Getting girls back to school during the COVID-19 pandemic in Kenya: Lessons from the 4Ts initiative

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GETTING GIRLS BACK TO SCHOOL DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN KENYA: LESSONS FROM THE 4Ts INITIATIVE

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Outline

- Introduction
- 4Ts Intervention
- Implementation
- Findings
- Lessons Learnt
- Policy/Programme Implications
PC Kenya seeks to improve the well-being and health of current and future generations and to help achieve a humane, equitable, and sustainable balance between people and resources.

We develop sustainable program solutions that respond to:

- girls’ educational needs and build their social, economic, and health assets;
- improve sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- reduce HIV transmission; prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV); assess various service-integration models; and
- strengthen evidence for program related to unintended pregnancy.

An affiliate of PC Inc.
Introduction:

- About 1 in 5 girls (18%) ages 15-19 in Kenya experience pregnancy

- The proportion of girls (ages 15-19) who get pregnant in Kenya has not changed in the last decade.
  - 74% have less than secondary education
  - 98% of girls aged 15-19 who have ever been pregnant in Kenya are out of school.

Early pregnancy & motherhood in Kenya

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

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased girls’ vulnerability

- Teenage pregnancy
- Child marriage
- Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)
- Female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C)
- Social exclusion
- School dropout
- Child marriage

Social exclusion
Opportunities...

School re-entry policy guidelines

**Purpose:**

• “The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a framework for enhancing re-entry of learners who drop out of school, including those with special needs and disabilities, in order to improve retention, transition and completion rates at all levels of basic education.”

On-going MoE Efforts

- **School re-entry implementation plan and monitoring tools**
- **Guidance & Counseling Policy:** would provide room for building evidence-based solution (e.g., parental engagement)

Changing social norms

- **Government ownership of the issue**
  ✓ **Examples - policy popularization; Back-to-school campaigns**
Intervention:

4Ts ‘Trace, Track, Talk, and reTurn’

- An intervention geared toward operationalizing Kenya’s school re-entry policy guidelines in the time of COVID-19.

- MoE-led effort to:
  - Trace girls who are currently out-of-school
  - Track them down at the household level, and
  - Talk to them about the importance of education and the education policy documents:
    - school re-entry policy guidelines
    - & national school health policy
  - reTurn to school - ensure they do return to school as a result of this intervention.
Implementation

Implementation Sites:
- Homa Bay County: 8 sub-Counties (42 Zones)
- Narok County: 6 sub-Counties (32 Zones)

Activities: (May-August 2021)
1. Orientation of CSOs
2. Sensitization of stakeholders:  
   - School heads, BoMs, Teachers, Parents, Learners
3. Distribution of re-entry guidelines~2000 copies
4. Monitoring
Implementation

Tracing
Head Teachers, School BoMs, Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs)

Tracking
CSOs, Chiefs, Village Elders

Talking
CSOs

Key Messages for PPGs

Support
You have the support of the government, the Ministry of Education, and head teachers to return to school.

Children
Everyone has a right to education. CSOs, Chiefs, and Village Elders are working to ensure that education is accessible to all children.

Help
Why? Because education can help ensure you have a bright future.

sOw for sOw today in order to reap tomorrow:

▪ Do everything you can to return to school; you never know who you will become tomorrow!

Let us know
We have a few questions to ask you or your parent/guardian so that we can inform school about whether to expect you back in school or not.

For your information, the government’s school re-entry policy guidelines are freely available online:
https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2324&context=departments_sbsr-rh

MOE: County Dept of Education; Dept of Policy, Partnerships, EAC Affairs; Director General’s Office

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY LEARNING AND BASIC EDUCATION
HOMA BAY COUNTY

The 4Ts (‘Trace, Track, Talk, and reTurn’) Monitoring Tool

[INSTRUCTION: PLEASE COMPLETE ONE FORM FOR EACH OUT-OF-SCHOOL GIRL WHO SHOULD BE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL. THE TRACKING FORM ONLY NEEDS TO BE ADMINISTERED TO ONE PERSON – THE PARENT/GUARDIAN, WHERE POSSIBLE.

LOCATION INFORMATION:
□ County:
[ ] Homa Bay
[ ] Narok

□ Sub-county:

□ Village:

Village elder’s name:

Mob. No:

GIRLS’ DETAILS:
Girl’s Name:

[ ___ | ___ ] Age:

Parent/Guardian’s Name:

Mob No.:

Main reason for being out of school (Tick one that applies)

[ ] Pregnancy/parenting
[ ] Lack of child labor
[ ] Marriage
[ ] Pregnancy
[ ] Taking care of sick parents
[ ] Lack of school fees
[ ] Other (Specify):

Planning to re-enter (Indicate Yes or No)

Yes=1    No=2

Already re-entered (Indicate Yes or No)

Yes=1   No=2

Not planning to re-enter (Indicate Yes or No)

Yes=1    No=2

Planning to re-enter (Indicate Yes or No)

Yes=1    No=2

Nearest field officer (Tick one that applies)

[ ] District Officer
[ ] Area Officer
[ ] Village Officer

MOE: County Dept of Education; Dept of Policy, Partnerships, EAC Affairs; Director General’s Office

Monitoring tool
Results:

Enhanced education access by marginalized girls

- Reached more than **1,500** out-of-school girls and their families in Homa-Bay and Narok Counties during COVID-19
  - 30% re-entered school during the intervention period
  - 54% were planning to re-enter school during the intervention period
  - 16% were not planning to re-enter school
Results:

Teenage motherhood is the main reason for being out-of-school

- Pregnant/parenting: 90.7% (Narok N=651), 90.7% (Homa Bay N=773)
- Marriage: 17.5% (Narok), 2.2% (Homa Bay)
- Lack of childcare: 4.3% (Narok), 2.5% (Homa Bay)
- Other: 2.2% (Narok), 3.8% (Homa Bay)
- Fell ill: 1.8% (Narok), 0.7% (Homa Bay)
- Taking care of sick people: 0.2% (Narok), 0.0% (Homa Bay)
- Lack of school fees: 0.0% (Narok), 0.0% (Homa Bay)
Some barriers...

- **Harmful cultural practices**

  Proportion of married girls not planning to return to school despite being reached by 4Ts

  82.5% (n=131)

- **Norms - gender/cultural/social**

  “One of the girls was pregnant and since she is not allowed to live in the same house/under the same roof with the father in her condition, she was forced to drop out of school to go put up with a relative until she delivered”.

  (SCO, Homa bay County)
Lessons learned:

❖ The negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on girl’s access to education.

❖ Targeted messages for parents and girls are effective in promoting school re-entry for marginalized girls.

❖ Parental engagement and support is key to promoting school re-entry.

❖ Harmful cultural practices and taboos as major barriers to school re-entry for girls.

❖ Structural- and system-related challenges affects optimal delivery.

— e.g., Distance, lack of/poor documentation
Policy/Program Implications:

Norms are changing:

- Government ownership of the issue (policy popularization, radio program, 4th ‘T’, number tracking, intervention monitoring, etc.)
- Although monitoring data on boys were not collected, they were also beneficiaries of the intervention. The intervention enhances access to education for boys, as well

“We are really happy with this 4Ts program and the school re-entry project as a whole. It has highlighted the need to have a proper policy on school re-entry and sensitized us on the need to encourage the parenting girls to go back to school. With a document and a structured tool, we are now able to give these girls and their parents the right information, and even the simple messages that are easy to understand to enable them go back to school.”

[Head teacher]
CONCLUSION

- The 4Ts is effective in expanding out-of-school girls’ access to, and inclusion in, education in the time of COVID-19, however, contextual and/or system-related challenges may hinder optimal delivery.

- For scale-up, there is need to:
  - Take into consideration the contextual vulnerability that may hinder re-entry and retention;
  - Develop targeted approaches for married girls; and
  - Establish/strengthen tracking system for monitoring and reporting on school re-entry, retention and challenges
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THANK YOU

Q&A
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