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

George Odwe, Chi-Chi Undie — Population Council









CIES 2022
ILLUMINATING THE POWER
OF IDEA/LISM



RELI
Regional Education
Learning Initiative

Wellspring
Philanthropic Fund

Outline

-  **Introduction**
-  **4Ts Intervention**
-  **Implementation**
-  **Findings**
-  **Lessons Learnt**
-  **Policy/Programme Implications**

POPULATION COUNCIL KENYA (PC Kenya)

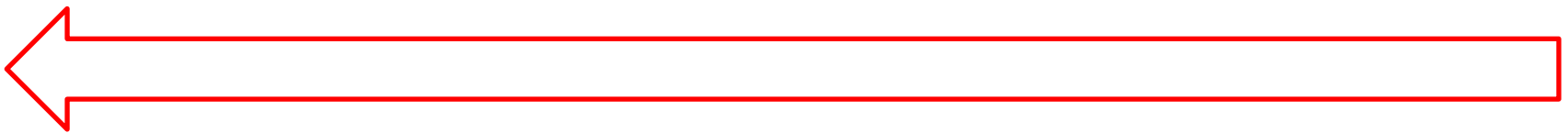
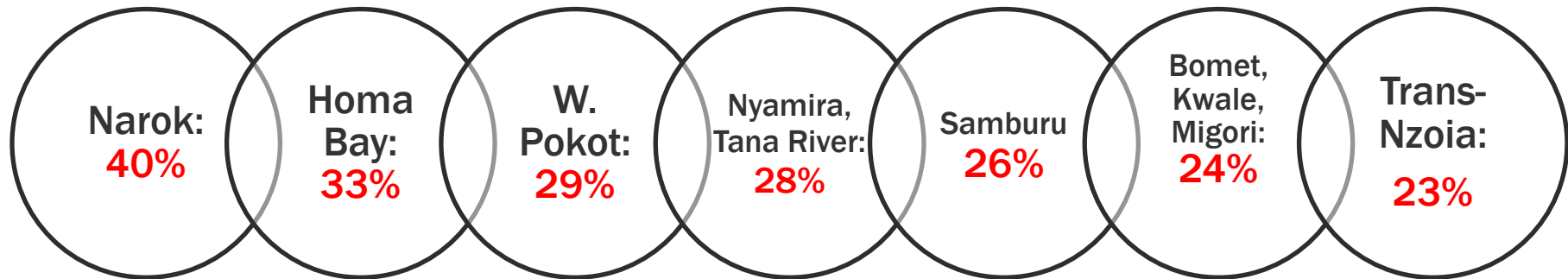
- PC Kenya seeks to improve the well-being and health of current and future generations and to help achieve a humane, equitable, and sustainable balance between people and resources.
- We develop sustainable program solutions that respond to:
 - girls' educational needs and build their social, economic, 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.



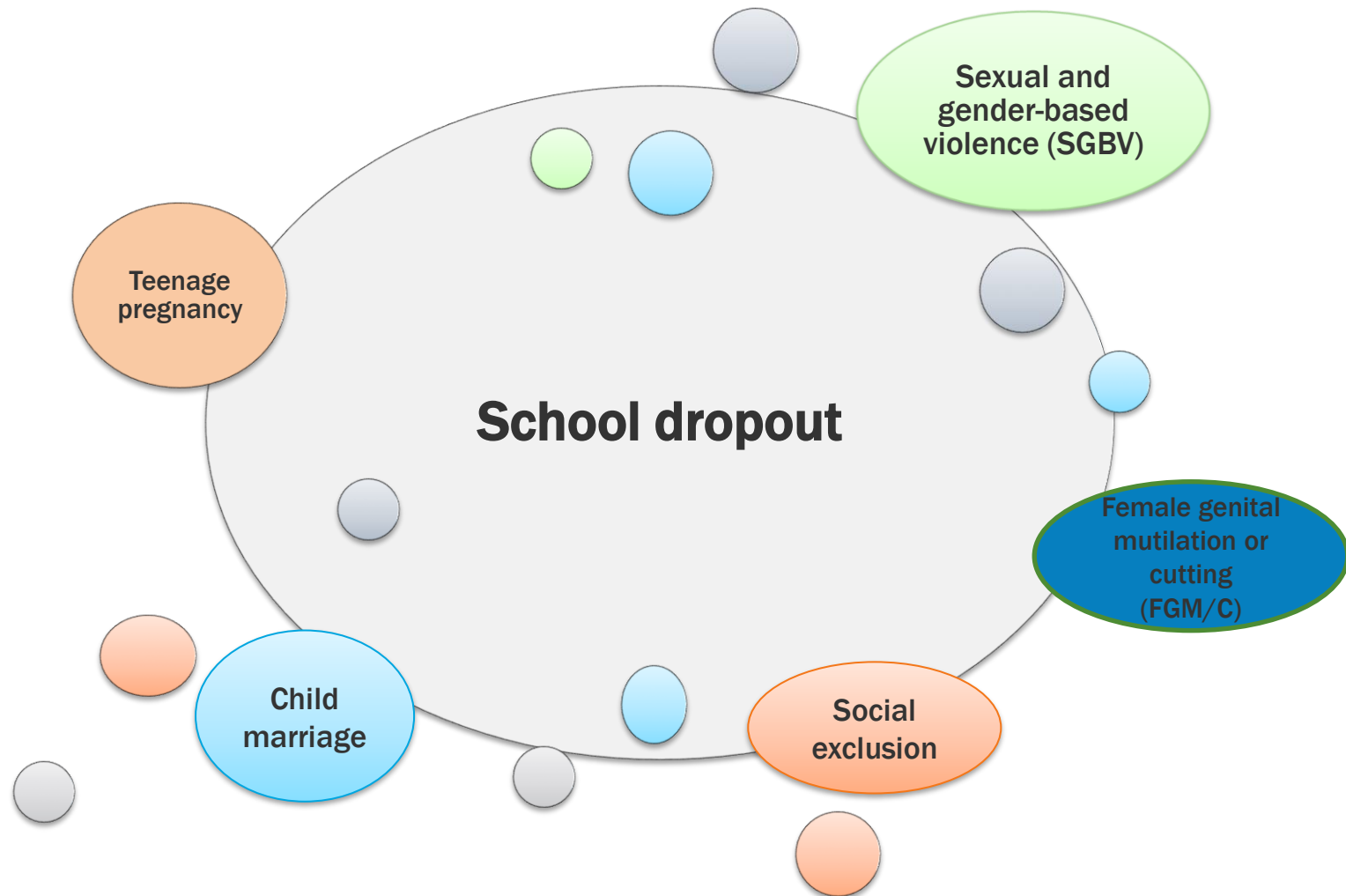
Early pregnancy & motherhood in Kenya



By County:

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

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased girls' vulnerability



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'

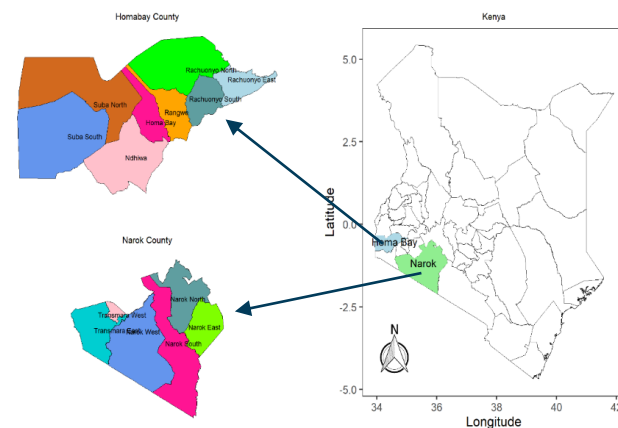
- An intervention geared toward operationalizing Kenya's school re-entry policy guidelines in the time of COVID-19.
- MoE-led effort to:
 - ✓ **Trace** girls who are currently out-of-school
 - ✓ **Track** them down at the household level, and
 - ✓ **Talk** to them about the importance of education and 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)

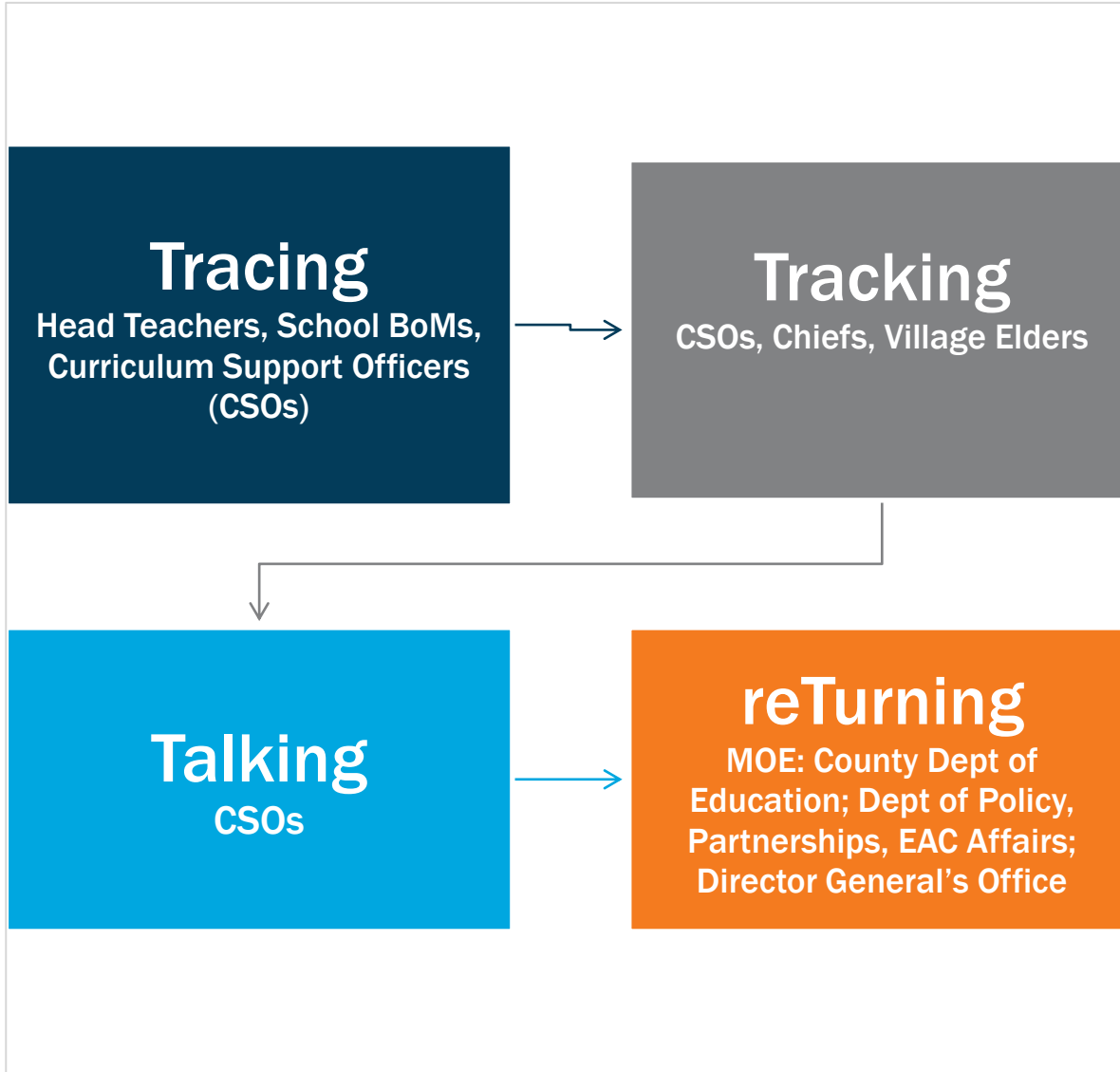


Activities: (May-August 2021)

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



Key Messages

Key Messages for PPGs

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

Children In Kenya, education is for ALL children: This means that any child in your home who dropped out of school (whether female or male) is free to return to school.

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

Slow for Slow today in order to map tomorrow: Do everything you can to return to school; you never know who you will become tomorrow!

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

Let us know

For your information, the government's school re-entry policy guidelines are freely available online: https://knowledgecommons.popschool.org/viewcontent.cgi?article=2224&context=departments_sabir_dh

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UNEP, UNFPA, UNICEF

Monitoring tool

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY LEARNING AND BASIC EDUCATION

HOMA BAY COUNTY
The 4Ts (Trace, Track, Talk, and reTurn) Monitoring Tool

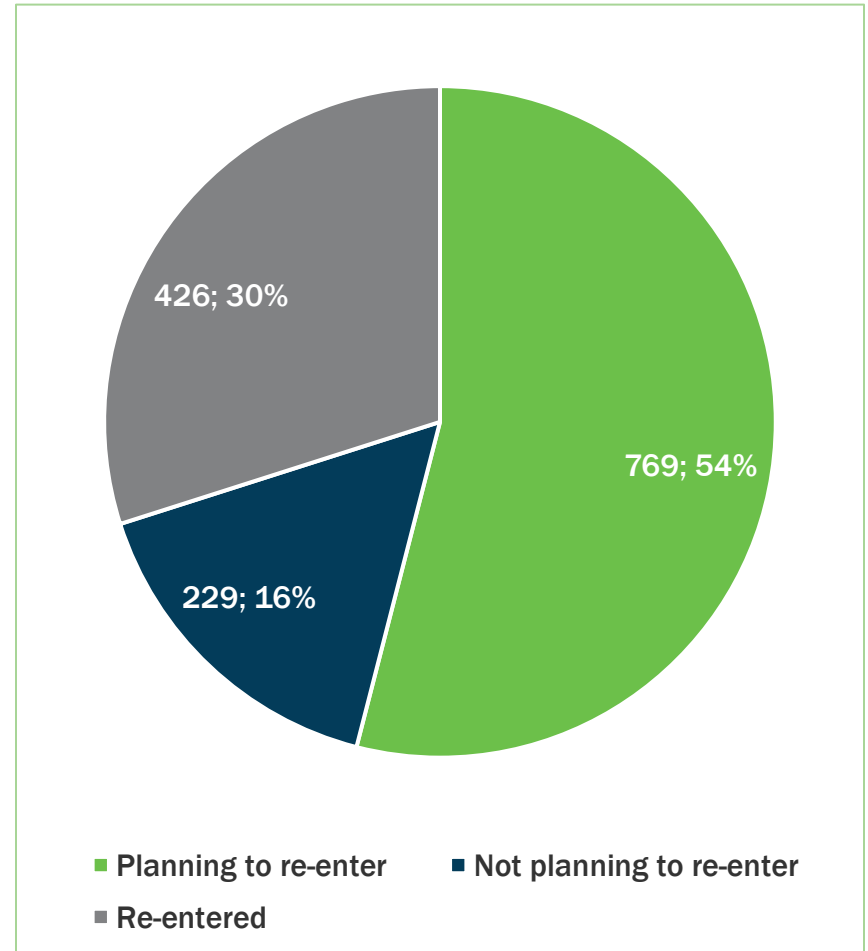
INSTRUCTION: PLEASE COMPLETE ONE FORM FOR EACH OUT-OF-SCHOOL GIRL WHO SHOULD BE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL. THE TRACKING FORM ONLY NEEDS TO BE ADMINISTERED TO ONE PERSON - THE PARENT/GUARDIAN, WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

LOCATION INFORMATION:				
Country: [Tick one that applies]	Sub-county:	Zone:	Village Name:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Homa Bay			Village elder's name:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Narok			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]	Did this reason come about as a result of the pandemic (COVID-19)? [Indicate Yes or No] Yes=1 No=2	Planning to re-enter [Indicate Yes or No] Yes=1 No=2	Not planning to re-enter [Indicate Yes or No] Yes=1 No=2	Already re-entered [Indicate Yes or No] Yes=1 No=2
<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnant/parenting				
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of childcare				
<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage				
<input type="checkbox"/> Fell ill				
<input type="checkbox"/> Taking care of sick parents				
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of school fees				
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)				

Results:

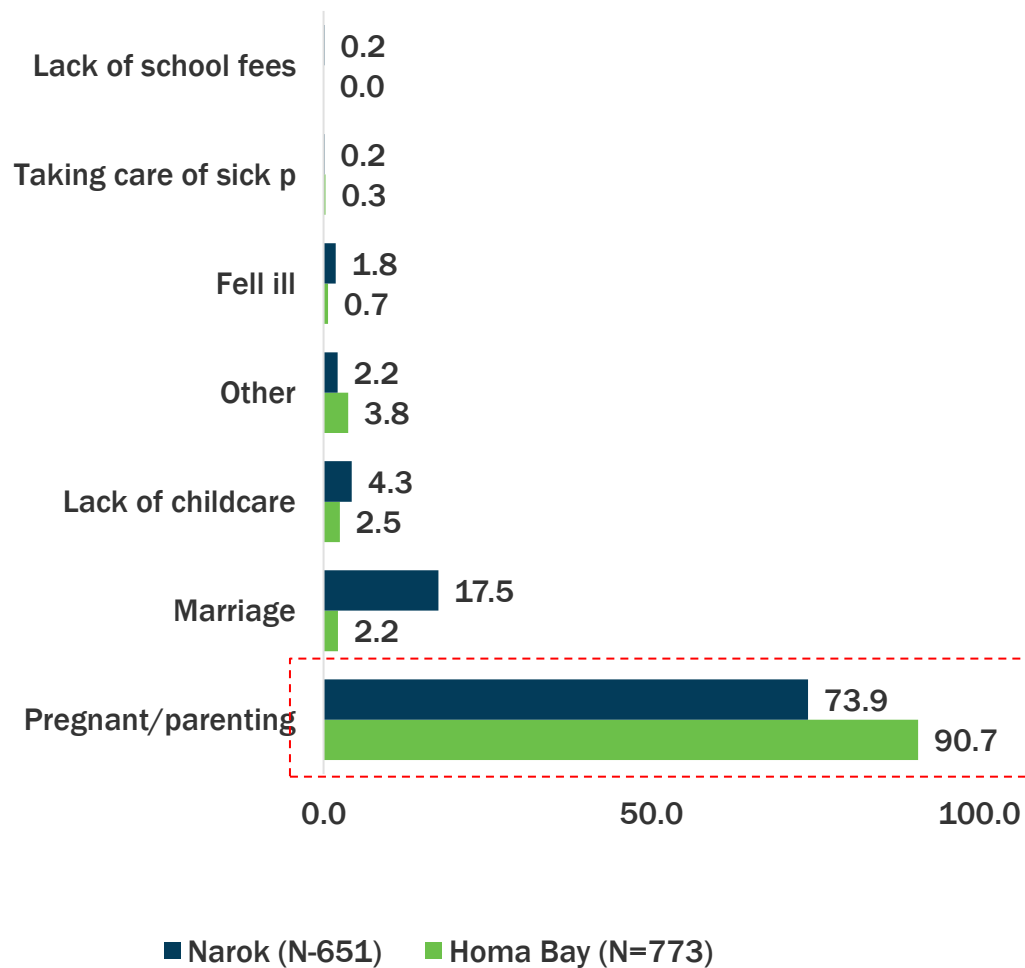
Enhanced education access by marginalized girls

- 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



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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