

Cross-generational and
transactional sexual relations in
Uganda: Income poverty as a risk
factor for adolescents

Prof Grace Bantebya Kyomuhendo
School of Women and Gender Studies

Presentation Outline

- Background ..Child violations and poverty
- Study issues in Ugandan context and objectives
- Methods : study communities and population
- Findings : Girls vulnerabilities and drivers
- Recommendations

Background ..Child Violations and Poverty

- 25th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child being celebrated November 2014
- significant steps have been made towards protecting child rights and providing a platform for children's voices to be heard.
- However there are still gaps in ensuring child rights are upheld and tackling child poverty

Study Issues : Ugandan Context

- Income poverty declined but remains significant : 19 % living below poverty line and over 30% vulnerable
- Uganda continues to face significant challenges meeting 10 (of 17) MDG targets – particularly with respect to health, education
- adolescent girls are more socially and economically vulnerable (both at individual, household and at community levels) than boys.

Objectives

- Understand the multiple and overlapping reasons behind cross-generational relationships in Uganda,
- Explore the consequences of adolescent experiences of these exploitative relationships
- The extent to which policy and programming are addressing this phenomenon.
- The extent to which income poverty collates with discriminatory social norms (social pressures)

Methods : Study communities and Population

- Kamuli and Kampala districts
- Criteria : poverty levels , rural urban , NGO
- Qualitative : FGDs with boys, girls , women and men
- Case studies : Girls –cross generational sex
- Key Informants /leaders

Findings :Girls Vulnerabilities and Drivers



- Cross generational sex common among adolescents in both districts
- Reasons similar
- **Economic hardships**
(*embera mbi*) (*Kweyiya*)
- **Difference** : rural long term and urban short term relationships

Findings : Girls Vulnerabilities and Drivers

-” *Poverty is the major problem. When unfortunately poverty comes, and you cannot provide your daughter with all she needs, then there is trouble. For instance if the only dress she has no longer fits her, and she has no body lotion, perfume, and eats, she goes with any man who provides her with these items; even her teacher, bodaboda rider or fellow villager” (Men’s FGD, Busota, Kamuli).*

Findings :Girls Vulnerabilities and Drivers

- Discriminatory Social norms mainly Gender Based

‘In this community a girl is seen as mature when she grows breasts and starts menstruating. For a boy once he breaks his voice or grows a beard, he is a man.’

Source: FGD, adolescent females, Kamuli

- *Eito telyenga*
- *Muwala kasukali*

Findings :Girls Vulnerabilities and Drivers

■ Peer pressure

'I got [the older man] through peer pressure [...] You look at your friend with beautiful attire, and you too want it. Then when you ask how they got it they will tell you that you get a man to provide. Later I wanted to have another man to get more things and I ended up in the sex trade.'

Source: Case study, 18 year old female, Kampala

Findings :Girls Vulnerabilities and Drivers

- Risky physical environment
- Kampala slums access to material goods
- Housing arrangements in the rural communities



Findings :Girls Vulnerabilities and Drivers

- Structural and system factors : limited health , education, sanitation
- Access to these facilities pose risks and vulnerabilities



Findings :Girls Vulnerabilities and Drivers

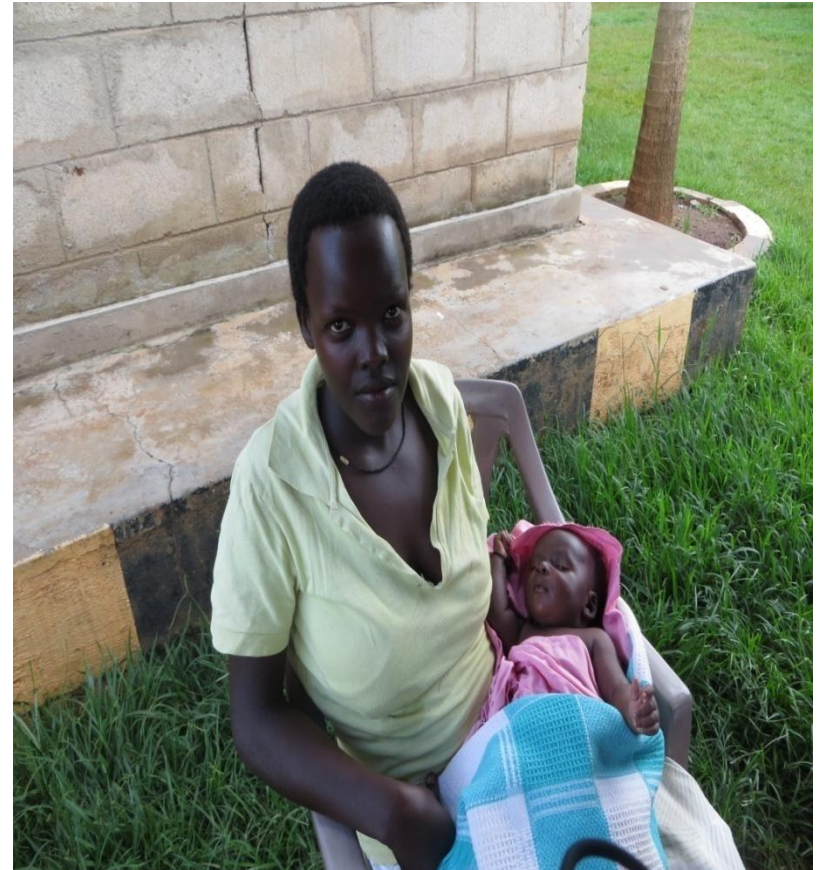
■ Inadequate care at home:

“There are situations where the children are in the hands of stepmothers. There are situations where the girls are badly beaten and even chased away from home at night and unfortunately the only people who can accommodate them are the older men since they have houses or can afford to rent lodges – which their male peers cannot.”

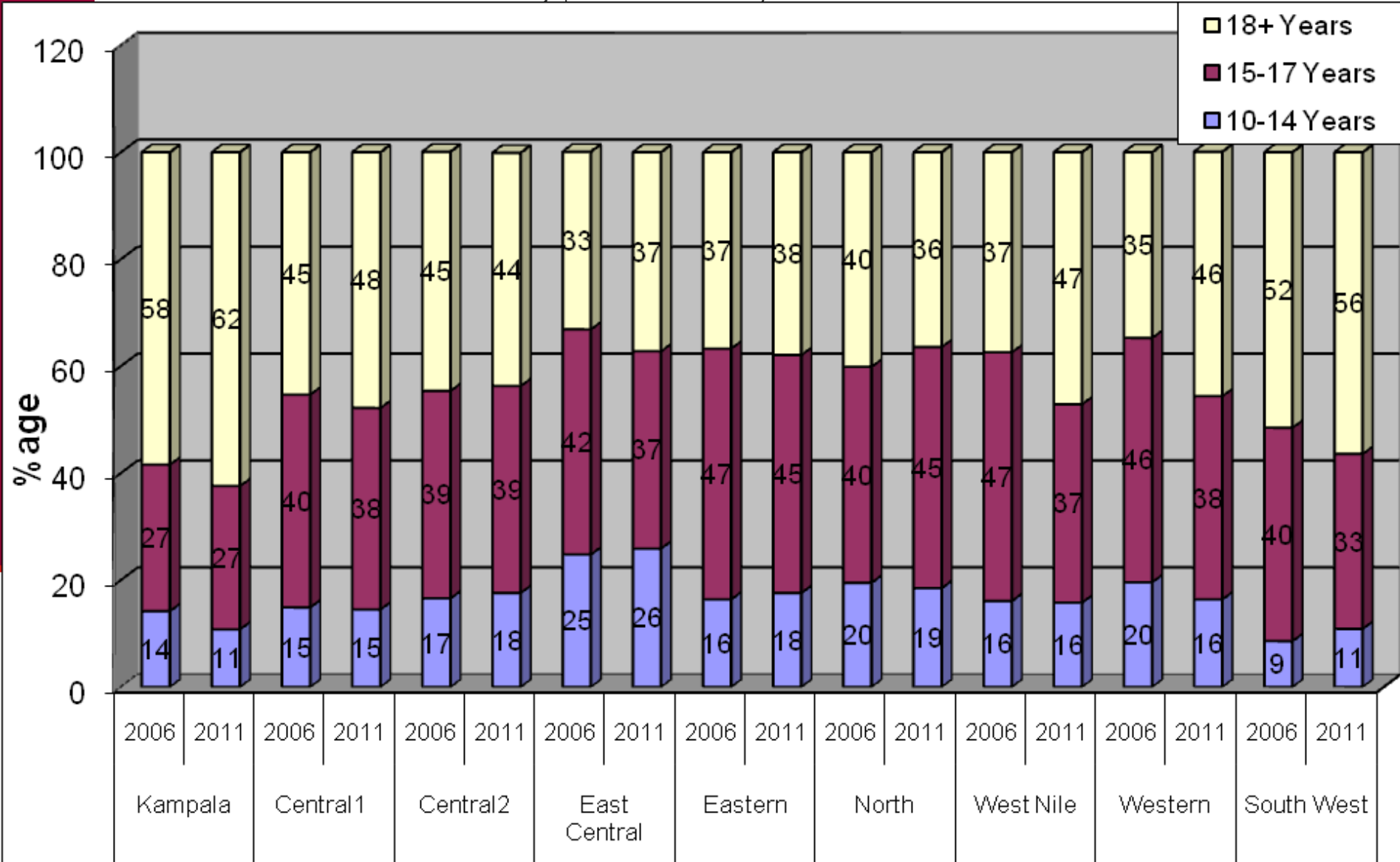
Source: Small group discussion, in-school adolescent males, Kampala

Consequences

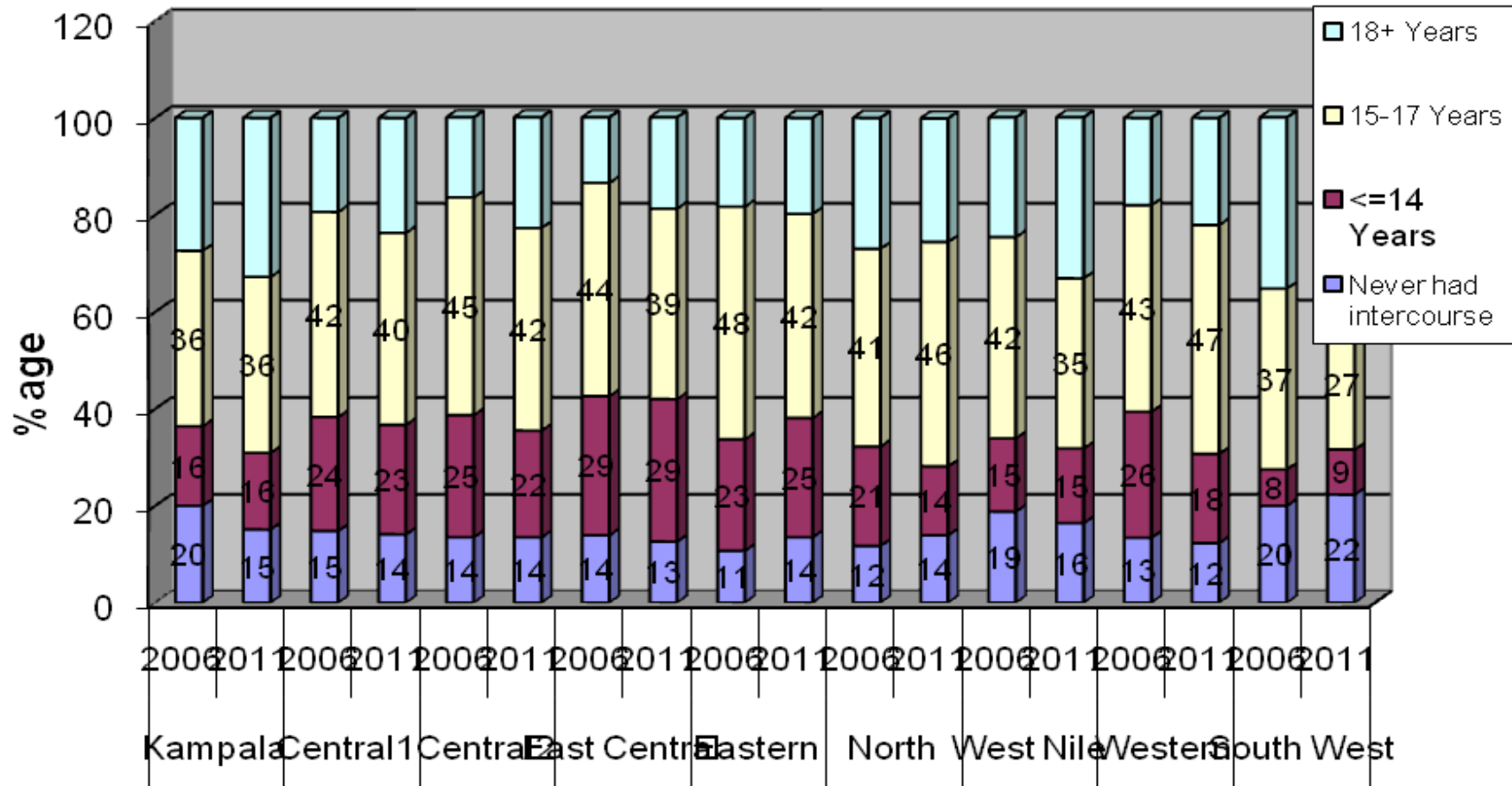
- Early pregnancy
- Dropout of school
- Health..HIV STD ,
abortion .maternal
mortality
- GBV
- Generally **NO**
feasible benefits



Age at first marriage by regions of Uganda for ever married women age 15-49 years



Age at first sexual intercourse by regions of Uganda



Responses : Access to justice

- Comprehensive legal framework but limited effect on the ground less impact reducing child violations
- Limited coordination
- Limited financing
- Less sharing among key players
- Responses to cross generational sex limited
- Singular interventions credit, vocational skills
- Informal settlements preferred at community level.. compensation

Recommendations

- Child protection policies and programmes should integrate a specific component to address the issue of early sexual relationships,
- MIS should recognise the connecting nature of both economic and social norms drivers with respect to cross-generational relationship

Recommendations

- new and locally focused training initiatives based on lessons from integrated programming must be promoted
- There is a need to strengthen delivery of, and access to, social services that are deemed to have the most protective functions for children

Recommendations

- Child protection policies and interventions should integrate poverty reduction and socio-cultural components aiming to explicitly address the combined and stultifying effects of income poverty and social norms drivers.

Our responsibility????



**Cross-generational
sex is a violation
and abuse of
Girls Rights**