



Health and WaSH

Impact of the Demographics and Health scenario on poverty

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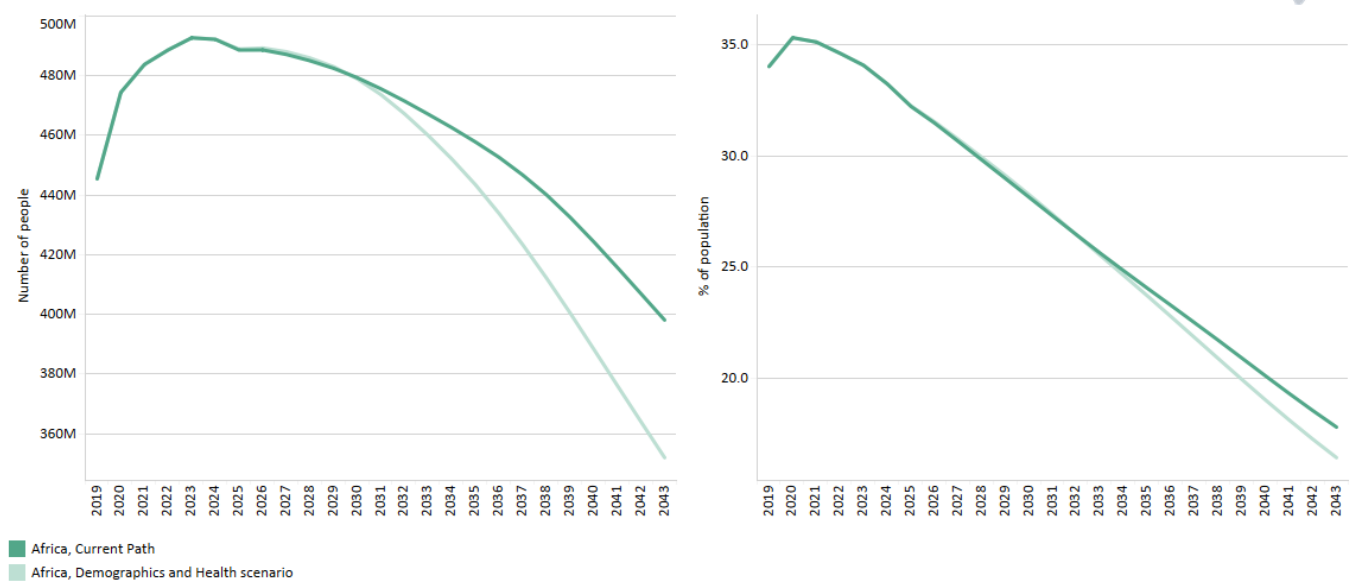
Last updated 27 October 2023 using IFs 7.84

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



Source: IFs 7.84 initialising from PovcalNet data

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.

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Cite this research

Jakkie Cilliers (2024) Health and WaSH. Published online at futures.issafrica.org. Retrieved from <https://futures.issafrica.org/thematic/05-health-and-wash/> [Online Resource] Updated 27 October 2023.



About the authors

Dr Jakkie Cilliers is the ISS's founder and former executive director of the ISS. He currently serves as chair of the ISS Board of Trustees and head of the African Futures and Innovation (AFI) programme at the Pretoria office of the ISS. 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.

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