

2025 Global Forecast Series

Presented By
INIGO

Key Trends on Our Radar

TOP 20 Tech Companies

Microsoft \$3.3T Apple \$3.3T Amazon \$1.8T Alphabet \$1.8T Tesla \$1.8T

Stock Ownership

Thursday Dec 12th • 11AM PST

FREE WEBINAR
REGISTER NOW

VISUAL

VC+ MORE FROM VC ▼ GO AD-FREE ▼ PARTNER WITH US

ADVERTISEMENT

ECONOMY

How Global Health and Wealth Has Changed Over Two Centuries



Published 4 years ago on February 24, 2021

By **Nick Routley**



X

Sorry

This video does not exist.

x



How Global Health and Wealth Has Changed Over 221 Years

At the dawn of the 19th century, global life expectancy was only 28.5 years.

Outbreaks, war, and famine would still kill millions of people at regular intervals. These issues are still stubbornly present in 21st century society, but broadly speaking, the situation around the world has vastly improved. Today, most of humanity lives in countries where the life expectancy is above the typical retirement age of 65.

At the same time, while inequality remains a hot button topic within countries, income disparity *between* countries is slowly beginning to narrow.

This animated visualization, created by [James Eagle](#), tracks the evolution of health and wealth factors in countries around the world. For further exploration, Gapminder also has a fantastic [interactive chart](#) that showcases the same dataset.

The Journey to the Upper-Right Quadrant

In general terms, history has seen health practices improve and countries become increasingly wealthy—trends that are reflected in this visualization. In fact, most countries drift towards the upper-right quadrant over the 221 years covered in the dataset.

However, that path to the top-right, which indicates high levels of both life expectancy and GDP per capita, is rarely a linear journey. Here are some of the noteworthy events and milestones to watch out for while viewing the animation.

1880s: Breaking the 50-Year Barrier

In the late 19th century, Nordic countries such as Sweden and Norway already found themselves past the 50-year life expectancy mark. This was a significant milestone considering the global life expectancy was a full 20 years shorter at the time. It wasn't until the year 1960 that the global life expectancy would catch up.

1918: The Spanish Flu and WWI

At times, a confluence of factors can impact health and wealth in countries and regions. In this case, World War I coincided with one of the [deadliest pandemics](#) in history, leading to global implications. In the animation, this is abundantly clear as the entire cluster of circles takes a nose dive for a short period of time.

1

A have catastrophic consequences. This was the
c Republic of China (1960), where life expectancy
p f people. These extreme events are easy to spot
in he countries in question.

x

1

E experience massive booms in wealth, and in the
following decade, smaller countries such as the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait rocket to the
right edge of the visualization.

In following decades, both Iran and Iraq can be seen experiencing wild fluctuations in both health and wealth as regime changes and conflict begin to destabilize the region.

1990s: AIDS in Africa

In the animation, a number of countries plummet in unison at the end of the 20th century. These are sub-Saharan African countries that were hit hard by the AIDS pandemic. At its peak in the early '00s, the disease accounted for more than **half of deaths** in some countries.

x

1995: Breaking the 50-year barrier

Global life expectancy reaches retirement age. At this point in time, there is a clear divide in both health and wealth between African and South Asian countries and the rest of the world.

Thankfully, that gap is would continue to narrow in coming years.

1990-2000s: China's Economic Rise

With a **population** well over a billion people, it's impossible to ignore China in any global overview. Starting from the early '90s, China begins its march from the left to right side of the chart, highlighting the unprecedented economic growth it experienced during that time.

What the Future Holds

If current trends continue, global life expectancy is expected to surpass the **80-year mark** by 2100. And, sub-Saharan Africa, which has the lowest life expectancy today, is expected to mostly close the gap, reaching 75 years of age.

Wealth is also expected to increase nearly across the board, with the biggest gains coming from places like Vietnam, Nigeria, and the Philippines. Some experts are projecting the world economy as a whole to **double** in size by 2050.

There are always bumps along the way, but it appears that the journey to the upper-right quadrant is still very much underway.

Enjoying the data visualization above?

Join over 375,000 subscribers to our free email with new visuals every day on the trends that matter.

RELATED TOPICS: [#Wealth Of Nations](#) [#Global Life Expectancy](#) [#GDP PPP](#) [#Improving Global Health](#)

DON'T MISS



Visualizing How COVID-19 Has Impacted Global Wages

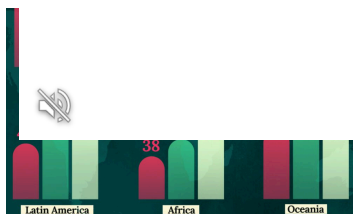
UP NEXT

Mapped: The Greenest Countries in the World



COMMENTS

ALSO LIKE



Life Expectancy by Region (1950-2020)

Ranked: The Best Countries to Retire

Ranked: The Life Expectancy of Humans and 10 Other Animals

Mapped: The World's Biggest Oil Discoveries Since 1868



Ready to refine your FX strategy?
Download OANDA's

Free Guide

Leveraged trading is high risk and not suitable for everyone. Losses may exceed deposits.



SUBSCRIBE

Join the 375,000+ subscribers who receive our daily email

Your email address

Sign Up

POPULAR

X

H
R
D

›
Much Americans Spend
n Each State

DEMOGRAPHICS / 2 weeks ago
Mapped: The Share of Sin
Households in Each U.S. S





[ABOUT](#) [SUBSCRIBE](#) [VC+](#) [VORONOI](#) [MASTHEAD](#) [PRESS CENTER](#) [CAREERS](#)
[CONTACT US](#) [FAQ](#) [USE OUR VISUALIZATIONS](#) [LICENSING](#) [ADVERTISE](#)

Copyright © 2024 Visual Capitalist | [Privacy Policy](#)
[Do Not Sell My Information](#)

