



# Policy Brief No 1 of 2025

## Harnessing Kenya's Demographic Shift for Sustainable Growth.

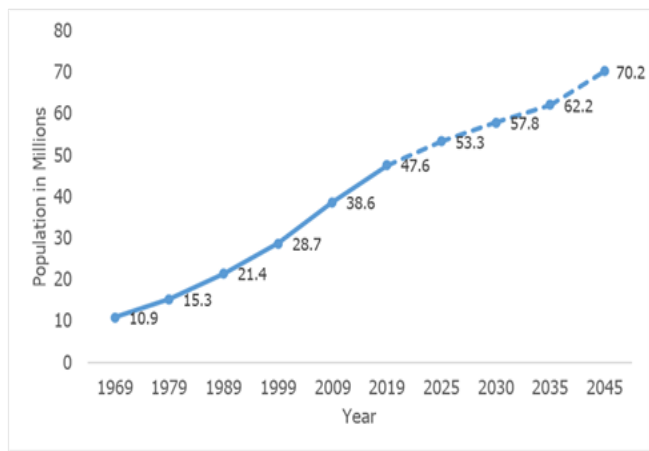
### Overview:

Kenya is undergoing a demographic transition, with a large youthful and a growing ageing population. This demographic shift presents both opportunities and challenges for sustainable growth. Strategic policies are needed to leverage the potential of youth while addressing the needs of older persons, ensuring inclusive and sustainable development.

This policy brief examines Kenya's population size, growth patterns, and age structure, highlighting the opportunities and risks linked to these trends. It underscores the urgency of aligning population dynamics with investments in human capital, job creation, and social systems to ensure that demographic change contributes positively to national development goals, including Vision 2030 and the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA).

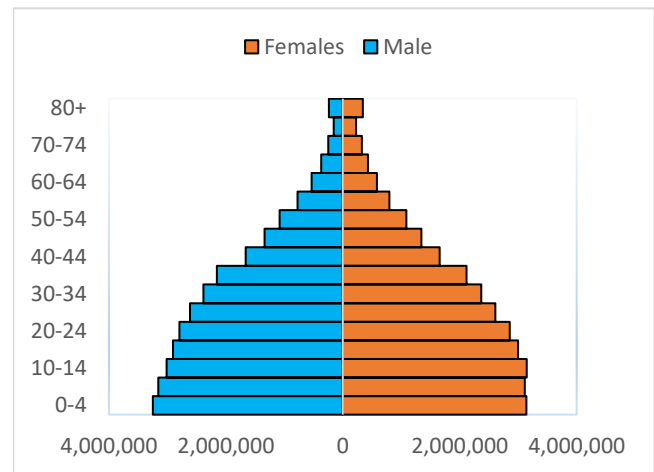
### Background:

Kenya's population is projected to be at about 54 million in 2025, with over 60% under the age of 25 and a growing older population. These demographic shifts exert pressure on education, health, employment and social protection systems. This calls for the need to align demographic trends with Vision 2030, county plans, and the SDGs for equitable development.

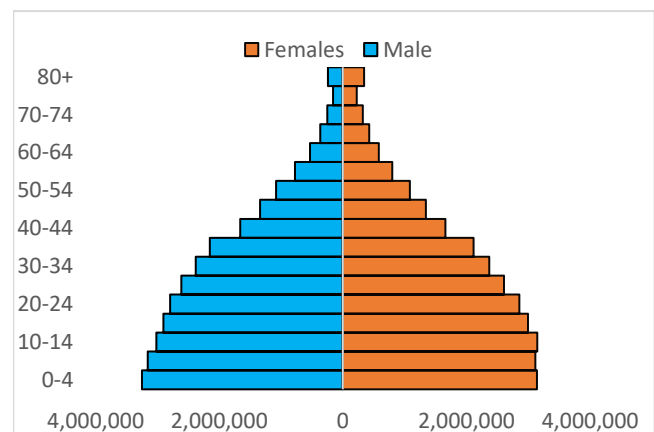


**Source:** Kenya Population and Housing Census Analytical Reports on Population Projections 1969 – 2019.

The country's age structure is heavily skewed towards young people, with children, adolescents, and youth accounting for a substantial share of the population. This youthful structure reflects past high fertility and has resulted in a high dependency ratio, with significant demands on households and public systems to provide education, healthcare, and basic services.



Population Pyramid, 2019  
Source: 2019 KPHC Basic Report, Vol. III



Population Pyramid, 2025  
Source: 2019 KPHC Analytical Report on Population Projections, Vol. XVI

# Policy Brief No 1 of 2025

## Key Findings:

- **Large Youth Population:** Approximately 75% of the population is below 35 years, creating high demand for education, skills development, and employment opportunities. Each year, large cohorts of young people enter the labour market, placing pressure on an economy that has struggled to generate sufficient formal employment opportunities.
- **Demographic Momentum:** Although the annual growth rate declined to 2.3% by 2019, Kenya's population is expected to continue growing due to its youthful base.
- **Growing elderly population:** The share of persons aged 65 years and above increased from 3.6% in 1969 to 3.9% in 2019, with projections indicating continued growth through 2045.
- **Rapid urbanization and migration:** Rapid urbanization, fuelled largely by youth migration, is reshaping population distribution. While cities offer economic opportunities, they also face growing challenges related to informal settlements, unemployment, congestion, and overstretched services.

## Implications:

Failure to address Kenya's double population burden will result in:

- Rising youth unemployment and underemployment, increasing poverty, inequality, and social instability.
- Overburdened health and social protection systems due to an ageing population.
- Missed demographic dividend, weakening economic growth and slowing progress toward national and global development targets.

## Recommendations:

1. Ministry of Education should expand access to quality education, vocational training, and youth centred employment programs.
2. Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and National Treasury should implement sustainable pensions, and community support initiatives for older persons.
3. NCPD and KNBS should integrate demographic data into national and county development planning and policy formulation.

## Conclusion:

Kenya's demographic shift is a strategic opportunity to drive sustainable and inclusive growth. By investing in human capital, protecting vulnerable groups, and aligning population dynamics with development priorities, Kenya can realize its demographic dividend and achieve long term prosperity.

## References

1. Population Situation Analysis (2025). National Council for Population and Development.
2. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS). 2023. Kenya Population and Housing Census Report. Nairobi: KNBS.
3. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). 2022. World Population Prospects 2022. New York: UN.

This Policy Brief is based on the Kenya Population Situational Analysis Report 2025.

**Collaborating Organizations:** National Council for Population and Development (NCPD), Population Studies and Research Institute (PSRI) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Copyright © 2025, National Council for Population and Development. All rights reserved. This report or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the National Council for Population and Development, except for the use of brief quotations in a book review.



NCPD is a semi-autonomous government agency that formulates and promotes population policy and coordinates related activities for sustainable development in Kenya.

NCPD  
National Council for Population and Development  
P.O. Box 48994 – GPO Nairobi  
00100, Kenya  
Tel: +254 735 700 208/0724 256 202  
Email: [info@ncpd.go.ke](mailto:info@ncpd.go.ke)  
[www.ncpd.go.ke](http://www.ncpd.go.ke)