

Enhancing Reproductive Health Outcomes in Trans Nzoia County

County:	Trans Nzoia County		
Sector/s:	Health	Sub-sector/Theme:	Reproductive health
Keywords: (for search in the online platform)	Teenage pregnancies Reproductive health		
Target Audience:	Counties		
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Introduction

Reproductive health involves the well-being of individuals in matters related to the reproductive system, including family planning, maternal care, sexual health, prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and fertility treatments among others. The 2010 Constitution of Kenya article 43 (1a) guarantees every person the right to the highest attainable standard of health which includes the right to reproductive health care. This has been integrated into various frameworks which enhance service delivery at both the national and County government levels.

Despite the existence of these regulatory frameworks many Counties still face challenges in addressing reproductive health, including limited access to quality services, inadequate health infrastructure, cultural barriers, lack of comprehensive education and insufficient funding.



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Trans Nzoia County, located in the former Rift Valley region, is home to 990,341 people comprising 489,107 males, 501,206 females and 28 intersex individuals. The County faces several challenges related to reproductive health, including low reporting rates, a rise in teenage pregnancies, high poverty levels and frequent staff turnover.

Through advocacy and collaboration with various partners in the reproductive health sector, as well as County governance structures, efforts have been made to engage National Government Administrative Officers (NGAOs) such as chiefs in awareness campaigns. County Health Management Teams (CHMTs) share data with NGAOs to support informed decision-making, which includes warning young men who exploit girls and raising awareness on the prevention of rape and teenage pregnancies. The County organizes quarterly stakeholder meetings where the church, partners and other relevant parties are involved in reducing teenage pregnancies. The sub-county focal person is given specific targets to meet within a set timeframe, including improving statistics on teenage pregnancies. These interventions have contributed to a significant reduction in the teenage pregnancy rate, decreasing from 42% in 2022 to 17.5% in 2024.



County health officers in reproductive health sensitizing community on teenage pregnancies and child

Implementation of the practice

- In 2021, the County Government of Trans Nzoia, in collaboration with AMPATH, conducted a baseline survey to assess pregnancy rates in the County and identify strategies for improving the indicators. This baseline survey prompted county officials in the Department of Gender to maintain active and up-to-date records.



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- In 2022, the Department of Education in collaboration with Jhpiego, launched advocacy initiatives during school closures. These initiatives included engaging youth through church events and designated dialogue days, where they discussed the importance of abstinence and the avoidance of early marriages
- That same year, the County organized a meeting with NGAOs and CHPs to share data on the teenage pregnancy rate. After data analysis the NGAOs were tasked with leading advocacy efforts within their respective capacities.
- Since 2023, through a partnership with Imarisha Dada program, young mothers who have dropped out of school receive psychological and counseling support. This is done for four months, where they participate in seven counseling sessions, resulting in a 50% success rate, with many of the young women returning to school after completing the sessions.
- For long-term sustainability, the county is currently developing a comprehensive reproductive health policy. This policy aims to establish clear guidelines, improve service delivery, and ensure consistent access to reproductive health services. It will also address key challenges such as teenage pregnancies, maternal health and community education, while promoting collaboration among stakeholders to create lasting solutions.

Results of the practice

- **Reduction in teenage pregnancies:** The teenage pregnancy rate decreased significantly from 42% in 2022 to 17.5% in 2024, showcasing the effectiveness of targeted advocacy and community outreach programs.
- **Increased awareness and community engagement:** Collaboration with stakeholders, including churches, chiefs and local partners, has led to heightened awareness about reproductive health issues such as early marriages, sexual abuse and safe reproductive practices.
- **Counseling and reintegration of young mothers:** Through the Imarisha Dada program, 50% of young mothers who dropped out of school due to pregnancy have successfully returned to their education after participating in seven counseling sessions over four months. The psychological support provided has had a profound impact on their emotional and social reintegration.
- **Improved data-driven decision making:** County Health Management Teams (CHMTs) have been able to share timely data with National Government Administrative Officers (NGAOs), leading to informed decision-making and better-targeted interventions at the community level.
- **Improved advocacy through schools and dialogue sessions:** School closure periods were effectively used to hold advocacy sessions in churches and through community dialogue days, reaching out to youth on topics such as abstinence and the dangers of early marriages. This has contributed to positive behavioral changes among the youth population.



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Lessons learnt:

- **Data-driven decision-making facilitated more effective planning and improved outcomes.**
Sharing data between County Health Management Teams (CHMTs) and National Government Administrative Officers (NGAOs) allowed for a better understanding of reproductive health challenges, such as teenage pregnancies and enabled the County to focus resources where they were most needed.
- **Collaboration is key to success**
Partnerships with various stakeholders including government departments, NGOs like AMPATH and JHAPIEGO, religious institutions, and community leaders proved crucial in addressing reproductive health challenges. This multi-sectoral approach ensured that advocacy and interventions reached a broad audience and maximized the collective impact.
- **Community engagement drives behavior change**
Involving the community through advocacy sessions in churches, schools and dialogue days was instrumental in changing attitudes and behaviors related to reproductive health. Trusted figures like chiefs and religious leaders increased the acceptance and effectiveness of these interventions, highlighting the importance of grassroots involvement in public health initiatives.
- **Psychosocial support is essential for reintegration**
The success of the Imarisha Dada program demonstrated the importance of providing psychological and counseling support to young mothers. These interventions not only helped the individuals involved but also contributed to their reintegration into education. The structured counseling sessions were critical in addressing the emotional and social barriers that often prevent young mothers from returning to school.

Conclusion

The reproductive health initiative in Trans Nzoia County has demonstrated the power of collaborative, data-driven and community-centered approaches in addressing complex health challenges. By bringing together key stakeholders ranging from County officials, healthcare providers, NGOs and local leaders, the initiative achieved significant improvements in reducing teenage pregnancies, reintegrating young mothers into education and increasing awareness about reproductive health.