

Ghana on the Rise: Investing In Population Development



Key Messages

Ghana on the Rise: Investing in Population and Development highlights the advances Ghana has made and the challenges it still faces as it strives to become a higher-income country. Exploring the impact of rapid population growth at the national and the family levels, the presentation illustrates the links among development, family planning, and rapid population growth. The presentation underscores the importance of addressing rapid population growth and meeting unmet need for family planning to reduce poverty and achieve national development goals.



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In the past few decades, Ghana has made some remarkable achievements with a growing economy, higher school enrollment, and a healthier population.



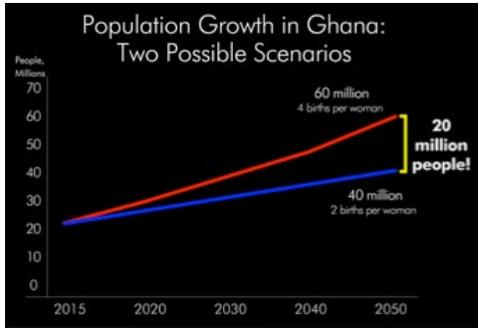
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However, these gains are fragile and many have not yet benefited from these successes. One in three Ghanaians is surviving on less than \$1.25 a day.¹



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The population is growing faster than the economy can support. Ghana adds over 700,000 people each year, making it one of the fastest growing countries in the world.²



If we continue to have families with an average of four children, our country will grow to 60 million by 2050!³

But if we start having smaller families and our population grows at a slower rate, we will reach a more manageable 40 million by 2050.⁴

That's a difference of 20 million people—which is most of our population today!⁵



Rapid population growth and urbanization mean cities are getting more crowded, making it harder to provide adequate housing and services like water and electricity.



Bigger populations reduce available arable land

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Rapid population growth affects our natural resources, including Ghana's farmlands.

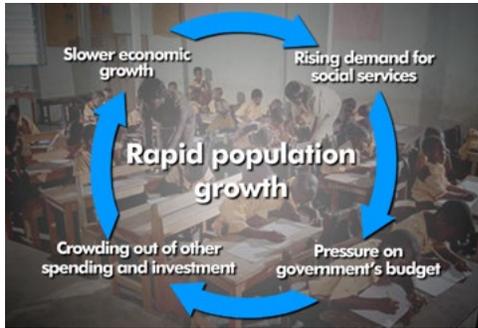
While population is expanding, land is not. As farmers subdivide their lands among their children, farms will likely get smaller.



Bigger populations can affect our energy supply

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As our population size continues to increase and more people migrate to urban areas, we will need to connect hundreds of thousands of new households to the electrical grid.⁶ Managing future population growth is one critical step in helping Ghana manage its long-term energy supply challenges.



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More people will need social services from the government, limiting investments in other vital areas. This would slow economic growth with fewer jobs, put more pressure on our natural resources, and lower quality of life.

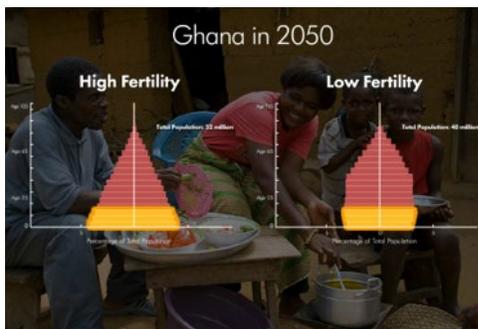


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One way to ensure families in Ghana have a better future is by addressing the reproductive health needs of families with a special focus on family planning.

Family planning can:

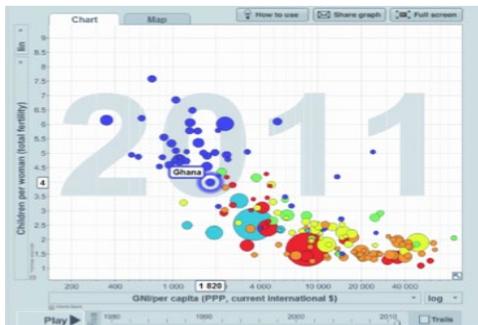
- Improve the health of women and children.
- Speed up social and economic growth and development.
- Help reduce poverty.



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Family planning would help us change the age structure of our population. This is the number of people who are young, middle-aged, or old.

When there are more working-age adults to support children and the elderly, it can lead to more rapid economic growth for the country.



Many countries have made significant economic progress in recent decades, in part by managing population growth.

With fertility declines, these countries were able to invest in national development, and today have much higher gross national incomes per person than Ghana.

Family planning is a missing link to achieving our development goals.



MCHIP/Karen Kasmauski

In Ghana, only one in five married women are using a modern contraceptive method.⁷ Low contraceptive use among couples can lead to larger families than initially wanted. Parents and caregivers will need to spend more on household resources to support and provide for a larger family.



Ghana's unmet need for family planning contributes to the high fertility rate in the country. One in three women do not want another child now or at all, but is not using family planning.⁸

In Ghana, one-third of pregnancies are unplanned.⁹

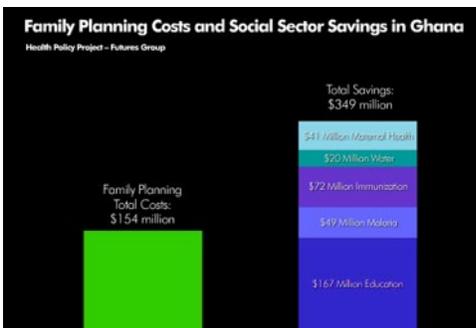


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Unplanned pregnancies can lead to high-risk pregnancies and unsafely performed abortions.

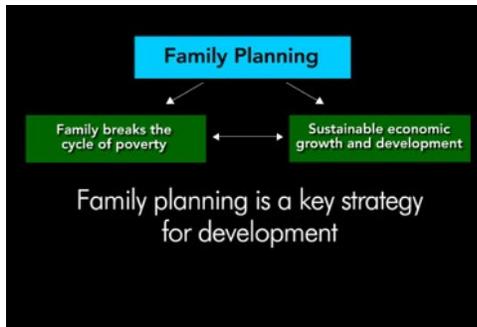
Ten women die each day in Ghana from complications during pregnancy or childbirth.

If Ghana's unmet need for family planning was met by 2030, 7,000 maternal deaths would be prevented and 380,000 children's deaths would be avoided.¹⁰



By 2030, if Ghana meets its needs for family planning and the average family size became smaller, the cost to meet the needs of its people would also decrease, including costs for education, vaccinations, water, sanitation, and malaria.

The government would save more than \$2 for every dollar invested in family planning.



When every individual and couple is able to choose the timing and spacing of each pregnancy, they can have the number of children they want and can care for.

Family planning is a key strategy for addressing rapid population growth, reducing poverty and growing the economy, both at the family level and at the national level.



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With leadership from key policymakers, a broad range of stakeholders should join together to:

- Ensure that family planning is a key component of all national development strategies.
- Include reproductive health and contraceptives in the National Health Insurance Scheme's benefit package.
- Increase access to family planning services at the community level by expanding the Community-Based Health Planning and Services program.
- Expand the group of policymakers and leaders who support family planning and mobilize political and community resources.



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Investing in family planning today is investing in the future of our country and our people.

By recognizing the importance of population growth and taking action now, we can keep the nation on the path to becoming a higher-income country.

Key Message References

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10. Futures Group calculations, May 2015.

Acknowledgements

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