



**Knowledge hub**  
-  
**Collection of best practices**

**Summary of the best practice**

1. Title of the best practice (e.g. name of policy, programme, project, etc.) \*

4Ts 'Track, Trace, Talk and reTurn' Initiative

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented \*

Kenya

3. Please select the **most relevant** Action Track(s) the best practice applies to \*

- Action Track 1. Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools
- Action Track 2. Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development
- Action Track 3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession
- Action Track 4. Digital learning and transformation
- Action Track 5. Financing of education

4. Implementation lead/partner organization(s) \*

Population Council, Kenya

5. Key words (5-15 words): Please add key descriptive words around aims, modalities, target groups etc. \*

Promoting School Re-entry and Retention for Marginalized Girls

6. What makes it a best practice? \*

The initiative fostered government ownership of school re-entry for parenting adolescents and created agency for return to school among marginalized girls and their families

## Description of the best practice

### 7. Introduction (350-400 words)

This section should ideally provide the context of, and justification for, the practice and address the following issues:

- i) Which population was affected?
- ii) What was the problem that needed to be addressed?
- iii) Which approach was taken and what objectives were achieved? \*

i) Which population was affected?

Out-of-school adolescents

ii) What was the problem that needed to be addressed?

The COVID-19-related long school closure and lockdowns curtailed access to basic education for many girls due to several factors, including early pregnancy, gender-based violence, and harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C).

In Kenya, the education of an estimated 18 million learners was disrupted, with a total of about 15 million children and adolescents in primary and secondary schools remaining at home for more than nine months without access to structured learning, social protection, and other benefits associated with schooling. In addition, as school reopened following extended closure, many pregnant girls or young mothers could not continue their education. A study in 2021 showed that about 16% of girls and 8% of boys of in 4 counties: Nairobi, Kisumu, Kilifi, and Wajir did not return to school. This proportion could be higher in other counties, such as, Narok and Homa Bay, which have a perpetually high burden of teenage motherhood (33%-40%) in the country. The negative impact of COVID-19 on girls' education underscored the need for interventions geared towards addressing its effects on school re-entry and retention, particularly for marginalized and vulnerable girls such as those pregnant or parenting.

iii) Which approach was taken and what objectives were achieved?

We operationalized the school re-entry policy guidelines by providing technical support to the Ministry of Education (MoE) to increase pregnant/parenting girls' primary school re-entry rates through the implementation of a back-to-school campaign referred to as the 'Track, Trace, Talk, and reTurn' (4Ts) initiative. Specifically, the initiative involved; 1) tracking or identifying pregnant/parenting girls who dropped out of school by liaising with school heads; 2) tracing such girls down to the household level in collaboration with village chiefs; talking to girls, their families, and school heads about Kenya's school re-entry policy, the benefits of education, and the fact that the government welcomes their re-entry into school; 3) and ensuring that girls who want to, do return to school.

## 8. Implementation (350-450 words)

Please describe the implementation modalities or processes, where possible in relation to:

- i) What are the main activities carried out?
- ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?
- iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?
- iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation?

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- i) What are the main activities carried out?

The 4Ts initiative had three main activities, namely: 1) sensitization of key stakeholders (including county and sub-counties education, headteachers, parents and community leaders, and learners) about the 4Ts initiative using low-tech (mobile phones, WhatsApp) and meetings/workshops; 2) Tracing, tracking, and talking to out-of-school girls and their families. In addition, we developed information, education, and communication (IEC) materials with key school re-entry messages and available support that aided the taking; and 3) monitoring and documentation activities.

- ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?

The implementation of the 4Ts initiative was carried out between May-August 2022 across all eight sub-counties within Homa Bay County and six sub-counties within Narok County.

- iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?

Population Council, Kenya (PC-K) developed the 4Ts initiative in collaboration with the Homa Bay County Department of Education, and Ministry of Education (MoE) to foster the re-entry of pregnant/parenting girls into school. Its implementation was led by the Ministry of Education, with the Director General's office and the Directorate of Policy, Partnerships, and EAC Affairs providing overall coordination and implementation as well as monitoring the intervention. At the same time, the County Directorate of Education in Homa Bay and Narok supported the implementation process by collaboration with Primary and Secondary school heads' associations. Using existing MoE structures, the county and sub-county education directorate informed school heads within their remit about 4Ts activities. The Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) in collaboration with school heads and the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government (mainly the local administration- Chiefs, Assistant Chiefs and Village Elders through the 'Nyumba Kumi Initiative'), conducted the actual tracing, tracking, and talking to out-of-school girls as well as monitoring and documenting the number of out-of-school girls reached via 4Ts initiative.

- iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation?

The 4Ts initiative was co-funded by Wellspring Philanthropic Fund (WPF) and Echidna Giving through Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors for USD 300,000. The initiative was designed, implemented, and monitored within existing Ministry of Education structures in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government with technical and financial assistance from PC-K.

## 9. Results – outputs and outcomes (250-350 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the questions below:

- i) How was the practice identified as transformative? (e.g., impact on policies, impact on management processes, impact on delivery arrangements or education monitoring, impact on teachers, learners and beneficiary communities etc.);
- ii) What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?
- iii) Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results? \*

i) How was the practice identified as transformative? (e.g., impact on policies, impact on management processes, impact on delivery arrangements or education monitoring, impact on teachers, learners and beneficiary communities etc.);

The 4Ts initiative was transformative because it operationalized the school re-entry guidelines to support education for marginalized girls. The initiative invigorated government (read Ministry of Education) ownership of the school re-entry issue and created awareness and action among education stakeholders, including out-of-school girls and their families, communities, and policymakers. The Ministry of Education at the national level adopted this intervention, employing the model as it's 'Back to School Campaign' for vulnerable girls as part of its education sector COVID-19 response.

ii) What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?

Through the implementation of the 4Ts between May and August 2021, reached 1,424 out-of-school girls (773 in Homa Bay and 651 in Narok) and their families with important school re-entry policy information. The initiative enhanced education access by marginalized girls. Of the 1,424 out-of-school girls reached, 30 percent (n=426) re-entered school (despite the pregnancy/parenting status of the vast majority), while 54 percent (n=769) were planning to re-enter school during the project period. Only 16 percent were not planning to return to school, most of whom were married. Although we did not collect monitoring data on boys, they were also beneficiaries of the intervention. The intervention enhances access to education for boys, as well

iii) Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results?  
The initiative has not been evaluated.

## 10. Lessons learnt (300 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the following questions:

- i) What were the key triggers for transformation?
- ii) What worked really well – what facilitated this?
- iii) What did not work – why did it not work? \*

i) What were the key triggers for transformation?

While high teenage pregnancy rates are not new in the Kenyan context, the COVID-19 pandemic put a lot of concern about increased teenage motherhood into the spotlight. Combined with PC-K's previous work on expanding education for adolescent mothers in Kenya, it catalyzed the government ownership of the school re-entry for parenting girls issue. PC-K has a longstanding work on school re-entry that commenced in 2014 and involves developing, implementing, evaluating, and scaling up interventions that promote school re-entry for out-of-school parenting girls in Kenya. This culminated in the development of the 2020 National Guidelines for School Re-entry in Early and Basic Education. The guidelines symbolize the Government of Kenya's commitment to providing inclusive education to all learners for sustainable development.

ii) What worked really well – what facilitated this?

Both Homa Bay and Narok County's Department of Education and the parent Ministry of Education were part of the intervention design, planning, and implementation from the beginning. We developed a 4Ts roadmap highlighting key activities and timelines and assigned responsibilities to each team member. This arrangement enabled project activities to be relevant and appropriate, as well as laid some groundwork for the subsequent awareness, support, and positive reception of the intervention by the other stakeholders and community members. As a result, both Homa Bay and Narok County's Department of Education embraced and incorporated 4Ts activities into their work plans.

iii) What did not work – why did it not work?

The implementation of the 4Ts initiative faced some structural- and system-related challenges that may have affected its optimal delivery. Some challenges were similar across the two counties, while others were unique to the context. These challenges include competing priorities and workload for the CSOs, high staff transfers and movements, long distances and poor road infrastructures, and lack of or inadequate documentation of out-of-school parenting girls

## 11. Conclusions (250 words)

Please describe why may this intervention be considered a “best practice”. What recommendations can be made for those intending to adopt the documented “best practice” or how can it help people working on the same issue(s)? \*

Implementation and monitoring of the 4Ts intervention activities revealed opportunities for operationalization and institutionalization of school re-entry guidelines. By fostering collaboration between the MOE and other stakeholders, including parents and school heads, the 4Ts intervention effectively enhanced access to education for marginalized girls during the COVID-19 pandemic. Marginalized girls face a range of pre-existing and new challenges that hinder their education. Solutions promoting school re-entry for such groups cannot progress at scale without addressing these challenges. Therefore, multi-sectoral and multi-partner approaches need to involve out-of-school children, parents, and the community. Fostering a strong partnership between MoE and other government ministries/agencies and other NGO stakeholders is key to providing sustainable solutions to improving teenage mothers' education outcomes.

## 12. Further reading

Please provide a list and URLs of key reference documents for additional information on the “best practice” for those who may be interested in knowing how the results benefited the beneficiary group/s. \*

1. Kenya tests the 4Ts to get girls back to school
2. Re-opening in the time of COVID-19 in Kenya
3. Citizen TV news feature on the 4Ts
4. <https://www.popcouncil.org/news/getting-girls-back-to-school-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-by-operationalizi>
5. [https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2022SBSR\\_4Ts\\_CIES-pres0.pdf](https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2022SBSR_4Ts_CIES-pres0.pdf)
6. [https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2021SBSR\\_4Ts-ImplementationReport.pdf](https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2021SBSR_4Ts-ImplementationReport.pdf)
7. Citation of a 4Ts publication in UNESCO's recent report entitled 'When schools shut: Gendered impacts of COVID-19 school closures,' and reference in this report to 'mobilizing communities to support girls' re-enrolment' (page 71, Box 20) as a promising approach to mitigate the effects of school closures.