

Demography is the study of human population with respect to size, composition, spatial distribution, and changes in the population that occur over time.

Populations are never static, they grow or decline through the interplay of three demographic processes:

Three Demographic Processes

Fertility

Number of births that occur to an individual or a population

Mortality

Death of an individual or the number of deaths that occur in a population

Migration

The movement of people into or out of a specific geographic area

The number of people in a given area can grow or decline as a result of the number of births that take place, the number of deaths that occur and/or by the number of people moving in or out of a locale. Migration can drastically change the size and composition of a population in a brief period of time, especially in small geographic locations.

Planners need to study changes in the composition of the population to plan for education, health care services, and economic development projects. The age of residents, gender, occupation, level of education, marital status, and living arrangements provide planners with the type of information needed to plan for the residents' diverse needs.

Knowing age ranges is of critical importance to planners since it is closely related to the demand for different types of services. A population composition that has a large percentage of residents under age 15 implies the need for schools, primary health services, and recreational needs. Gender is another key factor. For example, women, especially in their early reproductive years, 20–35, may need specialized health services for childbearing.

Table 2-1: Demographic Analysis in the Planning Process:

Health Care Example

Planning Process	Demographic Analysis
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Identify problems and needs	
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Study trends in mortality rates and causes of death among different segments of the population

Study trends in fertility to plan for maternal and child health care

Project total population size by age-sex structure since it provides insights on the different health needs among different age groups

Goals and objectives Collect information to establish objectives

Population size

Population composition

Geographic distribution

Population projections

Generating alternative strategies Collect information on the size, location and composition of the target population to develop alternative strategies to achieve stated goals and objectives.

Select and implement a plan of action Collect demographic data to determine:

Demand for services

Resource needs including the number of facilities, staff, medicine, and money

Locations for new facilities

Monitoring and evaluation Use of demographic indicators to measure the achievement of the objectives. This could include

Infant mortality rates

Age specific fertility rates

Age specific death rates

Morbidity statistics

Population Information

A demographic profile that includes population trends and changes in the composition of the population including age and sex, income levels, occupation, educational attainment and household size can help identify potential customers for the shopping center. The profile can also help determine available labor for jobs in sales and services. Much of this information is available in census reports.