

What south korea can do to help abandoned babies

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A 17-year-old high school student holds her newborn baby tightly and walks up to the stairs leading to a child's nursery. She then opens a hatch in the wall and softly puts the blanket-covered baby down. She turns around and walks away, sobbing with tears. Teenage pregnancy is considered to be shameful by a large majority of Koreans.

Pregnant adolescents are usually publicly ostracized by their peers, and sometimes even by their family members. Since many do not want to be isolated by their acquaintances, South Korea has a teen pregnancy rate of 2.9 women per 1000, according to the Korean Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology. Despite this low percentage, the small portion of girls who are carrying a child struggle, both socially and mentally. Women who experience teenage pregnancy do so mainly as a result of unprotected sexual intercourse, sexual abuse, incest, and many more unfortunate circumstances. While some of these girls choose to care for the baby, many are forced to abandon them in the streets, or in extreme cases, in public bathrooms.

After hearing reports of babies deserted in hazardous and life-threatening circumstances, Pastor Lee Jong-Rak of the Jusarang Community Church chose to take action by creating a facility, baby boxes, for them. "Some teenagers give birth to babies in empty houses or in public toilets. They wrap them in old shirts or towels and bring them to us," he declared. This small Seoul church has created a temperature-controlled chamber that functions as a baby box. Baby boxes, also known as baby hatches, enables unwanted newborns to be taken in anonymously without parents identifying themselves. Almost 200 every year are deposited in the baby box covered in <https://assignbuster.com/what-south-korea-can-do-to-help-abandoned-babies/>

blood and sometimes with the umbilical cord still attached to the naked body.

However, since last year, the Gwanak district office has continuously urged the pastor to close down the service. In 2012, the country banned the adoption of undocumented babies, and required all adoptions to be court-approved. “ We see the baby box as an illegal facility that encourages baby abandonment,” said Min Seo-young, a local official. However, what would be the impact of prohibiting baby boxes? 152 infants were abandoned in the first seven months of 2017; an occurrence that should never have to be experienced. With the regulation, that number is only capable of increasing, with single women being forced to now illicitly abandon unwanted newborns. The numbers show it all.

Instead of decreasing the number of baby boxes, officials need to legalize these critical facilities that can save hundreds of innocent lives. Expanding the nurseries would permit single women to anonymously give their newborns that they cannot ever hope to raise, an opportunity to survive: adoption. While the babies may never find their biological mothers, it certainly seems to be a better alternative than being forgotten in a public bathroom at Seoul station.