Commission for Gender Equality

Child and Adolescent Pregnancy in KwaZulu-Natal

A gender equality and accountability perspective
KZN Multisectoral Strategy (2025–2029)

AWACC • Durban • 30 October 2026

CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE

Chapter 9: State Institutions supporting Constitutional Democracy

Functions of the Commission for Gender Equality

187. (1) The Commission for Gender Equality must promote respect for gender equality and the protection, development and attainment of gender equality.

(2) The Commission for Gender Equality has the power, as regulated by national legislation, necessary to perform its functions, including the power to monitor, investigate, research, educate, lobby, advise and report on issues concerning gender equality.

(3) The Commission for Gender Equality has the additional powers and functions prescribed by national legislation.



A PREGNANCY IS NOT THE WHOLE STORY

BEFORE	AT PRESENTATION	AFTERWARDS
Was the child safe, informed and able to exercise agency?	Did healthcare identify protection needs and possible abuse?	Did referral lead to safety, schooling and continued support?

A clinical event may reveal a much longer history of vulnerability.

WHY THIS IS ALSO AN HIV AND CHILD-PROTECTION ISSUE

HEALTH

HIV, contraception, antenatal care and mental health

POWER

Sexual coercion, unequal relationships and violence

OPPORTUNITY

School retention, economic security and dignity

PROTECTION

Reporting, safe referrals and continuing support

KZN'S PROVINCIAL COMMITMENT | 2025–2029

CHILDREN 10–14

Provincial ambition: zero pregnancies among children in this age group by 2029.

ADOLESCENTS 15–19

Provincial ambition: significantly reduce teenage pregnancies.

One multisectoral strategy. Distinct age groups and distinct protection needs.

THE SIX STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE KZN STRATEGY

01 SRHR knowledge

Awareness and rights for adolescent girls, young women, boys and young men

02 Integrated youth programmes

Coordinate health, education, psychosocial and socioeconomic services

03 Teenage mothers

Protection, support, education and economic empowerment

04 Community-led change

Community action addressing pregnancy, GBVF and HIV

05 Boys and young men

Engagement in preventing GBVF and child and teenage pregnancy

06 GBVF and justice

Prioritise handling of cases, especially those affecting children

WHAT THE KZN STRATEGY GETS RIGHT

MULTISECTORAL

Multiple departments and community stakeholders

SERVICE ACCESS

SRHR, psychosocial and educational support

SOCIAL CHANGE

Community mobilisation and economic opportunity

MALE ENGAGEMENT

Recognition that prevention is not only a girl's responsibility

THE DRIVERS ARE GENDERED AND STRUCTURAL

WHO HAS POWER?

Adult men, age-disparate relationships and control over choice

WHO IS LEFT OUT?

Adolescents with disabilities, rural youth and gender-diverse young people

WHO CARRIES THE COST?

Girls' schooling, care responsibilities, stigma and lost opportunity

Poverty • Unequal power • Coercion • Harmful norms

GENDER-SENSITIVE IS NOT NECESSARILY GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE

SENSITIVE	RESPONSIVE	TRANSFORMATIVE
Recognises gendered vulnerability	Addresses practical and structural barriers	Changes unequal norms, power and institutional practice

CGE assessment: important strengths, but limited gender-transformative potential.

WHERE ARE THE MEN AND BOYS?

BOYS NEED

SRHR knowledge, consent education and healthy relationship skills

MEN MUST

Reject coercion, challenge harmful norms and share responsibility

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD

Address exploitation and hold adult perpetrators accountable

Male involvement is a starting point; transformation requires changed behaviour and accountability.

A CHILD PRESENTS PREGNANT: CARE, REPORTING, PROTECTION

CHILDREN'S ACT • SECTION 110

Specified professionals report defined abuse or deliberate neglect when the statutory threshold is met.

Form 22 → DSD / designated child protection organisation / SAPS

SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT • SECTION 54

Any person must report knowledge, reasonable belief or suspicion of a sexual offence against a legally vulnerable person.

Report immediately → SAPS

CARE → ASSESS → REPORT WHERE REQUIRED → REFER → FOLLOW UP

Completing a form is not proof that a child is safe.

CGE PILLAR 3 INVESTIGATION: LESSONS FOR KZN

FORENSIC CAPACITY

Reported shortages of forensic nurses and forensic psychologists

ACCESS TO SERVICES

Concerns about Thuthuzela Care Centre sustainability and accessibility

SAFE ACCOMMODATION

Inadequate shelter capacity and barriers for some survivors

ACCOUNTABILITY

Case tracking, backlogs and service coordination challenges

NATIONAL POLICY: ALIGNMENT, NOT REPLACEMENT

National plan (2027–2031): five proposed action pillars

EDUCATE & EMPOWER	PROTECT	PROVIDE	SUPPORT	ENABLE

National framework to strengthen provincial coordination, financing, rights-based services and accountability not to replace KZN's six objectives.

Version 1 (11 September 2026); not yet formally adopted – still in the development stage.

WHO IS ACCOUNTABLE FOR IMPLEMENTING KZN'S STRATEGY?

RESPONSIBILITY

Named leads for each objective and intervention

RESOURCING

Budgeted activities and frontline capacity

COORDINATION

Referral protocols and district-level partnerships

RESULTS

Shared, disaggregated outcome monitoring

SIX PROVINCIAL OBJECTIVES. SIX IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES.

01 **SRHR knowledge**

Confidential, accessible, rights-based services

02 **Integrated programmes**

Funded district plans and referral pathways

03 **Teenage mothers**

School retention, care and economic opportunity

04 **Community mobilisation**

Confront coercion and harmful gender norms

05 **Boys and young men**

Consent, shared responsibility, positive masculinities

06 **GBVF and justice**

Survivor-centred reporting, protection and follow-up

PROTECTING FUTURES, NOT ONLY PREVENTING PREGNANCY

A pregnancy may be recorded in a health facility.

BUT

The conditions that made a child vulnerable often began long before she entered it.

Prevention and accountability must begin there.

SOURCES AND LEGAL REFERENCES

- KZN Provincial Multisectoral Strategy to Curb Child and Teenage Pregnancies (2025–2029)
- CGE, Gender Analysis of the KZN Strategy (20 January 2026)
- CGE, Investigation into Implementation of Pillar 3 of the NSP-GBVF in KZN (2024/25)
- National Strategic Plan for Reducing Adolescent Pregnancy and Its Adverse Effects (2027–2031), Version 1 (11 September 2026)
- Children's Act 38 of 2005, s110; General Regulations Regarding Children, reg 33
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 32 of 2007, s54 (as amended)

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