Meet a 16 year old mother. She is a Masai girl from Kimokowa village in Ngorongoro District, rural Tanzania. With her traditional red checked Masai attire draped over her shoulder, she shows me to a three legged stool under an acacia tree. It is my first field visit since my appointment 3 weeks ago and I am not sure what to expect.

The brightest of smiles lights up her face as she speaks excitedly all the while rocking Sophia, her 2 month old baby who is wrapped in colourful *kangas* (cotton cloth) close to her mother’s chest. I perch myself on the stool and she seats on a dry log that serves as a bench.

The scene is heart wrenching, a baby carrying a baby but Peyai’s smile is so reassuring that for a little while, it all feels almost normal; like meeting a woman pushing a stroller across the mall. Her baby is snuggled in place binki in mouth, milk bottle ready and a bag complete with dipers, wipes and all other needs safely tucked away.

That is not the case with Peyai, very far from it. She is only a child, not a woman and is still merely even a teenager. She has no stroller, no milk bottle, no wipes and other than the kangas (which are also not exclusive for the baby) she really has nothing else to offer, not even adequate breast milk because she is just so young.

*“Nilikua napenda shule sana, nilikua nawapenda rafiki zangu na walimu, nilikua napenda somo la kingereza, sikua mtundu (anacheka kidogo) nilikua na fanya vizuri tu, lakini siku moja baba akaniambia sirudi shule tena maana amekuja mtu wa kunioa (machozi yana mlenga) ... kama sio Sophia na walimu wake ningepoteza matumaini yote... nilipo mwambia tatizo langu alinisikiliza akawafwata wazazi na mipango ya ndoa ikavunjwa.. na mshukuru sana kama sio yeye kujakusema nasi, sijui ingekuaje kwangu na mtoto, ndio maana nikampa jina la Sophia...”*

**TRANSLATION**

*“I really liked school, I liked my friends and teachers and I liked English. I was not naughty (she giggles) I was performing just fine but one day my father said I will not go back to school again because there was a man ready to marry me (her eyes get watery) ... if it was not for Sophia I would have lost all hope...when I told her my problem, she listened and she confronted my parents and the wedding was stopped...I am very grateful if she and the teachers (field officers) did not come to talk to us I don’t know what would happen to me and the baby, that is why I named her Sophia...”*