

# KUJIPANGA BULLETIN

MARCH 2025 IMPROVING ACCESS TO FAMILY PLANNING SERVICES IN KENYA



Edition 20



## Director's Statement

# “We came, we saw and we conquered!”

These are the words that are resounding in my mind as I reflect on the DESIP programme 6-year journey in Kenya. Through the funding provided by the UK Government and leveraging on strategic partnerships with development partners, the Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Health's division of Reproductive and Maternal Health (DRMH), County Governments, Implementing partners within and without the DESIP consortium and health care workers at both community and facility level, we can attest that we went everywhere we could, knocked on every door that we should have knocked on and did everything we could to ensure that marginalized women of reproductive age in hard to reach counties were able to access quality Family Planning services.

It has been an amazing journey and life transforming journey for me personally to lead the implementation of the largest family planning programme in Kenya. As the curtain closes for the programme at the end of Year 6, Quarter 4 (Jan - Mar 2025), we started out the quarter by conducting a final SARA assessment to compare baseline status to end of programme status at the facilities and scheduled various cluster meetings in the country. Counties that implemented the programme were able to showcase their best practices while also having an opportunity to cross-learn & pick up adaptations from their neighbouring counties who were faced with similar implementation context. This session culminated in the Final DESIP dissemination conference that took place on the 30th January 2025 bringing together more than 200 stakeholders (more than 160 physically and 110 participants) who were able to contribute to and hear us discuss our strategies that lead to the success of the programme.

The programme also conducted a 2nd and final Programme Close Out Review in Kwale County where DESIP has exited after year 2 of implementation and was pleased to find that DESIP strategies had been taken up and supported by the County leadership and other stakeholders & partners to ensure sustainability beyond end of programme. Field teams then visited each county office and bid farewell to them as they highlighted the importance of domestic financing for FP. Finally, the programme hosted a webinar to showcase the FP Learning compendium that has been hosted at the Council of Governors Maarifa Hub. Overall, the DESIP programme has greatly positively impacted the lives of women of reproductive age in the Nation of Kenya.



**Dr. Charlotte Pahe**  
Director of Programs

## Reaching the Most Vulnerable: Transforming Family Planning Access in Kenya

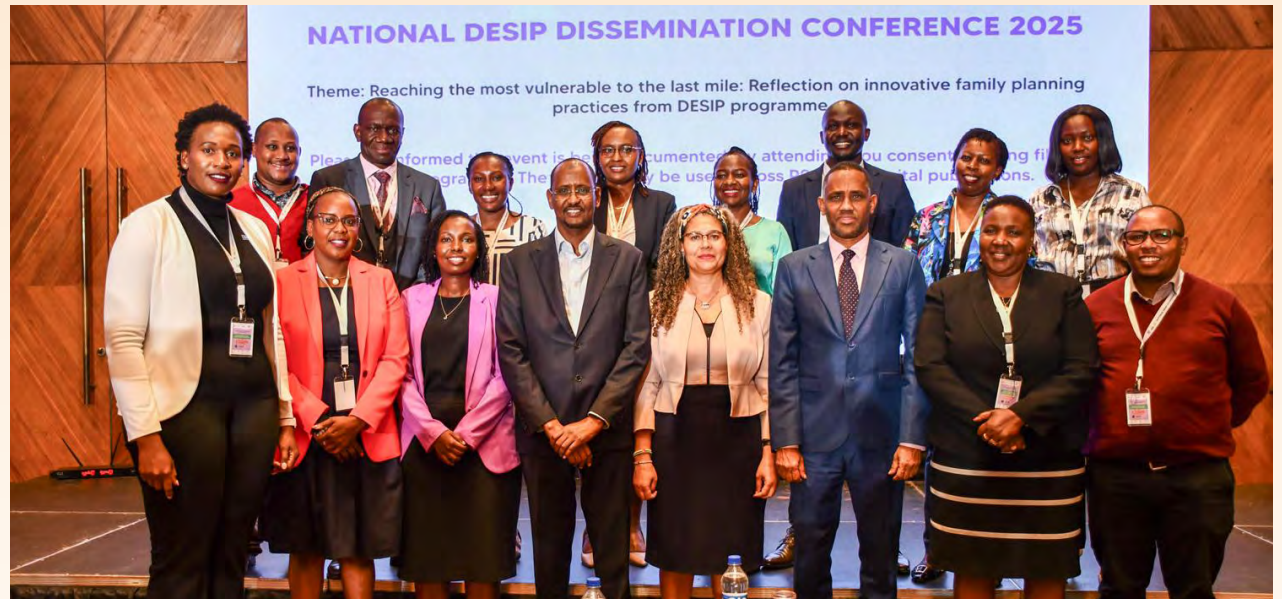
Kenya has made significant strides in reproductive health over the past five years, thanks to the Delivering Sustainable and Equitable Increases in Family Planning (DESIP) Programme. During the National DESIP Dissemination Conference 2025 held in Nairobi, key stakeholders gathered to celebrate the programme's achievements and discuss the future of family planning in the country.

Funded by UK Aid through the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), DESIP has played a crucial role in reducing maternal, neonatal, and child mortality by improving access to Family Planning (FP) services, especially for Kenya's most vulnerable populations. The programme's efforts have ensured that women of reproductive age, including persons with disabilities, can plan their pregnancies, recover fully between childbirths, and provide optimal care for their newborns.

Under the theme "Reaching the Most Vulnerable to the Last Mile: Reflections on Innovative Family Planning Practices," the conference highlighted how DESIP has advanced reproductive health equity and sustainability. Implemented across 12 counties with historically low modern contraceptive prevalence rates (mCPR), the programme has empowered rural women, adolescents, and persons with disabilities to make informed choices about their reproductive health.

PS Kenya's CEO, Dr. Margaret Njenga, emphasized the programme's impact, stating:

"The DESIP Programme has been a game-changer in Kenya's reproductive health landscape, empowering thousands of women and marginalized communities with access to quality family planning services. Through strategic partnerships and innovative approaches, DESIP has strengthened health systems and significantly reduced maternal mortality. As we celebrate this success, PS Kenya remains committed to sustaining these gains and ensuring that every woman has the right and opportunity to make informed reproductive health choices."



The British High Commission's Deputy Development Director, Eduarda Mendonca-Gray, highlighted the UK's long-standing commitment to sexual and reproductive health in Kenya. She pointed to the success of the world's first Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health – Development Impact Bond, which has provided over 400,000 girls and women in low-income settings with access to family planning services.

"Innovation has been vital to the transformative change we have seen across the ten counties we've worked in. Our initial \$6.4 million investment in the impact bond has been scaled up to \$12 million, thanks to partnerships with the UN-SDG platform, UNFPA, UNAIDS, and WHO. Additionally, we have worked closely with private sector players, including the Kenya Health Federation, Halcyon, and Options, to enhance accessibility and address financial gaps in family planning services," Mendonca-Gray stated.

Since its launch in April 2019, the DESIP Programme has achieved remarkable results:

361,378 additional family planning users reached.

3.68 million Couple Years of Protection (CYP) delivered.

4,528 maternal deaths averted through increased access to FP services.

Strengthened public, private, and faith-based health facilities to improve the quality of family planning services.

Kenya's progress in family planning is evident in the latest Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) 2022, which reports an increase in mCPR from 53% in 2014 to 57% in 2022 among married women. The contribution of DESIP-supported counties has been instrumental in these gains, positioning Kenya as an FP2030 exemplar country.

As the DESIP Programme concludes, the journey toward equitable and sustainable family planning access does not end here. PS Kenya remains committed to building on these successes, ensuring that every woman, regardless of her location or circumstance, has the right and opportunity to make informed reproductive health choices. We will continue to innovate and strengthen health systems, working towards a future where better health and wellbeing is a reality for all Kenyans.

## Delivering Sustainable and Equitable Increases in Family Planning (DESIP)

(DESIP) programme, funded by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), has a key objective: to expand access to modern contraception in 19 underserved counties in Kenya. Running from June 2018 to March 2025, DESIP is dedicated to increasing family planning (FP) uptake, particularly among rural women, adolescents, and persons with disabilities, with the goal of reducing maternal and child mortality. Through this mission, DESIP empowers marginalized populations by improving access to contraceptives and enhancing reproductive health outcomes.

In its first year, DESIP achieved significant success, delivering 433,122 Couple Years of Protection (CYP), well beyond its target of 352,159. The programme also reached 59,993 new FP users, with 18% living below the poverty line and 7% adolescents. Furthermore, DESIP successfully secured 46% domestic funding for FP commodities, an impressive increase from the initial 6%, helping to avert 1,174 maternal deaths and 409,325 unintended pregnancies. These remarkable outcomes were made possible through rapid programme inception, effective advocacy for government financing, and close collaboration with DFID's global family planning initiatives. Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, which resulted in an expected 20% reduction in service delivery, DESIP mitigated these impacts through innovative strategies. These included third-party monitoring, private-sector engagement, and sustainable efforts at the county level.

The programme continued its strong performance in 2020/2021, delivering 779,381 CYP, far exceeding its target of 503,588. It also reached 132,279 new FP users, including 9% adolescents and 1,131 persons with disabilities. In addition, the programme secured 43% domestic funding for FP commodities, which contributed to the prevention of 350,878 unintended pregnancies and 949 maternal deaths. DESIP adapted effectively to the ongoing pandemic, shifting to mass media outreach, community-based distribution, and virtual policy engagement, successfully reaching 11 million people. Its sustainability efforts were further bolstered by private-sector involvement, with 55.5% of supported facilities achieving NHIF accreditation.



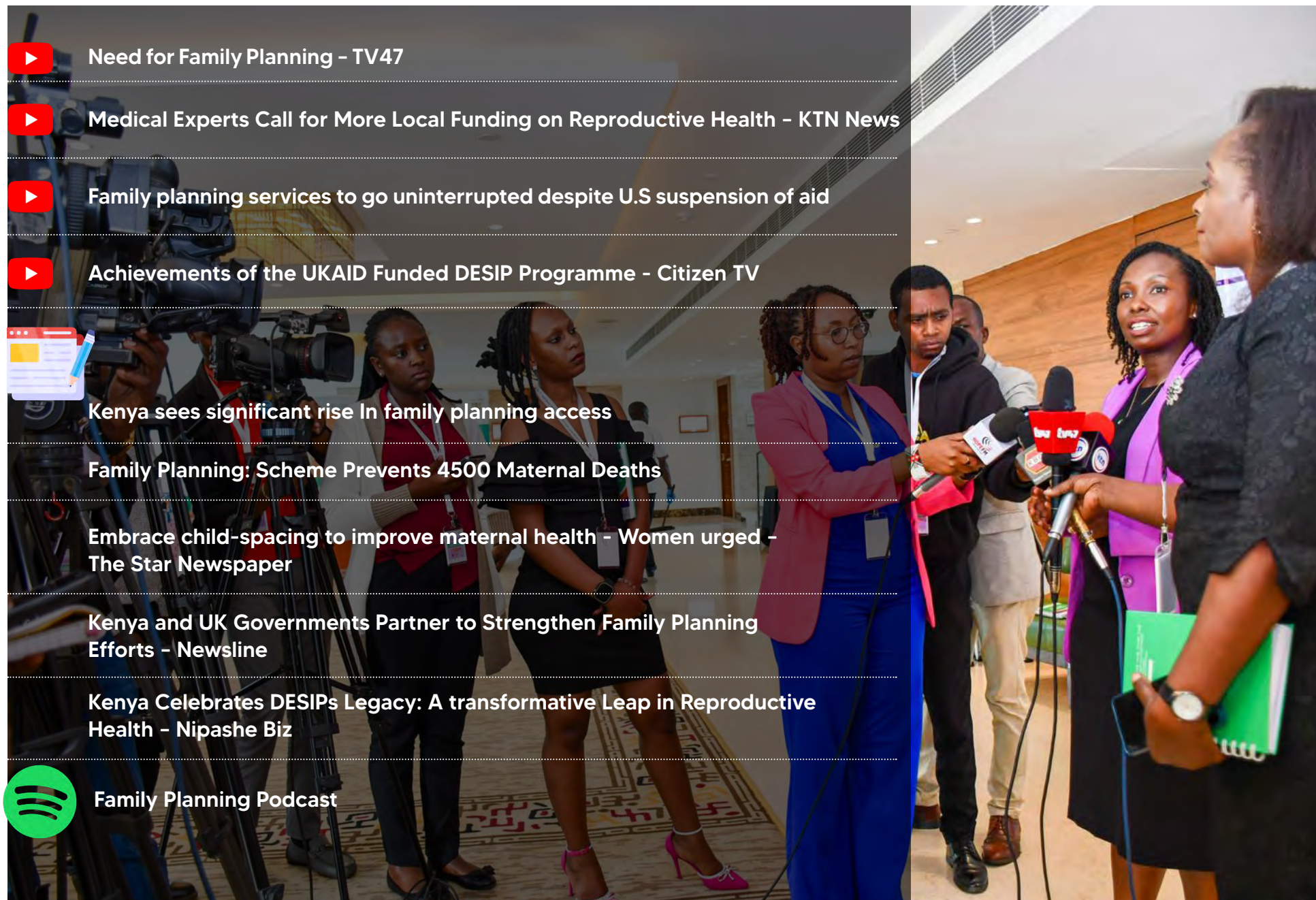
However, DESIP also encountered several challenges, including stockouts of injectable contraceptives in 30% of facilities due to supply chain issues, as well as delays in policy ratification and county budget disbursements for FP services. To overcome these challenges, DESIP put forward key recommendations, such as advocating for increased domestic FP financing, scaling up COVID-19 adaptations, and ensuring that marginalized groups and adolescents continue to receive equitable access to services.

In the following years, DESIP showed resilience in the face of budget cuts and a reduction in scope due to the UK's Foreign,

Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). Despite scaling down from 19 to 12 counties, DESIP maintained a high level of output. The programme focused on strengthening advocacy for domestic FP financing, fostering demand creation strategies, and providing technical support to the Ministry of Health and county health teams.

Even with the challenges, DESIP's commitment to innovation and sustainability has positioned it as a crucial component of Kenya's family planning efforts. As the programme comes to an end, its impact lives on, ensuring continued access to reproductive health services for Kenya's underserved population

## National DESIP Dissemination Conference 2025 Media Publications

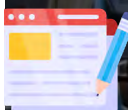


▶ Need for Family Planning - TV47

▶ Medical Experts Call for More Local Funding on Reproductive Health - KTN News

▶ Family planning services to go uninterrupted despite U.S suspension of aid

▶ Achievements of the UKAID Funded DESIP Programme - Citizen TV



Kenya sees significant rise in family planning access

Family Planning: Scheme Prevents 4500 Maternal Deaths

Embrace child-spacing to improve maternal health - Women urged -  
The Star Newspaper

Kenya and UK Governments Partner to Strengthen Family Planning  
Efforts - Newline

Kenya Celebrates DESIPs Legacy: A transformative Leap in Reproductive  
Health - Nipashe Biz



Family Planning Podcast

## PS Kenya Holds Quarterly Review Meeting to Reflect on Progress and Future Plans

PS Kenya recently held its quarterly review meeting for the Reproductive Health program, focusing on progress, challenges, and next steps in improving reproductive health services across the country. The meeting provided a platform for staff to reflect on achievements, address ongoing challenges, and strategize for future improvements in reproductive health service delivery.

In her opening remarks, Dr. Charlotte Pahe, the Director of Reproductive Health, acknowledged the team's dedication and urged them to stay focused despite the conclusion of the DESIP programme.

DESIP, which initially operated in 19 counties before scaling down to 12 due to budget cuts, achieved significant milestones in increasing access to family planning services. The programme reached 132% of its target for providing contraceptive protection and played a key role in reducing unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions.

"DESIP has laid a strong foundation for reproductive health services. While the programme has ended, it's crucial that we maintain the structures and partnerships we built. We have a responsibility to ensure that the communities we've served continue to have access to quality care," Dr. Pahe said. She also emphasized the importance of sustaining the gains made through DESIP, highlighting that the transition period requires strategic planning and consistent engagement with stakeholders to prevent gaps in service delivery. The team also reviewed the progress of other key programmes, including Accelerate and A360.



Accelerate showed strong performance in increasing awareness about reproductive health services and expanding outreach efforts. However, more effort is needed to address underlying issues such as gender-based violence and limited access to counseling services.

A360, which focuses on empowering young people to make informed reproductive health decisions, achieved 79% of its quarterly goals. Positive outcomes included greater engagement with community influencers and improved access to youth-friendly services.

The Accelerate program reported that more young people are now aware of the different contraceptive options available, thanks to increased community outreach and peer-to-peer

engagement. However, challenges remain in addressing social and cultural barriers that limit the uptake of services.

A panel discussion followed, where team members shared insights and recommendations for improving future programme performance. Key suggestions included enhancing community engagement through grassroots organizations, increasing visibility for ongoing programmes, and strengthening partnerships with county governments. The panel also highlighted the need for more financial support and innovative funding strategies to maintain the momentum of successful programmes.

One of the key takeaways from the panel was the importance of integrating reproductive health services into broader healthcare initiatives. This would ensure that family planning and other reproductive health services are not seen as standalone programmes but as part of comprehensive primary healthcare. Looking ahead, the team outlined a plan to sustain the gains made under DESIP while reinforcing the success of Accelerate, A360, and TIKO. Efforts will focus on improving data collection and analysis, increasing outreach to underserved areas, and developing targeted communication strategies to reach more people with reproductive health information and services.

The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to building on the successes achieved so far expressing confidence in their ability to navigate challenges and deliver impactful results in the coming months.

# Photo Gallery



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## About DESIP

DESIP is a 6-year (2019 to 2024) UKaid funded programme focused on Delivering Sustainable and Equitable Increases in Family Planning (DESIP) in low Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) Counties in line with Kenya's 'Vision 2030' as well as the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) 'Accessible quality healthcare for all Kenyans.' The country's long-term development blueprint has progressively realized a skilled and healthy workforce. Gains in Family Planning (FP) uptake have been considerable, with the 2018 modern Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (mCPR) amongst married women at 59%, exceeding Kenya's FP2020 target of 58.3%. Despite the progress, many women and girls are still left behind, notably, the 19 Counties where DESIP is implemented (Baringo, Elgeyo Marakwet, Garissa, Homa Bay, Isiolo, Kajiado, Kilifi, Kwale, Lamu, Mandera, Marsabit, Migori, Mombasa, Narok, Samburu, Tana River, Turkana, Wajir and West Pokot). The mCPR in these Counties range from 2% to 45%, as per the 2014 Kenya Demographic Health Survey.

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Ministry of Health

