



# Health and WaSH

Impact of the Demographics and Health scenario on poverty

Jakkie Cilliers

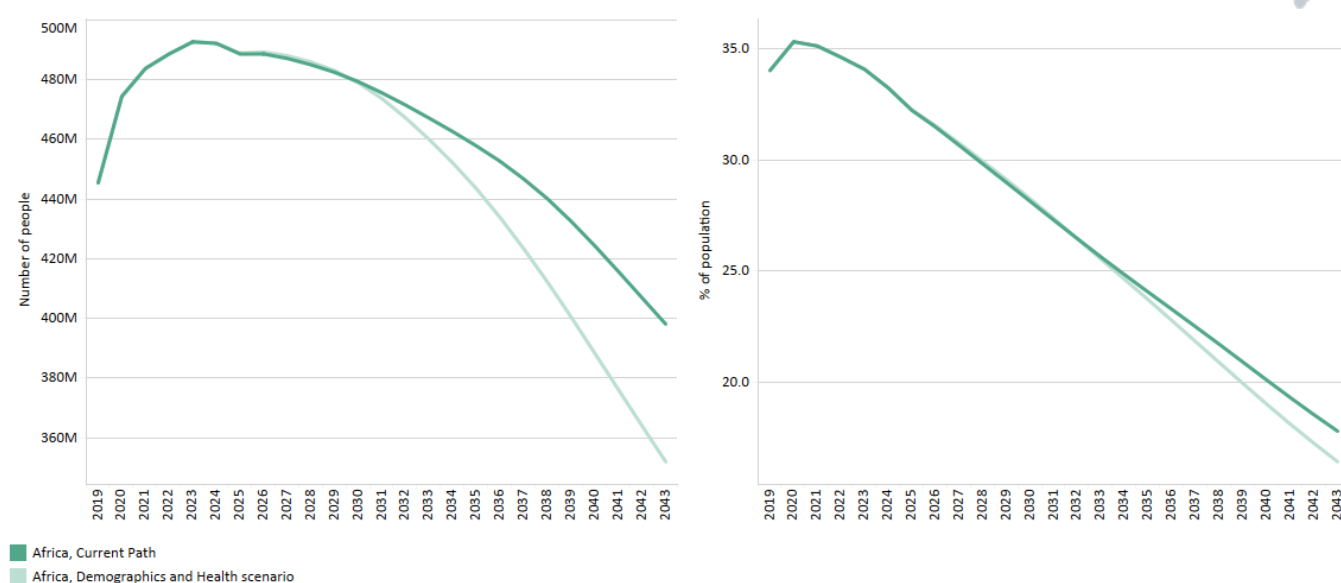
Last updated 14 January 2025 using IFs 7.84

## Impact of the Demographics and Health scenario on poverty

The Demographics and Health scenario is projected to reduce the number of extremely poor Africans by 50 million to 348 million in 2043 (using the US\$1.90 extreme poverty line) compared to the Current Path. This figure includes 14.2 million people in Nigeria, 6.2 million people in the DR Congo and 3.7 million people in Madagascar. Instead of an extreme poverty rate of 18%, it could decline to 16.5%—a remarkable testament to the contribution that family planning and better healthcare can make to Africa's fortunes.

Chart 12 shows the decline in extreme poverty in millions per year for each African country and region (using US\$1.90) that would follow the Demographics and Health scenario compared with the Current Path forecast. Because the scenario reduces the communicable disease burden rapidly in Nigeria (meaning a larger population) before the larger uptake in contraceptives has an effect, the initial impact is that extreme poverty in Nigeria is above the Current Path forecast until 2033 after which it declines. By 2043, Nigeria would have 15% fewer extremely poor people.

Chart 12: Absolute and per cent decline in extreme poverty, 2019 to 2043



Health expenditure declines in most countries in the Demographics and Health scenario, except in a few countries such as Egypt and Algeria where the treatment of non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular and malignant neo-plasma afflictions, consume significant resources. On the back of a population that is 111 million smaller in 2043, cumulatively, African governments will spend US\$150 billion less on health from 2023 to 2043. The required investment in WaSH infrastructure is US\$64 billion, less than half that amount translating into a saving of US\$86 billion.

These results reflect the benefits over long-term horizons that can be gained from investments in demographics and health on the back of medical breakthroughs with regard to AIDS and malaria, amongst others.

## Donors and sponsors



### Reuse our work

- All visualizations, data, and text produced by African Futures are completely open access under the [Creative Commons BY license](#). You have the permission to use, distribute, and reproduce these in any medium, provided the source and authors are credited.
- The data produced by third parties and made available by African Futures is subject to the license terms from the original third-party authors. We will always indicate the original source of the data in our documentation, so you should always check the license of any such third-party data before use and redistribution.
- All of our charts [can be embedded](#) in any site.

### Cite this research

Jakkie Cilliers (2025) Health and WaSH. Published online at [futures.issafrica.org](https://futures.issafrica.org). Retrieved from <https://futures.issafrica.org/thematic/05-health-and-wash/> [Online Resource] Updated 14 January 2025.

## About the authors

Dr Jakkie Cilliers is the ISS's founder and former executive director. He currently serves as chair of the ISS Board of Trustees, head of the African Futures and Innovation (AFI) programme at the Pretoria office of the Institute, and is an extraordinary professor at the University of Pretoria. His 2017 best-seller *Fate of the Nation* addresses South Africa's futures from political, economic and social perspectives. His three most recent books, *Africa First! Igniting a Growth Revolution* (March 2020), *The Future of Africa: Challenges and Opportunities* (April 2021), and *Africa Tomorrow: Pathways to Prosperity* (June 2022) take a rigorous look at the continent as a whole.

## About African Futures & Innovation

Scenarios and forecasting can help Africa identify and respond to opportunities and threats. The work of the African Futures & Innovation (AFI) program at the Institute for Security Studies aims to understand and address a widening gap between indices of wellbeing in Africa and elsewhere in the world. The AFI helps stakeholders understand likely future developments. Research findings and their policy implications are widely disseminated, often in collaboration with in-country partners. Forecasting tools inspire debate and provide insights into possible trajectories that inform planning, prioritisation and effective resource allocation. Africa's future depends on today's choices and actions by governments and their non-governmental and international partners. The AFI provides empirical data that informs short- and medium-term decisions with long-term implications. The AFI enhances Africa's capacity to prepare for and respond to future challenges. The program is headed by Dr Jakkie Cilliers.