

ISBN 978-9987-18-083-7

APRIL - 2024

Study Brief

Experience of the Implementation of Reintegrating Teenage Mothers into formal Secondary Schools in Tanzania



HakiElimu @2024

ISBN 978-9987-18-083-7

Any part of this publication may be reproduced for education and non-commercial purpose, provided provenance is made to the source and a copy provided to HakiElimu

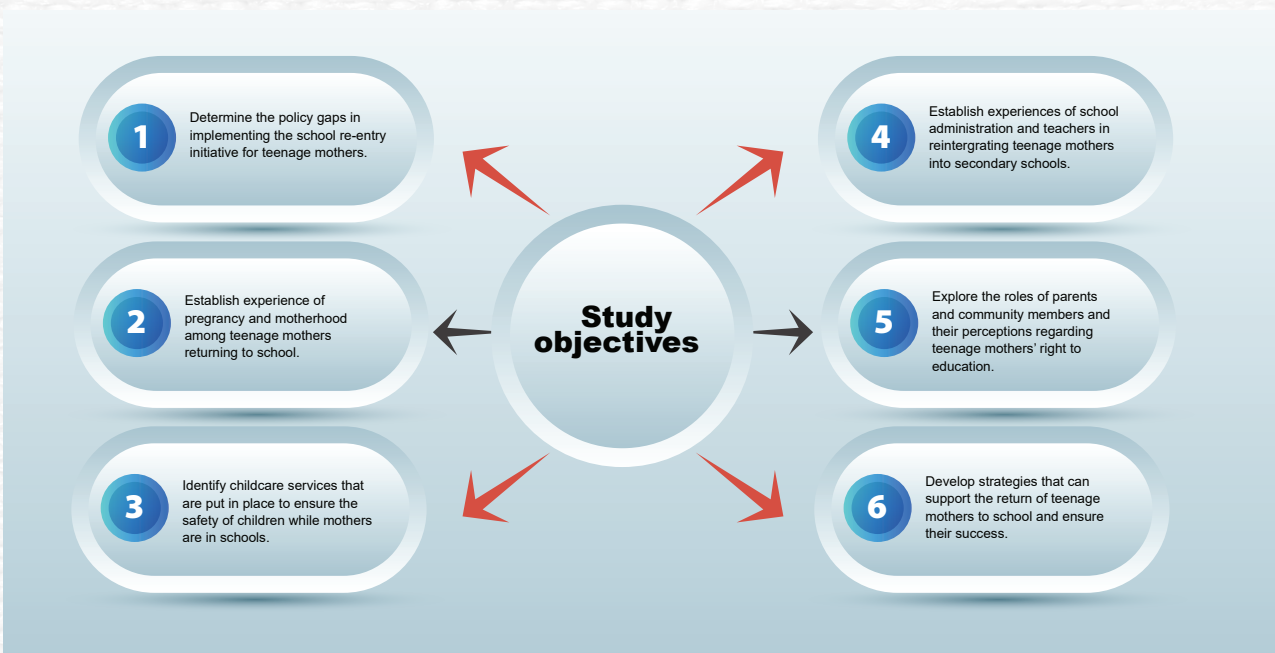
For full report, please visit www.hakielimu.or.tz/publications.



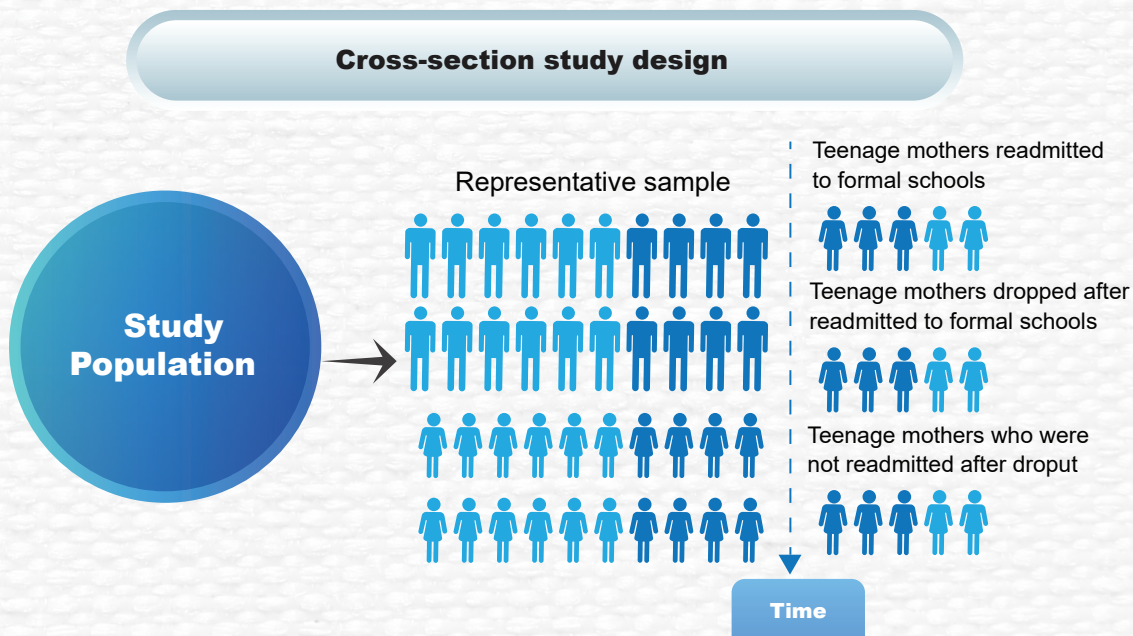
1. Introduction

Many African countries have established programs that make it possible for girls who drop out of school due to pregnancy be readmitted after giving birth. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives is hindered by various challenges faced by teenage mothers, such as a lack of childcare options, negative attitudes from teachers and students, financial constraints, and stigmatization. Tanzania, like other countries, implements the school re-entry initiative since 2022. This study brief presents the summary of the findings about the experiences of teenage mothers and other key stakeholders regarding the school re-entry initiative in Tanzania Mainland. The study employed a mixed cross-sectional approach. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently for a better understanding of the phenomena at hand.

2. Study Objectives

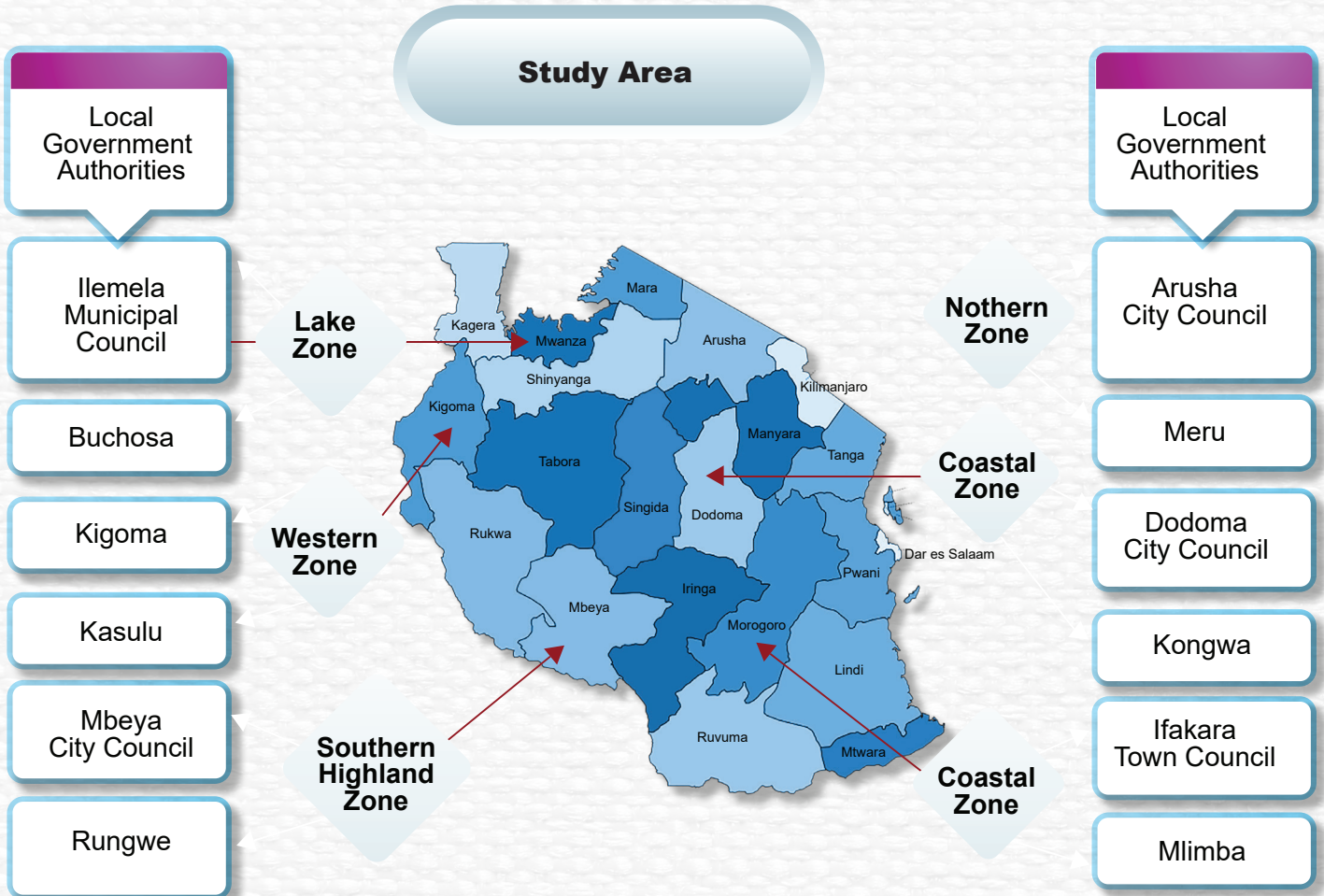


3. Study Design



3. Study Area

6 Zones 6 Regions 12 Local Government Authorities

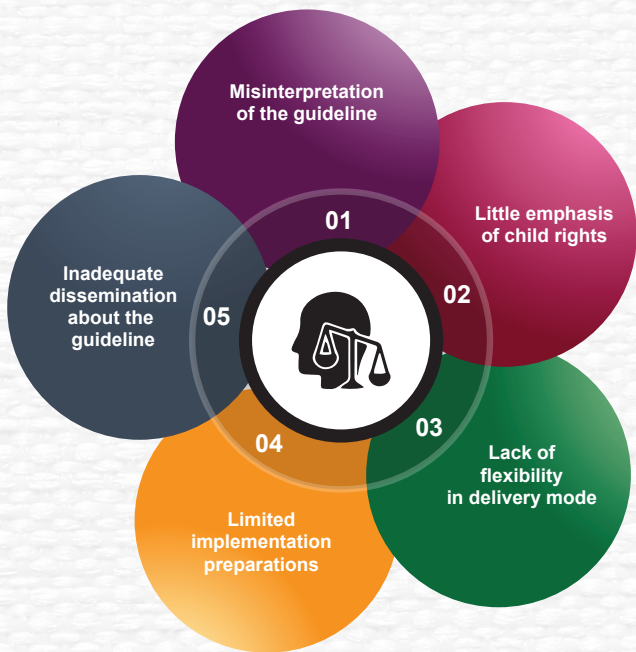


Two schools in each LGA (Total=24)



4. Key findings

Policy gaps in implementing the school re-entry initiative for teenage mothers

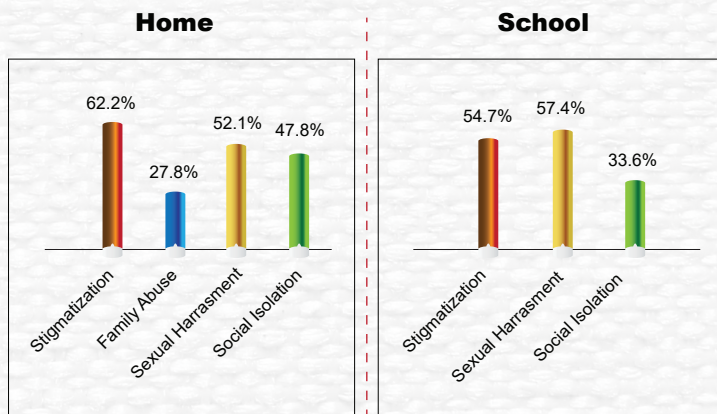


"Being a teenage mother increases the cost of living in providing the services to the born child and taking care of myself and buying school requirements. It is not easy to administer in this situation."

"There is no law that obligates the girl to return to school after giving birth. Officials struggle in implementing the guidelines successfully. It can be seen as coaxing the girl to return, and if she chooses not to, there are no legal consequences"

Experience of teenage mothers

A Mistreatment in forms of social stigma, sexual harassment, and violence during their pregnancy, after giving birth, and readmitted to school



PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES ON MISTREATMENT OF TEENAGE MOTHERS



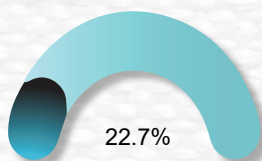
B Teenage mothers experienced implicit resistance from school leaders as they were discouraged and rejected when they were seeking for readmission



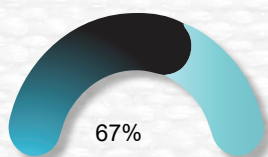
C Teenage mothers' readiness for readmission to formal school was compromised by unwelcoming learning environment at family and school

Home related unwelcoming learning environment

Domestic Violence

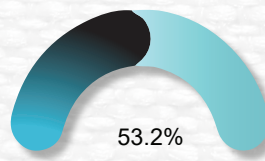


Abandonment by the partner

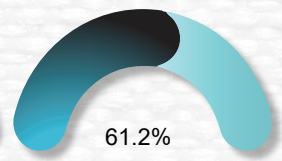


School related unwelcoming learning environment

Labelling



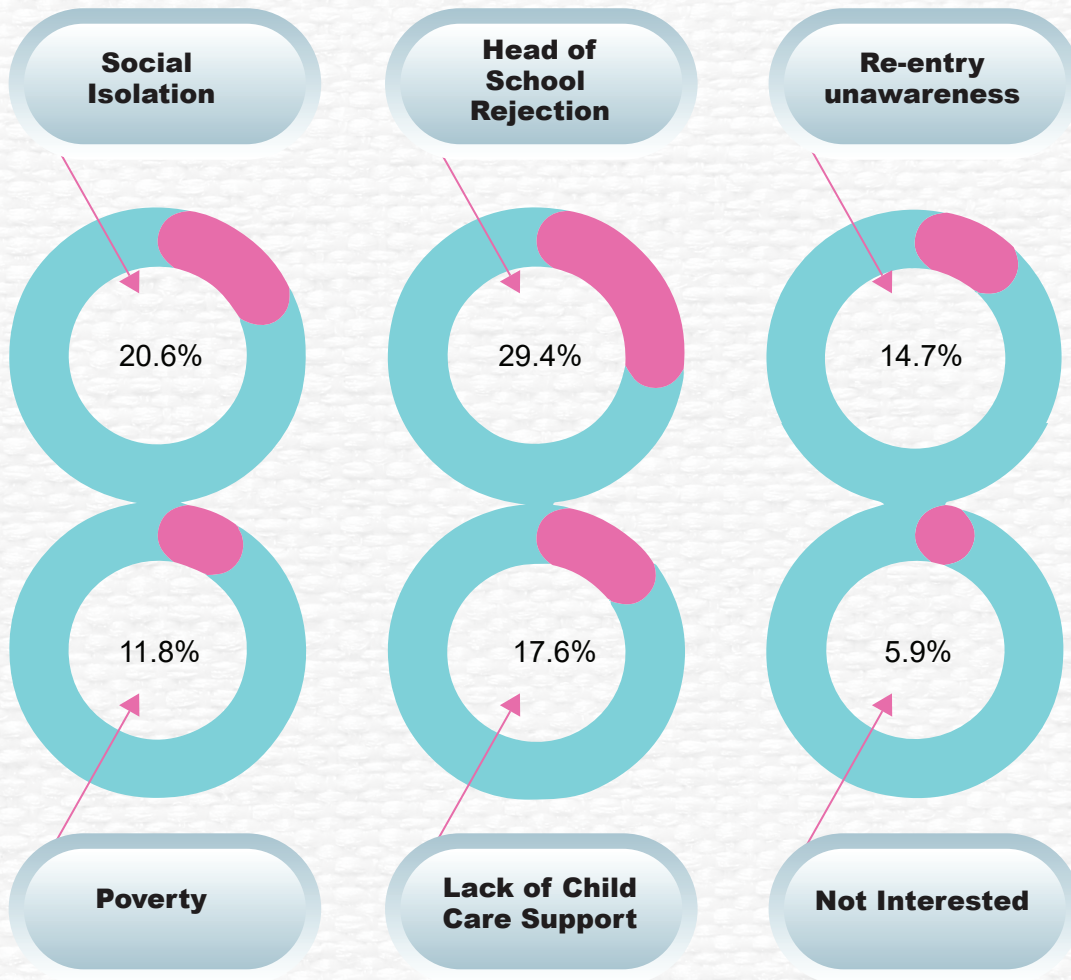
Bullying



PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES BY TEENAGE MOTHERS



D Reasons for teenage mothers not returning to school after dropout

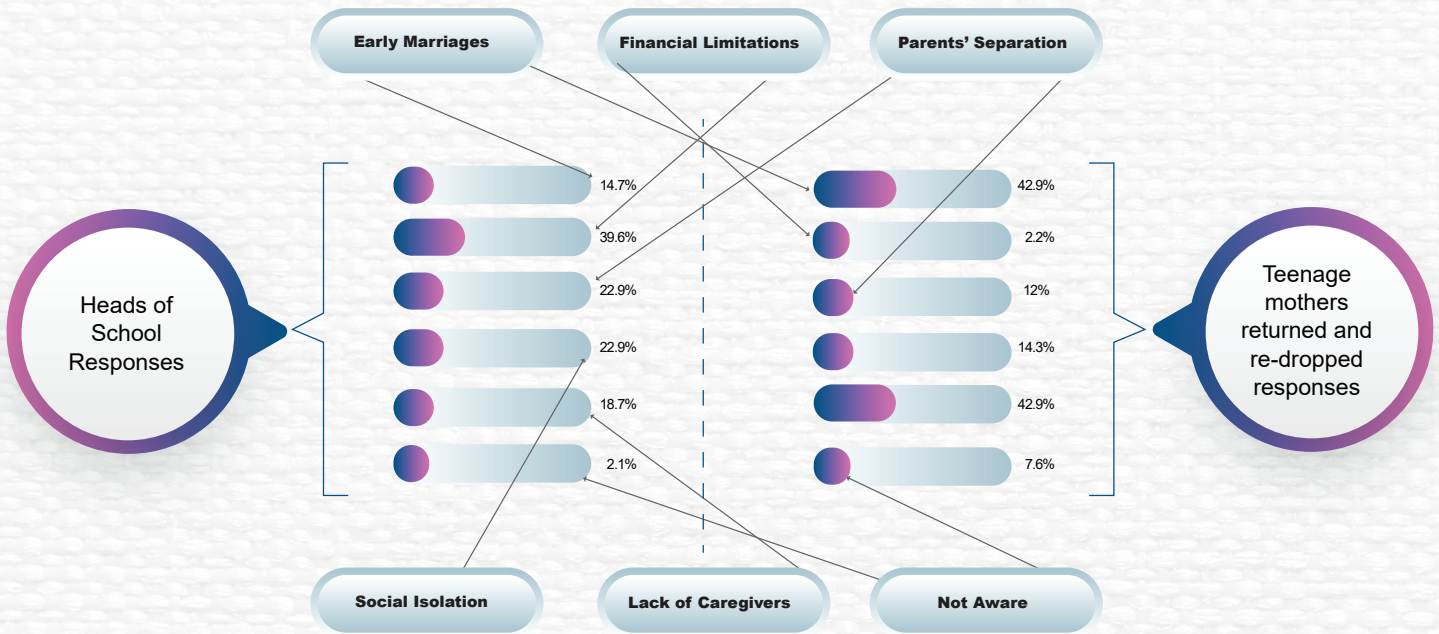


PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES BY TEENAGE MOTHERS



E

Reasons for dropout of teenage mothers after returning to schools



Experience of school administrators and teachers on school re-entry initiative

"I, as a teacher, have not understood that guideline but I just hear advertisements and government directives. We did not expect it; it is something new for our country."

Limited Awareness

Lack of Records

We don't have records for drop outs due to pregnancy and re-admitted teenage mothers as we have not documented them well at district level

"The majority of stakeholders are not aware of the guideline due to inadequate awareness creation and dissemination. Need training to councilors is crucial as they are important stakeholders in ensuring the implementation of the school re-entry guideline."

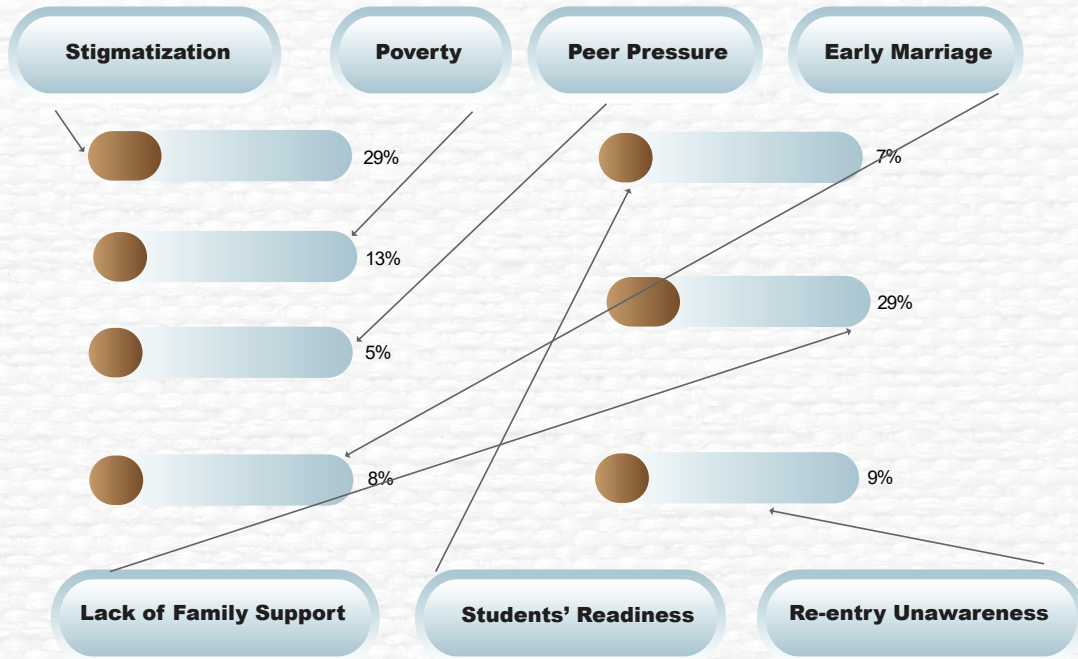
Inadequate Training

Limited Resources

"The capitation grants which each school receives were used for purchasing learning resources ; for all students including the teenage mothers. Other needs such as school uniforms are still the responsibility of parents."

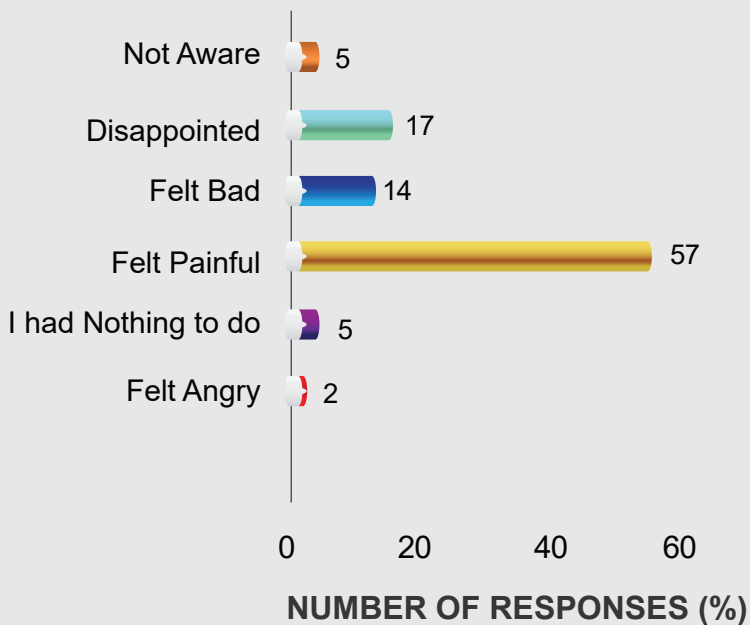


A. Community standpoints on teenage mothers



PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES

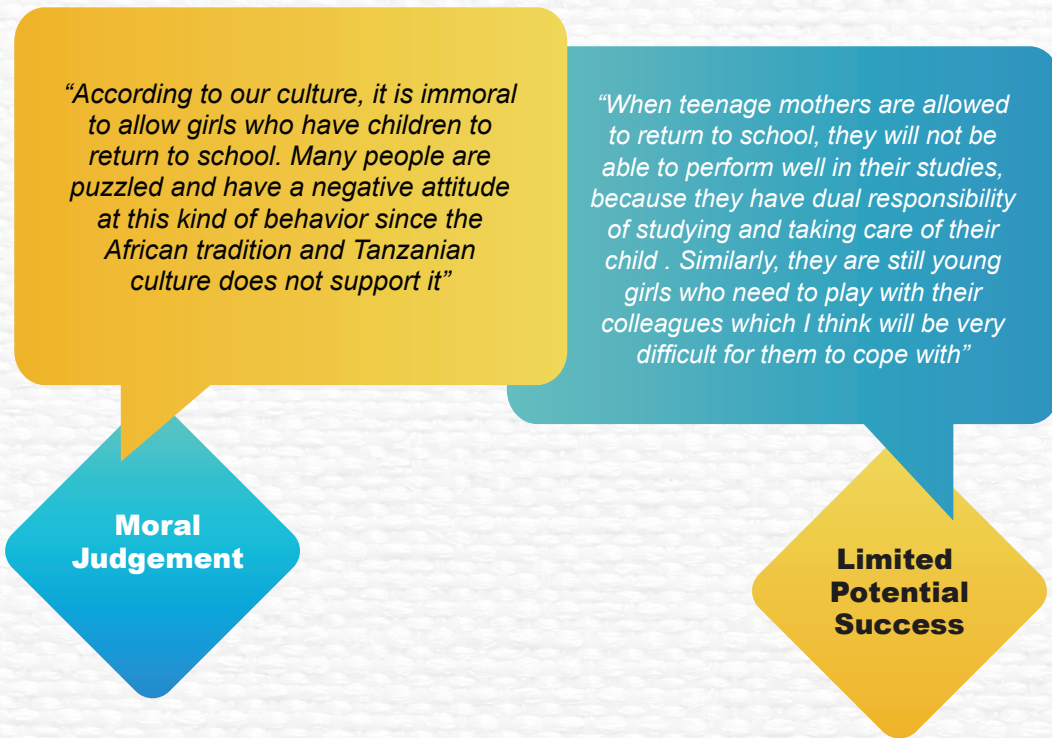
B. Parents psychological strain



“Frankly speaking, it pained me a lot because she was my only hope. I believe that she will help me after completion of her school”

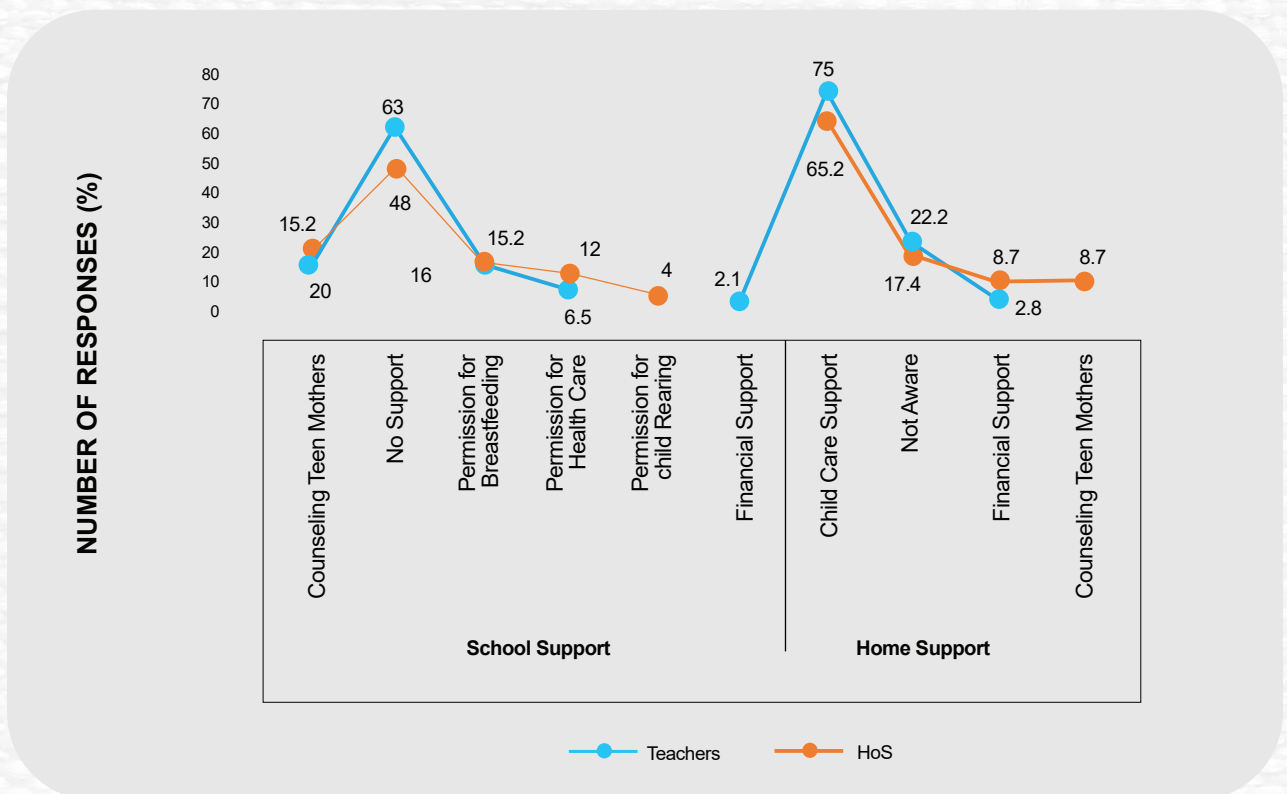


C. Community perceptions to teenage mothers



Childcare services in place to ensure the safety of children while mothers are in schools

A. Less support provided to children at school and home

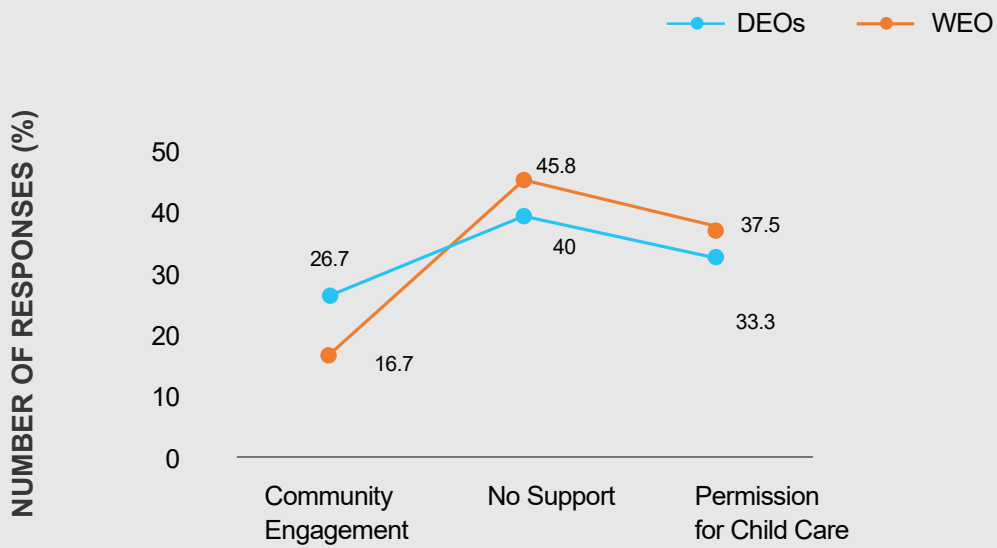


B. Child safety

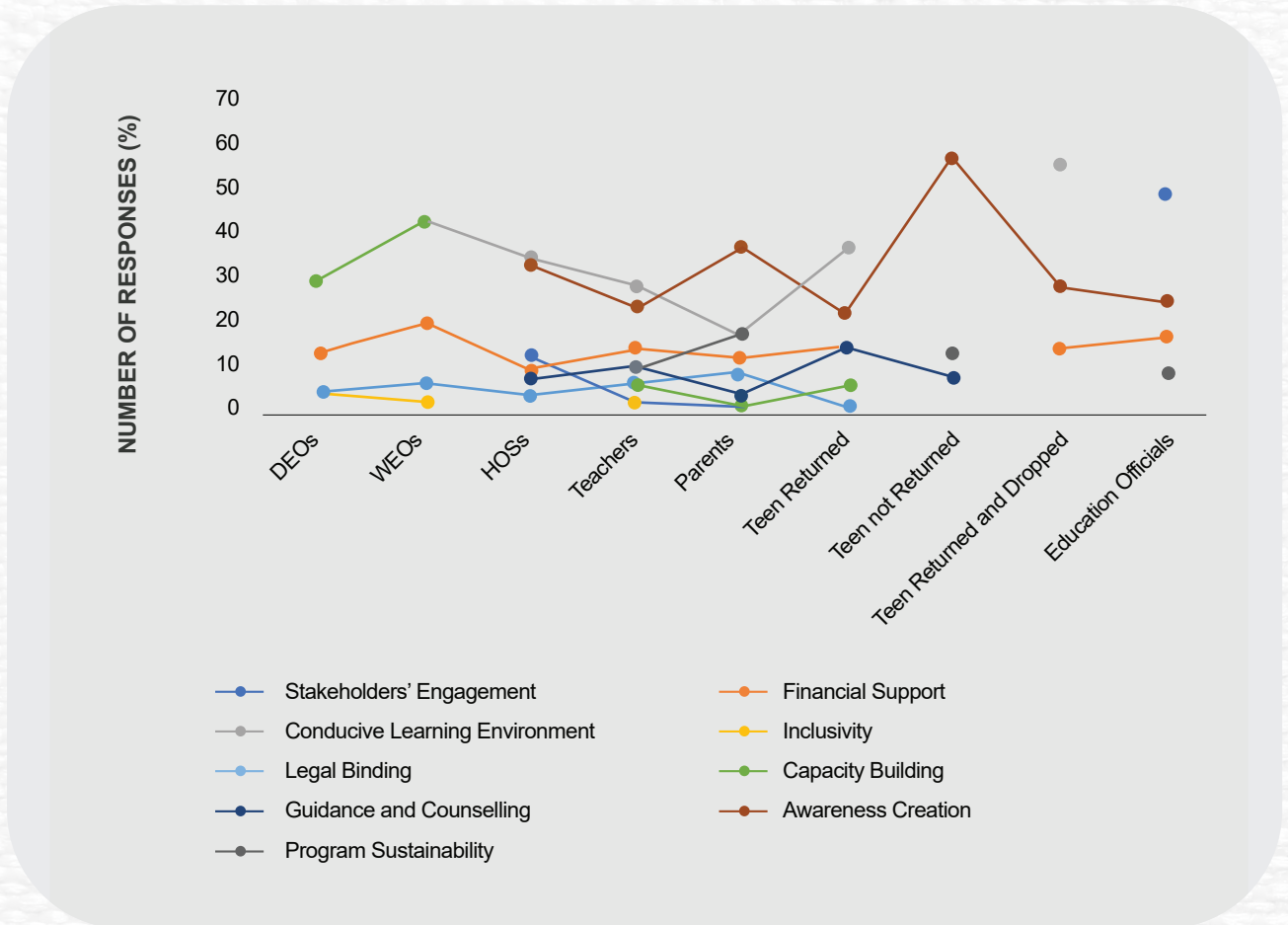


PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES

C. Child care and safety support provided by educational officials



Strategies for ensuring teenage mothers return and thrive in school



5. Conclusion and Key Recommendations

This study explored the experience of implementing the school re-entry initiative for teenage mothers in Tanzania mainland. The study was conducted in secondary schools across six regions and twelve districts, employing individual interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaires, and documentary reviews.

The government's introduction of the school re-entry guideline is a significant step towards mitigating the educational barriers faced by teenage mothers who had previously dropped out of school. This initiative which allows them to rejoin the formal education system, reflects the government's commitment to fostering equitable and inclusive education in Tanzania.

Notably, some readmitted teenage mothers have achieved remarkable success, particularly those who excelled in their form four national examinations and advanced to advanced secondary education, signaling their potential to contribute meaningfully to their families and society. Despite these positive outcomes, the study's findings have revealed that the school re-entry initiative has not entirely met its objectives, as a considerable number of teenage mothers do not return to the formal education system.



A. Recommendations for Policy

Strengthen institutional commitments and advocacy:

- Develop and implement clear policies that support teenage mothers' rights and their educational journey.
- Increase institutional support for the welfare of teenage mothers.

Prioritize child rights and protection:

- Enhance the school re-entry guideline to comprehensively address the needs of teenage mothers and their children.
- Emphasize the importance of children's well-being and provide access to supportive resources.

Promote quality care giving and safety:

- Advocate for policies that promote quality caregiving and enhance the attachment between teenage mothers and their children.
- Prioritize child safety and create a nurturing environment for their development.

Enhance fight against stigmatization:

- Implement dialogues between stakeholders to establish clear rules and regulations that safeguard teenage mothers' rights.
- Address stigmatization and marginalization effectively.

Improve gender responsiveness training for teachers:

- Support teachers in gaining a deeper understanding of inclusiveness and gender responsiveness.
- Empower teachers to better support teenage mothers and ensure their inclusion, voice, and respect within the school community.

Advocate for curriculum reforms:

- Push for reforms in the educational curriculum to introduce flexible learning options for teenage mothers.
- Accommodate their unique needs, such as parenting responsibilities, through self-paced learning materials

Strengthen counseling and support services:

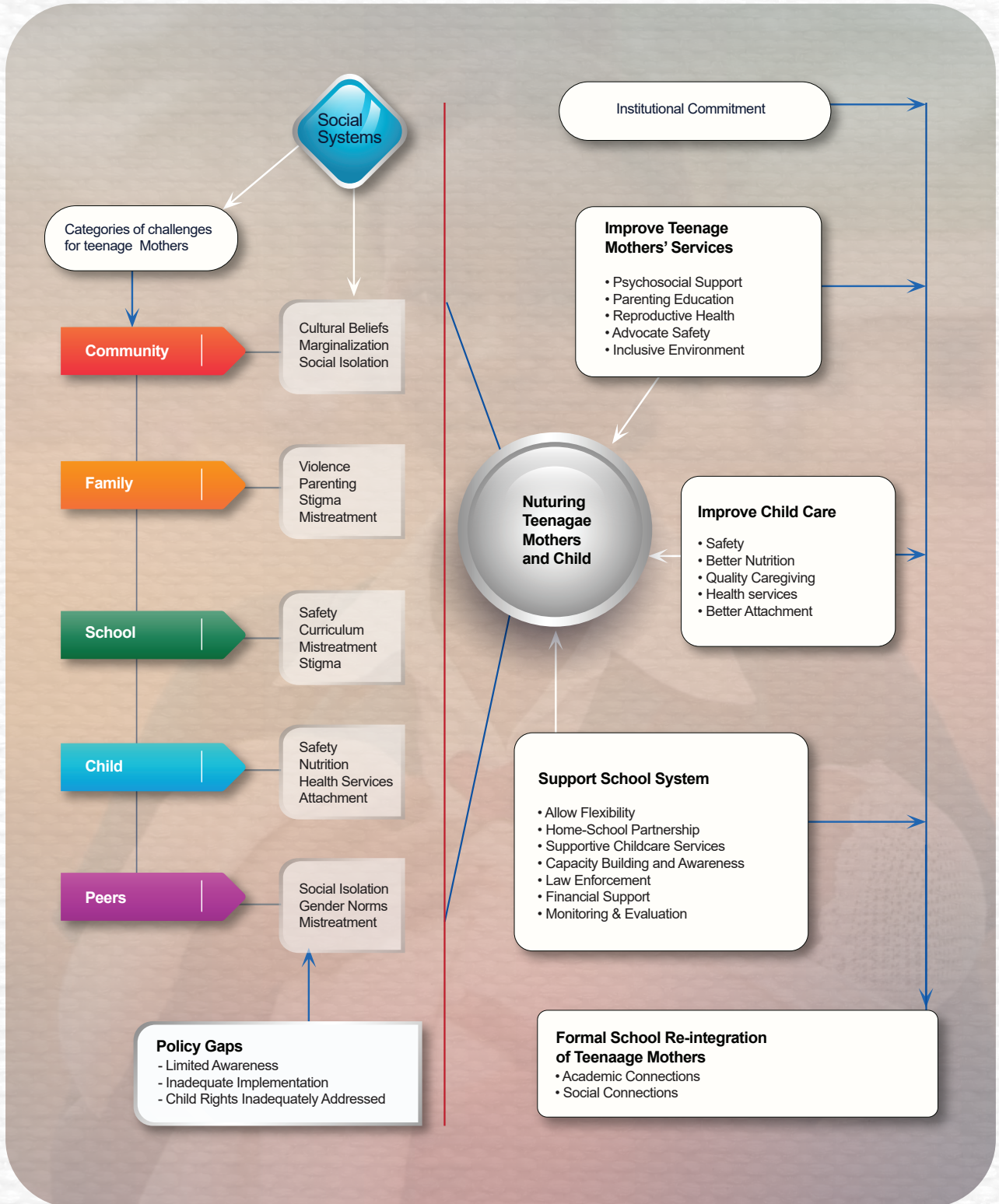
- Enhance counseling units within schools to provide psychological support and assistance to teenage mothers.
- Create a safer and more supportive learning environment for their reintegration into formal education.
- Ensure the presence of dedicated school counselors in schools receiving teenage mothers.

Legislative reviews:

- Advocate for the review of the Education Act of 1978 and the Marriage Act of 1971.
- Facilitate the operationalization of the school re-entry guideline for teenage mothers.
- Raise the minimum marriage age to 18 years, enabling girls to complete their basic education.



B. A suggestive model





"An Open, Just and democratic Tanzania where all people enjoy the right to education that promote equity, creativity and critical thinking"



Mathuradas Road off UN Road, Plot Number 739,
P. O. Box 79401, Upanga, Ilala, Dar es Salaam • Tanzania.
Phone: +255 (0)22 2151852/3 • Fax: +255 (0)22 2152449
www.hakielimu.or.tz

   @hakielimu