

Centre for Gender Studies

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF INFORMAL SUPPORT GROUP ACTIVITIES ON
TEEN MOTHERS' SOCIAL REHABILITATION IN RWANDA:
A CASE STUDY OF GASABO AND RULINDO DISTRICTS**

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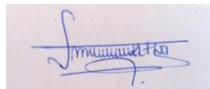
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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research with the title “**THE CONTRIBUTION OF INFORMAL SUPPORT GROUP ACTIVITIES ON TEEN MOTHERS’ SOCIAL REHABILITATION: A CASE STUDY OF GASABO AND RULINDO DISTRICTS**” is the work of KABANYANA Claire Ketsia, a student at the University of Rwanda, College of Art and Social Science (Gender studies) under my supervision.

Done at Kigali on 12th October 2020

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Supervisor’s signature :



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DEDICATION

My dedication of this Masters Project goes to:

The Almighty God, my Rock and my Shield, for his protection in health, knowledge, wisdom and determination to cover this journey.

My life partner, the love of my life, RUTAGENGWA Guido for loving, caring, believing in me and helping me jumping in the path of studies after so long.

My lovely kids Iliza R. Tehillah, IMENA R. Ronny, INEMA R. Ronia, my inspiration, my joy and my pride, with them I always feel courageous and stronger.

My thought goes to my little angel IKUZO R. Tevah, who passed away 1 month after her birth while I was studying, she was a fighter until her last breath.

My parents Maitre MUTEMBE Protais and MUREKATETE Jeannette for raising and showing me the value of life.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at examining the Contribution of Informal Support groups activities on the social rehabilitation of teen mothers in Rwanda, with a case study of Gasabo and Rulindo Districts.

The objectives that guided the study were: to explore the challenges experienced by teen mothers of Rulindo and Gasabo Districts before meeting the support groups; to assess the type of activities that are performed by the informal support groups to help teen mothers of Rulindo and Gasabo Districts in their social rehabilitation; and to evaluate the government motivation towards the informal groups' activities in the social rehabilitation of teen mothers of Rulindo and Gasabo Districts. The study population was 20 teenagers mothers among whom 10 were taken from Rulindo District and other 10 were from Gasabo District. These teen mothers were chosen because they have been identified to have connection with informal support groups' activities.

In addition, the study population was at the same time used as the sample size of the study because it was a small group which was easy to manage by the researcher.

The researcher also conducted an interview with six key informants and included 1 representative from the National Commission for Children, 2 officers in local authorities, 2 officers of MIGEPROF at the District levels (in charge of Gender) and 1 initiator of the informal support group. The study used a qualitative research design in which purposive sampling technique was utilised to get the sample size and snowball method was used to recruit participants. Focus groups and interview guide were used to collect data and content analysis method was used in the data analysis. The findings proved that togetherness of teen mothers in support groups help them to come out from the feeling of loneliness and help them to cope with their status of being mother at a younger age. Informal support groups helped teen mothers to build a sisterhood circle and help each other in difficult times by strengthening each other, helping them to become resilient to hindering situations against being early at early age. The researcher recommended that teen mother's informal support groups should be assisted with qualified professionals who shall help and ensure they become more independent and self-reliant. Teen mothers informal support groups members should be provided with trainings to enable them help as more members as they can reach.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus
CASS: College of Arts and Social Sciences
CLADHO: Collectif des Ligues et Associations de Défense des Droits de l’Homme
MIGEPROF: The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
NCC: National Commission for Children
MOH: Ministry of Health
MINALOC: Ministry of Local Government
NISR: National Institute of Statistics in Rwanda
STDs: Sexual Transmissible Diseases
USA: United States of America
US: United States
UN : United Nations
NCHR: National Commission for Human Rights
WHO: World Health Organization
PhD: Doctor of Philosophy
Dr : Doctor
UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund
NGO: Non-Government Organization
UNICEF: United Nations Children’s Fund
PTSD: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
WHO: World Health Organization
GBV: Gender Based Violence
RIB: Rwanda Investigation Bureau
YWCA: Young Women’s Christian Association
GMO: Gender Monitoring Office
AEE: African Evangelistic Enterprise
TVET: Technical and Vocational Education and Training
RBC : Rwanda Biomedical Centre

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This is a research project report of the study conducted to examine the contribution of informal support groups on teen mothers' social rehabilitation in Rwanda with a case study of Rulindo and Gasabo Districts. This study was conducted for the fulfilment of Masters Degree of Arts and Social Sciences in Gender and Development at the University of Rwanda. The report is divided into five chapters as follows: chapter one contains the background of the study; chapter two deals with the literature review; chapter three present the methodology used; chapter four presents data presentation and data analysis while chapter five of discussion of findings and conclusion of the study.

In the following part of chapter on the researcher presents the background of the study and also draws attention on the objectives and research questions of the study and ends with the significance, scope as well as the organization of the study.

1.2 Background of the study

As the world today strive to increase the awareness on the promotion and defense of women and girls' rights through different campaigns and programs, different forms of violence against women also increase. Worldwide, sexual violence and sexual harassment against women continue to raise and the violence against them come to the front line. Young girls, especially teenagers are the most vulnerable to this violence as they are the ones who are more victims of it (Ayona, 2020).

The whole world today is confronting the problem of effects violence committed against teenagers and the most alarming is the early pregnancies accompanied by the social rejection of the teen mothers. As from fact, the United Nations Population Fund showed that among the challenges that the World is facing, there is teenage pregnancy that continues to be a significant challenge as this is requiring an urgent resolution the world over. As emphasized by its report, in 2014, the World Health Organization has reported that 11% of all births were due to women

aged 15-19 years, an estimated 16 million women globally. Approximately 95% of teenage pregnancies happen in developing countries with 36.4 million women becoming mothers before age 18 and 5.6 million having a live birth before age 15 in 2010. Sub-Saharan Africa had the highest prevalence of teenage pregnancy in the world in 2013 alone (UNFPA, 2013).

Reports have underlined how early pregnancy brings many consequences to young women and teen motherhood is viewed to be both a cause and consequence of social exclusion. For instance, according to Franjić (2018), teenage parents are exposed to a number of issues such as unemployment, poverty, delivering babies with low birth-weight and increased risk of childhood accidents. The social exclusion of teen parents extends to poor health status, non-access to health and different social supports and the poorer health outcomes for themselves and their babies. The poorer health and social outcomes for young mothers is also linked to inadequate access to appropriate care and support. (Franjić, 2018).

Teen motherhood continues to be a serious problem this was proved by its magnitude globally as most cases of early pregnancies are related to child sexual abuse. According to the report published by UNFPA in 2013, the problem of teen motherhood is predominantly observed in Africa with many cases in west and central Africa. For example, in 2013, it was estimated 28% of teenagers in West and Central Africa who give births before the age of 18. In the same year the Eastern and South Africa had 25%; south Asia had 22%; Latin America and Caribbean had 18%. Arab states with 10%, East Asia and Pacific 8% and 4% in East Europe and Central Asia (UNFPA, 2013).

According to the study conducted by Yohannes, Elizabeth and Joyce in 2019 on the in five countries of East Africa, revealed that adolescents pregnancy and early motherhood was common in these countries, ranging from 18% among adolescents in Kenya to 29% in Malawi and Zambia in the year 2014. This study also showed that, although all five countries experienced a decline in adolescent pregnancy since 1990, the decline has been largely inconsistent. More than half of the adolescent's new pregnancies and or births in these countries were unintended (Yohannes, Elizabeth and Joyce, 2019)

In Rwanda a Demographic Health survey conducted in 2015 showed that the Eastern province and Kigali City presented two times more teen pregnancies than other provinces (NISR, MOH

and ICF International, 2015). Rural Nyagatare District had the lowest median age in girls and was among the four first districts with lowest median age in boys at first sexual intercourse with lowest median age at first birth. Also, the same survey indicated that the urban district of Gasabo in Kigali City was among the two first districts of Rwanda with advanced median age in girls at first sexual intercourse and at first birth.

In addition, the 2016 National Institute of Statistics report indicates that the problem of teen motherhood is alarming in Rwanda where it was found that 21% of young girls become mothers before reaching the age of 18 years old, and most of the cases were due to the result of child defilement (NISR, 2016). The above statistics are indicators that show how teenage pregnancy in Rwanda is on a lesser extent compare to other sub-Saharan countries. Rwandan girls also are among those who are being affected by teen pregnancy even though different efforts, measures and actions have been put in place to fight it. Teenage pregnancy is still a very real challenge to girls especially in the pursuit of their education and their skills that increase success rates.

Piyanart Sa-ngiamsak (2016) highlighted that there are numerous problems which are observed in the teen mothers' lives. These problems include the lack of the adequate assistance, anxiety, sorrow, being alone and feeling of rejection, trauma and nervousness due to negative feelings. It was observed also that the teen mothers were anxious about not meeting the families' expectations and feel shameful as they develop guilty of being unable to accomplish the responsibilities of being good daughters in their families as well as facing some challenges resulting from their baby's fathers denial, the harmful reactions coming from their friends and people of their communities (Ibid).

The GMO study of 2017 also indicated that, additionally to the teen mothers who presented some different health problems like HIV and other sexual transmitted diseases. There are other challenges faced by teen mothers, some are tied to the economic constraints, others are related to the lack of access to health facilities and other are connected to their incapacity to cover the medical insurance of their newborns (GMO, 2017).

Nicole (2004) also pointed out that while observing challenges encountered by teen mothers the emphasis can be put on some severe problems such as limited financial means, deplorable conditions of life, depression experiences, family instability and limited educational options to turn to.

In order to help teen mothers to cope with different challenges they encountered, The Mental Health Foundation report of 2013 indicates that it is imperative to deal with the problems faced by teen mothers while offering them a serial of comprehensive and balanced services. This will help ensuring that they are prevented from being exposed to the difficulties such as depression, tension, losing hope, feeling of abandonment which common problems that they face after giving birth (Mental Health Foundation, 2013).

In addition, Rick (2008) indicated that there are people of good will who joined their efforts together and formed the groups named support groups to assist teen mothers in order to overcome the consequences of early motherhood. The informal groups are more focused on the work of recovery of their members. Rick underlines how these support groups can be a good way to help young girls who have experienced sexual violence and became mothers on the early age fighting loneliness, building confidence and get emotional strength. He further shows how in the mutual support groups, victims of sexual abuse regain hope and self esteem as they meet different people who encountered the same situations.

It is in this context that, in this study the researcher aims at examining how Informal support groups in Rwanda mutually contribute in the social rehabilitation of teen mothers into the society as they're often treated as social misfits.

1.3 Problem Statement

The background of this study indicates that Rwanda, like many other countries on the globe faces the problem of young girls who give birth and their teen age. For instance, the survey conducted in 2019 by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) showed that, at 19 years old one in five or 20.8 per cent Rwandan girl, were first time mother and this increased from 6.1 per cent in 2010 to 7.3 per cent in 2015 (Hudson 2019). The majority of these young mothers are impregnated by people who violate or cheat them and they turn to be marginalized and abandoned by their families, the whole society in general and even those who impregnated them deny their responsibilities. For instance, different highlights that are presented in the background show how teen mothers face problems that they are unable to support themselves.

Among these problems faced by teen mothers, Sa-ngiamsak (2016) highlighted lack of the adequate assistance, anxiety, sorrow, being alone and feeling of rejection, trauma and nervousness due to negative feelings. He also indicated that teen mothers are anxious about not meeting the families' expectations and feel shameful as they develop guilty of being unable to accomplish the responsibilities of being good daughters in their families as well as facing some challenges resulting from their baby's fathers' denial, the harmful reactions coming from their friends and people of their communities.

A survey conducted in 2017 in Rwanda also indicated that 4.1% of teen mothers have different health problems like HIV and other sexual transmitted diseases, and some other problems tied to the economic constraints, lack of access to health facilities and incapacity to cover the medical insurance of their new born (GMO, 2017). In addition, Nicole (2004) also pointed out limited financial means, deplorable conditions of life, depression experiences, family instability and limited educational options as other challenges faced by teen mothers

To try to help these young mothers overcoming some of these challenges, the government of Rwanda has put a lot of efforts to fight against the child sexual violence and effects related to it whereby early motherhood and associated consequences make part of these effects. This is done in different programs implemented by the government through the ministry of gender and family promotion, the ministry of health and other government agencies like the National Police, Rwanda Investigation Bureau and others (Ministry of Health Report, 2018).

There are also National and International Non Governmental and Governmental Organizations (GOs and NGOs) that stood up and established different programs that aim at reintegrating teen mothers' welfare and the lives of their children. For instance UNFPA is one of the United Nations Agencies that work in Rwanda and help in fighting the consequences of teen motherhood. It always calls for stronger policies that can help women and girls to easily access sexual and reproductive health information and services as part to contain unwanted pregnancies, undermining social- economic transformation (UNFPA, 2018). Plan International also is one of the International non Governmental Organization that helps in tackling adolescent pregnancy especially among the ones aged between 10 and 14 who are most at risk and yet often

overlooked. It also supports girls who have already become mothers (<https://planinternational.org/sexual-health/teenage-pregnancy>).

Nevertheless, there are other informal groups that work to support the teen mothers but their work is not recorded anywhere and no study has ever been conducted to examine their contribution on the social rehabilitation of teen mothers. One example of these groups is a group called Enfants-Meres that works in Rulindo District. The activities of these groups are sometimes funded by the Government and Non Governmental Organization.

Given the above informal group exists and is working on the service of the young women who have been victims of early motherhood; this means that there is a contribution that these groups are giving to restore the life of these young mothers. However, the question can be raised to know why the work of these groups is not recognized and reported like any other work done to this end by the Government and Nongovernmental Organizations. This study was therefore conducted to examine the contribution of support given by these informal groups to the social rehabilitation of teen mothers in Rwanda with a focus in the districts of Rulindo in Northern Province and Gasabo in the City of Kigali.

1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to explore the contribution of informal support groups on teen mothers' social rehabilitation in Rulindo and Gasabo District.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To explore the challenges experienced by teen mothers of Rulindo and Gasabo Districts before meeting the support groups.
- ii. To assess the type activities that are performed by informal support groups to help teen mothers of Rulindo and Gasabo District in social rehabilitation.

- iii. To evaluate the government motivation to informal groups' activities in social rehabilitation of teen mothers of Rulindo and Gasabo Districts.

1.5. Research questions

- i. What is the life experience lived by teen mothers of Rulindo and Gasabo Districts before being helped by support groups?
- ii. What activities do informal support groups perform to help teen mothers of Rulindo and Gasabo District in their social rehabilitation?
- iii. What does the government do to motivate informal support groups' activities in social rehabilitation of teen mothers of Rulindo and Gasabo Districts?

1.5. Significance of the study

This research appreciates the efforts initiated by the government of Rwanda in caring for the victims of gender based violence and is designed to document other alternative mechanisms here called “ Informal Support Groups” to address the issues exposing the lives of sexually abused children resulting in early motherhood (teen mothers).

The findings of the study would be evidence-based information for the development of rehabilitative programs related to sexually abused children.

The recommendations of the study would be used to stress on the need for sustainable interventions on welfare of sexually abused children by both government and non-government stakeholders.

The study provides a literature for review by future researchers interested on the rehabilitation of sexually abused children.

1.7 Scope of the study

1.7.1. The concept scope

This study focused on informal support groups as a mechanism for social rehabilitation and integration of sexually abused children with consequence of early motherhood in the community.

It is designed to discuss the difficulties experienced by sexually abused children with focus on the consequences experienced in the community when it results into early motherhood. The study then explores how teen mothers can build resilience through the mechanism of social informal support groups. The findings of this study relied on the data that were collected on sexually abused children with consequence of early motherhood who come together for supporting each other.

1.7.2 Geographical scope

This study was conducted in Rulindo District because the researcher has prior knowledge about the existence of a support group. The researcher extended this study to Gasabo District of the City of Kigali. This is because according to Kayiranga (2017, Gasabo was found among the two districts in Kigali (which is an urban district) with advanced media age in girls at first sexual intercourse and at first birth. And it is the one which has a high number of teen mothers who do not live in their families than others (Byishimo, 2019).

Moreover, the researcher was distinctively familiar with the miserable living conditions of teen mothers of Gasabo District as their cases were often brought to her former office (National Commission for Human Rights) for advocacy.

1.7.3 Time Scope

This study was conducted within nine months starting from December 2019 and ended August 2020. It focused on the supporting services rendered by informal group to teen mothers within the past five years from 2015 to 2020.

1.8. Conclusion of the chapter

This chapter has briefly introduced to the reader the importance of Informal support groups in the social rehabilitation of sexually abused children resulting in early motherhood (teen mothers).

The chapter delineates the background of the study, its problem statement, research objectives the significance of the study, the scope of the study and the research questions.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATUREREVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The present study aims at examining the contribution of informal support groups on the social rehabilitation of teen mothers in Rwanda with a case study of Rulindo and Gasabo Districts. The study does not stand in isolation, other writers and scholars should have done works related to it. Therefore, this chapter contains the review of related literature to the present study, looking at both theoretical literature and empirical literature. The chapter also presents the theoretical and conceptual framework used by the study and ends with the gap identification and conclusion.

2.1 Theoretical Review of the literature

2.1.1 Definition of the key concepts

This study has used some terms which may be unfamiliar to the reader, it is for the great importance to define them and make their meaning easier to the reader. Looking at the meaning as in line of other scholars and the meaning the researcher has given to them in this study.

The key concepts of this study are support group, informal support group, social rehabilitation, teenager, teenage pregnancy and teen mothers.

Support group: According to Dictionary. Com, Support group is a group of people who meet regularly to support or sustain each other by discussing problems affecting them in common, as alcoholism or bereavement (<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/support-group>).

In this study a support group is the group that brings together people with same former experiences having the purpose of recovering. The members of a support groups can be gathered by a professional or themselves.

Informal support group: Mwestwood (2006) defined informal groups as groups that are composed of people who are not officially organized under a registered name, but who meet together in order to advise, offer solace and friendship and /or spiritual guidance.

In this study the concept of informal support group refers to a group of people who came by the social network and don't have rigid rules to be followed in their activities and most of them are not registered by the government.

Social Rehabilitation: According to online dictionary.university, Social rehabilitation is an assistance provided to restore an individual independence and involvement in the community to the maximum practicable extent (<https://dictionary.university>). In this study , social rehabilitation refers to all activities that deal with helping people who have experienced some disturbing life events, like anxiety , illness among others, to reestablish the normal life regain their capability and confidence.

Teenager: According to encyclopedia a teenager is a person who falls within the ages of 13 to 19 years old (<https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teenager>). In this study teenager means a young girl in the period of transition between childhood and adulthood, and is generally between 13 and 19 years.

Teenage pregnancy: UNESCO defined teenage pregnancy to be also known as adolescent pregnancy and is the pregnancy in a female under the age of 20 (UNESCO 2018). In this context teenage pregnancy refers to the occurrence of pregnancy in girls aged bellow 21 years old according the Rwanda law stating the age of marriage .This period is characterized by changes in physical, social, psychological and reproductive health characteristics.

Teen mother: According to Urban Dictionary, a teen mother is a female between the age of 13 and 19 who has got a kid from having unprotected sex. In this study teen mother refers to a girlwho became mothers during their age bellow legal age of marriage, that is, below 21 years old.

2.1.2 The situation of teen motherhood

The UNICEF study, Hidden in Plain Sight, founds that around 120 million girls worldwide (slightly more than 1 in 10) have experienced forced intercourse or other forced sexual acts at some point in their lives. However, girls living in certain parts of the world seem to be at greater risk than others. Prevalence rates of 10% or more for forced sex are found in 13 of the 18 countries in sub-Saharan Africa with available data. Findings of the above mentioned study show

that, in low and middle-income countries, the exposure to certain forms of sexual violence is not uncommon in the lives of many girls. The proportion of those aged 15 to 19 who have ever experienced forced sexual intercourse or other sexual acts in their lifetime varies widely across countries, ranging from no reported experiences among adolescent girls in Kyrgyzstan to 22% among such girls in Cameroon (UNICEF, 2014).

According to Sylvia (2016), about 11% of all births worldwide are girls aged between 15 and 19 years old. According to the World Health Statistics of 2015, the average global birth rate among 15 to 19 years old is 49 per 1000. In Sub-Saharan Africa these rates were high because it had 20 per 1000. The ten highest –risk countries for teenage motherhood were Niger, Liberia, Mali, Chad, Afghanistan, Uganda, Malawi, Guinea, Mozambique and Central Africa Republic (WHO, 2015).

According to WHO (2020), at least 10 million unintended pregnancies occur each year among adolescent girls aged between 15 and 19 in developing countries. Yohannes, Elizabeth and Joyce (2019) argued that early and unintended pregnancies among adolescents are associated with several adverse health, educational, social and economic outcomes and this is more specific in Sub-Saharan Africa.

According to Plan International (2020), in East Africa teen pregnancy rate is very high among teenagers. Governments, civil society and churches are divided on how to approach this problem whereby governments and Non Governmental Organizations working in their countries in the field of health advocates for safe abortion and want to ensure that contraceptives are accessed to the youth easily, but church leaders and faith based organizations do not support that. The arguments of church leaders and faith based organizations is that allowing abortion and availing contraceptives to the youth, will be encouraging them to indulge in risk of increased sexual behavior (Mugisha, 2018).

Rwanda has not remained indifferent about the problem of teen pregnancy as the rate of teen pregnancy and teen motherhood continue to increase every year. For instance the teen pregnancy rate in Rwanda increased from 6.1% in 2010 to 7.3% in 2015. 49.6% teen mothers had their first pregnancy between the age of 12 and 17 (UN, 2015). The statistics brought forth by Bishumba (2020) show that 17,859 underage girls were impregnated in 2016, this number

slightly decreased to 17,337 in 2017 and climbed to 19,832 in 2018. From January 2019 to January 2020 teen pregnancies increased to 15,696 and these averages to 1,452 a month. An estimated 23,544 children were born to teen mothers in 2019 (Bishumba 2020).

According to Xinhua (2019) more than 19,000 mothers in Rwanda gave birth during their teenage age, a 2018 report of the Rwandan health ministry showed that Broken down leading districts in teen pregnancies are Nyagatare which registered 1,465 teen pregnancies, Gatsibo 1,452, Gasabo, 1,064 and Kirehe 1,055 (MINISANTE, 2018). However, the report published by Plan International Rwanda indicates that Gasabo has the high growing rate of teenage pregnancies with 20% increasing rate every year (Plan International, 2020).

2.1.3 Challenges faced by teen mothers

There is a growing body of international and national literature such as the state of the world children UNHCR (2011) as well as that of IICSA (2017) developed around many problems associated with childbearing during the teen years. Bissell (2000) argued that women who become teenage mothers when compared to those who delay childbearing past the teen years are more likely to be socio-economically disadvantaged as a result of their parenting at an early age. Similar findings by Lehana&Rhyn (2003); Olausson, Cnattingius, Haglund&Weitoft (2001) shows that childhood abuse affects the victim into her adulthood physically, psychologically and socially. However, other people like Quinlivan, Tan, Steele & Black (2004); Ehlers (2003) argued that women who fall pregnant during the teen years stand the risk of developing some physical problems while pregnant and when delivering as compared to adult mothers.

While Trivedi (2000) highlighted that that teenage mothers are more likely to experience obstetric difficulties when compared to adult mothers, Plan International (2020) pointed that teen mothers have demonstrated to be exposed to different risks when giving birth. These risks are increased death rate of young mothers between 15 and 19 years old, health risk and complication because of their immature bodies and high risk that babies born to teenagers are likely to die during birth. In addition to health problem, teen mothers meet negative social and economic problems. These problems include but not limited to stigma and rejection by their

parents and peers but also the threat of violence by their families or by those who impregnate them Chohan&Langa M.(2011).

Teen mothers are mostly exposed to the lack of economical means, poor education and illiteracy. They tend to be more dependent, they experience denial of support from their parents, those who impregnated them or any person who may know them. Teen mothers are also exposed to psychological and substance abuse difficulties (Barbara, 2010). Moreover, they experience different challenges in their education and occupation status, more to that they face parenting challenges from the time of pregnancy to the motherhood time (Courtney, 2014). Teen motherhood interrupts the improvement of the education and this hinders their financial achievement, producing ability and safety (Dangal, 2006).

Teen motherhood harm young girls' life and impede their socio-economic outcomes with the high risk of drop school, with a lower or lack of acceptable requirements on the market place this lead to unemployment and low payment and cause them living a miserable housing conditions and suffering from anxiety. (UNICEF, 2008)

Some other scholars have classified the challenges faced by teen mothers as educational challenges, economical challenges and health challenges.

i. Educational challenges

The challenges that hamper teen mothers' educational successes are associated to the lack of family assistance and school facilitation. Chigona and Chetty (2008) emphasized the teen mothers' experiences while going back to school; it was observed that they skip school days as they refuse or are afraid of being mocked. Teen mothers experienced as well frustration by both friends and teachers when they have not been able to perform well their work as they are unable to fulfill both the task of caring for their children and revising their studies. Among the serious cause of teen mothers drop out the school was stigmatization by the school staff ACLU of California (2015). The practice of stigmatization practice done to teen mothers consist of teasing them and asking why getting married while studying and emphasizing that they should be accountable of destroying their own lives.

CHAUKE (2013) found that teen mothers who come back to school after delivery are exposed to pressure and abuse. They are exposed to ridicule by their fellow students and they are obliged to keep silence because their teachers have the negative attitude towards them. Expulsion from the schools was viewed. The conditions of hostility in school were pointed out by Walgwe et al. (2016) who stated that school drop out of teen mothers take place right away during pregnancy because expulsion is considered to be one of the suitable corrective measure that will prevent other girls from getting early pregnancy.

Concerning the lack of support from family, Asomani (2017) found that teen mothers dropped out because being pregnant at early age is viewed as social deviation and it is often followed by the family denial or rejection. In that context, teen mothers experience stigmatization practices as means of punishment for correction. Among the reprimand given by their parents is being thrown out of their houses. Achoka et al (2012) emphasized teen mothers drop schools as they face abuse and exclusion from the family to the community sphere (parents, educators, students and the community). Teen mothers are exposed to criticism and accusation from their communities saying that pregnancy is what they deserve as punishment and this causes them feel so ashamed of returning to school. Ugoji (2013) found that a large percentage of teen mothers suspend schools due to stigmatization related to mocking names, insults and other particular perception by the society. Teen mothers are seen as people with lesser morals and with no values who are capable of contaminate other students of their age.

ii. Economic challenges

It was underlined how most of teen mothers are familiar to the fact that mothers stay at home where they nurture their children rather than combining household's chores with career or different other responsibility out of the households. For that reason, teen mothers feel incapable to look for job opportunities after delivering as the social expectation force them to fulfill the aspirations of being full time mothers (Dench et al., 2007).

Study shows that when teen mothers are surrounded by different constraints especially the financial hardship, they find themselves stuck and incapable to fulfill their obligations as mothers. (Ankomah,2013). Some special problems occurred to teen mothers who do not get

assistance from parents or guardians, as they are unable to handle the financial needs or their new borns. Teen mothers are thus obliged to go for any means offered to them in order to help them survive cover the child necessities. Zondo(2006). As teen mothers are not qualified to participate on the labor market, they experience outcomes instability that can lead them remain dependents and remaining in the sexual abuse cycle as victims. Fisher et al. (2017)

iii.Mental Health Challenges

Sexual violence against teen girls erodes the strong foundation that girls require for leading healthy and productive lives. The exposure to violence during childhood can increase vulnerability to a broad range of mental and physical health problems, ranging from depression and unwanted pregnancy to cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and sexually transmitted diseases, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)(CDC, 2015).

Among the variety of experiences that teen mothers encountered there are mental illness and emotion problems, pain, confusion, suicide thinking, traumatic diseases, stress disorder, self deprivation psychological disorder. (Gharehbagh,2015). Being sexually abused teen is attached to shocking experiences of nervousness, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), these change their personality as they become more abusive, they misbehavior by doing different offenses and they are incapable to offer a rich parenthood. (Debra Allnock and Patricia Hynes, 2012).

According to the Rwanda's Penal Code under article 190 defines child defilement as any sexual intercourse or any sexual act with a child regardless of the form or means used. That penal code agrees with Article 27 of The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child that states in part that children should be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. That means a child by the law is any person below the age of eighteen years. It is thus reported in the Rwanda National Police annual report (2016) that 1866 out of 2996 defilement cases were prosecuted and others lacked evidence.

2.1.4 Measures undertaken to tackle the challenges of early motherhood and problem related to it in Rwanda

Different efforts that address the problem of teen mothers can be observed from the Government of Rwanda with the help of Non-Government Organizations. Among interventions includes Rwanda's Adolescent Girls' Initiative project intended to improve incomes while empowering disadvantaged adolescent girls and young women (age 15-24 years) and promote TVET as priority (MIGEPROF, 2020). Imbuto Foundation reports that it has trained around 739 adolescent mothers in parents-adolescent communication guide and positive parenting (Imbuto, 2020).

In line with Rwandan Government priorities to fight the issue of teen mother challenges, accelerator Phase II of the UNFPA project in Rwanda employs social entrepreneurship to tackle teenage pregnancies by encouraging young to think critically and creatively about issues related to their sexual and reproductive health and rights (UNFPA, 2020).

In trying to find solution to challenge confronted by teenage mothers, UNFPA Rwanda is working with the government to support comprehensive sexuality education in schools and to enhance youth friendly services. UNFPA also supports the government at policy level to implement the Reproductive Mental, Newborn, Child Adolescent Health policy and also provides technical support in the development of family planning and adolescent sexual and reproductive health strategic plan (UNFPA, 2020).

2.2.2. Understanding informal support Groups and how they impact teen mothers' lives

According to Landis and Stark (2014) Young women who are survivors of sexual violence normally seek for assistance from family members and other within their informal social networks. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Guidelines on Mental health and Psychological Support in Emergency Settings (IASC, 2015) highlighted the importance of social support in the aftermath of traumatic event, although limiter research exists on the role of social support networks play in the recovery process for young women survivors of sexual violence.

According to Masten and Obradovic (2006), peer groups resilience mechanism is the one of adaptive system that facilitate individuals to learn and develop the social regulatory capacity that is embedded in human relationships and ties to cultural traditions. WHO (2017) supported the togetherness of people affected by similar difficulties to find solutions and said that peer groups members feel supported by others and there is a better understanding for each other's situation. Paine-Andrews (2018) and Strobel (2014) highlighted the importance of support group mechanism as helping to overcome challenging life for teen mothers vis-à-vis their physical, psychological and social issues. It was reviewed that teen mothers support groups help vulnerable teen mothers to acquire an increased level of resilience after coping from the successful strategies that have been used by resilient co-group members who had suffered the same challenges and stayed brave and positive oriented.

As far as teen mothers are concerned, the design of a support group is intended to recognize the barriers faced by teenage mothers, especially those living in disadvantaged communities. Teen mothers support groups are safer and a trustworthy place where its members would gather in order to share personal struggles and reach out for help. Through informal groups of teens, members begin to have an understanding that they could rely on each other and they could want more from life. They see positive role models in the group who are working to achieve personal goals and fight their way to success with their employment and social standing (Sandra Rubchinuk, 2009).

Kyla Ellis-Sloan (2015) argues that teenage mother support groups communicate special benefits as they provide a great assistance to the young parents who would not be able to benefit from such advantages if there were followed one by one. Being member of a support group help members learn from others, building their inner strength and creating a space of friendship that lead to the regain respect and social belonging.

Knijn and Soc Policy (2012) argued that informal support groups help in the context of childcare and play an important role in facilitating teenage mothers' entry into employment and employment sustainability. This employment sustainability, which actually, is self employment created from capacity building, helps teen mothers to be economically self reliant reestablishes their social status.

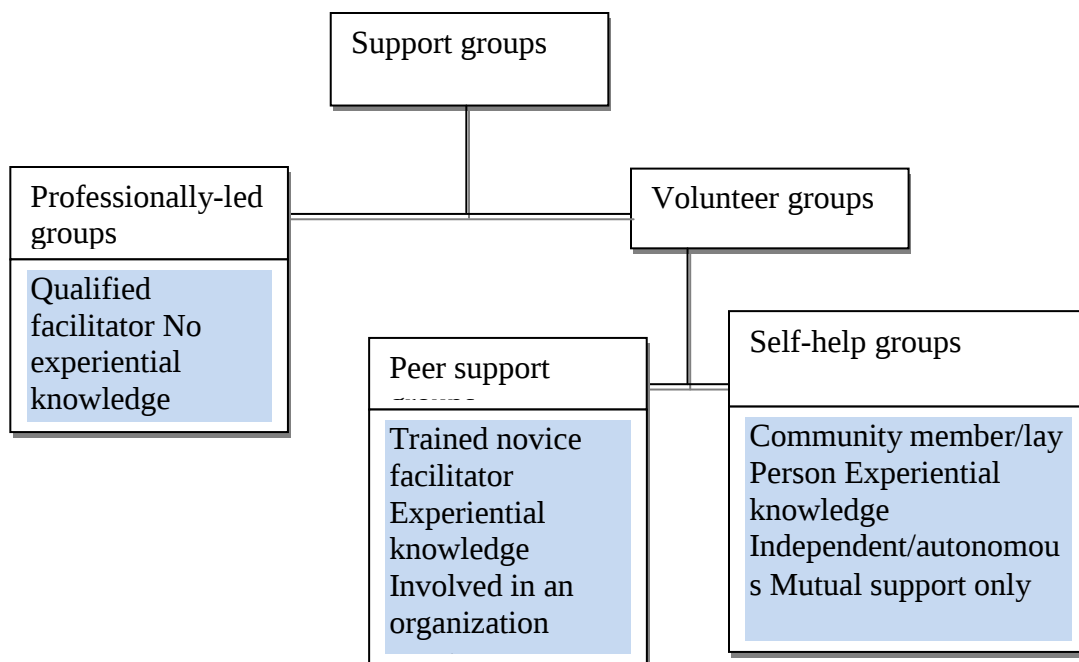
Even though informal support groups have been proven to be an important opportunity for the rehabilitation of teen mothers because their influence of bringing together people with similar experiences who were once wounded and then being able to restore themselves, Staff (2018) pointed out some threats that may arise in support groups compare to the members' benefits. Among those threats there are disturbing members, dialogue that are monopolized by a certain group of people, no secret keeping, emotional

Among the risks include disruptive group members; conversation dominated by griping; lack of confidentiality; emotional complications, misunderstanding and disagreements between members; unsuitable or unstable medical services and aggressive comparison between members concerning the best or the worse conditions in the group.

Types of informal support groups

CATIE (2008) mentioned that the type of support groups depends on how members define and set up their groups with much emphasis on educational component and emotional support. First 5 LA (2012) revealed that support groups differ on several dimensions as regarding to the purpose, the structure, the facilitation, the expertise of facilitators and the modality by which support is provided. In the same way N. Strobel et.al (2014) highlighted the existence of two main types of support groups which are professionally-led and volunteer support groups.

Figure 2: Types of support groups



Source: N. Strobel et.al (2014): The Role of support groups and connects groups in overcoming psychological distress.

The figure 2 shows that main difference between the professionally-led groups and the volunteer groups depends on the knowledge and training level of the group facilitator. The first one requires a qualified facilitator while the later does not have a familiar person with expertise in the issue addressed in the group.

2.2 Empirical review on the support given to teen mothers

Different studies have been conducted to examine how teen mothers are helped to cope with life situation. A Study conducted in the United States of America by Paine-Andrews and his colleagues in 2018 revealed that support group mechanism was popular and suitable to many people. This was because support groups have shown their important role in helping people cope with different problems faced. Support groups there were over than 500,000 that year and were found to be both inexpensive and effective ways to offer assistance to people dealing with a

variety of distress. Inform Support Groups have become a very known and common way of assisting people who are experiencing troubles in their lives (Paine-Andrews et al., 2018). The same study highlights the benefit of informal support groups which encourage companionship as it gathered people with similar experiences, they feel comforted as they know that they have been through the same situations, support groups offer a platform where each idea is welcomed and being valued and heard, members of support groups find self strength as they learn to each other. They provide inspiring stories that comfort and encourage members, when it comes to deal with common some issues, members are the ones to look for suitable resolutions that are approved by themselves.

The findings of the study conducted by Freeman and Dodson in 2014 about the social network development among low-income single mothers revealed that informal support was at least among mothers most in need. These informal support groups were proved to provide protection from psychological distress, economic hardship, poor parenting practices and poor child outcome. This was confirmed by another study conducted by Manuel, Martinson, Bledoe, Mansori, & Bellamy (2012), which found that informal support was consistently positively associated with maternal psychological well-being. Moreover, informal support was found positively relates to maternal personal control (Kang, 2013), confidence (Orhtnes, Jones & William, 2014) and perceives physical health (Dauner, Wilmot, & Schultz, 2015).

Another study conducted by Verloskundige (2001) on Young women's perceptions on the effectiveness of a support group for teenage mothers found that different kind of assistance provided to teen mothers while pregnant and after giving birth were of great importance in reintegrating teen mothers in the normal life of the society. The study further shows that there are informal support groups that help teen mothers in the awareness because there are different options that they can benefit in order to be educationally, mentally and healthy restored.

The study recommended the health care specialists and government to offer a minimum help in order to improve the living conditions and fight against teen mother's deprivation in order to prevent mental health problems that can follow in teenage mothers' life as it can be discern as compared to their adult counterpart.

The study conducted in Malaysia by Saim and others in 2013 found that teen mothers are provided with shelter homes by informal support groups, where they can stay for a minimum

period of two weeks up to two years depending on teen's needs. Those shelter homes offer various activities from vocational classes such as tailoring classes and handicrafts, outdoor and religious activities, job placement as well as voluntary work.

The above findings were supported by the study conducted in Uganda by Tomson in 2016 to examine the experience of young female survivors of sexual violence and the role informal support networks played in contributing to survivor's healing and recovery. The study used a survey on 12 female survivors of sexual violence, revealed that all girls who participated in this study identified stigma as the primary source of psychosocial distress. This is because it pushes the victim to keep the memory of sexual violence and becomes a significant barrier to the recovery and reintegration process. Nevertheless, reassurance from close friend was described by girls as being a particular powerful means of counteracting these negative messages inflicted upon them by others in the community.

In Rwanda, it is estimated that 21% of young women enter into motherhood before the age of 18 (NISR, 2016). The assessment conducted by GMO reported that these teen mothers experience numerous problems among which include non-civil registration of their babies, high rate of school dropout and limited school reintegration mechanisms, stigmatization and violence by family members and the community and limited access to justice. Apart from that teen mothers who were found to have health related problems including HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, the GMO study conducted in 2017 also highlights the lack of capacities for the teen mothers to access health care facilities and inability to afford health insurance for their children due to lack of financial means . (GMO (2017)

A study conducted by RBC in 2016 evaluated the extent to which violated teenagers are seeking for help. The findings of this study were that teen mothers were found unaware of how and where to claim their justice for their reestablishment in their rights, for their own integration in the community, and for the rights of their children. The same study found that there were any visible and consistent interventions to address the teen pregnancy and motherhood phenomenon. It was also found that 75% of teen mothers did not seek any legal support, they did not file the case of violence in the court, nor have they brought the issue in the community structure such as Umugorobaw'ababyeyi that would help. The study recommended that there was a need of legal assistance in order to have due power and the capacity to claim the rights of teen mothers and

those of their children. That is, that teen mothers need support for survival such as professional training and skills in order to face survival challenges. They need to be integrated in the society, not as dependent, but as producers and contributors to the development of the country with due dignity and capacity.

The study conducted by Haguruka in 2018 revealed that in Rwanda, teenagers who got pregnant dropped out from schools in order to deal with the new status of motherhood and struggles related to it. Only a non-significant percentage of teen mothers had managed to complete secondary education. The study also found that teen mothers have challenge of social integration because they are rejected by the community, abandoned on their own by their families as well as their male partners.

Another study conducted by the Centre for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA in 2003 found that there are support group that start their group by putting more emphasis on their common beliefs and understandings which creates a trustworthy atmosphere and rise the belonging spirit of its members while improving members' healing, problem solving capacity and personal development (Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, 2003). Support group is a social fellowship made by people who experienced similar problems, conditions, history, symptoms who decide to monitor their self adherence and connect in person or via phones in order to build their self capacity.

A research conducted by Leerlooijer in 2013 revealed that teen mothers have themselves the potential to come out from their problems if they are joined together for in an informal support group. In their study on the evaluation of the community-based empowerment interventions for unmarried teenage mothers, the same author found that teenage mothers support groups are important as different initiative like community awareness, schools, empowerment through activities that generate income, advises and advocacy because they are best ways to deal with physical, psychological and social problems. Among the severe complications encountered by teen mothers are some observed during and after pregnancy, lack of education and being rejected in their communities.

As scholars argue support groups are essential to address the need for services offered to teen mothers because they provide help for their challenges and promote mutual support and the

importance of learning from personal experience and strength at all times. They said that support groups are vital in the lives of teen mothers as they offer services that help them cope with challenges encountered, in the support groups they get strengthen and learn from personal experience to the common support. Motjeleb (2009) underlined that 90% of support groups' members are keen to discuss with their peers about their daily experiences and are free to get more common suggestions from peers concerning breastfeeding, the change nappies, the washing and feeding the baby.

2.3 Gap identification

The reviewed literatures highlight the extent at which teen motherhood is a remarkable problem and concern for every world nation. The literatures also point out the level at which teenage pregnancy and early motherhood stands in Rwanda. Furthermore, they showed different stakeholders, including the government and NGOs that work together to fight sexual violence committed against teenagers who became mothers prematurely and the kind of help provided to them.

Apart from the recognized support provided by the government and recognized NGOs, there are few scholars that indicated informal support groups (support groups) that work in assisting teen mothers. These support group mechanism is judged worthwhile in the rehabilitation of teen mothers. However, no specific literature was found in addressing its applicability to rehabilitation of teen mothers in Rwanda. Therefore, this study is conducted to explore more on the contribution of these informal support groups to the social rehabilitation of teen mothers in Rwanda focusing on the two districts of Rulindo and Gasabo.

2.4 Theoretical framework

The present study on informal support groups as a recovery tool for teen mothers is based on the theory of resilience. Yates et al. (2014) clarifies that given its susceptibility to adverse circumstances, the theory of resilience is concerned with cultivating a positive mindset from the individual's own competence. This theory is utilized in order to find a successful developmental outcome though they might be challenges of adaptation for disadvantaged people, communities and societies.

The resilience theory covers two important concepts that are adversity and competence. Adversity is about negative situations and interactions which may interfere the adaptive functioning and development. It was observed that adverse developmental effects result from experiences that obstruct, exhaust and weaken the adaptive systems that are normally assigned to promote and protect. Whereas Competence it is about the ability of an individual , a group and a society to adapt in different situations with success and to being able to satisfy contextual, development and cultural expectations (Masten and Obradovic, 2006).

According to Ager, Annan, Panter and Brick (2013), individuals encounter most devastating threats to their developmental life when they find that there are some failures in the adaptive systems. In reality, individual resilience should be familiar when adaptive systems are operational and easy to access. Individuals thus learn and grow the social regulatory capacity embedded in human relationship and ties to cultural practices through adaptive competence.

Table 1: Adaptive systems implicated on resilience

No	Adaptive systems	Problem solving mechanism
1	Attachment system	close relationships with caregivers, friends, romantic partners, spiritual figures
2	Mastery motivation system	self-efficacy processes, reward systems related to successful behavior
3	Stress response systems	alarm and recovery systems
4	Self-regulation systems	emotion regulation, executive functioning, activation and inhibition of attention or behavior
5	Family system	parenting, interpersonal dynamics, expectations, cohesion, rituals, norms
6	School system	teaching, values, standards, expectations
7	Peer system	friendships, peer groups, values, norms
8	Cultural and societal systems	religion, traditions, rituals, values, standards, laws

Source: Ann S. Masten and JelenaObradovic (2006): Competence and Resilience in Development

The Table 1 indicates that there are numerous adaptive mechanisms available for individuals in troubles that are able to successfully help them develop regardless of what they are facing. Among those mechanisms are attachment system, mastery motivation system, stress response system, self regulations, family system, school system, peer system and cultural and societal system.

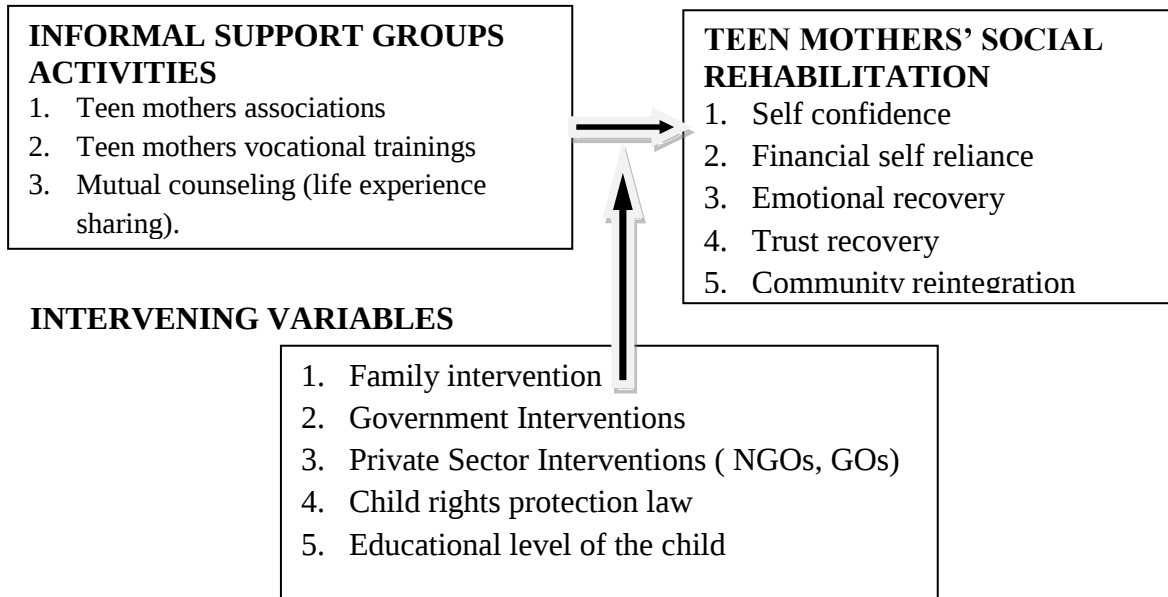
The researcher used this theory to explain how support groups can help teen mothers to reestablish their confidence through mutual support which brings them together to understand and accept their situation. After having understood and accepted their situation will then develop the mechanism of coping with the present life from the available opportunities.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The empirical evidences revealed that teen mothers experience different challenging conditions after being sexually abused including physical, psychological and social issues. Despite the challenges faced however, researchers found that support group mechanism as a best mean to overcome such challenging life for teen mothers. From the conceptual framework in figure 1, the researcher explains how informal support groups through their different activities help vulnerable teen mothers to acquire an increased level of resilience after coping from the successful strategies that have been used by resilient co-group members who had suffered the same challenges and stayed brave and positive oriented. These activities of informal support groups therefore are taken to be the independent variables which will influence the social integration of teen mothers which is the dependent variable. The conceptual framework also indicates some intervening variables which may boost or hinder the success of informal support to reach their objectives and contribute to teen mothers' social rehabilitation.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES **DEPENDENT VARIABLES**



Source: The Researcher, December 2019.

2.6 Conclusion of the chapter

This chapter dealt with the review of related literature to the contribution of informal support groups activities to the teen mothers' social rehabilitation. It reviewed the theoretical literatures of different writers who wrote in relation to this topic and the empirical review which examined the findings of studies conducted by other researchers. In this study also, the researcher presented the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that guided the study and it ends by the summary of all which was discussed in it.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological approach that was used in order to collect and evaluate the research questions data. It reveals how the study has been conducted in terms of research design, the target population, the sampling design and the sampling size. The chapter has also put much emphasis on the description of the methods used during the process of gathering data and the techniques used while analyzing them. In finally, the researcher explained about her ethical concern as well as the reliability and validity of the instruments and data.

3.1 Description study area

Rulindo District is one of five districts of Northern Province in Rwanda. It is a rural district with agriculture as the major economic activity (NIS, 2010). The choice of the two Districts of Rulindo and Gasabo is motivated by the fact that the researcher has feasible knowledge of the existence of teen mothers in these areas that can be used as the basis for the research. Rulindo District was purposively selected because the researcher had prior knowledge for having an operational teen mothers' informal support group called Enfants-Meres that assists more than 1000 teen mothers regrouped into support groups. On the other hand, while choosing Gasabo District, the researcher was challenged by the survey that pointed out this District as being among the two firsts Districts of Rwanda with advanced median age in girls at first sexual intercourse and at first birth (Kayiranga, 2017). Moreover, the researcher was distinctively familiar with the miserable living conditions of teen mothers of Gasabo District as their cases were often brought to researcher's former office at National Commission for Human Rights for advocacy.

Nevertheless, although the research showed how teen mothers from the two Districts come from poor families, the researcher is aware of the living conditions in rural areas that may be different

from urban areas. But the interest of the researcher in this study is to explore teen mothers' experiences and benefits from joining support groups for their social rehabilitation.

3.2. Research Design

A research design is a guidance document for gathering, measuring and analyzing data. It helps the researcher in the process of exploring methods and techniques for the data collection and analysis (Hasounah,2003). In relation to this study, the researcher employed a qualitative research design whereby textual data were recorded from respondents' interview transcripts and researcher's observation notes, the qualitative approach here was about investigating how informal support groups help teen mothers for their social rehabilitation while receiving views from chosen target groups.

3.3. The target population

The target population is commonly explained as the number of community from which the sample can be taken during the research. According to Statistics Canada (2010), the target population is the population in which information is needed, for this reason based on the nature and the objective of the survey, the target population is made by various elements that may be individuals, households, schools, hospitals, farms, businesses, etc.

Therefore, the study population is about the people of analysis, a category of individuals that have one or some characteristics of interest to the researcher (Kothari,2000). In accordance to this, others scholars continue by emphasizing that a study population is composed by a group of individuals or items that are considered to have similar characteristics; they added that normally all individuals or things that have a correlated linking traits or characteristics between them.

For the present study, the target population was the teen mothers in Rulindo and Gasabo Districts. However, It was complex for the researcher in this study to have a precised target population because no clear record are recorded about the numbers of teenagers who get pregnancies in Rwanda, especially in the chosen district of Gasabo and Rulindo. The only recent

record available are those recorded in The New Time by Bishumba in 2019 comparing the statistics of teen pregnancies in the whole country between 2016 and 2017.

For instance, Bishumba indicated that the number of teen pregnancies decreased from 17849 in 2016 to 17337 in 2017. She added that this number shifted dramatically to 19832 teen pregnancies in 2018 and further highlighted that the districts which were leading in teenage pregnancies in the three years were: Nyagatare with had 1465, Gatsibo with 1452, Gasabo with 1064 and Kirehe which had 1055 teenage pregnancies and no record was found about Rulindo district. This gives gaps of statistical records about recent teenage motherhood situation and the level of involvement of informal according each district in Rwanda and involvement of informal support group to help in their social rehabilitation and it was hard for the researcher to have a precised number of target population. It is for that reason that from this population, the researcher typically selected a sample based on her understanding of group awareness to be tested while having in mind that the information needed is available from those respondents Grinnell and Williams, (1990).

Therefore, the researcher focused on 10 teen mothers who were regrouped into an informal support group named Enfants-Mères in Rulindo and 10 others who were non members of any support group in Gasabo District. This means that population of interest for this study was 20 teen mothers including 10 from an informal support group from Rulindo and 10 teen mothers who were not in any support Group in Gasabo. This was based on the preliminary information that teen mothers support groups were not commonly known. This same group of 20 teen mothers was used as the sample population because it was manageable small for data collection and analysis.

3.4. Sampling technique

Kothari (2004) defined sampling technique as the strategy to get a sample from a given population. It includes the procedures followed by the researcher while selecting sample objects. The sampling technique for this research was a purposive sampling technique because the researcher selected people who are directly affected by the problem of the study. Therefore, teen

mothers whose consistent availability and attitude in the study were selected as a specific targeted group in the study population. Additional, 6 key informants composed by 1 representative from the National Commission for Children, 2 officers in local authorities, 2 officers of MIGEPROF in charge of gender at the District levels and 1 initiator of an informal support group who shared explanatory responses with regard to their expertise in rehabilitation of sexually abused children with consequence of early motherhood.

3.5. Sample Size

Normally, the sample size depends on the number of participants and the proper way of selecting them. This study is based on a qualitative approach as it is designed to explore the existence of Informal support groups as the effective mechanisms for the social rehabilitation of teen mothers in Rwanda; this means that the study sample was determined purposefully rather than computing a probability sample. After the purposive sampling, the researcher recruited participants using snowball approach.

The researcher used 20 teen mothers as participants. This because this group is small enough to reach and these participants were falling into the criteria set by the researcher such as having experienced teen pregnancy during their childhood life (from 13 to 18years old), being recognized by either the local authorities or the support group, willing to share their experiences and being able to avail themselves in the discussion to the suitable place and time that was chosen by the researcher and authorities for the purpose of achieving the research objectives.

The researcher also used 6 key informants composed by 1 representative from the National Commission for Children, 2 officers in local authorities, 2 officers of MIGEPROF in charge of gender at the District levels and 1 initiator of the informal support group.

3.6. Research Instruments

According to Hasouneh (2003), data collection is the term that illustrates the process related to the collection and the preparation of the needed information in a study. In this study, the researcher used two types of instruments namely, a structured interview guide, which was used to collect information from the key informants and a discussion from which contained different topics discussed by formed focus groups.

3.7. Data Collection Techniques

According to Graeme and Nargiza (2018), data collection techniques are the methods that are used to collect information from participants. These methods allow the researcher to gather information systematically about the ongoing research and the objects study and the settings they occur in. It is for this reason that the researcher has to collect systematically the data. If data are obtained in a disorganized way, it will be difficult to address the study questions in a definitive way. The researcher in this study used focus groups with respondents and interview with the key informants.

3.7.1. Focus Group Discussion

The choice of using Focus Group discussion in this study is because of the qualitative nature of the current study. The major reason was to get a deep understanding of social issues especially on teen pregnancy menace. This approach aimed at obtaining data from a purposively-selected group of individuals rather than getting it from a statistically representative sample of a broader population (Goyal, 2013). With regard to this technique, the researcher used 4 focus groups of five people each, that is two focus groups with 10 participants of Rulindo and 2 focus groups with 10 participants of Gasabo. This was done making the minority opinion greater than 1 person as it is a group of 3 which is uniquely numbered and large enough, it shouldn't be too big to hinder the proper debate.

3.7.2. Key informant interview

In the research area, a key informant is a person who can provide specific, detailed knowledge about a particular problem you wish to understand, on the other hand, the key informant may often have a clear point of view or may share unique issues or problems encountered by a particular group of your organization Goyal (2013).

However, key informant interviews such as focus groups are other kind of details that lets you speak to someone with firsthand knowledge of the information you need, or the problems you are

trying to tackle. Key informant interviews may be useful for the preliminary assessment of a problem to identify someone who has been in the target area for so long, know the written and unwritten policy about the mix of the research and the problems examined and build a list of the difficulties and strengths of the current problem (Ibid).

With respect to this study, this approach was used to gain more realistic and in-depth answers on topics that may have been too sensitive or contentious to be discussed in a focus group or that could not be answered through a survey.

3.8. Data Analysis Procedures

The researcher conducted this study by examining the Contribution of Informal support groups activities on the social rehabilitation of teen mothers in Rwanda through a systematic arranging of the interview transcripts and observation notes. The researcher identified significant patterns and made a content analysis based on the research questions.

3.9. Ethical consideration

In order to give to the researcher access to the information required during the study, relevant authorities provided a permission that helped the researcher carrying out the research. The researcher was firstly provided by the Recommendation Letter from the University of Rwanda (CASS) that helped her conducting the study in two Districts (Rulindo and Gasabo). The letter helped the researcher to officially introducing herself in both Rulindo and Gasabo Districts and get the go ahead of meeting participants related to the study.

The researcher was keen to share the objective of the study to the respondents, to set a consensus of how the interview should be conducted, to respect views of respondents without interrupting them and to ensure them that the information provided were protected and the status of the information asked by the respondents to be kept confidential were respected.

As teen motherhood is linked to adverse effects such as depression, shame, regret and other harmful experiences to the lives of young girls, this means that the process of collecting data by

the researcher took into account the ethical standards as confidentiality, respect of respondents while avoiding to harm them. The researcher has recognized her expertise in the promotion and protection of human rights matters while ensuring the care and respect of respondents in line with human rights standards. For this reason, in process of the interview a familiar and accessible venue, accessible was chosen in order to create a trustful atmosphere during the research process.

3.10. Validity and Reliability

Reliability refers to the dependability or trustworthiness in the context of a measuring instrument.

Validity is concerned with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about. Validity of a measure is how well it fulfills the function for which it is being used. In other words, validity of a measuring instrument is its ability to measure what it is intended to measure (Dick & Hagerty, 2001).

The reliability of instruments were tested by the researcher using the instrument to a pilot group of 8 people with whom two pilot focus groups were formed outside of the target population to check whether their responses given were relevant to what the instruments were composed to test.

3.11. Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter on the methodology focused on detailing information about how the study was conducted as regard to the research design, population of interest and sampling procedures. It describes the techniques that was used for data collection; ethical principles adhered by the researcher and the data analysis process that have been considered in order to manage to handle the field work successfully. In the annex of this document is attached the interview guide used for both teen mothers and key informants.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter contains the presentation and interpretation of the information collected from respondents. It also includes the discussion the researcher's point of view on different points brought forth by respondents relating the found results with the objective of the study which is to examine the contribution of support group on the social rehabilitation of teen mothers.

This study explored the effectiveness of informal support groups on social and psychological mechanisms for the rehabilitation of teen mothers in Rwanda. The researcher interviewed both teen mothers who were members of a support group and other who were not in the support group in order to assess how support groups serve teen mothers for their rehabilitation in the community. The researcher collected information from interviews of 6 Key informants and 2 Focus Group Discussions composed by 10 girls each.

Based on the narratives of the participants, the researcher identified 3 important themes and those will be discussed below. With reference to research questions, the researcher took notes on teen mothers' experiences on early motherhood and how it affected their lives, she then analyzed the benefits of supports groups for teen mothers and explored the extent to which the existing strategies are also helping them.

4.1 Profile of the respondents

Participants and key informants were selected based on perceived subject knowledge, gender, education, occupation and age. Therefore, tables 1 and 2 provide an exhaustive summary on the same. The purpose of basing on the above mentioned criteria of the participants was to understand well the challenge met by teen mothers in their daily lives.

Table 1: Pseudonyms of Focus Group Discussions members and their Profiles (Target Group 1)

No	Year of birth	Academic level	Age she got pregnant	Age of the child
1	2002	P3	17	7 months
2	2003	P4	16	5months
3	2000	P6	17	1 year and 5months
4	2000	Never went to school	17	1 year old
5	2000	P3	17	1 year
6	2002	S3	17	3months
7	2001	S2	18	7moths
8	2002	S3	18	Still pregnant
9	1999	S2	16	4 years old
10	2002	P3	17	7months

Source: Researcher (Primary Data), January 2020)

Table.1 includes the focus group of 10 teen mothers from Gasabo District, composed of 5 persons each group. The teens were drawn from 2 different sectors of Gasabo District (Remera Sector, Rukiri 1 Cell & the other from Kacyiru Sector, Kibaza Cell).

Table 2. Pseudonyms of Focus Group Discussions members and their Profiles (Group 2)

No	Year of birth	Academic level	Age she got pregnant	Age of the child
1	2002	P6	18	1 year old
2	2003	P6	18	3 years old
3	2000	S6	17	2 years old
4	2000	P6	17	4 years old
5	2000	P3	18	3 years old
6	2002	P5	18	6 years old
7	2001	S3	16	8 years old
8	2002	P3	16	1 year old
9	1999	P3	16	2 years old
10	2002	S2	18	6 years old

Source: Researcher (Primary Data), December 2019)

Table.2 includes the focus group of 10 teen mothers from Rulindo District, composed of 5 persons each group. The teens were drawn from two different sectors of Bushoki Sector, Mukoto Cell & Remera Village) & 2nd group (Ejoheza from Bushoki Sector, Gasiza Cell, Remera Village).

In order to respect the respondent's privacy, their names are used as pseudonym.

Table 3: Profile of Key Informants

No	Title	Education	Gender	Age	Marital Status
1	Child Rights Protection and Promotion Officer -	Masters	M	38	Married
2	President of Enfants Meres Organization – Rulindo District	Bachelor	F	40	Married
3	Gender Promotion Officer- Gasabo District	Bachelor	M	40	Married
3	Gender Promotion Officer- Rulindo District	Bachelor	F	35	Married
5	Executive Secretary of Mukoto Cell	Bachelor	M	38	Married
6	Social Affairs in Kacyiru Sector, Kibaza Cell	Bachelor	F	40	Married

Source: Researcher (Primary Data), 2020)

The research participants and key informants were keen to respond all the questions of the interview prepared by the researcher; they were free to express their views, observations and professional experiences on teen mother's challenges. The following sections will include the data collected.

4.2 Challenges confronted by teen mothers before meeting the support groups

The researcher interviewed teen mothers and relevant authorities about their everyday experiences in order to verify the existing literatures about their vulnerability. The findings confirmed that teen mothers' daily life is hindered by social, psychological, economic complexities as consequence of motherhood.

4.2.1. Social and psychological challenges

While asked how family, friends and the society perceive teen motherhood, the groups in their discussions give many comments; some of them are summarized as:

“Many girls decide to leave home because they are always being criticized by both family and neighbors as bad girls in the community and spiritually, I have come to know that once the first born is pregnant, the siblings can do the same, I saw that in our family, I got pregnant, now my two little sisters have followed the same example, though our parents took care of our children it is a shame for the entire family. Our family has been nicknamed the one which produces bastards, I have decided to move and look for a job far away from that mockery....” Teen number 1, group 2, Gasabo, January, 2020”.

Another girl added:

“Sometimes the community can even not reject you as such but you hold yourself down as if you don’t deserve to be happy, you are abnormal, psychologically you feel rejected. The society perceive that we can be bad mothers, they are right somehow because imagine most of us now have started using contraceptives methods, a girl of 17 years starting limiting birth? Imagine in 20 years how will be this one? So often we are reminded each they if not by the community by the child that we gave birth that there as a mark of our misbehavior which cannot be removed.....” Teen number 8, group 2, Gasabo, January, 2020”.

The other focus group had similar view on the same question.

“Family perceives teen motherhood as a double burden as most of us are coming from poor families, in one way or another when there is a need that is wanting their participation such as birth of the new baby, some basic needs the problem always arises and the family gives you hurtful words. Friends and neighbours also say that you are social deviant, prostitute; sometimes they don’t want you to play with their daughters saying that you will have bad influence on them.

Recently my son was playing with his friends and he annoyed them a bit. There a fight followed and curiously I learned that he was chased from the place saying that he was a bastard. It was not the first time that he was reminded that he is from an unknown father”(Teen”(number 9, focus group 1, Rulindo, December 2019)

From group discussions, the researcher found that teen mothers were desperate showing how much being mother at their age was a taboo. As the community continues to reject them, teen mothers accuse themselves for not being acceptable in the community. As teen motherhood is portrayed as social deviant in the community, this brought psychological harm that needs redress.

According to the National Commission of Human Rights of Rwanda, teen mothers encounter psychological trauma terror, loss of self-esteem, guilt, depression, shame and lose of consideration in the community. Victims also present higher level of anxiety, depression and psychosomatic complaints (NCHR, 2016)

Similarly, it was a commonly shown in the other focus group as they were discussing on the same subject matter on challenges faced by teen mothers, and one teen said:

“While pregnant, many of us faced rejection by relatives, abandonment by parents and family members, no courage to go back to school as you will be the mockery of others, no encouragement rather you are always reminded how you have caused shame to the entire family, denial of the father who impregnated, unsafe abortion, some become heads of households at a very young age, others are forced to pick up work during pregnancy and do not find any and decide not to return home and others lose their babies as a result of many difficult conditions encountered. After having the baby, some of us lack small jobs and opportunities, for example in construction sites, no one can give you work with a child on the back saying that you will be unable to fulfil your tasks, some choose prostitution just to feed the baby, others abandon their babies and escape the family, etc. In our community, some men believe that we are easy and make advances to us but disrespecting us.....” Teen number 6, focus group 1, Rulindo, December 2019”.

The researcher then found that most of the participants encountered rejection by their relatives, abandonment by parents and family members, the mockery of others, shame, denial responsibility by their babies’ fathers. All these challenges faced form the exposure risks to psychological harm.

4.2.2. Economic challenges

As teen mothers are still young and dependent to their parents or guardians, it was emphasized how they lack resources or other opportunities to pursue their dreams. This was affirmed by the professional in charge of Gender and Family Promotion in Rulindo District who said that “Most of the girls that they have met as teen mothers were from families that are in the second economic category 2 (Icyiciro cya 2 cy’Ubudehe). This explained how poor most of them are and how they can’t be able to benefit from the government prior assistance as their families were not assessed into the Category 1 that gets government assistance on a monthly basis. This leads teen mothers to face difficult situations like having babies falling in the case of malnutrition, health issues, among others.

The researcher could also see some responses from the group of teen mothers from Gasabo District which opined that;

“Among the problems that we meet there is shame, poverty, rejection by the father of the new born, financially unable to cover some basic needs (foods, milk for the baby,...).. Lack of jobs is also one of the challenges, you know when your parents always have to provide for everything for you and your child it is always hard, they offend and mistreats you. Even when you find a small job in the construction sites, finding a person who will care for your baby from the morning up to 6pm, you will surely lose this opportunity or give it to another person who is free to work without any reason.....” Teen number 1, group 2, Gasabo, January, 2020.

After having the baby, some of us lack small jobs and opportunities, for example in construction sites, no one can give you a casual work as you have always your baby on your back, they will say that you will be unable to fulfill your tasks; some of us choose prostitution in order to feed the baby, others abandon their babies and escape their families, etc. In our community, some men believe that we are easy and make advances to us by disrespecting us...” Teen number 6, focus group 1, Rulindo, December 2019”.

By summarizing this part, the researcher found that many of the participants encountered financial obstacles as they were challenged to find the daily needs such as foods, milk, etc. for their babies. Teen mothers witnessed the lack of jobs as a significant challenge encountered as a

big issue in the family as their parents are found incapable to always provide everything for them and their children.

4.2.3. Educational challenges

The majority of the Focus group discussions members show low interest in going back to school as some of them were impregnated while being at home, other were not encouraged to go back to school just after giving birth.

One teen said:

“While pregnant, many of us faced rejection by relatives, abandonment by parents and family members, we were not encouraged to go back to school as we had to take care of the new borns and to continue to seek for the small activities for survival”. Teen number 8, focus group 1, Rulindo, December 2019”.

The Gender Officer underlines:

“We always encourage families and partners to mobilize girls to go back to school and pursue their dreams, recently for example AEE has assessed more than 5000 girls who were not to school due to different reasons including early pregnancy, they were in the range of 10-24years old, curiously among them few are those who choose to return in school and follow the existing alternatives present or presented to them as the Nine Year Basic Education, many of them chose the short course trainings (3 months, 6 months few are those who chose a long term training)”.

As far as education is concerned, the researcher found that teen mothers' motive of dropout school were based on the fact that they had to take care of the new born and seek for the small activities for survival. On the other hand professionals emphasized that the lack of encouragement by families and stakeholders is the lead cause to dropout as it has been proven that when the encouragement mechanism is available, teen mothers can easily continue their studies.

There are also many social norms related to the girl's educational it was emphasized by Gender & Adolescence Global Evidence research, the social aspirations on the girl's marriage and childbearing can also discourage parents to invest in their education as they will not be accountable as boys who are able to conquer the future adversities and provide for their families (Gage, 2017).

4.2.4 Justice related challenges

When it comes to report to justice the suspects who impregnated teen mothers, there are many problems that arise; some are caused by the silence of the teen mothers themselves or an arrangement between the victim and the suspects' families and this has a negative impact vis to vis of the justice and the family of the victim.

The Social Affairs of Kacyiru Sector said:

“Most of teen mothers do not cooperate or give information about the men who impregnated them this causes teen mothers' new born grow without being recognized by their fathers”.

Teen number 4, focus group 2, Gasabo, January 2020 testified as follow:

“Some of our parents do not care about the civil registration of the baby or follow with us where it is necessary to bring the case to court, rather they said that that they have been mothers at our ages (16-17) and say that this is no need of bringing the case to court.....”

This was emphasized by to officer in charge of Gender and Family Promotion Officer in Rulindo District whom quoted saying:

“Socially, teen motherhood is always viewed as a shame for some families and they decide to find arrangements rather than reporting the suspect “.

Based on views from the teen mothers and professionals in charge of gender and family promotion on the District levels, teen mothers' families are not free to report due the shame and fear of being rejected by their respective community rather they discuss and arrange within families of the father of the baby to which material compensation or marriage is decided.

These findings confirmed what was stated in the literature by Chohan &Langa M (2011) and others who highlighted that most of teenage mothers experience stigma and rejection by their parents and peers but also the threat of violence by their families or by those who impregnate them.

4.3 Activities done by support groups for teen mothers' social rehabilitation

The researcher interviewed teen mothers who were members of the groups, and asked them about the functioning of teen mothers' support groups with focus on their origin, the activities carried out by the group and the source of finance.

The researcher found that, teen mothers support groups were formed from a private founder's inspiration after experiencing or witnessing the interconnected challenges of teen mothers. In that regard, the research met with the founder of the informal support group called Enfants-mères, which is operational in the District of Rulindo with a large number of 1000 teen mothers, the Founder was excited to share with the researcher about the group's experience as follow:

“It was in 2004, when I suddenly found a baby abandoned in front of my door, I went to report the case to the local authorities as I waited for so long the opportunity of meeting the mother of that baby, but all my aspirations were in vain then I come to decide to adopt him. Finally, after many years, I came up to meet personally the mother of the abandoned child who told me how desperate she was while she has decided to leave the baby at my place. She said to me how her biological father sexually abused her and after being impregnated, he forced her to abort or kill the baby. As desperate and inexperienced girl, she was decided to bring the baby at my home. I continue, assisting the boy as I did it to my own children and he is performing well in school as currently he is in Secondary School (S4) and he is still in my family. The case of this boy and others that I came to meet later are the ones that inspired me and my fellow to start an association”.

Regarding to the services offered by the Informal support group, it was found that teen mothers do saving and lending, receive vocational training such as tailoring and hair dressing, reproductive health, etc. The groups are primarily financed by members' regular contributions and in some instances they get some minimal funding from different NGOs and the Government.

The founder of “Enfants-mères” continues by sharing the following:

“Our priority is based on helping teen mothers becoming self-reliant and having a basic financial literacy, that is why we regroup them into small saving and lending groups, so far we work in 17 Sectors of Rulindo District, we have more than 1000 teen mothers into different groups. We provide some training such as vocational, reproductive health. This is the reason why we always need other partners to supplement our efforts which is more focused on technical than emotional. Members of the Organization are the first who fund the activities of the Organization from their regular contributions. We have received some funds from the UN Women through Pro Femmes Twese Hamwe, YWCA and GMO. This year 2020, we will work with Migeprof”.

The informal support group has been providing not only emotional support but also material support to the teen mothers. Some of the responses on the specific support given hereafter:

“After delivering, bringing as together as teen mothers, approached by Enfants- Meres through local authorities of our cell and villages, assigned to us one volunteer who gather with us often, receiving emotional support, trainings about savings, reproductive health,etc. was encouraging as we saw that we were not alone. In our groups, teen mothers who are younger than others receive vocational trainings according the donor’s will. The Ejoheza group was given a swamp by the District, they grow different crops and the harvest produced is sold and the profit is shared by the members of the group....”
President of Enfants- Mères Organization, Rulindo, December, 2019”.

On the other hand, one teen mother responded to the question on the specific importance teen mothers gain after joining support group and here was the response:

“We came out of our shame, building resilience together, we have learnt about saving and lending, the group helped a lot how to cope with the change of being mother at a younger age, how to care about the baby but mostly we have built a sisterhood circle, I remember in our first meetings, some were still crying but apart from the new ones who are still devastated by the challenges of being teen mothers at early age but we have set

The way we support each other in difficult times, we have new teen mothers, they benefit a lot from the team and from Enfants- meres, because they receive vocational trainings, some of them have started work in a hair salon, they braid women's hair, they sew clothes, etc. We gather each Friday from 3-5pm, a share is equivalent to 250 frs plus a person can go up to have 4 shares, after 3 months we gather and share and continue the saving process, this allows us to not lack soaps, milk for the baby, some cattle to raise, etc. the amount that a member can receive from the team goes from 10.000 Frs up 70.000 Frs that is reimbursed in three months with a small profits to help the saving group develop....." Teen number 10, focus group 1, Rulindo, December 2019".

Teen mothers who joined informal support groups admitted that they had found emotional healing in groups. It was found that teen mothers in groups help each other and become self-reliant in addition to having a basic financial literacy and forming saving and lending groups. In short, it was found that emotional support, trainings about savings, reproductive health and vocational trainings, etc. were among the key activities of the groups and they are driving important factors of social rehabilitation of teen mothers.

While interviewing teen mothers who were not members of any support groups about the importance of informal teen mothers support groups, they were keen to share their interests in joining them while praising the common benefits gained by members of the groups.

Teen number 9, focus group 2, Gasabo, January 2020 wish as follow:

"Being together shall help us achieve many things, my sister who also had the similar experience of early motherhood has been able to develop herself, she pays the nursery school for her son and help our family survive. In her group she is allowed to borrow money and pay back in 3 months, in September 2019 she received from the group 100.000 Frs that she reimbursed with a low interest after 3 months (that amount of money was shared within our family members, I received 15.000 Frs to start grill and sell fish and this has helped me a lot)."

Teen number 3, focus group2, Gasabo, January 2020 who received personal training from Stakeholder added:

“Peace House Ministries gave me a course of 3 months and a sewing machine to utilize after training, I thought that they will gather us into a group with other girls with similar experiences but it was not done, I think learning a trade is a precious gift that will last, adding healing to the training will help more.”

The Secretary Executive of the Mukoto Cell emphasised the importance of teen gathering for their social healing by saying:

First and foremost, what the teen mothers need mostly is the moral assistance, having where they can meet, talk and learn from their peers, as the Sector we have provided a space for them in order to help them build strength, resilience and confidence about the future“.

As the importance of support group was more highlighted, a teen girl reiterated that being part of a support group which is more focused on emotional healing than placing money on the first interest of its members is for a great value:

“Emotionally when you meet people with similar challenges, you gain confidence and hope for the future, you are no longer isolated and you learn from others how they have been able to recover. I once have been member of an informal support group of teen mothers and I was morally built up, I found courage, resilience and hope for the future. But this did not last. After 7 months of the existence of the group, its members were dispersed. As the District is the one which brought us together and gave us the amount of 1 Million Rwandan francs as a start-up capital for our common business, we were 10 girls, we had a shop that was selling the African garment known as ‘kitenge’, the business was promising, we were able to cover expenses of 90.000 Frs each month and save around 40.000 Frs per week; but some misunderstandings arose among us when some needed to share money and close the shop. We had serious issues, the District of

Gasabo came to assist and settle those misunderstandings but it was too late, members were already scattered. I learn from this experience how group is good but when the first target is money, beneficiaries are more motivated by it rather than healing from the abuse or challenges that brought them together. For our team, money was the first interest for some of us. I will suggest to the District to more focus on the healing than the material things given to teen. Money can be a supplementary tool to the initial idea of moral healing of group members". Teen number 7, focus group 2, Gasabo, January 2020."

Briefly, Informal teen mothers support groups had revealed to be very important for the rehabilitation of teen mothers. According to testimonies of participants, before coming into groups, they were hopeless, rejected in the community. The shame and disrespect were what they felt they deserved but since they met with others who had similar experiences, they feel comforted each day, they got emotionally healing and they found a way to reshape their lives in form of vocational trainings, saving and lending groups for economic resilience.

However, some groups may be ineffective due to mistrust between members as some envisage economic gain than psychological healing which lead often to embezzlement of group's property.

The findings on this point affirmed those from the study, discussed in the empirical literature, conducted by Paine-Andrews and his colleagues in America, year 2018. This study also found that support group mechanism been popular and suitable to many teen mothers in America by helping them to cope with different problems they faced. In these findings of Paine-Andrews 'study it was also revealed that support groups encouraged companionship as they gathered people with similar experiences, these groups comforted people as they meet to share same lived experiences. In this study also support groups were found to offer platforms where each individual's idea is welcomed and being valued and heard. Members of support groups strengthen each other as they exchange the similar experiences. Hence, they provide inspiring stories that comfort and encourage members and finally look for suitable resolutions that are approved by themselves to tackle their day to day problems.

4.4 Government intervention to motivate the informal support groups' activities in the social rehabilitation of teen mothers.

During the survey, the researcher took a focus on Understanding the local strategies that support teen mothers.

It was noticed that there are other existing strategies in place that address teen mothers' issues.

The Gender and Family Promotion, Gasabo District, January 2020 revealed as follow:

“The District assists teen mothers in different ways such as: Identifying the victims and the kind of the assistance that they need (social, economic, legal,...), Identifying the suspect when the victim is willing to share (this is to allow the District to send the case to the Rwanda Investigate Bureau for bringing the case to Court) and Encouraging Sectors to help teen mothers draft some small projects and present them to the District for funding, some sectors have been able to receive the funding. ”

Another officer emphasized:

“We meet and hear them, together with the volunteers called ‘Inshuti z’Umuryango’ (Friends of Family), we identify what are their needs. We have been able to regroup some teens in a group after vocational training by the assistance of African Evangelistic Enterprise (AEE) they have been able to start a tailoring workshop which is operational since today. Emergency cases are reverted to the District through its line of budget called the District through Social Protection....” Officer In charge of Social Affairs, Gasabo District, January, 2020.

Teen mothers have been given much supports not only by the government but also they receive assistance from support groups such as Enfants- Mères Organization which is an Informal support group in Rulindo district. The responses to the question on what kind of support they provide were responded as follows:

“During different meetings and mobilizations, we always emphasize the rights of the child, how every child is valuable and should be assisted not matter how he/ she was born (Fata umwana wese nk’uwawe campaign), this help us to prepare the population to help us safeguarding children in their areas (accept them even if they were born from unknown parents, out of marriage, etc., they should be accepted as other children in the

society).There are many projects that offer some small cattle animals, we take into consideration the kids born from teen mothers and other with specific problems among others to benefit from these kind of assistance as well as working with different actors and refer the claims that needed legal assistance to concerned level.....” Executive Secretary of Mukoto Cell, Rulindo, December, 2019”.

The interviewee further provides some insight on plans in place.

“The sector plans mobilization and work with different actors (AEE, Save the children, Lawyers of Hope, etc.) about civil registration of new born, Fight child sexual abuse, Reproductive Health,...Follow up of the teens’ groups created and advocacy for more trainings....” Officer In charge of Social Affairs, Gasabo District, December, 2019”.

Teen pregnancy is a great concern to governmental institutions; this is the reason why some measures have been put to place in order to fight it. As regard to institutional framework, apart from the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion which serve as a central body who oversees the protection of children, a number of government institutions were given responsibilities encountering child protection.

The National Commission for Children has general mission of serving as a Central Authority in charge of implementing the Hague Convention on the protection of Children. The Rwanda National Commission for Human Rights has specific mission of monitoring the respect of child rights. In that way, the Commission established an Observatory of Child Rights which has agents in all Sectors in Rwanda. The Gender Monitoring Office is fighting against gender based injustice and violence (MIGEPROF M.o., 2011).

The interviewee when asked about their involvement in combating early pregnancy gives some interventions.

“The National Commission for Children (NCC) is more involved in Coordination Mechanism (following the Non-Governmental Organizations operating in the area of Child Protection), we prepare a Joint Action Plan and share it with partners (Imbuto,Plan International, AEE,GMO, Enfants-mères,), our package offered to teen mothers is composed by :Prevention, Response and Sustainability. With the help of our partners, we identify the teens’ challenges and once we have their records, we plan

campaigns as well as the GBV clinics (knowing the problems faced by teen mothers, legal assistance, Counseling, Testing HIV, Family Planning, orient children with malnutrition to Health Centers and other Early Childhood Development centers, some are send to RIB for justice, for now the GBV. The GBV clinics have been done so far in 20 Districts of Rwanda, each Clinic takes around 3 days)” – Child Rights Protection and Promotion Officer – NCC, December, 2019”.

After taking a focus on the existing strategies on helping teen mothers, the researcher found that there are efforts from the government and nongovernment institutions though they are dispersed and not specific into clear interventions. The assistance given to teen mothers are at the initiative of group peers with limited or inexistent funds and in reality there is no clear guidelines specified to teen mothers whereas it is so required as Haguruka (2018) study emphasized there were any visible and consistent interventions to address the teen pregnancy and motherhood phenomenon.

4.5. Discussion of findings

The objective of this study was to explore the effectiveness of Informal support groups on social and psychological mechanisms for the rehabilitation of teen mothers in Rwanda. The researcher built the study on the resilience theory stipulated by Yates et al. (2014) who theorized that despite individual’s vulnerability to unpleasant situations develop positive attitude from her/his own competence by seeking to achieve a positive developmental outcome despite of threats to adaptation for vulnerable individuals, groups and societies.

On the first objective of examining the challenges confronted by teen mothers before getting the help of support groups, the results for the discussion of focus groups and responses given by the key informants were the teen mothers’ daily life is hindered by social, psychological, economic complexities as consequence of motherhood.

Interviewed teen mothers revealed that some decided to leave home because they were always being criticized by both family and neighbors as bad girls in the community. They said that they felt psychologically rejected, that they are abnormal and do not deserve to be happy. They said

that many of them faced rejection by relatives, abandonment by parents and family members, no courage to go back to school for the fear of being mocked by others.

These findings are in line the study reviewed in the empirical of Paine-Andrews et al., 2018 and N. Strobel et.al (2014) which highlighted the importance of support group mechanism to overcome challenging life for teen mothers vis-à-vis their physical, psychological and social issues.

They reported lack of encouragement rather reminding how they have caused shame to their families, denial by their partners, becoming heads of households at a very young age, others are forced to pick up work during pregnancy and do not find any and decide not to return home while others lose their babies as a result of many difficult conditions encountered. As they are still dependent to their parents or guardians, it was emphasized how teen mothers lack resources and other basic needs for themselves and their babies.

The findings the objective about the activities done by support group that help in social rehabilitation of teenage mothers, It was reviewed that teen mothers support groups help vulnerable teen mothers to acquire an increased level of resilience after coping from the successful strategies that have been used by resilient co-group members who had suffered the same challenges and stayed brave and positive oriented.

This concurred with the argument of Masten and Obradovic (2006) who stated that peer groups resilience mechanism is the one of adaptive system that facilitate individuals to learn and develop the social regulatory capacity that is embedded in human relationships and ties to cultural traditions. WHO (2017) supported the togetherness of people affected by similar difficulties to find solutions and said that peer groups members feel supported by others and there is a better understanding for each other's situation.

As regard to the importance of informal support groups in their rehabilitation process, interviewed teen mothers who are in support groups strongly praised the groups for being their comfort. They proved as they joined together they came out of the shame, build their resilience together, learn how to cope with their status of being mother at a younger age and how to care about the babies. They added that being in groups helped them to build a sisterhood circle and help each other in difficult times. They said that they receive vocational trainings in tailoring, hair

dressings though only few are given special courses and they also do lending and saving between them.

The findings support literature of the Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA (2003) which emphasized that support group is a social fellowship made by people who experienced similar problems, conditions, history, symptoms who decide to monitor their self adherence and connect in person or via phones in order to build their self capacity. Members of a support group can start their group by putting more emphasis on their common beliefs and understandings which creates a trustworthy atmosphere and the rise of the belonging spirit while improving members' healing, problem solving capacity and personal development.

4.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher has presented, analyzed collected from the field and discussed the findings in relation to the existing theoretical and empirical framework. The findings highlighted numerous challenges faced by teen mothers such as economical, legal, psycho-social, and educational among others. The findings supported that teen mothers' support groups form a potential mechanism that assist them to cope with challenges and being reintegrated into the community.

The following chapter will present the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the overall conclusion of the study taking into account findings from the field, the analysis there to and the interpretation as made by the researcher. Nevertheless, it presents the recommendations addressed to various stakeholders who in one-way or another, plays a major role in mitigating the subject matter under study. Furthermore, it suggests the areas for further research.

5.2 Summary

The objective of this study was to explore and understand the contribution of teen mothers' informal support groups for their rehabilitation. It is important to stress that this study conveys the perception and construction of the main contributions made by these informal support groups rather than accounting for teen pregnancy.

The study was conducted under certain limitations under which the hypotheses were verified based on interviewees' perceptions on teen mothers' support groups and their role in the rehabilitation process. Interviews were conducted on both teen mothers and key informants made of professional officers and local leaders.

The findings highlighted that teen mothers' daily life is hindered by a range of social, psychological, economic complexities as consequence of motherhood. Interviewed teen mothers revealed situations like feeling of loneliness, guilty, rejection, shame in the families and community as well.

It was revealed that through the environment of sisterhood found the supports groups, teen mothers have acquired the resilience; learn how to cope with their status of being mother at a younger age and how to care about the babies. The importance of informal support groups is not only limited to psychological healing but also extend to economic capacity building of teen mothers like providing vocational trainings in tailoring, hair dressing and self-supporting in the form of saving and lending schemes.

Regarding the government related strategies in supporting teen mothers' groups, it was found that there some support in form of funds provided by both Non-Government Organization and

Government institutions. Other form of support from peer persons who bring together teens in a group and seek support from others NGOs or advocacy from the government.

5.3 Conclusion

This study examined the contribution of informal support groups activities on the teen mothers' social rehabilitation. From the analysis of the information collected from the participant of the study, the findings were that teen mothers' daily life is hindered by social, psychological, economic complexities as consequence of motherhood. This is because teen motherhood is linked to adverse effects such as depression, shame, regret and other harmful experiences to the lives of young girls.

In addition, the findings proved that togetherness of teen mothers in mutual support groups help them to come out from the feeling of loneliness, facing life, coming brave and help themselves to cope with their status of being mother at a younger age and how to care about their babies. Support groups help teen mothers build a sisterhood circle and help each other in difficult times by strengthening each other.

Furthermore, the study found that teen mothers' gain from the informal support, was the companionship of people who share common experience like teen motherhood and who come together for self-reliance by forming a potential mutual understanding and empathy which helps build trust, openness and a feeling of belonging. Hence, this enhances self-acceptance, self-empowerment and problem solving capacity in them.

The researcher concludes that the informal support groups provide to teen mothers is valid and helpful environment for their resilience as they are good avenues that help them fight sadness and come out sharpen for building their futures.

5.3. Recommendations

After basing on the results of this study, some recommendations and suggestions were formulated as follow:

It was found that teen mothers informal support groups are good way that helps teen mothers become resilient to hindering situations against them in their new status of being early mothers. This requires that there should be a support group mechanism, recognized guidelines or policy that all supports groups may follow in order to help those operating in this domain to give a full package while delivering this service to teen mothers.

To the Government and certain public institutions:

This study revealed that though they may be different initiatives and strategies established in order to fight teen pregnancy in Rwanda, many of those efforts both from the government and nongovernment institutions seem to be dispersed and not specific into clear interventions. It is therefore imperial for:

- The Ministry of Gender and Family (MIGEPROF) as a central body which oversees the protection of children in conduction with the Ministry of Local Governance to reinforce some existing local programs as significant National civic education program called Isibo that works from village levels to tackle issue concerning teen motherhood.
- MIGEPROF should provide a national guideline which comprises minimum requirements to be followed by all the initiators and stakeholders operating in teen mothers' informal supports groups domain.

As the findings of the study confirmed how teen mothers' daily life is hindered by social, psychological, economic complexities as consequence of motherhood; to help them rise from their ashes of shame and despair, it is advised to:

- The National Commission of Children and local entities (from sector level to the village one) to add technical skills and avail financial means related to the work of the local volunteers such as ‘Inshuti z’Umuryango’ because they are familiar to child’s issues in their communities they can easily accompany teen mothers in their daily basis with teachings, advises that will help them in the recovering process.

The findings also revealed that cultural norms continue to play a significant role in the cycle of teen mothers’ pregnancies as many parents feel not concerned a lot about raising sexual and reproductive health issues in the presence of their children, it is requested to:

- ✓ Ministry of Education and Health should adapt a suitable curricula on Reproductive Health that fits students from their different ages of schools, teachers as well should be trained enough about the matter and encourage students to speak out any kind of harm that they face.

As it was emphasized by this study, informal support groups are primarily financed by members’ contributions and may receive minimal funding from different institutions, it is thus advised to :

- ✓ Non-governmental organizations initiators of informal supports groups to more revise their guidelines and offer a balanced package that equip all teen mothers of the group while meeting the existing funding.

Lastly, the study showed how important is the role of family in fighting teen pregnancies, for this

- ✓ Parents should be sensitized about Sexual and Reproductive health basic skills
- ✓ They should support their children despite the situation of becoming mothers at the early age.
- ✓ They should be sensitized about the civil registration of their grand children
- ✓ They should accept to give information about those who defiled their children rather than accepting negotiations.
- ✓ They should encourage their children to pursue studies after delivery

- ✓ They should accompany their children in the process of recovering from the abuse encountered

5.4 Areas for further studies

- ✓ A research should be conducted to evaluate the level of government's involvement in supporting teen mothers' groups.
- ✓ Another study should be conducted to examine the attitude of teenage mothers towards the support given by Informal groups.
- ✓ A further study should be conducted to examine the organization level of support groups in helping teen mothers.

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Broken down by leading districts in 2018, Nyagatare registered 1,465 teen pregnancies, Gatsibo 1,452, Gasabo 1,064 and Kirehe 1,055.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I. Discussion Guide for Focus groups

1. Respondent Identification

- Names:
- Tel:
- Age:
- Level of Education:
- Support Group Name:
- Physical Address:
District.....Sector.....Cell.....Village

2. How teen motherhood has affected your life?

.....

.....

3. How did you come to be a member of this group?

.....

.....

4. How do you feel to be a member of this group?

.....

.....

5. Is there any difference between being a member of this group compared to when you were not?

.....

.....

5. Do you face some challenges as part of this group? How?

.....

.....

6. What can be improved in your support group?

.....

.....

APPENDIX II. Key Informant Interview Guide

1. Informant Identification

- Names
- Organization
- Position.....
- Years of Experience in rehabilitation of victims of gender based violence

1. Are you aware of the existence of teen mothers support groups for their social rehabilitation?

- If you are aware can you share with me their contribution in the life of teen mothers?
.....
.....
.....
- If you are not aware, do you think that they can be effective for rehabilitating teen mothers?
.....
.....

2. What are other measures that can be used in the rehabilitation of teen mothers and how can you compare them to support group mechanism.

.....
.....

APPENDIX III: Consent form for participants

Study topic: “The contribution of informal support group activities on the teen mothers’ social rehabilitation in Rwanda”. Study location: Rulindo - Gasabo, Rwanda

Student/Researcher: **Claire Ketsia KABANYANA**

University of Rwanda, College of Arts and Social Sciences

Phone number: (+250) 788574560, Email: mamickab @ yahoo.com

Participant:

- Iparticipate in this study on a voluntary basis and can withdraw from the study at any time without giving reasons and without any negative consequences. I have also agree to be recorded using an audio recorder.
- I have been informed orally and in writing about the aims and the procedures of the study, the advantages and disadvantages as well as potential risks.
- My questions related to study participation have been answered voluntary and satisfactorily.
- I was given sufficient time to make a decision about participating in the study.
- I agree that the researcher and the supervisor have accessed the original data under strict confident.

Date Signature of participant

Date.....Name & signature of the researcher

APPENDIX IV. LETTERS ALLOWING THE RESEACHER TO CONDUCT THE STUDY

KABANYANA Claire Ketsia

Tel 0788574560

Email: ketsiakabanyana@gmail.com

Kigali

Kigali, ku wa 3 Mutarama 2020

DISTRICT DE GASABO

RECEPTION

03/01/2020

Signature

A. Traite

Bwana Muyobozi w'Akarere ka
Gasabo

Impamvu : Gusaba gukora ubushakashatsi

Bwana Muyobozi,

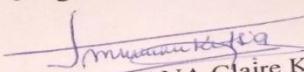
Mbandikiye mbasaba ko mwanemerera

gukora ubushakashatsi mu Karere muyobora.

Mu by'ukuri Bwana Muyobozi, ndi umunyeshuri wiga muri Kaminuza y'u Rwanda, mu cyiciro cya gatatu (Masters Programme of Social Sciences in Gender and Development), nkaba ndi gukora ubushakashatsi gisoza icyo cyiciro, by'umwihariko nkaba naribanze ku kamaro k'amatsinda ahuza abangavu babyaye imburagihe nk'imwe mu nzira yabafasha kwongera kwisanga muri sosiyete ***'UNDERSTANDING INFORMAL SUPPORT GROUPS AS A MECHANISM FOR SOCIAL REHABILITATION OF EARLY MOTHERHOOD CHALLENGES'***.

Ku mugereka murahasanga icyemezo nahawe na Kaminuza y'u Rwanda kinyemerera gukora ubwo ubushakashatsi.

Mugire amahoro y'Imana n'imirimo myiza.


KABANYANA Claire Ketsia

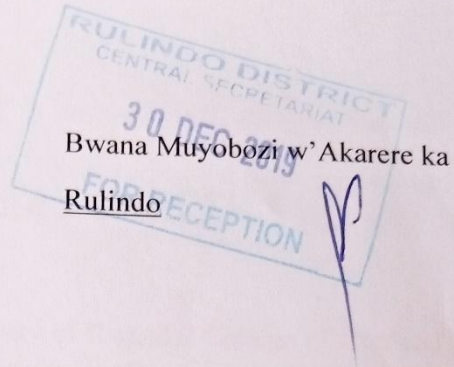
Kigali, ku wa 30 Ukuboza 2019

KABANYANA Claire Ketsia

Tel 0788574560

Email: ketsiakabanyana@gmail.com

Kigali



Bwana Muyobozi w' Akarere ka
Rulindo

Impamvu : Gusaba gukora ubushakashatsi

Bwana Muyobozi,

gukora ubushakashatsi mu Karere muyobora.

Mbandikiye mbasaba ko mwanemerera

Mu by'ukuri Bwana Muyobozi, ndi umunyeshuri wiga muri Kaminuza y'u Rwanda, mu cyiciro cya gatatu (Masters Programme of Social Sciences in Gender and Development), nkaba ndi gukora ubushakashatsi gisoza icyo cyiciro, by'umwihariko nkaba naribanze ku kamaro k'amatsinda ahuza abangavu babyaye imburagihe nk'imwe mu nzira yabafasha kwongera kwisanga muri sosiyete **'UNDERSTANDING INFORMAL SUPPORT GROUPS AS A MECHANISM FOR SOCIAL REHABILITATION OF EARLY MOTHERHOOD CHALLENGES'**.

Ku mugereka murahasanga icyemezo nahawe na Kaminuza y'u Rwanda kinyemerera gukora ubwo ubushakashatsi.

Mugire amahoro y'Imana n'imirimo myiza.

KABANYANA Claire Ketsia



UNIVERSITY of
RWANDA

CENTRE FOR GENDER STUDIES
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The Centre for Gender Studies (CGS) at the University of Rwanda/ College of Arts and Social Sciences offers a Master's Degree in Social Sciences specialising in Gender and Development. As part of the Master's Degree requirements, students have to carry out a field study and write a thesis on an area of their interest.

During data collection phase, students usually require the assistance from organisations relevant to their chosen area of study. We envisage this program having a wide-range impact not only on the growth of academic knowledge in Rwanda but also, on the development of policy and practice throughout the country.

Allow me to introduce **Ms KABANYANA Claire Ketsia** whose thesis topic is titled **"Understanding informal support groups as a mechanism for social rehabilitation of early motherhood challenges."** She will provide you with a proposal of her intended study and discuss with you her research needs.

If you require any other information, please contact us at cgs.rwanda@gmail.com

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Prof. Jeannette BAYISENGE
Director, CGS

Date: December 23rd, 2019