



Research Paper: Prospects and Challenges of Harnessing Demographic Dividend in Tanzania



Photo credit: Pathfinder International

About E2A

The Evidence to Action for Strengthened Family Planning and Reproductive Health Services for Women and Girls Project (E2A) is USAID’s global flagship for strengthening family planning and reproductive health service delivery. The project aims to address the reproductive healthcare needs of girls, women, and underserved communities around the world by increasing support, building evidence, and facilitating the scale-up of best practices that improve family planning services.

Awarded in September 2011, this five-year project is led by Pathfinder International, in partnership with the African Population and Health Research Center, ExpandNet, IntraHealth International, Management Sciences for Health, and PATH.

Background

Working with Pathfinder International and with support from the USAID Tanzania Mission and the UK Department for International Development, E2A is instituting a new approach to advocacy in Tanzania, which is designed to ensure the government’s investments in family planning and maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH) services have the greatest possible impact. As a part of this effort, the E2A/Pathfinder team commissioned a research policy paper on the Demographic Dividend based on an economic analysis of the situation in Tanzania.

That report, *Prospects and Challenges of Harnessing Demographic Dividend in Tanzania, 2014*, is written by the School of Economics, University of Dar es Salaam, with technical support from the African Institute for Development Policy. The paper highlights the impact of rapid population growth on education, employment, the health sector, and the economy, and makes recommendations for harnessing the Demographic Dividend in Tanzania. The research described in the paper is being used to advocate for increased investments in family planning and MNCH services, and to move advocacy efforts away from treating family planning as a health issue, but rather, an issue of development more broadly.

Research paper on the Demographic Dividend

The paper confirms what development experts all over the world now know: to arrive at a healthy working population, with fewer dependents, and greater opportunities for growth and stability, birth and death rates must decline—and Tanzania is no exception. With current fertility and mortality rates remaining stable, according to a

The **Demographic Dividend** is the economic benefit a country may enjoy as the ratio of working-age adults significantly increases relative to young dependents due to rapid decline in birth rates if the surplus labor force is well educated, skilled, and gainfully employed.

2013 national census, Tanzania’s population is projected to reach 66.8 million by 2025—which could have detrimental effects on the economy and health of the population.

The paper examines Tanzania’s prospect of harnessing the Demographic Dividend by 2025, the date by which the country aims to transition from a least-developed to a middle-income economy. According to the paper, the country’s demographic and economic profiles—steady economic growth coupled with a high but slowly declining fertility rate—favorably position it to benefit from the Demographic Dividend, but only if the government prioritizes the right investments.

Like many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Tanzania has a large population of young people who are economically dependent on their parents. Currently, 45 percent of Tanzanians are younger than 15.¹ To fully leverage this generation of young people for the economic benefit of Tanzania and to help them realize their right to health and development, the paper acknowledges that the Government of Tanzania must make

¹ Population Reference Bureau, *2015 World Population Data Sheet* (Washington, DC: PRB, 2015).

considerable investments in accelerating fertility decline, creating new jobs, and improving health care and education. According to the research, high fertility in Tanzania is driven by: the persisting demand for many children (especially in rural areas); for girls, early marriages and early dropout from school; for women, limited economic opportunities; high child mortality rates; and high unmet need for contraception that results in high incidence of unplanned births.

The paper also highlights the need to improve the environment in urban areas, where a growing population is moving. Investments in planning, governance, infrastructure, and new jobs will be essential, particularly if the United Nations Population Division's projection is correct: 53% of Tanzania's population living in urban areas by 2050.²

Recommendations to the Government of Tanzania

Recommendations from the paper focus on prioritizing investments to accelerate reductions in the number of children women are having through voluntary family planning and education interventions, and creating a globally competitive labor force and industrialized economy that will ensure gainful employment.

Specific recommendations focused on family planning and MNCH include:

- Declare family planning a key national development priority to mobilize all sectors to contribute to family planning programs.
- Increase the national budget allocation for family planning commodities and educational campaigns.
- Enhance the capacity of family planning programs to address barriers to curbing unmet demand for contraceptives, and increasing access to and use of contraception, with special focus on expanding method choice, commodity security, task-shifting, and community-based services.

- Prevent early marriages and teenage childbearing by promoting girls' school attendance and improving access to family planning among adolescents and youth.
- Reinforce interventions to reduce child mortality, including immunization programs, integrated management of childhood illnesses, nutrition, and the distribution of insecticide-treated nets.
- Strengthen public-private partnerships in the delivery of family planning services.

“Concerted efforts in addressing factors that sustain demand for many children and prevent many women who need to use contraception from accessing and using it would go a long way in reducing fertility in Tanzania,” says the paper.

Read the research brief created from the report described here:

www.e2aproject.org/publications-tools/demographic-dividend-research-brief-tanzania.html



EXPANDNET



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² United Nations Population Division, “World Urbanization Prospects—the 2014 Revision” (New York: United Nations Population Division, 2014).