

# Qualitative Growth and Health Promotion

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One of the core tasks of international development cooperation is to improve the health of disadvantaged population groups. As such, this concept is enshrined in the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations (MDG 4, 5 & 6). Health, food security and access to clean drinking water are basic human needs, which must be met as a prerequisite for the creation of prosperity and socially sustainable growth.

Practical experience and scientific studies show that as well as being an objective of the fight against poverty and qualitative growth, good health is, in fact, an effective instrument for achieving them. Improvement in health does not need to wait for preceding economic growth; it can itself be a catalyst for economic growth, greater social security, improved educational opportunities and a long-term reduction in poverty.

## Health as a catalyst for qualitative growth

In many respects, a healthy population is a basic requirement for and driver of qualitative growth.

## Health as a human right

A person's health and welfare is of fundamental importance for ensuring an independent and dignified life. KfW Development Bank's involvement in the health sector is therefore also based on the inalienable right of every human being to enjoy the highest attainable level of physical and mental health (Article 12,

**Qualitative growth** describes a development process which targets sustained economic, ecological and social progress. Qualitative growth means increasing welfare prosperity in society as whole, which does not necessarily mean a rise in incomes but which can also be expressed, for example, in an increase in distributive justice, equal opportunities, social security, peaceful coexistence and the preservation of natural resources.

UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - ICESCR).

However, on its own, a legal entitlement to access to healthcare is not enough to realise this right. The primary concern in German Financial Cooperation (FC) partner countries is improving the de facto access of all population groups to high-quality health services. This is a question of dismantling economic, geographical, religious, ethnic and gender-specific barriers to access. In short, more social justice and equal opportunities must be ensured.

## Particular benefits for women

From the point of view of equal opportunities, health promotion is above all centrally important for the role of women in society. Women bear the main burden of care for the sick and are exposed to a high risk of death during pregnancy and birth. The more children a woman bears, the more limited her opportunities for personal development. For this reason, reducing the risk of disease and death and helping women to avoid unwanted pregnancies directly strengthen the position of women. Thus, women increase their chances of a better education, of integration into the official labour market and of social participation. This enables a society to use its productive potential, strengthen social peace and to create a sustainable democratic society.

The extensive promotion of improvements in sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) by FC makes an important contribution to this. Contraceptives are supplied, sex education is offered and health and counselling services relating to pregnancy and birth are provided from FC funds. In addition to the intended primary effects on health, these projects also have an effect on a country's social standards as well as on its demographic development (see case study 1).

## Reduction of income poverty

Disease and the associated economic costs constitute one of the main causes of poverty



Source: Dr Dirk Müller

in countries without a social security net. The direct effects of disease on household income are reflected in the costs of medical care, the loss of income due to illness or due to disabilities caused by a childhood disease, and loss of future income as a result of premature death. According to World Health Organization estimates, 100 million people are driven into poverty each year as a result of the cost of illness (World Health Report 2010).

As part of its commitment to strengthen health systems, KfW is attempting to break the vicious circle of poverty and disease by focusing on the development of basic health services, development and expansion of fair, sustainable financing structures for the health sector and demand-side subsidies for health services (e.g. the use of voucher systems). The projects promoted by FC in these areas primarily benefit disadvantaged sectors of the population and reduce the risk of target groups of becoming impoverished as a result of health expenditure.

Furthermore, FC regards the development and expansion of social security systems (basic social security, health insurance, old age provisions) in its partner countries as an important way of creating long-term structures for reducing poverty. Particularly in poor countries, social transfers, microinsurance and voucher systems provide an opportunity to protect the predominantly young population from impoverishment through disease. In future, as development progresses and life expectancy increases, incentives and scopes for saving money and investing in social insurance (retirement, health and unemployment insurance) will increase in many devel-

oping countries. FC involvement in these areas shall be broadened in coordination with other sectors such as microfinance and adapted in line with the partner country's specific needs.

## Benefits to economies

From an economic viewpoint, good physical and mental health amongst the population leads to an increase in productivity at work. There is scientific evidence of the positive effects of good health on a country's economic development.

An increase in life expectancy accelerates economic growth and a decline in childhood diseases increases the average income (Bloom, Canning and Sevilla, 2004; Commission on Macroeconomics and Health, 2001). Conversely, economic damage caused by avoidable diseases and lost years of life by far exceeds what would have to be spent on improving healthcare provisions in the world's poorest countries.

Furthermore, the absence of health risks and the existence of a healthy work force help to measurably improve the investment climate, measurable in rising direct foreign investment, as well as increasing the domestic saving rate. Both factors are extremely important for sustainable economic growth.

## Making use of the demographic bonus

In poor countries with a rapidly growing population, national resources are often inadequate to provide people with sufficient fertile land, food, jobs and the necessary social and economic infrastructure (education and health facilities, means of transport, water and power

supply). The consequences are grave: waves of internal and external migration, the depletion of the country's natural resources, rising poverty statistics and social and political instability.

In many sub-Saharan African and Asian countries, where birth rates are still far above five children per woman, the main deficiencies are still sexual and health education, birth control and access to family planning services. In these countries, sustainable growth is often impossible until a process of demographic transition takes place. When birth rates decrease as a result of a decline in child mortality, this creates the so-called "demographic bonus". Across the population, family sizes fall, parents spend more money on healthcare and educating their offspring, and women get the opportunity to earn a living outside the home. The productive members of the population then have to provide for fewer economic dependants such as children and old people. Citizens can consume more, save and invest. Moreover, the state can invest funds saved on social infrastructure development in the improvement of that infrastructure's quality and in job creation.

However, in addition to the reduction of infant and child mortality and the availability of contraceptives and family planning services, a good education system and an adequate labour market policy which allows additional labour to be absorbed are prerequisites for a country being able to convert this demographic bonus into qualitative growth.

The promotion of family planning and of reproductive health and gender equality are presumed to be the most important instruments for reducing birth rates alongside the improvement of educational opportunities for women. FC is heavily involved in both fields. Germany is the second largest bilateral donor (after the USA) in the field of family planning. FC promotes the provision of contraceptives, sexual education and reproductive health and advisory services worth a total of more than 500 million euros. Tried-and-tested projects

such as social marketing (see case study 1) are increasingly supplemented by innovative financing instruments such as demand-side financing, which lets poor people insure themselves against specific health expenses using health vouchers, for example.

## Protection of natural resources and preservation of social harmony

Local and regional ecosystems also benefit from a reduction of population growth in many underdeveloped regions. High population pressure leads to the disappearance of species-rich rain forests, the decimation of global fish stocks, pollution of the oceans and a decline in areas which can be used for agriculture. The result is more famines, waves of migration and social unrest. A deceleration in population growth is therefore an important factor in the sustainable use of natural resources and the preservation of social peace in many sub-Saharan African and South-East Asian countries.

## Summary

The aim of promoting human development in a socially just and ecologically sustainable manner opens one's eyes to the diverse interactions between a society's state of health and its chances of development, taking us above and beyond classic growth theories. The burden of disease to which a population is exposed, the available health and family planning services and the social insurance mechanisms in the event of illness, inability to work or old age have a direct impact on a population's physical and mental wellbeing and a country's population dynamics and its potential for macroeconomic development. ■

## Further information

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In its 2001 report, the *Commission on Macroeconomics and Health* estimated that an increase in donor funds for health investment equivalent to 0.1 per cent of the donor countries' GDP could save around eight million lives per annum. This would cost around 27 billion US dollars per annum. The resulting growth in productivity was calculated at 186 billion US dollars per annum.

## Case study 1 – Social marketing in Niger: changing social structures to enable growth

### Major challenges

Niger is one of the poorest countries in the world. It also has the highest population growth in the world. Between 1950 and 2007, the country's population increased by 2.2 million to 14.2 million, and it could reach 53.2 million by 2050 if the present trend cannot be reversed. On average, a woman from Niger has more than seven children. Traditional structures and values favour early marriage for girls, prevent their access to education and stand in the way of the acceptance of family planning and safe sex. The prevalence of HIV is rising, especially amongst young women. The barren desert soil is already incapable of feeding today's population. There are too few jobs, health facilities, schools and water connections. Due to the high social expenditure, the state has no scope for investment in either the labour market or in better trade channels. Niger will not be able to develop unless the demographic trend is reversed.

### Animas-Sutura addresses these problems and speaks out to people

The Association Nigerienne de Marketing Social (Animas-Sutura or the Niger Social Marketing Association) was founded in 2006 with financial support from KFW Entwicklungsbank and is now regarded as a key tool in implementing national population policy and AIDS strategy. Its aim is to make condoms and other contraceptives accessible to every single man and woman. Furthermore, the education campaigns conceived by Animas-Sutura help to change the population's attitudes and behaviour with regard to unprotected sex, early marriage and pregnancy, traditional role models, family planning and contraception.

The results are encouraging – demand for condoms has increased by 57 per cent since 2007. In rural communities where intensive campaigns to change behaviour took place, the number of women using contraceptives rose to 15.2 per cent compared with 6.1 per cent in villages where intensive campaigns did not take place. The project is thus making an important contribution to the declared aim of Niger's government to increase the use of family planning methods and slow down population growth.

*In its choice of product name and symbols ("foula" after the traditional headdress), advertising media (national sporting icons and popular music groups) and communications media (radio, direct communication with the village community and street theatre), Animas-Sutura is making use of national and local traditions to ensure the population's acceptance of the advertised products and messages. The use of solar-powered radios and the focus on women's groups take the country's specific development barriers into account and strengthen the role of women in social change.*



Source: Dr Dirk Müller

## Case study 2 – Giving South African orphans and children in need of protection a future

### A childhood destroyed by HIV/AIDS

Children and young people in South Africa are frequently the main sufferers of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. They are often severely traumatised by witnessing the course of the disease and ultimate death of their parents. If both parents die and there is no other family support, older children are forced into the role of head of the family and main provider for their brothers and sisters at a very young age. It is not uncommon for these orphans to be entirely self-dependent, ending up on the streets where they are susceptible to crime and abuse. They almost always leave school and suffer from social exclusion. Their chances of a better future are slim. In view of the estimated 1.4 million children who have lost one or both parents and who are mostly uneducated and grow up without social guidance, South Africa's chances for development are not good. When family and social structures collapse and a whole generation of young people grows up without prospects, there is a huge risk to the social harmony and economic development of the country.

### Respite offered by care centres

The aim of the FC's "Support for orphans and other South African children in need of protection" project is to improve the range of care and education opportunities for such children. It finances the establishment and equipping of centres where children and young people can receive psycho-social care and help with managing their daily lives. In particular, the intention is to prevent girls – who often have to assume the role of head of the family – from leaving school and falling victim to abuse or early pregnancy. The provision of education and training opportunities which are specifically tailored to the young people's lives aims to give children and adolescents a chance to take control of their lives and escape poverty.

The current generation will only have the chance to play a part in the development of South African society if the country succeeds in protecting these children and adolescents from the HIV pandemic and providing them with prospects for development. This project thus contributes to the sustainable economic and socially just development of the country.