



TEAM KENYA NCPD

Agencies Represented: National Council for Population and Development (NCPD) and Ministry of Health

Problem: Only 58% of women use a modern family planning method, while 18% of women have an unmet need for family planning; the population is growing at a rate of 2.9%

Policy: Population Policy for National Development, under review for a new 5-year plan

Objective: Better utilize evidence to improve coordination and gain increased political support and funding for the next iteration of the Population Policy implementation plan

Funding: Government funding with support from international private and public donors

THE PROBLEM:

Kenya's population grew at a rate of 2.9% between 1999 and 2009. Currently, 43% of the population is under 15 years of age, and the average Kenyan woman births 4 children, meaning that the population will continue to grow. If this high growth rate is not managed, it will be incredibly difficult for Kenya to become an upper middle-income country by 2030.¹ Although the use of modern family planning methods has substantially increased in Kenya, from 7% in 1977 to 30% in 1998 and 58% in 2014, the number of women who have an unmet need for family planning is still high, at about 18%.² Low male involvement in decisions related to reproductive health and family planning, and retrogressive beliefs and policies all slow progress in achieving demographic and population goals. The Population Policy for National Development, developed in 2012, sought to address these challenges.

THE POLICY:

The Kenyan Population Policy for National Development "aims to ensure that population growth does not impede the attainment of Vision 2030 development targets" and seeks to "attain a high quality of life for the people of Kenya by managing a population growth that can be sustained with the available resources."³ The policy lays out a plan to slow the population growth rate by reducing "the number of births born to a woman, deaths that occur among children aged five years and below, and deaths that occur among women due to pregnancy related causes." It also commits the government to providing information on population matters to the public, and providing accessible reproductive health services, including modern family planning methods. Select targets for 2030 include reducing the natural growth rate to 15 per 1,000 people, reducing the under-5 mortality rate to 48 per 1,000 live births, decreasing the average number of children per woman to 3, and increasing the use of modern family planning methods to 70% nationwide.

Implementation of the policy is cross-sectoral, involving the Government, NGOs, the private sector, and communities. The National Council for Population and Development (NCPD), a semi-autonomous government agency overseen by the Ministry of Devolution and Planning, played a major role in advocating for and developing the population policy, and is responsible for overall coordination and

¹ Policy Brief No. 53, 2016. National Council for Population and Development. <http://www.ncpd.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Policy-Brief-53-Implication-of-Levels-of-Births-Across-Counties.pdf>

² Policy Brief No. 51, 2016. National Council for Population and Development. <http://www.ncpd.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Policy-Brief-51-Engaging-Men-to-Reduce-Unmet-Family-Planning-Need.pdf>

³ Sessional Paper No. 3 of 2012 on Population Policy for National Development, 2012. Government of Kenya. <http://www.ncpd.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Population-Policy-Popular-Version-English.pdf>

advising during implementation.⁴ Specifically, NCPD is tasked with ensuring the optimal use of resources, harmonization of efforts by various stakeholders, and alignment of activities with the vision of the policy. NCPD also works with line ministries, government agencies, the private sector, and NGOs to develop monitoring and evaluation plans.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND STATUS:

As the current 5-year implementation plan is about to expire, the Government of Kenya is developing a new 5-year plan that will advance the goals of the population policy by cutting across multiple sectors, including but not limited to the health, education, the environment, and gender. The new plan is being developed using data from a national survey, which shows that some targets were achieved while others have been challenging to obtain. Building off the targets from the last iteration of the policy, NCPD hopes to achieve a total fertility rate of 2.1 children per woman and reduce the teenage pregnancy rate to 8% by 2050.

NCPD will also be focusing on improving the policy's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework. As there are so many stakeholders involved in implementation, collecting and harmonizing data has been a challenge, and too often, data has been out of date or unusable. Data collection has traditionally been led by the M&E Directorate in the Ministry of Devolution and Planning. Because the Ministry is comprised of economists rather than demographers, its staff is less familiar with means of measuring population policies. The M&E unit within NCPD contributes as well, but struggles with a very small staff and low capacity. To address some of these challenges, NCPD is updating the M&E framework manual, which provides guidance to county government and Ministry staff on what key indicators to focus on and how to collect the most essential data points.

KEY CHALLENGES:

- Overall, there has been insufficient funding for population programs, particularly those focused on family planning. Although the Government of Kenya committed to mobilizing its own resources to execute the population policy, with contributions from international donors and public-private partnerships, funding has been insufficient to cover the needs of all 47 counties. Currently, funds cover only about 50-60% of programs that are meant to be implemented under the policy
- To date, there has been poor coordination between ministries, implementing partners, and donors. The latter tend to fund specific projects in specific counties, leaving gaps that NCPD and other partners cannot fill due to their own funding arrangements and limitations. This has left some counties and programs without support
- Due in part to a small staff, stretched thin between regional offices across all 47 counties, NCPD has struggled to keep track of what various development partners are implementing, hindering effective coordination
- The previous M&E framework was largely ineffective, and where indicators were clear, low funding levels made completing surveys and collecting data on all indicators a challenge

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Implementation of the Population Policy for National Development has resulted in a positive focus on family planning, with a remarkable increase in the contraceptive prevalence rate, from 46% in 2009 to 58% in 2014
- Successful advocacy has garnered additional support from the Parliament, Treasury, and Ministry of Devolution and Planning. Population issues are now more likely to be integrated into development planning, and the Ministry of Devolution and Planning has allocated additional

⁴ Sessional Paper No. 3 of 2012 on Population Policy for National Development, 2012. Government of Kenya. <http://www.ncpd.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Population-Policy-Popular-Version-English.pdf>

funding to population programs. These successes should continue under NCPD's initiative to create a new network of Parliamentarians who can talk passionately about population programs and advocate for more funding

- NCPD has also engaged extensively with religious leaders, who often have influence over large followings, to ensure their support for family planning services and extend the reach of NCPD programs

WHAT'S NEXT:

- The NCPD team seeks to learn how to empower women and enhance their decision-making opportunities, especially regarding reproductive health, to increase their uptake of family planning services
- At the workshop, they would like to hear from other participants how to better communicate their policy rationale with the general public, specifically how to counter myths and negative attitudes toward family planning. Improving the use of data and evidence will help the team to develop messages and tell stories that counter the conflicting messages coming from political and religious leaders
- Improving data collection and monitoring and evaluation will also allow the NCPD to improve its coordination of the various programs implemented under the population policy umbrella, and make better use of evidence to lobby for continued political support and needed funding

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