



# Demographic Dividend and Improving Health for Women and Youth



## African Youth Bulge Presents Opportunities

Africa's population is expected to peak at 1.6 billion by 2030—nearly 70% of which will be working age. The number of youth in Africa will increase by 42% over this period. This youth bulge will no doubt change the economic landscape of the continent. Harnessing this potential into a positive force for development through investments in health, empowerment, education and employment is the greatest challenge of the next 15 years. If successful, African countries will be able to reap significant dividends from this demographic change—known as the demographic dividend (DD).

Improving health is essential to ensuring equitable and sustainable growth in Africa

## Health and the Demographic Dividend

Good health remains a key to reducing youth vulnerability, improving workforce productivity and creating an environment for youth to realize their full potential. Smart investments in key areas like sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) including family planning will have an outsized impact on accelerating the demographic change and driving economic growth. Studies have demonstrated that if just 10% more girls go to school, average GDP increases by 3% and when barriers to work are reduced for women productivity increases by 25%.

Across Africa, barriers limiting young people's access to SRHR information and services persist—particularly for young girls.



## The Role of the Private Sector

The private sector can play a role in partnering to advance integrated initiatives that address critical needs for women and girls. These interventions ultimately benefit business as they engender a more robust economic environment, provide opportunities for investment in future employees and customers, and limit violence, systematic risk and volatility. We are building a group of private sector champions to support this work.

GBCHealth is dedicated to leveraging the resources and expertise of the private sector to meet today's most pressing health challenges. Founded in 2001 under the leadership of Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke, GBCHealth has built a strong track record of mobilizing business action to address workplace and community health issues.



## UNFPA-GBCHealth Partnership

GBCHealth is teaming up with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to encourage smart partnerships in health, empowerment, education and employment to reduce vulnerability and support young people to reach their full potential. The partners strive to achieve the following goals:

- Create awareness and stimulate action on health issues critical to realizing the DD
- Establish a space for the private sector to advocate – alongside government and civil society – for policies that promote, support, and expand the DD agenda
- Provide direct avenues for the private sector to partner with governments to improve SRHR outcomes and scale successful programs through integrated interventions and business know-how
- Support, complement, replicate and/or scale existing UNFPA initiatives that are underway, such as the flagship Sahel Women’s Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD) Project

We are soliciting your participation in roundtables with other leaders; your interest in exploring partnerships to replicate, expand, and scale projects; and your ideas to address bottlenecks in project design and implementation.

Ghislaine Ouedraogo-Ametchie  
goametchie@gbchealth.org



## IMPACT

The private sector can accelerate progress on the achieving the demographic dividend in several ways.

### Demand generation and behavior change:

Produce tiered-messages and materials to target influencers, youth and other segments of the population with social marketing and mass media.

**Supply chain performance:** Provide key insights and tools to improve supply chain efficiency throughout the entire delivery ecosystem to ensure consistent availability of products.

**Training:** Train health workers to improve quality of care and build innovative business models for delivering health services to households.

**Advocacy:** Participate in high-level dialogues to shape national and global health policies that empower women and girls.

**Financial empowerment:** Share experience structuring financial mechanisms to attract new donor and private capital to development projects.

**Data collection and monitoring:** Share data collection techniques, technology and monitoring capabilities to improve efficiency, bolster project implementation capabilities and augment policies.

**Regional standardization of registration and quality:** Work closely with national governments to enhance security measures to ensure legitimate, high-quality products are reaching users.

**Complementary interventions:** Understand the effects that programs in other areas including financial literacy, governance and employment are having on health status.