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MAINTAINING EQUITY IN FAMILY PLANNING DURING A PANDEMIC: DESIP Programme COVID-19 Adaptations Brief



Adaptation:

Any modification made to a planned programme's activities, interventions, approach or funding due to COVID-19.



NUMBER OF ADAPTATIONS IN KENYA

- 4 Social Behavior Change
- 5 Service Delivery
- 11 Enabling Environment

As COVID-19 spread around the world, the DESIP* programme in Kenya rapidly adapted implementation approaches to maintain family planning (FP) programmes and continue equitable service delivery while keeping their clients, communities, and staff safe. To document and share crucial lessons learned, from May–November 2020, the USAID-funded Research for Scalable Solutions (R4S) Project had supported the documentation of DESIP's COVID-19 programme adaptations in Kenya. This brief highlights key insights in COVID-19 adaptations across the FP High Impact Practice (HIP) categories: social behavior change, service delivery, and enabling environment. While COVID-19 is still impacting FP programmes, based on the potential for operating efficiencies and increases in reaching young people and women with disabilities, DESIP has identified adaptations that will be maintained in a post-pandemic setting.

SOCIAL BEHAVIOR CHANGE

COVID-19 Challenge
Lowered demand for FP services

ADAPTATION

Mass radio and social media campaign for youth

- In April 2020, DESIP started broadcasting FP promotion shows coupled with COVID-19 prevention messaging.
- Since the onset of COVID-19, youth mobilizers have been reaching out to their peers with information on the availability of FP services and access to counseling via DESIP's social media platforms, including WhatsApp, and SMS.

COVID-19 Challenge
Movement restrictions

ADAPTATION

Outreach to persons with disabilities (PWD)

- In April 2020, DESIP altered engagement with PWDs from group-based to individual, home-based visits.
- DESIP also released targeted radio messaging to reach more people living with disabilities with information on FP and COVID-19.

SOCIAL BEHAVIOR CHANGE IMPACT



The mass radio campaign reached at least **11 million people** with FP messaging between April and June 2020.

132 PWD were reached with a home visit between July and September 2020.

DESIP engaging youth to increase access and utilization of FP services

*A 2019 to 2024 UK Aid funded programme focused on Delivering Sustainable and Equitable Family Planning Increases (DESIP) in low Contraceptive Prevalence Rate counties in Kenya. Implemented by Population Services Kenya with Population Service International as a consortium member.

SERVICE DELIVERY

COVID-19 CHALLENGE
Lowered demand for FP services

ADAPTATION

Door-to-door service delivery

- In April 2020, community health volunteers (CHVs) started community-based distribution of FP products and services for rural women to reduce barriers to access for FP.
- During the pandemic, village heads mobilized women of reproductive age to welcome the new CHVs.

SERVICE DELIVERY IMPACT

Community-based distribution of FP products in East-Turkana, the **number of women reached increased 2.5-fold** (from 34 in August to 84 in September).

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

COVID-19 CHALLENGE
FP supply chain disruptions

ADAPTATION

COVID-19 guidelines for FP supply chain

- DESIP supported dissemination of government guidelines for continued provision of FP services during COVID-19.
- DESIP engaged and collaborated with the county and sub-county Pharmacists to improve forecasting of FP products.
- When the government imposed a curfew and restricted movement between counties, disrupting the supply chain of FP commodities, DESIP offered technical support to help facilitate redistribution of FP commodities between neighboring counties.

INTEGRATION OF ADAPTATIONS BEYOND COVID-19

Guided by insights on efficiency and potential ability to reach more women with disabilities and young people, DESIP will be integrating a number of adaptations into their routine FP programme, even beyond COVID-19.

Those adaptations include:

Mass radio and social media campaign for youth:

- Mass media campaigns, especially via radio and TV, are proving to be cost-effective ways to reach rural youth in Kenya that DESIP would like to continue post COVID-19.

Virtual trainings:

- DESIP is looking for ways to incorporate virtual trainings that are flexible to providers' busy schedules.
- Although virtual trainings save time and money, a challenge is the lack of stable internet.

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COVID-19 CHALLENGE
COVID-19 policies and guidelines

ADAPTATION

Virtual trainings in disability inclusion

- Due to COVID-19 rules on social distancing, DESIP delivered virtual training on social and disability inclusion to service delivery staff via Zoom; this was previously planned to be face-to-face training.
- Where virtual training was not feasible, DESIP provided in-person disability inclusion training to community health workers while following social distancing guidelines.

“Since the virtual training, several providers have made efforts to make changes in the facilities like having disability friendly toilets and having ramps and wheelchairs”

Programme Manager

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT IMPACT

DESIP ensured the continuity of SRH services in Kenya through advocacy at the national level and technical support at the local level.

Between April and June 2020, DESIP trained **12 sub-country staff** on disability awareness over Zoom, who cascaded training to **225 CHVs**.

“Virtual provider trainings can save time and money”

Programme Manager



PHOTO Radio Angaaf: Discussing access to FP services during COVID-19. Dr. Amina, Country Reproductive Health Coordinator & Guyatu Elema, Radio Presenter

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