

**UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE**  
**Faculty of Community and Health Sciences**

**INDIVIDUAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND SCHOOL FACTORS THAT  
INFLUENCE SEYCHELLOIS TEENAGE MOTHERS RETURNING TO SCHOOL  
AFTER CHILDBIRTH**

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A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Public Health, in the School of Public Health, Faculty of Community and Health Sciences, University of the Western Cape.

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## KEYWORDS

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Seychelles

Teenage mothers

Young girls' education

School attendance

Challenges

Supporting factors

Policies

Public secondary schools

Behaviour

Qualitative study



## ABBREVIATIONS

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ACHPR	African Charter on Human and People's Rights
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SAWOP	Seychelles Association of Women Professionals
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UWC	University of the Western Cape



## ABSTRACT

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Teenage childbearing interferes with girls' educational attainment in many settings, as it frequently marks the end of their schooling. While the right to education is guaranteed in the Seychelles Constitution and its Education Act of 2004, which include clauses supportive of girls' continuing their education during pregnancy and after childbirth, data show that many teenage girls do not return to school after childbirth. According to official figures, 10 out of 18 teenage mothers in the Seychelles did not return to school in 2013. A young girl terminating her education early because of pregnancy may have negative social, economic and health consequences for the individual and for the Seychelles as a country. To avoid the negative consequences that may result from pregnant teenage girls not completing school, it is important to explore the facilitating and hindering factors to young mothers returning to school after childbirth in the Seychelles.

This research aimed to explore the factors that influence teenage mothers to return to school after childbirth in Seychelles. A qualitative research methodology was used, where in-depth interviews were conducted with twelve young women who were teenage mothers, and with four key informants. Amongst the young women, six had returned to school after childbirth, and six had not return to school after childbirth. The key informants were professionals including a school counsellor, a schoolteacher, a counsellor working with young mothers, as well as a professional working with a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that targets out of school young pregnant girls. Purposive sampling was used to access the research participants. The content of the interviews was transcribed and then analyzed using thematic analysis.

The findings indicated that there were numerous factors influencing a young mother's decision to return to school after childbirth in Seychelles. These were not limited to individual level factors such as the internal motivation of the young mothers to achieve a better future for themselves and their child, but also included other immediate and broader influential factors. Family support was crucial in determining whether a young mother would return to school after childbirth. Furthermore, the school environment was not always conducive to the retention of the teenage mothers, as often teachers' attitudes, the rigid grade

system and school uniform policy acted as deterrents for those young girls' school return. Additionally, the school policy for pregnant learners and teenage mothers, and the lack of welfare assistance, were other hindering factors to the young women's return to school. These factors were often interconnected, and collectively impacted on those teenage mothers' decision to return to school.

Teenage mothers and their children are two vulnerable groups in society. Pregnant girls dropping out of school after delivery can contribute to the chain of poverty in Seychelles, as this leads to their having lower educational attainment, reduced employment and career development opportunities. To address the issue of teenage mothers not returning to school after childbirth in Seychelles, it is important to have better mechanisms that will together tackle the multiple factors influencing their return to school. This involves adopting a health promotion approach using the Ottawa Charter. This would be done by adopting healthy policies and creating a supportive school environment with regard to teenage mothers and pregnant learners and would include the Ministry of Education working in partnership with other sectors so as to adopt a comprehensive approach to teenage mothers and schooling.



## DECLARATION

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I declare that “Individual, social, economic and school factors that influence Seychellois teenage mothers returning to school after childbirth”, is my own work. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any university. All the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Name: Cynthia Noshir

Signed: C. Noshir

Date: March 2017



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# CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

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## 1.1 Introduction

Teenage childbearing interferes with girls' educational attainment in many settings, as it frequently marks the end of their schooling. Even though there are various international conventions and protocols that support girl child education, globally, a large number of teenage mothers do not return to school after childbirth. Similarly, in the Seychelles, even though there are numerous laws and policies in place to facilitate and support teenage mothers' return to school, the number of teenage mothers returning to school remains low. Recent data showed that 10 out of 18 teenage mothers did not return to school in 2013 (Ministry of Education, 2016).

A young girl terminating her education early because of pregnancy may result in negative social, economic and health consequences for herself and her country. To address the negative consequences which may result from pregnant teenage girls not completing school, it is important to understand the facilitating and hindering factors to young mothers returning to school after childbirth. This study therefore aimed at exploring the individual, social, economic and school related factors that influenced Seychellois teenage mothers returning to school after childbirth.

This chapter provides an introduction, and orientates the reader to the study. It provides background information for the study, the study setting, problem statement, aim, objectives and the rationale for the study. It concludes by providing a chapter outline for the remainder of the mini-thesis.

## 1.2 Background

It is estimated that up to 42 million children in Africa do not attend school, and that almost 60 percent are girls that drop out of school due to pregnancy (Malahlela, 2012 as cited in Chang'ach, 2012). Adolescent childbearing interferes with girls' educational attainment because in many settings having a child marks the end of schooling for girls (Grant &

Hallman, 2008). In addition, Meekers and Ahmed (1999) suggest that young girls often have no choice but to drop out of school, either because school policies require pregnant school girls to be expelled from school, or due to difficulties in combining motherhood with formal education. The authors also argue that a girl's ability to return to school following pregnancy and childbirth is strongly dependent on the support she acquires from parents or other relatives, and the level of education already achieved. In many developing countries marriage signals the beginning of reproductive life, which may limit female schooling opportunities as girls are taken out of school in order to dedicate their time to domestic, marital and maternal duties (Guilbert, 2013).

### **1.3 Study Setting**

The Republic of Seychelles is an archipelago in the Indian Ocean consisting of 116 islands. In 2014, the population comprised 91400 inhabitants (National Bureau of Statistics, 2015) mostly occupying three of the islands in the archipelago. Seychelles abides by, and is party to numerous international and regional human rights treaties, guidelines and policies with a focus on children, women and gender equality (Ministry of Social Development and Culture, 2011). Additionally, the right to education is guaranteed under Article 33 of the Constitution of the Republic of Seychelles (Republic of Seychelles, 1993:31) whereby the Education Act (Republic of Seychelles, 2004) specifies that no Seychellois should be prejudiced in his or her education by reasons of his or her sex.

There are 10 public secondary schools which are located on the three most populated islands in the Seychelles. The Seychelles has free public education from pre-school (crèche) to the end of secondary school. Pre-school (crèche) education is two years, primary school education is six years (grades one to six) and secondary schooling is five years (grades seven to eleven). Primary to secondary schooling, up to grade ten, is compulsory. In each grade (primary to secondary school), the students are divided into streams depending on the size of the student population in each grade. The streams track the students according to their academic ability, into groups or subjects within a grade. Within each stream, the students are allocated into classes depending on their academic ability. The classes in the upper streams are occupied by students with a higher academic performance and are oriented towards more academic subjects. The classes in the lower streams are occupied by students with a lower

academic performance, and the subjects are more technically oriented. After secondary school, students can choose to continue with their education – through passing examinations to qualify for application to a tertiary education institution, or they can leave the educational system to seek employment or apprenticeship (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013).

In 2005, the Ministry of Education implemented a Teenage Pregnancy Support Policy (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013). The Teenage Pregnancy Support Policy adopts a holistic approach that ensures that teenage girls who fall pregnant during schooling are provided with full opportunities to access their right to education, through the provision of support structures (Ministry of Education, 2011). However, in spite of this, the number of teenage mothers in the Seychelles that return to school after childbirth appears to be low (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013).

#### **1.4 Problem Statement**

Despite increased public awareness and readily available contraceptive services in the Seychelles, trends indicate that unplanned and unwanted pregnancy amongst teenagers remains a problem (Seychelles Association of Women Professionals (SAWOP), 2009). While information is limited, data shows an increase in teenage pregnancy from 18.7 percent in 1999 to 29.2 percent in 2011 (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2013). Furthermore, 15% of teenagers were having their second or third baby by the age of twenty years old (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013).

Furthermore, data obtained from the only published study conducted in the Seychelles (2004 – 2008) on the barriers to teenage mothers completing schooling showed that only 5 out of 37 teenage mothers returned to school after childbirth, and 27 out of the 37 were neither in employment nor in school (SAWOP, 2009). More recent data showed that 10 out of 18 teenage mothers did not return to school in 2013 (Ministry of Education, 2016). Two out of 10 teenage mothers were denied re-entry to school because they were co-habiting with an intimate partner (Ministry of Education, 2016). The high number of teenage mothers not returning to school is of concern for a small country like the Seychelles. The early termination of the education of a young girl because of pregnancy may have negative social, economic and health consequences for herself and the Seychelles as a country.

Pregnant girls dropping out of school can contribute to the chain of poverty in the Seychelles, as this leads to them having lower educational attainment, with reduced opportunities for employment, greater likelihood of occupying lower paid jobs, and fewer opportunities for career development (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013). Furthermore, teenage mothers and their children are two particularly vulnerable groups in society. Their long-term life chances are interconnected, and a mother's educational level can shape both her and her child's life courses, either towards economic and social productivity and stability, or towards poverty and dependency (Chigonda & Chetty, 2008).

To avoid the negative consequences that may result from pregnant teenage girls not completing school, it is important to explore the facilitating and hindering factors to young mothers returning to school after childbirth in Seychelles.

## **1.5 Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this study was to explore the factors that influence Seychellois teenage mothers' return to school after childbirth. The objectives were to explore:

Individual factors that influence Seychellois teenage mothers' return to school after childbirth.

Social factors that influence Seychellois teenage mothers' return to school after childbirth.

Economic factors that influence Seychellois teenage mothers' return to school after childbirth.

And

Factors within the school environment that influence Seychellois teenage mothers' return to school after childbirth.

## **1.6 Rationale**

This research was motivated by the fact that a low proportion of Seychellois teenage mothers return to school to complete their studies after childbirth in spite of the Teenage Pregnancy Support Policy which allows them to stay in school during pregnancy and go back to school

after delivery. There is a paucity of in-depth studies on factors influencing Seychellois teenage mothers' return to school after childbirth. This research aims to contribute to developing an improved understanding of the factors that either promote or hinder teenage mothers' return to school after childbirth.

Results obtained from this study will provide useful insights that may assist school policies in accommodating pregnant teenagers or teenage mothers better. Furthermore, social workers could gain insights as to how teenage pregnancy and childbirth impacts on schooling completion, and may therefore enable them to respond more positively and effectively in helping adolescent mothers remain in school after childbirth. Lastly, this study may be useful as a baseline study for future studies in the area of teenage pregnancy, and in the design of teenage pregnancy-related programmes.

## **1.7 Outline of the Thesis**

This first chapter of the thesis has introduced the study. The remainder of the thesis consists of the following chapters:

Chapter 2: **Literature Review**. Discusses literature relevant to the study.

Chapter 3: **Research Methodology**. Describes the study methodology used.

Chapter 4: **Findings**. Presents the study results.

Chapter 5: **Discussion**. Discusses and interprets the results.

Chapter 6: **Conclusions and Recommendations**. The final chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations drawing on the study.



## CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

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### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of factors that influence young mothers to return to school after childbirth, as reflected in the literature. Legislation and policies, both international and local that support female education are discussed, followed by a discussion of how education is structured in Seychelles. Lastly, various factors identified in the literature, and that influence young mothers' return to school after childbirth are explored.

### 2.2 International Conventions Supporting Female Education

There are various international conventions and protocols that support girl child education. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) states that all Member States shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that discrimination against women in education is eliminated, on the basis of the equality of men and women (United Nations, 1981). Furthermore, the Millennium Development Goal 3 promotes the elimination of gender disparity in primary, secondary and tertiary education (United Nations, 2000).

Regionally, in Africa, there are numerous conventions supporting girl child education. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child stipulates that every child shall have the right to education and special measures should be taken with respect to females to ensure equal access to education for all sections of the community (African Union, 1990). The Charter also states that Member States shall take all appropriate measures in ensuring that children who become pregnant before completing their education have the opportunity to continue their education on the basis of their individual ability. The protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) on the rights of Women in Africa further adds that "State Parties shall promote the enrolment and retention of girls in schools and other training institutions" (ACHPR, 2003:13).

## **2.3 Conventions and Educational Policies Supporting Female Education in the Seychelles**

The Seychelles subscribes to, and is party to, numerous international and regional human rights treaties, guidelines and policies with a focus on children, women and gender equality (Ministry of Social Development and Culture, 2011). A few of these are: the African Union Protocol to the African Charter on Human Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Millennium Development Goals and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

At the national level, the right to education is guaranteed under Article 33 of the Constitution of the Republic of Seychelles (Republic of Seychelles. Right to Education, 1993); the Education Act (Republic of Seychelles. Education Act, 2004) additionally specifying that it is the policy of the government to ensure that all Seychellois are offered equal educational opportunities in accordance with their abilities, needs and aptitudes. The Act also states that no Seychellois should be prejudiced in his or her education by reason of his or her sex, colour and creed, and that the Minister of Education is responsible for carrying out the government policy. Additionally, in 2015 and 2016, education received the second highest proportion of the national budget, as in Seychelles this is considered a high priority area for the government (State House, 2016).

Female school dropout rates in Seychelles were not considered a concern in the 1990s because only a small number of girls dropped out of school when compared with recent statistics (Ministry of Social Development and Culture, 2011). However, recent figures from the Student Support Unit of the Ministry of Education show that the numbers are on the increase, with a high number being due to teenage pregnancy (Ministry of Social Development and Culture, 2011). In 2006, there were 5 teenage girls dropping out of school due to pregnancy, and in 2008 the figure had increased to 25 (Ministry of Social Development and Culture, 2011).

The Seychelles has a teenage pregnancy policy aimed at the re-integration of teenage mothers into secondary school. The Teenage Pregnancy Support Policy adopts a holistic approach that ensures that teenage girls who fall pregnant while still at school are provided with full opportunities to access their right to education and continue with their schooling, through the provision of support structures (Ministry of Education, 2011).

## **2.4 Factors Influencing Teenage Mothers' Return to School after Childbirth**

Even if there are numerous laws and policies in place to facilitate, and support teenage mothers' return to school, there are other key determinants that influence their return.

Bhana, Morrell, Shefer and Ngabaza (2010) explain that being pregnant and giving birth to a child are major experiences for any individual, and particularly so for a teenager who is still at school. Being a young mother still in school poses risks for educational success and completion (Grant & Hallman, 2008), with negative educational and employment consequences for young women (Bhana et al., 2010).

Availability of resources within the teenage mothers' households – both economic and social resources – plays a role in determining whether a teenage mother will resume her education after childbirth (Grant & Hallman, 2008). Childbearing for girls is often associated with an end to schooling due to the difficulties of combining the duties of schoolwork and parenthood (Kaufman, De Wet & Stadler, 2000). Additionally, pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood decisions can transform the context in which teenagers live and their allocation of time to different activities. This can affect decisions about continuing with schooling (Grant & Hallman, 2008). Teenage mothers' motivations to remain in, or return to, school after childbirth are often complicated, and sometimes thwarted, by competing childcare responsibilities and educational demands (SmithBattle, 2007).

Factors such as existing school policies and environmental factors; and individual, socio-cultural and economic factors will be reviewed in more detail below.

#### 2.4.1 School Policies and Environmental Factors

Although more countries nowadays officially allow girls to stay in school and/or return to school after a pregnancy, in many cases these policies are poorly implemented, or are not uniformly enforced (Lloyd, 2005). While the policy arena may, in theory, be supportive in enabling teenage mothers to return to school, significant barriers may exist in practice. The positive effects of these policies depend on the attitudes of the principal, teachers, governing bodies, families, and communities, and their willingness to effectively implement them. Effective implementation is insufficiently monitored and enforced, and hence the best interests of the pregnant teenager or teenage mother may not be looked after in practice (Partners in Sexual Health, 2013).

Teacher support for teenage mothers can promote gender equality and mediate the negative social, economic and health consequences that are associated with early pregnancy (Bhana et al., 2010). Chigona and Chetty (2008) suggest that, while teenage mothers returning to school after childbirth face a number of challenges, lack of support from teachers may be a key factor impeding their ability to succeed. Some teenage mothers find that teachers do not take into account their parenting situation, as teachers expect them to perform and behave like other students regardless of their additional responsibilities (Kaufman, de Wet & Stadler, 2000).

A study conducted in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal provinces in South Africa showed that teachers related to teenage mothers in diverse ways. While some displayed moralistic judgement, others were caring and supportive (Bhana et al., 2010).

Some teachers in this study expressed unhappiness in implementing a policy that promotes support for pregnant learners and teenage mothers by allowing them to remain in school and return after childbirth. They believed that schools should be shielded from the visible presence of sexuality and teenage pregnancy. These teachers also regarded the presence of teenage mothers in classrooms as a threat to the collective academic performance of the class and to classroom harmony, and questioned the ability of teenage mothers to cope with the school's academic demands.

In contrast, other teachers participating in the study demonstrated a willingness to show care and acceptance of teenage mothers returning to school. Teachers highlighted difficulties in addressing the needs and concerns of teenage mothers in the absence of school-level policies and guidance. They stated that no specific person was assigned to ensure the wellbeing of teenage mothers; there were no procedures in place to assist pregnant teenagers; and teachers were not properly trained to provide a supportive environment for teenage mothers. For example, there was minimal support for teenage mothers to perform activities such as breastfeeding. And these factors may lead to difficulties in girls completing their education after childbirth (Bhana et al., 2010).

In addition, Marteleto, Lam and Ranchhod (2008) found that a school system with a sharp alignment of age and grade made it difficult for girls to reinsert themselves into their studies after giving birth. The authors suggest nevertheless that African schools may be more receptive in allowing young women to return to school after childbirth, because it is common for many students to repeat grades, and hence there is often a wide age range in a particular grade.

Moreover, school structural factors can hamper a return to school. A teenage mother's return to school is dependent on the availability of a place and how well she performed academically before she withdrew from schooling, with decisions on return left to the discretion of the admitting schools (Molosiwa & Moswela, 2012). For example, in Zimbabwe, a pregnant student must leave school when she discovers she is pregnant and reapply to school two years after pregnancy (Maluli & Bali, 2014). Her subsequent readmission is then subject to the availability of a place in the school. In Tanzania, despite government authorization for readmission of pregnant students, this is not always a straightforward issue, as some school heads refuse to provide teenage mothers with a place in their school (Tjombonde, 2003 as cited in Maluli & Bali, 2014). Difficult school enrolment processes, stringent attendance policies, lack of educational options and bureaucratic mismanagement have also been identified as hindering factors to young mothers' return to school (SmithBattle, 2007).

## 2.4.2 Individual Factors

Sodi (2009) states that some teenage mothers are not in a position to return to school after giving birth as they may have to look after their children, whilst others may suffer from poor health subsequent to childbirth, which makes it unconvincing for them to return to school. Furthermore, in a study conducted in the Philippines, it was found that some teenagers use their pregnancy status to escape the demands of high school education in situations where they were keen to leave anyway (Pogoy, Verzosa, Coming & Agustino, 2014). The authors concluded that this lack of motivation for educational achievement correlated with uncertainty in the young mothers regarding their purpose in life and what career they wished to pursue. They therefore may find parenting an alternative future role to adopt.

On the other hand, the girls who remain at school while pregnant, and return to school after childbirth, are frequently motivated to complete their education by recognising that this increases their likelihood of getting employed, having a higher earning potential and successfully supporting a child later in life (Partners in Sexual Health, 2013). Meekers and Ahmed (1999) suggest, based on a study among young women in Botswana, that highly motivated students with good school performance prior to pregnancy are those most likely to return to school after childbirth, and seek to complete their education. There were similar findings in a study in the KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa where highly motivated students with good grades before the pregnancy were found to be more likely to return to school after childbirth (Grant & Hallman, 2008).

Repeated births, the length of time teenage mothers stay out of school, and insufficient time as a result of having to cope with the combined demands of schooling and motherhood, are other factors determining a return to school after childbirth. Having repeated births before the age of 18 years has a negative impact on school performance and school completion (Jonathan, Klein, MPH & Committee on Adolescence, 2005). Furthermore, the longer a girl stays away from education, the less likely it is that she will ever return to school (Grant & Hallman, 2008). Teenage mothers having insufficient time for completing their homework and for studying at home also had a negative impact on pregnant mothers' remaining in school. This is because relatives who take care of their child want to be relieved of the childcare chores when the girls return from school (Chigona & Chetty, 2007).

Coping with parenthood and the emergence of new priorities can also influence teenage mothers' return to school. South African researchers have emphasised that returning to school after childbirth is not easy for adolescent mothers because of the hardships involved in organizing time for both studying and parenthood (Kaufman, de Wet & Stadler, 2000). The authors also added that in most cases, when the child falls ill, the teenage mother has to care for the child or take the child to a health facility, and if the child is admitted to hospital for a period of time, the mother may have to miss classes for an extended period of time. Chigona and Chetty (2007) further argue that teenage mothers are often overwhelmed by their situation in school. This can lead to their dropping out after returning to school, as they do not receive any counselling on how to be prepared to deal with the stigma related to being a teenage mother, or how to cope with parenting and the parallel demands of schooling. Furthermore, the emergence of new priorities due to becoming mothers and concerns for their child's future regardless of school status has also been identified as a factor influencing American teenage mothers in whether to return to school (SmithBattle, 2007). This is because the teenage mothers are preoccupied with their babies, which is their new priority, and so school becomes of less importance to them. This finding is similar to that found in a study conducted in Seychelles which reported that teenage mothers reported that school became of no interest to them after having the baby, as they had bonded with the baby and this had become their primary interest and occupation (Seychelles Association of Women Professionals (SAWOP), 2009).

### 2.4.3 Socio-cultural Factors

Family status and family characteristics can influence a girl's likelihood of dropping out of school during pregnancy, and of resuming schooling after delivery (Grant & Hallman, 2008).

Continuing education for young pregnant mothers may sometimes prove to be a burden as the parents of teenage mothers are sometimes reluctant to provide support to their pregnant daughters because of the stigma attached to teenage pregnancy (Chigona & Chetty, 2008). For example, the authors found that parents sometimes distanced themselves from pregnant girls because they felt ashamed that the community would look down on them. A study in Botswana found that parents who were angry about their daughters' pregnancy were more likely to encourage her to find a job, which then reduced the teenage mother's chances of returning to school (Molosiwa & Moswela, 2012). In addition, Chigona and Chetty (2008)

found that some parents in South Africa were reluctant to provide emotional support to their teenage daughters in taking care of the child. Similarly, in a study conducted in Seychelles, teenage mothers stated that their parents had made it clear that it should be their responsibility to care for their child. This impacted negatively on their being able to return to school after childbirth (SAWOP, 2009). On the other hand, studies have found that teenage mothers who had a supportive family member to take care of their child were more likely to be able to continue with their schooling after childbirth (Kaufman, De Wet & Stadler, 2000). The authors further argue that parental support for teenage daughters to continue schooling may be motivated by a belief in educated girls bringing in more bride wealth. This cultural tradition motivates families to encourage a girl's return to school after childbirth.

Chigona and Chetty (2008: 274) found, in a South African study, that stigmatisation and discrimination from community members, where teenagers who became pregnant were perceived as having "low morals", discouraged young mothers from completing school. The authors add that some community members disliked teenage mothers attending the same classes as girls who had not been pregnant, as they feared this might encourage other girls to become pregnant. The community members in the study also perceived the wearing of school uniforms, with pregnant stomachs showing, as inappropriate for teenage mothers. Achoka and Njeru (2012) added that in a study conducted in Kenya, it was observed that society assigned a negative identity to teenage mothers, as they were perceived as having failed in their ambitions and future dreams, including furthering their education.

Cultural beliefs may have a negative direct or indirect influence on teenage mothers' aspirations and perceptions towards returning to school (Chohan, 2010). In a Tanzanian study, school heads and religious leaders argued that a policy allowing girls to return to school after childbirth was controversial as it went against dominant cultural norms and beliefs about sexual appropriateness (Maluli & Bali, 2014). They additionally viewed girls returning to school after childbirth as hampering the biological mother's love and care for the child. They suggested that a girl who violated traditional values related to sexual behaviour deserved the accompanying burden of raising her baby alone and facing difficulties in readmission to school after childbirth. In contrast, in some countries, for example, South Africa, it is not uncommon for extended family members or members of the community to raise children that are not their own. There is an unspoken understanding among family and community members that extending assistance to another will create a sense of community so



that the child will grow up and contribute in a way that will enhance the community as a whole (Chohan, 2010).

#### 2.4.4 Economic Factors

Many teenage mothers come from families that are financially challenged. Frequently, their parents cannot afford to care for their grandchild because they need to engage in paid work themselves. Due to poverty, many teenage mothers cannot afford to take their babies to a crèche, or to hire a babysitter in order to have the time to study. Furthermore, a study conducted in South Africa found that some adolescent mothers come from families that live in a small house, which makes it difficult for the girls to study at night, as this may disturb others who are sleeping (Chigona & Chetty, 2008). Based on another study conducted in South Africa, Kaufman, de Wet and Stadler (2000) argue that while most families try to provide for the newborn baby, many babies are born into conditions of limited resources where the families find it difficult to meet the additional financial costs that arise with the birth of the baby. Grant and Hallman (2008), in a study conducted in the KwaZulu Natal province in South Africa, also identified lower socio-economic status, rural residence and a larger household size as associated with an increased risk of pregnant girls dropping out of school.

The need to provide financially for themselves and their baby often pressurises teenage mothers to drop out of school and enter the labour market (Meekers & Ahmed, 1999). This is borne out by a study conducted by SAWOP (2009) in the Seychelles, which showed that the little financial support teenage mothers received from whatever source(s) was insufficient to meet their needs and expenses and those of their babies. This resulted in some Seychellois teenage mothers not returning to school after childbirth due to the need to seek work to provide for themselves and their children financially. Some participants in this study also reported that the need to seek employment rather than return to school if their boyfriends were currently unemployed, so as to have the financial means to raise the baby. In a study conducted in America amongst lower income families, parents of teenage mothers reported strong expectations that the girls should seek employment rather than return to school (SmithBattle, 2007). Furthermore, this same study found that competing demands and responsibilities required that the teenage mothers patched together work, day care and school schedules with little outside support. In some cases, employment took precedence over

schooling as teenagers were expected by their families to help support their child, and employers did not accommodate school schedules.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

There are various levels of factors identified by literature that influence teenage mothers to return to school after childbirth. Although these factors are experienced on different levels, they have an impact on one another. Factors at a broader level can exert a persuasive influence on an individual. For example, the availability of income will determine to what extent a family is able to extend financial and social support to a pregnant or parenting teenager (Corcoran, Franklin & Bennett, 2000). Individual determination to continue with education after childbirth could be affected by school policies and school environment. To understand the issues affecting teenage mothers' continuation of schooling after childbirth, it is therefore important to consider the interconnectedness of the different levels of factors.



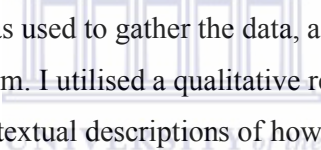
## CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology used in the study described in this mini-thesis, discussing the following aspects: research design, study population, sampling, data collection, data collection instruments, data management and analysis, rigour and ethical issues such as: permission, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. As a researcher, it is important to document how the study was conducted so as to provide an audit trail that will determine the trustworthiness of the findings. Furthermore, it allows another researcher to clearly follow the research process used and arrive at comparable conclusions given the researcher data, perspectives and situations (Sandelowski, 1986).

### 3.2 Research Design



An exploratory study design was used to gather the data, as little information is currently available on the research problem. I utilised a qualitative research methodology, as this approach can provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005). This approach focuses on meanings, in understanding phenomena in their settings, in which situations are described from the perspectives of those involved (Robson, 2011). Qualitative research is effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the opinions, behaviours, values and social contexts of particular populations (Mack et al., 2005). Since the study sought to explore the factors that influence Seychellois teenage mothers' return to school after childbirth, the researcher found an exploratory study design and a qualitative research methodology most appropriate.

In-depth interviews were conducted to collect the data, as this is a technique designed to elicit a vivid picture of the participant's perspective on the research problem (Mack et al., 2005).

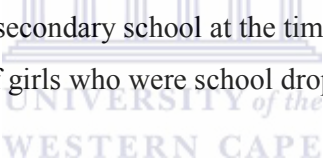
### 3.3 Study Population

The study population comprised young women that had been teenage mothers in the past, and had either returned or not returned to school after childbirth; and key informants. The key informants were a teacher, a school counsellor, a counsellor working with young mothers, and a professional working with a Non Governmental Organization (NGO) that targets out-of-school young pregnant girls.

### 3.4 Sampling

A purposive sample was chosen from the study population. Purposive sampling is a sampling method that enables the researcher to choose participants that are likely to provide rich information in terms of the specific needs of a project (Robson, 2011). Selection of potential young women for interview was based on the criteria described below.

The young women:

- 
- (1) were enrolled in public secondary school at the time of becoming pregnant; this was to avoid the inclusion of girls who were school drop-outs before becoming pregnant;
  - (2) were aged between 13 and 16 years old when they became a teenage mother; as this is the age of girls in public secondary schools in Seychelles
  - (3) reside on one of the three islands of Seychelles that have public schools;
  - (4) were aged 18 years and older at the time the study was conducted, to avoid the difficult ethical issues and procedures associated with the inclusion of minors in the study.

Selection of key informants was based on the following criteria:

- (1) work directly with teenage mothers through provision of services, treatment and/or support;

- (2) have common characteristics in terms of expert knowledge on the topic.

The sample for the in-depth interviews comprised 12 young women, equally divided into two groups – 6 were teenage mothers who returned to school after childbirth and 6 were teenage mothers who did not return to school after childbirth. The sample of four (4) key informants was drawn from professionals who work with teenage mothers.

Demographic and school completion information about the teenage mothers was accessed from the Ministry of Health and from a Non-Governmental Organization database. The teenage mothers were contacted by telephone by the researcher. The teenage mothers' names were provided to the researcher by informants who have access to the database. The informants had sought the teenage mothers' permission to be contacted by the researcher for research purposes. After obtaining the young mothers' names from the informants, the researcher then made contact with the participants. If a young mother declined to participate in the study, then the next name on the list was contacted.

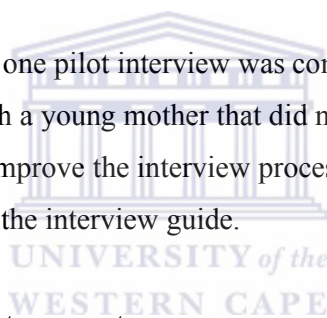
### **3.5 Data Collection**

After identifying and contacting a participant, the participant and the researcher agreed on a mutually acceptable place where a one-to-one interview could be conducted only. Interviews were conducted in private rooms at different locations, such as English River and Providence. These are areas on the main island of Mahe. The participants were given an information sheet in the language of their choice, either English (Appendix 1) or Creole (Appendix 2), the native language used in the Seychelles. The participant information sheet contained an explanation of the study, benefits and possible risks of participating in the study, as well as the contact numbers of the researcher and her supervisors. On the day of the interview, the participants were given a consent form to sign and given further explanation of the purpose of the study (Appendix 4 and Appendix 5). The researcher then turned on the digital recorder (which had been discussed and agreed upon with the participant) and guided the participant through the conversation until all the issues on the interview guide were explored (Appendix 6, Appendix 7, Appendix 8 and Appendix 9). All interviews, except one, were conducted in

Creole. All interviews were conducted between February and April 2016. Interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher who is a first language Creole speaker. The one transcript in English was translated in consultation with an English Translator to ensure accuracy of meanings, as the researcher is not a first language English speaker.

Data was collected through face-to-face in-depth interviews that the researcher conducted using a semi-structured interview guide between February and April 2016. The interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes. During the in-depth interviews, rapport was established, making the participants feel as comfortable, and secure, as possible (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003) to enable them to talk freely on factors that influenced them to return or not return to school. Additionally, I, as the researcher, was aware of the different participant personalities and emotional states, and therefore created a comfortable atmosphere, conducive to gaining in-depth information (Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003). The participants were given transport allowances in order to reach the agreed upon venues.

In preparation for the research, one pilot interview was conducted with a young mother that returned to school; and one with a young mother that did not return to school. After piloting, changes deemed necessary to improve the interview process were made through the amendment of the questions in the interview guide.



### **3.6 Data Collection Instrument**

Two separate interview guides were developed; one for the young women, and the other for the key informants (See Appendix 6, Appendix 7, Appendix 8 and Appendix 9). The interview guides served as a checklist of topics to be covered and the order of the questions (Robson, 2011). The wording and the order of questions were often modified based on the flow of the interview.

The interview guides contained a list of areas I wanted to get responses on that answered the research objectives. Under each area, there were possible key questions that I could ask the participants. Additional unplanned questions were often asked to follow up on what the participants had said. Closed questions were used at the start of the interview to obtain the demographic characteristics of the participants. Thereafter, open-ended questions were used

to obtain information pertinent to the research topic. Open-ended questions were used as these were more flexible, encouraged cooperation and rapport, and allowed me as the researcher to go into more depth on a topic or clear up any misunderstandings (Robson, 2011). Probes were also used when I wanted the participants to expand on a response they had given.

### **3.7 Data Management and Analysis**

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data, as it is an appropriate method for searching for meanings and experiences, and understanding the realities of participants (Robson, 2011). Analysis was done manually as the size of the sample was small.

I first familiarized myself with the transcribed data. This was done through repeated reading of the transcribed data, searching for meanings and patterns, and noting down ideas. Initial codes were then generated from the data on the basis of interesting features of the data that emerged. The codes were then meaningfully grouped, and themes extracted – focusing on the perceptions or beliefs with regards to how participants explained issues. The themes were then checked to see whether they were keeping with the generated codes. The themes were then refined, to generate clear definitions. Meaningful trends were extracted through a process in which the researcher interpreted the data, seeking connections between themes and commonalities or differences in views across participants. Themes were also checked for the explanations they offered in terms of the research objectives. Where minority themes emerged, these have also been reported on.

### **3.8 Rigour**

Rigour in qualitative study is important as it helps ensure that the research is credible and provides an accurate reflection of what participants actually expressed. Triangulation and member checking were used by the researcher to ensure rigour in this study. Individual in-depth interviews conducted with young women who were teenage mothers and key informant interviews were used to look for patterns of convergence amongst the different sources, in order to develop a general interpretation of the perspectives on factors that influence teenage

mothers' return to school after childbirth. This was aimed at ensuring the validity of the study.

Additionally, I kept a research diary in which I recorded my feelings and experiences during data collection. This helped me as a researcher to reflect, and recognize and describe any beliefs and biases that I might have had, which could impact on the research process and outcomes (Creswell & Miller, 2000). I also detailed all the processes undertaken during the research in the research diary. This provides an audit trail that can be used by other researchers or by an external auditor, to allow them to check whether or not they could arrive at similar, or comparable, conclusions with regard to the study (Sandelowski, 1986). These measures were intended to contribute to the trustworthiness of the research findings.

Furthermore, the researcher's mini-thesis supervisors reviewed a selection of transcripts, along with someone in Seychelles who is external to the study, but familiar with the issues. This was done with the intention of challenging the researcher's assumptions, and questioning decisions through the research process, in order to increase the validity of the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Additionally, after each interview, the researcher summarised the main points discussed and shared this with participants to provide them with an opportunity to make final comments or give clarification. This provided confirmation that what the participants had said had been understood accurately.

### **3.9 Ethics**

The researcher received research ethics approval from the University of the Western Cape (UWC) Senate Research Committee (Appendix 10) and from the Health Research and Ethics Committee of Seychelles (Appendix 11) as the study was being conducted in Seychelles.

A study information sheet was used to inform the participants about the study and the intended use of the data collected (See Appendix 1, Appendix 2 and Appendix 3).

Furthermore, the participants were told that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without negative repercussions, and that their participation was voluntary and based



on their willingness to participate. Each participant was asked to sign a consent form before commencement of the interview session (See Appendix 4 and Appendix 5).

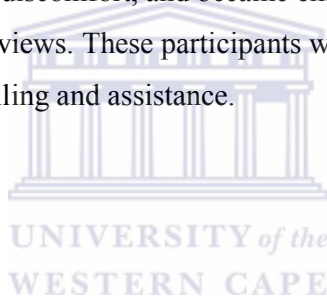
Participants were given an assurance of confidentiality, and that every effort would be made to ensure that their identities would not be disclosed to anyone, or appear in any documents made public, and that they would not be individually identified in dissemination of the findings.

To protect the identity of the participants, names were replaced with study identification numbers. Additionally, the transcripts were kept in a locked area. Nobody had access to the transcripts and the list of names of the participants except for the researcher. The consent forms were kept separately from the transcribed interviews. All recordings will be deleted once reports and research papers are completed.

Some participants experienced discomfort, and became emotional when talking about certain issues during the in-depth interviews. These participants were referred to a counsellor after the interview, to obtain counselling and assistance.

### **3.10 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented a description of the research methodology to enable the reader to evaluate the manner in which the study was conducted. The next chapter discusses the study findings.



## CHAPTER 4 - FINDINGS

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### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the in-depth interviews with the young women participants and with the key informants. It includes the socio-demographic profile of the young women and details of the key informants. It describes the various factors influencing teenage mothers' decisions on whether or not to return to school after childbirth, including individual and external factors. These factors include personal motivation; family and financial support; implementation of school policy, and school practices; and the influence of the school environment. Lastly, some factors identified solely by key informants are reported.

### 4.2 Socio-demographic Description of Participants

A total of twelve young women were interviewed. Six of the young women had returned to school after childbirth and six had not returned to school. The socio-demographic details of the young women participants are summarised in the table below.

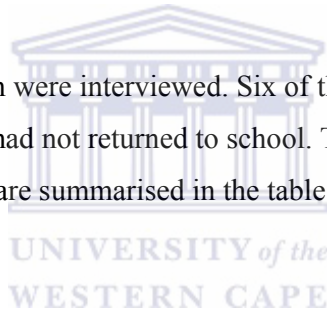


Table 1: The socio-demographic profile of the young women at the time of the interview.

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Returned to school</b>	<b>Did not return to school</b>
Number of participants	6	6
Mean age in years when interviewed (range)	18.3 (18 -19)	20 (18-24)
Mean age in years when pregnant (range)	15.2 (14-16)	15.8 (15-16)
Range of school grades when became pregnant	Grades 9 to11	Grade 10 to 11
Separated from baby's father and stayed with parent(s) after childbirth	4	2

Separated from baby's father and stayed with grandparent after childbirth	2	0
Co-habited with baby's father after childbirth	0	3
Married, stayed with, then divorced baby's father	0	1

All the four key informants in this study were females, ranging in age from 31 years to 72 years old. Key informants were from organizations working directly with teenage mothers through the provision of therapeutic and counselling services or through teaching and learning. The organizations to which they were attached were either governmental or non-governmental.

#### **4.3 Internal Factors Positively or Negatively Influencing Return to School**

The common views of both teenage mothers and key informants will be reported in this chapter unless specified otherwise.

The findings reveal that the young women's personal motivations influenced their return to school. For these young women their motivation to continue with their education was linked to the fulfilment of this aspiration being perceived as providing a better future for themselves and their child.

Prior school performance did not appear to coincide with a return to school in this qualitative study sample. Most of the participants stated that they had been in the upper academic streams in their grade prior to pregnancy, indicating that they had been performing well at school. Two participants were in the lower streams, and one stated that she had been struggling with schooling before her pregnancy. The findings suggest that there did not appear to be an overlap between prior good school performance and a return to school post-childbirth. Instead, other intervening factors seemed to be most influential.

#### 4.3.1 Education as Enhancing Future Economic Well-being Promotes Return to School

Some young mothers envisaged completing school as providing best for the child's future. For example, some of the participants who returned to school reported they wanted better qualifications, improved financial status and living conditions, as this would impact positively on their child's future. As a young woman explained:

*“... (B)ecause you don't have a school certificate that's what I thought there's me and my child ... I have to find a future for her... that's what pushed me ... to return to school, I have to go to school I will get my certificates... when work, I know I will have my certificate...”* (Participant 12, age at pregnancy 15, grade 11, returned to school)

Wanting a better future for the child was also influenced by their own experience with respect to their own mothers' lack of education and the way this had negatively impact on their lives. A participant explained:

*“... (L)ike my mother she didn't have education and so I saw the difficulties... she went through like in her life... you stand nowhere... if you don't have a qualification... this ... pushed me to continue ... I want my own house... better salary... put my kids in a nice environment because where I stay is not good at all.”* (Participant 5, age at pregnancy 16, grade 11, returned to school)

Key informants confirmed that they saw personal motivation to continue with education as playing an important role in girls' return to school. This is expressed in a statement by one informant:

*“... [Motivation] plays a big role... if the young mother... wants to do it then it will be [her] determination to try all her best; on the other hand it can be she is getting very little support... [from] other people but if ... her motivation [is] high to say ... 'I will do it', they still do it... .”* (Counsellor, working with young mothers)

#### 4.3.2 View That ‘Right to Education’ Promotes Schooling Completion

Some participants were aware of their right to education and this motivated them to return to school. They felt that becoming pregnant while young should not hinder them in realising their right to continue their education. A young mother stated:

*“... I continued because I am a youngster... I have a right for me to school.”*

(Participant 11, age of pregnancy 15, grade 10, returned to school)

#### 4.3.3 Responsibility for Childcare Militates against Return to School – ‘Growing up quickly’

For some young women who returned to school, having a child did not change their aspirations to continue with their education after childbirth, despite needing to care for their children.

However, for others, having a child changed their situation as they felt responsible for caring for their child due to broader external factors such as lack of family support, and/or lack of financial assistance.

For these participants, experiences of motherhood influenced them not to return to school after childbirth. This was the case even if they had previously aspired to complete their education and obtain a better qualification after childbirth. They assumed a mother-figure role due to their changed circumstances and felt continuing with schooling might conflict with this. Participants found their new circumstances meant that they needed to ‘grow up quickly’ and take on the responsibilities of an adult. This was expressed by one participant, who said:

*“So you are like a single mom having all the burden on your own... I am a mother I have to act like a mother not like a child because I am not a child anymore.”*

(Participant 9, age at pregnancy 16, grade 11, did not return to school)

#### 4.3.4 Fluidity in Decision-making

Decision-making was often fluid. One of the young mothers explained:

*“I would feel at times you make a lot of decisions, decisions change fast, so today you make a decision and you say... I am ready to return; tomorrow it can happen a certain problem that you say I am not going... .”* (Participant 8, age at pregnancy 15, grade 10, did not return to school)

#### 4.4 External Factors Influencing Return to School

Some external factors influenced teenage mothers in favour of a return to school while for others these deterred them. These external factors that influenced the teenage mothers to return to school after childbirth were not always the same. These included family influence; family support and commitments; financial support; the implementation of the school policy for pregnant learners and teenage mothers; and the school environment.

##### 4.4.1 Family Advice Has Mixed Influence on Decision-making

Family strongly influenced some of the young women’s decisions to continue their education. All the young women who had returned to school stated that their parent(s) or grandparents had advised them to return to school.

On the other hand, some young women did not return to school despite their parents’ advice to return to school, as other factors weighed more heavily against returning. A young mother explained that she would have liked to follow her mother’s advice to return to school but family circumstances made this unrealistic:

*“Yes she [her mother] told me to return to school but I was telling her I will return to school yes “but you cannot take care of me, take care of my child and take care of my small brother all at the same time ... .”* (Participant 4, age at pregnancy 16, grade 11, did not return to school).

Some teenage mothers said that they were advised by their parent(s) not to return to school, but rather to take care of their baby. According to these participants, their parents felt that they, as teenage mothers, needed to take responsibility for their own babies' care and not rely on their parents.

One of the young women explained that, initially, her parents had wanted her to return to school; however, as she had been bullied by her peers prior to the pregnancy, her parents advised against her return, and for her to rather opt for employment post-childbirth. Her parents feared that she would be bullied even more by other students if she returned to school as a teenage mother.

Key informants confirmed that parents who viewed education as important generally advised their daughters to return to school, whereas those who placed less value on education tended to advise a teenage mother to find work and look after her child. The key informants felt that most times, parents who encouraged their daughters' return to school provided a strong support structure for their daughter and her baby.

The baby's father had a variable influence on the teenage mothers' decisions about returning to school. Some of the young women who were cohabiting with their children's father after childbirth said that their partner had urged them to stay at home with the baby until the child was stronger and then seek work.

In some cases, new partners influenced girls' decisions. For example, one of the participants explained that her baby's father had told her not to return to school. However, after they separated she wanted to return to school. However, she then heeded the advice of her new boyfriend that she should not to return to school and should rather find work. One participant who married her baby's father prior to her pregnancy explained that she discussed with her husband the possibility of returning to school. However, he did not support her decision to return as he wanted to study further. This caused problems in their relationship that led to divorce and her seeking employment as she was a single mother who needed to take care of herself and her child financially.

All the same, girls' partners did not always have a deciding influence. For example, one participant stated that she decided against returning to school, despite the baby's father leaving her free to return to school if she wished. She felt she had a responsibility to find work in order to take care of her child, as she did not wish to be dependent on her partner. She explained:

*"... (W)e made a decision to say ... you got pregnant we will deal with [the baby] even if you want to return to school. After [childbirth] I didn't, I said ... I am not returning I am going in the world of work."* (Participant 8, age at pregnancy 15, grade 10, did not return to school)

#### 4.4.2 Role of Family Support and Commitment in Caring for the Child Promoted a Return to School

Family support to care for the child and the teenage mother had a strong direct influence on girls' return to school. Teenage mothers who had returned to school tended to receive substantial support from their families in taking care of their children. Support took the form of a family member caring for the child whilst the young mother was at school or doing homework. They assisted by, for example, taking the baby for appointments at the clinic and/or paying for childcare. A young mother explained that family support had been important in facilitating her return to school:

*"... I was getting support from my family, my mother was watching [the baby] and then when I returned I do my homework, mommy can help me."* (Participant 10, age at pregnancy 16, grade 11, returned to school)

Young mothers who did not return to school reported that they received minimal support from their families. This forced them to choose finding work over returning to school. One of the participants became very emotional when she discussed not receiving help from her mother during and after her pregnancy. Because of social problems at home, she could not ask her mother for help.



The key informants also felt that family support in taking care of the child was crucial in determining whether or not a young woman could decide to return to school after childbirth.

Lack of support from the child's father also influenced girls not returning to school. As one young woman explained:

*“I felt I had to stand on my own as I had left [the baby's] her father. Her father had looked for another woman; I had to make do on my own... [if] he would be here to help me... I would be able to return to school but he wasn't there I had to do everything on my own.”* (Participant 4, age at pregnancy 16, grade 11, did not return to school)

#### 4.4.3 Financial Support Promotes a Return to School

Access to funds for the young mother was an important influential factor in determining whether or not a teenage mother returned to school after childbirth. Young women who returned to school reported receiving financial support from their parents, grandparents, the baby's father (even if they were separated) and/or from government welfare benefits. This made it easier for them to support their baby and pay for childcare while they returned to school. In contrast, young women who did not return to school sought work in order to financially provide for themselves and their babies. This took priority over returning to school. These young women reported that they did not receive financial support from their parents, the baby's father or from the government welfare benefits. Some said that they were told by the welfare agency that they did not qualify for financial assistance.

#### 4.4.4 Influence of School Policy for Pregnant Learners and Teenage Mothers on School Return

##### *Knowledge about Policy*

Young women were not always aware of the government's school policy that supported a return to school after childbirth. Only five young women in the study sample said they knew about the policy's existence.

All but one of the key informants stated that they were aware of a policy supporting girls returning to school after childbirth, but only one had actually seen the policy. The key informant who had seen the policy had been actively involved in the policy development and implementation. She argued that most people in the Seychelles were aware of the school policy allowing return to school after childbirth.

##### *Government's Return to School Policy: Implementation and Practice*

While the government's policy, in theory, encourages young women's return to school post-childbirth, practices were frequently poorly implemented, or implemented in ways that were at odds with the spirit of the policy.

In some instances, the school laid down conditions on teenage mothers and their parents upon returning to school that were not specified in the policy. Some of the participants who returned to school said that they had received letters stipulating that they were not allowed to co-habit with their children's fathers upon returning to school. One of the girls stated that her letter additionally stated that she was not allowed any contact with the baby's father. This made it extremely difficult for her to return to school, as the baby's father was attending the same school as she. One young mother explained the contents of her letter:

*“Don't get in contact with any boys in school...” like [the] father of my child used to hang out at school, I wasn't supposed to get contact with him, I am supposed to act like all kids because... I am not supposed [to be] more superior than anybody.”*

(Participant 10, age of pregnancy 15, grade 9, returned to school)

A school counsellor confirmed this, saying it was common practice to give young mothers a letter with conditions attached that they needed to abide by, if they wished to remain in school. She said that one of the conditions was that the teenage mother may not cohabit with the child's father or with a partner if she wished to return to school. If the school became aware that she was cohabiting, she would have to stop her schooling. The school counsellor further explained that cohabiting was not encouraged because it gave the girl a feeling of 'being an adult' and it was perceived as not befitting the lifestyle of a child.

Additionally, conditions were sometimes also set with respect to the girls' parents, requiring them to show that they would be able support the teenage mother and her child if the young mother were to return to school.

The Return to School Policy stipulates that teenage mothers should be given a choice of school to return to after childbirth and in most cases this choice seemed to be upheld (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013). However, one participant said that she was pressured by the Ministry of Education to return to another school. This meant that she had to travel a long distance to school in the morning after dropping her child at day care. Ultimately, she managed to return to the same school as prior to her pregnancy. However, this was only because one of her grandparents knew a person in the Ministry of Education who intervened so as to allow her to relocate back to her previous school.

The school policy for pregnant learners and teenage mothers does not specify the length of time a teenage mother may stay out of school after childbirth before applying to return. This may create problems in returning to school. For example, a school counsellor explained that the Ministry of Education often had cases where young mothers wanted to return to school two to three years after the baby's delivery. In such cases, the teenage mother was evaluated to see whether she would be likely to manage academically if she returned to school. She further stated that while the Ministry of Education wanted to satisfy a teenage mother's desire to return to school, this would be problematic if she was unlikely to cope academically due to a long absence. If it was not considered appropriate to return, the young mother was counselled and referred to an apprenticeship scheme.

#### 4.4.5 Negative Factors in a School Environment that Hinder Return to School

Having to repeat a grade had a negative influence on girls returning to school after childbirth. Some of the young women who did not return to school said that if they had to repeat a grade due to pregnancy this would place them in a grade lower than their friends with whom they had previously studied. Feeling uncomfortable about attending classes with younger students deterred them from returning to school. Some of the participants who did not return to school admitted that they would feel uncomfortable wearing school uniforms after becoming mothers. They stated that others in the school environment would view them disparagingly. Some of those teenage mothers said that it was 'not proper' for mothers who were breastfeeding to be at school, and that their primary responsibility should be taking care of their babies.

Some teenage mothers who did not return to school also expressed the view that they would have felt shy to face their teachers and peers if they had to return to school as a young mother, especially as they had been advised by the teachers to stop schooling when their pregnancy became visible. One of the young women explained:

*“When I told I am pregnant they [teachers] said I have to stop because I would not be able to continue school [with] my belly big.”* (Participant 7, age at pregnancy 16, grade 10, did not return to school)

On the other hand, those young women who returned to school stated that although they were teased by their peers whilst pregnant at school, this did not deter them from returning to school, as continuing with their education for the good of their own future and that of their baby, outweighed other considerations.

#### 4.4.6 Challenges Related to Schooling for those Returning to School

Those teenage mothers who returned to school encountered various challenges. Some shared experiences of their peers teasing them for having had a baby. Most said that teachers were supportive when they returned: they were given extra schoolwork in order to catch up, and teachers were understanding when they missed classes or arrived late at school.

However, others felt that they did not receive support from their teachers when they returned to school. One participant related that teachers expected her to perform as well as other students, despite her childcare responsibilities. She was expected to complete her lessons in the same given time and there was no understanding when she arrived late at school, and teachers did not understand that she sometimes had to be absent from class to take her child to the clinic, or if her child was sick.

Coping with motherhood and schooling was not always easy for the young mothers as they had to focus on their schoolwork as well as taking care of their child, which was tiring. As two young women explained:

*“For me it was difficult because when you come from school you are tired, you have to take care of small baby and at times when at night he wakes... .”* (Participant 6, age of pregnancy 15, grade 9, returned to school)

*“I even remember one time I was writing with one side of my hand, another side of my [hand] I am with a rattle playing two o’clock in the morning with my child, it wasn’t easy there were times I got big project [but] that child was sick... .”* (Participant 11, age of pregnancy 15, grade 9, returned to school)

Some key informants confirmed the view that the school environment was not particularly supportive of teenage mothers. Young mothers had to perform to the same expectations as other students at school, creating barriers for those mothers returning to school. A key informant reflected the views of the other key informants in explaining:

*“... (T)hey [Ministry of Education] just give this young mother opportunity to return to school. They tell her the option is here for her to return to school, but at school I don't think they necessarily accommodate in any way special... they [teenage mothers] have to give back lessons, assignments, everything like the other [students] that don't have kids ... this come like a barrier ... .”* (Counsellor, working with young mothers)

#### **4.5 Factors Influencing Return to School as Identified Solely by Key Informants**

The factors described below were identified by key informants as influencing young mothers' return to school after childbirth.

##### **4.5.1 Availability of Dedicated Funds**

One key informant explained that all public schools have a dedicated fund available to all students who cannot afford certain school necessities and that teenage mothers could access. The necessities provided for included items such as payments for school uniforms, school bags, stationery, lunches, footwear and spectacles, if needed. Girls accessing this fund are not given money but are given the items they request. While these funds are not reserved specifically for teenage mothers returning to school, she felt that access to these funds could assist returning teenage mothers if their expanded financial responsibilities made it difficult for them to afford certain school related necessities.

##### **4.5.2 Role of Teachers not Geared to Helping Student Mothers**

Some key informants expressed the view that the role of teachers was to teach and not be involved with the social issues of pregnant girls and teenage mothers. They felt that if teachers were to take on these additional types of roles this would compromise their ability to devote time to carrying out their teaching duties.

### 4.5.3 Integration of Support of Student Mothers Needed

Some key informants felt that the Ministry of Education worked in isolation in providing support for teenage mothers to return to school after childbirth. They suggested that there should be better integration between the Ministry of Education's unit working with pregnant girls and teenage mothers and units in the Ministry of Social Affairs. Collaboration between the two ministries would assist in managing the needs of pregnant teenagers better. However, other key informants believed that in supporting teenage mothers, the Ministry of Education was doing work outside of its scope as a Ministry.

## 4.6 Conclusion

The findings clearly show that there are multi-factorial influences on whether or not a young mother is able to return to school after childbirth. These include individual, family and partner, institutional and broader socio-economic factors. The following chapter discusses these findings in the light of comparative findings from the literature.



## CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSION

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### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the major research findings on factors influencing Seychellois teenage mothers' return to school after childbirth, and situates them within the comparative literatures. In order to understand the issues raised, and address the research question, the Socio-Ecological Model of Health by Bronfenbrenner (1979), as cited in Corcoran (1999), will be used. The model can be seen as a way to organize factors associated with complex social problems so that knowledge can be built, and interventions implemented at the appropriate system level. The model proposed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) has different system levels. The microsystem is the most basic interactional level in which the pattern of activities, roles and interpersonal relations experienced by an individual in a given setting are situated (Bronfenbrenner (1979) as cited in Corcoran, 1999). The mesosystem is the setting in which an individual interacts with others and is influenced by broader social environmental influences (Corcoran, Franklin & Bennett, 2000). With regard to adolescent pregnancy and parenting, Corcoran, Franklin and Bennett (2000) identified family structures, family functioning, religious orientation, enacted social and financial support, and problems with school, the neighbourhood and peer groups as mesosystem level factors. The macrosystem represents the more indirect influence of the broader social environment that includes policies, resource distribution, values and socio-economic status (Corcoran, Franklin & Bennett, 2000). The different levels in the model may interact, and overlap, with one other, and should not be seen as always separated from one another. For example, resource distribution can influence the support that a teenage mother receives from her family. This may further influence the young girl's motivation for continuing with her education as seeking employment in order to be able to take care of her child might become her main priority.

### 5.2 Microsystem Level Factors Influencing Return to School

There were various individual level factors found in this study that influenced young women's return to school after childbirth. Two important factors that motivate the young



women to return to school included the woman's view of education as important for improved life opportunities, and the young people knowing their 'right to education'. Knowing their rights drove the young mothers to return to school, as they felt entitled to be educated as the remaining students in their school.

### 5.2.1 Conflicting Challenges of Motherhood and Personal Commitments to School Return

Young mothers who had returned to school after childbirth showed a strong internal motivation to complete their studies, despite feeling a concomitant responsibility to take care of their babies. They viewed education as key in ensuring a better future for themselves and their babies. A study conducted by SmithBattle (2006) in America found similarly that teenage mothers' commitment to return to school was underpinned by views that a high school completion qualification was a prerequisite for acquiring tertiary education and improved job opportunities.

This study furthermore revealed that some young women felt that, regardless of their motherhood status, as young people they had a right to be in school as stipulated in the Seychelles' constitution.

Nevertheless, in this study, despite some young mothers having had high educational aspirations and feeling strongly regarding their right to education prior to childbirth, they faced challenges in completing their schooling once they had a baby. Both immediate individual issues and those in the broader social environment (Corcoran, Franklin & Bennett, 2000) played a role in outweighing their internal motivation and determination to return to school. The study by SmithBattle (2006) similarly found that young women's aspirations to continue their education were frequently thwarted by these types of challenges. This led to post childbirth changes in their intentions to continue with their education (Bezuidenhout, 2002).

### **5.3 Mesosystem Level Factors Influencing Return to School**

In this study, family support, access to childcare, school environment, and peer influence were mesosystem level factors influencing young women's decisions to return to school.

#### **5.3.1 The Influence of Family Support on School Return**

Returning to school after childbirth is not easy for teenage mothers due to the hardship in organizing time for both studying and parenthood (Kaufman, de Wet & Stadler, 2000). Parental or family support has been identified as a key enabling factor in students being able to cope with the stresses of new parenthood, and in being in a position to continue with their education (Riordan, 2002). Mollborn (2007) suggests that teenage mothers who are provided with more resources, such as money, childcare and housing, should have more time and energy to commit to schooling than those who must fend for themselves.

In this study, teenage mothers who received family support were more likely to return to school than those who did not receive any support. Most teenage mothers who were able to return to school after childbirth stayed either with their parents or grandparents who provided the necessary support that facilitated their return to school. Support included both financial assistance and care for the child. For example, having someone to take the baby to the clinic minimized the period of time that the teenage mothers were absent from school. Alternative family care for the child was important in teenage mothers having time to complete homework or to study at home. This enabled those teenage mothers to manage their time more effectively for both studying and parenthood.

Riordan (2002) states that despite receiving family support, some teenage mothers are still unable to continue with their schooling as the support may be insufficient to fully meet their needs. While the parents of teenage mothers may value their daughters' continued education, their social and economic circumstances may not provide a strong enough foundation for their daughters to overcome the significant barriers they face in returning to school (SmithBattle, 2007). Nelson (2013) similarly identifies insufficient family support as a factor hindering young mothers' return to school.

The findings in these studies resonate with those from my study. Young mothers who returned to school identified receiving adequate family support as a strong facilitating factor in their ability to return to school. In contrast, young mothers who were unable to return to school identified inadequate family support as a hindering factor. My study findings tend to confirm that receiving adequate and extensive family support for a young mother and her child is a significant enabling factor in being in a position to return to school.

The support provided to a teenage mother is often dependent on a family's socio-economic circumstances prior to her pregnancy. A teenage mother having a child may add more pressure to pre-existing family socio-economic difficulties. In cases where the family is socio-economically disadvantaged, this may force the young mother to seek employment rather than return to school. This issue may have influenced some parents in my study to encourage their daughters to seek employment rather than return to school.

Furthermore, some parents may have encouraged the teenage mother to seek employment because they, as parents, subscribed to a societal norm that young girls who become pregnant should take full responsibility for their actions in becoming pregnant. This issue needs further study.

There are conflicting findings on whether cohabiting with the father of the child has a positive or negative effect on the young mothers' return to school. In some studies conducted in America, teenage mothers who cohabited with their babies' fathers did not fare as well, economically, as those residing with parents (Bunting & McAuley, 2004). Bunting and McAuley (2004) surmise that this may apply in situations where the amount and quality of support available to teenage mothers from their babies' fathers was limited due to the fathers' lower academic achievements and income. However, Bunting and McAuley (2004) comment that in other studies, cohabitation with a biological father appeared to economically benefit the young mother and her child, acting as a facilitating factor for completing schooling.

In my study sample, those who stayed with their parents or grandparents appeared to fare better economically than those cohabiting with a partner, and were more likely to return to school after childbirth. In some cases, young mothers found that the baby's father provided insufficient financial support. Other women wished to be financially independent of their partners even if their partners were able to provide financial stability. This was due to a

concern that they might find themselves unable to cope financially were the relationship to end.

I was unable to ascertain definitively whether cohabitation with the baby's father had any significant impact on young women's return or non-return to school. This issue requires further study.

### 5.3.2 Access to External Childcare

Childcare is often the central issue that affects regular school attendance and education completion (Stadler et al., 2007) in teenage mothers. Many adolescent mothers come from financially challenged families, and their parent(s) may not be able to afford childminding for their grandchild (Chigona & Chetty, 2008). In my study, access to childcare was an important influence on whether or not a young mother returned to school after childbirth. Young mothers who had returned to school either received financial support from their families for childcare services, or had a family member able to take care of the baby while they were at school. Conversely, those who did not return to school identified their inability to access childcare as a barrier to completing their education. This inability tended to be linked to poor family socio-economic status, which made it difficult for the young mothers to obtain the necessary support through family members.

### 5.3.3 The School Environment

Although pregnant and parenting teenagers are entitled to public education, school districts have great latitude in how they implement this (SmithBattle, 2006). The administrative focus of schools is generally on attendance, grades and academic progress, and the prejudices of teachers tend to downplay the complex realities of teenage mothers' lives. This limits young mothers' educational options and creates barriers (SmithBattle, 2006). Furthermore, historically, teacher-learner relationships have tended to be those in which the roles of teachers were not necessarily based on learner care and support (Bhana et al., 2010). Teachers have the capacity to engender care and support to improve the life chances of pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers at school (Bhana et al., 2010).

The school environment was often perceived as uncondusive for returning mothers in this study. Some teachers' prejudices and unsupportive attitudes acted as barriers to young mothers' successful return to school in my study. Most of the young women reported being advised by teachers to stop schooling when their pregnancy became noticeable. Coping at school was challenging for teenage mothers who returned to school, as they frequently had to cope with competing demands of meeting schoolwork and school deadlines, and those of childcare. Some participants felt that teachers lacked understanding of the parenting constraints of young mothers returning to school. Teachers' exclusive focus on academic progress, attendance and punctuality militated against educational success for these young mothers. The view expressed by some key informants, that the role of teachers should be to teach students and that social support of teenage mothers should be left to other relevant professionals, lends support to the young mothers' perceptions that some teachers were unsupportive of young mothers returning to school.

The literature also identifies the point that schools do not necessarily inform teenage mothers of all the available resources and options opened to them, to enable them to find the best environment in which to continue their studies after childbirth (Nelson, 2013). Supporting teenage mothers in making the decision to continue or return to education involves discussing the various options available to them, referring them to appropriate agencies and organizations, making contact with agencies on behalf of the young mother and gathering information to assist them (Riordan, 2002). Most of the teenage mothers in this study stated that they were unaware of the school policy for pregnant learners and teenage mothers. Poor knowledge of the policy could have influenced their schooling return, as not having the correct information and knowledge of the available options for their return may have hampered them in making informed decisions regarding their return to school. Ensuring that teenage mothers are in possession of the relevant policy information could be vital in enabling teenage mothers to continue with their education (Riordan, 2002).

Furthermore, in cases where teenage mothers wished to return to school but were hampered by socio-economic difficulties, the schools did not seem to adequately link the young mothers to the appropriate agencies to receive support. As a result, some participants viewed returning to school as unrealistic, and finding work seemed to present itself as the only option they had to ensure financial stability for their children. Schools working in partnership with other ministries, organizations or agencies, such as the Social Welfare Agency, District

Administrators, and the Ministry of Health, to ensure that teenage mothers have access to relevant information, could act as a significant step in the move towards providing adequate support for teenage mothers. This could reduce duplication amongst service providers and provide opportunities to work towards meeting the young mothers' needs in service provision. The schools, liaising with statutory agencies and other organizations on behalf of the teenage mothers, particularly in relation to the financial support they are entitled to, could ensure that a guaranteed amount of funding or allowances was received.

#### 5.3.4 Teasing and Peer Pressure

Mothering, peer pressure and the school environment can negatively affect teenage mothers in coping with school (Chigona & Chetty, 2007). In this study, being teased or bullied by their peers whilst pregnant or when they returned to school after childbirth in some instances negatively influenced a young mother's return to school after childbirth. Some key informants in this study reported that teenage mothers were advised by their peers not to return to school after childbirth, but rather to find work, especially if they were not obtaining enough support from the baby's father. The school should be a conducive environment for young mothers returning to school. Teachers and other learners should receive sensitivity training to promote greater tolerance and acceptance of pregnant learners and schooling mothers.

### 5.4 Macrosystem Level Factors Influencing Return to School

In addition to microsystem and mesosystem level factors, there were macrosystem level factors influencing the school return of the young mothers in this study. These were school policy, gender and cultural values, and access to welfare support.

#### 5.4.1 School Policy for Pregnant Learners and Teenage Mothers

Even though there is legislation and a policy in Seychelles that supports female education after childbirth, it is evident that this does not always facilitate young mothers' return to school. There appears to be an assumption that the needs of adolescent mothers are sufficiently met through policies addressing educational needs, or through policies promoting

social inclusion (Riordan, 2002). In my study, the school policy had a variable influence on young mothers returning to school after childbirth. The Government's school policy on pregnant learners and teenage mothers lacked uniformity and effective implementation. The guidelines in the policy were open to varied interpretations by implementers, and this often had a negative influence on return to schooling. For example, the conditions imposed that prohibited young mothers from cohabiting with their babies' fathers or, in some cases, from even having simple contact with the fathers appears contrary to the spirit of a policy that aims to facilitate girls returning to school after childbirth; it also discourages father responsibility. Promoting a father's engagement in his baby's care could contribute important moral and material support for young mothers. Riordan (2002) suggests that education policies and strategies need to recognise the diversity of needs and life experiences and circumstances amongst adolescent mothers so as to be more promotive of girls returning to school.

Grant and Hallman (2008) suggest that the longer a girl stays away from education after childbirth, the less likely it is that she will ever return to school. The current vagueness of school policy with respect to the length of time a young mother can be away from school before returning can act as a barrier in girls returning to school. A young mother may think that she can return to school whenever she is ready, only to have readmission denied as she has been away from school for too long a period. There clearly needs to be greater clarity in the Seychelles' school policy as to the length of time a young mother may stay away from school after childbirth before being allowed to continue with her schooling or to still have a chance of readmission.

Some of the young women who did not return to school after childbirth saw the rigid grade system and school uniforms as deterring them from returning to school. This finding is similar to the findings in a study by Marteleto, Lam and Ranchhod (2008) who found that schools with sharp alignments in grade and age made it difficult for teenage mothers to reinsert themselves into school after childbirth. Research suggests that greater flexibility within the education system could lessen the likelihood that teenage mothers will disengage from schooling as a result of early motherhood (Riordan, 2002).

The teenage mother was not always given a choice about which school to return to after childbirth, as stipulated in the policy for pregnant learners and teenage mothers. If a teenage mother is forced to return to a different school further away than the one she previously

attended, transportation may become a problem for the young girl and her child.

Transportation may complicate the teenage mother's plans to remain in school as waiting for buses and negotiating several transfers with a baby, books, bag, and the baby's care items can be a daunting task (SmithBattle, 2007). The daily bus fees may also be an additional burden on her family's finances, and the teenage mother's punctuality at school may be affected.

These facts may act as barriers to a teenage mother coping with returning to school.

#### 5.4.2 Lack of Responsibility and Consequences for the Biological Father

It is evident at every level of interaction and institution in our society that women are raised to believe that they are second-class citizens compared to their male counterparts (Nelson, 2013). Gender and the effects of social and cultural power are intricately related to the experiences of pregnancy and parenting. It is women who become pregnant, and largely, it is women who bear the responsibility for taking care of children (Bhana et al., 2010). In this study, it was observed that it was the girls who bore all the consequences of the pregnancy. She had to take care of the child, which, in some cases, meant discontinuing her education if she was receiving minimal support. Furthermore, she had to bear the stigma associated with pregnancy and motherhood whilst at school. The fathers did not have any consequences.

The father of the child may not encounter as many challenges as those that confront teenage mothers in having a child (Pellat (1998) as cited in Nelson, 2013). In a study conducted in South Africa, Bezuidenhout (2002) concluded that should the baby's father be an older man, he might face legal charges. However, this is difficult to enforce. In some countries, if the baby's father is also a minor, he may be expelled from school for a specified period.

However, the young father can deny paternity of the child in order to continue with schooling, as happens in many cases. This may enable him to escape the responsibility and social stigmatisation associated with pregnancy. He thus can avoid consequences for his future educational and career life, with long-term economic consequences for both himself and his family – an option not open to teenage mothers (Bezuidenhout, 2002).

Although there are policies and interventions to encourage girls' schooling and decrease gender disparity in education, discrimination associated with pregnancy tends to remain a burden on girls rather than boys. In this study, it was observed that the school policy did not



make any reference to the fathers and that, furthermore, its implementation did not promote the father's taking of responsibility, which increases the gender inequality gap. This is a broader societal concern. This therefore calls for better mechanisms to be put in place to ensure that the burden of teenage pregnancy does not fall only on the young mother but on the boy or man as well.

### 5.4.3 Access to Welfare Support

Not all teenage mothers will require welfare assistance or support, as some will have extensive family support, and will generally have positive school experiences (Riordan, 2002). They may simply require some assistance with childcare expenses or some minor financial provisions. In my study, lack of welfare assistance to assist with childcare expenses was identified as a hindering factor to returning to school. In discussing the importance of childcare for teenage mothers to return to school, Riordan (2002) stresses the importance of quality and affordable childcare. Riordan (2002) further adds that a number of reports show that reimbursement of childcare costs is essential if participation in education is to become a realistic option for young mothers. In 2015, during the National Day Address, the former President of Seychelles, Mr James Alix Michel, acknowledged that single mothers are vulnerable members of the society. He further added that the costs of daycare may be excessive for many mothers, and that the government of Seychelles would provide additional support for day care (State House, 2015). At present, there are no specific social welfare schemes for pregnant teenagers and young mothers in Seychelles. A pregnant girl or a young mother may seek welfare assistance from general schemes such as the childcare scheme and the supplementary welfare benefits. These schemes provide funds, and access to assistance is based on financial need. The amount of funding received varies according to the financial status of the household. The length of time that the teenage mother receives funding depends on the continued financial status of the household, and on how long the parents of the teenage mother can support her and her child. The supplementary welfare benefits and the childcare scheme are two separate entities that need to be applied for separately.

The fact that parents of teenage mothers may have to access the grant on behalf of their daughters who are below the age of 18 can create an impediment. If teenage mothers do not get parental support to access the welfare benefits, this reduces the young mothers' financial

resources. The administrative system to access welfare may therefore act as a disincentive for young mothers who are minors, and they may rather seek work than be involved in the complexity of accessing welfare.

Furthermore, a young mother may not qualify for welfare assistance if her family income is above the minimum household income needed to qualify for welfare assistance. Some of the young mothers in this study were reportedly unsuccessful in obtaining welfare assistance after childbirth, as they did not meet the set criteria based on household income. Despite the government's commitment, the availability of welfare may still not benefit teenage mothers if they encounter difficulties accessing the funds. This indicates the need for measures to reduce the barriers for teenage mothers in accessing government welfare benefits. This would promote their being able to afford childcare for their babies, and being better positioned to complete their education.

## **5.5 Limitations**

As this was a mini-thesis, the sample size for this study was relatively small; therefore, the saturation point normally recommended for qualitative research may not have been reached.

Furthermore, as is the nature of qualitative research, while rich insights can be obtained on the underlying issues influencing teenage mothers in Seychelles to return to school after childbirth, the research cannot be deemed to be representative of all pregnant girls and teenage mothers.

Accessing teenage mothers for interviews was at times difficult. Some were engaged in post-secondary schooling or were working. Conducting interviews was dependent on when the young mothers were available, which increased the time period for the study and data collection. Some of the young mothers' contact details had changed. Getting in contact with them at times was not possible.

As there is a paucity of published research on factors influencing teenage mothers in returning to school after childbirth in Seychelles, accessing documents and local literature pertinent to the research was difficult. At times, there was a reluctance to share what

documentation does exist, making the process of obtaining information about teenage mothers and school return in Seychelles arduous and time consuming.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

Teenage mothers returning to school after childbirth faced a range of difficulties in combining studying and parenthood. Furthermore, teenage mothers may find it difficult to obtain the necessary support for themselves and their children due to family related socio-economic disadvantages, policy-related deficiencies, and due to the complexities involved in accessing welfare support. Additionally, dominant socio-cultural attitudes and practices and school level policy implementation that discourage male responsibility for teenage pregnancy may increase educational gender inequality. In conclusion, the findings show that teenage mothers and their child/children are vulnerable members of society. It is important for all appropriate agencies in society to work in partnership to provide adequate support for teenage mothers.

The concluding chapter will offer some recommendations to address the findings and improve adolescent parents' educational outcomes.



## CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 6.1 Introduction

This study aimed to explore the factors that influence Seychellois teenage mothers' return to school after childbirth. The findings showed that there were multi-factorial influences on whether or not a young mother returns to school after childbirth.

### 6.2 Conclusions

These were not limited to the girl's internal motivation to achieve her future aspirations and a better future for her and her child. Family support was crucial in determining whether a young mother would return to school after childbirth. Furthermore, the school environment was not always conducive to the retention of the teenage mothers, as often teachers' attitudes, the rigid grade system and school uniform policy acted as deterrents for those young girls' school return. Additionally, the school policy for pregnant learners and teenage mothers, and the lack of welfare assistance, were other hindering factors to the young women's return to school. These factors were often interconnected, and collectively impacted on those teenage mothers' decision to return to school.

Teenage mothers and their children are two vulnerable groups in society. Pregnant girls dropping out of school after delivery can contribute to the chain of poverty in Seychelles, as this leads to their having lower educational attainment, reduced employment and career development opportunities. It is therefore important to have better mechanisms addressing the various levels of factors influencing teenage mothers' school return after childbirth.

### 6.3 A Health Promotion Approach for Teenage Mothers Returning to School

Addressing the issue of teenage mothers not returning to school after childbirth involves adopting a holistic approach to promoting the health and the future outcomes of teenage mothers. Therefore, employing the Ottawa Charter (World Health Organization (WHO)),

1986) as a framework for a health promotion approach in framing areas to address the issues based on the different levels of factors influencing young mothers return to school is important. This involves focusing on the combination of the five priority action areas of the Ottawa Charter:

- (1) Building healthy public policies with regards to teenage pregnancy and teenage mothers. This puts the issue of adolescent pregnancy and parenthood on the agenda of policy makers in all sectors and at all levels, making them aware of the consequences of their decisions. Furthermore, the implementation of the policies needs monitoring, with the involvement of all active stakeholders.
- (2) Creating a supportive environment at home and at school that generates optimal living conditions and educational opportunities for teenage mothers. This includes reinforcing the right to healthy relationships with partners, peers, family and community. Having healthy public policies will also create a supportive environment.
- (3) Strengthening community action, through effective community involvement in setting priorities, making decisions, planning and implementing strategies to achieve better health with regards to teenage pregnancy and teenage mothers. This includes involving the community in the development of policies pertinent to pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers.
- (4) Developing personal skills. This involves providing information, enhancing life skills and education for teenage mothers, teachers, students, parents of teenage mothers and other relevant stakeholders. This should include receiving training in greater tolerance, understanding and acceptance of pregnant learners and teenage mothers who return to school; parenting and self-sufficiency skills to enable pregnant learners and teenage mothers in making the transition to motherhood; and accessing the necessary appropriate resources and/or services.
- (5) Re-orienting health services, so that health services engage in health promotion, in addition to clinical and curative services focussed on teenage pregnancy and teenage mothers, such as, for example, school nurses referring teenage mothers to appropriate agencies to receive financial support.

## 6.4 Recommendations

From this, and other studies, it is clear that there are numerous factors that either facilitate or hinder a teenage mother's return to schooling after childbirth. With regards to the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

The school policy should include the steps that schools should take towards prevention of teenage pregnancy, in which both girls and boys are equally targeted. This requires multi-sectoral involvement.

The policy on pregnant learners and teenage mothers should be communicated effectively to all stakeholders. The steps for implementing the policy should be clearly stated, where specific duties to address the problems of stigma and discrimination by teachers and other learners are clearly outlined.

The policy on pregnant learners and teenage mothers needs to be implemented consistently in all schools. It additionally needs to include monitoring mechanisms to ensure that it is uniform and consistent in its implementation.

The policy on pregnant learners and teenage mothers should ultimately be incorporated in the Education Act to give it the legal weight that it deserves. Any policy not properly based in law may be taken less seriously when it comes to implementation.

Schools need to take up, and increase, tolerance and acceptance of teenage mothers, as an issue within the school, improving the capacity of the school to work with teenage mothers.

Schools should create linkages for teenage mothers with other key agencies (SmithBattle, 2006). This will ensure a multi-sectoral and comprehensive approach to addressing the issue of teenage mothers' school return.

The school policy should clearly state the length of time a teenage mother can be absent from school after childbirth for her to be able to gain re-admission to continue with schooling. This

will ensure that teenage mothers would not be denied re- admission to school due to re-applying after too long a period of time absent from school.

Financial packages similar to those offered for higher education may offer a way to provide financial resources and reduce the need for paid work among teenage mothers (Mollborn, 2007). This could be a monthly stipend that would cover the travel and school expenses of teenage mothers. The scheme should be specific to pregnant learners and teenage mothers, where the young girls can apply for assistance on their own, without having to rely on their parents in order to be able to apply. This will reduce the complexities of accessing welfare support.

Health professionals, educators and community agencies can help promote teenage mothers' motivation to stay in, or return to, school using a comprehensive approach. Facilitating teenage mothers to return to school involves multiple components (SmithBattle, 2006). These include educational remediation, quality day care, legal services, and family planning and support programs. Additionally, several agencies potentially have a role to play in supporting policy development and working in partnership for policy practice (Riordan, 2002). These include the following ministries: Education, Health and Social Affairs, Youth, and Local Government. A joint partnership could enable teenage mothers to link with existing services; reduce duplication amongst service providers; and would help reduce the gaps in service provision (Riordan, 2002).

The school policy should reflect the roles of male learners that have fathered children with teenage mothers. Counselling could encourage the boys to accept the responsibilities of fatherhood. Both parents should be encouraged towards taking responsibility for raising the child. The ideal situation would be to empower young fathers and mothers to acquire an education so that they can later obtain jobs to help support the child.

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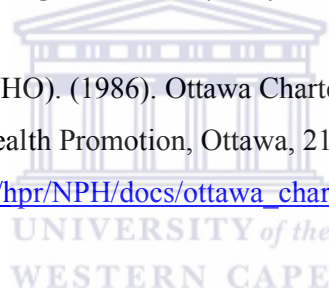
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## **APPENDIX 1: INFORMATION SHEET FOR THE YOUNG WOMEN (ENGLISH)**

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### **INFORMATION SHEET**

**Project Title:** Individual, social, economic and school factors that influence Seychellois teenage mothers going back to school after childbirth

#### **What is this study about?**

This is a research project being conducted by Cynthia Noshir at the University of the Western Cape. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are a young woman that was a teenage mother. The purpose of this research project is to explore factors that impede girls' education in Seychelles. Results obtained from this study will be useful to guide future programmes or interventions targeting young girls in Seychelles.

#### **What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?**

You will be interviewed in a private room on one of the premises of the Ministry of Health. The interview will be conducted only once, in Creole and will not last more than one hour. During the interview, you will be asked about individual, social, financial and factors in school that influenced you as a teenage mother going back to school after childbirth.

#### **Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?**

To protect your anonymity, your name will be replaced with a study identification number. Only the researcher will be able to link your interview to your identity, as the identification details will be accessible by the researcher only.

To ensure your confidentiality, your interview transcripts will be locked in storage areas. The interview transcript will contain your identification number only, not your personal details.

During the writing up of the mini-thesis your name will be replaced with a pseudo-name that will not be linked to you.

### **What are the risks of this research?**

There may be some risks from participating in this research study. These include psychological and emotional risks that may result from participating in the study as questioned asked during the interview will be about your past experiences as a teenage mother. For example you could feel uncomfortable because of fear, embarrassment or guilt.

All human interactions and talking about self or others carry some amount of risks. We will nevertheless minimise such risks and act promptly to assist you if you experience any discomfort, psychological or otherwise during the process of your participation in this study. Where necessary, an appropriate referral will be made to a suitable professional for further assistance or intervention.

### **What are the benefits of this research?**

This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about factors that influence teenage mothers going to school after childbirth. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of factors that impede young girls' education.

### **Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

### **What if I have questions?**

This research is being conducted by Cynthia Noshir from the School of Public Health at the University of the Western Cape. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Cynthia Noshir at: Yellow Roof Dental, Mont Fleuri, 4388246 and [ocean2basket@gmail.com](mailto:ocean2basket@gmail.com)



Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:

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Head of Department  
University of the Western Cape  
Private Bag X17  
Bellville 7535  
[soph-comm@uwc.ac.za](mailto:soph-comm@uwc.ac.za)

Prof José Frantz  
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## APPENDIX 2: INFORMATION SHEET FOR YOUNG WOMEN (CREOLE)

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#### PAZ LENFORMASYON – ZENN MANMAN

Tit sa proze: Faktè endividyel, sosyal, ekonomik e dan lekòl ki enfluyans bann manman adolesan pou retoun lekòl apre lansentman

Lo kwa ki sa letid i baze?

Mon apel Cynthia Noshir e mon e etidyan ki pe fer mon letid avanse avek liniversite Western Cape Sid Afrik. Sa resers I en nesosite pou mon master dan letid piblik ki mon pe konplete avek liniveriste. Mon pe envit ou pou vin en partisipan dan sa resers akòz ou en zenn manman ki ti ansent ler ou ti en adolesan dan lekòl. Rezon sa resers i pou ganny en bon konprezon lo ki faktè ki'n kapab ed ou reste dan lekòl ou kit lekòl ler ou ti ansent e ganny ou baba.

Nou swete ki sa resers i annan benefis pou gid program dan fitir ou lentervansyon ki pe target bann zenn fiy sesel ki vin ansent e ganny baba pandan lekòl, dan lesans ki zot kapab kontinny zot ledikasyon si zot anvi.

Ki mon pou ganny demande si mon agree pou partisipe?

Ou pou ganny interview dan en lasanm prive dan en landrwa kot minister lasante. Sa interview pou ganny fer zis en fwa an kreol e pa pou pli long ki enn-er-d-tan. Pandan sa interview mon pou demann ou lo faktè endividyel, sosyal, finansyel e bann faktè dan lekòl ki'n enfluyans ou konman en zenn manman pou kapab retoun lekòl ou pa retoun lekòl apre

lansentman. Sa interview pou ganny rikorde lo en masin rikord avek ou permisyon pou mon kapab ekoute apre pou fer sir mon mazin tou keksoz ki ou dir.

Eski mon partisipasyon dan sa letid pou reste konfidansyel?

Pou protez ou idantite ou non pou ganny ranplase avek en nimero idantifikasyon. Zis sa reserser ki pou kapab fer sa lyen ant ou interview e ou idantite, aköz ou detay pou ganny aksesib par selman mon.

Pou fer sir ki ou reste konfidansyel, ou detay interview pou ganny take dan en landrwa ki gard keksoz. Sa papye interview pou annan ou nimero idantifikasyon selman, pa ou detay personel. Zis sa reserser ki pou annan akse avek ou form konsantman and sa pou ganny garde separeman avek bann lenformation ki oun donnen pandan interview.

Pandan ki mon pe ekrir mon papye ou non pou ganny ranplase avek en lot non ki pa pou ganny relye avek ou.

Ki bann risk sa resers?

I kapab annan risk pou partisipan dan sa letid. Sa i enkli risk sikoloji e emosyonal ki kapab ganny assosye ek bann kesyon ki ganny demande pandan interview lo bann leksperyans konman e zenn manmam. Par egzanzp si ou enkonfortab aköz lafreyer or anbarasman.

Tou enteraksyon imen e koz lo prop lekor ou lezot I anmenn serten risk. Nou pou sey miniz sa bann risk e asiste ou si ou ganny diskonfor pandan ou partisipasyon dan sa letid. Kot i neserer nou pou refer ou kot bann profesyonel apropiriye pou lasistans ou entervansyon profesyonel.

Ki bann benefis sa resers?

Sa resers pa'n ganny fer pou ed ou personelman, me rezilta sa resers pou ed sa reserser ganny en pli bon konprenezon lo bann faktor ki enfliyans bann zenn manmam pou retourn or pa retourn lekol apre donn nesans. Nou swete ki dan fitir sa resers pou befenisye bann program ou entervansyon ki pe target bann zenn fiy sesel ki ansent e donn nesans ler zot ankor lekol, pou zot kapab kontinny zot letid si zot anvi.

Eski mon bezwen dan sa resers e eski mon kapab aret partisipe nenport ler?

Ou partisipasyon dan sa resers in konpletmen volonter. Ou kapab decide pou pa pran par dan sa letid. Si ou decide pou partisip dan sa resers, ou kapab arête nenport ler. Ou kapab decide

pou pa reponn serten kestyon. Si I annan keksoz ou pa anvi diskite, ou kapab dir nou. Si ou deside pou pa partisip dan sa letid oubyen aret partisipe pandan okenn moman letan, ou pa pou ganny penalize or perdi okenn benefis ki ou sipoze gannyen.

Si mon annan okenn kestyon?

Sa resers pe ganny fer par Cynthia Noshir sorti kot lekol lasante piblik kot liniversite Western Cape. Si ou annan oken kestyon lo sa resers li menm, ou kapab kontakte Cynthia Noshir Yellow Roof Dental Clinic Mont Fleuri, 4388252 e [ocean2basket@gmail.com](mailto:ocean2basket@gmail.com)

Si ou annan okenn kesyon lo sa letid e ou dwa konman e partisipan sa resers oubyen ou anvi raport okenn problem oun eksperyans avek sa letid, ou kapab kontakte:

Prof Helen Schneider

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### APPENDIX 3: INFORMATION SHEET FOR KEY INFORMANTS (CREOLE)

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#### PAZ LENFORMASYON – ENFORMAN KLE

Tit sa proze: Faktè endividyel, sosyal, ekonomik e dan lekòl ki enfliyans bann manman adolesan pou retoun lekòl apre lansentman

Lo kwa ki sa letid i baze?

Mon apel Cynthia Noshir e mon e etidyan ki pe fer mon letid avanse avek liniversite Western Cape Sid Afrik. Sa resers I en nesite pou mon master dan letid piblik ki mon pe konplete avek liniveriste. Mon pe envit ou pou partisip dan sa resers akòz ou en endividi ki travay pre avek bann zenn manman. Rezon sa resers i pou ganny en bon konprezon lo ki faktè ki'n kapab ed ou reste dan lekòl ou kit lekòl ler ou ti ansent e ganny ou baba.

Nou swete ki sa resers i annan benefis pou gid program dan fitir or lentervansyon ki pe target bann zenn fiy sesel ki vin ansent e ganny baba pandan lekòl, dan lesans ki zot kapab kontinny zot ledikasyon si zot anvi.

Ki mon pou ganny demande si mon agree pou partisipe?

Ou pou ganny interview dan en lasanm prive dan en landrwa kot minister lasante. Sa interview pou ganny fer zis en fwa an kreol e pa pou pli long ki enn-er-d-tan. Pandan sa interview mon pou demann ou lo faktè individyel, sosyal, finansyel e bann faktè dan lekòl ki enfliyans bann manman adolesan pou kapab retoun lekòl or pa retoun lekòl apre lansentman. Sa interview pou ganny rikorde lo en masin rikord avek ou permisyon pou mon kapab ekoute apre pou fer sir mon mazin tou keksoz ki ou dir.

Eski mon partisipasyon dan sa letid pou reste konfidansyel?

Pou protez ou idantite ou non pou ganny ranplase avek en nimero idantifikasyon. Zis sa reserser ki pou kapab fer sa lyen ant ou interview e ou idantite, akòz ou detay pou ganny aksesib par selman mon.

Pou fer sir ki ou reste konfidansyel, ou detay interview pou ganny take dan en landrwa ki gard keksoz. Sa papye interview pou annan ou nimero idantifikasyon selman, pa ou detay

personel. Zis sa reserser ki pou annan akse avek ou form konsantman and sa pou ganny garde separeman avek bann lenformation ki oun donnen pandan interview.

Pandan ki mon pe ekrir mon papye ou non pou ganny ranplase avek en lot non ki pa pou ganny relye avek ou.

Ki bann risk sa resers?

I kapab annan risk pou partisipan dan sa letid. Par egzanp ou kapab enkonfortab pou diskite serten keksoz konfidansyel ki ou kwar pe afekte ledikasyon bann zenn fiy me ki piblik pa konnen.

Tou enteraksyon imen e koz lo prop lekor ou lezot I anmenn serten risk. Nou pou sey miniz sa bann risk e asiste ou si ou ganny diskonfor pandan ou partisipasyon dan sa letid. Kot i neser nou pou refer ou kot bann profesyonel apropriye pou lasistans ou entervansyon profesyonel.

Ki bann benefis sa resers?

Sa resers pa'n ganny fer pou ed ou personelman, me rezilta sa resers pou ed sa reserser ganny en pli bon konprezon lo bann faktor ki enfliyans bann zenn manmam pou retourn or pa retourn lekol apre donn nesans. Nou swete ki dan fitir sa resers pou befenisye bann program ou entervansyon ki pe target bann zenn fiy sesel ki ansent e donn nesans ler zot ankore lekol, pou zot kapab kontinny zot letid si zot anvi.

Eski mon bezwen dan sa resers e eski mon kapab aret partisipe nenport ler?

Ou partisipasyon dan sa resers in konpletmen volonter. Ou kapab decide pou pa pran par dan sa letid. Si ou decide pou partisip dan sa resers, ou kapab arête nenport ler. Ou kapab decide pou pa reponn serten kestyon. Si I annan keksoz ou pa anvi diskite, ou kapab dir nou. Si ou decide pou pa partisip dan sa letid oubyen aret partisipe pandan okenn moman letan, ou pa pou ganny penalize or perdi okenn benefis ki ou sipoze gannyen.

Si mon anna okenn kestyon?

Sa resers pe ganny fer par Cynthia Noshir sorti kot lekol lasante piblik kot liniversite Western Cape. Si ou annan oken kestyon lo sa resers li menm, ou kapab kontakte Cynthia Noshir Yellow Roof Dental Clinic Mont Fleuri, 4388252 e [ocean2basket@gmail.com](mailto:ocean2basket@gmail.com)

Si ou annan okenn kesyon lo sa letid e ou dwa konman e partisipan sa resers oubyen ou anvi raport okenn problem oun eksperyans avek sa letid, ou kapab kontakte:

Prof Helen Schneider  
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Head of Department  
University of the Western Cape  
Private Bag X17  
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**APPENDIX 4: CONSENT FORM (ENGLISH)**

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**CONSENT FORM**

**Title of Research Project:** Individual, social, economic and school factors that influence Seychellois teenage mothers going back to school after childbirth

The study has been described to me in language that I understand. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand what my participation will involve and I agree to participate of my own choice and free will. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed to anyone. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without fear of negative consequences or loss of benefits.

Participant's name.....

Participant's signature.....

Date.....







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### FORM KONSANTMAN

Tit risers: Faktè endividyel, sosyal, ekonomik e dan lekòl ki enfliyans bann manman adolesan pou retoun lekòl apre lansentman

Sa letid in ganny dekrir avek mon dan en langaz ki mon konpran. Mon bann keston lo sa letid in ganny reponn. Mon ganny en konpran ki mon partisipasyon dan sa letid i vèdir e mon dakor pou partisip lo mon prop swa e desizyon. Mon konpran ki mon idantite pa pou ganny devwale avek person. Mon konpran ki mon kapab aèt mon partisipasyon dan sa letid nenport ler san donn okenn rezon e san lafreyer okenn konsekans negativ ou benefis perdi.

Non partisipan.....

Signatir partisipan.....

Dat.....

**APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE YOUNG WOMEN  
(ENGLISH)**

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**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE YOUNG WOMEN**

(Researcher to record the following information on the audio-tape for transcription purposes)

Date of interview: (dd/mm/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_

Duration (length of time taken) for interview (minutes/hour): \_\_\_\_\_

Participant study identifier number: \_\_\_\_\_

Seychelles region: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Background information to ask of participant (and to be recorded on audio tape for transcription purposes)

Current age of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's age at time of pregnancy: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of children participant has: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's grade at time of pregnancy: \_\_\_\_\_

Was participant married at time of pregnancy: \_\_\_\_\_

Did participant return to school after giving birth: \_\_\_\_\_

If participant returned to school after giving birth, ask until what grade participant completed at school: \_\_\_\_\_

2. How young women talk about personal experiences of being a teenage mother

- Tell me about your aspirations for the future when you were a teenager
- Tell me about your feelings when you discovered you were pregnant
- Can you tell me what being a teenage mother meant to you?
- How did you balance everything?
- Tell me how you coped as a teenage mother

3. How the young women talk about family support and culture

- Tell me how your family responded when they found out about your pregnancy

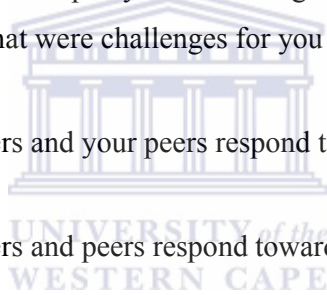
- Tell me about the sort of response you got from your family when the baby was born
- Tell me about the response you got from the community when they realised you were pregnant
- Tell me about the type of response you got from the community when you became a teenage mother

#### 4. How the young women talk about finances

- Tell me about the kind of financial support you received as a teenage mother

#### 5. How the young women talk about school

- Tell me about your views on education and schooling
- Tell me about your school experience before your pregnancy
- Tell me how you felt as a teenager who was pregnant and attending school
- Tell me about the things that helped you as a teenager who got pregnant while at school
- Tell me about the things that were challenges for you as a teenager who got pregnant whilst at school
- How did the school teachers and your peers respond towards you when they found out you were pregnant
- How did the school teachers and peers respond towards you when you became a teenage mother



#### If participant RETURNED to school after childbirth

- Can you tell me at about what stage of your pregnancy did you leave school and how long was it after childbirth did you return to school
- Can you tell me whether you went back to the same school or a different school
- How did you feel about going back to school after having a baby?
- What were the things that influenced you in going back to school after having a baby?
- What were the things that made it easier for you to go back to school after having a baby?
- What made it difficult for you to go back to school after having a baby?
- How did the school teachers and your peers respond towards you as a teenage mother?
- How has going back to school affected your life, if at all, over the past years, since having a baby as a teenager?

- Where you aware of the MOE policy?
- Did you have enough options at schools to help you continue in school

If participant DID NOT return to school after childbirth:

- Can you tell me at what age of your pregnancy did you leave school?
- How did you feel about the possibility of going back to school after having a baby?
- What were the things that influenced you in not going back to school after having a baby?
- If you had wanted to go back to school, what could have made it easier for you to go back to school after giving birth?
- If you had wanted to go back to school, what could have made it difficult for you to go back to school after giving birth?
- How has not going back to school affected your life, if at all, over the past years, since having a baby as a teenager?



## **APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE KEY INFORMANTS (ENGLISH)**

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### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS**

(Researcher to record the following information on the audio-tape for transcription purposes)

Date of interview: (dd/mm/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_

Duration (length of time taken) for interview (minutes/hour): \_\_\_\_\_

Participant study identifier number: \_\_\_\_\_

Categories of key informant (e.g. teacher, counsellor, psychologist etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Views on facilitating factors or challenges for teenage girls in continuing their education

- Tell me about the things that you think helps a teenage girl to go back to school after childbirth
- Tell me about the challenges you think teenage girls experience in going back to school after they have given birth.



## APPENDIX 8: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE YOUNG WOMEN (CREOLE)

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Interview guide for the young women (Translated creole)

### GID INTERVIEW POU BANN ZENN FIY

*(Reserser pou rikord sa bann lenformasyon swivan lo en masinn rikorde pou kapab fer transkripsyon apre)*

Dat interview: (dd/mm/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_

Dirasyon (kantite letan pran) pou interview (minit/erdtan): \_\_\_\_\_

Nimero idantifikasyon partisipan: \_\_\_\_\_

Rezyon Sesel: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 1. Lenformasyon pou demann partisipan (e pou ganny rikorde lo en masinn rikord pou kapab fer transkripsyon apre)

Laz akyel partisipan: \_\_\_\_\_

Laz partisipan ler ti tonm ansent: \_\_\_\_\_

Kantite piti partisipan annan: \_\_\_\_\_

Grad lekol ki partisipan ti ete ler ansent: \_\_\_\_\_

Eski partisipan ti'n marye ler ansent: \_\_\_\_\_

Eski partisipan ti retourn lekol apre donn nesans: \_\_\_\_\_

Si partisipan ti retourn lekol apre donn nesans, ki grad I ti komplet lekol: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. Manyer bann zenn fiy i koz lo bann leksperyans personel konman en manman adolesan

- Dir ou bann aspirasyon pou fitir ler ou ti en adolesan
- Dir mon manyer ou ti santi ou ler ou ti dekouver ou ansent
- Eski ou kapab dir mon ki ti vedir pou ou konman en manman adolesan
- Ki manyer ou ti balans tou keksoz?
- Dir mon manyer ou ti debouye konman en zenn manman

### **3. Ki manyer sa zenn fiy I koz lo sipor famiyal e kiltir**

- Dir mon manyer ou fanmiy ti reakte ler ti dekouver ou ansent
- Dir mon manyer ou fanmiy ti azir ler ou baba ti ne
- Dir mon manyer kominote ti azir ler zot ti aprann ou ansent
- Dir mon manyer kominote ti azir ler ou ti vin en zenn manman

### **4. Manyer sa zenn fiy i koz lo finans**

- Dir mon ki bann siport finansyel ou ti gannyen konman en manman adolesan

### **5. Manyer sa zenn fiy I koz lo lekol**

- Dir mon ou vi lo ledikasyon e lekol
- Dir mon ou leksperyans lekol avan ou lansentman
- Dir mon manyer ou ti santi konman en adolesan ki pe al lekol
- Dir mon kwa kit i ed ou ler ou ti en adolesan ki ansent lekol
- Dir mon bann defi ki ou ti eksperyanse konman en manman adolesan lekol
- Manyer ou bann ansenyan e kanmanrad lekol ti fer ler zot aprann ki ou ansent

#### *Si partisipan ti RETOURN lekol apre lansentman*

- Eski ou kapab dir monk i staz ou lansentman ou ti kit lekol e konbyen letan apre donn nesans ki ou ti retourn lekol
- Eski ou kapab dir mon si ou ti retourn dan menm lekol oubyen en lekol diferan
- Ki manyer ou ti santi ou pou retourn lekol apre donn nesans?
- Kwa ki ti enfliyans ou pou retourn lekol apre donn nesans?
- Kwa ki ti fer li fasil pou ou retourn lekol apre donn nesans?
- Kwa ki ti fer li difisil pou ou retourn lekol apre donn nesans?
- Manyer bann ansennyen e ou bann koleg lekol ti tret ler ou ti en manman adolesan?
- Ki manyer retourn lekol in afekte ou lavi, si sa I leka, sa bann dernyen letan, depi ki oun ganny zanfann konman en zenn manman?

#### *Si partisipan PA TI retourn lekol apre donn nesans:*

- Eski ou kapab dir monk i staz ou lansentman ou ti kit lekol?
- Ki manyer ou ti santi lo retourn lekol apre ganny ou baba? Ki bann keksoz ki ti enfliyans ou pou pa al lekol apre donn nesans?

- Si ou ti anvi al lekòl, ki bann keksoz ki ti pou'n kapab fer li fasil pou ou al lekòl apre donn nesans?
- Si ou ti anvi al lekòl, ki bann keksoz ki ti pou'n kapab fer li difisil pou ou al lekòl apre donn nesans?

Ki manyer pa al lekòl in afekte ou lavi, si sa I leka, sa dernyen letan, depi ki oun ganny zanfàn konman en zenn manman?





## APPENDIX 9: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS (CREOLE)

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### Interview guide for key informants (Translated Creole)

#### GID INTERVIEW POU BANN ENFORMAN KLE

*(Reserser pou rikord sa bann lenformasyon swivan lo en masinn rikorde pou kapab fer transkripsyon apre)*

Dat interview: (dd/mm/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_

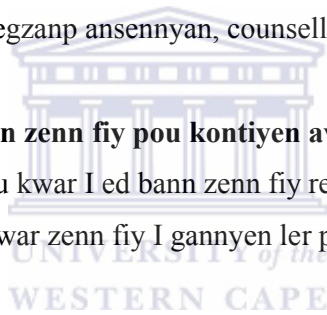
Dirasyon (kantite letan pran) pou interview (minit/erdtan): \_\_\_\_\_

Nimero idantifikasyon partisipan: \_\_\_\_\_

Kategori sa enforman kle (par egzamp ansennyman, counsellor, sikolog et.): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Vi faktè ki fasilite or defi bann zenn fiy pou kontiyen avek zot lekòl

- Dir mon bann keksoz ki ou kwar I ed bann zenn fiy retourn lekòl apre donn nesans
- Dir mon bann defi ki ou kwar zenn fiy I gannyen ler pe retourn lekòl apre donn nesans



## APPENDIX 10: ETHICS CLEARANCE (UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE)

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### DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

18 January 2016

#### To Whom It May Concern

I hereby certify that the Senate Research Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the following research project by:  
Ms CYS Noshir (School of Public Health)

Research Project: Individual, social, economic and school factors that influence Seychellois teenage mothers' return to school after childbirth.

Registration no: 15/07/257

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse event and/or termination of the study.

*Ms Patricia Josias*  
Research Ethics Committee Officer  
University of the Western Cape

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[www.uwc.ac.za](http://www.uwc.ac.za)

A place of quality,  
a place to grow, from hope  
to action through knowledge

## APPENDIX 11: ETHICS CLEARANCE (HEALTH RESEARCH AND ETHICS COMMITTEE OF SEYCHELLES)

MINISTRY OF HEALTH  
PUBLIC HEALTH AUTHORITY  
OFFICE OF PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSIONER  
P. O. Box 52, Victoria Hospital, Mahé, Republic of Seychelles  
Tel:(248)4388016, Fax:(248)4225131, E-Mail: [Jude.Gieleon@health.gov.sc](mailto:Jude.Gieleon@health.gov.sc)



Please address all correspondence to the Public Health Commissioner

10<sup>th</sup> February 2016

Ms Cynthia Noshir  
Ministry of Health  
Seychelles

Dear Ms Noshir,

**Research Proposal 1508: Individual, Social, Economic and School Factors that Influence Seychellois Teenage Mothers Returning to School after Birth**

This is to inform you that the Health Research and Ethics Committee has reviewed the proposal as submitted for approval.

The Committee does not foresee any ethical issues in carrying out the above study. However, as per protocol needs, please attend to the following below:

• **Data Collection**

To increase validity and credibility of the research project it is recommended that back translation of certain segments of the interview transcript is conducted.

• **Funding**

State source of funding not mentioned.

As such, the proposal is **approved**.

The Committee requires a copy of the final report of this study.

Thanking you.

Yours sincerely,

Anna-Lisa Labiche (Ms)  
Chairperson  
Health Research and Ethics Committee

