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Expanding access to education for teenage mothers in Homa Bay County: What 'might' work

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Expanding Access to Education for Teenage Mothers in Homa Bay County

What 'Might' Work

Chi-Chi Undie, Population Council

APHRC Roundtable Discussion

What Works for Girls' Education

October 9, 2015; Nairobi, Kenya

Ministry of Education

Context

Homa Bay County Context

40% of girls aged 15-19 have begun childbearing

More than 2x the national level of 18%

Few ever return to school

Of these, 9% had a live birth **before** age 15

17% of women aged 15-49 are married **before** age 15

Kenyan policy context

1994

- **Adoption of school re-entry policy** for girls. Guidelines formulated in 1996.

2007

- **Adoption of Gender Policy in Education** with reference to **school re-entry for student mothers**

2008

- **Free Secondary Education policy** passed. Tuition covered in public, day schools.

2009

- Publication of **National School Health Policy**, including guidance on handling **in-school pregnancy**

Community context

Out-of-school teen girls in Homa Bay (n=728)

Awareness: Had not heard of ...

Policy*	Out-of-school girls (n=728)	Household Heads (n=511)	School Principals (n=167)
School Re-Entry	7%	11%	18%
National School Health	36%	35%	2%
Free Secondary Education	57%	55%	n/a

What's the best model?

Policy dialogue and advocacy

- Two dialogues
- 200 school principals from schools in the study sites
- Advocacy with Homa Bay County Dept of Education

Interactive media campaign

- ‘Real-life’ radio series
- Expert interviews (MOE, principals, community leaders, etc.) on policies
- Call-ins, prizes
- Complementary IEC materials on policies
- Road shows
- Engagement of local celebrity & politicians (Women’s rep, etc.)

Lessons learned from implementation

What we're learning

- Dialogue is critical
 - Schools aren't the enemy
 - Schools face important constraints
 - Schools want to help
- Initial support for stakeholders is important
- Girls want to return to school (married and unmarried)

What 'might' work

- ✓ Leaving pre-conceived notions behind
 - Being bold, asking tough questions, no such thing as 'no-go' areas
- ✓ Listening
- ✓ Working collaboratively with a view toward letting go

Thank you

Acknowledgment

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