

#### 4.7.2 Responses of Adolescent Mothers on Challenges they Face

Most of the challenges faced by adolescent mothers are mainly in school and at home. These two environments are in the microsystem level that is closest to the child according to the ecological systems theory by Bronfenbrenner.

##### 4.7.2.1 Major Challenges Faced by Adolescent Mothers in School

Responses of adolescent mothers on challenges faced in school are illustrated in Table 20.

**Table 20: Major Challenges Adolescent Mothers Faced in School**

Participants	Attending classes	Academic performance	Completing Homework	Relating with Other Students	Emotional and Personal Health	Relating with School Administration
Becky		✓			✓	
Betty	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Dama	✓			✓	✓	
Dolly	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Essy		✓			✓	
Euny	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Jenny						
Lisa	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Patty		✓		✓	✓	
Rosa	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Susy	✓			✓	✓	

Information from Table 20 shows that the greatest challenges facing adolescent mothers in school are attending classes, emotional and personal health and academic performance.

These challenges were corroborated by counsellors and teachers during interviews. A number of adolescent mothers had a problem relating with others students. Various reasons were given for irregular class attendance by adolescent mothers during interviews and during the FGDs. Reasons given included:

- a) Taking the baby to hospital. Some babies had chronic problems that interfered with the studies of their mothers. For example, Rosa's baby has been asthmatic since birth. During the interview Rosa expressed her concern:

“Any time my child gets asthmatic attacks, I have to take him to Kenyatta National Hospital. As I told you, my mother cannot help me since she is disabled”.

The study by Chigona and Chetty (2007) also found that teen mothers often miss classes when their babies fall sick. They explain:

In most cases when the child falls sick the teen mother has to take the baby to hospital; and if the baby is admitted in the hospital for a period of time, the teen mother has to miss classes (p. 7).

- b) When there is no one to take care of the baby. This mostly happened when those employed to take care of the baby stopped working without notice. Sometimes the mother was forced to stay at home for more than two days or until another worker was found.
- c) Some adolescent mothers developed problems at the time of giving birth. That was how Rosa's problems with the hip bones started. The pain at times was so much that she had to see a doctor. Essy had a similar challenge.

When they missed school several times, it was hard for the adolescent mothers to catch up with school work. Jenny who is in a boarding school, did not face the challenge of

missing classes. Her performance is also very good. According to her, she was too young (12 years) when she became pregnant to understand what it meant in her life. Additionally, her mother took the baby as her own. Essy and Becky also did not miss classes because their children were not living with them. They could also complete their homework without much interference. The study found that teachers have no time to help adolescent mothers go through the missed lessons. They advise them to get notes from other students. It is not easy for this advice to work since students in most schools have a negative attitude towards parenting students.

Failure to complete homework was mainly due to challenges faced at home. Findings from FGDs showed that most of the adolescent mothers who did not have this problem completed their homework in school before going home. Some of the health issues were psychological. There were adolescent mothers who had not yet come to terms with their pregnancy. This depended on the circumstances that surrounded their getting pregnant. For example, one of the participants who was raped was very reserved. During the interview, she did not say much. Information collected from the counsellor in her school indicated that she was still traumatised by the experience. The persistent trauma and fear have led to this adolescent's mother's isolation from other students. Relating with other students was a major issue for most of the adolescent mothers. This depended on the level of enthusiasm in their school to implement the Readmission Policy.

Some adolescent mothers did not feel free to interact with the school administration. Neither did they report any cases of harassment by other students. Lisa was in that group. Such students suffered silently. Those who opened up tended to heal more quickly and cope more with their studies. That is why professional counselling services are crucial in

the schools. It is important for stakeholders to realise that adolescent mothers are often too shy to talk about what they go through.

#### 4.7.2.2 Major Challenges Faced by Adolescent Mothers at Home

Challenges faced by adolescent mothers at home are highlighted in Table 21.

**Table 21: Challenges Faced by Adolescent Mothers at Home**

Participants	Baby care	Taking baby to hospital	Chores at home	Lack of sleep	Doing homework	Conflicts with parents	Poverty
Becky			✓	✓	✓		✓
Betty			✓	✓			
Dama	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Dolly				✓		✓	
Essy				✓			
Euny	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Lisa	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Patty				✓			✓
Rosa	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Susy		✓	✓		✓	✓	

Table 21 shows that one of the greatest challenges faced by adolescent mothers was lack of enough sleep. Some of the participants could not sleep at night because of their babies who kept waking up or crying. Another cause for this challenge was the memory of the experience that led to their pregnancy. They said both during the interview and the FGDs that they could not forget. However, they said that the impact depended on the extent of support they were getting especially at home. For example, Jenny, who has very



supportive parents and neighbours, does not have this challenge and therefore she can focus on her studies.

Some parents continued to be a challenge including those who paid school fees for their daughters. For Lisa, her father continued to be a hindrance in her progress although he paid the fees. She explained:

My father is still bitter about my pregnancy. He even refuses to buy paraffin for the lamp I use to do my homework. At times he takes away the lamp when I am reading. This causes a lot of tension between us. He would also ask me to do several chores for him even when I am studying for my exam. It is difficult to do any school work on Saturdays. My father also takes too long to buy any materials I require for my studies. This makes it so hard for me to catch up with the others.

This experience had contributed to Lisa's low grades in most subjects. In the case of Dama, her challenge was her mother's negative attitude towards her since she became pregnant. She looked disturbed as she remarked:

She is too critical of any small mistake I make. She also keeps reminding me about the pregnancy. My sister who is in form one in this school is her favourite. I can't focus on my studies. I wish my mum could be friendlier. She is even the one who drove me to get pregnant in the first place.

Dama was wiping tears from her eyes as she was emotionally disturbed. She continued:

"I still remember that day when she came home drunk and she threatened me with a knife. I went to seek comfort from my boyfriend. That day changed my life". From this interview, it was noted that the deputy principal was a great encouragement to Dama. She kept telling her she was bright and capable of getting an A grade. Her average was B+. It

was clear from the above experiences that Dama and Lisa required a lot of counselling. Their reactions and emotions indicated they were still hurting. They are bright students and they are capable of doing better. That is why stakeholders should be prepared and trained to acquire skills of handling such cases. Attitudes of parents have been cited as one of the major factors that determine the effectiveness of the Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers (Oywecha, 2008; Shaningwa, 2007; Omwancha, 2004).

The adolescent mothers in the district schools go home every day. They complained of having too many chores at home after school. This was interfering with their academic performance. Euny's experience is typical of most of the other adolescent mothers. She narrated her experience:

I come home already tired. I am expected to do so many things: breastfeeding, bathing and feeding the baby, washing baby's clothes and spending the night with him. It is even worse when the baby is sick. There are times that I don't sleep the whole night. Sometimes I miss school just because I am so tired. Other times, I have to take the baby to hospital. And my mother nags me a lot. My siblings say negative things about me. The most supportive person is my auntie. She tells me not to give up.

The school counsellor was Euny's mentor. She tells her that those experiences will be over soon and encourages her to work hard.

The findings from the interviews and FGDs showed that those who take care of the babies at home assume it was the adolescent mother's turn to take over after school and during the weekend.

From the findings of the study it was noted that many adolescent mothers come from poor homes. With an additional dependant, many parents were unable to meet

educational requirements for all their children although they were willing to support their daughters' education after giving birth. One girl who gave birth when she was in form one was forced by poverty to stay at home for three years. She was working as a casual labourer. She was now back in form one. Her child was 3 ½ years old. On her way to school, she would drop off her child at the kindergarten.

A major observation from the findings in this study was that most adolescent mothers in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District were forcing themselves to continue with studies even when their aspirations were not supported at home, when caring for their babies was very demanding and when faced by challenges in school such as harassment by other students. These and other challenges facing the adolescent mothers have serious implications in the effective implementation of the Government Readmission Policy. Adolescent mothers face most of the challenges in their effort to balance motherhood and schooling demands. The argument by Pearsons (1990) cited by Chigona and Chety (2007) is that “adolescents are too young and emotionally immature when they first fall pregnant” (p. 12).

#### **4.7.3 Responses of the DEO and KEMI Officials on Challenges of Implementing the Government Readmission Policy**

In response to the question on challenges faced in the process of implementing the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines, the DEO and the KEMI officials gave some challenges that were similar. First, there was shortage of personnel in both. The office of the DEO has responsibilities for both primary and secondary schools in the district. The QASO interviewed responded,

I am aware that our major role is to monitor and supervise implementation of various programmes in schools. The main problem is shortage of

personnel. There are only two QASOs for the district. I am also aware that since the Readmission Policy was launched, we have not monitored the implementation.

Findings from information collected from the counsellors corroborated with the QASO's report. One counsellor expressed her concern that the DEO focused more on primary schools and neglected the secondary schools. KEMI was faced with the same challenge.

The second major challenge according to both the DEO and KEMI officials was lack of funds to carry out training in form of seminars and workshops in order to capacity build stakeholders especially the school counsellors, the school management, teachers and school nurses in order to implement the Readmission Policy effectively. Monitoring implementation also required large amounts of money. Drawing from these challenges, one major concern shared by both the DEO and KEMI was the apparent lack of enthusiasm by the government to implement the Readmission Policy. Indicators of this concern were:

- a) No Readmission Policy Guidelines document had been given to any of these offices. Neither have they been informed about the guidelines. They only have Gender in Education Policy which is too general.
- b) The Government had not allocated any funds or budget required for organising training of the stakeholders and monitoring/supervising the implementation.
- c) The shortage of personnel in the two offices had not been taken into consideration.

The participants in the schools had expressed similar concerns in their responses to the questionnaires and during the interviews. The impression created by the findings of the study was that the stakeholders were not seeing the seriousness by the Government in the

implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines. The whole burden was left to the schools.

#### **4.8 Suggestions Made to Achieve More Effective Implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines**

This section addresses the last research question: How best can the Government Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers be implemented? Analysis of the participants' suggestions on how to achieve effective implementation of the policy guidelines partly helps to answer this question. The main suggestions made by the principals and deputy principals to improve implementation of the Readmission Policy are presented in Table 22.

**Table 22: Principals’ and Deputy Principals’ Suggestions to Make Implementation of the Readmission Policy more Effective**

Suggestions for Improvement	Frequency	Percentage
Strengthen guidance and counselling departments in the schools	40	100
Parents to be made aware of their roles – to be more involved in the development of their children	36	90
Strengthen co-operation between school and parents/home	32	80
Carry out sexuality awareness education	31	77.5
Create awareness of dangers of premarital sex/negative effects of early pregnancy	30	75
Create awareness of the policy among all stakeholders	30	75
Make peer education effective/intensive training of peer counsellors	25	62.5
There should be follow up by MOE to monitor implementation	25	62.5
Send materials to guide implementers	23	57.5
Do away with mixed secondary schools/separate boys and girls	20	50
Keep students busy to avoid idleness	13	32.5
Be vigilant – carry out pregnancy tests in schools in order to intervene early	10	25
Create ways of helping needy students	9	22.5
Use media to create awareness of the policy	5	12.5

From table 22 the responses indicate that all the principals and their deputies (100%) in the 20 schools in the study recognised the significant role of guidance and counselling in effective implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on student pregnancy.

Most of them also saw the need to have parents on board both in school (80%) and at home with their children (90%) for the policy to be meaningful. Parent's roles in the development of their children and co-operation when their daughters become pregnant are very crucial. 77.5% of the participants recognised the need to take sexuality awareness education in school seriously. This education would create opportunity to teach adolescence reproductive health, create awareness of the dangers and risks of premarital sex in addition to negative effects of early pregnancy. Other participants suggested that peer education and counselling should be taken more seriously (62.5%); MOE should follow up and monitor the implementation (62.5%); the guidelines and other materials to guide stakeholders should be sent to schools (57.5%); the Government should create separate schools for boys and girls (50%).

Some participants (32.5%) were of the opinion that idleness might be contributing to sexual activity among the students. Keeping them busy with healthy activities such as games and sports and projects such as tree planting and beautification of the school environment should help to direct their energies more positively. Information from the participants had shown that many adolescent mothers in schools were supported by individual donors, church organisations and relatives. There were some who would have liked to continue with their studies but could not afford. With this in mind, 22.5% of the participants suggested that ways of helping needy students should be sought. Ways of creating awareness of the policy through the media should also be considered, according to some participants. However, this suggestion might not receive much support from the

community as it would be seen as a way of encouraging pregnancy in schools. Using the media to advocate healthy boy-girl relationships might be a more welcome suggestion. Some of the participants indicated the need for at least one professional counsellor in each school who should not be allocated any teaching load in order to be more available for the students. This idea might not improve the situation because teaching gives the counsellors opportunity to know and understand the students more. In fact interaction with the counsellors during the interviews indicated their love for teaching. What they needed was reduced workload. Some of the suggestions made by the counsellors interviewed are similar to those made by principals and deputy principals. Counsellors' suggestions to strengthen the department are presented in Table 23.

**Table 23: Counsellors' Suggestions on How to Strengthen Guidance and Counselling in Schools**

School	Physical facilities for the department	Reduced workload	Regular workshops and seminars	Major course in Guidance and Counselling	Monitoring by MOE	Bond with parents	Funds to invite experts	Allowance for HOD
Kahinga	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		
Kazuri	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mahua		✓	✓		✓	✓		
Maridadi		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Meta	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Murangi	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Mutati	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Neema	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	



As shown in Table 23, all the counsellors suggested reduced workload, physical facilities, organisation of regular workshops and seminars, bonding with parents and regular monitoring by the MOE. Need for seminars/workshops, less workload and qualified counsellors, were corroborated by suggestions made by principals and deputy principals. Like the principals and their deputies, all the eight counsellors saw the need to have parents on board for the implementation of the Readmission Policy to be effective. The suggestions made in relation to the parents' responsibilities were reactions to the parents' reluctance to support their daughters when they get pregnant. Information from the adolescent mothers during the interviews and FGDs had indicated a general reaction that parents were unfair, difficult and suspicious in the way they related to them. The strained relationship between parents and their children usually made the daughters look for company outside home leading to early pregnancy. The outcome led to more conflicts between adolescent mothers and their parents.

The teachers interviewed in this study also made several suggestions on how issues on pregnancy and adolescent mothers in secondary schools should be handled. The suggestions made by the teachers included: the MOE should use its mechanisms to create awareness of the policy on student pregnancy in schools. Parents should not assume teachers are doing everything in relation to teaching sexuality awareness to their children; all teachers should be trained in basic guidance and counselling skills; efforts should be made to create a more conducive environment for pregnant and adolescent mothers in both home and school. One of the teachers corroborated with the DEO about the Government policies:

The Government should actualise the policies it makes. Often policies are good but implementation is not handled seriously. For example, you are

telling me the readmission Guidelines were ready for implementation by March 2011. Up to now (May, 2013), they have not been sent to schools that are expected to implement them.

The main suggestion made by the adolescent mothers during interviews and FGDs was that their parents need to understand them. The way parents continued to condemn their daughters after becoming pregnant had a negative impact on their academic progress. As Sarazin and Duteil (2003) have observed, “Young people are not perfect. Not all they do ends well. But instead of always correcting them whenever they go wrong, they should be encouraged in their good acts” (p. 23). Findings from data collected from different participants indicated that adolescent mothers in schools would perform better in their studies if their parents gave them support and unconditional love. The adolescent mothers also suggested that students should be guided on sexual matters to avoid being manipulated by men.

All the participants in this study were willing to respond to the questions given during interviews, discussions and in response to the questionnaire. This chapter has analysed the relevant data collected from the participants in order to answer the six questions that guided the study. According to the findings in this study, the stakeholders in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District are ready to implement the Government Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers, but they need to be empowered to deal with issues related to adolescence pregnancy in schools more effectively. Chapter five gives the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study. Suggestions for further research related to adolescence pregnancy in schools are also made.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study based on research findings already presented and discussed in Chapter Four. The purpose of this study was to analyse the roles of stakeholders in implementing the Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District, Kenya. Literature review has shown that studies on the Readmission Policy have not paid much attention on the adolescent mothers already in schools and how they cope with their multiple roles as mothers, students and as adolescents. The policy guidelines on giving guidance and counselling to the students in the schools in order to promote healthy relationships among boys and girls have also not been considered. The studies accessed by the researcher were more concerned with whether girls continued with studies after getting pregnant. After interacting with community leaders, the DEO and some heads of schools in the district, the researcher was prompted to carry out this study by a great concern in the area in relation to sexual activity among boys and girls and the rising number of adolescent mothers in schools. The Government Readmission Policy requirements apply to all schools in Kenya according to the MOE. A study of this nature would be appropriate in any part of the country since public secondary schools in the country share similar characteristics. However, in order to carry out an in-depth analysis of the situation, the researcher chose one district. The study was guided by six research questions which are used to guide the summary of the findings.

## **5.2 Summary of the Study**

The study was mainly based on participatory research which is one of the major strategies in the qualitative approach. The researcher was therefore able to become acquainted with the participants and study them in depth in their natural setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). A limited use of descriptive research survey design was also used in order to supplement the qualitative data. The target population included all the principals, deputy principals, counsellors and teachers of the 22 girls' and mixed secondary schools in Kikuyu District, adolescent mothers in these schools, parents/guardians of adolescent mothers, the DEOs and KEMI officials responsible for capacity building the school personnel. Two of the 22 schools were used for pilot testing. No sampling was done to select principals and deputy principals since all the remaining 20 girls' and mixed secondary schools were used in the study. Purposive sampling was used to select 8 school counsellors and 10 teachers using quota sampling, eleven adolescent mothers, five parents and one guardian. The two DEOs and the two KEMI officials interviewed were also purposively selected. The 40 principals and deputy principals in addition to the other participants interviewed and those who took part in the FGDs made a total of 79 participants in the study.

A questionnaire was used to collect information from the principals and their deputies. The researcher administered guided interviews on school counsellors and teachers to get information on their roles, professional qualifications and challenges in regard to implementation of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines. An interview guide for adolescent mothers was used to probe their experiences in school and at home, in addition to challenges they faced as they played their double roles as mothers and students. The extent to which the parents/guardians of adolescent mothers support their daughters

was also sought with the use of an interview guide. The researcher also administered informal interviews to two DEO and two KEMI officials on measures taken to support and capacity build the stakeholders involved in implementing the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on girls who get pregnant in schools. In order to allow for group interaction that would promote deeper insight of the roles played by the various stakeholders, the researcher administered a guide for two FGDs comprising five adolescent mothers each. They responded to open-ended questions. The questionnaire that was administered personally by the researcher on the principals and the deputy principals helped to generate statistics that portrayed the magnitude of the phenomenon. A pilot study was carried out in two schools to test suitability of the research instruments. Independent experts in the area of study were also used to establish their validity. Use of source and methodological triangulation to obtain data helped to ensure the dependability of the findings. There were times when the researcher had to seek clarification about information given by going back to the participants. This was done to ensure the dependability of the findings and credibility of the study. Responses of the participants to the research questions that guided the study are used to summarise the findings.

Question one sought to find out the extent to which the stakeholders in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District were aware of the Government Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers. Findings from the various responses indicated that although most of the participants knew about the policy, they were neither aware of nor read the guidelines. These participants included the QASO and KEMI officials who, according to the Readmission Policy are expected to prepare the implementers. The way various stakeholders reacted when a school girl became pregnant was an indicator that they might not have been aware of the policy guidelines. Most of the stakeholders were not doing

what the guidelines have outlined. Examples include: Counsellors in two schools reported that sponsors were reluctant to continue supporting the students after they became pregnant. Such sponsors had to be persuaded to continue by the school counsellors and the principals. Among the challenges facing implementation of the Readmission Policy, was that many parents withdrew their daughters before the schools discovered they were pregnant. This reaction by parents contributed to the difficulty experienced by the school administration in keeping accurate records of student pregnancy and number of adolescent mothers in schools. According to information given by some counsellors, principals and deputy principals, some parents were even encouraging their daughters to carry out abortions. Adolescent mothers interviewed also cited cases of abortion carried out by their colleagues. Most parents also refused to co-operate with the schools on issues related to their parenting daughters. Interviews with parents showed that they did not know what the guidelines say about what they were expected to do. If they did, may be their reactions could have been different.

Additionally, the adolescent mothers did not know there were guidelines that implementers of the Readmission Policy were expected to follow. One of the Policy guidelines indicates very clearly that the school counsellor should offer as much support and counsel the girl who becomes pregnant carefully to help her comprehend the delicate situation and emphasise the need to continue with schooling (MOE, 2011). On the contrary, most of the girls who got pregnant remained traumatised for a long time not knowing there were people who could have given them the unconditional love and support. This situation was manifested by their fear to confide with anyone in school and at home about their pregnancy. Girls believed they would be sent home immediately the pregnancy was detected. That is why most of the girls who got pregnant were at the mercy

of their parents and relatives. Although the school administration is expected to use any available opportunity to make all stakeholders connected to the school aware of the Readmission Policy and the guidelines, responses by the principals and deputy principals indicated that they did not use all the opportunities in the school. Due to decision to keep issues related to pregnancy confidential, very few school administrators made use of the BOG, PTA meetings, school assembly, clubs and societies, peer mediation groups to sensitise stakeholders as stipulated by the Readmission Policy Guidelines.

Research question two inquired about the extent to which the stakeholders were given special preparation to implement the Government Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers. It is clear from the guidelines that capacity building the implementers is very crucial. The study found that all the stakeholders were in agreement that there can be no effective implementation of the Readmission Policy without sensitization and training to equip them with appropriate skills on handling pregnancy related issues. According to QASO, EMIS and KEMI officials interviewed, no special funds had been set aside by the Ministry of Education to carry out such an exercise. Additionally, the officials supposed to play this role were not enough. Findings also showed that most counsellors had not done any major course in Guidance and Counselling. The majority of the counsellors had attended two to three days' seminars which they said were too general and inadequate. The few qualified counsellors in schools also required sensitisation and preparation to implement the Readmission Policy Guidelines. Therefore, the answer to question two is that all the key stakeholders involved in implementing the Readmission Policy Guidelines on adolescent mothers in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District have not been prepared to carry out their roles effectively.

Question three was on how the key stakeholders use the Readmission Policy to raise aspirations of adolescent mothers in their studies. The QASO and the EMIS officials interviewed admitted that the MOE had not yet planned for monitoring the implementation of the Readmission Policy on girls who get pregnant in school. Stakeholders complained of lack of any follow up by MOE to support the implementers. Additionally, no effort had been made to establish medical services such as school clinics, school nurses and school open days for free medical check-ups in all the secondary schools as stipulated in the Readmission Policy Guidelines. Only girls' boarding schools had nurses and clinics which were there even before the Readmission Policy was launched. As a result, it was not easy to detect cases of pregnancy in schools. Giving support on health related issues to pregnant girls and adolescent mothers already in schools was also not easy without such services. This became more challenging in schools which were very far from health centres especially those in Karai zone.

However, the study found some positive measures being taken to promote implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers in Kikuyu District. The DEO and the school administrators were co-operating to ensure all adolescent mothers who wanted to continue with their education were readmitted either in the same or in other schools. A deliberate effort was particularly made by the DEO to ensure school placement of any adolescent mother who decided to continue with her studies.

The study found that there were various strategies used by schools to enhance implementation of the Government Readmission Policy. First, a few schools had regular Guidance and Counselling programmes in place to deal with various issues related to student pregnancy such as reproductive health, boy-girl relationships, sexuality and peer pressure. Secondly, support provided for peer education has made an impact on healthy



relationships among students in some schools. In this regard, some adolescent mothers have been recruited to join peer educators. Thirdly, the school administration in most schools was making effort to involve various stakeholders in the process of implementing the Readmission Policy. There was some evidence of support given to Guidance and Counselling Departments, pregnant and parenting students and individual parents of adolescent mothers. In most cases the school administration was ready to encourage any student known to be pregnant or a mother. The best mentor according to adolescent mothers was either the principal, the deputy principal or the counsellor. Fourthly, the principals of the three girls' boarding schools in the study portrayed genuine concern for students who could not continue with studies after getting pregnant either due to poverty at home or due to hostile attitude by parents. These principals were making effort to appeal to PTA, BOG and outside donors to create a special kitty for funds to assist such adolescent mothers in addition to other needy students. One adolescent mother who received such assistance in one of these schools obtained an average of "A" grade in the 2011 KCSE according to information given by the school counsellor. This young mother is already registered for an engineering course in one of the public universities. This is a good illustration that with support, adolescent mothers can fulfil their potential. Finally, some schools were making efforts to detect cases of pregnancy in order to provide counselling and support before the girls affected withdrew from school secretly. In spite of lack of clinics in mixed secondary schools, one of these schools was using a hospital nearby to have a routine check up for all the girls once a term.

It is, however, important to note that not all schools were going out of their way to involve various stakeholders. Use of clubs and societies, school assemblies, BOG and PTA meetings were rarely involved in the implementation of the Government Readmission

Policy on adolescent mothers in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District. Teachers interviewed complained of being ignored by the administration and the counsellors when girls in their classes got pregnant or when adolescent mothers were admitted.

Research question four sought to inquire ways in which the key stakeholders respond to the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines. Effectiveness of the implementation depended on the reactions by different stakeholders. The study found both positive and negative reactions. First, it was noted from interviews with adolescent mothers that most of them took time to accept that they were pregnant. Due to lack of effective coverage of sexuality education, many girls were given misguided information on sex especially by their peers and men they related with. They were traumatised when they discovered the reality because first, they did not comprehend fully what was happening and second, they believed their future was completely destroyed. Additionally, for many of them, it was their first time to have sex. They felt betrayed and being used. Most of the adolescent mothers blamed their parents for failing to give them information about sex and life. They were also afraid to ask their parents questions. Information gathered from different participants indicated that there was a poor bond between children and their parents. That is why the girls were quick to respond to approaches by men. Further, the adolescent mothers were not sure how the school authorities and their parents would react when they discovered they were pregnant. So the first reaction was to keep their pregnancy secret, thus losing the earliest opportunity to be counselled especially in school. This reaction was an indication of lack of awareness of the Readmission Policy Guidelines.

In spite of lack of awareness of the policy, most adolescent mothers wanted to continue with their studies after giving birth. They were motivated by the need to be

independent and ability to support their children. However, memories of circumstances that led to becoming pregnant continued to haunt some of them contributing to poor relationships in schools and at home as well as poor academic performance. Lack of support for adolescent mothers by some members in the school community and at home was one of the indicators that the Readmission Guidelines were not clear. For example, in some schools other students ridicule and harass the adolescent mothers. However, according to interviews, these reactions were minimised in schools where the principals, deputy principals, counsellors and teachers encouraged the students to give support to the adolescent mothers.

Most of the parents, especially fathers, failed to show unconditional love and support for their daughters after getting pregnant. In some cases they wanted them to get married immediately while others were not ready to give further support for their studies. There were also cases of some fathers who continued giving their daughters a hard time even after agreeing to cater for their educational material needs. To such parents, apart from the pregnancy being seen as an embarrassment to the family, it was also a sign of wastage of resources. Although some parents were aware that girls who become pregnant in school were allowed to continue with their studies, they reacted negatively because they were not sensitised about the policy and their roles as parents.

There were cases where many girls stayed at home for more than a year before they resumed their studies due to various reasons. According to the research findings, adolescent mothers delayed in their resumption of studies due to: lack of opportunity to get any counselling after pregnancy was discovered; lack of enough resources to cater for both the mother and the baby; lack of support and encouragement by parents and relatives; failure to get someone to take care of the baby; poor health of the adolescent

mother after giving birth; lack of confidence in catching up with school work and ignorance about the Readmission Policy Guidelines.

Question five sought to establish any challenges faced in the process of implementing the Government Readmission Policy. Findings from various responses showed that most of the challenges were related to school and home environments. First, as noted earlier, many girls kept their pregnancy a secret and dropped out of school suddenly. Some were withdrawn by their parents quietly. Such cases hindered the implementation of the Policy Guidelines which included counselling of both the girl and the parents. There was a general lack of co-operation by parents when their daughters became pregnant and after giving birth. Most of the parents failed to liaise with the school to discuss issues affecting their children as outlined in the Readmission Policy. Secondly, most of the parents failed to provide a warm environment for their daughter and the baby. Poor communication between adolescent mothers, their parents and siblings hindered their recovery from what happened. Additionally, irregular class attendance by the adolescent mothers due to issues related to baby care and personal health had a negative impact on their academic performance. It was also noted that low self-esteem has made students become vulnerable to exploitation by other people.

Challenges directly related to guidance and counselling in public secondary schools are: shortage of professional and committed counsellors; heavy workload for the school counsellors; lack of facilities such as sound proof rooms or no rooms at all to facilitate provision of effective guidance and counselling services in schools; shortage of funds that would facilitate involvement of experts from outside. Although the counsellors get a lot of support from the school administration, as noted earlier, they complain of lack of support by the MOE. Since the Readmission Policy was launched in secondary schools

neither monitoring, nor supervision by the ministry officials had taken place. The QASO and the EMIS official in the district cited failure by the MOE to allocate funds to facilitate implementation of the policy as the major challenge during the interviews. These and other challenges have adversely affected effective implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines on girls who become pregnant in school.

In response to question six, major suggestions to make implementation of the Government Readmission Policy more effective according to the participants included: strengthening Guidance and Counselling Departments; monitoring implementation of the policy by the Moe; sensitising the parents about the policy in order to have their co-operation with the schools when their daughters got pregnant. Creating awareness of the requirements of the policy among parents was also suggested by the adolescent mothers. Additionally, the schools required materials to guide the implementers.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The main purpose of this study was to analyse the roles played by stakeholders in the implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District, Kenya. All the six research questions were satisfactorily answered. Findings from information collected through interviews, FGDs in addition to questionnaires brought out several issues related to the implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District. Based on the findings, the researcher has made the following conclusion.

First, lack of awareness of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on student pregnancy was making the work of stakeholders very difficult. It was observed that the weaknesses that contributed to lack of effective implementation of the policy did not arise from ignorance about the policy itself, but they were largely due to ignorance

about the guidelines that the stakeholders were expected to follow as they played their roles. For example, many girls kept their pregnancy secret because they were afraid of being sent home immediately the school authority knew about it. Yet one of the guidelines states clearly that a girl “should not be coerced to leave school because she is pregnant. The girl should leave school at an appropriate time so as to give birth”(MOE, 2011, p. 18). Therefore, based on the findings in this study, the researcher concluded that lack of awareness of the policy guidelines and materials to guide the stakeholders adversely affected implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers in Public Secondary Schools in Kikuyu District.

Second, findings from the study also showed that a very crucial stage in the implementation process was not catered for by the MOE. In this regard, no in-service courses, seminars or workshops were organised to address the roles of stakeholders and equip them with skills to implement the Readmission Policy Guidelines on adolescent mothers in schools effectively. Handling girls who become pregnant in school in addition to their parents requires special skills due to the sensitivity of the phenomenon. The situation is made more critical by lack of monitoring and supervision by the MOE personnel. Plans made to strengthen Guidance and Counselling Departments have also not been achieved in the schools under this study. The plans are there in theory. As a result, the stakeholders have been left to devise their own approaches to the implementation of the policy leading to lack of uniformity in addressing pregnancy related issues in schools, since interpretations of the policy requirements were different. In view of the discussed findings of the study, the researcher came to the conclusion that failure to implement the Readmission Policy Guidelines effectively could be largely attributed to lack of sensitization/preparation of the key stakeholders prior to and during the implementation.

Very few schools were going out of their way to raise aspirations of the adolescent mothers in their studies. The education officers in collaboration with the school administration were only effective in making sure the girls who became pregnant were readmitted in their preferred schools. However, in most cases, the specific needs of adolescent mothers such as how to overcome their traumatic experiences, how to raise their self esteem and confidence and catch up with other students are not taken into consideration. Therefore, these observations led the researcher to conclude that as a whole, the stakeholders were not using the Government Readmission Guidelines to raise the aspirations of the adolescent mothers in their studies.

Stakeholders react differently to the Government Readmission Policy on girls who get pregnant in school. Reactions are both positive and negative. The nature of reaction by each stakeholder depends on various factors such as, awareness of the policy guidelines, the school commitment to implement the policy, relationship between the parents and their daughters, education level of the parents, determination of the adolescent mothers to continue with their studies and the level of counselling given to the girls immediately they get pregnant give birth. Adolescent mothers who are given intensive counselling, supported by parents, schools, friends and relatives are very comfortable in their studies and are confident in the realisation of their dreams. Jenny is a good example in this category.

According to the ecological systems theory advanced by Bronfenbrenner, parents, relatives, the school and immediate neighbours fit in very well in the micro-system level where influences are strongest and have greatest impact on the child (Meece & Daniels, 2008). In cases where support for the adolescent mothers was lacking at this level, the stakeholders did not play their roles according to the Readmission Policy Guidelines.

Hence the adolescent mothers were still suffering from low self esteem which affected their confidence in realising their educational goals. The ability to cope with their roles as mothers and students at the same time very much depends on support given in school and at home. As in the case of other countries like Namibia (Shaningwa, 2007) and UK (Vincent, 2009), this study established that most of the adolescent mothers in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District forced themselves to continue with studies even when their parents and schools were indifferent. In other words self motivation was playing a great role among the girls who continued with studies after getting pregnant. The ones who are not self-motivated were rather frustrated.

This study found that all the key stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Readmission Policy in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District were faced with great challenges. Examples of challenges revealed were: negative attitudes by parents towards their daughters' pregnancy; lack of skills in guidance and counselling in schools; poverty in most homes making many girls vulnerable to sexual exploitation; lack of role models and positive mentorship in most homes and in the community leading to increased sexual activity among boys and girls. The study also found that the social environment in Kikuyu District poses a great challenge to the implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on student pregnancy. Findings indicated that mushrooming unlicensed video halls in most shopping centres in addition to the "bash" parties discussed in chapter four are attracting the youth of both sexes. This environment is encouraging sexual activity among school girls and boys in addition to adolescence pregnancy. As a result, carrying out guidance and counselling on healthy relationships between boys and girls as stipulated by the Readmission Policy Guidelines was becoming very challenging. Based on such findings in this study the researcher concluded that to a great extent, challenges faced by



the key stakeholders contributed a lot to lack of effective implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on adolescent mothers in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings from this study, the researcher makes the following recommendations that should contribute to more effective implementation of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on adolescent mothers in secondary schools:

- a) The MOE should create awareness of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines among all the stakeholders. Awareness of just the Readmission Policy has failed to facilitate effective implementation. To facilitate implementation, the Readmission Policy Guidelines and other relevant materials should be made available to the key stakeholders in schools, KEMI and the DEO. While creating awareness of the policy guidelines, the Government should target the parents and not just the schools for the success of the implementation.
- b) The parents should be convinced about their role to provide both moral and financial support to their daughters who become pregnant in order to enable them complete their studies.
- c) Deliberate plans should be made to guide and sensitise all the key stakeholders on the significance of the Readmission Policy. The MOE should be committed in capacity building stakeholders, especially the school management, counsellors, teachers, to equip them with skills to handle cases related to pregnancy in schools. Regular seminars/workshops should be organised to keep stakeholders updated on ways of making the Readmission Policy more effective. In this regard, allocation of special funds to ensure successful sensitization of the stakeholders is vital.

- d) There is a great need for the Government to employ more personnel in the field in order to monitor/supervise implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines in schools and to disseminate any new information and materials to the stakeholders. With this support the implementers will be encouraged to carry out their roles as outlined by the Readmission Policy Guidelines.
- e) Teachers need training and guiding materials on how to inculcate moral values as they teach reproductive health in order to enable students make informed choices as they grow up and as they interact with members of the opposite sex. Although reproductive health education is in the curriculum for both primary and secondary schools, teachers have not been equipped with skills on how to relate it with healthy boy-girl relationships (Kiragu, 2007). As Van Pelt (1984) has observed, “it is not enough to teach a child the facts about reproduction and sexual functioning; the child needs to be able to relate the information received to his developing moral code. Sex education and moral values, must go hand in hand” (p. 178).
- f) Parents should also be reminded that they have a great role to play in the development of their children in an environment that is peaceful, full of unconditional love and values. The study found that parents have not taken their roles seriously. Most of the parents have failed to create time to be with their children in order to guide them in life skills. In this regard, provision of sexuality awareness and moral education to the children is a major responsibility of parents. To carry out this responsibility effectively, strategies on guiding and counselling parents should be sought.
- g) Efforts should be made to strengthen the bond/co-operation between schools and parents in order to raise aspirations of the adolescent mothers to achieve their

education goals. Additionally, they should co-operate in inculcating moral values and healthy relationships between boys and girls.

- h) Peer mentorship should be encouraged in schools. In schools where peer mentorship is encouraged, boy- girl relationships are healthy. The government should allocate funds to enable all schools to have trained peer educators.
- i) For implementation of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines to be effective, Guidance and Counselling Departments need to be strengthened by equipping schools with proper facilities such as counselling rooms and recruitment of qualified counsellors. In appointing counsellors, the TSC should collaborate with the school administration in order to appoint staff committed to offering support to all the students especially those with pregnancy related issues. Findings from the study showed that although academic qualifications in guidance and counselling are important, effective counselling also requires personal commitment and interest in reaching out to students. The Government should facilitate special training for the committed and effective counsellors in schools. Additionally, the school counsellors especially the heads of departments should be allocated less workload in order to have more time with the students.
- j) One of the policy guidelines points out clearly the importance of mobilising resources for medical services, infrastructure which include school clinics and free medical check-ups. Students affected are advised to receive proper medical services for antenatal and postnatal care (MOE, 2011). The MOE should liaise with the Ministry of Health in order to facilitate implementation of the policy by ensuring clinics are established in or near all the schools.

- k) The Government should carry out a survey to establish the merits and demerits of separate schools for boys and girls. Findings from responses by participants indicated that girls' schools have fewer challenges related to adolescence pregnancy than the mixed secondary schools. According to most principals, deputy principals and counsellors, schools that have taken this direction have improved tremendously in discipline and performance. Kahuho High School which used to be mixed and is now for boys only was given as an example of the schools that used to perform poorly in national examinations. The school is currently ranked very high in the list of the public schools in the district in KCSE results. One of the mixed secondary schools used in the study has also improved in both performance and discipline since an internal arrangement was made to teach boys and girls separately according to the counsellor and the principal. Such arrangements are made due to frustration faced in trying to maintain discipline among boys and girls in mixed secondary schools. The right decision on this issue can only be made after the Government has made deliberate strategies to monitor the implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines on adolescent mothers in schools.
- l) The MOE together with the county governments should carry out measures to ensure that the social environment in the community does not encourage sexual activities and other malpractices among boys and girls.
- m) Lastly, there is a need to review the title "Readmission Policy". This title was initially used when girls had to stay at home for one year after getting pregnant and then had to apply for readmission. Since girls who get pregnant are encouraged to stay in school and only leave at an appropriate time so as to give birth, the case of

such girls is not that of readmission. In view of this change in the policy, another title such as “Government Policy on Student Pregnancy” should be considered.

### **5.5 Suggested Areas for Further Research**

The researcher suggests further research for the following areas:

- a) The root causes of adolescence pregnancy in schools.
- b) Analysis of attempts being made to reduce adolescence pregnancy in schools.
- c) Strategies used to mainstream moral values and life skills in the school curriculum.
- d) Analysis of roles played by peer educators in developing healthy relationships among students in schools.
- e) The role played by culture and religion in the sexual behaviour of the adolescents in school.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX I**

#### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ADOLESCENT MOTHERS**

##### **INTRODUCTION**

My name is Naomi Mbugua, a post-graduate student at Catholic University of Eastern Africa. I am carrying out a research on the implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on girls who get pregnant in Public Secondary Schools in Kikuyu District. To do this I need your support. Your suggestions on the implementation are welcome.

Please respond to the questions freely and honestly. Be assured that confidentiality will be honoured. Your name and identity will not be disclosed.. The information given is strictly for the study.

Thank you for your willingness to be interviewed.

##### 1. Background information

- a. In which class were you when you became pregnant?
- b. How old were you when you got your baby?
- c. Which class are you in now?
- d. What is the name of your school?
- e. Is the school you are in a new one or were you there before you became pregnant?
- f. Where do you stay?

2. a. Can you please tell me how you reacted when you discovered you were pregnant?
- b. What were the reactions of your parents/guardian?

3. Who is taking care of your baby?
4. Can you share how you were able to continue with your studies? Was the decision easy or difficult? Please explain.
5. What are your dreams/goals? What plans do you have to achieve them?
6. What challenges do you face in school in relation to:
  - a. Attending classes
  - b. Academic performance
  - c. Doing your homework
  - d. Relating with other students
  - e. Relating with school counsellors, teachers and school administration
  - f. Other
7. Please tell me about any assistance/support you get in school in order to cope with your studies.
8. Comment on any challenges at home in relation to your studies and taking care of your baby.
9. Suggest how students who get pregnant should be treated.
10. What advice would you give to girls on getting pregnant while one is a student?
11. Any other comment.

## APPENDIX II

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF ADOLESCENT MOTHERS

1. Background information
  - a. Marital status
  - b. Education level
  - c. Occupation
2. Are you aware of Government Readmission Policy on girls who get pregnant while in school? Please tell me what you know about it.
3. Can you please tell me how you reacted when you discovered that your daughter was pregnant?
4.
  - a. How was your daughter able to continue with her studies?
  - b. What challenges is your daughter facing in school?
5. Who takes care of your daughter's baby?
6. How is your daughter able to cope with schoolwork at home?
7. How is her school performance since she gave birth?
8. What plans do you and your daughter have for her future and that of her baby?
9. What challenges have you and your daughter faced since she became pregnant?
10. Give any recommendations in relation to allowing pregnant girls to continue with education
11. Any other comment.

**APPENDIX III**  
**THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA**  
**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**  
**P.O. BOX 62157 – 00200**  
**NAIROBI**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE SCHOOL COUNSELLORS**

**INTRODUCTION**

My name is Naomi Mbugua, a post-graduate student at Catholic University of Eastern Africa. I am carrying out a research on the implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on girls who get pregnant in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District. To do this I need your support. Your suggestions on the implementation are welcome.

Please respond to the questions freely and honestly. Be assured that confidentiality will be honoured. Your name and identity will not be disclosed. The information given is strictly for the study.

Thank you for your willingness to be interviewed.

1. Male ( ) Female ( )
2. Counselling experience: \_\_\_\_\_ years
3. Apart from counselling, what other responsibilities do you have in the school?
4. What would you say about your work in school?
  - a. Overworked ( )
  - b. Just enough ( )
  - c. Very light ( )



5. Have you had any professional training in Guidance and Counselling? If yes please comment on:
- a. Duration of the training
  - b. Qualification
  - c. Adequate or inadequate
6. Government Policy on girls who get pregnant in school:
- a. What do you know about the Government Policy on girls who get pregnant in school?
  - b. In what ways have you been prepared for your roles in implementing the Readmission Policy on pregnant and parenting students?
  - c. Have you and other teachers attended any seminars/workshops on guidance and counselling in relation to implementation of the Readmission Policy?
  - d. If yes, comment on their duration and whether they have helped you to guide and counsel the pregnant/ parenting students and their parents.
7. How are you able to know the girls who are pregnant or who are already mothers in the school?
- a. Girls volunteering the information
  - b. Detecting on your own
  - c. With help of the teachers
  - d. Information by the principal/deputy principal
  - e. Other students
  - f. Parents of the girls
  - g. School nurse
  - h. Other

8. To what extent does the school administration give support in the provision of Guidance and Counselling services?
9. How often are you involved in:
  - a. Counselling pregnant/parenting students?
  - b. Counselling parents of young mothers?
  - c. Guiding all the students on issues related to sexuality, relationships and self-esteem.
  - d. Collaboration with other teachers and the school nurse in relation to student pregnancy?
10. What challenges does the counselling department face in relation to the Readmission Policy Guidelines?
11. In what ways can Guidance and Counselling Department be strengthened in order to handle issues on pregnancy and parenting students effectively?
12. Any other comment.

**APPENDIX IV**  
**THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA**  
**FACULTY OF EDUCATION**  
**P.O. BOX 62157 – 00200**  
**NAIROBI**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE SCHOOL TEACHERS**

**INTRODUCTION**

My name is Naomi Mbugua, a post-graduate student at Catholic University of Eastern Africa. I am carrying out a research on the implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on girls who get pregnant in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District. To do this I need your support. Your suggestions on the implementation are welcome.

Your willingness to take part in this study is very important. Please respond to the questions freely and honestly. Be assured that personal issues will be kept confidential. Your name and identity will remain secret. The information given is strictly for the study.

Thank you for your willingness to be interviewed.

1. Male (     )     Female (     )
2. Counselling experience: \_\_\_\_\_ years
3. Teaching experience in secondary school: \_\_\_\_\_ years
4. Are you in Guidance and counselling committee in the school?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
5. What do you know about the Government Policy on girls who get pregnant in school?

6. What are your views about the idea of allowing pregnant students and adolescent mothers to continue with their studies?
7. Have you had any professional training in Guidance and Counselling?
- a. If yes, please comment on:
- Duration of the training \_\_\_\_\_
  - Qualification \_\_\_\_\_
  - Adequate or inadequate \_\_\_\_\_
- b. In what ways have you been prepared for your roles in implementing the Readmission Policy on pregnant and parenting students?
- c. Have you attended any seminars/workshops on guidance and counselling in relation to implementation of the Readmission Policy?
- d. If yes, comment on their duration and whether they have helped you to guide and counsel the pregnant/ parenting students and their parents.
8. How are you able to know the girls who are pregnant or who are already mothers in the school?
- a. Girls affected volunteering the information
- b. Detecting on your own
- c. With help of the teachers
- d. Information by other students
- e. Information by the principal/deputy principal
- f. Parents of the girls
- g. School nurse
- h. Other

9. How do you handle the situation?
10. To what extent are parenting students given support by the school?
11. How often are you involved in:
  - a. Counselling pregnant/parenting students?
  - b. Counselling parents of young mothers?
  - c. Guiding all the students on issues related to sexuality, relationships and self-esteem, etc...?
  - d. Collaboration with the school counsellor, other teachers and the school administration in relation to student pregnancy?
12. What challenges does the school face in relation to the readmission of adolescent mothers?
13. Suggest ways in which issues on pregnancy and adolescent mothers in secondary schools should be handled.
14. Any other comments.

## **APPENDIX V**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICIALS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

My name is Naomi Mbugua, a post-graduate student at Catholic University of Eastern Africa. I am carrying out a research on the implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on girls who get pregnant in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District. To do this I need your support. Your suggestions on the implementation are welcome.

Please respond to the questions freely and honestly. Be assured that confidentiality will be honoured. Your name and identity will not be disclosed. The information given is strictly for the study.

Thank You for your willingness to be interviewed.

1. What is the role of the District Education Office in relation to implementation of the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on student pregnancy?
2. To what extent are the stakeholders/implementers sensitised, made aware and prepared to understand the policy's significance and to implement the guidelines?
3. In your opinion, how effective is the policy so far in Kikuyu District in relation to:
  - a) Girls' retention in school
  - b) Raising educational aspirations of both boys and girls
  - c) Reduction of sexual activity and pregnancy in schools

4. Please comment on any budget allocated for in-service courses, seminars or workshops in relation to the Readmission Policy Guidelines.
  
5. Comment on any materials prepared by the Government or KIE to guide counsellors and teachers as they handle pregnant and parenting students in addition to other students in the school. Please comment on how helpful they are.
  
6. Which challenges in relation to implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines have been reported to you? How have you responded to them?
  
7. Can you give suggestions for achieving more effective implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines?

## APPENDIX VI

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KENYA EDUCATION MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE OFFICIALS

#### INTRODUCTION

My name is Naomi Mbugua, a post-graduate student at Catholic University of Eastern Africa. I am carrying out a research on implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on girls who get pregnant in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District. To do this I need your support. Your suggestions on the implementation are welcome..

Please respond to the questions freely and honestly. Be assured that confidentiality will be honoured. Your name and identity will not be disclosed. The information given is strictly for the study.

Thank You for your willingness to be interviewed.

1. Can you please explain your awareness of the Government Readmission Policy on girls who get pregnant while in school?
2. Do you think special training for key stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Readmission Policy is necessary?

YES ( )

NO ( )

If YES, please explain.

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3. Have you been involved in any capacity building the school personnel (including those from public schools in Kikuyu District) in relation to the implementation of the Government Readmission Policy?

YES ( )                      NO ( )

4. If YES, please comment on achievements made.

5. If NO, can you explain the reason?

6. In what ways can the stakeholders be prepared for effective implementation of the Government Readmission Policy?

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## APPENDIX VII

### FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR ADOLESCENT MOTHERS

#### INTRODUCTION

My name is Naomi Mbugua, a post-graduate student at Catholic University of Eastern Africa. I am carrying out a research on the implementation of the Government Readmission Policy on girls who get pregnant in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District. To do this I need your support . Your suggestions on how the implementation could be more effective are welcome.

Please respond to questions and comments by your colleagues freely and honestly. Be assured that confidentiality will be honoured. Your name and identity will not be disclosed. The information given is strictly for the study.

Thank You for your willingness to take part in the discussion.

1. What do you understand by the Government Readmission Policy on girls who get pregnant while in school?
2.
  - a) What were your reactions when you discovered you were pregnant?
  - b) Who was the first person to tell?
  - c) Why did you tell this person?
3. Can you comment on how people around you reacted to the news about your pregnancy?
  - a) Your parents/guardian
  - b) Your boyfriend
  - c) School counsellor

- d) School administration (principal and deputy principal)
  - e) Your siblings/relatives
  - f) Other students
  - g) Other?
4. Please talk about how people's reactions affect/affected you
  5. What made you continue with your studies?
  6. Can you comment about support given to pregnant/parenting students in your school?
  7. What challenges do pregnant and parenting students face in relation to being students and mothers at the same time?
  8. How do you manage in the face of such challenges?
  9. a) Who do you prefer talking to when in difficulties?  
b) Why do you prefer this person?
  10. Can you give any other comment and suggestion related to student pregnancy and continuing with studies?

## APPENDIX VIII

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

P.O. BOX 62157 – 00200

NAIROBI

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRINCIPALS AND DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Naomi Mbugua. I am a post-graduate student at Catholic University of Eastern Africa currently under-taking research. The purpose of the study is to assess how the Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on girls who get pregnant while in school are being implemented in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District. To do this I need your support. The aim of this questionnaire is to find out how your school and various stakeholders are involved and identify the challenges faced.

Please respond honestly and freely to all the items about yourself as an administrator, your observations and feelings concerning the policy and the stakeholders. All your responses will remain confidential. Your name is not required.

Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this exercise.

#### **Instruction:**

Kindly respond to the following questions by placing a tick (✓) in the appropriate box. Where there is a space provided below the item, use it to write the information required.

**SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. (a) Male ( )  
(b) Female ( )
2. (a) Principal ( )  
(b) Deputy principal ( )
3. Administrative experience in secondary school: \_\_\_\_\_ years.
4. Indicate with a tick (✓) the category of your school, whether it is girls only, mixed, boarding or day.

School category	Girls Only	Mixed	Boarding	Day
National				
Provincial				
District				

5. Current student enrolment \_\_\_\_\_ students
6. Current Student enrolment in mixed secondary schools; indicate in columns below:

BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL

7. Teaching staff in your school:

MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL

8. How would you rate the staffing in your school in regard to teacher-counsellors?
- a. Just enough ( )
  - b. Under-staffed ( )
  - c. Over-staffed ( )

**SECTION B**

9. (a) The school is aware of the Government Readmission Policy on pregnancy in schools.

Yes ( ) No ( )

- (b) If YES, is your school implementing the Government Readmission Policy guidelines on student pregnancy?

Yes ( ) No ( )

10. Indicate the rate of pregnancy (in numbers) among girls in your school and the average number of pregnant and parenting students who continue with studies over the last four years. Include those who transfer from other schools.

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>RATE OF PREGNANCY IN YOUR SCHOOL</b>	<b>NUMBER OF PREGNANT/PARENTING STUDENTS IN YOUR SCHOOL</b>
<b>2011</b>		
<b>2010</b>		
<b>2009</b>		
<b>2008</b>		

Comment on the rate of pregnancy and the number of those who are readmitted in your school after giving birth.

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11. In what ways are the following involved when the school learns a girl is pregnant?

- (a) The principal /deputy principal
- (b) The pregnant student
- (c) The school counsellor:
- (d) The teachers
- (e) The parent(s) of the girl:
- (f) The school nurse :
- (g) Other students:
- (h) Any other:

12. Indicate with a tick the level of involvement of the following in relation to implementation of the Readmission Policy Guidelines in your school.

<b>Group/Individuals</b>	<b>Very involved</b>	<b>Somewhat involved</b>	<b>Not involved</b>
<b>Guidance and counselling</b>			
<b>Career guidance</b>			
<b>Peer mediation groups</b>			
<b>P.T.A</b>			
<b>Board of Governors</b>			

<b>Clubs and societies</b>			
<b>Individual parents</b>			
<b>Pregnant and parenting students</b>			
<b>School Assembly</b>			
<b>Any other</b>			

13. Comment on the following in relation to preparation/training given to counsellors in your school in order to carry out effective guidance and counselling services.

<b>Training given</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Not given</b>
<b>Intensive guidance &amp; counselling course</b>			
<b>In-service training</b>			
<b>Seminars/workshops</b>			

### **SECTION C**

14. This part of the questionnaire consists of 14 statements. They are designed to get your opinion concerning the Readmission Policy Guidelines on student pregnancy. Read each statement carefully and against it, please put a tick (✓) in any one column that indicates how best you agree or disagree with the statement. Use the key below to guide your responses. Give reasons for your response in the space provided at the end of each statement. Please do not tick more than one column for each statement.



**KEY**

SA Strongly Agree

A Agree

U Undecided

D Disagree

SD Strongly Disagree

	<b>STATEMENT</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Reasons for your response</b>
1	The Government Readmission Policy Guidelines are very clear						
2	Allowing girls who get pregnant to continue in school increases immorality and indiscipline among students						
3	Effective implementation of the policy guidelines will raise educational aspirations of pregnant/parenting students						
4	The government should have alternative institutions for teenage mothers						
5	After getting pregnant the girls perform poorly in most academic work						
6	I feel competent to plan for effective implementation of the guidelines in the school						
7	I use any available opportunity to create awareness of the policy guidelines among school stakeholders						
8	The guidelines are too demanding to be implemented effectively						
9	School counsellors are too busy with class and other students to be able to meet with pregnant and parenting students and their parents						
10	The parenting students will be able to have a bright future when they continue with their studies						

	STATEMENT	SA	A	U	D	SD	Reasons for your response
11	Effective implementation of the guidelines will contribute to reduced pregnancy in schools						
12	I do not feel competent enough to organise for effective implementation of the readmission guidelines						
13	I support regular guidance & counselling in the school						
14	There is no need to involve all the students in support for pregnant and parenting students						

15. Give your comments on the significance of the Readmission Policy on student pregnancy.

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16. What challenges does your school face in the efforts to implement Government Readmission Policy Guidelines on student pregnancy?

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17. Give suggestions on how the Readmission Policy Guidelines on student pregnancy could be made more effective.

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18. Any other comment.

THANK YOU FOR FILLING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

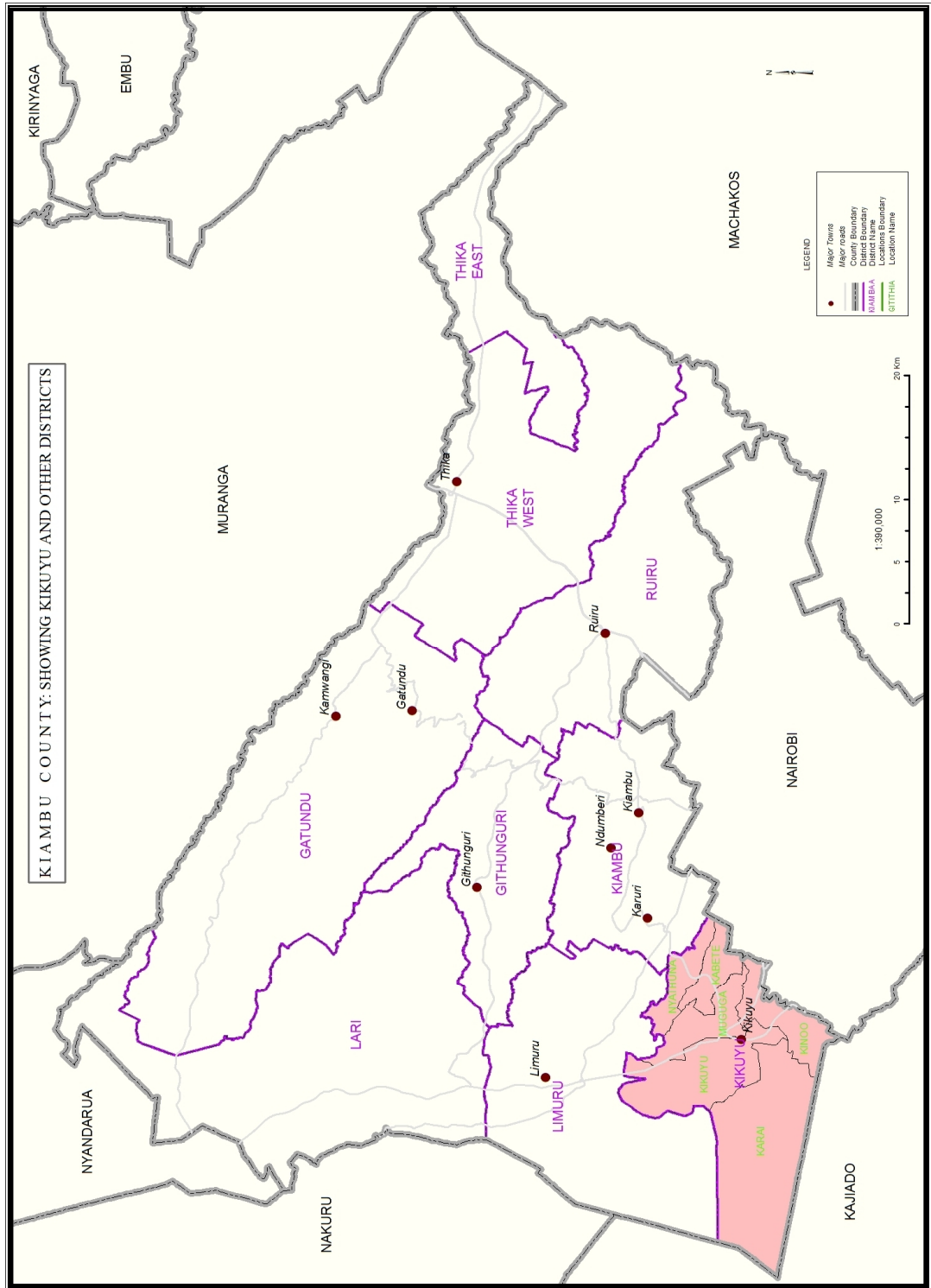
## APPENDIX IX

### GIRLS' AND MIXED PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KIKUYU DISTRICT


	<b>ZONE</b>	<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
<b>I</b>	<b>THOGOTO ZONE</b>		
1.	Alliance Girls High School	National	Girls boarding
2.	Uthiru Girls High School	Provincial	Girls boarding
3.	Musa Gitau Secondary	District	Mixed
4.	Muhu Secondary	District	Mixed
5..	Rungiri Secondary	District	Mixed
<b>II</b>	<b>KABETE ZONE</b>		
1.	Mary Leakey Girls High School	Provincial	Girls boarding
2.	Kabete Secondary	District	Mixed
3.	St. Kevins Secondary	District	Mixed
4.	Nyathuna Secondary	District	Mixed
5.	Gikuni Secondary	District	Mixed
6.	Kanyariri Secondary	District	Mixed
7.	Gathiga Secondary	District	Mixed
8.	Kibiciku Secondary	District	Mixed
<b>III</b>	<b>MUGUGA ZONE</b>		
1.	Kanjeru Girls	District	Girls
2.	Kerwa Secondary	District	Mixed
3.	Muguga Wagatonye	District	Mixed
4.	Nderi Secondary	District	Mixed
<b>IV</b>	<b>KARAI ZONE</b>		
1.	Moi Girls Kamangu	Provincial	Girls Boarding
2.	Renguti Secondary	District	Mixed
3.	Karai Secondary	District	Mixed
4.	Gichuru Memorial	District	Mixed
5.	Mai-a-ihii Secondary	District	Mixed

# APPENDIX X

## MAP OF KIAMBU COUNTY SHOWING KIKUYU DISTRICT




**APPENDIX XI**  
**RESEARCH PERMIT**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PAGE 2</b></p> <p><b>THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:</b> <b>Prof./Dr./Mr./Mrs./Miss/Institution</b> <b>Naomi Wairimu Mbugua</b> <b>of (Address) Catholic University of E.A</b> <b>P.O BOX 62157, Nairobi</b> <b>has been permitted to conduct research in</b></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"><tr><td style="width: 60%;"></td><td style="text-align: right;"><b>Location</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Kikuyu</b></td><td style="text-align: right;"><b>District</b></td></tr><tr><td><b>Central</b></td><td style="text-align: right;"><b>Province</b></td></tr></table> <p><b>on the topic: Analysis of stakeholders roles in</b> <b>implementing the readmission policy on adolescent</b> <b>mothers in public secondary schools in Kikuyu</b> <b>District, Kenya</b></p> <p><b>for a period ending: 31<sup>st</sup> August 2012.</b></p>		<b>Location</b>	<b>Kikuyu</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Central</b>	<b>Province</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PAGE 3</b></p> <p><b>Research Permit No. NCST/RCD/14/012/181</b> <b>Date of issue 7<sup>th</sup> March 2012</b> <b>Fee received KSHS. 2000</b></p> <div style="text-align: center;"></div> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"><tr><td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"><p><i>Naomi Wairimu Mbugua</i></p><p>.....</p><p><b>Applicant's</b> <b>Signature</b></p></td><td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;"><p><i>Wairimu Mbugua</i></p><p>.....</p><p><b>Secretary</b> <b>National Council for</b> <b>Science &amp; Technology</b></p></td></tr></table>	<p><i>Naomi Wairimu Mbugua</i></p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>Applicant's</b> <b>Signature</b></p>	<p><i>Wairimu Mbugua</i></p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>Secretary</b> <b>National Council for</b> <b>Science &amp; Technology</b></p>
	<b>Location</b>								
<b>Kikuyu</b>	<b>District</b>								
<b>Central</b>	<b>Province</b>								
<p><i>Naomi Wairimu Mbugua</i></p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>Applicant's</b> <b>Signature</b></p>	<p><i>Wairimu Mbugua</i></p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>Secretary</b> <b>National Council for</b> <b>Science &amp; Technology</b></p>								

## APPENDIX XII

# RESEARCH AUTHORISATION: NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Telegrams: "SCIENCETECH", Nairobi  
Telephone: 254-020-241349, 2213102  
254-020-310571, 2213123.  
Fax: 254-020-2213215, 318245, 318249  
When replying please quote

P.O. Box 30623-00100  
NAIROBI-KENYA  
Website: www.ncst.go.ke

Our Ref: **NCST/RCD/14/012/181**

Date: **7<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

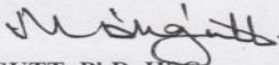
Naomi Wairimu Mbugua  
Catholic University of Eastern Africa  
P.O.Box 62157-00200  
Nairobi.

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *"analysis of stakeholders roles in implementing the readmission policy on adolescent mothers in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District, Kenya,"* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Kikuyu District** for a period ending **31<sup>st</sup> August 2012**.

You are advised to report to **The District Commissioner and the District Education Officer, Kikuyu District** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.



**DR. M. K. RUGUTT, PhD, HSC.**  
**DEPUTY COUNCIL SECRETARY**

Copy to:

The District Commissioner  
The District Education Officer  
Kikuyu District.

**APPENDIX XIII**

**RESEARCH AUTHORISATION: THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER**

**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**



Telegrams: "DISTRICTER", Kikuyu  
Telephone: Kikuyu (06631181)  
When replying please quote

THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER  
Kikuyu  
P. O. Box 51-00902  
Kikuyu  
DATE: 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2012

REF NO: K/PC/3/5 VOL.1 (40)

Naomi Wairimu Mbugua  
Catholic University of East Africa  
P.O Box 62157-00200

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your authority to carry out a research on "**Analysis of stakeholders roles in implementing the readmission policy on adolescent mothers in public secondary schools in Kikuyu District**" by the National Council for Science and Technology for the period ending 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2012, you are hereby authorized to conduct the same.

However, ensure that law and order is observed during the period.

**DISTRICT COMMISSIONER  
KIKUYU DISTRICT**

*A. Iwaya*  
C.A. IMAYA P. O. Box 51 - 00902,  
KIKUYU

FOR: DISTRICT COMMISSIONER  
KIKUYU.

CC  
District Education officer  
Kikuyu District.