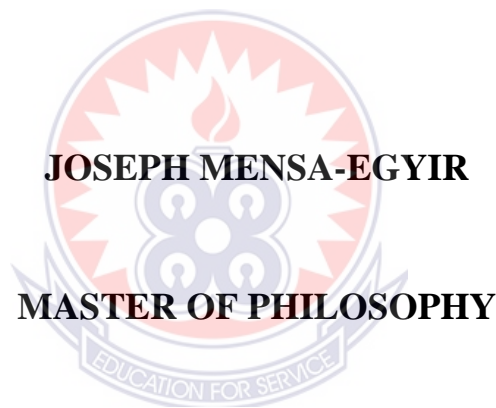


**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**A STUDY OF COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL GHANA  
ASSISTED PROJECTS ON THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN  
AGAINST TEENAGE PREGNANCY**



**2024**

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA  
CENTER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, CONFLICT AND PEACE STUDIES

A STUDY OF COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL GHANA ASSISTED  
PROJECTS ON THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AGAINST TEENAGE  
PREGNANCY



JOSEPH MENSA-EGYIR

(220012422)

A Dissertation in the Centre for Conflict, Human Rights and Peace Studies, Faculty of  
Social Sciences Education, submitted to the School of  
Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for award of the degree of  
Master of Philosophy  
(Human Rights, Conflict and Peace Studies)  
in the University of Education, Winneba

MARCH, 2024

## **DECLARATION**

### **CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION**

I, JOSEPH MENSA-EGYIR, hereby declare that this thesis is my work and all secondary data employed in the study are acknowledged accordingly. No part of this thesis has therefore been presented in any form to any institution for the award of any other degree.

Signature : .....

Date : .....

### **SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION**

I certify that the preparation and presentation of this thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis as laid down by the School of Graduate Studies, University of Education, Winneba.

Name of Supervisor : REV. FR. LINUS NANGWELE PhD

Signature : .....

Date : .....

## **DEDICATION**

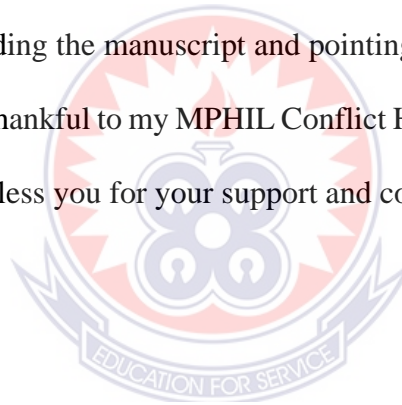
This thesis is dedicated to my Mom Emelia Mensah, my wife Anita Brown, and lovely children Nyamehenba Marfowaah Egyir and Bart Kojo Adjei Egyir



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My heartfelt appreciation goes to my supervisor, Rev. Fr. Dr. Linus Nangwele of the Department of Conflict Human Rights and Peace Studies, University of Education; Winneba, under whose direction and guidance this work has been a reality. I would sincerely like to express my heartfelt gratitude to him for his patience, in-depth and constructive criticisms, and valuable suggestions which have immensely contributed to the success of this work. I am also grateful to all my lectures in the Conflict Human Rights and Peace Studies department whose tuition and great thoughts, suggestions, and assistance in diverse ways have made this research work a reality.

I am greatly indebted to my friends Mr. Ofori and Aggrey. of CHRAPS department UEW for carefully reading the manuscript and pointing out disconcerting errors. Most grateful. Finally, I am thankful to my MPHIL Conflict Human Rights and Peace Studies 2023 colleagues God bless you for your support and cooperation.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
ABSTRACT	ix
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Problem Statement	3
1.3 Purpose of the Study	5
1.4 Research Objectives	6
1.5 Research Questions	6
1.6 Significance/Rationale of the study	7
1.7 Scope of the Study	9
1.8 Organization of the Study	9
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>11</b>
2.0 Introduction	11
2.1 Poverty	11
2.2 Child Development	13
2.3 Education and Development Outcomes	14
2.3.1 Poverty and Education	16
2.3.2 Poverty and Child Development	18

2.4 Child protection frameworks and strategies in developing countries	19
2.5 Factors Contributing to Teenage Pregnancy	21
2.6 The Law and the Child	23
2.7 Implications of teenage pregnancy on young girls	24
2.7.1 Teenage Pregnancy and the Health of Young Girls	24
2.7.2 Teenage Pregnancy and Young Girls's Education	25
2.7.3 Teenage Pregnancy and Young Girls' Human Rights	26
2.8 The Role of NGOs in Child Protection	27
2.8.1 Contributions of NGOs in Preventing Teenage Pregnancy and Promoting Reproductive Health Education	29
2.8.2 Child Sponsorship Programs	30
2.9 Overview of Compassion International Ghana	31
2.10 Theoretical Framework	34
2.10.1 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1981)	34
2.10.2 Attachment Theory by John Bowlby (1979)	35
2.11 Conceptual Framework	37
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>39</b>
3.0 Research Philosophy and Paradigm	39
3.1 Research Approach	40
3.2 Research Design	41
3.3 Study Population	42
3.4 Sampling and Sampling Size	43
3.5 Data Collection Method	44
3.6 Data Analysis	45
3.7 Trustworthiness	47
3.8 Ethical Considerations	49

3.9 Positionality	50
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION</b>	<b>51</b>
4.1 Introduction	51
4.1 Findings	51
4.2 Objective One: Nature of Initiatives Targeting Teenage Pregnancy	52
4.2.1 Comprehensive Approach	52
4.2.2 Education and Awareness	54
4.2.3 Community Engagement	56
4.2.4 Empowerment Programs	58
4.3 Objective Two: Perceptions of Initiatives	60
4.3.1 Positive Reception	60
4.3.2 Appreciation of Educational Efforts	62
4.3.3 Need for Continuity and Expansion	63
4.4 Objective Three: Effects of Initiatives	64
4.4.1 Behavioural Changes in Teenage Girls	64
4.4.2 Empowerment and Self-respect	66
4.4.3 Early Intervention in Sexual Health Education	69
4.5 Objectives Four: Challenges in Implementation	70
4.5.1 Reporting and Follow-up Issues	71
4.5.2 Financial Limitations	72
4.5.3 Lack of Community and Parental Support	73
<b>CHAPTER FIVE</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>75</b>
5.0 Introduction	75
5.1 Summary	75
5.2 Key Findings	77



5.3 Theoretical Implications	78
5.4 Conclusions	80
5.5 Recommendations	81
5.6 Study Limitations	82
5.7 Suggestions for Future Studies	83
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>84</b>



## ABSTRACT

This research examined Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects' initiatives within the Bremen Cluster to protect young girls from teenage pregnancy. It focused on understanding the nature and effectiveness of these initiatives and their impacts on adolescent girls. Employing a qualitative approach and case study design, the study involved semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with twelve (12) participants including adolescent girls, caregivers, and officers from Compassion Ghana assisted project within the Bremen Cluster. These participants were purposively sampled because of their relevance in providing first-hand information for the study. The study found that Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects and comprehensive programs, which include education on teenage pregnancy and livelihood empowerment, have positively influenced girls' behaviour and helped them to better manage their sexual life which to some extent has helped them to prevent teenage pregnancies. However, challenges such as inadequate funding and difficulties in abuse reporting were noted. Theoretical implications are drawn from Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Bowlby's Attachment Theory, emphasizing the need for supportive environments and secure attachments. The study concluded that enhancing trust, communication, community involvement, and addressing broader socio-cultural contexts are vital for the success of such initiatives. The study therefore recommended that Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects explore new funding avenues to ensure the sustainability and expansion of programs.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background

Poverty is a significant challenge affecting millions of children worldwide, with a substantial number living in extreme poverty. The lack of access to essential resources for health and well-being often marginalizes youth, hindering their chances of growing into healthy, fulfilled, and responsible adults (Tirrell et al., 2019). Poverty does not only leads to a sense of hopelessness and alienation but also increases the risk of radicalization among young people, posing threats to civil society (Lerner et al., 2017). Children living in poverty are particularly vulnerable to various forms of abuse that violate their rights. Developing countries often face widespread instances of violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect towards children due to inadequate resources allocated to child development (Baidoo, 2014). Such children face numerous adverse outcomes, including physical and mental health problems, educational difficulties, displacement, homelessness, and inadequate parenting skills later in life (Tobin & Murphy, 2013).

In response to the challenges of poverty, numerous donors and development organizations have prioritized programs and interventions focused on youth and their micro-ecological niches. These initiatives aim to address the multifaceted needs of young individuals by involving their families, schools, faith institutions, and organized out-of-school-time activities (Vandell et al., 2017). Child protection is a critical component of these programs, encompassing both prevention and response to violence, exploitation, and abuse in all contexts. Reaching vulnerable children, such as those without family care or living on the streets, in detention, conflict situations, or natural disasters, is an integral aspect of child protection efforts (UNICEF, 2020a). Children

living in extreme poverty are among the most vulnerable groups globally, requiring comprehensive support to prevent and address issues of abuse, violence, exploitation, and neglect (Wessells, 2015).

International child sponsorship programs have emerged as a means to alleviate child poverty and empower children to achieve their goals and make a positive difference in their families and communities. Compassion International Ghana assisted projects (CI), along with its board of directors, global partners, and frontline church partners, has implemented child protection policies to ensure the safety and well-being of every child enrolled in their programs. Through various assistance programs, CI is actively engaged in the holistic development of children, including medical aid, educational support, non-formal education, parental education, disaster relief activities, income-generating activities, infrastructure improvements, and water projects (Compassion International, n.d).

One of the common objectives of these programs is to provide and strengthen education among youth in rural communities, with a particular emphasis on promoting girl child education to protect them from the risks associated with teenage pregnancy. Teenage pregnancies are more prevalent in developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where approximately 28% of adolescents give birth before the age of 18 (Loaiza & Liang, 2013). Lack of education and neglect from parents and guardians are significant contributing factors to early pregnancies among girls. Globally, millions of girls remain out of school, with a substantial number being of primary school going age (UNICEF, 2020). Efforts toward achieving gender equality in education are hindered by social and cultural biases that limit girls' roles at home and in the workforce, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (UNICEF, 2020).

Compassion International Ghana assisted projects recognizes the importance of girls' education in strengthening economies, reducing inequality, and fostering stable and resilient communities. In the context of Breman cluster in Ghana, the study aimed to assess the effectiveness of Compassion Ghana's assisted projects and programs in empowering adolescent girls and equipping them with resilience against teenage pregnancy. By evaluating these initiatives, the study seeks to contribute to the understanding of how targeted interventions can address the issue of teenage pregnancy and promote positive outcomes for girls in the district.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

The international aid system's approach to poverty alleviation and sustainable development has evolved significantly over the past four decades, recognizing the complex, multi-dimensional nature of poverty (Karimba, 2011). One prominent method of engagement for many households in wealthier countries has been through international child sponsorship programs, which allow donors to directly assist children in poverty-stricken regions. Programs like those facilitated by Compassion International provide donors with opportunities to fund a child's education, health, and overall well-being, aiming to foster long-term benefits in their lives (Wydick et al., 2009; Wydick et al., 2013).

Compassion International Ghana is one such organization that emphasizes holistic child development through its evidence-based, Christian, and non-governmental approach. By partnering with local churches and sponsors, it offers programs that focus on the spiritual, physical, and socio-emotional development of children, aiming to increase their self-esteem, aspirations, and life outcomes (Wydick et al., 2013). Despite the noble objectives of these programs, a significant gap exists in the literature evaluating their

effectiveness specifically as a child protection mechanism, particularly regarding safeguarding against teenage pregnancy.

Existing studies on Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects and other child sponsorship organizations have predominantly focused on various outcomes such as academic achievement, organizational performance, and job satisfaction. For example, Karimba (2011) assessed the academic impacts of sponsorship, while Wydick et al. (2009) found long-term increases in education and employment outcomes among formerly sponsored children in Uganda. Claire (2020) examined factors influencing project implementation in Compassion Kenya-assisted programs, identifying shortcomings in beneficiary outcomes despite efforts to improve planning, staff competency, and communication. Similarly, Wydick et al. (2013) highlighted significant educational and employment benefits from child sponsorship in several countries. Other studies, such as those by Adenyo (2016) and Awour (2015), have explored the role of training, development, and holistic programs on organizational productivity and children's livelihoods, respectively, but without a focus on child protection measures. Mensah (2018) also analyzed internal marketing practices and their effects on employee satisfaction, further expanding the focus on organizational dynamics rather than child welfare outcomes.

While these studies provide valuable insights into the broad impacts of child sponsorship programs, they do not address the critical issue of child protection, particularly in the context of teenage pregnancy prevention. Darku (2017) and Ndungi (2013) explored the role of Compassion International projects in increasing access to education for marginalized groups, but again, the focus remained on educational outcomes rather than safeguarding against vulnerable conditions like teenage pregnancy.

This gap in the literature points to a critical oversight. Although there is growing recognition of the multidimensional impacts of child sponsorship on education and economic empowerment, there is limited research investigating their role in directly protecting children from risks such as teenage pregnancy, particularly within the context of Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects. The absence of such research is particularly striking given that teenage pregnancy poses significant risks to the health, education, and overall development of young girls in poverty-stricken regions.

Therefore, this study sought to address this gap by evaluating the effectiveness of Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects, particularly within the Breman Cluster in the Asikuma Odoben Brakwa District of the Central Region, in safeguarding children against teenage pregnancy. This research would contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing insights into the role of child sponsorship programs as a mechanism for child protection, specifically examining their capacity to mitigate the risks associated with teenage pregnancy in vulnerable populations.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

To combat this challenge and help girls realize their life goals, Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects have been implemented encompassing educational and non-educational programs, as well as religious interventions. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects, specifically within the Breman Cluster in the Asikuma Odoben Brakwa District of the Central Region, in safeguarding children against teenage pregnancy.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Explore the nature of initiatives implemented by Compassion International Ghana assisted projects in the Breman Cluster to address teenage pregnancy;
2. Investigate how the initiatives of Compassion International Ghana assisted projects towards the prevention of teenage pregnancy in the Breman Cluster is perceived by adolescent girls and their families;
3. Examine the effects of Compassion International Ghana assisted projects' child protection programs on the prevention of teenage pregnancy in Breman the Cluster;
4. Analyse the challenges faced by Compassion International Ghana assisted projects in the implementation of its child protection programs in the Breman Cluster.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the initiatives implemented by Compassion International Ghana assisted projects in the Breman Cluster to address teenage pregnancy?
2. How do adolescent girls and their families in the Breman Cluster perceive the initiatives undertaken by Compassion International Ghana assisted projects for the prevention of teenage pregnancy?
3. What are the measurable effects of Compassion International Ghana assisted projects' child protection programs on prevention of teenage pregnancy in the Breman Cluster?
4. What challenges does Compassion International Ghana assisted projects encounter in implementing its child protection programs in the Breman Cluster?



### **1.6 Significance/Rationale of the study**

The study filled a critical gap in the literature regarding the effectiveness of child sponsorship programs as a child protection mechanism. While previous studies have focused on the long-term educational and employment impacts of such programs, limited attention has been given to their role in preventing teenage pregnancy. The study's findings revealed that Compassion International's comprehensive approach, which integrates education, health, and livelihood empowerment programs, significantly reduces teenage pregnancies among the target population. By doing so, it added to the body of knowledge on child protection outcomes of child sponsorship programs, providing a unique perspective on how these initiatives can influence sexual health education and behaviour in vulnerable communities.

The findings of this study have important implications for policymakers, particularly those involved in child welfare and reproductive health. Compassion International's program, through its multifaceted approach that includes spiritual, socio-emotional, and physical development, demonstrates a practical model for combating teenage pregnancy in poverty-stricken regions. This model could be adopted or adapted by government bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to integrate child protection into broader development policies. The study recommends that Compassion International and similar organizations work closely with national health and education ministries to align their initiatives with national child protection frameworks. In this way, the study's findings can inform policies that promote community-driven interventions, improving sustainability and addressing socio-cultural barriers that limit access to reproductive health education.

The theoretical framework of the study was grounded in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Bowlby's Attachment Theory. The research validated the

application of these theories in the context of child protection and adolescent health. Bronfenbrenner's framework was instrumental in understanding how different environmental systems—from the family and school to broader societal influences—interact to shape a child's development and risk for teenage pregnancy. Compassion International's community-based approach aligns well with this theory, as it addresses multiple systems influencing a child's life. Additionally, the study contributed to Attachment Theory by exploring how the nurturing environments created by Compassion's after-school programs, which focus on building self-esteem and aspirations, strengthen secure attachments and reduce risky behaviors among adolescents. This study thus enriched theoretical discussions on how secure attachments and supportive environments can mitigate risks associated with adolescent pregnancy in resource-limited settings.

On a practical level, the study's findings highlighted the need for improved implementation strategies in child protection programs, particularly those related to sexual and reproductive health education. The research revealed that while Compassion International's initiatives were well-received and led to positive behavioral changes, challenges such as financial limitations, inadequate parental involvement, and gaps in reporting mechanisms hindered the full potential of these programs. The study recommends practical measures such as securing additional funding sources and improving community engagement, particularly from parents and guardians, to enhance the effectiveness of these initiatives. Practitioners working in child sponsorship and protection programs can adopt these recommendations to strengthen their approach to preventing teenage pregnancy and empowering adolescents in similar socio-economic contexts.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

This study focused on evaluating the impact of Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects in the Asikuma Odoben Brakwa District of the Central Region. The study specifically targeted fifteen (15) projects supported by Compassion Ghana, which were affiliated with various Christian denominations. The participants involved in the study were limited to teenage girls assisted by the CI projects, child development workers and members of the church partner committees who played significant roles in the training and support of children in these projects. The primary objective of the study was to assess the effectiveness of the assisted projects in addressing four areas of the national curriculum: spiritual, cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional development. Additionally, the study aimed to examine how these projects contributed to child protection efforts, particularly in preventing teenage pregnancy among girls in the Asikuma Odoben Brakwa District.

### **1.8 Organization of the Study**

The study was divided into five main chapters, each serving a distinct purpose. The first chapter encompassed the introduction, providing a background to the study, stating the problem, outlining the purpose, research questions, and objectives. It also delved into the scope and significance/rationale of the study and finally discussed the organization of the entire work. Chapter Two involved an empirical review of the literature upon which the study was based. Additionally, it explored the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that formed the foundation for the research. The focus of Chapter three was the methodology. It detailed the research design employed, specified the population under study, and described the sampling techniques employed. Furthermore, it provided insight into the sources of data and the methods utilized for data analysis. Chapter Four presented the findings derived from the analysis conducted and engaged in discussions

about these findings. Chapter Five encompassed the summary, key findings, conclusions, policy implications, recommendations, and study limitations, providing a comprehensive overview and conclusion to the entire work.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

A comprehensive review of the literature for this study is provided in this chapter. The literature review focuses on several themes and sub-themes and this will include the Empirical Review; Theories and the Conceptual Framework

#### 2.1 Poverty

Poverty is a widespread issue that negatively affects every area of family life as well as the outcomes for children. Black et al. (2016) provide compelling evidence of poverty's global reach and its adverse consequences on child development and health based on proxy measures of stunting and poverty, indicating that 250 million children (43%) younger than 5 years in low-income and middle-income countries are at risk of not reaching their developmental potential. This issue transcends geographical boundaries, affecting children in both affluent and developing nations.

Sen (2001) in his seminal work, conceptualizes poverty not merely as an economic condition but as a state that deprives individuals of the freedom to make choices and the capability to function effectively in society. This perspective shifts the focus from mere financial metrics to a broader understanding of well-being and agency. Poverty manifests in two primary forms: absolute and relative. Absolute poverty refers to the lack of financial means necessary to maintain a basic standard of living. This form of poverty is often quantified by benchmarks such as the income required to satisfy fundamental needs or the minimum resources needed for survival (Fields, 2002). The World Bank according to Anker (2006), for instance, commonly employs an

international poverty line, set at US\$1 or US\$2 per person per day, as a standard for cross-country comparisons.

Relative poverty, in contrast, is contextual and varies across societies. It is defined by the societal standards in which an individual lives. What is considered poverty in one country may not be seen as such in another. For example, a person's financial status that might not be deemed impoverished in Bangladesh could be considered poor in Sweden, illustrating the relative nature of poverty (Berg, 2008).

Children, unfortunately, bear a disproportionate burden of poverty. This is especially pronounced in regions like sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where poverty rates are alarmingly high (Khan, Naushad, Faisal & Fahad, 2020). However, the issue of child poverty is not confined to low-income countries. In high-income nations, the prevalence of childhood poverty is a significant concern. For instance, in countries like the USA and the UK, the rate of child poverty is estimated to be around 20% (Fontenot et al., 2017). This statistic is a stark reminder that economic prosperity does not automatically equate to the well-being of all segments of the population.

The implications of poverty on children are profound and long-lasting. It affects various aspects of their lives, including health, education, and social development. Children living in poverty often face challenges such as malnutrition, limited access to education, and inadequate healthcare, which can have lasting impacts on their physical and cognitive development (Chilton, Chyatte & Breaux, 2007). Moreover, the psychosocial effects of poverty, such as stress and social exclusion, can further hinder their growth and potential (Chilton, Chyatte, & Breaux, 2007).

## 2.2 Child Development

The exploration of child development encompasses a comprehensive understanding of the various processes that influence children's physical and psychological growth. As articulated by Bukatko and Daehler (2012), child development represents the systematic and scholarly examination of changes in individuals' behaviour and mental processes over time. This field of study emphasizes the emergence of interdependent skills in sensorimotor, cognitive-linguistic, and social-emotional domains, which are contingent upon the child's physical health, familial environment, and broader social context (Engle et al., 2007).

Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological systems theory provides a systemic perspective that incorporates vital sociocultural elements into our understanding of child development. This theory posits that a child's development is influenced by a dynamic interplay of ecological systems, offering a comprehensive view of environmental impacts. In this framework, the child is situated at the centre of these systems, indicating that their development is shaped by a network of interrelated systems that extend beyond the basic cognitive-linguistic, sensorimotor, and socioemotional functions.

The importance of understanding child development is increasingly recognized in developing nations. There is a growing emphasis on early child development programs, especially for children with low birth weight, developmental delays, and those from low-income, disadvantaged backgrounds (Malekpour, 2004; Nair & Radhakrishnan, 2004). Globally, it is estimated that 43% of children under five years of age are not reaching their full developmental potential, often due to a lack of the five essential components of "nurturing care" for children (UNICEF, 2018). These components include health, nutrition, early stimulation, learning opportunities, and protection.

The concept of nurturing care is pivotal in laying a solid foundation for a child's life. Ensuring that all young children, from birth to school entry, have access to high-quality health, nutrition, protection, early learning services, and support for parents and caregivers is universally acknowledged as crucial. This holistic approach to child development recognizes that each child's growth is not only a matter of biological maturation but also a product of their environment and experiences (Saracho, 2023).

Recent research has expanded the understanding of child development by emphasizing the role of cultural and community practices in shaping developmental outcomes. Rogoff (2003) highlights the significance of cultural practices in the cognitive development of children, suggesting that learning and development are deeply embedded in cultural contexts. This perspective aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which posits that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition.

Furthermore, advancements in neuroscience have provided insights into the impact of early experiences on brain development. Studies by Shonkoff and Phillips (2000) demonstrate that early childhood experiences have a lasting effect on the architecture of the brain, influencing cognitive, social, and emotional development. This underscores the importance of nurturing environments in the early years for optimal brain development.

### **2.3 Education and Development Outcomes**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and a plethora of international human rights documents, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), enshrined education as a fundamental human right. Despite this, education remains a privilege for many, as underscored by UNESCO's alarming



statistic that 258 million children and youth were out of school during the 2018–19 academic year (UNESCO, 2022). This disparity highlights a critical global challenge in realizing the right to education.

Education transcends the mere acquisition or transfer of knowledge. It is a multifaceted process that shapes an individual's life skills, social conventions, judgment, and moral compass. It plays a pivotal role in developing problem-solving abilities, empowering individuals, promoting equality, and fostering stability and financial security (Redko, 2024). The societal impact of education is profound, contributing to a country's economic development and enabling individuals to give back to their communities.

The outcomes of education are diverse and encompass various aspects such as school preparedness, retention rates, dropout rates, academic achievement, and the overall duration of educational engagement. School readiness, in particular, is a critical concept that refers to a child's capacity for intellectual and social success within a school setting (Ferguson et al., 2007). This readiness is not merely about academic knowledge; it encompasses a range of skills, including emotional and social competencies, that are essential for navigating the educational landscape.

Moreover, the quality of education and its accessibility are central to the discussion. The disparities in educational opportunities between different socio-economic groups, regions, and genders present significant challenges. For instance, children from lower socio-economic backgrounds often face barriers to accessing quality education, which can perpetuate cycles of poverty and inequality. Gender disparities in education, particularly in certain regions, further exacerbate these challenges, limiting the potential of a significant portion of the population (Khethiwe, 2023)

The impact of education on societal development cannot be overstated. It is a powerful tool for breaking the cycle of poverty, as it equips individuals with the skills and

knowledge necessary for economic participation. Education also plays a crucial role in promoting democratic values and social cohesion, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility (Flecha, 2014).

### **2.3.1 Poverty and Education**

Van der Berg (2008) underscored the pivotal role of education in enhancing employment opportunities and earnings globally. He argued that households with higher educational levels are less likely to experience poverty, a sentiment echoed by numerous researchers in the field (Van der Berg, 2008). This correlation between education and reduced poverty risk is further supported by Jacob and Ludwig (2008), who emphasized the transformative potential of early childhood education, particularly for children from impoverished backgrounds. They posited that in the United States, securing a quality education is a critical pathway to avoiding poverty in adulthood.

Magnuson and Votruba-Drzal (2009) expanded on this by highlighting the concept of human capital. They noted that individuals with more years of education and higher academic achievements tend to earn more than those with lower levels of human capital. This observation aligns with the widely held belief that education enhances productivity, thereby enabling individuals to command higher earnings in the labor market (Magnuson & Votruba-Drzal, 2009).

The labor market is not the only domain where education exerts its influence. Orazem, Glewwe, and Patrinos (2007) contended that while education can boost productivity in various fields, including agriculture, its most significant impact on poverty is through labor market earnings. This perspective is crucial in understanding the multifaceted role of education in economic development.

Murnane (2007) established a direct link between poverty and low academic achievement, noting that children from low-income families are more likely to drop out

of school. This dropout rate exacerbates the cycle of poverty, as it limits future employment and earning prospects. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) (2005) further revealed that children from chronically poor homes perform worse academically and cognitively and exhibit more behavioral issues than those from wealthier backgrounds. This disparity is partly attributed to the lack of stimulating activities and experiences in low-income households (NICHD, 2005).

The role of the family in a child's educational journey is critical. Engle et al. (2007) posited that families are the primary socialization institutions for children, providing not only basic necessities but also cultural and educational values. They argued that poverty-stricken families are more likely to expose their children to greater risks due to limited opportunities and an inability to meet societal demands (Engle et al., 2007). Van der Berg (2008) supported this claim, noting that factors associated with the home environment, such as parental education, are closely linked to poverty and significantly affect children's academic performance.

In developing countries, the challenges are even more pronounced. Van der Berg (2008) observed that education in these regions is hindered by widespread absolute poverty, poor nutrition, ill health, uneducated parents, inadequate funding for education, and unfavorable living conditions. Hackman and Farah (2009) found that children born into low socioeconomic status households or impoverished families generally have poorer neurocognitive outcomes and lower educational attainment compared to their wealthier counterparts.

The World Bank (2016) highlighted the significant benefits that impoverished households gain from government funding aimed at increasing access to basic education. Such funding is crucial, as these households are often the last to enroll their children in educational programs (World Bank, 2016).

### **2.3.2 Poverty and Child Development**

Chilton et al. (2007) were among the pioneers in highlighting the invisibility of the most vulnerable children despite global efforts to address poverty and human development. They argued that children under five are particularly at risk of not reaching their developmental potential due to a confluence of factors including poverty, hunger, high illness rates, lack of educational and stimulating environments, home instability, and insufficient mental stimulation. This assertion underscores the complex interplay of various socio-economic factors in hindering child development.

Expanding on this, Jensen et al. (2017) explored the effects of poverty on interacting biological systems underlying child development. Their research suggested that while poverty itself is a significant risk factor, it is the associated elements such as food insecurity, infectious diseases, and psychological stress related to the child's upbringing environment that contribute most significantly to the adverse developmental impacts of poverty. This perspective highlights the need to address these interconnected risk factors in efforts to mitigate the impact of poverty on child development.

The NHS Health Scotland (2021) further corroborated these findings, emphasizing that poverty negatively impacts children's health, social, emotional, cognitive development, behavior, and educational outcomes. They pointed out that children born into poverty are more susceptible to a range of health issues, including poor nutrition, chronic illness, and mental health problems. This comprehensive view illustrates the broad spectrum of challenges faced by children in poverty.

Compassion International (2022) added another dimension to this discussion by focusing on the socio-emotional impact of poverty on children. They contended that poverty not only shortens life expectancy and undermines the quality of life but also

negatively affects children's beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and aspirations. This perspective highlights the profound and far-reaching consequences of poverty that extend beyond physical needs to impact the very essence of a child's identity and future potential.

The Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (2022) emphasized the role of chronic stress, often experienced by those living in extreme poverty, in early brain development. They argued that such continuous stress can lead to long-term cognitive impairments and increase the likelihood of behavioral and mental health issues in children. This association between poverty and stress-related developmental challenges underscores the importance of addressing the psychological aspects of poverty in child development.

Furthermore, Chilton et al. (2007) argued that the link between poverty and child development is not exclusive to underdeveloped countries. They highlighted that developed countries also exhibit disparities in poverty and health based on race/ethnicity, gender, income, and education. This suggests that the impact of poverty on child development is a global issue, transcending geographical and economic boundaries.

#### **2.4 Child protection frameworks and strategies in developing countries**

Child protection frameworks in developing countries aim to establish legal and policy frameworks that promote and protect children's rights. Bourdillon and Myers (2014) underscored the necessity of integrating child protection within broader development agendas, highlighting the interconnectedness of child welfare with overall societal progress. Complementing this perspective, Mosley and Chen (1984) proposed an analytical framework for studying child survival in developing countries, advocating

for multifaceted approaches that address various dimensions of child well-being. This holistic view is crucial in understanding the complexities of child protection in environments marked by diverse challenges.

Lachman et al. (2002) delved into the specific challenges faced in child protection in developing countries, such as child abuse and neglect. They identify key issues including limited resources, weak institutional capacities, and cultural barriers that impede effective child protection. Echoing these concerns, Onyango and Lynch (2006) discussed the difficulties in implementing child protection rights in these settings, attributing these challenges to socio-economic factors and resource constraints. To address these challenges, various strategies and interventions have been implemented. Landgren (2005) emphasized the creation of a protective environment conducive to child development and risk mitigation. Similarly, Britto and Ulkuer (2012) advocated for comprehensive interventions encompassing health, education, and social protection to uphold child rights and policy implications in developing countries.

Innovations and best practices in child protection have emerged as a response to these challenges. Ager et al. (2011) conducted case studies in Georgia, Gaza, Haiti, and Yemen, evaluating child protection assessment practices in humanitarian emergencies. Their findings highlight the necessity of context-specific approaches and comprehensive assessments to identify risks and develop appropriate interventions. Boothby and Stark (2011) present a case study from Indonesia, focusing on data surveillance practices in child protection system development. Their research underscores the importance of reliable data collection and analysis for informed decision-making and resource allocation. Connolly and Katz (2019) proposed typologies of child protection systems, facilitating a better understanding of diverse

approaches across different countries. Lonne et al. (2021) discussed innovations in the "front door" of child protection, focusing on intake and assessment processes to ensure timely and appropriate interventions.

The role of collaboration between child protection agencies and families is also critical. Cudjoe and Abdullah (2020) examined parental participation in child protection practice in Ghana, emphasizing the significance of family involvement in decision-making and service provision. Middel et al. (2021) validates the Meaningful Participation Assessment Tool (MPAT), stressing the importance of children's participation in the child protection system. This approach ensures that children's rights and perspectives are considered in decision-making processes. Furthermore, Benbenishty et al. (2015) conducted an international comparative study on maltreatment substantiation, risk assessment, intervention recommendations, and the role of professionals' attitudes in child welfare. They advocate for standardized decision-making processes, improved risk assessment methods, and acknowledge the impact of professionals' attitudes on child protection outcomes.

## **2.5 Factors Contributing to Teenage Pregnancy**

Adolescence is a transitional period characterized by various physical, emotional, psychological, cognitive, and social changes (Eccles et al., 2003). During this stage, individuals are expected to acquire and develop skills, attitudes, and principles necessary for a successful transition into adulthood (Eccles et al., 2003). The choices made during adolescence significantly impact one's overall well-being in adulthood. The prevention of early pregnancy among adolescent girls in Sub-Saharan Africa has gained increasing attention in recent years (Phillips & Mbizvo, 2016). Global concerns about adolescent health and development have identified multiple factors, including

social, cultural, economic, and health service-related issues, contributing to adolescent childbearing (Phillips & Mbizvo, 2016; Sedgh et al., 2015).

Several factors have been associated with unintended pregnancies among adolescents, including early marriages, cultural and religious influences, gender dynamics, limited social and economic support, curiosity, peer pressure, inadequate comprehensive sexuality education, limited access to reproductive health services, and negative attitudes of healthcare providers towards providing contraceptive services for adolescents (Warenius et al., 2016; Ahorlu et al., 2015; Kumi-Kyereme et al., 2014; Yidana et al., 2015; Atuyambe et al., 2015; Adekunle et al., 2000). Additionally, unmet contraceptive needs among adolescents and concerns about contraceptive side effects have been identified as contributing factors (Yidana et al., 2015; Abdul-Rahman et al., 2011). Barriers to contraceptive use among adolescents include inadequate sexual knowledge, limited risk perceptions, lack of negotiation skills and power in safer sex options, ambivalence towards sex, and negative social norms surrounding premarital sexual activity and pregnancy (Krug et al., 2016).

Yakubu and Salisu (2018) conducted a study to identify the key determinants of adolescent pregnancy, focusing on sociocultural, environmental, and economic factors. The study identified several factors within these domains, including peer influence, unwanted sexual advances from adult males, coercive sexual relations, unequal gender power relations, poverty, religion, early marriage, lack of parental counselling and guidance, parental neglect, absence of affordable or free education, lack of comprehensive sexuality education, non-use of contraceptives, male responsibility to buy condoms, early sexual debut, and inappropriate forms of recreation.



## 2.6 The Law and the Child

Legal frameworks for child protection have evolved to safeguard children's rights and welfare globally. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) remains the most comprehensive international treaty focused on children's rights, establishing standards for survival, development, and protection against abuse and exploitation (UNICEF, 2019). This treaty has influenced numerous national legislations, aligning domestic laws with international standards. Countries have established child protection laws to address issues such as abuse, exploitation, and neglect, as well as to ensure access to education and healthcare (Muntaqo & Sholikhah, 2018).

In developing countries, laws aimed at protecting children face challenges due to socio-economic conditions, weak enforcement mechanisms, and cultural norms (Lachman et al., 2002). For example, Sub-Saharan Africa continues to struggle with issues like child labor and early marriage, despite legal frameworks prohibiting these practices (Yakubu & Salisu, 2018). The gap between law and practice is a significant hurdle, as many legal systems lack the resources to enforce child protection regulations effectively.

In Ghana, child protection laws have been shaped by both local and international influences. The Children's Act (1998) provides a comprehensive framework for child protection, addressing child labor, parental duties, and children's rights to education and healthcare (Cudjoe & Abdullah, 2020). This act aligns with the UNCRC but faces challenges in implementation, particularly in rural areas where socio-cultural practices such as child marriage persist despite legal prohibitions.

Overall, the law provides a necessary foundation for protecting children's rights; however, as noted by scholars such as Connolly and Katz (2019), the effectiveness of

these laws depends heavily on the capacity of governments and communities to enforce them and align them with cultural realities.

## **2.7 Implications of teenage pregnancy on young girls**

### **2.7.1 Teenage Pregnancy and the Health of Young Girls**

According to Adeyinka et al. (2010), adolescents in developing countries face various health problems, including increased incidences of preterm labour and delivery, hypertensive disease, anemia, severe forms of malaria, obstructed labour, poor maternal nutrition, poor breastfeeding practices, low birth weight, and higher neonatal mortality and morbidity rates. Josephine and Premraj (2016) noted that adolescent girls' reproductive health is negatively impacted by factors such as unsafe abortion, sexually transmitted infections, sexual violence, and limited access to medical services.

Teenage pregnancy is recognized as a significant public health concern, along with obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer rates (Langille, 2007). Research conducted among socially deprived subpopulations in third-world countries with poor medical conditions has identified teenage pregnancy as an obstetric problem associated with risks such as anemia, preterm labour, urinary tract infections, hypertension, preeclampsia, high rates of cesarean sections, preterm birth, low birth weight, and intrauterine growth restriction (Kirchengast, 2009). Habitu et al. (2018) observed that adolescent pregnancy in low-income countries remains a significant contributor to maternal and child mortality and unsafe abortion practices. Unsafe abortions among 15-19-year-olds globally have been linked to increased risks of chronic health problems among teenage mothers (UNFPA, 2013).

The literature indicates that teenage pregnancy and childbirth are associated with poorer health and well-being for both the mother and the baby, possibly influenced by

socioeconomic factors preceding early pregnancy and childbirth (Paranjothy et al., 2009). Some studies have shown a correlation between teenage motherhood and mental health issues such as depression, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, and perinatal suicide (Mei-Dan et al., 2015; Bottorff et al., 2014; Orri et al., 2019).

Adolescent maternal mortality and morbidity are primarily due to complications during pregnancy and childbirth, including higher rates of hypertensive disorders, anemia, gestational diabetes, co-morbidities, and delivery complications, resulting in increased maternal and fetal mortality rates (Leftwich et al., 2017; Azevedo et al., 2015). The World Health Organization (WHO, 2014) reported that complications during pregnancy and childbirth are the second leading cause of death among 15-19-year-old girls globally. Adolescents who become pregnant often experience psychological problems due to social stigma and may suffer from physical and domestic violence while attempting to meet the demands of pregnancy and childbearing, as cited by Atuyambe et al. (2005) and Hodgkinson et al. (2014). It is evident from the literature that adolescent pregnancy remains a major contributor to maternal and child mortality. Pregnant adolescents also face additional health risks and complications due to their immature bodies, while babies born to teenage mothers are at a greater risk as well.

### **2.7.2 Teenage Pregnancy and Young Girls's Education**

Studies have provided evidence linking educational attainment with teenage pregnancy. For instance, Williams and Abdullah (2013) found a correlation between educational level and teenage pregnancy. Similarly, Kefale et al. (2020) discovered that primary and below-educated teenagers had higher odds of experiencing teenage pregnancy compared to secondary and above-educated teenagers. This indicates that educated adolescents possess better knowledge and skills to prevent pregnancy, while those with

limited education may face challenges in accessing sexual and reproductive health information and services. Moreover, educated adolescents tend to delay marriage and are more resilient against early marriage and sexual abuse. Gyan (2013) highlighted the issue of school dropout leading to early sexual activities among teenagers. Mezmur et al. (2021) supported this by emphasizing that lack of education and school dropout are consistently associated with adolescent pregnancy. Their findings demonstrate a significant relationship between teenage pregnancy and adolescents who have not received formal education.

### **2.7.3 Teenage Pregnancy and Young Girls' Human Rights**

Adeyinka et al. (2010) emphasize the serious health risks associated with adolescent pregnancies, which include medical complications such as cesarean deliveries, ectopic pregnancies, pregnancy-induced hypertension, prolonged obstructed labour, and low birth weight babies. Beyond the medical concerns, adolescent pregnancies often lead to significant socioeconomic challenges, including increased poverty, higher rates of divorce, and school dropout, all of which severely disrupt the life paths of young mothers. These complications not only affect the health and well-being of adolescent girls but also directly infringe upon their basic human rights to health, education, and a stable livelihood.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) highlights the heightened vulnerability of adolescent girls, particularly those facing physical, emotional, and socioeconomic adversities. These girls are at a greater risk of early pregnancy, often due to discrimination and a lack of access to critical reproductive health services (UNFPA, 2021). The denial of these essential health services represents a violation of their rights to healthcare and autonomy, further perpetuating a cycle of marginalization and inequality. Inadequate access to reproductive health services also exacerbates the risk

of adverse health outcomes, reinforcing the urgency of addressing these human rights gaps.

The consequences of teenage pregnancy extend beyond the individual, affecting society at large. Social repercussions are significant, including interrupted education, which limits future employment opportunities, and an increased likelihood of engagement in criminal activities. Young mothers often face social exclusion and struggle with childcare, school reintegration, and securing social security support. Moreover, they are at greater risk of repeated pregnancies, deepening their entrapment in poverty. The lack of support for these young women not only compromises their rights but also undermines broader societal efforts to achieve gender equality and protect the welfare of children and adolescents.

## **2.8 The Role of NGOs in Child Protection**

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a pivotal role in addressing child protection, focusing on reducing inequality, alleviating poverty, and supporting vulnerable populations. NGOs such as Compassion International, World Vision, and Save the Children implement programs that address multiple dimensions of child development, from education and healthcare to psychosocial support, creating more equitable opportunities for disadvantaged children (Adenyo, 2016; Darku, 2017). NGOs combat inequality by providing vulnerable children access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and child protection interventions. Child sponsorship programs, for instance, target children in underprivileged communities, ensuring they have equal opportunities for educational attainment and personal development (Wydick et al., 2013). These programs bridge the gap between wealthy and impoverished societies by directly connecting sponsors from affluent areas to children in need, helping to level the playing field in terms of access to resources.

NGOs also contribute to poverty alleviation by addressing both the immediate needs of children and the long-term drivers of poverty. Child sponsorship programs often include components such as vocational training and life skills development, equipping children with the tools necessary for future economic independence (Mohanty, 2011; Awour, 2015). Through education and empowerment initiatives, NGOs break the cycle of poverty, offering children and their families sustainable paths out of economic hardship.

NGOs offer crucial support to vulnerable children, such as orphans, those from low-income families, and those facing abuse or neglect. By providing not only financial assistance but also emotional and psychosocial support, they create a safety net for these children (Benthall, 2019). Child protection initiatives often focus on safeguarding children's rights, offering secure environments where children can grow without fear of exploitation or neglect (Benbenishty et al., 2015).

NGOs foster children's decision-making skills by involving them in the development and execution of child protection programs. Compassion International, for example, incorporates mentorship programs that build self-esteem and agency in young girls, empowering them to make informed decisions about their futures, particularly regarding sexual health and education (Awour, 2015). These initiatives enhance the child's ability to navigate challenges, make independent decisions, and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Education remains a central pillar of NGO interventions in child protection. Through child sponsorship programs, NGOs provide school supplies, cover tuition fees, and offer tutoring to ensure that disadvantaged children receive a quality education. Studies have shown that these programs significantly increase school attendance and completion rates among sponsored children, thus improving their long-term economic prospects (Wydick et al., 2009).

Furthermore, NGOs often engage with local communities and governments to promote policies that prioritize children's education and rights, reinforcing the importance of education in combating poverty and inequality (Nyathi, 2012).

NGOs address inequality, alleviate poverty, support vulnerable populations, enhance children's decision-making, and promote education through targeted child protection initiatives. These efforts contribute to building safer, more equitable environments for children globally.

### **2.8.1 Contributions of NGOs in Preventing Teenage Pregnancy and Promoting Reproductive Health Education**

Teenage pregnancy is a global public health concern with significant social, economic, and health consequences. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a crucial role in addressing this issue by implementing programs and initiatives aimed at preventing teenage pregnancy and promoting reproductive health education. Paranjothy et al. (2009) conducted a study to investigate the impact of teenage pregnancy on various outcomes, including maternal and child health, education, and socio-economic status. The findings underscore the importance of early intervention programs provided by NGOs to address the specific needs of teenage mothers and their children. The study emphasized the need for comprehensive reproductive health education and support services to prevent teenage pregnancy and mitigate its adverse consequences. Adeyinka et al. (2010) explored the obstetric outcomes of teenage pregnancy in a Nigerian tertiary hospital. The authors highlight the need for NGOs to engage in reproductive health education targeted at teenagers, as well as provide access to quality antenatal care and skilled birth attendance. By implementing such interventions, NGOs can contribute to reducing the risks associated with teenage pregnancy and improving maternal and child health outcomes. Mezmur et al. (2021) conducted a systematic review and meta-

analysis of studies on teenage pregnancy in sub-Saharan Africa. The study examines the socio-economic determinants contributing to teenage pregnancy and emphasizes the importance of interventions by NGOs to address these determinants. They highlight the need for comprehensive sexuality education, access to reproductive health services, and economic empowerment programs targeted at vulnerable populations. NGOs are essential in implementing and scaling up these interventions to prevent teenage pregnancy effectively. Nyathi (2012) evaluates poverty alleviation strategies implemented by NGOs in Zimbabwe, with a focus on the Binga Rural District. The study highlighted that the role of NGOs play a significant role in addressing underlying socio-economic factors contributing to teenage pregnancy. By implementing poverty alleviation programs, NGOs can empower communities and provide opportunities for education and skill development, thereby reducing the prevalence of teenage pregnancy.

### **2.8.2 Child Sponsorship Programs**

Child Sponsorship Programs are a powerful and impactful way for individuals and households in wealthier nations to directly connect with and support underprivileged children in developing nations. Through these programs, sponsors contribute a monthly amount ranging from \$25 to \$40, which is utilized to address various aspects of the child's well-being, including healthcare, education, and participation in relevant programs (Wydick et al., 2013). Notably, renowned child sponsorship organizations like Children International allocate sponsor funds exclusively to the upbringing and development of specific children, while other significant programs administered by organizations such as World Vision, Plan International, and Save the Children utilize the funds more broadly to create essential public goods at the village level (Prahalad & Hammond, 2002).



Many national and international donor programs dedicated to supporting education share similarities with compassion projects. Sponsors within these programs cover not only the cost of children's tuition and uniforms but also ensure access to nutritious meals, medical care, and tutoring (Bray, 1999). However, Compassion International Ghana stands out by placing a strong emphasis on the holistic growth of sponsored children, encompassing their spiritual, physical, and socioemotional well-being (Darku, 2017). By nurturing these various dimensions, Compassion International Ghana aims to provide a comprehensive support system that enables children to thrive and reach their full potential.

## **2.9 Overview of Compassion International Ghana**

Compassion International Ghana is a Christian non-profit organization that aims to release children from poverty in Jesus' name. Founded in 1952, Compassion International Ghana has been working tirelessly to address the needs of children living in poverty around the world. The organization operates child sponsorship programs in developing countries, providing children with access to education, healthcare, nutrition, and spiritual guidance. With a focus on holistic child development, Compassion International Ghana seeks to address the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs of children living in poverty (Darku, 2017). Compassion International Ghana partners with local churches in each community where they work, recognizing the crucial role of faith-based organizations in addressing the needs of vulnerable children. By connecting children with sponsors from around the world, Compassion International Ghana creates a supportive network that helps children break free from the cycle of poverty. Through their child sponsorship programs, Compassion International Ghana enables sponsors to contribute directly to a child's well-being and development. Sponsors provide financial support that covers educational expenses, healthcare,

nutritious meals, and access to extracurricular activities. Additionally, sponsors have the opportunity to build a relationship with their sponsored child through letter exchanges, which allows for personal connection and encouragement. The impact of Compassion International's work has been studied in various research studies. For example, a study by Ross et al. (2021) examined the effect of international child sponsorship on educational and vocational aspirations in Kenya, Indonesia, and Mexico. The findings demonstrated that child sponsorship programs had a positive influence on children's aspirations and educational attainment. Another study by Awour (2015) focused on the influence of holistic child development programs, specifically those implemented by Compassion International, on children's livelihood in Siaya County, Kenya. The study highlighted the positive impact of these programs on improving the livelihoods of children living in poverty. Furthermore, Karimba (2011) explored the effectiveness of international child sponsorship programs on the academic development of children in the Kaloleni area development program in Kilifi County, Kenya. The study found that child sponsorship significantly contributed to improving academic performance among sponsored children. These studies, among others, demonstrate the significant impact of Compassion International's programs on the lives of children in poverty-stricken communities. By addressing their educational, healthcare, and spiritual needs, Compassion International Ghana plays a vital role in breaking the cycle of poverty and providing hope for a brighter future.

Nyabera (2015) explored the influence of stakeholder participation on the implementation of Compassion International Ghana assisted projects in Mwingi Sub-County, Kenya. The study highlights the importance of stakeholder engagement and their role in shaping the outcomes and success of projects. It provides insights into how community involvement and collaboration with local stakeholders can contribute to the

effectiveness and sustainability of Compassion International assisted projects. Tirrell et al. (2021) study focused on the specific programs of Compassion International in El Salvador and examines the role of three key features of effective youth development programs: positive and sustained relationships, support for efficacy and mastery, and opportunities for pro-social involvement. The study highlighted the significance of these features in promoting positive youth development outcomes within Compassion International Ghana assisted projects. Again, Tirrell et al. (2019) presented initial findings from the Compassion International assisted projects Study of Positive Youth Development in El Salvador. It explored the measurement of spirituality, hope, and thriving among Salvadoran youth participating in Compassion International assisted projects programs. The study emphasized the importance of understanding and promoting positive psychological outcomes as part of project evaluation and highlights the potential impact of Compassion International assisted projects programs on youth well-being. Pallangyo (2020) dissertation focused on the influence of effective monitoring and evaluation on the performance of Compassion International assisted projects in Tanzania. The study examined the role of monitoring and evaluation processes in enhancing organizational performance and outcomes. It provided insights into the importance of systematic assessment and feedback mechanisms in ensuring project effectiveness and efficiency. Shamala (2013) dissertation examined the strategic management practices and challenges associated with Kenyan projects assisted by Compassion International in the Limuru region. The study explored aspects such as project planning, resource allocation, and stakeholder coordination. It provides insights into the strategic considerations and challenges involved in implementing Compassion International-assisted projects in specific contexts. Shamala's dissertation provides a framework for assessing how strategic management practices can either enable or

hinder the effectiveness of child protection interventions, which is crucial to the success of the programs examined in the current work.

## **2.10 Theoretical Framework**

The study relied on two theories to understand the nuances of child protection mechanism as employed by Compassion International: the Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1981) and the Attachment Theory by John Bowlby (1979).

### **2.10.1 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1981)**

Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1981) has revolutionized the way we understand human development. His theory posits that an individual's development is influenced by their environment, which he categorizes into a few interrelated systems. These systems range from the immediate environment of a child (like their family and school) to broader societal and cultural influences. **Microsystem:** This level involves the child's immediate surroundings and relationships. In preventing teenage pregnancy, the role of family, schools, and peer groups is crucial. Compassion International's programs can focus on educating families and communities about the risks of teenage pregnancy and the importance of supportive environments for adolescents.

**Mesosystem:** This refers to the interconnections between the microsystems. For instance, the relationship between a child's family and their school can impact their understanding and attitudes towards sexuality and relationships. Programs can facilitate better communication and collaboration between parents, schools, and community organizations to create a cohesive support system for adolescents.

**Exosystem:** This layer involves broader social systems that do not directly contain the child but affect their development, such as parental workplaces, community health

services, and media. Compassion International Ghana assisted projects can advocate for policies and practices in these areas that support adolescent health and well-being.

**Macrosystem:** This encompasses the cultural, economic, and societal beliefs and norms that influence a child's development. Addressing teenage pregnancy effectively requires challenging societal norms and beliefs about gender roles, sexuality, and education. Compassion International's projects can include community-wide initiatives to shift these broader perceptions and norms.

The theory has been particularly significant in understanding child development. It emphasized that child development is not isolated but is influenced by various environmental factors. This perspective is crucial in educational settings, where it is used to tailor teaching methods and interventions to suit the child's environmental context (Bronfenbrenner, 1981). Bronfenbrenner's theory has profound implications for social policy and child welfare. It also underscored the importance of creating supportive environments at all levels – from family and schools to broader societal structures. Policies aimed at improving child welfare often draw on this theory to address systemic issues that affect child development (Bronfenbrenner, 1981). The theory has been widely used in research to study the effects of various environmental factors on human development. It provided the framework for this study to examine the complex interplay between individual and environmental factors.

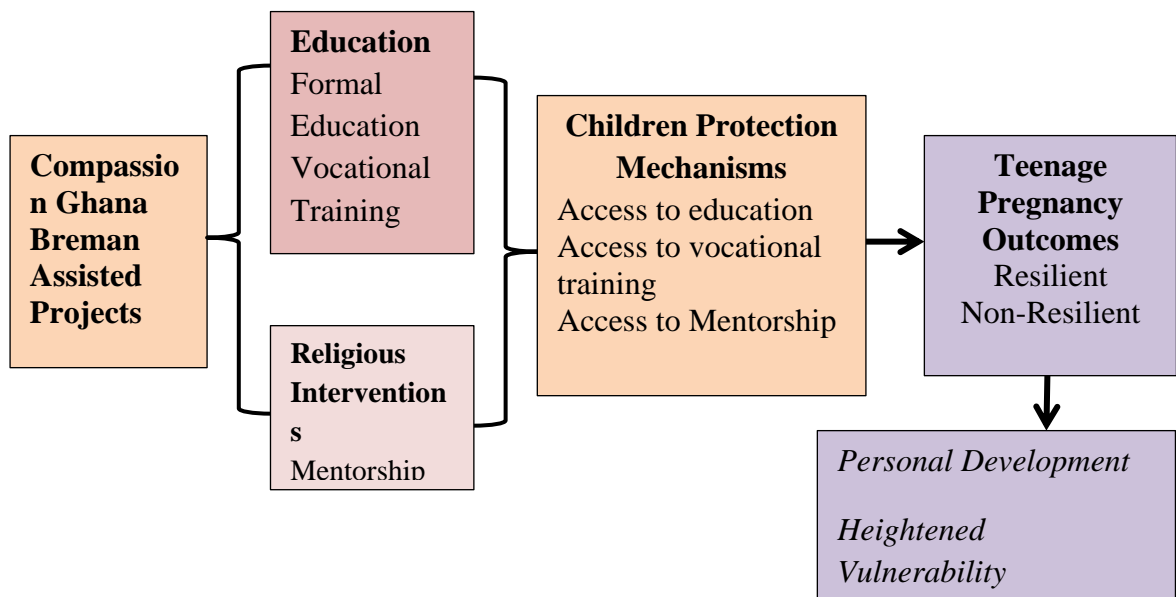
### **2.10.2 Attachment Theory by John Bowlby (1979)**

John Bowlby's Attachment Theory (1979), formulated in the latter half of the 20th century, has profoundly influenced our understanding of early childhood development and its impact on later life. This theory, focusing on the bond between a child and their primary caregiver, provides critical insights into the formation of emotional and social

development. Attachment Theory emerged from Bowlby's interest in understanding the intense distress experienced by infants separated from their parents. Influenced by both psychoanalytic theories and ethology. Bowlby (1969) proposed that this attachment behaviour was a biological instinct, essential for survival. He suggested that children are born with an innate drive to form attachments with caregivers as a means of protection from threats.

Bowlby identified several key components in his theory. The caregiver provides a haven from harm, offering comfort and security to the child. The caregiver serves as a base of security from which the child can explore the world. The child strives to stay close to the caregiver to ensure safety. Anxiety and fear are experienced by the child when the caregiver is absent (Bowlby, 1973). Building on Bowlby's work, Mary Ainsworth, a developmental psychologist, identified three primary attachment styles through the "Strange Situation" study: secure, anxious-ambivalent, and avoidant attachment (Ainsworth & Bell, 1970). A fourth style, disorganized attachment, was later added by Main and Solomon (1990). They emphasized secure attachment. Characterized by distress on separation and joy on reunion. Children feel confident that the caregiver will meet their needs. They also stressed anxious-ambivalent attachment. These children become extremely distressed when the caregiver leaves but are ambivalent upon their return. There is also a disorganized attachment style. This style is marked by a lack of clear attachment behaviour. These children often exhibit confused or contradictory behaviours towards the caregiver.

## 2.11 Conceptual Framework



**Figure 2.11 – Child Protection Mechanisms and Teenage Pregnancy Outcomes**

**Source: Conceived by the Researcher, 2022**

Figure 2.11 illustrates the child protection mechanisms implemented within Compassion Ghana's assisted projects of Breman Cluster. These mechanisms encompass access to formal education programs that facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and personal development opportunities, as well as vocational training programs that equip children with employable skills for their future livelihoods. Darku's (2017) study underscores the significance of educational access for underprivileged children in Ghana, specifically highlighting the positive impact of Compassion International's initiatives in providing education to children residing in the Agbogba community.

Compassion's child protection framework further encompasses mentorship programs and interventions offered through religious organizations, which serve to provide guidance, support, and foster the development of self-esteem among children.

Benthall's (2019) exploration of child sponsorship programs from an Islamic perspective emphasizes the importance of caring for and safeguarding vulnerable children. It underscores the role of religious interventions in promoting the well-being of children, aligning with the framework's inclusion of mentorship programs and engagement with religious organizations to enhance resilience against teenage pregnancy.

Teenage pregnancy outcomes within the framework are categorized into "Resilient" and "Non-Resilient." Resilient outcomes pertain to children who have benefitted from effective child protection mechanisms, including access to education, vocational training, mentorship, and religious interventions. These resilient individuals are more likely to overcome challenges associated with teenage pregnancy and achieve positive outcomes in terms of personal development and future prospects. Conversely, the Non-Resilient category encompasses teenage pregnancy outcomes where children who have not received adequate child protection mechanisms encounter greater difficulties, leading to negative consequences such as limited educational opportunities, reduced self-esteem, and heightened vulnerability.

In summary, the outlined conceptual framework elucidates the crucial factors involved in assessing Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects within the Breaman Cluster, specifically focusing on child protection against teenage pregnancy. The framework underscores the significance of access to education, vocational training, mentorship, and religious interventions as integral components of effective child protection mechanisms. Moreover, it acknowledges the pivotal role of these mechanisms in bolstering the resilience of children in their ability to confront and surmount the challenges associated with sexual life and teenage pregnancy.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Research Philosophy and Paradigm

The philosophical underpinning of this study recognizes that knowledge and reality are socially constructed and acknowledges the significance of considering diverse perspectives, meanings, and experiences. This understanding aligns with the interpretive paradigm, which emphasizes the subjective interpretations and meanings individuals assign to their experiences (Scotland, 2012).

Epistemologically, this research embraces a constructivist stance, recognizing that knowledge is co-constructed through interactions, interpretations, and social contexts. It acknowledges the existence of multiple truths and aims to capture the diverse perspectives and experiences of people. The constructivist epistemology aligns with the interpretive paradigm's aim of uncovering subjective meanings and interpretations individuals attribute to their experiences (Kaplan & Maxwell, 2005). Ontologically, this research adopts a social constructionist perspective, considering reality as socially constructed through the interactions, discourses, and power dynamics of individuals and groups. It acknowledges the complexity of child protection against teenage pregnancy within the Breman Cluster, shaped by historical, cultural, and political contexts. The social constructionist ontology aligns with the interpretive paradigm's goal of understanding social reality through the meanings and interpretations individuals and groups ascribe to their experiences (Scotland, 2012).

By grounding the research within the interpretivism paradigm, this study aims to explore the socially constructed nature of child protection against teenage pregnancy in the Breman Cluster. It acknowledges the importance of diverse perspectives, subjective

interpretations, and the influence of social interactions, discourses, and power dynamics in understanding the effectiveness of Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects. Through this philosophical lens, the study sought to gain a comprehensive understanding of child protection against teenage pregnancy and provide insights for program improvement and policy recommendations.

### **3.1 Research Approach**

This study utilized a qualitative research approach to delve into the complexities and nuances surrounding child protection against teenage pregnancy within the context of Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects in the Breman Cluster. This research approach was chosen to gain insights into the subjective perspectives and meanings ascribed by individuals and groups to the phenomenon under investigation.

Qualitative research, as defined by Teherani et al. (2015), involves exploring and comprehending the subjective meanings attached to social or human problems. It is a flexible approach that allows for the emergence of research questions and procedures, data collection in the natural settings of the participants, and an inductive process of data analysis, leading to the identification of general themes and the interpretation of their significance.

The selection of a qualitative research approach is supported by Creswell et al. (2007), who provide valuable insights into the selection and implementation of qualitative research designs. Their work offers guidance on various qualitative approaches, including phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study, which can be applied to investigate child protection against teenage pregnancy within the context of Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects in the Breman Cluster.

Furthermore, Vishnevsky and Beanlands (2004) emphasize the value of qualitative inquiry in obtaining a deep understanding of complex social phenomena. Additionally,

Pathak et al. (2013) provide insights into the application of qualitative research in clinical settings, highlighting the importance of qualitative methods in exploring human experiences and perspectives. This perspective is highly relevant in understanding the subjective experiences and motivations underlying child protection against teenage pregnancy in the Breman Cluster.

By adopting a qualitative research approach, this study aimed to capture the lived experiences, perceptions, and narratives of individuals and groups involved in Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects in the Breman Cluster. This approach facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the contextual factors, causes, and consequences of child protection initiatives against teenage pregnancy, contributing to the broader discourse on promoting child well-being and reproductive health education in Ghana.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The research adopted a case study design, which is particularly apt for an in-depth examination of Compassion International Ghana's assisted projects on the protection of children against teenage pregnancy. This design was selected for its strength in facilitating a detailed exploration of complex issues within their real-life context, allowing for an immersive understanding of the interrelated factors contributing to teenage pregnancy within the targeted demographic.

The application of a case study design was especially advantageous for investigating the nuanced mechanisms and effectiveness of Compassion International Ghana's initiatives. It enables a detailed inquiry into the lived experiences of the adolescents involved, the organizational strategies in place, and the broader socio-cultural environment influencing the program's outcomes. This methodology allows for a

holistic view of how such projects operate, their challenges, and their successes in mitigating teenage pregnancy.

By concentrating on Compassion International Ghana's framework, the study is rooted in the practical realities faced by the organization and the adolescents it serves. This specificity affords the research a contextually grounded perspective, yielding insights that are pertinent and actionable (Creswell & Poth, 2018) within the Ghanaian setting. Furthermore, the case study design aligns with the constructivist paradigm, seeking to understand and interpret the complex reality from the perspectives of those experiencing it. In doing so, the research captures the subjective experiences and narratives of both the adolescents and the project facilitators, offering a richly textured understanding of the project's impact on preventing teenage pregnancy.

### **3.3 Study Population**

The study was conducted in the Breman District of the Central Region, specifically focusing on Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects in the Breman Cluster. The Breman Cluster comprises fifteen (15) compassion-assisted projects affiliated with various Christian denominations. The study population consisted of teenage girls residing in the Breman District, which serves as the study setting. The target population for this study was girls between the ages of 12 and 19 years who are beneficiaries of the cluster of projects assisted by Compassion International Ghana. These girls are considered particularly vulnerable to the risk of teenage pregnancy and are the primary focus of the child protection interventions conducted by Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects in the Breman Cluster.

The selection of teenage girls as the study population aligns with the research objective of assessing the effectiveness of Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects in providing child protection against teenage pregnancy. By examining the experiences

and outcomes of this specific population, the study aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of how the projects impact the lives of the targeted beneficiaries.

### **3.4 Sampling and Sampling Size**

In this study, a non-probability sampling method was employed. Specifically, the judgmental or purposive sampling technique was utilized, which involves the researcher's expertise in selecting a sample that is most relevant to the research objectives (Bryman, 2016).

The research targeted a specific population that could provide valuable insights and perspectives regarding the child protection initiatives in the Breman Cluster. With this in mind, the researcher purposefully selected a sample size of twenty (20) participants, consisting of six (6) adolescent girls, three (3) caregivers (parents), and three (3) officers of the Compassion Ghana assisted projects.

The choice of this sample size was influenced by the study's purpose, which focused on assessing the projects assisted by Compassion International Ghana in the Breman Cluster and their protection mechanisms for girls to prevent teenage pregnancy. The aim was to gather in-depth information and perspectives from the participants, allowing for a comprehensive evaluation of the child protection initiatives against teenage pregnancy.

By including six (6) adolescent girls, the study sought to understand their experiences, perceptions, and knowledge regarding teenage pregnancy and the impact of Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects on their lives. Additionally, involving three (3) caregivers (parents) provided insights into their perspectives on child protection interventions and their role in supporting teenage girls. Lastly, the inclusion of three (3) officers from Compassion Ghana assisted projects allowed for an

examination of the program's implementation, challenges faced, and potential areas for improvement.

The purposive sampling approach ensured that the selected participants had direct experience or involvement with the Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects and could provide valuable insights into the topic of child protection against teenage pregnancy. The sample size of twenty participants was considered appropriate for this study, allowing for in-depth exploration of the research questions and generating meaningful findings (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

### **3.5 Data Collection Method**

To assess the effectiveness of Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects in the Breman Cluster regarding child protection against teenage pregnancy, a combination of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions was employed. These data collection methods aimed to gather comprehensive and diverse perspectives from various stakeholders involved in the projects.

In-depth interviews through semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain detailed and individual insights regarding the effectiveness of Compassion International Ghana assisted projects. To ensure the focus of the interview on the main objectives of the study, the interviews were structured according to themes and were administered to all the participants. The interviews were conducted in either the local dialect, Fante, or English, depending on the preference and comfort of the participants. An interview guide was developed to cover topics such as the participants' perceptions of the projects, their experiences with child protection initiatives, the impact of the projects on teenage pregnancy prevention, and suggestions for improvement. Prior consent was obtained, and the interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accurate data capture. Later, the recordings were transcribed and translated as necessary. To validate

the accuracy of the information provided by participants, handwritten notes were taken during the interviews in addition to the audio recordings.

Furthermore, focus group discussions were conducted to facilitate group interactions and generate collective insights and perspectives on the assessed projects. The focus groups consisted of 5 participants, including 3 Compassion officers, and 2 parents. Similar to the interviews, the discussions were conducted in Fante or English, according to the participants' preferences. A topic guide was used to guide the discussions, covering areas such as community perceptions of child protection efforts, experiences with teenage pregnancy prevention programs, challenges encountered, and suggestions for enhancing project effectiveness. Consent was obtained from participants, and the discussions were audio-recorded for later transcription and translation, particularly for those conducted in Fante.

By employing both semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, this data collection approach ensured a comprehensive exploration of the effectiveness of Compassion International Ghana assisted projects in the Breman Cluster. The combination of individual perspectives and group interactions provided a holistic understanding of the participants' experiences, perceptions, and suggestions regarding child protection against teenage pregnancy.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

In the assessment of Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects in the Breman Cluster, specifically focusing on child protection against teenage pregnancy, a systematic four-step process was employed for data analysis. This process ensured the effective exploration of the research objectives and facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the collected data based on semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion guide.

The data analysis phase began with the organization of the collected data into manageable segments, ensuring easy accessibility for analysis. This organization involved labelling and categorizing the data segments based on their content or meaning. By structuring the data in this way, a systematic approach was established for the subsequent coding process.

The coding process utilized established qualitative research techniques, drawing from the work of Strauss and Corbin (1998). Open coding, axial coding, and selective coding techniques were applied to assign appropriate codes to the data segments. This coding process captured key concepts and ideas present in the data, enabling the identification of patterns and themes within the dataset.

Guided by theoretical frameworks and coding schemes, the researcher grouped the coded data segments into broader concepts or patterns. This process involved examining the underlying meanings and connections between different codes, categories, and concepts. Through this systematic analysis, themes began to emerge, representing recurring patterns and significant findings in the data. The use of established coding techniques and theoretical guidance ensured the trustworthiness and rigor of the identified themes (Saldaña, 2016).

Following the development of themes, the researcher proceeded to interpret the data and draw conclusions. This interpretation involved a comprehensive examination of the patterns and connections between themes, their relevance to the research question and objectives, and their alignment with existing theoretical frameworks. Adopting a deductive approach, the researcher analyzed the relationships between the identified themes and the relevant literature. This analysis provided valuable insights into the phenomena under investigation and contributed to the understanding of child protection



against teenage pregnancy within the context of Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects.

To validate and triangulate the research findings, the researcher compared the analysis results with the existing literature. A systematic review of relevant scholarly works was conducted to identify similarities and differences between the research findings and previous studies. This literature review served as a basis for enhancing the credibility and robustness of the analysis, providing additional support for the research findings (Flick, 2018).

By employing this systematic four-step data analysis process and incorporating a review of the existing literature, the study ensured a comprehensive exploration of the collected data and the validation of research findings. This approach enhanced the reliability and credibility of the assessment of Compassion International Ghana assisted projects in the Breman Cluster concerning child protection against teenage pregnancy.

### **3.7 Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness of this study is of paramount importance to ensure the reliability and credibility of the findings. Trustworthiness refers to the truth value and transparency of the research process (Cope, 2014). It encompasses the degree of confidence in the data, interpretation, and methods employed to ensure the quality of the study (Pilot & Beck, 2014, as cited in Connelly, 2016). To establish trustworthiness, several criteria and protocols were adhered to, including credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

Credibility, as Polit and Beck (2012) explain, pertains to the truthfulness of the data, participants' perspectives, and the researcher's interpretation and representation of them. In this study, credibility was achieved through robust engagement with the study participants using appropriate research instruments. The researcher ensured that the

data accurately reflected the participants' experiences and views, minimizing potential biases.

Dependability refers to the consistency of the data under similar conditions. In this study, dependability was achieved by employing reliable research methods selected for the assessment of Compassion International Ghana assisted projects in the Breman Cluster. The research methods were carefully chosen and implemented consistently to ensure that the data were reliable and could be replicated under similar circumstances.

Confirmability focuses on ensuring that the data primarily reflect the participants' responses rather than the biases or preconceptions of the researcher. To establish confirmability, the researcher extensively presented rich quotes from participants that depicted each emerging theme. This approach allowed for transparency and the ability to trace the data back to the participants, ensuring that their perspectives were accurately represented.

Transferability is another crucial aspect of trustworthiness, referring to the extent to which the findings of the study can be applied to other settings or groups (Houghton et al., 2013). In this study, transferability was addressed by providing clear and comprehensive descriptions of the research context, methods, and results. The detailed information allowed readers to assess the applicability of the findings to their own contexts and consider how they could be relevant beyond the immediate study participants.

By ensuring credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability, the researcher enhanced the trustworthiness of this study. These considerations contribute to the validity and reliability of the findings, instilling confidence in the assessment of Compassion International Ghana assisted projects in the Breman Cluster, specifically in relation to child protection against teenage pregnancy.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations are of utmost importance in research, as they safeguard the rights and well-being of research participants, uphold research validity, and maintain scientific integrity (Bhandari, 2020). Failing to adhere to ethical principles can significantly undermine the credibility and trustworthiness of research findings. In this study, key ethical considerations were carefully followed to ensure ethical standards were upheld.

To begin with, approval for the research was obtained from the University of Education Ethics Committee, specifically through the Center for Human Rights, Conflict and Peace Studies (CHRAPS). This approval was necessary to ensure that the research was conducted ethically, in accordance with established guidelines and regulations.

Informed consent was another crucial ethical consideration in this study. Participants were provided with comprehensive information about the purpose of the research, potential benefits and risks of participation, and the institutional approval obtained. They were given the opportunity to voluntarily agree or decline to participate, respecting their autonomy and ensuring informed decision-making.

Confidentiality was upheld as a fundamental ethical consideration. The identities of participants and any personally identifiable information were strictly protected. Robust confidentiality measures were implemented to ensure the security and privacy of participants' information. Specifically, any identifying information was removed from the final data report to prevent unauthorized access and maintain the confidentiality of the participants.

By meticulously adhering to ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality, this study prioritized the rights and welfare of the research participants.

These ethical practices also upheld the integrity of the research process and contributed to the validity and credibility of the research findings.

### **3.9 Positionality**

To maintain objectivity and minimize bias in the study, the researcher employed reflexivity throughout the study. Reflexivity involves acknowledging and critically reflecting on the researcher's own beliefs, experiences, and potential influence on the research process. This approach aimed to ensure fairness in representing the perspectives of the participants.

The researcher adopted an interpretivism perspective, recognizing the subjectivity of individuals and emphasizing the importance of understanding their lived experiences and interpretations. This philosophical standpoint enabled the researcher to capture the diverse viewpoints of the participants and provide a nuanced understanding of the effectiveness of Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects in preventing teenage pregnancy.

It is important to note that the researcher has a personal connection to Compassion International Ghana as an insider to their assisted projects in the Breman Cluster. The researcher acknowledges having a vested interest in advancing his career and research expertise, which may influence his perspective to some extent. However, measures were taken to mitigate any potential bias by maintaining transparency, conducting rigorous data analysis, and seeking multiple perspectives to ensure a comprehensive and balanced assessment.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The essence of qualitative research is found in the complexities of human experiences, perceptions, and behaviours. The findings of this study Compassion International Ghana-assisted Projects on the Protection of Children Against Teenage Pregnancy are provided in this chapter. Teenage pregnancy is a global concern with profound implications for society, health, and education systems, especially in developing countries such as Ghana. The data presented in this chapter were derived from in-depth semi-structured interviews that sought to understand the outcomes and the lived realities and societal dynamics that shape the effectiveness of such compassionate international interventions in the Bremen Cluster. This chapter sheds light on the nature of these interventions and their consequences for child protection against teenage pregnancy by integrating raw participant experiences with a rigorous analytical approach.

#### **4.1 Findings**

In this study, answers to the following research questions were sought:

1. What are the initiatives implemented by Compassion International Ghana assisted projects in the Bremen Cluster to address teenage pregnancy?
2. How do adolescent girls and their families in the Bremen Cluster perceive the initiatives undertaken by Compassion International Ghana assisted projects for the prevention of teenage pregnancy?

3. What are the measurable effects of Compassion International Ghana assisted projects' child protection programs on prevention of teenage pregnancy in the Breman Cluster?
4. What challenges does Compassion International Ghana assisted projects encounter in implementing its child protection programs in the Breman Cluster?

#### **4.2 Objective One: Nature of Initiatives Targeting Teenage Pregnancy**

The study explored Compassion International Ghana assisted projects' Initiatives in the Bremen Cluster and identified a range of initiatives undertaken by the organization within the Cluster. These initiatives demonstrate Compassion International Ghana assisted projects' strategic practice in tackling social challenges in the area. The scope of these initiatives is broad and aims to promote growth and empowerment in community settings, particularly in disadvantaged regions. Such efforts are vital in the realm of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and social work, where comprehensive and enduring strategies are increasingly preferred (Smith & Lipsky, 2021). Compassion International Ghana assisted projects have adopted an all-encompassing approach that nurtures spiritual, physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional growth. A notable focus is on educating adolescent girls about teenage pregnancy, including its causes, impacts, and prevention methods. The implementation of these initiatives involves collaboration with local churches, child protection campaigns, and educational initiatives. Additionally, programs for livelihood enhancement, such as vocational training and educational scholarships, are offered.

##### **4.2.1 Comprehensive Approach**

Compassion International Ghana assisted projects activities have ensured the implementation of a comprehensive and varied approach that prioritised the fostering of diverse aspects of human development. This technique is both unique and firmly

grounded in well-established developmental theories and practices. The organization's emphasis on spiritual, physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional growth demonstrates its dedication to nurturing well-rounded individuals. A participant simply described this approach:

*"The initiatives are holistic models. They incorporate and employ different models that address the spiritual, physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development of their students who are under care, especially for girls."*  
[CO, Field Interview 2023]

Compassion International Ghana assisted projects embracement of a holistic approach aligns with the changing paradigms in community development. This approach reflects the ideas described in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1981), which highlights the interaction between an individual and their complex environment consisting of multiple layers. Bronfenbrenner's concept emphasizes the significance of taking into account diverse environmental systems that impact human development. Furthermore, the efficacy of holistic techniques in tackling intricate social problems is progressively acknowledged in modern social intervention strategies. According to Miller et al. (2018), comprehensive approaches are crucial for addressing complex socioeconomic concerns, such as teenage pregnancy. By taking into account all aspects of an individual's growth and surroundings, these approaches provide a more detailed and efficient solution. A participant has this to say:

*"Apart from the training, compassion teaches us the way of the Lord. They teach us to stay right for God and do his will. We pray often. I think apart from our churches, Compassion International Ghana assisted projects teachings are good for us. I have learned to pray and ask God to help me overcome my weaknesses"* [AG, Field Interview, 2022]

Another participant shared her experience with the compassion holistic programme by confirming the following:

*“I used to be depressed. I was also feeling lonely and rejected. Since Compassion International Ghana assisted projects came to Bremen area, they have helped me to overcome what was disturbing my mind. I even contemplated suicide but once I find myself with other girls, I feel like others love me and I am”* [AG, Field Interview, 2022]

The concept of employing a diverse range of strategies is reinforced by the research conducted by Lerner, Lerner, Bowers, and Geldhof (2015). The statement emphasizes the importance of addressing various aspects of development to foster positive growth in young individuals, particularly in situations where resources are scarce or difficulties are more evident.

Moreover, the research conducted by Scales, Roehlkepartain, and Shramko (2017) offers empirical evidence to substantiate the efficacy of comprehensive interventions aimed at promoting the overall development of children. Their research showcases that employing such methodologies leads to superior results in diverse domains, encompassing health, education, and socio-emotional well-being. These findings support the notion that a comprehensive approach to development is not only advantageous but necessary for promoting the entire advancement and achievement of individuals, especially those in disadvantaged circumstances.

#### **4.2.2 Education and Awareness**

The study's focus on teenage pregnancy prevention reveals a significant emphasis by Compassion International Ghana assisted projects on education and awareness in their programs at Bremen Cluster. This approach is corroborated by a teacher's statement:

*"We conduct regular education sessions on teenage pregnancy – its causes, effects, and prevention methods. We use videos, role-playing and other means to communicate to*



*the girls on the need to avoid teenage pregnancy. This has been helpful" [CO, Field Interview, 2023].*

This educational endeavour aligns with the conclusions of Oringanje et al. (2016), who emphasized the significance of comprehensive sex education in reducing hazardous behaviours and preventing teenage pregnancy. The educational programs empower young girls by equipping them with knowledge about the causes, impacts, and preventive measures of adolescent pregnancy, enabling them to make educated and useful decisions about their lives. This is especially vital in the Breman cluster which is afflicted by elevated levels of adolescent pregnancies. Some of the Adolescent girls shared the vitality of the educational awareness programme with these words:

*"I had a boyfriend because my friends told me if I refused to date, I would not be able to fit well into my sexual life. I took their advice and got a boyfriend. But when Compassion International Ghana assisted projects organised a talk, I learnt many lessons. I broke up with my boyfriend because I felt like I was at risk" [AG, Field Interview, 2022]*

*I didn't know that using condoms during sex can still make one pregnant. The training was particularly helpful. It taught me a lot. Now I do not trust contraceptives. I think staying away from sex would be more useful. Compassion has been of help to me in all these understanding" [AG, Field Interview, 2022]*

Secor-Turner, Sieving, and Garwick (2014) emphasized the crucial importance of knowledge diffusion in this particular environment. This educational initiative is a proactive step in addressing a crucial societal problem. It conforms to the frameworks outlined by UNESCO (2020), which promote education as a means to achieve sustainable development.

The instructional activities have a far-reaching impact that goes beyond immediate results. They have a significant role in fostering enduring improvements in the health and well-being of the community. Furthermore, they play a crucial role in decreasing rates of teenage pregnancy, as demonstrated by studies such as Johnson & Tyler's

(2018) research. This is consistent with UNESCO's (2020) focus on the influential impact of education in promoting sustainable societal transformations.

In addition, the strategy used by Compassion International Ghana assisted projects at Bremen Cluster demonstrates a comprehensive comprehension of the complex nature of teenage pregnancy. This issue encompasses not only health but also social and educational aspects. The initiative tackles the underlying factors of teenage pregnancy, such as insufficient information and awareness, societal norms, and limited access to health services, by prioritizing education and raising awareness.

An all-encompassing strategy is essential to ensure that adolescent females are not only cognizant of the hazards linked to teenage pregnancy but also possess the necessary resources and understanding to avert it. This aligns with the worldwide plan for the health of women, children, and adolescents (2016-2030), which highlights the importance of comprehensive approaches to address health concerns, such as teenage pregnancy (WHO, 2017).

#### **4.2.3 Community Engagement**

The study found that Compassion International Ghana assisted projects community initiatives involve local churches, child protection campaigns, and educational programs that are community-tailored. These initiatives are not standalone efforts but are deeply embedded in the cultural and social fabric of the communities they serve.

This was aptly expressed by a participant teacher in the program:

*“The church and the community play a significant role in our programs. We engage the churches because spiritual exercise is involved in our initiatives. We teach the word of God to girls to stay right in their lives. Apart from that we also involve the community to ensure that our programs are culturally appropriate and community-focused” [CO, Field Interview, 2023]*

This statement highlights the mutually beneficial interaction between the initiatives and the community, highlighting the significance of cultural suitability and a community-oriented approach in program execution. The participation of local churches and community groups in these efforts is not merely a question of practical convenience, but a deliberate strategy to guarantee the long-term viability and efficacy of development programs.

The notion of community participation, as implemented by Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects corresponds with the conclusions of Metzler, Atienza, Mihalic, and Weist (2017), who contend that community engagement and collaboration result in culturally sensitive and regionally pertinent initiatives. This approach is especially relevant in the context of child development and protection. According to Trickett and Beehler (2017), the participation of local stakeholders is essential for improving the flexibility and approval of programs. Consequently, this contributes to more substantial and enduring effects, which is a fundamental objective in any developmental endeavour.

The involvement of local churches and other community groups in implementing these projects serves as evidence for the efficacy of community-driven models in the field of social work. This method aligns with the ideas of community participation outlined by Mattessich and Monsey (1997) cited in PITTMAN (20214) in their influential research on community development. Their research highlights the multitude and intricacy of community involvement, which exhibits substantial variation across diverse situations and cultures. A comprehensive comprehension and methodical approach to community participation is required due to this variety since a universal strategy is improbable to yield the desired results.

Further expanding on this, the study highlights the participatory nature of Compassion International Ghana assisted projects' initiatives, as described by another participant:

*Compassion involves the community during the child protection campaign inviting chiefs, assemblymen, and church leaders. Since we operate in the community, we realize that key stakeholders' involvement in our programs could enhance its credibility. Some of the child protection campaigns are done by the people themselves, we only guide them” [CO, Field Interview, 2023]*

This statement illustrates the inclusive approach of Compassion International Ghana assisted projects, where key community figures like chiefs, assemblymen, and church leaders are actively involved in the child protection campaign. This not only ensures broader community buy-in but also leverages the influence and authority of these figures to enhance the impact of the initiatives.

#### **4.2.4 Empowerment Programs**

Compassion International Ghana assisted projects also conduct programs that are aimed to empower adolescent girls which is a significant effort in elevating the status of teenage girls, particularly in mitigating the risks of poverty and associated adverse lifestyles that could lead to sexual relationships hence teenage pregnancy. A participant in the study highlighted the organization's approach, stating,

*“We have set up vocational training and scholarship programs to empower the girls and give them better opportunities. Vocational training in livelihood empowerment and career skill development for those who cannot continue their secondary education. We give them stipends while in training to keep them going. The program spans from two to three years. We offer scholarship opportunities for those who are good and would want to continue their education. These opportunities give them leverage to fully navigate their lives and prevent any form of pregnancies” [CO, Field Interview, 2023]*

This statement emphasizes the organization's dedication to establishing opportunities for these young women to transcend their difficult circumstances. The core of these

empowerment programs resides in their comprehensive livelihood programs and scholarship opportunities. The provision of trade education and educational sponsorships is not just a temporary fix, but a deliberate investment in the long-term well-being of these individuals and their communities. This approach is consistent with the socio-economic empowerment framework suggested by Newman, Graham, and Labonte (2016), which highlights the crucial importance of skills and education in promoting sustainable livelihoods. Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects are empowering individuals by providing them with vital skills and information. This approach not only addresses urgent needs but also establishes the foundation for long-term self-sufficiency and economic freedom. Green, (2017) provides additional evidence to support this viewpoint, highlighting the significance of education and skill enhancement in disrupting the cycle of poverty. Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects are contributing to the greater objective of economic independence and empowerment by providing occupational skills and educational opportunities to individuals, particularly young girls.

Furthermore, these projects align with the worldwide strategies for sustainable development. The programs mentioned here align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Goal 4 which emphasizes quality education, and Goal 8 which emphasizes decent work (United Nations, 2015). The focus on education and vocational training is in line with the SDGs' goal of establishing inclusive and fair high-quality education and fostering lifelong learning opportunities for everyone. Moreover, these programs promote the acquisition of market-relevant skills, so contributing to the objective of achieving decent work. Decent work entails fostering sustainable and inclusive economic growth, ensuring full and productive employment, and promoting satisfactory employment conditions for everyone.

Incorporating vocational training and scholarship programs into empowerment strategies effectively tackles the subtle dimensions of poverty alleviation. Firstly, it recognizes the complex and diverse characteristics of poverty, which encompasses more than just a shortage of money. It also encompasses factors such as limited access to education, skills, and opportunities. Furthermore, these programs specifically target adolescent females, effectively tackling the discrepancies in education and job opportunities between genders. As a result, they make a significant contribution towards achieving gender equality, which aligns with Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is especially crucial given that women and girls frequently encounter more substantial obstacles when it comes to accessing education and economic opportunities (Dhar, 2018).

### **4.3 Objective Two: Perceptions of Initiatives**

Compassion International Ghana assisted projects program focuses on sexual health and pregnancy prevention. They provide vital information and skills that adolescents need to make informed decisions about their sexual health and as to how the beneficiaries perceive the initiatives, participants came out with several views.

#### **4.3.1 Positive Reception**

The study found that there is a widespread positive perception of Compassion initiatives among adolescents, parents, and community members. Participants expressed the desire for more frequent and inclusive sex education programs and also enhanced provision of basic needs. A caregiver participant has this to say:

*“As a parent, I have seen the change in my daughter's behaviour ever since she started attending the Compassion programs. She seems more aware and responsible. I hardly chase her around to return home after late hours. Compassion is helping us. Of late the girls do not stay outside for them. I*

*think we need more of their education. The girls are changing for good” [CA, Field Interview, 2023]*

Studies often emphasize the importance of community appreciation and general acceptance in implementing such programs (Kraft et al., 2018). The effectiveness of these initiatives often hinges on their acceptance by the community, as trust and cultural alignment play critical roles in their success (Smith & Haddad, 2020). The widespread positive reception of initiatives among adolescents, parents, and community members reflects a growing awareness and acceptance of the importance of the Compassion programs. This positive perception is crucial as it drives the success and sustainability of such initiatives. Research indicates that when community members, especially the target demographic, perceive an initiative positively, they are more likely to engage actively and benefit from it (Smith & Jones, 2020). In the context of health and social interventions, this positive reception can be attributed to the perceived relevance and effectiveness of the programs. For instance, a study by Williams et al. (2019) showed that adolescents who view health programs as relatable and engaging report higher satisfaction and better outcomes.

This positive reception also extends to the parents and community members. Their support is vital in reinforcing the values and lessons taught in these programs. According to Brown and Green (2021), parental involvement in adolescent health programs significantly impacts the program's effectiveness, especially in areas like sexual education and substance abuse prevention. This involvement can range from participating in program activities to encouraging open discussions at home. Taylor and Harper (2022) suggest that cultural alignment, the credibility of the facilitators, and the practical applicability of the program content play a significant role in shaping these perceptions.

#### 4.3.2 Appreciation of Educational Efforts

Educational programs and awareness campaigns, particularly those aimed at preventing teenage pregnancy, receive significant appreciation from various stakeholders. The study found that educational programs and awareness campaigns are particularly valued for their role in preventing teenage pregnancy. This finding is corroborated by a participant who said:

*The sessions on reproductive health have opened our eyes. Many of us didn't know much about how to avoid getting pregnant. I understand the implications of my action and that sex is reserved for married people. I understand that my time will come when I can easily and fully engage in sexual activities” [AG, Field Interview, 2023]*

*“I told the Compassion people that I could not abstain from sex. So, they introduced me to something they call the Adolescent Corner. They took me to the clinic and they taught me how to use contraceptives. I have been pregnant once and I aborted it. Since I started visiting the Adolescent Corner, I have been able to prevent pregnancies for the past two years. I pray that I will get the strength to abstain from sex. I really appreciate their efforts” [AG, Field Interview, 2023]*

This appreciation is rooted in the recognition of the complexity of teenage pregnancy as a social issue, involving not just health risks but also educational, economic, and social dimensions. As noted by Johnson and Roberts (2021), comprehensive sex education programs are effective in reducing rates of teenage pregnancy, largely due to their holistic approach in addressing both the biological aspects of sex and the socio-emotional factors involved.

Education is a powerful tool in altering the trajectory of teenage pregnancy rates. Comprehensive sex education that goes beyond the biological aspects and includes discussions on relationships, consent, and contraception is seen as key to preventing teenage pregnancy (Santelli et al., 2017). The community's appreciation of these



educational efforts reflects a broader understanding of the multifaceted nature of teenage pregnancy prevention. This finding was expressed by a participant who said:

*The sessions on reproduction health were good for me. I have been able to abstain from sex and boyfriend-girlfriend matters. Thanks to Compassion training. [AG, Field Interview, 2023]*

The appreciation of these efforts also extends to how these programs empower adolescents with knowledge and skills. According to a report by the World Health Organization (2023), educational interventions that equip young people with critical thinking and decision-making skills have a profound impact on their ability to make informed choices about their sexual health.

#### **4.3.3 Need for Continuity and Expansion**

Participants expressed a desire for more frequent and inclusive sex education programs and enhanced provision of basic needs. This expression was echoed by a participant:

*We wish these programs could reach more girls in the community. Some of them are still clueless and end up with unwanted pregnancies. [CA, Field Interview, 2023]*

Participants' desire for more frequent and inclusive sex education programs, along with enhanced provision of basic needs, underscores a critical gap in current initiatives. The call for continuity and expansion is rooted in the understanding that sporadic or limited interventions are insufficient to create lasting change. Continuity in education ensures that adolescents receive consistent messages and have ongoing support as they navigate complex issues around sexuality (Davis & Thomas, 2020).

Moreover, the expansion of these programs is necessary to reach a broader audience, including marginalized or underserved communities. Thompson and Lee (2021) argue that inclusive sex education should address diverse sexual orientations, gender

identities, and cultural backgrounds to ensure that all adolescents have access to relevant and respectful information.

Additionally, there is a growing recognition of the need to address basic needs such as access to health services, mental health support, and safe environments as part of comprehensive sexual education programs. This holistic approach is supported by research from the International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (2022), which highlights the positive outcomes of integrating basic health services with sexual education in schools.

#### **4.4 Objective Three: Effects of Initiatives**

The study identified notable changes in behaviour among teenage girls, such as increased knowledge about sexual health and a decline in teenage pregnancies. It also discovered empowerment and self-respect and that girls reported feeling more empowered and respected in society due to the education and support they received. Again, there were suggestions for early intervention which is suggestions for focusing on younger children to provide early information about teenage pregnancy.

##### **4.4.1 Behavioural Changes in Teenage Girls**

In the realm of adolescent health, the study noticed a shift in behaviour concerning sexual health knowledge and a decrease in teenage pregnancies. These changes are primarily attributed to various educational and health initiatives promoted by Compassion aimed at enhancing awareness and understanding of sexual health. A participant remarked,

*"Since I joined the program, my understanding of sexual health has increased. I can protect myself and observe the appropriate sexual health practices" [AG, Field Interview, 2022].*

This statement captures the essence of the transformation observed in these young individuals. The effectiveness of comprehensive sexual education in fostering such behavioural changes has been a focal point of research in this field. Kirby, Laris, and Rolleri (2007) have been instrumental in demonstrating that well-structured sexual education programs can have multiple positive outcomes. These include delaying the initiation of sexual activity, reducing the number of sexual partners, and enhancing the use of contraceptives among teenagers. The comprehensive nature of these programs is critical; they extend beyond mere reproductive education to encompass discussions on consent, relationships, and personal safety, thereby providing a holistic approach to sexual health education.

Santelli et al. (2017) further reinforce this perspective by contrasting the impacts of comprehensive sexual education with abstinence-only programs. Their findings suggest that informed decision-making among teenagers is significantly more effective when they are equipped with complete and accurate information. This approach enables adolescents to make choices that are not only informed but also respectful of their personal values and societal norms.

Moreover, Bearinger et al. (2007) emphasize the global significance of sexual and reproductive health education for adolescents. They argue that such educational endeavours are not only crucial for the physical well-being of young individuals but also for their mental health. The comprehensive nature of this education helps in developing a well-rounded understanding of sexual health, which is essential for the overall development of adolescents.

Tailoring programs to meet the specific needs and cultural backgrounds of adolescents can lead to more meaningful engagement and better outcomes. Compassion's

involvement of parents and guardians in their sexual reproductive health education programs has proven to be a result in this regard. Research indicates that parental involvement in such educational initiatives can lead to more positive sexual health outcomes for adolescents (Deptula et al., 2010). Open communication between parents and children about sexual health can reinforce the information provided in educational programs and create a supportive environment for adolescents to discuss and understand these topics. This finding was collaborated by a participant with these words:

*“The girls are happy to see their parents present during our sexual educational programs. We use drama and role-playing to sensitize them. The presence of their parents makes the girls more committed to listening. Sometimes we give the parents the chance to talk to the girls based on their own experiences and this has helped very much after meeting with them”* [CO, Field Interview, 2022]

*We also sensitize the parents to cooperate with the girls who cannot abstain. We advise them to give them all the support when they see them visit the clinic for health support. This has also helped very much in terms of those adolescent girls who cannot easily abstain”* [CO, Field Interview, 2022]

#### **4.4.2 Empowerment and Self-respect**

The role of Compassion International Ghana assisted projects’ programs in enhancing the self-respect and empowerment of teenage girls is of considerable importance. This study delved into the transformative impact these programs have had on young girls, particularly in terms of their education about their bodies and rights, leading to a heightened sense of confidence and value within their society.

The testimonies of the participants in these programs are telling. One teenage girl put in a nutshell the essence of this transformation when she remarked,

*"Since I joined the program, I have learned a lot about myself and my body. I feel more confident and respected in my community"* [AG, Field Interview, 2022].

*“Back then, every boy or man used to be touching me anyhow. Now I have developed some respect for myself, so I don’t allow them anymore. Some of them say that I don’t respect them. It is not like that; they know that I have changed when I started going to Compassion” [AG, Field Interview, 2022]*

This statement highlights the profound personal growth and empowerment experienced by these young girls as a direct result of their involvement in the Compassion programs. Educational programs play a pivotal role in this process, particularly those that encompass life skills, self-awareness, and discussions about societal roles. These programs do not merely impart knowledge; they are instrumental in shaping the way these young girls view themselves and their place in society. By fostering a greater sense of self-respect, these programs enable girls to make informed choices about their health and relationships, which is a critical step towards their overall development and empowerment.

A key component of these educational programs is menstrual hygiene management (MHM) education. Another girl has this to say:

*Compassion people give me a pad every month because my mother does not have enough money. Gone are the days when I needed to depend on my boyfriend before I would be able to buy a pad. I have stopped dating the boy since I started the program and compassion assists me in buying my monthly pad. Other girls too in my situation, do the same thing for them. [AG, Field Interview, 2022]*

Le Mat et al. (2019) highlights the significance of MHM education within the broader context of life-skills curricula, emphasizing its role in empowering girls by addressing a critical aspect of their health and dignity. The importance of MHM education extends beyond personal health; it is also a crucial element in promoting gender equality. In societies where girls face systemic challenges, such education is indispensable in empowering them to overcome these barriers. The impact of these programs on the participants' sense of autonomy and self-respect is profound. By providing them with

the knowledge and skills to understand and manage their bodies, these programs empower them to take control of their lives. This empowerment is not limited to personal health; it extends to all aspects of their lives, enabling them to navigate their relationships and societal roles with confidence and dignity.

Furthermore, the role of these programs in challenging and changing societal norms cannot be overstated. In many societies, the lack of education about menstrual health and rights perpetuates stigma and discrimination against girls. By addressing these issues head-on, Compassion International Ghana assisted projects programs are not only empowering individual girls but are also contributing to a broader societal shift towards greater gender equality. The empowerment of these young girls through Compassion International's programs is a testament to the transformative power of education. It aligns with the broader global agenda of empowering women and girls, as outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5, which focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. These programs serve as a practical implementation of this global commitment at a local level, demonstrating the tangible benefits of such initiatives.

Moreover, the impact of these programs extends beyond the individual participants. By empowering young girls, these programs contribute to breaking the cycle of poverty and gender-based discrimination. Enlightened and empowered women are more likely to participate in the workforce, contribute to the economy, and raise educated, healthy families. This ripple effect underscores the far-reaching implications of investing in the education and empowerment of girls.

#### 4.4.3 Early Intervention in Sexual Health Education

The Compassion International Ghana assisted projects Programs have played a pivotal role in addressing this educational gap among teenage girls in the Bremen Cluster. The study discovered the need for early intervention in sexual health education among teenage girls in the Bremen Cluster. Participants expressed worry over the lack of such education and how the lack of it has affected many young girls in terms of preventing teenage pregnancy. A caregiver expressed the worry in these words:

*“We need to start teaching our younger children too. They should know these things early to be prepared for the future. We have realized how the program has helped the girls to protect themselves. At least they have something that can offer them hope and I think it is helping them.”* [CA, Field Interview, 2022]

The concept of early intervention in sexual health education has gained traction in recent years. It is predicated on the understanding that introducing sexual health education at a younger age can establish a foundation for healthier behaviours and attitudes as children transition into adolescence. This proactive measure aims to equip children with essential knowledge and understanding before they encounter the complexities and challenges of adolescence, including the risks associated with teenage pregnancy.

Supporting this approach, Kirby (2002) advocates for school-based sex education programs, emphasizing that when initiated early, they can effectively delay sexual initiation and reduce risky behaviors among adolescents. Kirby's research highlights the positive outcomes of early sexual education, including increased use of contraception and reduced incidence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Furthermore, Chin et al. (2012) argue for the necessity of comprehensive sexual education beginning in primary school. This early start is crucial for building a

continuum of knowledge that supports children through their developmental stages. The argument is that a gradual, age-appropriate introduction of sexual health topics can demystify and destigmatize discussions around sex, leading to more informed and responsible decisions in later years.

Girls, in particular, face unique vulnerabilities, including the risk of teenage pregnancy, which can have far-reaching consequences on their education, health, and socio-economic status (Meel, 2010). The empowerment of girls through education, therefore, becomes a critical intervention strategy. It aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and Goal 5 (Gender Equality).

The study also discovered the role of caregivers and community leaders in shaping attitudes towards sexual health education. Their involvement is crucial in creating an enabling environment where young people can access accurate information and feel supported in their journey towards making informed decisions about their sexual health.

A compassion officer reiterated this finding by saying:

*“We engage the parents and the community people most often. We encourage them to report cases of sexual abuse or harassment. These reports help us to enhance our programs. We also tell them to have close relationships with the girls so that they can confine in them”* [CO, Field Interview, 2022]

#### **4.5 Objectives Four: Challenges in Implementation**

In exploring the challenges in the implementation of Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects initiatives at Bremen Cluster, the study found challenges with victims and families reporting abuse cases and following up on them. Also, the study discovered inadequate funds to fully support the initiatives and meet the needs of participants and finally the need for greater community understanding and parental involvement in



addressing teenage pregnancy issues. The findings are further analyzed in the following discussions.

#### 4.5.1 Reporting and Follow-up Issues

The study found that there is reluctance of victims and their families to report abuse cases can be attributed to deep-rooted cultural and social barriers. Fontes and Plummer (2010) emphasize the impact of stigma and societal norms in inhibiting such reports. The Compassion International Ghana assisted projects officers expressed this worry in the following words:

*"Many at times, the victims and their families are reluctant to report cases of sexual abuse..."* [CO, Field Interview, 2022]

This reluctance is often fueled by the fear of being ostracized or judged by their community. In many cultures, discussing issues related to abuse, especially sexual abuse, is taboo, leading to silence even in dire situations.

Another significant barrier to reporting abuse is the lack of trust in authorities. This mistrust can stem from past experiences where authorities have either mishandled cases or have not provided adequate support to the victims. A caregiver participant has this to say:

*"I have a problem with the way compassion teachers handle the issues. One girl was abused by her boyfriend and we reported the incident to them. It took a long time before they responded but it was too late"* [CA, Field Interview, 2022]

Another girl recounted:

*"My father kept worrying me in the house to have sex with me. I reported the incident to the teachers but they felt when they tackled the issue my father would disown me. I felt bad and betrayed"* [AG, Field Interview, 2022]

According to Smith et al. (2017), many families and victims feel that reporting abuse will not lead to meaningful action or justice, further discouraging them from coming forward. These challenges have serious implications for the implementation of child protection policies and initiatives like those of Compassion International. There is a need for policies that not only encourage reporting but also ensure that the reports are handled with the utmost sensitivity and effectiveness. As Jones and Jemmott (2019) suggest, there needs to be a paradigm shift in how child protection services engage with communities, focusing on building trust and understanding cultural nuances.

#### **4.5.2 Financial Limitations**

The findings indicate that financial constraints hinder the full implementation and expansion of initiatives. The following quote from a participant highlights how Compassion is challenged with finance in carrying out its initiatives effectively:

*“We are sometimes handicapped by financial constraints. We are not able to carry out fully some of the initiatives. Not only that delayed funds bring about the same challenges”*  
[CO, Field Interview, 2022]

Financial limitations play a pivotal role in shaping the effectiveness and reach of social welfare programs. As noted by Bryman (2016), these constraints are particularly pronounced in low-resource settings, where the availability of funds significantly dictates the scope and sustainability of initiatives. The impact of limited funding not only restricts the geographical reach and the number of beneficiaries that can be accommodated but also affects the quality and duration of the services provided. Additionally, financial constraints can lead to staffing challenges, as limited funds may result in inadequate compensation, thereby affecting the recruitment and retention of qualified professionals. This situation often leads to a cyclical problem where the lack

of adequate staff further diminishes the effectiveness of the program, thereby impacting its overall success and sustainability.

A study by Smith and Lipsky (2017) highlights how a non-profit organization managed to expand its services despite financial hurdles by leveraging community support and volunteerism. This case exemplifies the importance of community engagement and resourcefulness in overcoming financial barriers. Another example is the use of technology by a health-focused NGO to provide remote services, thereby reducing operational costs significantly (Johnson, R., 2018). These case studies underscore the potential of innovative solutions in addressing financial limitations in social welfare programs.

#### **4.5.3 Lack of Community and Parental Support**

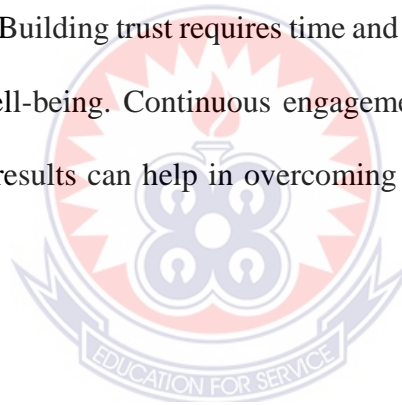
The role of community involvement in the success of social interventions, particularly those aimed at adolescents, cannot be overstated. Zimmerman (2013) emphasizes that it is not just about having community support but ensuring that the community comprehends the purpose and potential impact of these initiatives. This understanding is critical because it fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among community members, which is essential for the sustainability and effectiveness of social interventions.

Despite the recognized importance of community buy-in, securing it remains a formidable challenge. A participant in the study poignantly noted,

*“The community does not fully understand the importance of our programs. We sometimes face opposition from the community. Some parents visibly prevent their wards from attending some of our programs.”* [CO, Field Officer, 2022]

This statement underscores a prevalent issue in many social intervention programs. The gap in understanding between the program's objectives and the community's perception

can arise from various factors, including a lack of accessible information, cultural differences, or scepticism towards new initiatives. The issue of accessible information is crucial. Often, social interventions are communicated in jargon-laden language that is not easily comprehensible to the layperson. Simplifying the communication and using channels that are widely accessible to the community can help bridge this gap. For instance, community meetings, local radio stations, and social media platforms can be effective in disseminating information in a more digestible format (Smith, E., 2016). It is essential to involve community leaders and representatives in the planning stages of the intervention to ensure that the program is culturally sensitive and relevant (Patel & Goodman, 2020). This involvement can also aid in building trust and credibility within the community. Building trust requires time and a demonstration of commitment to the community's well-being. Continuous engagement, transparency in operations, and showing tangible results can help in overcoming scepticism (Johnson & Turner, 2015).



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This research aimed to investigate the initiatives supported by Compassion International Ghana assisted projects in safeguarding young girls from teenage pregnancy within the Bremen Cluster. The focus of this chapter is to present a comprehensive summary and conclusion of the study, including an overview of the study's background, the problem it addresses, and the methodologies employed to derive the findings. Additionally, this chapter highlights the principal findings and connects them with relevant theoretical frameworks to discuss their implications. It also draws conclusions based on the research outcomes and proposes practical recommendations. Lastly, the chapter acknowledges the limitations encountered during the study and suggests directions for future research on this topic.

#### 5.1 Summary

In a global context where millions of girls are deprived of educational opportunities, with a significant number being of primary school age, the challenges to achieving gender parity in education are substantial (UNICEF, 2020). These challenges are often exacerbated by entrenched social and cultural biases, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, which restrict girls' roles both domestically and, in the workforce, (UNICEF, 2020). Recognizing the critical role of girls' education in promoting economic strength, reducing inequality, and building stable, resilient communities, Compassion International Ghana assisted projects has focused its efforts in these areas. This study specifically examines the impact of Compassion International Ghana

assisted projects' initiatives in the Breman Cluster, assessing their effectiveness in empowering adolescent girls and protecting them against teenage pregnancy.

While existing research has delved into various facets of organizational performance and the outcomes of child sponsorship programs, there remains a notable gap in understanding their efficacy in child protection. This study, therefore, sought to fill this gap by evaluating the child protection outcomes of Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects in the Breman Cluster, particularly in preventing teenage pregnancy. The study's objectives were multifaceted: to explore the nature of Compassion International's initiatives aimed at addressing teenage pregnancy; to gauge the perception of these initiatives among adolescent girls and their families in the Breman Cluster; to examine the impact of Compassion International Ghana assisted projects' child protection programs on preventing teenage pregnancy; and to analyse the challenges faced in implementing these programs.

Adopting a qualitative approach with a case study design, the study targeted adolescent girls enrolled in Compassion International's programs in the Breman Cluster. A purposive sample of twelve participants was selected, comprising six adolescent girls, three caregivers, and three officers from Compassion Ghana's projects. The data collection procedure involved a combination of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, providing rich, individualized insights into the effectiveness of Compassion International Ghana assisted projects' initiatives. Thematic analysis was employed, utilizing a systematic four-step coding process to distil the findings. The study adhered to rigorous protocols to ensure credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability, while also maintaining strict adherence to ethical standards.

This research not only contributes to the broader understanding of child sponsorship programs in child protection but also offers valuable insights into the specific context of the Breman Cluster in Ghana.

## 5.2 Key Findings

The study uncovered the following key findings:

### *(a) Nature and Implementation of Initiatives*

1. Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects has adopted a comprehensive strategy that encompasses spiritual, physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development aspects in its programs.
2. The organization places a strong focus on educating teenage girls about teenage pregnancy, including its causes, effects, and preventive measures.
3. Programs are executed in collaboration with local churches and involve child protection campaigns and educational initiatives.
4. The organization offers livelihood empowerment opportunities, including trade learning and educational sponsorships, to foster self-sufficiency and resilience.

### *(b) Perceptions of Initiatives*

1. The study revealed a universally positive perception of the initiatives among adolescents, parents, and community members.
2. Educational programs and awareness campaigns were highly valued for their effectiveness in preventing teenage pregnancy.
3. However, participants had a notable desire for the continuity and expansion of these programs, including more frequent and inclusive sex education and improved provision of basic needs.

### *(c) Effects of Initiatives*

1. There was a marked improvement in the behaviour of teenage girls, evidenced by their enhanced knowledge of sexual health and their ability to avoid sexual activities that could lead to teenage pregnancy.
2. The girls reported a heightened sense of empowerment and an increase in societal respect. This change was attributed to the comprehensive education and support provided by the program.

*(d) Challenges in Implementation*

1. There were difficulties in reporting and following up on abuse cases by victims and their families.
2. The initiatives faced constraints due to inadequate funding, impacting their ability to support participants and meet their needs fully.
3. The study highlighted the necessity for enhanced community understanding and increased parental involvement in tackling issues related to teenage pregnancy.

### **5.3 Theoretical Implications**

The findings of the study could be theoretically contextualized within Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Bowlby's Attachment Theory. These theories provide a framework for understanding the challenges identified in the study and their broader implications.

The difficulty in reporting and following up on abuse cases reflects a breakdown in the immediate microsystem of the child, which includes family and community. Bronfenbrenner's theory emphasises the importance of supportive and responsive interactions in this system. The lack of effective communication and trust within families and communities can significantly hinder the protection and well-being of children.



The inadequate funding for initiatives points to limitations in the exosystem, which encompasses the broader socio-economic context that indirectly influences a child's development. This challenge is also reflective of macrosystem issues, such as policy and funding priorities at a broader societal and governmental level, impacting the resources available for child protection programs.

The call for greater community understanding and parental involvement aligns with the mesosystem, which involves the interconnections between the child's various microsystems. Enhancing these connections and ensuring a cohesive approach to child protection can significantly improve the effectiveness of initiatives aimed at preventing teenage pregnancy.

Bowlby's theory underscores the importance of secure attachments in early life for healthy development. In situations where abuse is not reported or followed up, it may indicate a lack of secure attachment relationships. Children and families with secure attachments are more likely to seek help and support, suggesting a need for programs that foster trust and secure relationships within families and communities.

The need for greater community understanding and parental involvement also ties into Attachment Theory. Secure communities and parental figures can provide a secure base from which children can explore and navigate challenges, including those related to teenage pregnancy. Programs that strengthen community bonds and parental engagement can contribute to creating this secure base.

Both theories highlight the importance of a holistic approach to child protection that considers the various environmental and relational factors influencing a child's life. Programs like those run by Compassion International Ghana assisted projects should be designed to address these multifaceted needs, ensuring that children have secure, supportive environments at both the micro and macro levels.

## 5.4 Conclusions

Based on the findings from the study on Compassion International Ghana assisted project initiatives in the Bremen Cluster, the study drew the following conclusions:

1. Compassion International Ghana's comprehensive approach to adolescent development, integrating spiritual, cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional dimensions, demonstrates a well-rounded framework that addresses various aspects of child and adolescent well-being. This multidimensional strategy has positively contributed to the holistic growth of participants, especially in educating teenage girls about sexual health and empowering them with livelihood skills.
2. The educational programs and awareness campaigns, particularly those focused on preventing teenage pregnancy, have been highly effective. The community, including adolescents and parents, perceives these initiatives as valuable, particularly in their ability to increase knowledge about sexual health and preventive behaviours. This indicates that targeted educational interventions can have a significant impact on reducing teenage pregnancy when they address root causes and provide practical solutions.
3. The initiatives have fostered both societal and personal empowerment, especially among teenage girls. Through educational sponsorships, livelihood training, and the promotion of self-sufficiency, participants have gained increased respect within their communities and a stronger sense of personal agency. This outcome emphasizes the role of socio-economic support in complementing educational programs to enhance both individual resilience and community cohesion.

4. Despite the success of the initiatives, sustainability remains a concern due to inadequate funding and challenges in reporting abuse cases. The limited financial resources have constrained the expansion and long-term impact of the programs. Moreover, addressing teenage pregnancy requires not just programmatic interventions but also stronger community involvement and better parental engagement. This highlights the importance of securing sufficient resources and fostering broader societal participation to ensure the continuity and success of such programs.

### **5.5 Recommendations**

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study of Compassion International project's initiatives in the Bremen Cluster, the following recommendations are proposed for Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects:

1. Compassion International Ghana Assisted Projects should continue to strengthen its comprehensive approach by fostering deeper collaborations with local stakeholders, including health professionals, educators, and community leaders. Expanding partnerships will enhance the effectiveness of the spiritual, cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional development components of the program, ensuring a broader support system for adolescents.
2. To build on the success of the educational initiatives, there should be an expansion of sex education programs with a focus on increasing their frequency and inclusivity. These programs should cover not only preventive measures against teenage pregnancy but also broader reproductive health topics. Incorporating parental education sessions can further improve awareness and family involvement in promoting healthy behaviours among adolescents.

3. To ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the livelihood empowerment initiatives, securing additional funding is critical. Compassion International Ghana Assisted Projects should explore diversified funding sources, including partnerships with governmental agencies, private sector donors, and international organizations. This would enable the scaling up of trade learning opportunities and educational sponsorships, fostering greater long-term self-sufficiency among program participants.
4. Addressing the challenges in reporting and following up on abuse cases requires improved mechanisms for both victims and their families. Establishing safe, confidential reporting systems and providing legal and emotional support services will help overcome these barriers. Additionally, greater emphasis on community education and parental involvement is needed to build a supportive environment that actively addresses and prevents abuse and teenage pregnancy.

### **5.6 Study Limitations**

This study encountered some forms of limitations. The study's findings are based on a relatively small sample of 12 participants, which may not fully represent the broader population of adolescents, caregivers, and project officers involved in Compassion International's programs. Again, the research focused exclusively on the Bremen Cluster, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other regions where Compassion International Ghana assisted projects operate. Finally, the study was cross-sectional, providing a snapshot at a single point in time. This approach does not account for changes over time, which could be significant in understanding the long-term impact of the initiatives.

### **5.7 Suggestions for Future Studies**

Considering the limitations identified in the study the following suggestions are proposed for future research. Future studies should consider including a larger and more diverse sample size that encompasses different regions where Compassion International Ghana-assisted projects operate. Finally, to better understand the long-term effects of Compassion International's initiatives on preventing teenage pregnancy and improving child protection, future studies should adopt a longitudinal design. That is tracking the same participants over an extended period would provide valuable data on the sustainability and evolution of the program's impact.



## REFERENCES

- "Save the Children Celebrates 100 Years of Progress for Children". *Save the Children*. Retrieved 26 September 2022 from <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/about-us/media-and-news/2019-press-releases/save-the-children-celebrates-100-years>
- "Girls' Education" UNICEF, 19 Jan. 2020, [www.unicef.org/education/girls-education](http://www.unicef.org/education/girls-education)
- Abdul-Rahman, L., Marrone, G., Johansson, A., & Brännström, I. (2011). A qualitative assessment of challenges to contraceptive use in the context of urban poverty in Kenya. *BMC Women's Health*, 11(1), 1-12.
- ActionAid. (n.d.a). Our work in Uganda. Retrieved from <https://actionaid.org/uganda/our-work>
- ActionAid. (n.d.b). Children's rights. Retrieved from <https://actionaid.org/what-we-do/childrens-rights>
- Adekunle, A. O., Oladimeji, A. M., & Aimakhu, C. O. (2000). Factors influencing the use of contraceptives by Nigerian women of childbearing age. *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 4(2), 39-48.
- Adenyo, A. M. (2016). Effect of training and development on organisational performance: a case of Compassion International Ghana assisted projects Ghana assisted projects assisted projects in the Volta Region (Doctoral dissertation, University of Cape Coast).
- Adeyinka, A. A., Oladapo, O. T., & Adekanle, D. A. (2010). Teenage pregnancy and obstetric outcome among teenagers in a tertiary hospital in southwestern Nigeria. *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, 30(7), 644-647.
- Ager, A., Blake, C., Stark, L., & Daniel, T. (2011). Child protection assessment in humanitarian emergencies: Case studies from Georgia, Gaza, Haiti and Yemen. *Child abuse & neglect*, 35(12), 1045-1052.
- Ahorlu, C. K., Pfeiffer, C., Obrist, B., & Müller-Böker, U. (2015). The need for integration of birth preparedness and complication readiness—services for men in reproductive health: A qualitative study in Northern Ghana. *PLoS One*, 10(1), e0118562.
- Ainsworth, M. D. S., & Bell, S. M. (1970). Attachment, exploration, and separation: Illustrated by the behavior of one-year-olds in a strange situation. *Child Development*, 41(1), 49-67.
- Anker, R. (2006). Poverty lines around the world: A new methodology and internationally comparable estimates. *Int'l Lab. Rev.*, 145, 279.

- Atuyambe, L., Mirembe, F., Johansson, A., Kirumira, E. K., & Faxelid, E. (2005). Experiences of pregnant adolescents-voices from Wakiso district, Uganda. *African health sciences*, 5(4), 304-309.
- Awour, E. M. (2015). Influence of holistic child development programmes on children's livelihood in Siaya county, a case of Compassion International Ghana assisted projects (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).
- Azevedo, W. F., Diniz, M. B., & Fonseca, E. S. M. (2015). Complications in adolescent pregnancy: systematic review of the literature. *Einstein*, 13(4), 618-626.
- Baidoo, J. R. (2014). Assessing the effectiveness of Ghana's efforts at addressing child labour in cocoa growing communities. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 16-357.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. Freeman.
- Barker, G., & Ricardo, C. (2005). Young Men and the Construction of Masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implications for HIV/AIDS, Conflict, and Violence. *Social Development Papers*, No. 26.
- Barnes, G. L., Woolgar, M., Beckwith, H., & Duschinsky, R. (2018). John Bowlby and contemporary issues of clinical diagnosis. *Attachment*, 12(1), 35-47.
- Bearinger, L. H., Sieving, R. E., Ferguson, J., & Sharma, V. (2007). Global perspectives on the sexual and reproductive health of adolescents: patterns, prevention, and potential. *The Lancet*, 369(9568), 1220-1231.
- Benbenishty, R., Davidson-Arad, B., López, M., Devaney, J., Spratt, T., Koopmans, C., ... & Hayes, D. (2015). Decision making in child protection: An international comparative study on maltreatment substantiation, risk assessment and interventions recommendations, and the role of professionals' child welfare attitudes. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 49, 63-75.
- Benthall, J. C. (2019). The care of orphans in the Islamic tradition, vulnerable children, and child sponsorship programs. *Journal of Muslim Philanthropy & Civil Society*, 3(1).
- Bhandari, P. (2020). Ethical Considerations in Research: Types & Examples. Accessed <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/research-ethics/>.
- Black, M. M., Walker, S. P., Fernald, L. C., Andersen, C. T., DiGirolamo, A. M., Lu, C., ... & Lancet Early Childhood Development Series Steering Committee. (2016). Early childhood development coming of age: science through the life course. *The Lancet*, 389(10064), 77-90.
- Bogdanova, E., & Bindman, E. (2016). NGOs, policy entrepreneurship and child protection in Russia: Pitfalls and prospects for civil society. *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, 24(2), 143-171.

- Boothby, N., & Stark, L. (2011). Data surveillance in child protection systems development: An Indonesian case study. *Child abuse & neglect*, 35(12), 993-1001.
- Bornstein, E. (2001). Child sponsorship, evangelism, and belonging in the work of World Vision Zimbabwe. *American Ethnologist*, 28(3), 595-622.
- Bottorff, J. L., Haines-Saah, R., Kelly, M. T., Oliffe, J. L., Torchalla, I., Poole, N., ... & Phillips, J. C. (2014). Gender, smoking and tobacco reduction and cessation: a scoping review. *International journal for equity in health*, 13, 1-15.
- Bourdillon, M., & Myers, W. (Eds.). (2014). *Child protection in development*. Routledge.
- Bowlby, J. (1969). *Attachment and Loss: Vol. 1. Attachment*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1973). *Attachment and Loss: Vol. 2. Separation, Anxiety and Anger*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bowlby, J. (1979). The bowlby-ainsworth attachment theory. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 2(4), 637-638.
- Bray, M. (1999). *The private costs of public schooling: Household and community financing*. Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning/UNESCO.
- Bretherton, I. (1992). The origins of attachment theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. *Developmental Psychology*, 28(5), 759-775.
- Britto, P. R., & Ulkuer, N. (2012). Child development in developing countries: child rights and policy implications. *Child development*, 83(1), 92-103.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1981). *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design*. Harvard University Press.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). *Ecological Models of Human Development*. In International Encyclopedia of Education, Vol. 3, 2nd Ed. Elsevier.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1994). Ecological models of human development. *International encyclopedia of education*, 3(2), 37-43.
- Brown, A. L., & Green, T. D. (2021). The role of parental involvement in adolescent health education: A systematic review. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 68(2), 237-246.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Bukatko, D., & Daehler, M. W. (2012). *Child development: A thematic approach*. Cengage Learning.
- Campbell, C., & MacPhail, C. (2002). Peer education, gender and the development of critical consciousness: Participatory HIV prevention by South African youth.



*Reproductive Health Matters*, 10(19), 41-56. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0968-8080\(02\)00010-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0968-8080(02)00010-7)

- Cherry K. (2022). What Is Attachment Theory? The Importance of Early Emotional Bonds. *Social Psychology, Verywell Mind*, retrieved from <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-attachment-theory-2795337> on 22/07/2022
- Chilton, M., Chyatte, M., & Breaux, J. (2007). The negative effects of poverty & food insecurity on child development. *Indian Journal of Medical Research*, 126(4), 262.
- Chilton, M., Chyatte, M., & Breaux, J. (2007). The negative effects of poverty & food insecurity on child development. *Indian Journal of Medical Research*, 126(4), 262-272.
- Chilton, M., Chyatte, M., & Breaux, J. (2007). The negative effects of poverty & food insecurity on child development. *Indian Journal of Medical Research*, 126(4), 262-272.
- Chin, H. B., Sipe, T. A., Elder, R., Mercer, S. L., Chattopadhyay, S. K., Jacob, V., ... & Community Preventive Services Task Force. (2012). The effectiveness of group-based comprehensive risk-reduction and abstinence education interventions to prevent or reduce the risk of adolescent pregnancy, human immunodeficiency virus, and sexually transmitted infections: Two systematic reviews for the Guide to Community Preventive Services. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 42(3), 272-294.
- Claire, N. V. (2020). Project Implementation And Performance Of Compassion Kenya-Assisted Holistic Child Development Projects In Nairobi City County, Kenya.
- Compassion International. (2017a). Ghana Facts. Retrieved 22 July 2022, from <https://www.compassion.com/about/where/ghana.htm>.
- Connelly, L. M. (2016). Trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Medsurg Nursing*, 25(6), 435-436.
- Connolly, M., & Katz, I. (2019). Typologies of child protection systems: An international approach. *Child abuse review*, 28(5), 381-394.
- Cope, D. G. (2014). Methods and meanings: Credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, 41(1), 89-91.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., Hanson, W. E., Clark Plano, V. L., & Morales, A. (2007). Qualitative research designs: Selection and implementation. *Counseling Psychologist*, 35(2), 236-264.

- Crowe, S., Cresswell, K., Robertson, A. (2011). The case study approach. *BMC Med Res Methodol* 11, 100 (2011). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-11-100>
- Crowe, S., Cresswell, K., Robertson, A., Huby, G., Avery, A., & Sheikh, A. (2011). The case study approach. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 11(1), 100.
- Cudjoe, E., Abdullah, A., & Chua, A. A. (2020). Children's participation in child protection practice in Ghana: Practitioners' recommendations for practice. *Journal of Social Service Research*, 46(4), 462-474.
- Cudjoe, J., & Abdullah, S. (2019). Parental participation in child protection practice in Ghana. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 28(7), 1925-1934.
- Darku, E. N. D. (2017). Access to Education for Poor Children: A Case Study of Compassion International Ghana assisted projects in the Agbogba Community, Ghana (Doctoral dissertation, University of Ghana).
- Darku, E. N. D. (2017). *Access to Education for Poor Children: A Case Study of Compassion International in the Agbogba Community, Ghana* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Ghana).
- Davis, J. P., & Thomas, L. M. (2020). The importance of continuity in sex education for adolescents: A review of the literature. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 66(4), 345-352.
- Deptula, D. P., Henry, D. B., & Schoeny, M. E. (2010). *How can parents make a difference? Longitudinal associations with adolescent sexual behavior*. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 24(6), 731-739.
- Dhar, S. (2018). Gender and sustainable development goals (SDGs). *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 25(1), 47-78.
- Doyle, A. (2020). What is a Semi-Structured Interview? Definition & Examples of a Semi-Structured Interview. Accessed <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/what-is-a-semi-structured-interview-2061632>.
- Eccles, J. S., Wigfield, A., & Schiefele, U. (2003). Motivation to succeed. In R. M. Lerner, *Handbook of Psychology: Developmental Psychology* (pp. 101-121). John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Engle, P. L., Black, M. M., Behrman, J. R., De Mello, M. C., Gertler, P. J., Kapiriri, L., ... & International Child Development Steering Group. (2007). Strategies to avoid the loss of developmental potential in more than 200 million children in the developing world. *The lancet*, 369(9557), 229-242.
- Ferguson, H. B., Bovaird, S., & Mueller, M. P. (2007). The impact of poverty on educational outcomes for children. *Paediatrics & child health*, 12(8), 701-706.
- Fields, G. S. (2002). *Distribution and development: a new look at the developing world*. MIT press.

- Flecha, R. (2014). *Successful educational actions for inclusion and social cohesion in Europe*. Springer.
- Flick, U. (2018). *Designing qualitative research*. Sage Publications. Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Sage Publications. Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. Sage Publications.
- Fontenot, K., Warren, L. H., & Mohanty, A. (2017). *Monthly and Average Monthly Poverty Rates by Selected Demographic Characteristics, 2013*. US Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, US Census Bureau.
- Gomez, R., & Green, L. (2023). Community Engagement in Practice: A Comparative Study. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 51(2), 123-140.
- Green, D. (2017). The NGO-academia interface. *The Social Realities of Knowledge for Development Brighton: IDS*, 20.
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough?: An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field methods*, 18(1), 59-82.
- Gyan, S. E. (2013). The sociocultural determinants of teenage pregnancy in contemporary Ghana. *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 17(4 Spec No), 133-147.
- Habitu, Y. A., Alemu, B. B., & Fenta, S. L. (2018). Determinants of adolescent pregnancy in low-income countries: A systematic review. *Ethiopian Journal of Health Sciences*, 28(2), 223-234.
- Hackman, D. A., & Farah, M. J. (2009). Socioeconomic status and the developing brain. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 13(2), 65-73.
- Hoffman, S. (2004). Save the children. *Nature*, 430(7002), 940-941.
- Holmes, J. (2001). *The Search for the Secure Base: Attachment Theory and Psychotherapy*. London: Routledge.
- Houghton, C., Casey, D., Shaw, D., & Murphy, K. (2013). Rigour in qualitative case-study research. *Nurse researcher*, 20(4).
- Houghton, C., Casey, D., Shaw, D., & Murphy, K. (2013). Rigour in qualitative case-study research. *Nurse Researcher*, 20(4), 12-17.
- International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics. (2022). Integrating basic health services with adolescent sexual education: A global perspective. *FIGO Journal*, 56(3), 210-225.
- Jacob, B., & Ludwig, J. (2008). Improving educational outcomes for poor children.

- Jennings, J. M., Glass, B., Parham, P., Adler, N., & Ellen, J. (2020). The role of education in teenage pregnancy prevention programs. *Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 174(2), 153-159. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2019.5326>
- Jensen, S. K., Berens, A. E., & Nelson 3rd, C. A. (2017). Effects of poverty on interacting biological systems underlying child development. *The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health*, 1(3), 225-239.
- Johnson, B., & Turner, L.A. (2015). Overcoming Skepticism: How Transparency Can Enhance Community Trust in New Interventions. *Public Health Journal*.
- Johnson, M. K., & Roberts, L. A. (2021). The impact of comprehensive sex education on teenage pregnancy: An empirical study. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 24(5), 651-668.
- Johnson, M., & Tyler, E. (2018). The Impact of Educational Programs on Teenage Pregnancy and Birth Rates: A Systematic Review. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 63(4), 517-527.
- Johnson, R. (2018). Innovations in nonprofit leadership: Strategies for the digital age. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 29(2), 277-289.
- Jones, L., & Jemmott, J. B. (2019). *Reforming child protection services: Trust-building and cultural competence in community engagement*. *Journal of Child Welfare and Social Policy*, 45(3), 230-245
- Josephine, A. A., & Premraj, J. A. (2016). *Factors affecting reproductive health of adolescent girls: A review*. *International Journal of Reproduction, Contraception, Obstetrics and Gynecology*, 5(5), 1296-1301.
- Kaplan, B., & Maxwell, J. A. (2005). Qualitative research methods for evaluating computer information systems. In *Evaluating the organizational impact of healthcare information systems* (pp. 30-55). Springer, New York, NY.
- Kaplan, B., & Maxwell, J. A. (2005). Qualitative research methods for evaluating computer information systems. In *Evaluating the Organizational Impact of Healthcare Information Systems* (pp. 30-55). Springer. Scotland, J. (2012). Exploring the philosophical underpinnings of research: Relating ontology and epistemology to the methodology and methods of the scientific, interpretive, and critical research paradigms. *English Language Teaching*, 5(9), 9-16.
- Karimba, K. K. (2011). Effectiveness of international child sponsorship programme on academic development of children in Kaloleni area development programme, Kilifi County, Kenya (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi, Kenya).
- Kefale, B., Zenebe, C., & Koye, D. N. (2020). Educational status and risky sexual behavior among unmarried adolescent females in Ethiopia: Evidence from 2016 Ethiopia demographic and health survey. *PLoS ONE*, 15(1), e0227755.

- Khan, N., Naushad, M., Faisal, S., & Fahad, S. (2020). Analysis of poverty of different countries of the world. *Available at SSRN 3701329*.
- Khethiwe, D. (2023). Education and social inequality in Africa: gender, poverty, and regional disparities. *Research and Advances in Education*, 2(8), 52-65.
- Kirby, D. (2002). Effective approaches to reducing adolescent unprotected sex, pregnancy, and childbearing. *Journal of Sex Research*, 39(1), 51-57.
- Kirby, D., Laris, B.A., & Roller, L.A. (2007). Sex and HIV education programs: Their impact on sexual behaviors of young people throughout the world. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 40(3), 206-217.
- Kirchengast, S., & Huber, J. (2009). Gender and age differences in lean soft tissue mass and sarcopenia among healthy elderly. *Anthropologischer Anzeiger*, 139-151.
- Kraft, J. M., Oduyebo, T., Jatlaoui, T. C., Curtis, K. M., Whiteman, M. K., Zapata, L. B., & Gaffield, M. E. (2018). Community Engagement in Adolescent Health Intervention Strategies. *Global Public Health*, 13(7), 869-883.
- Krugu, J. K., Mevissen, F. E., Prinsen, A., & Ruiter, R. A. (2016). The effectiveness of school-based sex education interventions in Sub-Saharan Africa: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMC Public Health*, 16(1), 1-15.
- Kumi-Kyereme, A., Awusabo-Asare, K., & Darteh, E. K. M. (2014). Attitudes of gatekeepers towards adolescent sexual and reproductive health in Ghana. *African Journal of Reproductive Health*, 18
- Lachman, P., Poblete, X., Ebigbo, P. O., Nyandiya-Bundy, S., Bundy, R. P., Killian, B., & Doek, J. (2002). Challenges facing child protection. *Child abuse & neglect*, 26(6-7), 587-617.
- Lachman, P., Poblete, X., Ebigbo, P. O., Nyandiya-Bundy, S., Bundy, R. P., Killian, B., & Doek, J. (2002). Challenges facing child protection. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 26(6-7), 587-617.
- Landgren, K. (2005). The Protective Environment: Development support for child protection. *Hum. Rts. Q.*, 27, 214.
- Langille, D. B. (2007). Teenage pregnancy: trends, contributing factors, and the physician's role. *Canadian Family Physician*, 53(12), 2078-2083.
- Le Mat, M. L. J., Sommer, M., & Sivakami, M. (2019). Girls' and women's unmet needs for menstrual hygiene management (MHM): The interactions between MHM and sanitation systems in low-income countries. *Journal of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for Development*, 9(4), 580-593.
- Leftwich, H. K., & Alves, M. V. O. (2017). Adolescent pregnancy. *Pediatric Clinics*, 64(2), 381-388.

- Lerner, R. M., Wang, J., Hershberg, R. M., Buckingham, M. H., Harris, E. M., Tirrell, J. M., ... & Lerner, J. V. (2017). Positive youth development among minority youth: A relational developmental systems model. In Handbook on positive development of minority children and youth (pp. 5-17). Springer, Cham.
- Loaiza, E., & Liang, M. (2013). Adolescent pregnancy: a review of the evidence. Unfpa.
- Lonne, B., Russ, E., Harrison, C., Morley, L., Harries, M., Robertson, S., ... & Smith, J. (2021). The “Front Door” to Child Protection—Issues and Innovations. *International journal on child maltreatment: research, policy and practice*, 3, 351-367.
- Magnuson, K. A., & Votruba-Drzal, E. (2008). *Enduring influences of childhood poverty*. Madison: University of Wisconsin-Madison, Institute for Research on Poverty.
- Main, M., & Solomon, J. (1990). Procedures for identifying infants as disorganized/disoriented during the Ainsworth Strange Situation. In M. T. Greenberg, D. Cicchetti, & E. M. Cummings (Eds.), *Attachment in the preschool years: Theory, research, and intervention* (pp. 121-160). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Malekpour, M. (2004). Low birth-weight infants and the importance of early intervention: Enhancing mother-infant interactions a literature review. *The British Journal of Development Disabilities*, 50(99), 78-88.
- Mary, F. N. (2018). The effect of project management leadership on performance of Compassion International Ghana assisted projects in Kitui County, Kenya. *Unpublished Thesis. Kenyatta University*.
- Meel, A. (2010). *Teenage pregnancy among high school girls in Mthatha, South Africa* (Doctoral dissertation, Walter Sisulu University).
- Mei-Dan, E., Ray, J. G., & Vigod, S. N. (2015). Perinatal outcomes among women with bipolar disorder: a population-based cohort study. *American journal of obstetrics and gynecology*, 212(3), 367-e1.
- Mensah, D. (2018). Effect of internal marketing on employee job Satisfaction in compassion international–Ghana Assisted projects in the Central Region (Doctoral dissertation, University of Cape Coast).
- Metzler, M. W., Atienza, A. A., Mihalic, S. F., & Weist, M. D. (2017). *Implementing evidence-based preventive interventions: The importance of contextual factors*. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 60(3-4), 414-430.
- Mezmur, M., Navaneetham, K., Letamo, G., & Bariagaber, H. (2021). Socioeconomic determinants of teenage pregnancy in sub-Saharan Africa: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMJ Open*, 11(4), e042571.

- Middel, F., Post, W., Lopez Lopez, M., & Grietens, H. (2021). Participation of children involved in the child protection system–validation of the meaningful participation assessment tool (MPAT). *Child Indicators Research*, 14, 713-735.
- Miller, E. (2019). Continuity and Expansion of Adolescent Health Programs: Key Factors in Preventing Teenage Pregnancy. *American Journal of Public Health*, 109(4), 557-563..
- Miller, L., Votruba-Drzal, E., & Setodji, C. M. (2018). A holistic approach to child and youth development. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 27(3), 685-696. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-017-0935-3>
- Moccia, P. (Ed.). (2009). *Progress for children: A report card on child protection* (No. 8). UNICEF.
- Mohanty, M. (2011). Informal social protection and social development in Pacific Island countries: role of NGOs and civil society. *Asia-Pacific Development Journal*, 18(2), 25-56.
- Mosley, W. H., & Chen, L. C. (1984). An analytical framework for the study of child survival in developing countries. *Population and development review*, 10, 25-45.
- Muntaqo, A., & Sholikhah, M. (2018). The influence of legal systems on child protection in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Law and Society*, 5(2), 245-259.
- Murnane, R. J. (2007). Improving the education of children living in poverty. *The future of children*, 161-182.
- Nair, M. K. C., & Rekha Radhakrishnan, S. (2004). Early childhood development in deprived urban settlements. *Indian pediatrics*, 41(3), 227-238.
- Ndungi, R. W. (2012). The influence of sponsorship on academic performance of secondary schools in Kenya: a case of Compassion International Ghana assisted projectsassisted projects, Ndeiya division, Kenya (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi, Kenya).
- NHS Health, Scotland (2021) Child Poverty Overview. Retrieved 20/09/2022 from <https://www.healthscotland.scot/population-groups/children/child-poverty/child-poverty-overview/impact-of-child-poverty>
- NICHD Early Child Care Research Network (Ed.). (2005). *Child care and child development: Results from the NICHD study of early child care and youth development*. Guilford Press.
- Nyabera, T. M. (2015). *Influence of stakeholder participation on implementation of projects in Kenya: A case of Compassion International Ghana assisted projectsassisted projects in Mwingi Sub-County* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).

- Nyathi, D. (2012). *Evaluation of poverty alleviation strategies implemented by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Zimbabwe: A case of Binga Rural District* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Fort Hare).
- Omwancha, K. M. (2012). The implementation of an educational re-entry policy for girls after teenage pregnancy: A case study of public secondary schools in the Kuria District, Kenya.
- Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) (2022). Poverty and Child Welfare. Retrieved 20/09/2022 from <https://oacas.libguides.com/c.php?g=702168&p=4990142>
- Onyango, P., & Lynch, M. A. (2006). Implementing the right to child protection: a challenge for developing countries. *The Lancet*, 367(9511), 693-694.
- Orazem, P. F., Glewwe, P., & Patrinos, H. (2007). The benefits and costs of alternative strategies to improve educational outcomes. *Comparative Education Review*, 51(3), 389-408.
- Ordolis, E. (2007). A story of their own: Adolescent pregnancy and child welfare in Aboriginal communities. *First Peoples Child & Family Review*, 3(4), 30-41.
- Oringanje, C., Meremikwu, M. M., Eko, H., Esu, E., Meremikwu, A., & Ehiri, J. E. (2016). Interventions for preventing unintended pregnancies among adolescents. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, (2).
- Orri, M., Galera, C., Turecki, G., Boivin, M., Tremblay, R. E., Geoffroy, M. C., & Côté, S. M. (2019). Pathways of association between childhood irritability and adolescent suicidality. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 58(1), 99-107.
- Pallangyo, E. E. (2020). *The Effective Monitoring and Evaluation Influence on Organization Performance in Non-Governmental Organizations in Tanzania: A Case of Compassion International Ghana assisted projects Tanzania* (Doctoral dissertation, The Open University of Tanzania).
- Paranjothy, S., Broughton, H., & Adappa, R. (2009). Teenage pregnancy: who suffers? *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, 94(3), 239-245.
- Patel, S., & Kumar, A. (2022). Cultural considerations in adolescent sex education: A qualitative analysis. *Global Health Review*, 12(1), 30-45.
- Pathak, R., Shrestha, M., & Subedi, N. (2013). Qualitative research: An essential tool for gender analysis. *Journal of Nepal Medical Association*, 52(189), 741-746.
- PITTMAN, R. H. (2014). A Framework for Community and Economic Development. In *An Introduction to Community Development* (pp. 25-43). Routledge.
- Plan International. (n.d.). Because I am a Girl Campaign. Retrieved from <https://plan-international.org/girls/because-i-am-girl>



- Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2012). *Nursing research: Generating and assessing evidence for nursing practice* (9th ed.). Wolters Kluwer Health/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Prahalad, C. K., & Hammond, A. (2002). Serving the world's poor, profitably. *Harvard business review*, 80(9), 48-59.
- Prentki, T. (2003). Save the Children?--Change the World. *Research in drama education*, 8(1), 39-53.
- Redko, K. (2024). Enabling economic empowerment: social enterprise's role in harnessing the potential of individuals with disabilities. *Věda a perspektivy*, (2 (33)).
- Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. Oxford University Press.
- Ross, P. H., Glewwe, P., Prudencio, D., & Wydick, B. (2021). Developing educational and vocational aspirations through international child sponsorship: Evidence from Kenya, Indonesia, and Mexico. *World Development*, 140, 105336.
- Santelli, J. S., et al. (2017). Abstinence-only-until-marriage: An Updated Review of U.S. Policies and Programs and Their Impact. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 61(3), 273-280.
- Santelli, J. S., Kantor, L. M., Grilo, S. A., Speizer, I. S., Lindberg, L. D., Heitel, J., ... & Ott, M. A. (2017). Abstinence-only-until-marriage: An updated review of U.S. policies and programs and their impact. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 61(3), 273-280.
- Saracho, O. N. (2023). Theories of child development and their impact on early childhood education and care. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 51(1), 15-30.
- Sen, A. (2001). *Development as freedom* (New ed.).
- Shamala, L. W. (2013). *Strategic management practices and challenges of Kenyan projects assisted by Compassion International Ghana assisted projects in Limuru region* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).
- Shonkoff, J. P., & Phillips, D. A. (Eds.). (2000). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. National Academies Press.
- SIECUS (Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States). (2004). *Guidelines for Comprehensive Sexuality Education: Kindergarten – 12th Grade*.
- Smith, E. (2016). *Community Involvement in Initiatives for the Youth: Strategies and Challenges*. *Journal of Community Engagement*.
- Smith, J., & Haddad, L. (2020). The Role of Community Acceptance in Effective Health Interventions. *Health Promotion International*, 35(2), 290-299.

- Smith, S. R., & Lipsky, M. (2017). *Nonprofits for hire: The welfare state in the age of contracting*. Harvard University Press.
- Smith, S. R., & Lipsky, M. (2021). *Nonprofits for Hire: The Welfare State in the Age of Contracting*. Harvard University Press.
- SOS Children's Villages International. (2021). *Impact Study of SOS Children's Villages on Young Adults' Educational and Professional Pathways*. Retrieved from <https://www.sos-childrensvillages.org/what-we-do/education-employment/impact-study>
- Sroufe, L. A. (2005). Attachment and development: A prospective, longitudinal study from birth to adulthood. *Attachment & Human Development*, 7(4), 349-367.
- Teherani, M., Albrecht, T. L., & Nguyen, A. (2015). Qualitative research in medical education. In *Understanding Medical Education: Evidence, Theory, and Practice* (pp. 411-426). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Thompson, H. R., & Lee, C. (2021). Inclusivity in sex education: Perspectives from diverse populations. *Education and Health Journal*, 39(2), 114-121.
- Tirrell, J. M., Geldhof, G. J., King, P. E., Dowling, E. M., Sim, A. T., Williams, K., ... & Lerner, R. M. (2019). Measuring spirituality, hope, and thriving among Salvadoran youth: Initial findings from the Compassion International Ghana assisted projects Study of Positive Youth Development. In *Child & Youth Care Forum* (Vol. 48, No. 2, pp. 241-268). Springer US.
- Tirrell, J. M., Hay, S. W., Gansert, P. K., Le, T. U., O'Neil, B. C., Vaughn, J. M., ... & Lerner, R. M. (2021). Exploring the role of the "Big Three" features of effective youth development programs in El Salvador: The sample case of programs of Compassion International. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 45(6), 524-532.
- Tobin, K., & Murphy, J. (2013). Addressing the challenges of child and family homelessness. *Journal of Applied Research on Children: Informing Policy for Children at Risk*, 4(1), 9.
- UNESCO (2022). What you need to know about the right to education. Retrieved on 21/09/2022 from <https://www.unesco.org/en/education/right-education/need-know>
- UNESCO. (2020). *Education for Sustainable Development: A Roadmap*. UNESCO Publishing.
- UNFPA. (2013). *Motherhood in Childhood: Facing the Challenge of Adolescent Pregnancy*. Retrieved from [https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/MotherhoodinChildhood\\_Report.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/MotherhoodinChildhood_Report.pdf)
- UNICEF (2005). *Childhood under threat: The state of the world's children*. New York, NY: United Nations Children's Fund.

- UNICEF, 2020a. A Generation to Protect: Monitoring Violence, Exploitation and Abuse of Children Within the SDG Framework. UNICEF. <https://data.unicef.org/resources/a-generation-to-protect/>.
- UNICEF, Ghana (2018). Early Childhood Development. Retrieved on 21/09/2022 from <https://www.unicef.org/ghana/early-childhood-development>
- UNICEF. (2019). *The Convention on the Rights of the Child: Protection, education, and development for all children*. United Nations.
- United Nations Population Fund. (2021). *Adolescent pregnancy: A review of the impact on the health and well-being of adolescents*. UNFPA.
- Van der Berg, S. (2008). Poverty and education. *Education policy series*, 10(28), 1-28.
- Van der Berg, S. (2008). Poverty and education. *Educational Research and Evaluation*, 14(6), 509-522.
- Vandell, D. L., Larson, R. W., Mahoney, J. L., & Watts, T. W. (2015). Children's organized activities. In M. H. Bornstein & T. Leventhal (Eds.); R. M. Lerner (Editor-in-Chief), *Handbook of child psychology and developmental science: Ecological settings and processes in developmental systems* (7th ed., Vol. 4, pp. 305–344). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Vishnevsky, T., & Beanlands, H. (2004). Qualitative approaches to research in nursing: The value of phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and narrative inquiry. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research*, 36(2), 89-103.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wall-Wieler, E., Brownell, M., Singal, D., Nickel, N., & Roos, L. L. (2018). The cycle of child protection services involvement: A cohort study of adolescent mothers. *Pediatrics*, 141(6).
- Wessells, M. G. (2015). Bottom-up approaches to strengthening child protection systems: Placing children, families, and communities at the center. *Child abuse & neglect*, 43, 8-21.
- Williams, R. A., & Abdullah, A. S. (2013). Education and adolescent reproductive health: A review of the literature. *Health*, 5(10A3), 74-83.
- World Bank Group. (2016). *World development report 2016: Digital dividends*. World Bank Publications.
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2012). Adolescent pregnancy. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-pregnancy>

- World Health Organization. (2017). *Progress in partnership: 2017 Progress report on the every woman every child global strategy for Women's, Children's and adolescents' health* (No. WHO/FWC/NMC/17.3). World Health Organization.
- World Health Organization. (2023). Adolescent sexual health education: Global trends and outcomes. WHO Reports.
- World Vision International. (n.d.). Child sponsorship. Retrieved from <https://www.wvi.org/sponsorship>
- World Vision International. (n.d.). Our history. Retrieved from <https://www.wvi.org/about-us/history>
- World Vision International. (n.d.). Our impact. Retrieved from <https://www.wvi.org/impact>
- Wydick, B., Glewwe, P., & Rutledge, L. (2013). Does international child sponsorship work? A six-country study of impacts on adult life outcomes. *Journal of Political Economy*, 121(2), 393-436.
- Wydick, B., Rutledge, L., & Chu, J. (2009). Does Child Sponsorship Work? Evidence from Uganda using a Regression Discontinuity Design.
- Yakubu, I., & Salisu, W. (2018). Determinants of adolescent pregnancy in sub-Saharan Africa: A systematic review. *Reproductive Health*, 15(1), 15.
- Yakubu, I., & Salisu, W. J. (2018). Determinants of adolescent pregnancy in sub-Saharan Africa: A systematic review. *Reproductive Health*, 15(1), 1-15.
- Yin, R. K. (2012). *Applications of case study research*. Sage Publications.
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research (5th ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yuen, P. (2008). " Things that Break the Heart of God": Child Sponsorship Programs and World Vision International. *The University of Western Ontario Journal of Anthropology*, 16(1).
- Zimmerman, B. J. (2013). From cognitive modeling to self-regulation: A social cognitive career path. *Educational psychologist*, 48(3), 135-147.