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FACTCARD

"Today we have a very potent arm with which to overcome inequalities and marginalization. That arm is what we have called the demographic dividend... The sustainability of our social and economic development depends, in large measure, on our response to this opportunity."

Former Mexican President
Vicente Fox



Planning population dynamics for growth and development

FAMILY PLANNING DELIVERS

Securing contraceptives for economic development

Key action points

- Government policies and funding for public health, education and the labour market should be based on the population structure over the long term.
- Plan sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning, according to the population age structure.
- Governments and civil society at all levels should monitor unmet need for contraception, especially among marginalized groups.
- Empower women to make autonomous decisions about family planning by tackling economic, social, cultural, political and geographic barriers.

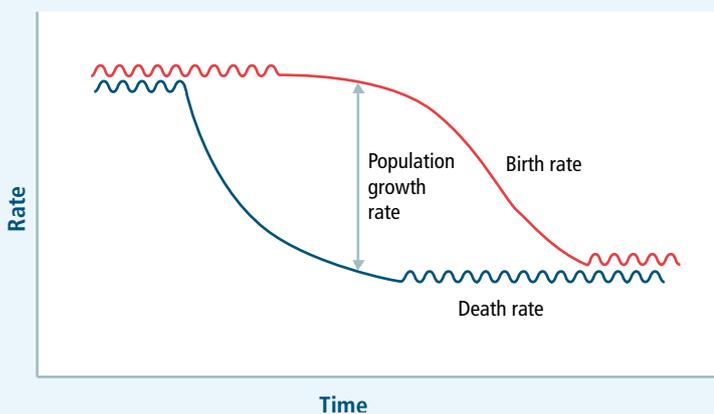
Population dynamics – impact on policy and planning

Population growth, age structure and characteristics – ‘population dynamics’ – have a profound impact on the health of the economy and human development.¹ By using rights-based approaches to slow population growth now, governments in developing countries can promote a population age structure that will open up opportunities for investments and savings over the long term.² But this will not happen by accident. Governments must influence population dynamics by making them an integral part of national policies and planning processes.

It’s shape that matters, not size

Without exception, developed nations have completed a demographic transition. ‘Demographic transition’ is the period that starts with a decline in mortality. For a time, fertility remains high, and the population growth rate shoots up. But where access to family planning and sexual and reproductive health services increases, and when women become more educated and have more opportunities to participate in the formal workforce, fertility rates also decline. Population growth then slows to a sustainable pace.

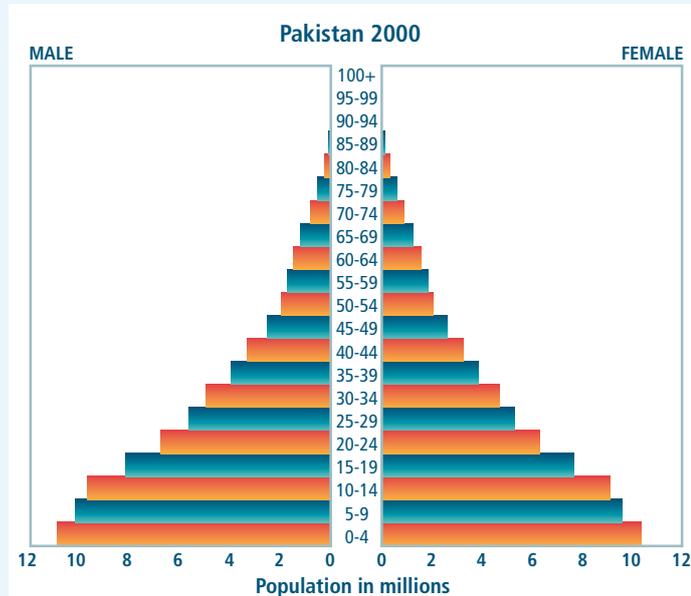
Figure 1: The demographic transition



Demographic transition leaves a large generation of children and young people in its wake – a ‘boom’ generation – and this creates a special bulge in the population structure that persists throughout the lifetime of that generation.

Figure 2: Pakistan’s demographic transition: 2000

Source: US Census Bureau, International Database⁵



Delivering the demographic dividend

The experiences of countries that have seen high levels of economic growth and rapid development demonstrate that governments play an important role in facilitating demographic dividends.³ **With effective government planning, the boom generation can support a nation to leap beyond its most ambitious development targets.**

When the individuals who make up this ‘boom’ generation are young, they place pressure on the economy and their working-age parents. To promote future growth, governments must regulate markets, they must ensure that financial and governance institutions are sound, that education is universal, that public health measures are in place, and that sexual and reproductive health services are accessible.⁴ If these conditions are in place when the young generation reaches working age it is able to provide returns. And these will be huge returns! They will be ready to join the labour force and eager to achieve their own dreams.

Given its size in relation to other cohorts, **this generation has the potential to deliver more resources than any other, which will benefit the whole population and the country for years to come.**

RAPID
WOMEN

RAPID is an advocacy model used to project the socio-economic impacts and costs of high fertility and rapid population growth. The projections encourage policy dialogue about the need for effective family planning and reproductive health. For more information visit http://futuresgroup.com/resources/software_models/rapid

Figure 3: Pakistan's demographic transition: 2050

Source: US Census Bureau, International Database⁵

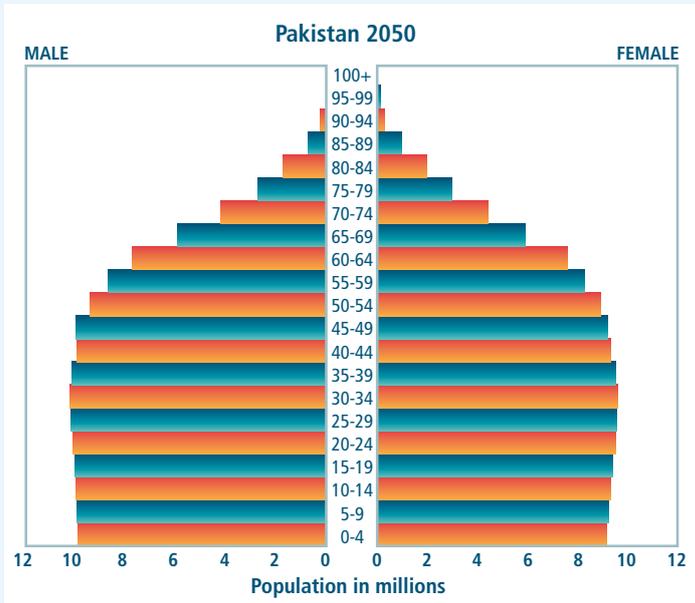
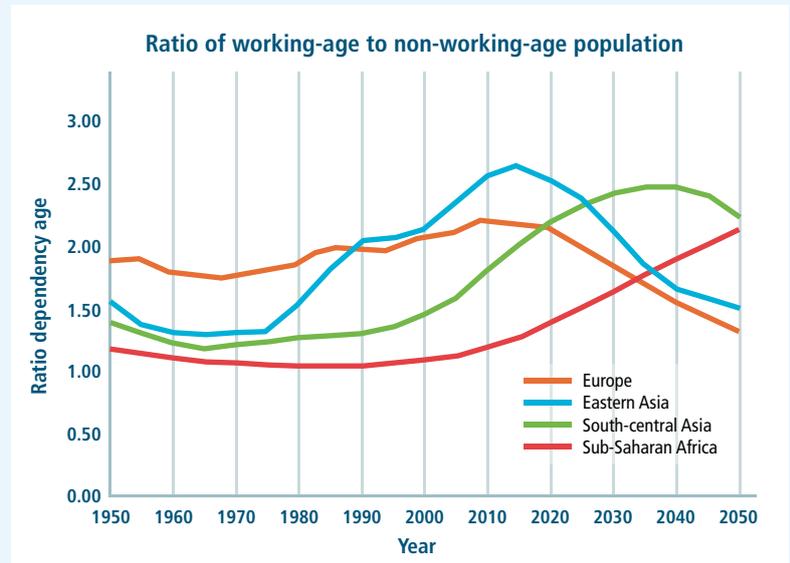


Figure 4: Dependency ratios around the world

Source: US Census Bureau, International Database⁵



The alternative scenario

If young people are uneducated, if there are no interesting and challenging job opportunities, if their voices are not heard, and if governments do not respond, they will remain unemployed, frustrated and angry.

Societies saturated with young people who feel invisible often experience civil unrest. During the 1990s, countries with young age structures* were three times more likely to experience civil conflict than countries with mature age structures.⁶

The keystone to demographic dividends: family planning

Family planning is one of the most critical services needed to manage population growth, to complete the demographic transition and to achieve a demographic dividend.

Governments that have prioritized comprehensive family planning services are now experiencing a demographic dividend and all that it has to offer.

Conversely, while many young people have expressed a desire to have fewer children than their parents' generation, they will be unable to realize their goals if they experience high levels of unmet need for contraception. New evidence shows that in some places, including Colombia and other Latin American countries, access to legal and safe abortion has been equally as important as family planning to slow population growth.⁷

If comprehensive family planning services are not widely available, the population will continue to grow rapidly and the burden of a youthful population will be magnified several times over.

Equally as grave, where unmet need for contraception exists – including comprehensive information about contraception and a choice of affordable, high quality contraceptive methods – governments are denying individuals their internationally agreed human rights to determine if, when and how many children to have.

Demographic dividends in East Asia: case study

The demographic transition in East Asia was more compressed than anywhere else in the world – taking place over 50 to 75 years.⁸ Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan – the 'East Asian Tigers' – took advantage of their age structure and experienced supercharged growth for more than four decades. With the aid of policy interventions, including family planning services, it is estimated that the demographic dividend delivered a quarter to two-fifths of the 'economic miracles' experienced by these countries.⁹

IPPF Member Associations in East Asia have made significant contributions to the economic growth of their countries. The Family Planning Association of Hong Kong, founded in 1950, was the first and only organization to provide family planning in Hong Kong until the government stepped up in 1974. Today, the Association provides a full range of services to women, men and young people of all ages and delivers targeted programmes for the most vulnerable.

* 65–70 per cent of the population under age 30.

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Glossary¹¹

Population growth rate is the number of people added to (or subtracted from) a population in a year due to natural increase and net migration.

Demographic transition refers to the shift of birth and death rates from high to low levels in a population. The decline of mortality usually precedes the decline in fertility, resulting in rapid population growth during the transition period.

Demographic dividend is the window of opportunity that opens up as fertility rates decline, when faster rates of economic growth and human development are possible when combined with effective policies and markets.

Dependency ratio is the ratio of the economically dependent part of the population to the productive part; this is arbitrarily defined as the ratio of the elderly (age 65 and older) plus the young (under age 15) to the population of working age (ages 15 to 64).

“With good policies, the dividend effect is three times larger than the effect that would be expected simply by calculating the numbers.”¹⁰

D Canning, Harvard School of Public Health