

The Truth about Population by Hans Rosling

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In the documentary by Hans Rosling, he explained the concept of “Peak Child,” which basically means that the number of children that will be born per year is at its peak. This occurs because, due to improved education, health conditions, and life expectancy, the birth rates are declining. Hans Gosling explains that this happens as fewer children are born to mothers who have experienced improved education and health. They are more likely to believe that their children will survive and live as adults. Therefore, due to the decline in birth rates, the number of children in the world today will be the same in the near future. That implies that we are already at, or very close to, Peak Child. Since birth rates decline and the average lifespan increases, the number of children in 2057 will be about the same as they are today. By 2070, the fertility rate will also fall below 2, which will lead to a decline in the world population in the long run.

The world population grew from 1.5 billion to 6.1 billion in only one century. For Hans Gosling, it increased by a staggering 4 billion only during his lifetime. It is predicted that due to the demographic lag, the world’s population will continue to rise. The number of humans being born yearly was the highest in 1990 and has remained so till today but is expected to decline soon. According to (Hillman) the trends in poorer countries are now beginning to follow the West. A population that is below 18 rests at 27% globally and is only expected to take a downward trend each year. World population grew from about 2.5 billion in 1950 to roughly 7.5 billion at the time discussed in Rosling’s presentation; the United Nations estimated the global population at approximately 8.2 billion in 2024. The total number of children has increased since 1950 from 0.87 to 1.96 billion today who are aged 15 or below. While the populations of America and Europe are expected to remain the same, the population in Asia and Africa are set to increase. In Asia, it is expected to reach around 5.3 billion in the mid-21st century, which may begin to decline by the year 2100. At the moment, the population is 1 billion in Europe, 1 billion in the Americas, 4 billion in Asia, and 1 billion in Africa, but by 2100, Asia is expected to rise to 5 million from 4, whereas Africa is predicted to rise to 4 billion from 1.

The population of Africa is expected to become as large as today’s population of Asia. In the coming decade, the rate of increase will also be similar to Asia’s growth rate, as it increased from 1.4 to 4.5 billion today. Africa’s population is expected to triple in the next 50 years. This is owing to the fertility rate in Africa, which currently stands at 4.5 children for a single woman. The global fertility rate declined from 4.5 to 2.5 in 42 years. In Africa, UN figures estimate that it will take longer than that. The living conditions are still extremely poor, and improvements in quality of life that lead to reduced fertility rates are still a long way from an optimum level.

Compared to Asia and Africa, the populations of Oceania, Europe, and America are expected to largely remain the same with very few expected changes. In fact, the population of Europe is decreasing slowly (Hillman). In the US, there will be just a few more people, mainly a few retired

people living in Latin America. Therefore, the difference will not be significant. In 2100, the world is expected to look quite different. Europe and North America will be the “old west” and will become a fraction of the world’s population, by only 10%.

Works Cited

Don't Panic — The Truth about Population. Dir. Dan Hillman. Perf. Hans Gosling. Wingspan Productions. BBC, 2013. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FAck2knC08E>>.