

## KwaThema's Teenage Pregnancy Problem

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Release date: 07 October 2023

Teenage pregnancy has become a huge issue in our communities. Young girls think it is fashionable to have a child at a young age. How do you even take care of a child while you are also a child?

That is a question that should remain in our heads. Some people make babies and come back to give those babies to their parents, usually being their mothers. And it is then our parents who are now responsible for the things that we do in the streets which is unfair.

22 years of age, said, "I saw my friends having children, and at times I would also feel tempted to have a child. But I couldn't let peer pressure get to me because I knew we come from different backgrounds, and I'm fully aware that if I bring a child into the world who will take care of him or her. My mom won't do it [and] I will have to do it alone, so I will wait until I'm financially stable then I can have a baby of my own."

Sister Thuli, who works in Kwa-Thema Health Centre said, "A year does not end without seeing the young girls here in the clinic carrying big stomachs. They are so young, and most of the times I would advise them to take prevention pills or to take their condoms for protection, so that they can avoid sicknesses and also having babies at young age." The biggest issue is that teenage mothers are less likely to continue going to school.

Who is 16 years and a teenage mother said, "I found out I was HIV positive when I went for my pregnancy checkup at the clinic. It was hard for me to tell my family, so I hid it from them."

She continued to say, "My life changed drastically. I felt like I was the only sick person in the world. I wouldn't advise anyone to go and have unprotected sex". The use of contraceptives such as condoms, pills and other means can prevent pregnancies and some sexually transmitted diseases and illnesses are very important.

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