

Pregnant teenager encouraged to finish school

Some voices are very powerful, and others lose their strength little by little due to fear or shame—voices like those of adolescents who face pregnancy at an early age.

Rosa, a 16-year-old adolescent who is eight months pregnant, has a soft voice that reflects a passiveness related to fear or concern over “what people will say.” She was a victim of sexual violence and will be a very young mother.

This is a common situation; the Ministry of Health’s registry shows that in Peru, 26,400 girls and adolescents gave birth in 2020.

Richard, a 16-year-old from a Shipibo community in Ucayali, and Rosa’s friend, explains that her pregnancy is the result of the sexual violence she suffered. The aggressor was not reported to the authorities because he did not live in the community.

Adolescent pregnancy is a problem that is due to socio-economic factors, sexual violence, family breakdowns, as well as difficulties in accessing education, health, justice and child protection services.

Richard recalls that when Rosa found out she was expecting a child, she thought of leaving school. However, he and other students encouraged her to keep studying and finish secondary school.

“In my school there have been cases of adolescent pregnancy and when we find out, we approach our classmates and reassure them. We tell them they shouldn’t stop studying and that they should finish school. Fortunately, they stay in school because they understand that studying helps us build our future and be better people,” said Richard.



Adolescents from the Masisea Indigenous community in Ucayali returning to their school for face-to-face classes.

(Photo: © UNICEF/2021/ Ayala)

When faced with adolescents that are pregnant or mothers, a school that is able to embrace them in a friendly and inclusive manner helps these adolescents finish secondary school and helps them gain the necessary knowledge and skills to build their future.

“For us, the school is an important ally because we can instill knowledge to the girls and boys about their rights and responsibilities,” said Royer Manuyama,

a teacher at Richard and Rosa’s school. “The school provides a space where students can receive advice and protection.”

Soon Rosa will be a mother and will finish secondary school. She will most likely bring her baby to school or leave him or her in the care of her own mother. Most importantly, Rosa will finish school and transform her life, for her sake and her child’s.



[Click here](#) to watch a video testimony featuring Richard.