

Teenage Pregnancy among Learners: School's Perspectives, Challenges and Responses

Wilter C. Friaes

Professor, Notre Dame of Marbel University

Sheila B. Roma

Research Director, Notre Dame of Marbel University

Loveleih G. Quemado

Professor, Notre Dame of Marbel University

Abstract: Teenage pregnancy refers to a teenage girl within the age range of 13-19, has not yet reached legal adulthood and becomes pregnant. Using a descriptive qualitative research design, this study aimed to gain insights on teenage pregnancy as an emerging issue among high school learners in one of the Municipalities in Mindanao from the perspectives of both the teachers and school heads. It described their experience of challenges in dealing with learners who engage in pre-marital sex and become pregnant at an early age, and their responses and actions on the issue. As revealed, As reflected in the sharing of both school heads and teachers in this study, early pregnancy has jeopardizes educational attainment of teenagers most especially the female students. It led many of them to drop out of school due to personal, social and cultural circumstances. The results of this study on the school heads and teachers' perspectives, challenges experienced and responses hope to provide significant input on the need for collaborations with other stakeholders particularly by the local government, barangay, and home in addressing this issue concerning the learners

Keywords: Teenage Pregnancy, Schools' Perspectives, Challenges and Responses, Qualitative Research,

INTRODUCTION

This study is an exploration on teenage pregnancy as an emerging issue concerning learners in schools particularly in the Philippine context. As a major concern in most schools in the basic education, teenage pregnancy has to be viewed and examined from different dimensions for better understanding. The role of every academic institution is vital in dealing with this specific phenomenon among the youth. The research intends to look into how schools view the issue, their challenges encountered and their responses.

In this study, a teenage mother is categorized as one who is pregnant before reaching the legal age of adulthood which is also similar to the definition of the UNICEF Malaysia Communications, 2008; Ro-sario, et, al. 2016. Teenage pregnancy has been a worldwide issue which has become the concern and priority of countries as it continues to increase each year. Philippine statistics on teenage pregnancy pre-sents an alarming trend, as well. Of girls, ages ranging from 15-19, one in 10 is already a mother (Phil-ippine Statistics Authority, 2014). Teenage pregnancy in the country is undeniably a major concern too among young people. One out of every young Filipino women age 15 to 19 is already a mother or pregnant with a first child. Age at first sexual intercourse is another indicator of the beginning of a woman's exposure to the risk of childbearing. In 2012, the number of teenage pregnancies, aged 10-19 years old, have increased to 70% over the last ten years. As a result, this has imposed a huge problem towards the achievement of Millenium Development Goals that puts the country in red alert (Philippine News Agen-cy, 2012 as cited by Salvador, et.al, 2016).

Teenage pregnancy is a multifaceted issue which need to be examined from various lenses. Collective efforts and initiatives of different sectors should be considered in order to provide the appropriate intervention in addressing the problem. Prior to intervention, the issue necessitates to be examine further from different perspectives in order to have deep sense of understanding on the phenomenon. In this study, it only focused on exploring the teenage pregnancy as an emerging issue among high school learners in the identified province in Region 12 from the perspectives of both the teachers and school

heads. It described their experience of challenges in dealing with learners who engage in pre-marital sex and become pregnant at an early age, and their responses and actions on the issue.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Teenage Pregnancy as a Global Issue

Teenage pregnancy is a focus of concern in the United Kingdom since the rates of teenage motherhood are higher than in other neighboring countries. Based on surveys, it is vastly occurs in more deprived areas among women in poorer socioeconomic situations. (Seamarck, 2004).

In the case of United States, teen birth rate is getting relatively low dropping below 18 births per 1,000 girls and women ages 15 to 19 for the first time since the US government has begun regularly collecting data on this group, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of newly released data from the National Center for Health Statistics as cited by Livingston & Thomas (2019) on their study. However, despite rapid declines in teen birth rates across all major racial and ethnic groups, disparities persist. In 2018, the birth rate for Hispanic and black teens ages 15 to 19 was almost double the rate among white teens and more than five times as high as the rate among Asians and Pacific Islanders. (Livingston & Thomas, 2019). In another study in 2020, the teenage birth rate within this age group stood at 15.4 births per every thousand women. Teenage pregnancy and births are related to a number of negative outcomes. Babies born to teenage mothers are more likely to be premature and have a low birth weight, and teen mothers often experience gestational hypertension and anemia. Additionally, there are significant adverse effects on socioeconomic and educational outcomes for teenage parents in the US. (Elfein, 2022).

Similarly, a study of Great Lakes American Indians found that almost 70% of 16 to 18 year olds reported engagement in sexual intercourse (Hellerstedt, Peterson-Hickey, Rhodes, & Garwick, 2006; cited by Dippel, et. al, 2017), compared to 30.0% of 15 to 17 year old and 70.6% of 18 to 19 year old nationally (Gavin et al., 2009 as cited by Dippel, et. al, 2017). The literature also shows that American Indian/Alaska Native youth may participate in risky sexual behavior; one national survey found that 38% of American Indian/Alaska Natives ages 15–24 had unprotected sex at first intercourse. Teen pregnancy and risky sexual behaviors among American Indian/Alaska Native youth have been linked to many risk factors including high rates of poverty and substance use), physical or sexual abuse and restricted or no access to contraception. (Dippel, 2017). All these tell that even in the US where constant monitoring and regulations have been done, yet still the issue on teen motherhood and pregnancy is still prevalent. More so in Africa as in the case of Nigeria where the ratio of teenage mothers to women in their 20s who actually die during pregnancy and childbirth is 5:1. In addition, they likely have more higher mortality rates for infants (Amoran, 2012 as cited by Salvador, et. al, 2016). The Sub-Saharan region of Africa, where a large percentage of the population is teenagers (15-19 years old), the rate of teenage pregnancy is the highest in the world. Fifty percent of the teenage population give birth before their 20th birthday (Coker, 2004; cited by Rosario, et. 2016).

In Asia, teenage pregnancy and premarital sex has emerged to be one of the major public health problems. In South Asia particularly in India, adolescent pregnancy is one of the serious health threat for women aged 15-19 years old (Raj et al., 2010 as cited by Salvador, et. al, 2016).

Teenage Pregnancy in the Philippines

The adolescent pregnancy epidemic in the Philippines has been acknowledged as one of the worst in the Western Pacific Region with a recent prevalence of 13.6% among 15–19 year olds. The Philippines is the only country in this region with no significant decline in adolescent fertility in the past decades from 56 per 1000 in 1973 to 57 per 1000 in 2013. (Maravilla, et. al, 2017). Further, on the same article, it was found out that despite the declining trends of repeated pregnancy and repeated birth in older age groups, the prevalence among adolescents younger than 18 years showed no decrease across 20 years of data and the prevalence was high with approximately one in every five adolescents aged 15–18 years with a history of pregnancy experiencing repeated pregnancy while one in every ten of those who had a livebirth experienced repeated birth.

In a survey conducted in the Philippines, women were asked how old they were when they had their first sexual intercourse and it shows that among women ages 25-49, the percentage having their first sexual intercourse increases sharply from age 15 to age 18. (National Demographic and Health Survey, 2013). On the same year of survey by 2013 Young Adult Fertility & Sexuality Study as presented by

Ogena (2013), sexual behavior of teenagers shows that since 1994, there has been a rise in the proportion of 18-24 old youth having sex before the age of 18. For males, socio-economic status and educational levels are positively correlated with early sexual initiation while the reverse is true for females. Urbanization appears to be positively correlated with early sexual initiation. Data on premarital sex show that males edge females by around 7% (35.5% vs. 28.7%), More than half of older cohort (54.3%) engaged in premarital sex. Limited access to sexual education and sexual health services are among the reasons identified. In 2014, fourteen percent (14%) of the teenage girls in the age bracket of 15- 19 were reported for the first time to be already mothers or have had several children as conducted by the Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality (2014).

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2012), the Philippines has the highest teenage pregnancy rate among the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. From 1999 to 2009, there was a 70% increase in teenage pregnancy in the country and, if not checked, births from teen mothers (ages 15-24) are expected to reach 30 million in the year 2030 (UNFPA, 2012; cited by Rosario, et. al, 2016).

When it comes to context, fertility is considerably higher in rural areas (3.5 births per woman) than in urban areas (2.6 births per woman), a pattern that is evident at every age group. The persistence of a disparity in fertility between urban and rural women is most probably due to factors associated with urbanization, such as better education, higher status of women, better access to health and family planning information and services, and later marriage. In support, the median ages of women at first sexual intercourse by background characteristics shows almost similar patten to median age at marriage: women in urban areas, those with higher education and women from households that belong to the highest wealth quintile had their first sexual experience at later ages than their rural, less educated, and poorer counterparts. (National Demographic and Health Survey, 2014).

Social analysts and researchers have enumerated some of the reasons why pregnancies among adolescents have been increasing in spite of interventions from government health agencies and NGOs. Limited Access to education and services are among the reasons identified as the major causes of teenage pregnancies. New technology is also considered as one of the major influence to the increased number of teenage pregnancy cases. Occasionally, teenagers get hooked to different social networking sites such as Facebook, Online Dating, Instagram, etc. using their smartphones, notebooks and tablets. Due to easy access to new technology and the curiosity of teenagers to engage in sexual activities without appropriate knowledge about family planning and contraceptions, it often ends up with unplanned pregnancy.

Theoretical Lenses

This study would like to look at the emerging issue on teenage pregnancy through the lenses of some theories that help explain such phenomenon. In Adaptation Theory, it defines the process by which an individual or group makes conscious choices to cope with his or her situation. Adaptive responses increase people's ability to cope and to achieve their goals including survival, growth, mastery of their lives, and personal and environmental transformation. According to Roy's model, a person is a bio-psycho-social being in constant interaction with a changing environment. In this study, it can be associated that a 'person' represents the teenage mothers. Roy sees the environment as "all conditions, circumstances, and influences that surround and affect the development and behavior of the person. Environment then may sum up the challenges of the participants in facing life with pregnancy and motherhood and the contextual factors that may have helped, contributed, influenced the being and becoming of the teenage mothers as how they are perceived by the school heads and their teachers who are also part of such environment.

The Theory of Reasoned Action have found that changing attitudes and subjective norms often leads to subsequent change in a variety of health behaviors in young adults. The TRA, which assumes the best predictor of behavior is behavioral intention, is guided by two major constructs. *Attitudes* are the beliefs and feelings about certain behaviors and the values (positive or negative) attached to the outcome of that behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Montano & Kasprzyk, 2008; Dippel, et. al, 2017). *Subjective norms* are the perceptions of social norms, including a belief about whether referent individuals approve or disapprove of a behavior and the individual's motivation to comply with these normative beliefs (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Montano & Kasprzyk, 2008; Dippel, et. al, 2017). In this study, it does not necessarily directly focused on exploring the reasons or elucidating the sexual decision-making of the teenage mothers given their current situation but somehow, through the encounters, interventions and efforts of the schools to mitigate the emerging problems of their learners, the study may somehow provide understanding the constructs of attitudes and these subjective norms influencing sexual behaviors and

decisions of the youth. These findings will further inform teen pregnancy prevention efforts and add to the Knowledge base on teen pregnancy specific to the locale of the study.

Roles of Education: From Global and Local Perspectives

A study was conducted to investigate the relationship (if any) that existed between the educators' attitudes towards teenage pregnancy and various educators' characteristics such as age, gender, religious affiliation, educational level and their teaching experience. The findings indicated that educators had positive attitudes and were sympathetic towards pregnant teenagers, but displayed reservations about the level of skills they possessed with regard to helping teenagers in times of emergency (like delivery) in the classroom. Further, the study formulated some recommendations that the researchers thought would strengthen the relationship between educators and pregnant teenagers in schools. (Mpanza & Nzima 2010).

In South Africa, law forbids excluding pregnant teenagers from school and permits young parents to continue with their schooling. However, the existence of progressive policy and law does not by itself ensure that pregnant teenagers and young parents remain in school or experience as little disruption to their studies as possible. Two of the factors influencing the experiences that pregnant girls and young parents have are the attitudes and practices of teachers. It was investigated how teachers in diverse South African secondary schools respond to young women's pregnancy and parenting. Teachers' responses are situated within a complex set of meanings invoking sexuality (and sexual censure), gender, class and race. This study argues that many teachers view teenage pregnancy and parenting as social problems – a domain of sexual shame with negative effects and disruptive to the academic life of the school. In fact, teachers show care and concern for pregnant women and young parents, providing some hope for better experiences of schooling

and the schools provide any formal school-based support and training for their learners. (Deevia Bhana, Robert Morrell, Tamara Shefer & Sisa Ngabaza, 2010).

On the contrary, a study in United Kingdom discussed the issue of teenage pregnancy as how schools perceived it. Accordingly, there is an unrecognised crisis in the education of pregnant schoolgirls and schoolgirl mothers. Girls leaving school due to pregnancy are not reported in official statistics. This has serious consequences in terms of resource allocation and planning of service provision. It also examines how teenage girls are forced out of the mainstream education system because they are pregnant or have given birth. The consequences for the young mothers and their children are dramatic—as a result of their missing out on the crucial experience of education they may be left disaffected from society with poor future employment and life prospects. The study concludes that despite new government schemes trying to address some of the issues of teenage pregnancy, there is a lost generation of teenage girls who have become pregnant and given birth in the last two to three years and who have effectively 'fallen through the net'. (Lall, 2007).

Education is the Key. The study of Sloan 2012; cited by Rosario, et. al 2016 revealed that the teenage girls who were participants on the study were confronted with the decision whether to continue with the pregnancy or not. They had to seriously considered their educational and employment options. These decisions, according to them, were not easy to make. Teen mothers who received strong support not only from their families but especially from school managed to finish high school, while their counterparts who did not have such kind of support failed to do so (Jamal, 2014; Mangino, 2008; Rosario, et. al, 2016). More so, these women emphasized the importance of education, that is education is key to a better future.

In a study conducted in the Philippines that explored the lived experience of adolescent mothers during their college years. Eight participants were asked, via unstructured interview, to share their experiences as college students in the midst of pregnancy. Results show that the participants went through several stages in their plight: they faced the complexities of adolescent pregnancy alongside college education; dealt with life and educational conflicts; appreciated the importance of education; found the resolve to carry on for their child; and dreamt of a better future for their families. Consistent with academic literature, the participants' experiences show that adolescent mothers are vulnerable in the education setting, and need proper guidance to achieve their full potential. Thus, education plays a significant role both on prevention of occurrence and even after the occurrence of teenage pregnancy looking into its implications to life and future of the learners. (Gatbonton, 2021).

Statement of the Problem

This study described teenage pregnancy as an emerging issue among high school learners in one of the Municipalities in Mindanao from the perspectives of both the teachers and school heads. It described their experience of challenges in dealing with learners who engage in pre-marital sex and become pregnant at an early age, and their responses and actions on the issue.

METHODS

This study utilized descriptive qualitative research design to describe teenage pregnancy as an emerging issue among high school learners from the perspectives and experiences of both the school heads and the teachers from the different secondary schools in the municipality. This design was utilized to be able to generate in-depth data from the participants through their narratives and experiences on dealing with the issue on teenage pregnancy among high school learners.

A total of eight participants have participated in this study. Four of them are school heads of the identified schools with the most number of cases of teenage pregnancy and the other four are classroom teachers who have been advisers of learners with cases of pre-marital sex and teenage pregnancy. The schools were identified through referral from the Municipal Social Welfare Development Office (MSWDO) of the local government unit of the municipality based on its record of teenage pregnancy cases.

Two sets of focused group discussion were conducted in this study. The first FGD was done with the school heads with 4 participants. The second FGD was conducted with 4 teachers as participants. FGD guide was used as instrument for data gathering. The tool was developed by the researchers and checked and validated by the panel of experts.

The data generated from the interviews were analyzed through thematic analysis. The data were transcribed and coded. In the coding, significant statement that are relevant to the questions were extracted, assigned them with meanings/concepts and these concepts were clustered into themes or categories.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

School Heads' Perspective on Teenage Pregnancy

Teenage Pregnancy has become a common issue among high school students

As shared by the school heads who are the first set participants of the study, they were saying that there is a shift on how learners regard teenage pregnancy from being a taboo to becoming an ordinary phenomenon in today's time. With their encounters on dealing with the issue on teenage pregnancy and early marriage, they seem to agree that most of the high school students today are no longer surprised whenever they learn that they have classmates or schoolmates who are confirmed pregnant. Pregnancy among teenagers in school has become too alarming as shared by one school head. The other school head even compared his experience saying that during their time in high school, when one of their classmates becomes pregnant, it was really something that should not be talked about by just anyone in school since it was something embarrassing for their classmates and family. He added,

Pero parang as the time passes by parang nagbabago ang prespektibo ng ating lipunan, ng ating society regarding that one. Most especially the youth. (School Head 1)

(As time goes by, the society, especially the youth has already change their perspective on the issue of teenage pregnancy)

Other participants have also shared their sentiments saying that,

Parang usual na lang talaga sa mga bata ngayon ang teenage pregnancy.. (School Head 2)
(Teenage pregnancy becomes usual among the young people)

Ang mga bata (ngayon) gusto na silang mag-early marriage kasi may edad yun sa kanila (referring to the guy)... (School Head 3)

(The young females today opt to marry early particularly with older men)

Kasi nakita namin na nagsisimula doon sa Grade 10, Andaming nabubuntis, early marriages...Diyan din nagsisimula..parang commong na lang sa mga Grade 10....(School Head 4)

(As observed, early marriages usually occur among the grade 10 students)

Noong una nag-ano na gid kami sa province na alarming na gid. Pinuntahan kami sang province kag nag conduct sila ng parang orientation sa Grade 10, Grade 11 kag 12. Kasi nakita namin nagsisimula doon sa Grade 10. Ang daming nabubuntis sa Grade 10. Early marriages diyan din nagsisimula sa Grade 10. Parang normal na lang sa kanila yan every time.. (School Head 3)

(An initial dialogue with the provincial government has already been conducted. An orientation-awareness program has already been conducted)

One school head has pointed out data from the Guidance Office of school where he is assigned. The cases of teenage pregnancy have been increasing. In the school that he manages, there are 23 cases of pregnancy during the current school year. Of which, 5 are below 18 years old while the rest are 18 years old but still studying as senior high school students.

Most of the cases we have in the school ay nandoon talaga sa Senior High School parang iyon din ang sa ibang eskwelahan. Karamihan talaga sa kanila nandoon sa Senior High School...(School Head 1)

(Most cases of teenage pregnancy are happening in the Senior High School level)

The school heads agreed that students adopt many things from their exposures to social media. Their behaviors are influenced by what they can see from the internet. They become liberated when it comes to the way they dress- up, their expressions, and they usually follow what are trending and popular. As observed by the school heads on the behavior of the students in school both male and female, they follow everything that is in the social media. One school head has pointed out that this behavior is true to most learners regardless whether they belong to indigenous group or not. He mentioned that availability of gadgets and easy access to internet are the noticeable factors on learners' being too exposed to social media which consequently influenced their behaviors.

Accessible ang tanan nga pwede nila ma tun-an. Ang ingana nga kaso, sa amon nga side lisod na namon siya in control kay dili kami ang ila kauban kung unsaon nila ang paggamit ang ila nga mga gadget kay naa man sila sa balay. Okay lang kung na sila sa school kay kaya naton sila i-regulate. Pero okay naa na sa balay lisod na ni i-control sa ilaha (School Head 4)

(The students have easy access to technology that are influential to their behaviors. When in school, this can be regulated but difficult when at home)

Ganinha ginastoryahan naton ang IP, bisan si IP or sa hindi man IP pero ang social media karon damo contribution. Kay karon nga pandemic ara lang sila sa balay, wala sila ginahimona iban kundi maglantaw sang ila nga cellphone, ug tanan sila may cellphone kay tungod gani mag demand para sa school (School Head 1)

(Even in the case of the indigenous people (IP) students. They have already been influenced by social media. During the pandemic, they just stayed home and spent most of their time with social media)

One school head has cited an example referring to some suggestive posts in social media that affect the sexual urges of the both male and female learners. As pointed out, common to this suggestive gestures are sexy dancing, showing of body parts, use of seductive languages, etc. The school heads agreed that all these are being imitated by the learners- be it a male or female.

Talagang very open na sila doon sa ano... At saka lahat ng mga impormasyon na nais nilang i-learn ay nandoon na sa social media including 'yong mga bagay na dapat sana sa kanilang edad hindi pa nila inuusisa... (School Head 3)

(Students can have all the access with social media. They get whatever information that they can learn from which are supposedly not yet suited to their age)

The school heads agreed during the dialogue that these exposures to social media have significant influence on the sexual affairs of the learners. One participant even shared that she has observed every time a guy show motives to female learner, usually the female then feels good about being given attention to especially if the guy is quite older and with income. It somehow increases her self-esteem and easily get into a relationship with him especially after agreeing to a sexual activity with the guy.

Kanina pinag-usapan na natin yung regarding sa mga IPs pero tingnan mo mga IPs marami pa ring mga teenage pregnancies kasi sa ngayon para bang ano, in my own observation, na sa isip ng mga bata ngayon paghindi lang mag shota basta walang rituals. Puwede kana mag shota, mag uyab kung wala rituals. Naga rituals sila ngayon is sex talaga, that is growing also in social media kasi open lang man lang yan doon. (School Head 3)

(In the context of the IP learners, as observed, they think that it's okay to engage with relationship for as long as there's no rituals. But now, they do rituals and mostly they do sex as part of rituals. They become too liberated because also of the influence by social media)

Tolerance and some circumstances of parents

Some parents are lenient in monitoring their children's involvements in school and even in their off-campus activities. When the school heads were asked about their observations on how parents deal with the issue on pregnancy of their children, they shared that when a learner gets pregnant, the parents usually agree immediately to their daughter's marriage even at young age. This usually happens among Grade 10 students within the age range of 15-17 years old.

Based on the sharing of the school in reference to the data from their respective schools, it was during the pandemic when the cases of teenage pregnancy has increased. Apparently, the learners were not in school and their teachers have less contact with them. As claimed by the school heads, since these children are in the comfort of their homes during their modular learning, their parents must have the huge part in monitoring and supervising them.

Based from the sharing of the participants, they have also interviewed some parents why these things happen. Accordingly, the parents admitted that there are times that they could no longer control their own children while some seem not to be too vigilant on the affairs of their children particularly on the romantic relationship and sexual affairs of their children. Many circumstances that only when the children already got pregnant that they respond. The school heads admitted that the school has limitation to control the behaviors and activities of the students when they are at home. On the other hand, the participants also consider that parents priority day by day is to work for their living that they could not give their full attention to their children's whereabouts and circumstances. Some of them are working from afar and the children are just left with some relatives.

I'm very upset dahil walang parent na naga-guide sa kanila kasi diyan sa May Senior High School na man kami diyan. Napapansin naming mostly sa mga early marriages and teenage pregnancies ang mga parent nila nasa abroad, nag trabaho Davao, Gensan, so walang nagga-guide sa kanila.. (School head 3)

(I am disappointed because their parents are not doing their part in guiding and monitoring their own children. Understandably, their parents are working in other cities so nobody guides them)

As encountered by one participant, most learners who are being forced to get married do not actually approved for it. They were forced due to their traditions and for some circumstances. There were instances that these forced marriages are customarily because of debts. The parents have no other option but to allow their young child to be married to someone they are indebted with. As shared by one school head, he wishes to pay the debts but not financially capable. This forced marriage is usually the desire alone of the parents and not by the children. Forced marriage results to pregnancy at teenage years. As encountered by the school based on their investigations, some officials in the barangay who are relatives of the female learner are guilty in the "bayad utang" because they have also benefitted from the money given by the male.

So ako silang gi ingnan nga, dili gud ko mo sugot nga inyo idayunon ang kasal. In-ana man sa isa ka part sang lalaki, Sir. Daghan na pud sila na kuha. Parang tabi tabi lang sir tapos atong partial lang gani asta nag dako na. Tapos ing dako, pila na tanan ang nakuha tapos kwenta-kwenta nila mga 80,000. Gi-trace sino ang nakakuha ng pera meron ante, lola, tiyo, o di kaya nakakantandang kapatid...(School head 1)

(I was very persistent not to continue push through with the arrange marriage. However, it was quite challenging since the male involved has already shelled out money to the family of the students. The amount of accumulated has almost reach 80, 000.00.)

Pag trace ko, kinsan man sa tiya, asawa ng Barangay Kagawad. Yung tiyo, Barangay Kagawad, may tiyo pa na isa Barangay Captain. Unsaon nako kapugong. That time surrender na lang ko, pagbiyan ako na luoy gid ko sa bata kay mahilak gud kay dili pa siya magasawa. 13 years old first honor pa gid sayang kayo ang bata. (School Head 1)

(When traced who benefitted from the money, the auntie, the wife of the barangay kagawad, the uncle and even the barangay captain have benefitted)

Kagawad, tulo ka kagawad, asawa ka kagawad ug isa ka kapitan ang nag sigi kuha dire, nahimulos sa kwarta. So amo to nag-undang na lang akuang pagsiay, wala gid na ko punggan ang bata. As of now tulo na siguro ang anak. (School Head 3)

(The barangay kagawad, the wife of the kagawad, the bragy captain were identified to have benefitted from the money)

Issues concerning learners from the encounters of the school heads

'Cultural mindset' brings pressure to the learners to be married which leads to teenage pregnancy

Marrying among the female members of the indigenous group is a common phenomenon. In fact, it becomes a norm that at an early age, one must already be married. Those who are still studying are affected and influenced with this kind of orientation. Because of pressure, they too resort to marrying even too early. These young female are being pressured with the idea that

'To be different from the rest is unacceptable and shame'. This has been a mindset within the culture of the group that since the rest are already married even at a young age, others must also be in order to cope with their set standard of being 'woman' in the that cultural group.

Alarming kayo siya no. Dili lang siya maka-apekto sa isa ka Pamilya, community man pud gina dala niya. Kay isa ka ginatrabaho sang isa ka bata nga amo na siya makita sa kauban mag epekto na siya sa iban niya nga kaubanan. Ang mahitabo is naa tay ginatawag na peer pressure. Sa atu-a nga mga IP nay peer pressure kay tungod kung medjo may edad na sila sir ang ingon na sa ilang kauban ikaw na ang wala na minyo. Para sa bata nga wala pa nag minyo kay wala naa siya ginahandom kay sa skwelahan na educate na man ta nang instill na dapat diay ma skwela ko, dapat diay naa koy maabot pero kung iyahang barkada sa community wala tanan naka eskwela, tanan naka minyo ang balik sa iyaha, ikaw na lang bala wala nag minyo. So ang nahitabo siya nga gusto mag pursue, siya ang gina-bully. Kung tanawon nimo sa ilang grupo. or sa ilahang grupo siya ang lahi so ang nahitabo siya ang gina bully biskan siya ang naga pursue. (School Head 3)

(The issue is already alarming. It does not only affect a family but the entire community. The IP students most of the time experienced peer pressure too within their culture. If you are not married, you are different. At time, you are bullied. It brings pressure to them. In effect, they are forced to get married at an early age due to pressure instead of pursuing their education.)

As observed by the school heads, cultural mindset of the people in the community is a huge contributing factors why children need to marry a guy even not according to their preference at an early age. Based from the stories and experiences of the children that they have interviewed, this is acceptable as practiced in their cultural group.

Ten years man gud ko sa community. I have been there nag-settle. Iba sir, bisan mag ano lang na didto, i-paminyo na diresto sang parents ang ila anak.. Na immerse gid ko sa

TEENAGE PREGNANCY AMONG LEARNERS: SCHOOL'S PERSPECTIVES, CHALLENGES
AND RESPONSES

community for 10 years. Alam na alam ko ang kultura ng IP. Kabalo pud ko didto na even dili na man gud siya as in behind sa rural pero nangingibabaw talaga ang kultura bilang IP...Paminyoon na nila biskan dili pa ready ang ila anak.. (Sschool Head 2)
I have been immersed with the community for 10 years so I fully understand their culture. Parents do easily subject their children to early marriage. This is also because of the influence of their culture)

Pressure to engage in early marriage due to poverty

As shared by the participants, there is pressure in many instances for the learner to either conform or not to conform especially if the parents have already approved. In most cases, the parents are the ones pushing the marriage because of the financial benefit they can get from the male. From the encounters of the participants with the learners pregnant learners they have interviewed, it is also due to poverty why they have resorted to live with a male partner who can provide them their needs. Consequently, she gets pregnant. In their culture, the giving 'dowry' is still a practice even today. Dowry refers to the money, goods or property provided by the male to the family of the bride to be. A participants have several encounters on meddling between the parents and the male as the husband-to-be of the learners. One case was about the 32 year-old male who pushed through a young learner under the care of her grandmother. Accordingly, he was the one supporting the studies of the female learner without her own knowledge. The grandmother who served as her guardian has probably agreed on the set up as she also benefits from the money. The financial support the male gives for the study of the female learner is already a payment for her to be his wife. Eventually, even with the intervention of the school head trying to pacify the situation could not do anything as the male has already gave them big amount of money.

Ang lalaki 32 years old at that time. Kung tingnan mo sa physical appearance nila mismatch gid kaayo. Maganda ang bang babae, ang lalaki physically matanda na....That time naga-eskwela ang bata, siya diay ang nagahatag sa bata without knowing sa bata nga katong ginahatag sa lola gikan diay to sa lalaki. Kuha dito, ihatag sa bata. So that time wala, nag-surrender gid ko. (School Head 3)
(The male is 32 years old that time. By physical appearance, he looks really older than the female student. They are really mismatched. While the female student was still studying, he was the one giving the allowance through her grandmother. But, the student was not aware of it.)

Because of the dowry, the male has all the right to take away the female learner even if it's against her will. The agreement was only between the male and the parents. Usually, the parents agreed because of the money that they have already received. As a school head, they were saying that they can just do much of talking to both parties but the decision would always be the parents or guardian.

Pareha ana ma'am naka bayad na siyag bugay (dowry). Kung nag bayad na ug bugay ang lalake mu ingon lang mana sila nga ma'am, ako man gud sir ginapatawag ang parents no gina istory, gi pa ipon na nimo, ana siya yes ma'am kay nagbayad na man, nag bayad na kung partial. Unsa akong term gina ingon nakon sir, partial gali ng imong itik gah. Na gets niyo ang akon point nga ang bata gi bayaran lang ug partial nga dowre, gipadala ang bata so ano mahitabo expectedkay nagkuyog na sila padulong na siya sa pregnancy. (School head 1)
(The partial dowry was already given by the male to the family. He believed that he had all the right to get the female student because of the payment. The student was given to the male because of that....)

Tapos may isang estudyante nag iyak nag punta sa akin nagpatulong, sir ayaw ko talaga mag-asawa. 13 years old pa, grade 6 yun graduating. Sabi ko bakit, sabi niya naa na day gi buya sa iya. March yun malapit na ang graduation, sabi ko uyab nimo, dila man sir. Lahi man gud sa amon sir, ang ginikanan mong mag arrange marriage. Sabi ko sa kanya, kailan man sila mag punta dito, yung lalaki. Sabi nila sir bukas. Yung galing sa mga part ng mga lalaki, ung siping nila kinabikasan. Yung ginawa ko yung bata dinala ko sa bahay pagkagabi, kinausap ko yun kasama noong kapatid. Kinabukasan dinala ko rin balik sa skwelahan. Don sa school ko na lang pinakain ng tanghalian tapos mga bandang ala-una meron ng kamag-anak. Saan daw yung babae, sabi ko nandito office, walang makagalaw

nito, makakuha nito unless meron mag punta dito na galing sa inyo na matanda (School Head 4)

(One female student approached me and seek for help. She doesn't want to marry the man arranged for her. I have tried to intervene on my capacity. I momentarily kept the student in school, brought him home and talked with her sister. I did not allow her to be taken away unless a family member will come and talk to me)

Additionally, it is observed that due to the material things such as money (especially) why female learners are easily hooked by the male partners. As shared by the heads, these males are outsiders from the schools. Some of them are drivers and workers in the town. Female are enticed with goods and money because these are the things that they lack and are not provided for them by their parents. In most cases, base from the interview of the heads with the female learners, they were saying that they are not actually attracted with their partners. They just find comfort because they are provided with their needs even their needs for their studies.

Ito pa kasi yung nakita kong problema ma'am, regarding sa teenage pregnancy yung mga babae are in school ang mga partner nila mga outsiders. Isa rin yung siguro yun sa affecting factor, ang mga bata ngayon mga realistic na kasi karamihan sa mga partners nila sa labas meron mga trabaho nagbibigay ng pera so by the time na sigena sila tagaan, makuha sila. (School Head 3)

(That is the problem that I have observed. Our female students have partners who are from outside the school. These male partners are already working that provides them money which in turn, they are asked with sexual favor that they can no longer refuse.)

Accountability

The issue on accountability is also one among the concerns pointed out by the school heads during the interview. It was pointed out by the school heads that some marriages involving their learners do not have marriage contract as legal document. When asked why is it happening, the school heads could not also explain. Although in many instances, they also question the validity of the marriage.

Secondly, it has been in the mindset of most parents whom the school heads have encountered with that whenever the children (daughter) has already slept with male, they already let go of their responsibility and accountability with their children. To borrow the term used by the school heads, it's as if they the parents have no obligation to the children at all. The school heads' encounter with the parents event with their usual dialogue with them attests this situation in the home structure of some families in the community. As shared by the school heads, this is true most especially among the indigenous group.

Pareho karon ang mga bata wala marriage contract so ma-ano atoh. So akua kay gina explain maayo sa parents, kay after ani mura man gud mahulog nga after ma minyo ang bata buhian ang parents. Wala na sila'y pakia-alam sa ilahang mga anak gyud.(School Head 1)

(As observed, marriage contract does not exist as document of marriage. Once the daughter got married, they no longer take responsibility with their own daughter.)

After ma siping ang bata buhian na sa parent ang bata kag ihatag ang full responsibility balhin sa lalaki. Karon pagtawagon na nimo ang parents ma-ingon na dayun ang parents na ma'am minyo na man gud na siya ma'am, iyahang na bana ang may responsibility. (School Head 2)

(The parents may let go of their responsibility as guardians with their own daughter once she has already been touched by a male arranged for her to marry.)

Kahit may parents na man sila pabaya lang gid kaya yun nag early marriage, nag asawa na lang kahit bata pa. Pero as school leader (School Head 3)

(Even if the parents are around, some still don't show much care about their own children. As a result, the children would opt to marry even too early instead.

The male, in many instances, do not also take full responsibility for the education of the student after their 'sipping'. When they are invited for a conference in school, they do not show up. This posits a

challenge for the school on how to address this issue. As shared, they already tried to lobby the case to the Barangay council to intervene in this situation to call for a dialogue among the involved parties including their parents.

Karon sir kung tawagon nimo ang bana, ang bana magpakita ug walay interest nga magpaskwela sa bata nga ni pero actually sa amon nga part gina try gid namon sila exertan effort mao gani karon September nag ano nako sir murag barangayan. Naki pag-coordinate nako sa mga barangay council nga together with DSWD kung pwede kung dili na namon kaya, di ma reach ang bata, di ma reach and parent, di man ma reach ang husband, kung pwede ba nga i-agi namon sa council para didto namon storyahan para ang involvement dili lang kami sa school kundi involvement ibalhin na pud namon paadto sa barangay para tanan munaog, mupongko kung unsahon namon tung duha nga ilahang isiping. (School Head 3)

(There are instances that we call for the husband to remind them about their obligation with regard to the schooling of their wife. Mostly, they do not show interest to give support. We have already coordinated with the Barangay council to look into this situation. Even the parents do not show interest at all. So, we lobby to the barangay council to invite all the involved individuals in order to have agreement.)

Schools' Responses

Ensuring Learners' Welfare

The school heads shared that they always ensure the welfare of their students. When it comes to their pregnant learners, they facilitate their needs in order to continue schooling. They provide the learners with modules so they may continue their studies. As a result, these pregnant students have finished studies. Some teachers do home visitation for the pregnant learners to ensure their safety and health. The school heads so monitor the safety of the learner who sought help from the school when forced to be married against her will.

Even before the pandemic, meron na kaming mga modules din na ginagamit para ibigay sa mga batang ito para lang makapagpatuloy sila sa kanilang pag-aaral. True enough, karamihan sa kanilang nagmomodule ay nakapagtapos din sa kanilng simulation.. (School Head 2)

(Modules are provided for the learners even for those who got pregnant in the middle of the school year. True enough, those who push through with their studies through modular approach, they were able to finish.

Ang role namin sa school, hindi naming sila pinahinto...tinutulungan talaga naming na makapagtapos..kahit magmodular pa..(School Head 1)

(It is part of our role in the school ensure that they can be able to finish their studies even through modular approach)

Kaya noong pandemic, ngayon may graduation tayo, may five babies kaming bagong nanganak na nagpasok ng graduation. Gi-cater lang talaga naming sila. Tapos ang iba ngayon kasi modular man tayo, Nakaka-college. So naka pursue pa rin sila sa college pero yun lang ang iba naghinto na talaga after graduation.. (School Head 4)

(During pandemic, we've got 5 babies born before the graduation. Their mothers were able to join the graduation. We also have graduated who even push through with college education)

There were instances that the schools heads have intervened on family issues when the learner seek for their help and when the school head finds that its necessary to intervene for the sake of the safety of the learners.

Tapos may isang estudyante nag iyak nag punta sa akin nagpatulong. Sir, ayaw ko talaga mag-asawa. Thirteen years years old pa, grade 6 yun graduating. Sabi ko bakit, sabi niya na naa diay gi buya sa iya. March yun malapit na ang graduation, sabi ko uyab nimo, dili man sir. Lahi man gud sa amon sir, ang ginikanan mong mag arrange marriage. Sabi ko sa kanya, kailan man sila mag punta dito.. Sabi nila sir bukas. Yung galing sa mga part ng mga lalaki, ung siping nila kinabikasan. Yung ginawa ko yung bata dinala ko sa bahay

pagkagabi, kinausap ko yun kasama noong kapatid. Kinabukasan dinala ko rin balik sa skwelahan. Don sa school ko na lang pinakain ng tanghalian tapos mga bandang ala-una meron ng kamag-anak. Saan daw yung babae, sabi ko nandito office, walang makagalaw nito, makakuha nito unless meron mag punta dito na galing sa inyo na matanda. (School Head 2)

(One female student approached and seek for help. She was being forced to marry by her parents to a man she doesn't like. I tried to facilitate the situation. The schedule of their 'sipping' is already the following day and the student doesn't really want it. So I brought her home just for her to feel safe. The following day at the office, I have talked with her sister and asked that she can only go home when someone from the elders of the family would come to the office to fetch her)

Pero sa dugayan makuha nimo ang simpatiya sang mga olds, palangga pud nila, mo respeto na sila. Same with the other school nako na assignment sir, pre-pandemic time first school year nako na assignment didto, akon gid ginapaginkan na wala gyud maminyo na estudyante kasi every now and then during meeting namo gapanguta gid ko sa kaubanan na teachers, kinsa man ninyo sa inyong mga bata balan ninyo naga uyab-uyab. Na-a sila nabalan naga uyab-uyab, akon ginatawag, dili nako sila pabulagon, ako sila gina orient. Weekly ko sila gina orient sa ilaha. Kisami ko na sila gina storyahan, dili dapat magpatintal. Dili man gud mapunggan. So first school year, walay early marriage, walay teenage pregnancy. During pandemic time, within two years onse dayun and na buntis. Lahat ng mga studyante nababa yun, yung nag-asawa sa kanila taga labas. Wala hindi na talaga na control kasi wala na man akong contact sa kanila.(School Head 3)

(Once you get the sympathy of the elders, they will respect you too. During the pre-pandemic, in the school where I was assigned, I really tried to ensure that no student will be married at an early age. I constantly monitor the students through their teachers. I keep asking the teachers to closely monitor their advisory classes. Teachers are asked to always orient the students, especially those who are in a relationship to be responsible beings. Before the pandemic, there were no cases of teenage pregnancy because of the close monitoring of teachers. But during the pandemic, there were many cases recorded.)

Intervention programs for the students to address the problem on teenage pregnancy

As shared by the school heads, they explicitly articulate in their thrusts to prioritize addressing the teenage pregnancy issue in schools. They emphasized that to educate the learners is the business of the school. They prioritize teenage pregnancy as issue to be addressed as part of the discussions during the planning and evaluation with among administrators and other stakeholders. It was mentioned by the school head that a research study was conducted in relation to the sexual engagement of the students. The findings has become the point of discussion during the planning. The policy on "No cellphone policy" was implemented to lessen the cases of teenage pregnancy. This is one example of the strategies they have implemented as part of their evaluation of the problem.

As much as business of the education is to give education to the learners, naka focus ang skwelahan para doon sa implementation ng curriculum of course the school governance kasali din doon. Although mayroon din na man tayong programs and interventions na ginagawa para doon sa ating mga kaso ng mga estudyante na ito but of course we are only limited to ano yung pag provide lang ng intervention na maipagpatuloy ang kanilang pag-aarala kaht paoano. (SH1) (The school focused more on the implementation of the curriculum. School Governance is part of it. There are also several interventions we do concerning this issue. The kind of intervention we do is limited to what and how we can help them to be able to finish their studies despite their situation)

Naging dahilan din siya nagkaroon kami ng resolution doon sa no cellphone policy ng paaralan noong nag pre-pandemic pa and I would say na yung aming no cellphone policy ay mayroon contribution na medyo na lessen yung aming teenage pregnancy during that time kasi yung cellphone nila nasa bahay so wala silang contact kung sino yung contact nila. May impact siya para doon. So that's one thing na napag-usapan namin which is MEPA. (SH2) (This has been our basis of implementing our no cellphone policy in school

TEENAGE PREGNANCY AMONG LEARNERS: SCHOOL'S PERSPECTIVES, CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

since pre-pandemic. We can say that the implementation of this policy has contributed to lessen case. Since they are not bringing their phones, it prohibits them to contact their partners outside the school. Further,

During the crafting of the implemented rules, it was mentioned that this issue on teenage pregnancy and how to address has already been part of the discussion in the SMEPA. After identifying those issues and concerns of various schools, they come up with certain program.

'Toga muna bago Buda' is also one of the the umbrella program of the school where all the other programs are anchored in. Example: symposium, counseling, classroom homeroom activities, counseling with parents, integrate health education in the subject, alertness of the teachers, make it as an advocacy of teachers and administrators.

In order to strengthen the awareness of the learners on the issue of teenage pregnancy and to instill in them the value of education, the schools initiate several awareness initiatives for their learners welfare. They provide symposia/conferences with the students on how to handle relationship and the importance on prioritizing education. They also provide lecture for the students related to teenage pregnancy through the help of the DSWD.

So amo na siya gina ano gid namon, as in ang lecture sir dili lang nag stop sa school naga padayun mi pakadto sa community. Bisan si DSWD gina tap na namon siya nga time. Ginahulat lang namon ang program daw lecture lang gyapon sila about ana. Ang youth dire sa munispyo naga lecture, si DSWD naga lecture pag abot senior high school ga lecture kay naami personality development. Didto mo gid na siya isulod tanan. Parepareha lang mutando lang ang bata, mu yes lang ang bata, mo ngisi lang ang bata. So asa namon ibutang ang among kugalingon, kung asa pa namon isulod ang amoa mga gusto para ana kay kung baga ma'am ara na siya tanan..(SH4)

(We ensure that lectures we provide should not only be in school. We invite DSWD to provide lecture/session too in the community. Our youth organizations in the LGU also provides lecture. We also provide lecture for the Senior High School on personality development. These participants during the lecture will simply listen and say yes as if they have internalized the talk. So, what else can we do? We have I think done everything.)

Noong di pa pandemic nakatulong din yun, iyo yung napansin naming. During that time gumawa kami ng symposium. After how many months, nagbuntis na iyang bata sir. Ang rason parang nag explore na hinuon sila. Muna gud na ang amon na pansin. Pirte daghana na minyo atong mga panahon, mayo na lang gani naagapan namon na biskan na buntis sila, na minyo sila naabtan nato sila na pandemic, amo na to sila nag-graduate during sa pandemic nga naka graduate gihapon sila. Out of curiosity, ang intervention nga amon gihatag sa unta sa ilaha, nahimo hinuong... lima gud. Katung mga years na after nag explore ang mga bata. (SH4)

(During pre-pandemic, we have conducted symposium. I think it helped somehow. After several months, there cases again. It seems that they really explored and wanted to experience it. During the pandemic, several lived with their partners (not married). It's good that we were able to save some of them. Though they got pregnant, we convinced them to continue schooling. Five of them were able to finish during pandemic.)

As shared by one school head, in their school, they have conducted symposium where the school invited alumni to give testimony on the importance of education and being responsible when it comes to engaging into romantic relationship while studying. The couples are both alumni of the school who were once 'love birds' during their high school years and eventually got married after they finished studies

Integration in the Curriculum

Integrating in the different subjects all the important reminders and orientations on health education including the negative implications pre-marital sex among the learners is also among the priority of the school. The school heads shared that they ask the guidance office to orient the students during homeroom classes on the negative impact of not being careful in dealing with romantic relationship including the negative implications of becoming pregnant and being a mother at an early age.

Another strategy the schools have been doing is to keep students busy engaging in the various school activities. This way, they can divert their attentions to be more productive with school tasks.

Doon na man sa school namin di kami nagkulang sa intervention. Unang-una kasali talaga yan sa aming mga school activities na we will keep our learners busy. Monthly meron kaming celebration just to divert the mind...Noon pa lang po na hindi tayo sa pandemic, loaded kami sa activities para lang ma divert lang ang utak nila na mag minyo-minyo sila. (SH3) (We did not lack in providing interventions. In our school, we really provide them several activities to keep them busy. We conduct monthly activities to divert their attention to a more productive things.)

Continuation...

Then isa sa mga ginawa naming na celebration noon nag invite kami galing dito sa trabaho. Mayroon two lover birds, hindi masyado ano ang lalaki nag propose ang lalaki na mag early marriage sila. So far mag six years na ako doon, parang dalawa lang yung nasa senior high school na nag-asawa sila junior high school pero nag padayun lang gihapon sila pag eskewla (One interesting initiative we did, we invited our alumni who are couple already. Way back to their story, they were lovers when they were still students. The man proposed for married to the woman. But, they continued to study and finished. So, they live together for six year already.)

Usually yung mga ano natin diresto na sila sa nakapag-aral, naka senior high school, tuloy di na magminyo. Usually yung magminyo na sa lower grade dili mana studyante sir. Outsider sila. Usual gid namatabo bata pa ni sila pero so far din ha sa school naa na siya'y intervention binibigay natin sa mga bata. Mayroon tayong consultation. Career guidance, isa rin siya para may focus ay ganito pala gawin. Mag invite tayo ng mgs resource speaker. Noong di pa pandemic nakatulong din yu, iyo yung napansin naming. During that time gumawa kami ng (SH3). (In our case here, usually, the SHS who engage in pre-marital sex and got pregnant, usually they don't go for marriage, they finish opt to finish high school. Most of their lovers are actually out own students. They are outsiders. What we give them as intervention, we do counselling for them, career guidance. We invite resource persons also to give talk for them.)

While it is true that, integration of lessons in the curriculum to educate further the learners on reproductive health and personality development, the participants still admit that there seems to be lacking in terms of highlighting in the curriculum contents on prevention of teenage pregnancy.

Siguro so in terms of curriculum, di masyado na integrate talaga yung prevention ng teenage pregnancy kasi doon sa curriculum yung focus lang is reproductive health particularly with for junior high school, it is in the MAPEH. For the senior high school, sa personality developmet ng ating naka-integrate. But in terms of yung concrete talaga na integration dun sa specific na ano ba dapat gawin ni estudyante para ma uiawasan niya ito. Parang yung pa ang wala sa intergration ng curriculum.(SH1)

(Prevention of teenage pregnancy is not explicitly taught for the students as part of the curriculum content. Although, it has included reproductive health and personality development for Junior High School.)

Consistent dialogue with the parents and other stakeholders

The school heads shared their common experience on dealing with the parents and how they have consistently been reminding and talking with them. The school heads tackle the issue during assemblies and meetings with parents, they onference with them to make them understand their roles as parents to their children. There are also some informal /casual conferences with parents emphasizing to them the value of education. They also explain to them their important roles in helping and nurturing their own children.

For the IP parents, they explain to them that being IP should not limit their goal for their children that daughter's marriage shouldn't be payment for family's debts. They have conferences with the parents and made them, understood the consequences of not taking good care of their children.

TEENAGE PREGNANCY AMONG LEARNERS: SCHOOL'S PERSPECTIVES, CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

As a school leader, ginapa-understand namon sa ila ang role nila as a parent so hindi porket IP ka hanggat doon na alng ang paanaw sa mga anak ninyo. Hanggang nagkaroon na... nag kampi na ang barangay. May mga resolution na ginawa. (SH1).

(As a school leader, we make them understood their roles as parents. We try to instill to them that being IP doesn't limit them to dream bigger for their children.)

Gipaintindi sa ila sir, gipaintindi sa ila na hindi dapat bayad ang bata sa utang sang parents. Parang gina-insist talaga nila ang kultura (SH2)

(We make them understood that children should not serve as payment for debts.)

Pinuntahan ko yung magulang at sabihin ko sa kanila, pagtinuloy mo yan pa-file-an kita ng kaso pero parang psywar. (SH3)

(I approached the parents. I advised them to stop (*exploiting their children*) or or else I will file them case)

As to other intervention na ma gagawa naming sa school is..kasi may ano kami tinatawag na Convergence of the Stakeholders and the School yung ang tintawga namin na SMEPA, School monitoring, evaluation and plan adjustment. Lahat ng indicators ng school ay nandon na. Isa sa mga tinitingnan natin sa school is yung enrollment, yung course survival, drop rate kung saan madalas na nagiging problema for the course survival is is tong maaga pa nag-asawa, yung mga pregnancy ng mga batang babae ang nandoon. So napag-uusapan naming doon sa aming convergence sa SMEPA kung ano yung mga dapat gawin. Tama yun involvement of LGU, madalas ka partner naming ara sa advocay ng paaralan isa yun na masasabi ko ting na konkretong intervention na nagagawa ng paralaan. I think there is also one time na isa sa mga grupo ng mga kaguruan naming nag conduct ng research. (SH1)

(In terms of intervention, we have this convergence of stakeholders and the school. We call it SMEPA which stands for School monitoring, evaluation, plan and adjustment. All the indicators of the school are there including enrolment and drop-out rate which common cause is pregnancy. It this meeting with the stakeholders, we discuss the issue and brainstorm collectively possible solutions to the problems we face on teenage pregnancy.)

From the Point of View of the Teachers

Teachers' Perspectives on teenage pregnancy based from their encounters with the identified students

The participants shared that the pounding and pressing issue on teenage pregnancy concerning the students of the schools in the municipality of Malungon is rooted to several factors which are categorized into learners' choice, home environment and poverty. According to them, the schools in the municipality have already been initiating several awareness programs and initiatives for the students in order to strengthen their focus on their studies rather than engaging in romantic relationship which usually affect their studies. However, the teachers shared that, despite the strong effort of the teachers in school to guide and monitor the students, especially those who are identified to be at-risk of pregnancy, there are factors beyond the control of the teachers which contribute to the issue confronting the students.

Students' own decision to engage due to the benefits

The first factor as shared by the teachers is on students' own decisions to explore. The teachers have observed that students, particularly the females are usually in a relationship as their own decision either because they just wanted to experience it or they get material and financial benefit from it. In many instances, the students learned to become independent and tried to relate with a man who can provide their needs financially. For the teachers, the students find it somehow pleasurable without thinking about the consequences. They acknowledge that they have no control on whether the learners want to get married or live with their partners. They gain more benefits (financially) when they live with their partner rather than with their parents. They like the idea that they are given attention by their lovers (outside the school).

They tend to be curious, aggressive and practical. As openly shared by the learners with the teacher participants, they also like the idea of marrying despite being young for the reason that they can avail and enjoy the material things that they want. As shared by students, there are many cases that their husband or partners are way older than them. They enjoy the benefits they get particularly the material things. The students are usually influenced by the social media. Whatever the trend is, they also tend to follow, thus, their lifestyles and preferences also changes. These students found comfort and care from the boyfriend who is older. Some narratives of the teachers based from their encounters with the students they have dealt with are as follow:

Na-a man siya'y motor kag wala siya motor so mo-angkas man na siya. Naabot na sa punto nga didto na siya mauli sa balay ka-lalaki. Nga-a mangabudlay pa man siya ka bakolay. Naka-pangita siya ug comfort ba (Teacher 1)
(He has motorcycle (referring to the male partner). He fetches the female student going home. Eventually, she lives already with the male partner. She finds comfort with the male partner.)

Kung baga naa'y someone nga ni-pamaper sa iyaha para okay ra ni mu hatag. Murag naa na siya kabuligan, Sir. Kung sa ilahang family baklan siya kilo-kilo ra pero kung mag-abot aning nga guy mag sal-ba biskan ano matabo. Nasalba na pud iyang income so napilitan siya nga i-go na lang niya..(Teacher 3)
(She finds comfort from someone who pampers her. Someone provides her needs that her family cannot provide. Thus, she decides to live with him)

Hayahay sila karon nga na-minyo sila. Kay ilang ingon, sa una sir anom (6) ka buok tapos pila ang income ni mama kag papa mao among bahinon. Tapos samantalang kami karon nag separate na mi, nag lain na mi, more than enough na ang income sang akong husband. Mas dako man gud ang bigay sang husband compare sa estudyante. Ingon sila more than enough na daw ang income sang iyang husband, mapalit na daw niya ang gusto niya paliton. Amo ni siya ang comment sa isa nako ka studyante. Ning upat (4) kay choice nila nga mag minyo (Teacher 4)
(They feel much secure financially not that they live with their partners. They feel more stable because their husband can provide enough for them unlike when they still live with their parents. From their experience, living with the condition of their parents was difficult.)

Nataandan ko sir sa Barangay National High School. Ang mag uyab talagang same grade level, ang babae ara sa pihak section, ang iyang boyfriend sa pihak section. Nag uyabay sila, nabuntisan sila. murag amo lang gid na sir ang akon matandaan na same grade level na buntisan niya ang iyang schoolmate. Most of the time gid sir kay naa sa gawas, older, may trabaho tapos ang bata naa sa school.(Teacher 2)(I recall one female student whose boyfriend is just from the other section. She got pregnant eventually. But most of the couples among students in school, the male partners are already working so they can provide the needs of the female students.)

As tackled by the teachers, there is also an increasing number of learners who are at-risk of pregnancy because of their engagement with other male who mostly are outside the outsiders or not students of the schools. Based from the knowledge of the teachers, these male lovers have jobs in the town, some are drivers and construction workers. When they are confronted about their condition, these students appear not ashamed of being pregnant. Borrowing from the words of One teacher-participant, "Daw usual lang na sa ilaha. There's no big deal kung buntis sila." As observed by the teachers, it seems that the students who are at-risk of pregnancy or those who are already in this condition are quite complacent for they are aware that the school may still allow them to push through their studies through modular. When given the advice, some learners seem not taking the advice for them seriously as experienced by the teachers. They seem to be listening and paying attention to the teachers' advise but in many instances, they still push through with their affairs. Consequently, they got pregnant. Learners are described to be aggressiveness and willing to explore things.

Maminaw man na sila Ma'am..pero dili gyud ginasunod. (Teacher 2)
(Often, they listen but they do not follow in actions.)

Masakit kasi nakita ko talaga yan noong wala pa Senior High School dami ang daming nabusong sa grade 10. Sige man ka-usad ang grade level. Every year yan tumataas ang number of cases. Yung sa bilog kanina para di natin ma blame ang paaralan kung mataas ang kaso kasi isipin natin karami ng factors tapos ito yung panahon nagiging neglected yung iba. Kung isipon mo kasi noon ang movie date ang may edad na nga 17 ero kung titingnan mo sir grade 4 may uyab na. Grade is 9 or 10. Kaya paaga ng paaga ang mga nabubuntis...(Teacher 4)

(It was a painful reality to see them on such situation. Cases are increasing every year. We cannot blame the school for that due to several factors. As, youth today are different. Before movie date is only done by 17 years old, but now, even 14, they already engaged in relationship.)

Dalawang taon na sir na ako talaga ang adviser ng na buntis na bata. That was last last year. Two years ago prior ng pandemic. Tapos ngayon in my class in grade 12 mayroon akong 3 na buntis. Noon una na last two years ago, naawa kasi ako sa bata kay she was from a broken family. At first, parang hindi ko siya nakikitaan na mabubuntis ang batang ito kasi maganda na man ang kanyang performance sa paaralan. Pero may ano na ako sir kung sino na mga bata ko na halimbawa na ma identify gid sila pero confident ako na iba yung bata kasi maganda na man ang kanya grado. (Teacher 4)

(I have been a class adviser of pregnant students for two school years. Two years ago, I really pity the student because she was from a broken family. At first, I was not able to notice that she was pregnant. Her performance in my class was okay. And her grades were actually okay. I really wonder it happened.)

The teachers said that they have been instilling in them the idea of prioritizing their studies over relationship but the learners especially those who are identified to be at-risk of pregnancy seem to be listening to the advice but not taking it very seriously.

Sa akon storya sir dili lang man gud broken family na mga bata, sa finances gid na sir. Tapos mostly sir, di gid sir murag majority gud sa ilaha, ang bata nga mabuntisan ang ilahang boyfriends are older. Kung boyfriend sir nasa labas na may trabaho lang kasi kulang sila sa finances because produkto sila ka broken family. Gibilin sa ilang ante, sa kanilang lola. Madala sila sa ilang uyab which is may edad na, may income na. Murag gaan sila sustento kay para nga, siguro binibigyan sila ng pera allowance (Participant 3)

(For me, it is not only due to having a broken family. It's really about financial needs. As observed, most of these students who got pregnant, their boyfriends are older than them. The lovers have work outside so they can provide their needs. Although, it is also evident that having a broken family is the reason why they go and live their boyfriends.)

Mga habal-habal driver. Yung dati may road constructions sa lugar, mga laborers. Pero nagsisilbi sila, di ako sigurado kung pirme sila ginagaan. Kung siguro malibre na ang pamasaha sa school, malibre na ang projects. Mga ganoon bagay kaya na ano sila sa inaana sir. Siguro ang ilang lola or mother or father, or kung ano man ang family ng iban, matagaan sila allowance or pangsud-an. (Teacher 3)

(Some of the students go with drivers and laborers. They provide their needs. Example, they are being provided with fare allowance, expenses for their projects, etc.)

Learners' Home Environment

The context of the learners at home is observed to have a big influence on the learners behavior as described by the teachers. Common issues at home are broken family set up of parents, children's exposures to their parents sexual activities, limited parental knowledge and parents' attitude on the issue confronted by their children.

As shared by one participant, the common family issue at home that affect learners' behavior is having parents who are separated. A teacher-participant shared that a student of him once opened up a family-related problem particularly on the separation of the parents. It was not necessarily because the child has been longing for affection from the parents but because the child has not been given proper

attention and guidance by the parents. One particular student shared with the teacher that it was the father who asked his daughter to stop from reporting to school due to pregnancy. The father said to the child that is was embarrassing. According to the teacher, she talked with the father and advise him to allow her daughter to continue her studies and the father approved. As described by the teacher, it happened to the student because of the complicated set up of the family. Her parents are separated. The father is working as a carpenter who is most of the time not at home. She's only under the care of her older sister who is also responsible of her own studies that is why the older sister could not also give much attention to her. Thus, she had all the chance to see her boyfriend and eventually escaped with him.

Tapos naiwan ang bata sa bahay ang kasama niya yung older sister pero ang sister man mo salig man kay abi ara lang sa balay lang so naiwan siya sa bahay ng mag-isa. Tapos mayroon siyang boyfriend. Ang boyfriend ang nakabuntis tapos di man siya panagutan ng kanyang boyfriend. Obviously nag layas (Teacher 4)

(The student is left at home with her older sister. Her sister is just so complacent that she is just staying at home. Without her sister's knowledge, the boyfriend of the student visits her sometimes. And because they are alone in the house, they can do it at home.)

The home structure is also a common concern shared by the teachers based on their knowledge and encounter with some at-risk of pregnancy learners. The learners were openly sharing with them their home set-up especially during bed time. As described by the teacher, "Irimaw lang daw sila matulog, Sir. Isa lang sila ug tulugan sa salog tanan. There are times dawn a ang bata kay makita nila ang ginabuhat sang ila ginikanan."

Sa discipline poor parental kay busy kayo sila. Ako sir ganoon din nanay ko pero basi lain man gud ilahang kinagisnan. Pero ang parent they spend time with us pero lahi man guro ang ilang mindsetting kay basi wala sila relihiyon sa bahay (Teacher 3)

(The reason can be poor parenting and poor discipline at home. Parents should spend time with their children. Their mind set is different now. Can also be because they do not have religion.)

Gina imagine na ko ba ano ang picture sa ilahang balay? Anong relationship sa bahay? Baka di maganda yung relationship tapos wala rin panahon si mama at papa sa bahay. Tapos maluwag disiplina. Murag lisod ba nga gusto naming at ginagawa naming yung part namin sa paaralan. Yung paaralan isang aspeto lang, isang part lang ang naga paningkamot nga ma educate ang mga bata. Dito sa ila nga part wala man nila ginahimo. (Teacher 4)

(I am trying to imagine the situations at home. What kind of relationship they have among them. The relationship may not be good. The parents may not have time. It's quite difficult that we are doing our part in school and yet, there's lack of follow up at home.)

Kay nag ask gid ko mismo sa akon estudyante. Nag ask ko grade 12, nag-ask pud ko sa junior high school, nag-ask pud ko sa grade 6. Kanang mag-ingon lang gud sila nga, sir as of now wala pa nawala ang linog. Kagabi pa gid daw kalit lang daw naglinog. Ang ilang house structure sir is wala maan gud na kwarto. Si mama, papa maglatag lang na sila. Dira na sila tanan. Mauna nga may tendency gud nga ang bata ma curious nganog naglihok ila balay, unsa nahitabo.(Teacher 2)

(Every time I ask the students from Grade 12, from junior high school and from grade 6, they would say that their houses are shaking (double meaning term). The home structure is a challenge. There are no separate rooms for them. They shared, sometimes, they got confused why there's a sudden shaking in the house.)

Parental involvement on their children's activities in and off school is also a challenge for most teachers. As shared by the teachers, parents are quite not particular with their children's whereabouts. When they learned that their children are pregnant, they usually resort to have their daughter be married with the man even the child was still young.

"Patawag nimo sila sir kay magmeeting, dili na sila muadto"(Teacher 1)

(If you call the parents for meeting, they do not attend)

"Ilaa man gud na sir kay manarbaho ang priority"(Teacher 2)

TEENAGE PREGNANCY AMONG LEARNERS: SCHOOL'S PERSPECTIVES, CHALLENGES
AND RESPONSES

(For them, work is their priority)

“Ang ubang parents kay kabalo man sila sang ginabuhat sang ila anak pero wla man gyud daw sila mabuhat. Unsaon man daw”(Teacher 3)

(Other parents admitted that they actually are aware of their students activities, but they can't do anything about it.)

Pero ngayon after the pandemic nagbalik ulit sila kasi di sila ma monitor ng parents nila kasi nag wo-work yung parents nila.. (T1)

(Their parents are working that's why they cannot be monitored constantly.)

Bakasyon, sunod sa klase, mabalitaan mo na lang na buntis na sila pero during klase, kadalasan mga December, after ng buwan may marinig ka na nga may na buntis na studyante. Actually, sa bakasyon doon mo malalaman tsaka mo malalaman na buntis pala itong mga studyante tapos naga pasok sa klase. Di sila nababantayan sa bahay. Kung sabihon mo na intervention ng school, duing class hour siguro mayroon.

(The cases of pregnancy usually happen after vacation. Usually, after December you can hear news that someone is pregnant. This is because they are not in school. They are not properly guided there.)

From the sharing of the teacher participants, there are some issues that emerge describing the parents roles on monitoring and supervising their children. Most parents tolerate their children's behaviors as they could not control their children's attitude. Some parents do not mind their children's romantic affairs as they may also benefit from their daughter's lovers financially. Parents' priority is to make a living- less attention to their children

Actually these emerging problem has something to do with parents' upbringing. Kay kung baga useless lang man gyapon sige ta advise, didto sa ilaha ang atong advise total opposite. And another one thing na akong makita, mag advise ko sa mga bata eskewla una bago mag biga-biga or toga muna bago traje de boda, amo gid na advise ko sa ilaha. Last year ang among graduates (7) lang man kabuok, pito na lag gyud apat pa gid buntis. (Teacher 1)

(This issue has something to do with their upbringing. It's quite frustrating on the part of the school that we keep giving them advise but no effort from their homes. I always remind them to ensure to graduate first before wearing 'traje de boda' (wedding gown). Last year, we have 7 graduates, 4 of them are pregnant.)

Maraming ibang factor, sa bahay, yung disiplina sa ila sa ilahang mag ginikanan.. (Teacher 2)

(Some factors are rooted at home. One is home discipline by the parents (lacking).)

Sixteen16 yung isa, yung isa na man ma'am is 22 yung isa 21 pero okay lang yung dalawa kasi yung dalawa kung batang na buntis kasama nila ang kanilang asawa sa bahay nila.. Kasama nila ang husband gabulig sa ilaha... Yung isa may baby na. (Teacher 3)

(One is 16 years old, the other one is 22, the other one is 21. The two couples, they live with their partners at their family's home. They live with their husband who is helping them. The other one has already a baby.)

Tapos minsan sasabihan ko rin, wag ka mag stop kay nabuntis ka na. Di man sila magsabi na naulaw sila, wala ko kabati nga na ulaw sila. Tatal pwede na mang modular or kung unsay basta makatapos. Igo lang mi mag follow, mag convince nga wag mags top. “Kung manganak man na, manganak lang gud ipa bantay lang na sa imuhang umagad ba or ganyan. Pero usually pag may edad di na sila magsabi na stop na ako. (Teacher 1)

(I would normally tell them not to stop from schooling. I advise them to just continue. Actually, they don't usually say that they are shy because they are pregnant. My advice to them, after giving birth, ask some family members of family members of your husband to take care of the baby.)

Hindering issues encountered by the teachers in dealing with learners (who became pregnant) or learners who got married at an early age.

Expectations from the LGU (Municipal and Barangay levels)

As shared by the teachers, there are limitations on the effort of the LGU on coming up with concrete programs and initiatives in addressing the issue of teenage pregnancy or in terms of saving those who are at-risk of pregnancy. As emphasized by the teacher-participants, there need for collective effort on giving support for the students including the LGU, Barangays and Schools. As stated by teachers 2, “Unsaon man na sang eskwelahan sir kapugong kung pag abot sa ilahang balay or barangay dili man sila gihapon mamonitor” What can the school do when at home, they are not being monitored). Another teachers also pointed out that,

Mas maganda rin kapag well-coordinated ang schools and LGU kahit sa barangay level para mabantayan gyud mga bata. Pungkuan gyud tani sang mga representatives para maka plano gyud unsay nami buhaton sang munisipyo or barangay. (Teacher 1)

(It’s good to have coordination between the school and the LGU even at the barangay level so they children’s activities can be monitored well. Representatives should need to sit down and plan for actions).

For me sir, the lack of education account teenage pregnancy. Tapos dapat sir supplemental support dili lang sa school pati guro sa munispyo pati pud down sa ila barangay para ma suistan nato na ma inform ang mga students about teenage pregnancy (Teacher 3)

(For me, lack of education is one reason why it is happening. There should be support from the municipal government. It should not only be the obligation of the school. The barangay should also take part on possible solutions).

Base on observation, kailangan... kung si teacher i-asa lang lahat parang mabigat siya masyado kasi nag te-teach pa kami then mag take pa kami about teenage pregnancy. Although part yun ng work namin as a teacher kasi kami ang parent sa school, ang maganda lang kung sabihin sa munisipyo, sa barangay, mga leaders nila, focus doon sila sa how to do something. Alam ko may mayroon silang programs about that pero something is kulang. (Teacher 3)

(As observed, it is quite heavy on the part of the teachers since they are also teaching. Although, it’s part of our job to monitor the students, the community and the parents should also recognize their roles. They too should have initiatives to do.)

Ang suggestion ko lagyan lang siguro ng more programs tapos yung munispyo, barangay mismo maggawa ng programs sex education ba or sa parents. Especially mga SARDOs, yung parent na pinapatawag ko di talaga yan sila magpunta, gina home visit tapos paghome visit andami nilang excuses. Sabihin nila na ano manag “anak nag skwela man toh”. Wala man daw klase ingon niya. Ipakita sa kanila yung set up. (Teacher 4)

(Provide more programs for the youth. Strengthen sex education. Involve the parents in the program. Encourage parents participation too. As observed, when parents are invited, the have alibis for not coming. When they are visited to their homes, they made some excuses defending that their children are actually in school. More often than not, they tolerate their children’s absence from school.)

Ang dapat siguro magkaroon ng batas na kapag mabuntis ang mga bata ng ganoon kaaga nag parents ang may parusa. Para ma alarm ang mga parents na dapat tutukan ko tung bata ko kasi pag mabuntis ito at the age of 16 makukulong pala ako ng dalawang buwan.(Teacher 1)

(To intensify parents’ sense of accountability, there should be a law to be considered that parents become accountable when their children got pregnant at young age.)

For me sir, the lack of education account teenage pregnancy. Tapos dapat sir supplemental support dili lang sa school pati guro sa munispyo pati pud down saila barangay para ma suistan nato na ma inform ang mga students about teenage pregnancy (Teacher 2)

Teachers Roles on the monitoring of the learners

The teacher-participants in the study recognize the limitations on their roles in the monitoring of the students after class hours or when students are at home. They were saying that learners activities at home or in the community are beyond their control. They have parents who are supposed to look after them. As stated by one teacher, "Kasi mahirap kontrolin yung sa bahay kasi family factor din talaga."

On the other hand, it is also undeniable that some teachers were observed to be quite not consistent in monitoring the learners whereabouts. As pointed out by one participant, "Karun man gud sir noh, mostly of the teachers belong na rin sa younger generation. Unlike sa una sir, especially katong mga teachers gud na medyo nagtagal na sa school, they really find time to talk with the students during lunch or during activity period." As described by the participant, some teachers would usually spend time with the students to mingle with them during lunch time or after classes. They find this time to allow learners to open their concerns about studies and even issues at home.

However, as observed by one participant, some teachers are not consistent. She pointed out some younger teachers who would usually leave the school right after class for some other important concerns too. Teachers are busy with their own tasks and obligations that they cannot fully attend to students others activities outside the classroom. They were saying that they have been bombarded with plenty of work to accomplish' too many school works; teachers cannot focused on disciplining learners' behavior. One teacher-participant shared his disagreement on what advise usually some teachers give to students on students' engagement to relationship. He seems not to agree with students engaging to romantic relationship just so students would have inspiration.

Pero mag ingon man pud ibang teachers nga as long as ang iyong pag-uyab himuan niyong inspiration okay lang. Karon duha ka opposing thoughts na nag contradict sa isa't isa. So karon mag ano ang bata nga dito na lang gyud siya. Kay na man isa nga negative, mangibabaw sa kanya ang binuhatan. It has something to do with the teacher itself kay ibaw nga teacher man gud especially, dili lang naton anohon kay teacher man ko, amo lang na ang iban "dira ka man malipay, hatag man inspirasyon sa imuha, padayuna lang". I beg to disagree on that perspective, wala gid kanang kamaayuhan. Ang skwela kag inspiration, di mana inspiration ang uyab-uyab. Para saku-a amo kaya no mana siya isa mana sa rason nga di ka makahuman ngano man asa man mo mukadto sa weekend, ibis makatabang ka sa imong pamilya. (T1)

(Some teachers tell students that it's okay to be in a relationship so long it gives them inspiration. For me, this is a wrong advise since most students misconstrued this kind of advice. Students should be inspired with their studies and not with having relationship. For me, being in a relationship hinders students finishing their studies.)

Add to these are the interruptions of classes which affects learners focus. The teacher has no control on the decision of the learners when they want to get married or live with their partners. Admittedly, they said that there were times that they cannot prioritize

Teachers' initiatives on addressing the issue of teenage pregnancy and early marriages in schools

Teachers show care for the students and ensure their welfare

When the teachers learned about a particular student who got pregnant, they immediately respond to the issue by inviting the student for a conference. They call for the parents too for a conference to ensure that they are aware of the condition of their child. In the conduct of the conference, the teachers shared that they always ensure not to sound like judging the student for what happened. As teachers who also act as counselor, they tried to process condition of the student to ensure that they are emotionally, psychologically and physically well.

Pinatawag ko yung bata sir. Pero di siya nag adto so gikadtuan ko sa ila balay pero wala ko siya nasakpan sa iyang balay. Dito siya sa iyang friend pero that time wala pa ko idea. Tung last na, although sige siya absent kay siyempre dako na siya tiyan. Gintagaan pa gid namon siya mura siyag module, kanang learning activity sheet coming from other adviser gina compile namon na sir tapos biskan wala siya gaskwela, ginapadala sa kapitbahay niya tapos ginabalik dire sa school padala lang gid. Buligan na lang gid siya nga makagraduate (Teacher 3)

(I called for the child but she did not come. So, I visited her to their house but she was not there. She was with her friends. When pregnancy becomes evident, we her modules with activity sheets. When she was absent, we send the module through her neighbor and submit them through her neighbor too. We helped them to actually finish schooling for high school.)

The teachers also shared that being mindful on the actuations and behavior of the students in the class allow the them to identify whether students are already at-risk of pregnancy or have already been engaged into such activity. The teachers do constantly remind them on the appropriateness of the actions that they should manifest and/or notice some students with unusual behavior and talk in private or sometimes openly express in the whole class what they observe on the changes on the behavior of the students without pointing out specific students.

Kasi sa ngayon medyo matagal-tagal na ako mag teach malaman mo na yung trend na kapag di na sila nagpapakita, naga sige na absent may something na yan. So ang ginagawa ko pag ganyan pag magbalik sa classroom, “Oh may uyab ka na oh”, gina ano ko na... gina bully-bully ko na sila. Sige kag uyab noh kay sige kamo absent. Di anay kamo uyab-uyab kay pag nabuntis kayo, lahi gig bala pag na-a nay anak, kadumaay ng nay uyab, mabuntis kayo sa umpisa lang yan.(Teacher 2)

(As observed, when student doesn't show for weeks, sure she is into something. When she comes back, my style is to fish them by asking whether they have boyfriends.)

Parang ganoon yung pagsabi pero di lang particular student, sa buong klase. Minsan kasi di mo sila one-on-one , mas maganda yung general kasi parang ayaw nila ng personalan. Ginagawa ko yung general tapos yung particular student pinatawag ko sa office sir tapos yun sasabihin, “wala ma’am nagasakit lang, naglain lang lawas ko. Tapos sasabihin ko lang “Basi naga lain lang lawas mo kay buntis ka na. “ Di ma’am uy purya-purya” mag ganyan-ganyan pa yan sila. Pagka-later on malamana mo na buntis na. So pag ganoon nan a confirm na buntis, number one talaga yan i-report naming sa principal namin. Monitor na lang kmai niya, follow up lang. Tapos minsan sasabihan ko rin, wag ka mag stop kay nabuntis ka na. Di man sila magsabi na naulay sila, wala ko kabati (Teacher 2)

(The reminder should be given to the whole class instead of talking to them individually. When I call for a particular student for a conference, I normally ask about her condition. They usually answer that they are fine, they are okay and their health conditions are okay. But eventually, I will just find out they are already pregnant. When it happens, we report it to the principal, monitor and follow up the student.)

Ang ako lang sir nga makadayun gid siya. Ma-complete niya gid ang iya senior high school. Kay sabi ko sayang na man sir, kadalasan kasi sir pag buntis na mag pahinga anay. After a year, after 2 years mag kolehiyo na sila. (Teacher 4)

(I ensure that the student is able to finish. Usually, during pregnancy, they rest for a while. After a year, we allow them to come back schooling and proceed to college.)

As a part of responsibility, kung ano pwede nila magawa na maka graduate ang bata, tulungan natin. Tapos ipaalam kay guidance councilor kung ano ginagawa nila. Ganito rin po ako sir, gina-inform ko talaga ang klase. Sabi ko mayroon kayong isang classmates na buntis siya. Tapos sabi ko, mahirap mag-aral na buntis, sana wala nang mabubuntis dito sa section natin kasi nakita yung sitwasyon ng kanilang classmate. (Teacher 3)

(As part of our responsibility, we ensure that the students are able to finish high school. We help them by all means. We inform them about the situation of their classmates who got pregnant for them to realize and to learn also from the experience. I emphasize to them that being pregnant while studying can be difficult...From there, they can have realizations.)

Facilitating the needs of Pregnant students to ensure continuity with studies

On the question about how do the teachers deal with their students who got pregnant in the middle of the school year, they all share similar approach in dealing with the condition of the learners

TEENAGE PREGNANCY AMONG LEARNERS: SCHOOL'S PERSPECTIVES, CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

who got pregnant. They facilitate the needs of the students so that they can still push through with their studies despite being pregnant. After having referred the case to the guidance office, the adviser convenes the other subject teachers to agree on the mechanisms to be employed how to help the student to continue her studies. The student is provided with alternative learning modality. Practically, most students in this condition are given modules to study and activity worksheets to accomplish similar to the modular approach. The role of the teachers then in to prepare the learning materials, provided them with a copy, distribute to the parents then collect again during the agreed deadline. For the teachers, they said, it give them additional work to do during the face to face but not much during the pandemic as all the students were actually in remote learning mode.

Kung sabihon mo na intervention ng school, during class hour siguro mayroon. Yung mga language na kanyang kina-conducts. Tapos mayroon rin kami na pastor sa school, pagtuloy-tuloy tapos absent yung studyante hinahanap na namin niyan. Kapos na lang magic-magic pud. Tapos i-adjust man di na min niya so kailangan yung nasa LMS yun pa rin ang ending ng klase niya. So ginagawa namin pag ganoon, modular. Before, noon first year ko Deped naalala ko mayroon akong studyante na nabuntis, so hinanap ko siya tapos pinaka usap sa principal namin.

(We have several intervention initiatives in school. We have a pastor in school who is helping us. We reach out students who are missing classes. We provide modules when necessary. I remember I have one student before, she got pregnant. I looked for her and asked the principal to allow her to continue.)

Further, the teachers recall the efforts they have been putting into just to prevent teenage pregnancy. When they identify learners to be at-risk, especially those who are really active and vocal when it comes to their relationship, those with identified to have issues at home and with the parents, those who have at one time opened up their sexual affairs with their partners, or those who have manifested certain level of aggressiveness into opposite sex relationship, the teachers really spend time in monitoring them every day just to save them from pregnancy at an early age. They consistently monitor attendance and absences especially those who dare escape classes. According to the teacher, some of the females students would cut classes to meet up with

Their lover or partners who are outsiders.

The teacher always integrate constantly in the homeroom period to give valuable reminders for the students on the pro and cons of being pregnant or being married at a young age. At times, they needed to intervene even in the personal concerns of the children. They do counseling whenever they open up their problems, they initiate and allow dialogue with them, they interact and guide them even after classes. They listen to the sentiments of the learners.

Sa aku-a sir, maghatag siya ug impact sir na... kaning teenage pregnancy human na ni sila sir. Ara pa sa grade 12, kalimitan sa nasunod, sige ka-advise tapos ma ingon lang mga bata: "bitaw sir", "tama sir", "tanawa bala to si ano sir". Mas okay gyud na ang mag advise sa teacher is dili pud upod. Kanang from time to time tagaan siya isa ka gid ka oras. Kaning four ka subjects four hours man itudlo sa isa ka semana. So mean to say may naa gyud isa ka oras nga specific subject which is related to this topic to solve the problem of teenage pregnancy. Why not incorporate now as a subject not only nga incorporate sa is aka subject but ihatag gid siya as isa ka subject. A (Teacher 4)

(Most often, students agree to what you are saying when they are in front of you. After that, they tend to forget your agreement. It would be good to intensify the curriculum content including the content related to teenage pregnancy. By inculcating this to the mind of the student, perhaps it can help them to change their paradigm and mindset.)

Amo na ang akong ginahatag sa akong mga bata. Amo na nga may ara ko fourth year na student nga mag graduate and said to say mother na siya karon. Kabalo ka bala sir ingon siya didto saying, kung wala lang ko gid ko nagpadala s bugso ng damdamin before, tama gid ka sir daghan ka makaila nga imong mabana. Dili lang ni kay they are suffocated on the situation na dira lang, baryo-baryo lang. Ang ilang lifestyle naga ikot lang dira, kung

baga wala sila nag go beyond from the four corners of that specific baryo. May ara pa man unta to mas daghan pa pananawon. Dira niya lang ma realize sir, nagbalik man siya atong graduation namon. Ingon siya tama gid ka sir. Biskan anong away sang akon live in partner karon, kay tungod kay mahilig man mag chat kag itsuraan man gud. (Teacher 2)
 (One student shared about her regret for engaging on such affair that has destructed her future. The students are confined only within the walls of their community. They have not realized that there is actually a better world outside their community once they just persevere and finish their studies. One student come back to me and shared that she is realizing how important those reminder I have given her.)

Pinuntahan ko kahit di ko alam ang lugar, nagpasama lang ako sa studyante mapuntahan ko lang yung studyante. Pagdating doon magtago-tago studyante kay mag ulaw man sa maestra. Amo na ilang pag-intindi, amo na ang iba na aware sila sa gihimo nila. Ang magawa lang talaga as teacher is tulungan silang makatapos sa kanilang pag-aaral. Ngayon kasi modular, this year lang bumalik siya. Parang ngayon lang siya nagpatika sakin tas nagapunta ako sa bahay nila. Parang nagligaw-ligaw ako sa kanya, sige na ako na maghatid dito ng modules mo. Ginasunod namin yung taas na mga module. As adviser ikaw ang mag collect sa iba't ibang subject teachers tapos ikaw na magbigay niyon sa estudyane mo. Effort yun sa adviser na isa-isahin yung mga module tapos ihatid mo pa yan. Ngayon bigla siya magpakita pero sabihin niya, abi na ko gi grade 10, grade 9 man diay gyapon. Sympre ikaw jud, gusto mo mag-untat kay gusto mo mag asawa. Tapos gi tanong ko siya ano epekto ng pag-asawa mo. Iyang ingon sige lang gud. (Teacher 2)
 (I visited the place of the student even if I am not familiar with the place. When she saw me, she hid because she was ashamed of her condition. What the teacher can just do is help them to finish their schooling. From my experience, I have visited the house several times. I delivered the modules for her and even collect them after. As adviser you need to facilitate it including the modules for other subjects. Despite this effort of the teacher, she would appears one day to inform you that she's getting married.)

Schools interventions/initiatives/Actions

As shared by the teacher-participants, the schools have already been doing several programs as intervention to the issue. These programs include Guidance program on counseling; Homeroom Guidance of Class Advisers;

Katung na-a pako sa guidance office, actually sir na-a mi mga module. Ang kanang module para sa Grade 9, na-a dira ang ___ sa grade 10 na-ay ___, tinuturuan sila mag bake....Nakikita ko yung beauty noon kasi maganda ito kasi sa Grade 9 nauumpisa nang mabuntis ang mga bata. Murag kung ang module na yan nasa guidance office, si guidance office mag bu-but in lang sa doon sa classroom on the vacant time or kausapin kung kailan mayroong vacant time ang mga bata tapos papasok siya vacant time doon.(Teacher 3)
 (When I was still at the guidance office, we deliver a module for their skill enhancement such as baking. It keeps them busy and productive. Especially that they are in the Grade 9 which is the year level when most pregnancy cases happen.)

In the conduct of such modules, the guidance counselors identify the class where they can deliver the modules for the students. The challenge is that, not all class sections can be experience the module. As shared, it is only delivered to students with vacant schedules. In the other schools, it is done in a plenary type of delivery like conducting it in the gym. However, as observed, it's not helpful because of the too huge number of students. To deliver the module in the classroom is way more effective and efficient because the students activities can be supervised closely.

Symposium are also conducted in school; Lecture on teen age pregnancy/HIV/AIDS; and Toga muna bago traje de boda campaign. There's a center in school where students can freely stay and open up their concerns to their teachers, facilitators or guidance counsellor- but it needs to be monitored well- but it may turn out to be a dating place for them. Exposure activities that motivates students to finish schooling because of the opportunity they can gain from completing education.

TEENAGE PREGNANCY AMONG LEARNERS: SCHOOL'S PERSPECTIVES, CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

Actually, sir sa mga school nagkakaroon ng lecture tungkol sa teenage pregnancy nayan, mga HIV/AIDS. Pero ganoon rin, makapunta si nurse sa buwan ng July, di na siya makabalik. Kinulang siguro sir sa information. Ako sir as adviser, we are aware of teenage pregnancy nga highest kita in our region. Ako kasi nakikita ko yan na problema. I spend one hour for that matter okay yun pero what about other adviser. Ginabuhat man kaya yun sa kanilang advisory class. Practical na mga information. I-educate sila dapat ginagawa nila yun. (Teacher 3)

(In our school, we have also conducted session on HIV/AIDS awareness for the students. But the challenge is the nurse who delivers the content visits the school seldom. So, follow up is a challenge. As adviser, I help to educate them by being too realistic and practical with what I tell them.)

The teachers identify the students as SARDO (Students-at-risk-of Dropping-out) and call for their parents. Since they are identified as SARDO, all efforts of the teachers are being done just to keep them in school to the extent of providing them snacks and meals.

Sa una sir ginagawa namin ni, sa school gina identify namon ning mga SARDO, Student-At-Risk of Dropping Out, gina identify namon sir ang ilang parents tapos ginapatawag namin pirme kami counseling. May seminar kag ug mga lecture. Ning mga SARDO na mga bata tired na pud sila, at risk pud sila. Kung nay 50 amon mana ang meryenda ug pani-ugto para di na sila mag uli kasi kung uwi yan di nay an magbalik sa session ng hapon. Apparently, with that 50 na indentified naa lay muabot nga 30. So maka ingon ka nga di layo nga problemado ang bata or pati ang parents. Isa mani sa indication nga ang bata hindi supportive and magulang. Patawag ka sa meeting wala rin. (Teacher 4)

(We identified students who are SARDO, we call their attention and even their parents. We invite them (students) for counseling. We conduct seminar for the parents with food and snack to ensure full participation and attendance. The challenge is that, only few of them (parents) respond. This is one indication that parents are not supportive.)

The teachers provides report to the guidance office on the status of their learners for monitoring. Counseling with these learners are being conducted. Follow up with other counselors is being done. This is to ensure that learners' needs are facilitated well.

INSIGHTS AND IMPLICATIONS

As reflected in the sharing of both school heads and teachers in this study, early pregnancy has jeopardizes educational attainment of teenagers most especially the female students. It led many of them to drop out of school due to personal, social and cultural circumstances. Personal circumstance as they needed to take care of themselves, take care of the baby and can no longer manage being a mother and learner. Social circumstance as they are affected somehow by what the school and community have to tell them, being stigmatized by family and peers. Cultural in the sense that most of the cases shared by the participants in this study are the encounter they have with their students who got pregnant due to cultural practices and traditions that dictates family decisions.

The role of the school is can be challenging in this sense. They need to balance how to see culture as sacred traditions of the tribal group versus the welfare and education of their own learners. Admittedly, their scope of influence can be limited within the school parameter through their several interventions, initiatives and formative experiences provided for the learners for them to be able to become more rationale on their decisions. The curricular programs, activities, journeying with their learners are evident as shared. However, they totally understand that their influence may only be limited within the school, especially when home, community and culture do not participate. The experience on mediating between their learners and their home and community is evident as experienced by the participants.

The results of this study on the school heads and teachers' perspectives, challenges experienced and responses hope to provide significant input on the need for collaborations with other stakeholders particularly by the local government, barangay, and home in addressing this issue concerning the learners for them to become empowered who are able to access quality and adequate health services for their sexual, reproductive, psychosocial and holistic well-being. This way, they can effectively involve in

various development programs and ultimately become catalyst and participants for sustainable development in their communities for the realization of a healthier community.

REFERENCES

- Dippel, E. A., Hanson, J. D., McMahon, T. R., Griese, E. R., & Kenyon, D. B. (2017). Applying the Theory of Reasoned Action to Understanding Teen Pregnancy with American Indian Communities. *Maternal and child health journal*, 21(7), 1449–1456. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-017-2262-7>
- Deevia Bhana, Robert Morrell, Tamara Shefer & Sisa Ngabaza (2010) South African teachers' responses to teenage pregnancy and teenage mothers in schools, *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 12:8, 871-883, DOI: 10.1080/13691058.2010.500398
- Elflein, J. (2022). Birth rate for teenagers aged 15-19 years 1991-2020. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/259518/birth-rate-among-us-teenagers/>
- Gatbonton, R.G.(2021).Educational Experiences of Adolescent Mothers while Studying College in the Philippines. *IAFOR Journal of Education*, v9 n1 p41-58 2021. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1291554>
- Indicator for Prenatal Services given to Pregnant Women Report (2020). Retrieved from the Municipal Social Welfare Development Office, Local Government Unit of Malungon, Sarangani Province, May 2022
- Livingston, G. & Thoma, D. (2019). Why is the teen birth rate falling?Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/08/02/why-is-the-teen-birth-rate-falling/>
- Maravilla, J.C., Betts, K.S. & Alati, R. Trends in repeated pregnancy among adolescents in the Philippines from 1993 to 2013. *Reprod Health* 15, 184 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-018-0630-4>
- Marie Lall (2007) Exclusion from school: teenage pregnancy and the denial of education, *Sex Education*, 7:3, 219-237, DOI: 10.1080/14681810701448028
- Mpanza, N.D. & Nzima, D.R. (2010). Attitudes of educators towards teenage pregnancy. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Volume 5,2010,Pages 431-439,ISSN 1877-0428, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.07.118>.
- National Institute of Health (n.d). Roy's adaptation model of nursing. *Nursing Theory*. <https://nursing-theory.org/theories-and-models/roy-adaptation-model>
- Ogena, N. (2013). 2013 Young Adult Fertility & Sexuality (yafs4) study. <https://psa.gov.ph/sites/default/files/attachments/BS1%20-%203%20%20Ms.%20Nimfa%20B.%20Ogena.pdf>
- Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) [Philippines], and ICF International. 2014. Philippines National Demographic and Health Survey 2013. Manila, Philippines, and Rockville, Maryland, USA: PSA and ICF International. <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/fr294/fr294.pdf>
- Rosario, A. H., Domocmat, M. C., & Oniashvili, S. (2016). Still a Teen, Already a Mother: Understanding the Teen Motherhood Phenomenon Through Photovoice. *International Forum Journal*, 19(2), 47-63. <https://journals.aiias.edu/info/article/view/97>
- Salvador, J.T. et. al. (2016). The Phenomenon of Teenage Pregnancy in the Philippines. *European Scientific Journal* November 2016 edition vol.12, No.32 ISSN: 1857 – 7881 (Print) e - ISSN 1857- 7431 University of Dammam, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia doi: 10.19044/esj.2016.v12n32p173
- Seamark, C. J., & Lings, P. (2004). Positive experiences of teenage motherhood: a qualitative study. *The British journal of general practice : the journal of the Royal College of General Practitioners*, 54(508), 813–818. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1324913/>