Fertility transitions in Kenya and Ghana: Trends, determinants and implications for policy and programs

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Why Focus on Kenya and Ghana

- First countries to develop and launch population policies in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Have developed and implemented a wide range of policies and programs aimed at increasing availability of family planning
- Both have experienced significant changes in TFR and CPR since 1970
- Represent different social and economic contexts
Sources of Data

- DHS datasets for 1993 – 2014 (some variables only for 2008)
- PMA 2020 survey results for 2014
- Review of documents describing national policies, strategies and implementation plans
- Authors’ personal experience of working with family planning programs in both countries
- Discussions with country program managers and implementation partners
Factors considered in our analysis

- **Reproductive behavior** of individual women or couples as indicated by changes in their fertility preferences and/or contraceptive behaviors

- **Socio-economic and demographic characteristics** of sub-populations

- **Institutional factors**, including shifts in policy and/or service delivery environments
Fertility trends:
Rapid decline; Stall and plateau; Recent changes
Fertility trends by sub-population

- **Wealth:**
  - Richest used to be most different
  - Poorest quintile now significantly higher

- **Education:**
  - Uneducated now 3.5 – 4.0 births higher than most educated
Fertility trends by place of residence:
Nationwide increase in Ghana
Rural decline, urban increase in Kenya
Fertility trends among 15-19 year olds

Urban-rural differences increased

Huge differences by education

Kenya

Ghana

No education
Primary incomplete
Primary complete
Secondary+

No education
Primary
Secondary+
Wanted Fertility Rates and Desired Family Size have plateaued in both countries.
Unwanted fertility rates:
Have also plateaued over time, but at much lower rates in Ghana
National responses: multiple policies and programs

Kenya

- **1965**: Population issues first highlighted in Sessional Paper
- **1967**: Government adopted official population policy and established a national family planning action programme under the Ministry of Health, with an emphasis on reduction of family size and spacing of children to reduce population growth rate
- **1994**: ‘Manage population growth’ a strategic imperative Kenya Health Policy Framework and reiterated in NHSSP I and II
- **1997**: National Reproductive Health Strategy (1997-2010) launched
- **2000**: Sessional Paper No. 1 on second National Population Policy for Sustainable Development (NPPSD)
- **2003**: Adolescent Reproductive Health and Development policy
- **2004**: National Coordinating Agency for Population and Development replaces NCPD
- **2005/6**: Parliamentary budget allocates Government funds to family planning for the first time
- **2007**: National Reproductive Health Policy published
- **2007**: Population growth, and especially urban and young, mentioned in Vision 2030 document

Ghana

- National Population Policy (Revised 1994)
- National Reproductive Health Service Policy and Standards (1996)
- Adolescent Reproductive Health Policy (1996)
- National Health Policy (2007)
- National Reproductive Health Policy and Service Standards (Revised 2003)
- MDG Acceleration Framework for MDG 5 (2012)—Prioritized Acceleration Solution: Develop proposal and mobilize the international community to ensure adequate funding for the procurement of commodities
All-method contraceptive use among married women in each country shows different trends and is not reflected in the unwanted fertility trends.
Among currently married women in Kenya, the gap in modern contraceptive use has increased among uneducated and poorest.
Use of modern methods among currently married women has increased more in rural than in urban populations in both countries.
Moreover, in Ghana modern method use has stalled among educated and wealthy women.

Most educated are no longer the highest users.

Most wealthy are now the lowest users.
Unmet need has decreased rapidly over past five years in both countries.
Conclusions and Recommendations: Behavioral Factors

- Both countries have experienced similar trends in TFR, despite differences in contraceptive use levels and patterns.

- Age at first sex and marriage has increased in both countries but still long duration of non-use among sexually active unmarried.
  - But women initiating contraception late; e.g. 5.8 and 2.8 years after first sex and marriage in Ghana.

- Both countries have seen a rapid increase in contraceptive use among married 15-19 years and rural populations.

- Ghana has lower wanted and unwanted fertility rates.
  - Although this may change when 2014 data are available.
Conclusions and Recommendations: Socio-economic and demographic characteristics factors

- Poor, uneducated and rural Kenyan women have much higher TFR (including wanted TFR), unmet need and lowest contraceptive use.

- TFR and mCPR have stalled among urban, educated and wealthiest in Ghana.

- In Ghana contraceptive use has increased among rural women, surpassing that among urban women.

- Both countries have distinct socio-geographic areas with extremely high TFR, high DSF and low CPR.
Conclusions and Recommendations: Policy and Structural factors

- Both countries have developed supportive policies and implemented a wide range of strategies.
- Both still rely on donors resources to fund implementation of their strategies.
- Major gaps in funding exist, hampering full implementation.
- Method mix still limited and majority of new users rely on DMPA, which has challenges with discontinuation and potential ineligibility for women at risk of HIV acquisition.
- The Kenyan program is not meeting the needs of rural, poor and uneducated women.
- The Ghanaian program is not meeting the needs of urban, wealthy and educated women.