

PRESS RELEASE

‘I have no idea how I got pregnant’ Children having children in Tanzania

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For Immediate Release

New research report ‘**I have no idea how I got pregnant**’ from London based African women’s organisation [FORWARD](#) and Tanzanian partners **CDF**, highlights the worrying problem of girls becoming mothers in Mpwapwa District of Tanzania.

The research conducted by the two organisations used a research method where selected young women and girls were taught to interview their peers, thereby providing richer and more honest findings than when interviewed by ‘outsiders’. The research found that **girls as young as 13** had become mothers, some due to being married off at an even younger age while for others it was a result of sexual assault or due to engaging in transactional sex due to poverty. The lack of sexual and reproductive health services and information was identified as one of the reasons why young girls do not understand their rights, their bodies and the consequences of engaging in sex at a young age.

The findings highlighted the multiple challenges faced by girls who become pregnant, for example Tanzanian Government Policy bans girls from returning to school after they have given birth and many schools expel girls who are pregnant as soon as the pregnancy is discovered.

One of the girls interviewed shared her view of this: **“I need to go back to school, so in future I can have a good career, being a young mother should not bring an end to my dream”**. Young mother aged 16.

“I got pregnant at the age of 15 and I was studying at Wota Secondary (form2). I realised I was pregnant after I felt sick and decided to go to the hospital, and they confirmed that I was five months pregnant. I have no idea how I got pregnant. From there I decided not to go back to school and I went back home where I stayed until I gave birth to my child. In our school they used to test for pregnancy at every beginning of semester, I was lucky I wasn’t tested because I was two weeks late since we opened school. So it was on the next holiday that I found out that I was pregnant and I decided not to go back to school.” Young mother, now aged 17.

The research was launched to a select audience in the House of Commons on Monday 11th June to mark International Day of the African Child (commemorated on Saturday 16th June) in collaboration with the All Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health, hosted by Co-Chair of the group, Baroness Jenny Tonge who said:

“We welcome this research ‘I have no idea how I got pregnant’ because it highlights the harsh realities of young women and girls the world over but specifically in Tanzania. It is disappointing that since the Beijing Declaration that these sexual health and rights issues have not been resolved, leaving girls vulnerable and excluded from education and from a successful future. We at the APPG on PDRH commit to continuing to raise these issues at every opportunity and we commend FORWARD and CDF for offering these girls a brighter future and for releasing such important research.”

The Summary Report of this research document can be found [here](#).

The full report 'I have no idea how I got pregnant': Participatory Study of Teenage Pregnancy and Child Motherhood in Mpwapwa District, Tanzania, can be found [here](#).

To find out more about the work of FORWARD visit: www.forwarduk.org.uk

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Notes to Editors:

- **For media enquiries please contact:** Naomi Reid: Naomi@forwarduk.org.uk , Tel: 020 8960 4000 (option 6)
- FORWARD is an African- led, women's rights organisation. Our work focuses on the issues of female genital mutilation (FGM), child marriage and other forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) that impact health, dignity and wellbeing of African women and girls. www.forwarduk.org.uk Twitter: @FORWARDUK
- FORWARD has been campaigning against FGM and other forms of Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) affecting African women and girls since 1983.
- **CDF** is a non-profit organization that works to promote and reinforce the rights of vulnerable children, particularly girls. CDF's vision is about creating a Tanzanian landscape where children dwell in a context permeated with dignity and where social justice is upheld. CDF focuses on three thematic areas: Child Protection and Participation, Men and Boys Engagement for Gender Equality and Girls empowerment to address FGM, child marriage and child pregnancy. www.cdftz.org Twitter: @cdftz