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Headline: [WATCH] Books & babies: How to keep young mothers in school

Blurb: We travelled to the North West for this video, where we spoke to a young mother who fell pregnant when she was 13, but managed to return to school after her pregnancy.

By-line: Yolanda Mdzeke & Aisha Abdool Karim

Script

Kanana Village, North West, South Africa.

Narration

[Thousands of teenagers fall pregnant every year in South Africa](#). Because of this, young mothers are often left with no choice but to [leave school](#).

Otlotleng Moolikwe is 18. She's a matriculant at Matsukubiyane Secondary School outside Rustenburg, South Africa.

She is also the mother of a 4-year old boy.

Otlotleng Moolikwe

I was 13 years old. It just happened... we didn't know more information about sex. Then it came out that the condom [burst] and I became pregnant.

Narration

[Teens say it's hard to get contraception from state clinics](#).

Nurses judge them for having sex, and when they fall pregnant, they're cross-questioned.

Otlotleng Moolikwe

They [the nurses] were just asking me 'who is the father', 'I'm still young, why was I having sex?'

Narration

In Kanana Village, a Grade 8 class meets for their weekly life orientation class, which today includes a sex education lesson.

These lessons start in Grade 4, but teens say it's often not enough.

Otlotleng Moolikwe

I think there are parts that are missing...

Because they won't tell us about different kinds of preventions [contraceptions], they will just tell us about abstaining.

Narration

Tinyiko Rokobela works for [Show Me Your Number](#), a non-government body, working with schools to try and fill the gaps in sex education in the classroom.

In a typical after school session with high school girls, they'll talk about sexual health and societal pressures.

Tinyiko Rakobela

I'm their safe space. So when they come they ask anything. The main thing that they asked about is all about contraceptions, like how to prevent pregnancy, how to be an independent young woman.

Narration

[Comprehensive Sexuality Education was first introduced to the South African curriculum in the year 2000.](#)

In 2019 [scripted lesson plans](#) were introduced to help teachers cover these lessons.

These classes include discussions on gender-based violence and power dynamics in relationships.

Teachers aren't always comfortable talking to learners about sex. This can make learners feel awkward.

Otlotleng Moolikwe

Sometimes I feel so... [uncomfortable], even now we are being taught LO by a man. Like, I won't be able to go and talk to Sir and tell him that 'Sir, I am in a current situation. So I don't know, how should I find a solution? Please help me'.

Narration

More information about sex in open talks, even in a classroom, is also changing mindsets.

Tinyiko Rokobela

Those who were pregnant last year they gave birth, and they managed to come back to school this year.

So I can see this programme it has an impact, because we also preach this thing of, even when you are pregnant or you have a child doesn't mean it's the end of the world. You have to come back – reach your goals.

Otlotleng Moolikwe

And sometimes my parents will just tell me, 'this is not your child. This is our last born. So you don't have a child. Don't stress yourself.'

Narration

[Support from family also goes a long way in empowering young girls to stay in school after having a child.](#)

ENDS

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