

# Voices of Youth: Tanzanian teens turn their own lens on teen pregnancy

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Tanzania has one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the world. NCCR North-South research looks at how adolescents in Tanzania handle reproductive health challenges. In the project described here, youths in Dar es Salaam and Mtwara Town planned, scripted, and acted in short dramatic videos about teen pregnancy and sexuality. The narrative medium enabled youths to depict their own experiences and gave adults a window into the problems they face. To spur creation of better interventions, the videos were shown and discussed with policy-makers and practitioners in workshops. They are now used for reproductive-health interventions - especially for outreach trips aiming at building capacities on teenage pregnancy targeting adolescents and their communities - and have aired on Tanzanian TV.

## Teenage pregnancy: a public health issue

Teen pregnancy is a major health concern, especially in developing countries, due to the high risk of complications, even death, for both mother and child. Tanzania has spearheaded many efforts to better understand and improve the sexual and reproductive health of young people. However, to create interventions that will effectively steer young people towards responsible parenthood, more knowledge is needed about their capacities as well as their social environment.

## Giving youth a voice...

To gain more vivid insights into young people's realities, a PAMS project was implemented in which adolescents in two secondary schools in Dar es Salaam and Mtwara were invited to create short fictional videos on: (1) what they see as key reasons for teen pregnancy; (2) their main sources of information on how to avoid teenage pregnancy.

After intense discussions, each youth group developed a screenplay for a story about negotiating sexuality and dealing with the risk of teen pregnancy. With the help of a professional video producer, they brought their screenplays to life.

Picture 1 : Youth discussing the content of the videos



(Photo: Constanze Pfeiffer)

The finished videos strikingly illustrate some of the common sexual pressures faced by Tanzanian youths. One clip, for example, depicts a girl who has the courage to reject the sexual advances of a boy, who plies her with expensive gifts, thanks in part to the information she gains from a youth magazine. The videos portray the youths' realities in a very direct, affecting manner.

## ... and making their voice heard

To ensure the videos reached key audiences, a workshop was organised that brought together youths and relevant stakeholders, such as government representatives, national and international NGOs, and international donors. The young video makers were invited to present their clips and speak directly to policy-makers.

Picture 2 : Workshop with youth, researchers, policy-makers and practitioners



(Photo: Constanze Pfeiffer)

## Significance for policy and practice

Various international and national NGOs and donors expressed great interest in the videos. Several Tanzanian TV stations also aired them. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) recently agreed to finance screenings of the videos during outreach activities in four districts in Tanzania, inviting the young video makers to participate as agents of change.

Picture 3: Website with video download



## Available for download

- 2 Videos by Youth in Mtwara and Dar es Salaam
- The Process of Participatory Video Production
- Key Messages by the Youth
- 🔗 [www.socialresilience.ch/reproductive-resilience/](http://www.socialresilience.ch/reproductive-resilience/)