Population dynamics and development cooperation

Making the most of the opportunities that arise from demographic development
Population dynamics: Current demographic trends

→ The global population is growing
The Earth currently has more than seven billion inhabitants. That number is likely to have grown to 9.6 billion by 2050. Just like in the last few decades, almost all the population growth of the future will take place in developing countries, especially in Africa. By 2050, the population of Africa will probably be more than double what it is today.

→ People are moving from the country into the town
For the first time in human history, the majority of the world’s population now lives in cities – and the urban population is growing all the time. In 2050, 66 per cent of all people will be living in cities. This migration from rural areas into towns and cities is a trend that can be observed all over the world and it is especially noticeable in developing countries. In addition to that, today about 216 million people all over the world no longer live in the country in which they were born.

→ Close link between high birth rates and poverty
History has shown us that political stability and growing prosperity in a country are always accompanied by a fall in the birth rate. Families with many children often find it more difficult to overcome poverty. A high rate of population growth can hamper a country’s development if efforts to meet the growing demand for schools, health facilities and other infrastructure, and to provide sufficient food for all are not successful. There are still 222 million women around the world who do not have access to contraception and reproductive health services so that they can decide for themselves when they want to have children and how many.

→ A strong young generation
There have never been as many children and young people in the world as there are today: they now make up 42 per cent of the global population (estimate for 2015). These young people have enormous potential to bring about sustainable progress in their home countries, advancing their economic, political and social development. However, in countries that are unable to offer their young people education and training or suitable jobs, that potential will go to waste and those countries will be unable to benefit from it.
The number of old people is growing
In 2050, there will be more than two billion people worldwide who are older than 60 (in 2015, that figure will already be over 895 million). The number of old people is increasing rapidly, particularly in emerging countries like China and India. This presents huge challenges for the health and social systems of these countries.

Natural resources are becoming scarce
Wherever the number of people is growing, it is getting harder and harder to provide the goods necessary to sustain life, such as water and food or wood and farmland. Where the supply of natural resources is limited, this can mean serious conflicts over their distribution.

What is the difference between demographics and population dynamics?

Demographics or the science of population growth is concerned with the statistical and theoretical evaluation of population development and population structures. It examines birth and death rates in particular, and it also looks at how populations are ageing and at migration (emigration and immigration).

Population dynamics is not a science, it is simply a term that is used internationally in the context of development policy. It describes how the size, composition and spatial distribution of the population changes over the course of time.
Example:
Population development in Uganda – rapid population growth due to high birth rates

In Uganda roughly one in every two people is younger than 15. Average life expectancy is about 55 years, which is very low. A Ugandan woman has on average nearly six children during her lifetime.

According to the United Nations, whilst the rate that the Ugandan population is growing is gradually going to fall, by 2035 the population will still have almost doubled to just under 73 million – and by 2050 it could even have tripled, to more than 104 million.

Source: All data are from UN DESA (2013) World Population Prospects, The 2012 Revision.
Sustainable development progress can only be achieved if global demographic changes are taken into account. We will need to make even greater use in the future of the opportunities arising from such changes. That is why the BMZ has plans for a cross-cutting, long-term involvement in the field of population dynamics.

→ We are in the process of putting population dynamics on the international agenda

Changes in the size, structure and distribution of the population have a huge influence on development processes. Greater attention therefore needs to be given to issues such as population growth, ageing, urbanisation and migration as part of international policy dialogue. The BMZ is working very hard and successfully on this – in particular, at present, within the framework of the global discussion about the development goals for the future that the international community wants to set itself for after the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals has passed in 2015. The guiding principles for German efforts in this context are sustainability, human rights, gender equality and self-determination, also in all areas of sexual and reproductive health.
Our development cooperation is aligned with demographic developments in the countries with which we cooperate

Far-sighted political action is only possible if reliable data and analyses of trends regarding population development in a country are available. That is why we are supporting the efforts of our partner countries to collect and evaluate data on their demographic development. This data provides the planning basis for political strategies that are able to cushion demographic risks and make use of demographic opportunities – for example, in the areas of health, education, the labour market and resource protection.

On the way to the “demographic dividend”:

- **Reduce child mortality**
- **Offer sex education and (reproductive) health services**
- **Create suitable jobs**
- **Group A (Countries with continuing high population growth)**
  - Birth rate sinks, demographic bonus emerges
  - Demonstrate the advantages of small families
- **Group B (Countries with slower population growth)**
  - Birth rate sinks further, demographic dividend can be used
  - Fostering the equality of women
  - Raise education levels

Improve the demographic database and data analysis, use the data for planning.
Our focus is on young people as a target group

The more governments invest in school education and vocational training, and seek to create an enabling environment for new jobs, the more young people will be able to earn their own living. We are supporting our partner countries in making these important investments. This is because, a country needs a well-educated young generation as a driving force for economic growth and development. Our involvement in this area also includes promoting the health of young people. We are working to ensure that young people are well informed about their sexual and reproductive rights, and have access to contraception. Young families who have good economic prospects

In development policy the demographic dividend means the possible economic and social benefit that can be achieved due to changes in a country’s age structure.

In many developing countries we have seen that, in order to experience this kind of positive effect, a multitude of changes are needed at various levels, which taken together can give development a boost. This chart shows some of these interventions and their interactions.
and are well informed about family planning can decide for themselves when they want to have children and how many they want to have.

We will also be getting more involved in other areas relating to population dynamics over the next few years as part of German development cooperation. This includes topics such as migration, urbanisation and rural development, the interactions between population dynamics and sustainable economic and democratic development, the environment and climate change, and preparations for the increasing ageing of many societies.

Further information can be found at:
www.bmz.de/bevölkerungsdynamik
www.bmz.de/positionspapier-bevölkerungsdynamik

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