

# Policy Brief: Migori County

## Access to and Utilization of Family Planning; The Missing Catalyst to Migori Development Agenda

### Background

It has long been accepted as a fact that the availability of family planning services saves lives. Where women have access to these services, children and families are healthier and society at large benefits. The above quote attributed to advocate Martha Plimton underlies the critical importance of family planning towards realizing county, national, regional and global development dreams. Family planning is one of the most evidence based interventions not just for realizing better health outcomes but also for contributing to holistic development.

An analysis conducted in 2014–2015 by the National Council for Population and Development and Health Policy Project found out that every shilling spent on family planning saves Kshs 4.48 in direct healthcare costs in Kenya. The analysis further pointed out that if county governments accelerated progress in uptake of modern family planning methods, every shilling would save up to Kshs 5.46! This can be replicated in Migori County.

With the onset of devolution in Kenya, county governments were tasked with ensuring the complete emotional, physical and mental wellbeing of the people. The constitution envisaged that devolution would accelerate realization of better health outcomes and bridge the enormous gaps in health indicators between different regions.

### Kenya Context

Kenya has made significant strides in family planning programs since the ambitious International Conference on Population and Development Program of Action. It has developed and implemented Population Policies including the latest, Sessional Paper No. 3 of 2012 on Population Policy for National Development which aims at increasing contraceptive prevalence to 70% by 2030. Kenya has also developed National Family Planning Guidelines, the National Health Policy 2014-2030 among other efforts. This has culminated into global recognition including by the Excel Awards during the 2015 International Conference on Family Planning.

However, this progress has not been universally felt. There remains huge disparity in regions and among specific forgotten populations like unmarried sexually active young girls, persons living in poverty, persons living with disability among others. Migori County is one of the counties that has a contraceptive prevalence rate below the national average. 44.6% against a national average of 58% and still below the 2015 national target of 52%.

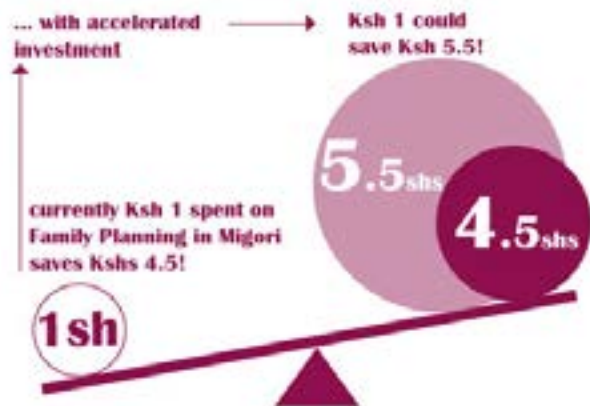
The Migori County government has an immense role to play to realize sustainable increase in uptake of family planning with sufficient will and resources. This increase, however, should not just take into consideration the married woman, it must also take into consideration sexually active young unmarried women and other forgotten demographics.

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## Current Situation in Migori County

### According to the Kenya Demographic Health Survey (KDHS 2014):

- *The average woman will give birth to 5.3 children in her life time compared to a national average of 3.9*
- *Contraceptive Prevalence Rate is 44.6%. This is less than Nyanza average of 56.4% and the national average of 58%.*
- *Migori County has the least Contraceptive Prevalence Rate in the former Nyanza.*
- *Uptake of the more cost efficient Long-acting reversible contraception use is lowest with only 1.1 % of women using IUCD and 10.6 % using implants*
- *23.3% of married women in Nyanza do not want to have a child, but are not using FP*
- *Over half (55.4%) of women are not using any method of family planning.*
- *26.4% of sexually active unmarried women in Kenya do not have access to family planning*
- *Almost 2 out of 10 girls in Nyanza become pregnant before they reach 20 years*
- *1 in every 149 live births results in maternal death*
- *Only 21% of primary healthcare facilities in Migori provide comprehensive youth friendly services including family planning*



The Migori County allocated 27% of the budget in FY 2014/2015 to health, however there was only a paltry 3% to preventive and promotive medicine and no dedicated budget line to reproductive health and family planning despite the dire necessity of investing in such services.

Access to and utilization of Family Planning by all will not only reduce the high rates of unintended pregnancies, high incidences of unsafe abortion, birth related complications and the ensuing maternal mortality that remains among the highest in the country, but it will also improve general standards of living of women and men in Migori County.

## Family Planning for Young People

Young people are hesitant about consuming sexual and reproductive health services such as family planning in health facilities that do not recognize and respect their right to affordability, privacy, confidentiality and style. Provision of these key services in a youth friendly manner that enjoys their confidence will thus greatly increase uptake in this special group.

Investing in Family Planning is not only a health issue, it is also smart economics for the county as reduced population growth will free monumental resources to provide for economic and social rights as stipulated in the constitution and other local and international human rights instruments

This will not only make Migori County realize development but also help in realizing Vision 2030 of making Kenya a globally competitive and prosperous country and also contribute to realization of the global Sustainable Development Goals.

### We therefore call upon the county government of Migori to:

- Increase percentage of primary care facilities offering comprehensive youth friendly services including family planning.
- Increase budgetary allocation to family planning and address all demand and supply oriented barriers of access to, and use of family planning.
- Increase access to long-acting reversible contraceptives by ensuring availability and training of service providers.
- Domesticate and implement international, national and county policies on adolescent and reproductive health including the National Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy, National Health Policy, Family Planning Guidelines and the Adolescent and Youth friendly services Guidelines.
- Fast-track the development and dissemination of Migori County costed Family Planning Strategy.

### References

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