4-18-2022

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

George Odwe
Population Council

Chi-Chi Undie
Population Council

Recommended Citation

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

George Odwe, Chi-Chi Undie — Population Council

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

Narok: **40%**

Homa Bay: **33%**

W. Pokot: **29%**

Nyamira, Tana River: **28%**

Samburu **26%**

Bomet, Kwale, Migori: **24%**

Trans-Nzoia: **23%**
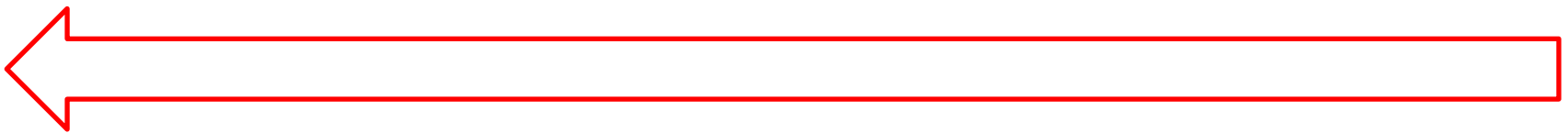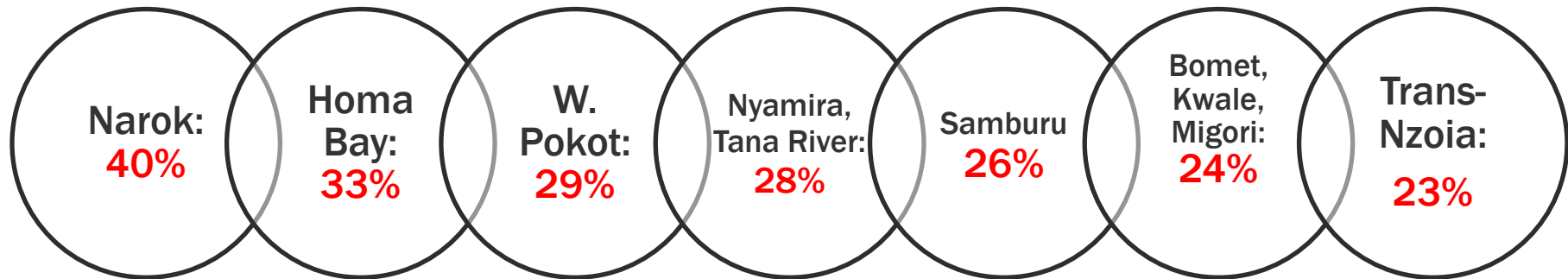
By County:

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

The COVID-19 pandemic has increased girls' vulnerability
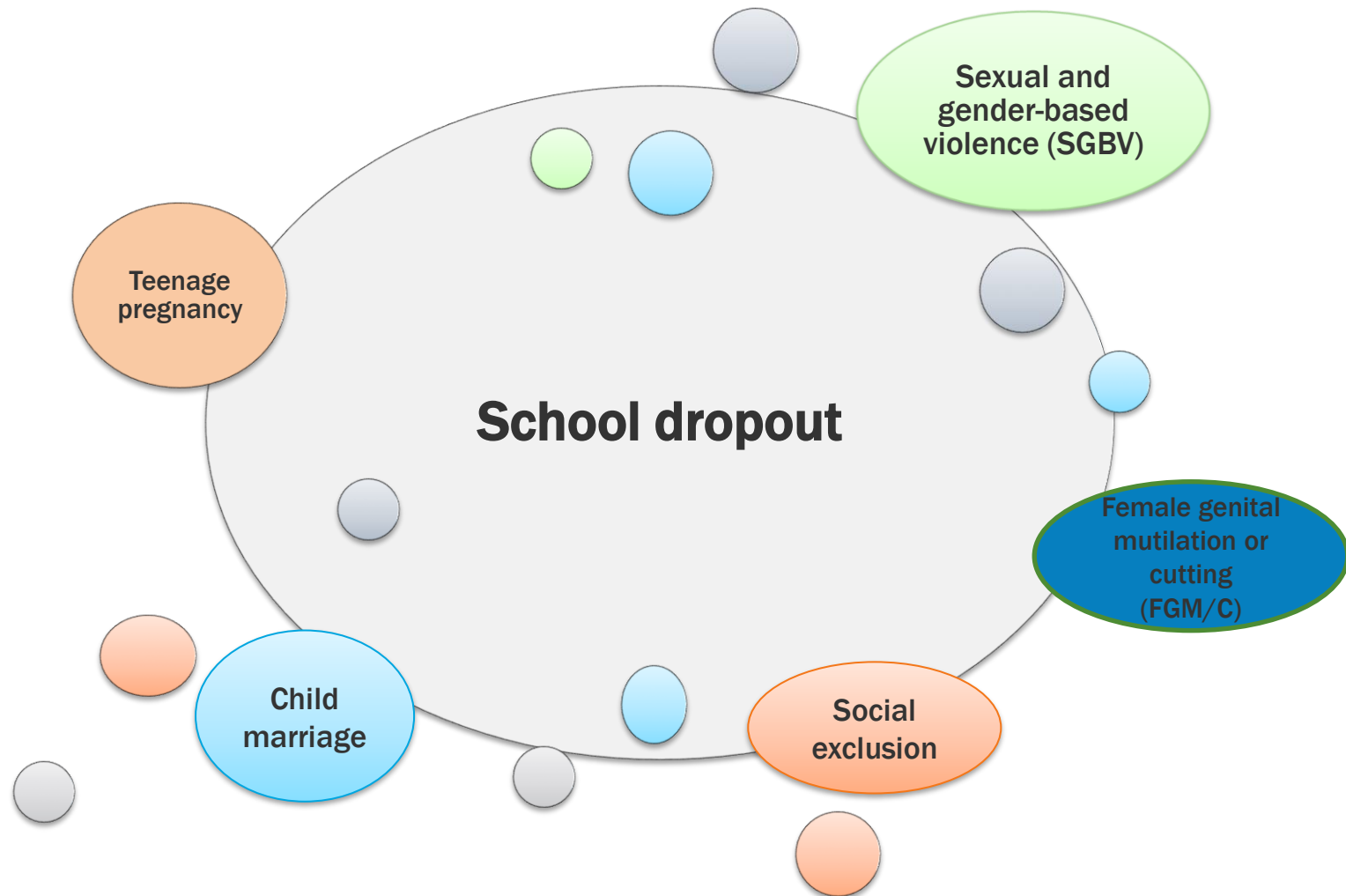
Opportunities...

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)
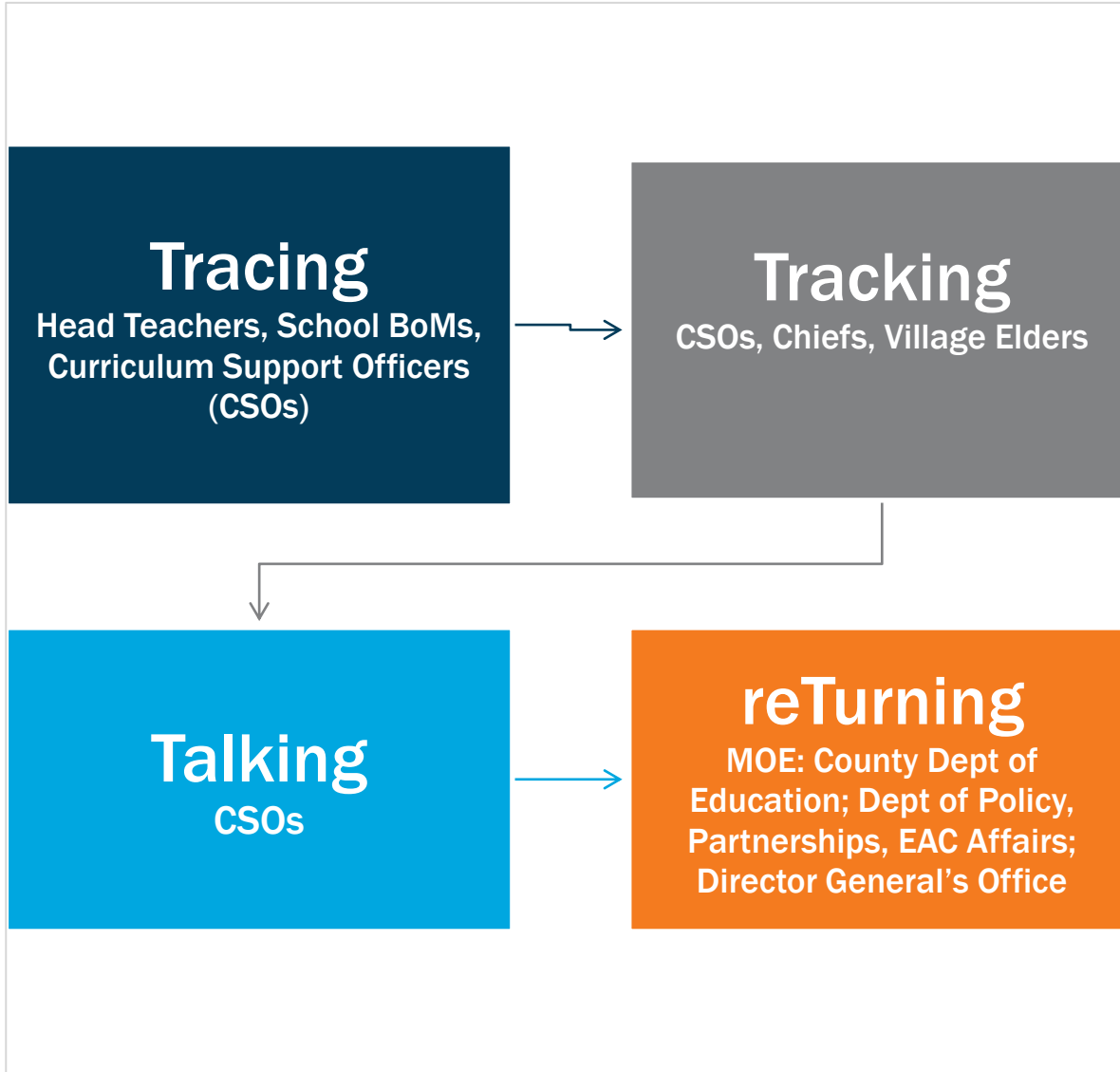- Narok County: 6 sub-Counties (32 Zones)
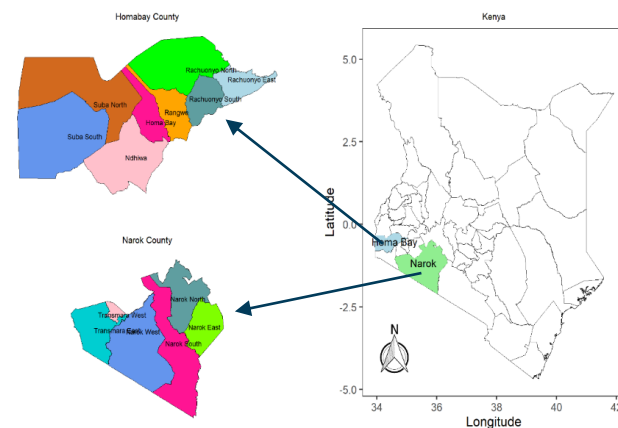
Activities: (May-August 2021)
1. Orientation of CSOs
2. Sensitization of stakeholders:
   - *School heads, BoMs, Teachers, Parents, Learners*
3. Distribution of re-entry guidelines~*2000 copies*
4. Monitoring

Implementation

Key Messages

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

Pie chart:
- 769; 54% (green)
- 229; 16% (dark blue)
- 426; 30% (gray)

Legend:
- ■ Planning to re-enter
- ■ Not planning to re-enter
- ■ Re-entered
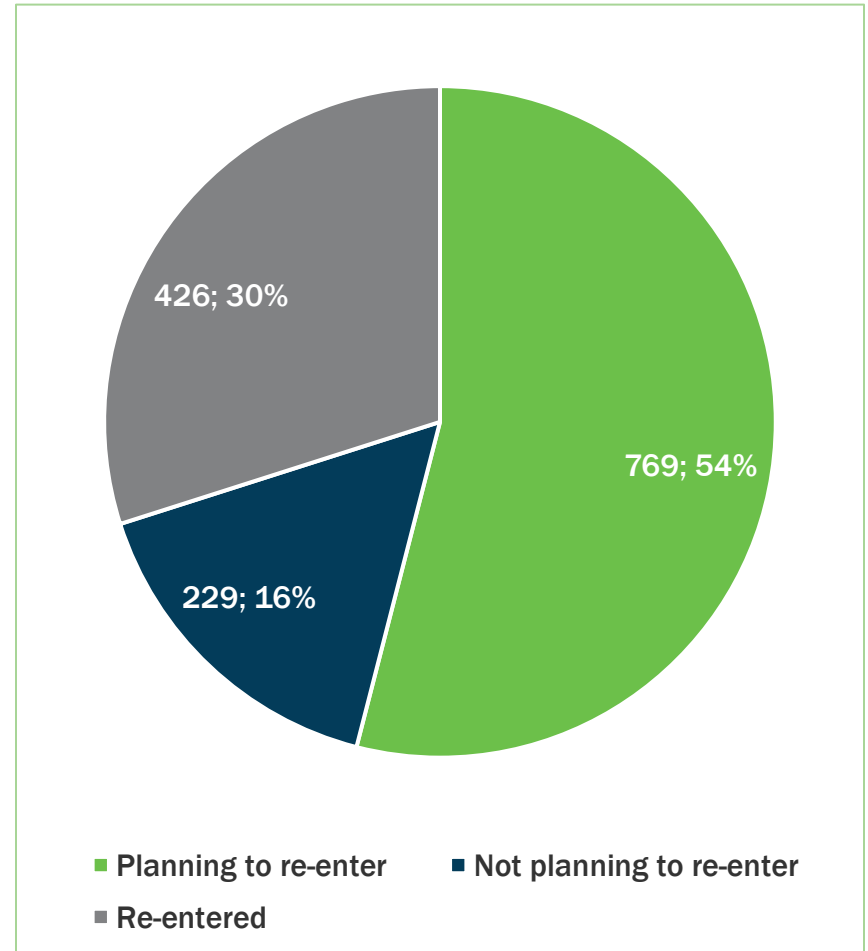
Results:

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

Reason	Narok (N-651)	Homa Bay (N=773)
Lack of school fees	0.2	0.0
Taking care of sick p	0.2	0.3
Fell ill	1.8	0.7
Other	2.2	3.8
Lack of childcare	4.3	2.5
Marriage	17.5	2.2
Pregnant/parenting	73.9	90.7

■ Narok (N-651)　■ Homa Bay (N=773)
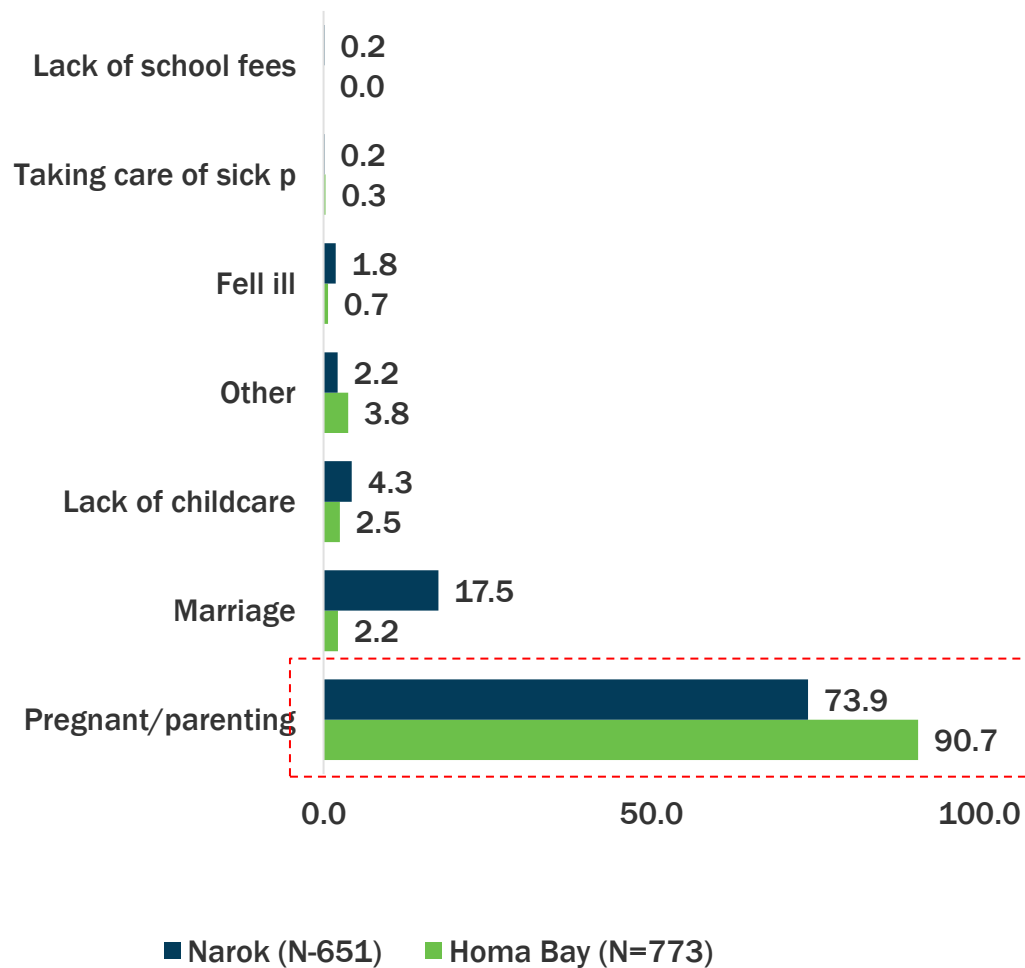
Some barriers...

- ## 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

Acknowledgements...

We would like to sincerely thank the following Ministry of Education team:

1. Ann Gachoya- AD, Directorate of Policy, Partnerships and EAC Affairs, MoE

2. Truphena Kirongo-AD, Director General's Office

3. Fredrick Kiiru –CDE, West Pokot County

4. Jane Njogu-CDE, Narok County

5. Millicent Nyabunga- CPC, Homa County and

6. Robert Moseti-CQASO, Narok County

THANK YOU

Q&A

Ideas. Evidence. Impact.

The Population Council conducts research and delivers solutions that improve lives around the world. Big ideas supported by evidence: It's our model for global change.