

Major Milestones towards Operationalizing Demographic Dividend: A Case Study for Kenya

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Introduction

Demographic dividend, as defined by the United Nations Population Fund means, "the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age structure, mainly when the share of the working-age population is larger than the non-working-age share of the population ". It is "a boost in economic productivity that occurs when there are growing numbers of people in the workforce relative to the number of dependents.

Methodology

This paper will collect information through desk review of existing data from published sources, programme and administrative data to document various milestones in operationalizing the demographic dividend in Kenya

Operationalizing the DD: Applying the DemDiv model to Kenya's situation

Kenya initiated the process of operationalizing the Demographic dividend in 2014 through development of DemDiv model. This tool can generate data that to develop sound policies to facilitate a demographic dividend. The project applied the model to project the demographic potential through interaction of policy changes in the family planning, education and economic sectors. The project generated a model that was applied to inform the demographic dividend for Kenya. It produced four scenarios for the period 2010 to 2050: A *base case* scenario where the status quo remains, *economic-only* scenario of improvements, *economic + education* scenario of improvement in economic and education variables and *economic + education + FP* scenario of combined improvements in all three sectors. The models recommended strategic investments for each of the four sectors to ensure Kenya is in the right path to achieving the dividend.

Policy briefs on Kenya's DD opportunities

To reinforce the key in the DemDiv, the messages were packaged into policy briefs to inform policy makers on what needs to be done to enhance demographic dividend in Kenya.

National Adolescent and Youth Survey (NAYS) 2015

Kenya also conducted National Adolescent and Youth Survey in 2015 to identify the potential for DD and specific investment opportunities available that can accelerate achievement of the demographic dividend in all the 47 counties.

Kenya Health Facility Assessment Survey (KHFA).

A national survey on Health Facility was conducted in 2015 to assess the performance of family planning and reproductive health programmes in Kenya. The survey findings are being implemented to inform policy and programme actions by both levels of government.

Domestication of African Union Demographic Dividend Roadmap.

Kenya Vision 2030, which is a long term development agenda envisages a rapidly industrializing middle income country whose citizens enjoy a high quality of life. It envisions rapid progress in the social, economic and political sectors between the year 2008 and 2030. Since the launch of the blueprint in 2008, notable progress has been documented in these.

In 2016, Kenya began the process of domesticating the African Union roadmap and the document was launched in May 2017. The Roadmap activities were incorporated in the Medium Term Plan III (2018 – 2022) and the 2nd County Integrated Development Plans (2018 – 2022) as part of the process for actualizing the Kenya Vision 2030 which is a major milestone in for furtherance of DD.

County Specific DD Guidelines for Implementation of Kenya's Road Map

Kenya's administrative structure is a devolved system with one National and 47 county governments. The Demographic and socio-economic indicators vary widely at the national and county level. Some counties are lagging behind and it is projected that the demographic window of opportunity opened as early back as 2010 (Kirinyaga and Nyeri) while others are expected to open beyond 2050. Based on this premise, Kenya developed county specific Demographic Dividend roadmap guidelines to guide the counties on the areas to focus on in order to be in the right path towards harnessing the Demographic Dividend.

Advocacy forums with County leadership

Population issues in Kenya are usually politicised and not accorded the attention they deserve. The size of the population is one of the parameters adapted by Commission for Revenue Allocation to allocate resources and also takes the biggest proportion of 45 percent. Therefore, population figures shape any population debate in Kenya. With this realization, continuous engagement with the policy makers to support population programmes are undertaken. As a result, the policy makers have enlisted their support through commitments to allocate resources in subsequent budgets to support DD and other population programmes.

Capacity building the media

Media is a very important key stakeholder in harnessing the DD due to their role in shaping different agendas. It therefore important to ensure that the media have factual information for reporting. The government has continued to build the capacity of the media houses on demographic dividend and other population issues.

Achievements in Education Sector

The DemDiv Model proposed some recommendations in the education investments that needed to be done for Kenya to be on the path to enhancing Demographic Dividend. It proposed reducing drop-out rate, increase transition from Primary to secondary school, re-establish the middle level colleges and reduce barriers and costs to tertiary education. To support implementation of the above recommendations, the expenditure for education sector has continued to grow over the years.

Early Childhood Development Programme

The government of Kenya has been very keen in giving a solid foundation to the young learners in early child hood development as evidenced by the growth in this sector. The early childhood enrolment increased by 3 percent form 3.3 million in 2014 to 3.4 in 2018. There was also a marked increase of trained ECDE teachers of 5.4 percent and 7.8 million of untrained teachers in 2018. Gross enrolment rate in pre-primary increased by 1.3 percentage point to 78.4 percent in 2018. The net enrolment rate also increased by 0.3 percent to 77.2 percent.

Transition to Secondary school

The completion rate in primary improved marginally from 79 to 82.3 but has stagnated at 84 percent up to 2018. The transition rate from primary to secondary has continued to improve from 76 percent in 2014 to 83 percent in 2018. The total enrolment rate at form 4 in secondary schools increased by 4.0 percent in 2018. The survival rate for all students in 2018 stood at 86.4 percent. The secondary school GER increased by 1.8 percentage point to 70.3 percent in 2018 while NER increased by 2.1 percentage points to 53.2 percent in the same period.

Universal Health Care

In Kenya, about 47 percent of births occurring are unplanned for as reported in the 2009 population and housing census. Some of the challenges facing this sector is inadequate access to quality health care and regional disparities in utilization of health care services and products.

One of the recommendations of the DemDiv model for Kenya was to improve access to family planning to reduce the number of unplanned births and lower unmet need for family planning. The model also recommended increase of national and county budgets on family planning to reduce stock-out. To address some of these challenges, the government has continued to increase the budgetary allocation to the health sector as well as increasing the Universal Health Care coverage.

Challenges and recommendations in Operationalizing the Demographic Dividend

Demographic dividend is still a very technical concept which is not easily understood. Frequent changes of the policy makers especially the legislators makes it so expensive to continuously engage new members.

Continuous engagement is costly and therefore unsustainable which creates a knowledge gap between one engagement meetings to the next.

Population debate are usually politicised hence some policy makers shy away from population debate.

There is need to allocate more resources to continuously advocate for operationalize the DD at all levels of government.

There is need for experts to unpack the DD to enable policy makers understand the concept to a level that they can debate it in their usual forum.

Conclusion

Kenya is in the path to domesticating the African Union Roadmap on Demographic Dividend which is supported by various programmes in the 4 sectors of focus. The DemDiv model informed the country on strategic areas of investments and packaging the data for policy makers. As a response to the requirements of DemDiv, Kenya required data to inform on the status of the youth as well as status of the health facilities. However, there are some challenges which need to be tackled to ensure that Kenya enhances demographic potential.