2019

School re-entry and retention policies in Kenya: Homa Bay County Head Teachers Dialogue

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School Re-Entry and Retention Policies in Kenya

Homa Bay County Head Teachers Dialogue

Ciala Resort, Kisumu
September 13, 2019

Photo by Hellen Murugi
Early pregnancy & motherhood in Kenya: ‘Not yet *uhuru’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage of girls aged 15-19 who have begun childbearing in Kenya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nyanza</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coast</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rift Valley</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Eastern</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Early pregnancy & motherhood in Kenya: ‘Not yet uhuru’

By County:
Percentage of girls aged 15-19 who have begun childbearing in Kenya

There is a problem ...

- The proportion of girls (aged 15-19) who get pregnant in Kenya has not changed in the last decade.

- 75% of these girls either have no education (33%), incomplete primary education (19%), or complete primary education with no secondary education (36%).


Photo by Nircle
The reality ...

• **98%** of girls aged 15-19 who have ever been pregnant in Kenya are **out of school**.

Kenya’s policy responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Adoption of school re-entry policy for girls at MOE’s National Symposium on girls’ education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Formulation of basic guidelines for school re-entry by MOE (issued through a circular to schools)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Publication of National School Health Policy, including guidance on handling in-school pregnancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Ongoing finalization of revised school re-entry policy guidelines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School re-entry policy guidelines: What do they say?

- Guidance + counseling for pregnant learners, other students, parents, teachers
- Unconditional re-admission for pregnant girls after delivery
- Schools, MOE to provide support in the admission process (into other schools)
National school health policy: What does it say?

- Pregnant learners allowed to remain in school for as long as possible
- To be advised of option to return to school after delivery
- Life skills counseling to be provided after delivery to help prevent repeat pregnancy
- Supportive environment, free of discrimination, to be provided by school administration
Why we’re here today

• Meeting objectives
  – Provide a forum for:
    • **Stock-taking** around school re-entry policy implementation
      – Sharing of best practices around re-entry policy implementation
      – Sharing of experiences with (and solutions to) any barriers to school re-entry policy implementation
    • **Reflection** and **opinion-sharing** on re-entry and retention policies for girls

  ➔ Revitalize implementation of re-entry policy
Thank you

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FlV97ja5U0A&feature=youtu.be
Baseline Survey Results
2018-2019

Chi-Chi Undie, Harriet Birungi, George Odwe, Francis Obare

Photo by The Star
WHY we conducted ‘baseline’ surveys

• To gain knowledge of our starting point with regard to promoting girls’ school re-entry (‘Where did we start?’) so that we can later on understand how far we have come (‘Where did we end? What progress did we make?’)
WHERE we conducted baseline surveys

• Homa Bay County
  – Homa Bay
  – Ndhiwa
  – Rangwe
WITH WHOM we conducted baseline surveys

• Head Teachers (n=251)
• Girls aged 12-16 in their homes (n=620)
• Girls’ household heads (n=644)
What we’re learning from Head Teachers
Pregnancy is an issue that primary schools in Homa Bay cannot ignore.

• ‘In the last one year [March 2018-March 2019], how many pregnancies have occurred in your school?’

Over 230 pregnancies

Photo by Center for Reproductive Rights
Pregnancy is an issue that primary schools in Homa Bay cannot ignore

- **61%** of Head Teachers have had girls get pregnant in their school and return to the same school in the last year.
- **35%** have had girls get pregnant elsewhere, then seek admission in their school after delivery.
- **20%** don’t know/aren’t sure, so it could be much higher.
Missed opportunity

- Most primary schools (96%) offer life skills education (LSE)
- But nearly half (48%) do not have an actual curriculum for LSE
- And in 27% of primary schools, LSE is taught as part of another subject
‘Girls who get pregnant should be allowed to remain in school’

- Head Teachers: 75%
- HHHs: 93%
- Girls: 63%
Head Teachers’ reasons

• Rights
• Pregnancy is not a disability
• Well-being
Girls’ and HHHs’ reasons

- Gender equity
- Rights
- Well-being
- Pregnancy is not a disability
Awareness of National School Health Policy

- Head Teachers: 78%
- HHHs: 71%
- Girls: 47%
‘Girls who get pregnant should be allowed to return after delivering’

Head Teachers: 88%
HHHs: 99%
Girls: 95%
Awareness of school re-entry policy

- **Head Teachers**: 83%
- **HHHs**: 91%
- **Girls**: 45%
Head Teachers are instrumental in informing girls and HHHs about the school re-entry policy.

Heard about it from a Head Teacher/Teacher

- 46% girls
- 28% household heads
### Head teachers’ knowledge of school re-entry policy content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pregnant girls should ...</th>
<th>% of head teachers in agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be dismissed from school for health reasons</td>
<td>✗ 18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive guidance and counseling</td>
<td>✓ 88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be re-admitted to other schools with conditions</td>
<td>✗ 52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be assisted by head teachers to get admission to other schools</td>
<td>✓ 32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What we’re learning from Girls in Homa Bay County
(aged 12-16)
Schooling

- Most are in school: 96%
- Most are in primary school, specifically: 88%
- Among those in school, some have ever had to interrupt their schooling: 12%

  - Reasons
    - Illness: 32%
    - Pregnancy: 30%
    - Lack of school fees: 28%
Pregnancy

Among all girls interviewed (regardless of schooling status), 9-11% have ever been pregnant.
Pregnancy: Who is responsible?

- ‘Boyfriend’ 95%
- ‘boda-boda’ 2%
- ‘Other’ 3%

52%: fellow student
43%: not a fellow student
Pregnancy: The role of coercive sex

- About 30% of those who got pregnant (and ever had to leave school as a result) were either physically forced or pressured into having sex.

Photo by Citizen TV
## Dreams and determination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td>Of girls currently out-of-school would like to re-enter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>96%</strong></td>
<td>Of their HHHs intend to support them in doing so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7%</strong></td>
<td>Of these same girls re-entered school, and then dropped out again</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Interventions
Interactive media campaign

- Aug to Sept/Oct 2019
  - ‘Real-life’ radio series
  - Expert interviews (MOE, head teachers, community leaders, etc.) on policies
  - Call-ins
  - Complementary IEC materials on policies
  - Road shows
Policy dialogue

- Two dialogues
  - With over 300 primary school heads in the 3 sub-counties
- Advocacy with education stakeholders
In summary ...

• Homa Bay County presents an enabling environment for the promotion of school re-entry for parenting girls, based on the attitudes and knowledge of school personnel and community members, and on the persistent dreams and desires of parenting girls.
Thank you for your attention
The **Population Council** conducts biomedical, social science, and public health research. We deliver solutions that lead to more effective policies, programs, and technologies that improve lives around the world.
Discussion
Group Discussion I: School Re-entry policy

- What updates/personal best practices can you share on how your school has been implementing the school re-entry policy for parenting girls since the March 2019 Head Teachers Dialogue? How well are these best practices working? Please elaborate.

- *Note: There are many ways to implement the school re-entry policy, even when one currently has no pregnant girls in his/her school.*
Group Discussion II: School re-entry policy

• What barriers have you faced in implementing the school re-entry policy in your school since the March 2019 Head Teachers Dialogue? In what ways are you addressing these barriers? Please elaborate.

*Note: There are many ways to implement the school re-entry policy, even when one currently has no pregnant girls in his/her school.*
Next Steps

• In 3 Homa Bay County sub-counties:
  ✓ 2\textsuperscript{nd} round of data collection from girls aged 12-16 and their household heads
  ✓ Continue media campaign (radio)
  ✓ Sustain ‘school re-entry’ school trophies
  ✓ Continue working closely with the Homa Bay County Department of Education
  ✓ Data analysis and report-writing
  ✓ Dissemination of project findings