

TEENAGE MUMS EMPOWERMENT



Annual Report 2024



The 45 graduates of the year 2024.

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Foreword by the Founder

I am so happy and proud! It was a tough journey but we made it and our girls are absolutely amazing. Especially considering our achievements in 2024, this was a truly special year for Teenage Mums Empowerment.

A specific achievement is that we were able to reach out to many more girls (102 girls) than the year before, and set up an office thanks to the new spacious facilities we've acquired in Dandora.

We couldn't have done it without the unwavering support of the board, the private individuals, my church and everyone who stood by us. Thank you all – it was truly an unforgettable experience.

Together, we created something beautiful and changed lives. I'm beyond grateful. We'll continue to empower girls and young women, to make a lasting impact – the best is yet to come!



Njeri Kabiru, Founder & CEO



Introduction

Teenage Mums Empowerment is committed to empowering teenage mothers, school dropouts, survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and young refugee women through vocational training, life skills education and mentorship. Our organization focuses on fostering self-reliance, sustainability and resilience among these vulnerable groups.

In 2024, the organization experienced significant growth, doubling its enrollment rate and consolidating its physical infrastructure with the establishment of its own facility.

Background

Teenage pregnancy presents substantial health, economic and psychosocial challenges. Research and evidence indicate that these challenges have long-term impacts on not only the teenage mothers themselves but also their families and society as a whole. In Kenya, the national teenage pregnancy rate stands at 18%, with the rate reaching as high as 40% among 19-year-olds, underlining the urgent need for intervention.

Contributing factors to this crisis include poverty, limited access to education, early sexual debut, inadequate reproductive health services, and harmful cultural practices such as gender inequality. Peer pressure, particularly through social media, further exacerbates the situation, with 59% of girls citing it as a key reason for early sexual activity.

Moreover, teenage pregnancy is often linked to gender-based violence (GBV) and other forms of abuse. Statistics reveal that the majority of perpetrators come from within the immediate social circle of the young girls (e.g., school boyfriends: 29.1%, neighbors: 18.4%, relatives: 10.6%). Young girls who become pregnant frequently drop out of school due to prolonged absences during pregnancy and early childcare.

Dandora, home to Kenya's largest dumpsite, faces additional challenges such as child labor, parental neglect, low education levels, food insecurity, crime, and limited law enforcement, which exacerbate the vulnerability of its residents, especially girls and young women. Addressing these issues by providing a safe space for young women and promoting their mental and physical well-being is essential.

Teenage Mums Empowerment aims to break the cycle of poverty and stigma by providing economic and psychosocial support to teenage mothers in Dandora.



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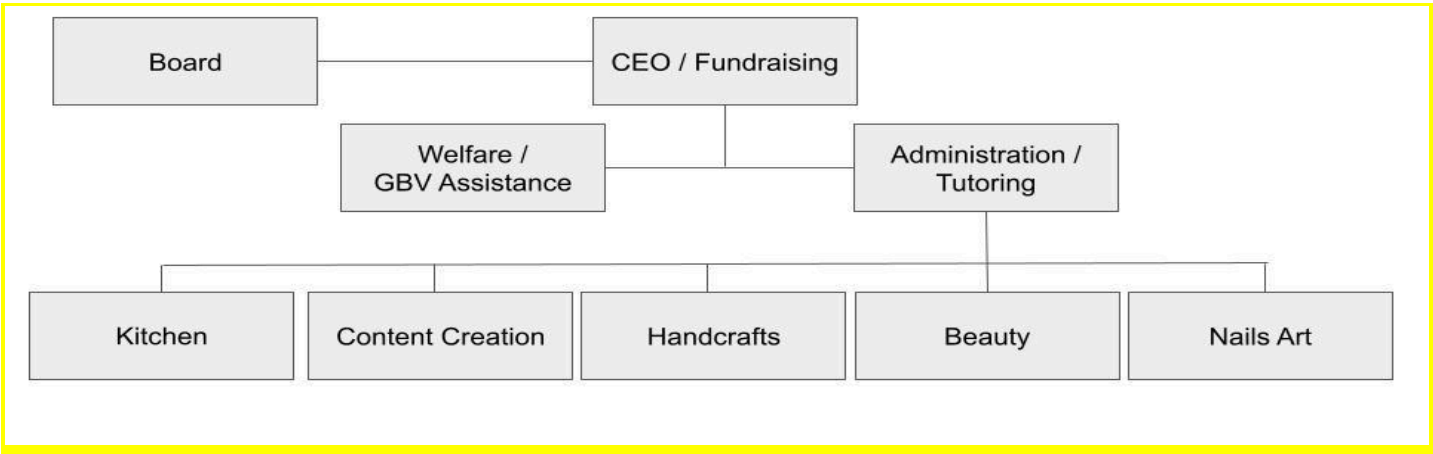
About Teenage Mums Empowerment

The program was developed in response to a growing demand from teenage mothers in Dandora. After sharing her personal story of being a teenage mother on social media, the founder and CEO, Njeri Kabiru, was approached by several young girls in similar situations who sought help. Drawing from her own experience, Njeri developed an informal skills training plan with the first cohort in 2020. By 2022, Teenage Mums Empowerment was officially established. After two years of conducting training sessions in church halls and friends' living rooms, the organization secured its own facilities in Dandora in 2024.

Organizational Structure

As of 2024, the organization comprises eight staff members and a board of five. All involved individuals, including the CEO, are volunteers and work full time.

Organogram



Alumnae from previous cohorts as well as mentors step in at various moments of the program, supporting the daycare, the external communication as well as the resource mobilization. Community events and awareness raising campaigns are organized in collaboration with trusted partners, based on different ad-hoc coalitions following specific purposes. Main partners and donors include Jenö Staehelin Foundation, the Ridgeways Baptist Church, UNHCR Kenya and Naivas. Support to GBV survivors is provided in collaboration with the local police office, the Nairobi City County for GBV, Mama Lucy Hospital and MSF.



Activities in 2024

Vocational Training

The primary focus of the program in 2024 was on vocational skills training. Each cohort, comprising approximately 50 girls, undergoes six months of training in the following areas:

- Manicure/Pedicure
- Makeup Application
- Handcrafting
- Digital Content Creation

The program is designed to equip young mothers and school dropouts with job-ready skills that offer economic sustainability in sectors with low entry barriers. The trainers are young professionals who are also teenage mothers, which provides invaluable insight into the challenges the young beneficiaries face while also understanding market demands.



Make-up Class



Manicure Class

Training Duration and Output:

- Manicure/Pedicure: 72 hours per cohort, and 144 hours in 2024.
- Makeup Application: 72 hours per cohort, and 144 hours in 2024.
- Handcrafting: 160 hours in the year.
- Digital Content Creation: 120 hours in 2024.

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Mentorship

Given the challenging context in Dandora, mentorship plays a crucial role in fostering personal growth, mental health and crisis management for the young mothers. The mentorship program includes weekly visits from different mentors and focuses on life skills education, self-esteem and community-building.



Sharing personal stories and feeling supported during mentor sessions.

By the end of the six-month training, mentorship also encompasses foundational business skills and financial literacy. In 2024, a total of 44 mentors visited Dandora.

Awareness Campaigns

Teenage Mums Empowerment is dedicated to raising awareness about the root causes of teenage pregnancy and the challenges faced by teenage mothers. Through social media campaigns and public events, both the team and participants share their personal stories, shedding light on their struggles. Through such initiatives, Teenage Mums Empowerment reached more than 5000 individuals in person in 2024.

- International women's day, Kajiado 8th March 2024, 500 participants
- International youth day, 15th August, Kayole 1000 participants
- Mentorship, Kahawa Sukari, 26th August, 800 teenage participants
- Uji mtaani Outreach in Maili saba, 5th October, 150 participants
- International Peace day Dandora Social Hall, 21 September, 70 participants
- Refugee Outreach, Mowlem, 09 November, 82 participants
- Refugee Outreach, 15th November, Mowlem, 38 participants

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- Community awareness and mentorship, Esther homes Kitale, 25th and 26th November, 77 participants
- 16 days of Activism, 27th November, Mukuru kwa Reuben, 2,000 participants
- Graduation 2024 in Dandora, 30th November 2024, 190 participants
- Graduation Dinner, 30th November, Participants, 70 participants
- Discussions with 80 refugees to assess empowerment needs for 2025.



Cooking for children in Mailli Saba.



Teenage mothers are speaking out to end violence against women.

Food Program

In a context of severe food insecurity, many of the young mothers and participants in Dandora only have access to one meal a day. Our feeding program is essential in ensuring that participants can learn without the distraction of hunger. This program also supports breastfeeding mothers, providing them with the necessary nutrition for both themselves and their babies.

- Meals provided to young mothers, babies and volunteers: 60 per day on average.

Daycare

Recognizing that the majority of our program participants are young mothers, our Dandora facility incorporates a dedicated daycare service. This ensures that the infants of our beneficiaries are included in our feeding program, addressing their nutritional needs alongside their mothers. Providing dedicated time for focused learning is crucial for these young mothers. Simultaneously, the well-being of their infants, many of whom are very young (as young as two months old and still breastfeeding), is paramount.

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To address both needs, childcare is provided within the same classroom as the training sessions. This arrangement, overseen by trusted and experienced volunteers and beneficiaries on a rotating basis, allows mothers to concentrate on the curriculum while remaining in close proximity to their children.

Key daycare provisions in 2024 included:

- Number of Babies Cared For: 32
- Clothes Distribution: 38 sessions
- Toys Distribution: 38 sessions
- Diaper Distribution: 523 pieces

Special Achievements

Teenage Mums Empowerment used the second year of its formal existence to consolidate its operational processes and to further develop its organisational structures. The following list of key achievements underpin that the efforts lead to concrete improvements, growth and, most importantly, change in the lives of the teenage mothers in Dandora.

- **Doubling of Enrollment Rate**
 - 102 teenage mothers enrolled across two cohorts in 2024.
 - First cohort (January-May): 47 participants, 21 graduates.
 - Second cohort (June-November): 55 participants, 24 graduates.
 - 22 of the graduates are currently employed.
- **Psychological Support for SGBV Survivors**
 - Provided psychological first aid to 15 SGBV survivors.
 - Referred one SGBV trafficking survivor for high school education.
- **New Partnerships and Recognition**
 - Joined the UNHCR GBV Working Group.
 - Secured our first official partnership and grant from the Jenö Staehelin Foundation.
 - Strengthened collaboration with local and county governments.



- **Infrastructure Improvements**

- Moved to a larger facility with a training center, daycare services, a fully functional kitchen, and offices.
- Received office furniture from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

- **Raising Awareness**

- Over 10 radio interviews discussing teenage pregnancy and its root causes.
- Ongoing social media campaigns reaching over 25,000 people.
- Launch of social media channels addressing the challenges of teenage motherhood.



Mentorship session with teenage mothers in Kitale.



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Challenges

Despite our significant progress, several challenges remain:

- **Limited Resources**

- The organization's planning capacity is constrained by a lack of sufficient financial resources to adequately address parallel operational requirements such as rent, materials, food provisions and allowances.
- The receipt of an initial grant in the second half of 2024 helped to secure the operations. Yet, funding remains a significant limitation. The organization's resource mobilization efforts are largely reliant on private, in-kind contributions and individual payments.

- **Limited Teaching Capacity:**

- Trainers are volunteers with no formal teaching background.
- One staff member, an educator, will focus on internal capacity building in 2025.

- **Socioeconomic Barriers to Attendance:**

- Extreme poverty and parental neglect hinder participation.
- Poor health of babies often results in absenteeism.
- Abusive relationships prevent some girls from attending training.
- For 2025, we will engage the broader social environment during the selection process to ensure community support for attendance.

- **Community Awareness:**

- Limited resources for educating the broader community on preventing teenage pregnancy.
- Societal and cultural opposition to the empowerment of young women.
- Plans to collaborate more closely with local authorities, GBV offices and other NGOs in Dandora in 2025.



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Handcrafting class

A Note of Celebration

In 2024, we proudly celebrated the success of 45 young mothers who, despite significant personal and socio-economic challenges, acquired new skills and are now on a path towards a brighter future. Their resilience and determination are a testament to the impact of this program.

By empowering Adolescent Mothers, Teenage Mums Empowerment creates a catalyst to Sustainable Development for a whole community. This initiative directly contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).

Concretely, the following outcomes can be observed for the participants of teenage mums Empowerment's program:

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Enhanced Agency and Resilience for the girls

- **Economic Empowerment:** The acquisition of marketable skills gives these young school-dropout girls the possibility to generate an income and therefore overcome exploitative, harmful relations and gain financial as well as social independence.
- **Holistic Well-being:** Mentorship in mental health and SRHR/GBV provides psychosocial support, reproductive health information and strategies for preventing gender-based violence. This allows for the young girls to protect themselves as well as their children from further trauma, avoid violent environments and make better informed decisions.
- **Enhanced Agency:** Increased self-esteem, confidence and decision-making abilities empower young mothers to take control of their lives and defend themselves when faced with gender inequalities. Furthermore, by fostering a community spirit amongst the cohort, teenage Mums Empowerment helps them to address social stigmatization and find ways to feel included in and shape their communities.

Breaking Intergenerational Cycles for their babies

- **Improving Child Well-being:** Increased maternal income and less exploitative environment supports improved nutrition, healthcare, education as well as mental well-being for their children.
- **Reducing Teenage Pregnancy:** Empowered and informed mothers are more likely to delay subsequent pregnancies, and educate their children differently from their up-bringing promoting responsible and planned parenthood.
- **Reducing Intergenerational Poverty:** The mother's economic independence and her knowledge about the worth of education improves the likelihood of future investments in their children's education, creating pathways out of poverty, supporting the broader SDG agenda.

Special Thanks

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our partners who have played a pivotal role in our achievements this year. We are proud to have joined the UNHCR Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Working Group, which has enhanced our capacity to advocate for policies focusing on teenage mothers. Additionally, we celebrate the establishment of our first official partnership and grant from the Jenö Staehelin Foundation, marking a significant milestone in consolidating our organizational structures. Our strengthened collaboration with local and

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county governments has fostered a supportive environment for our initiatives, enabling us to support the most vulnerable girls more effectively.

We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to all the individuals and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives that have donated and visited us throughout the year. Your support has not only provided vital resources but has also encouraged our team to continue with our work. These partnerships and contributions have been instrumental in driving our mission forward and we look forward to deepening these relationships in the years to come.

Plans for 2025

In 2025, Teenage Mums Empowerment aims to:

- Empower 110 teenage mothers, school dropouts and SGBV survivors.
- Develop sustainable projects to continue impacting lives long into the future.
- Establish institutional partnerships.

Teenage Mums Empowerment remains committed to consolidation of its impactful programs and advocating for policies that support adolescent mothers. By investing in these young women, we are investing in a more equitable, just and sustainable future for all.

We look forward to expanding our reach and continuing to provide hope, skills and support for the young women of Dandora and beyond.

