

U.S. MIGRATION METRICS

Brief written by Natalee Chin, research brief editor, Penn State. Based on research by Kathryn Foster, Cornell University; and Matthew Hall, Cornell University, and alumnus, Penn State.

For the full study, see:

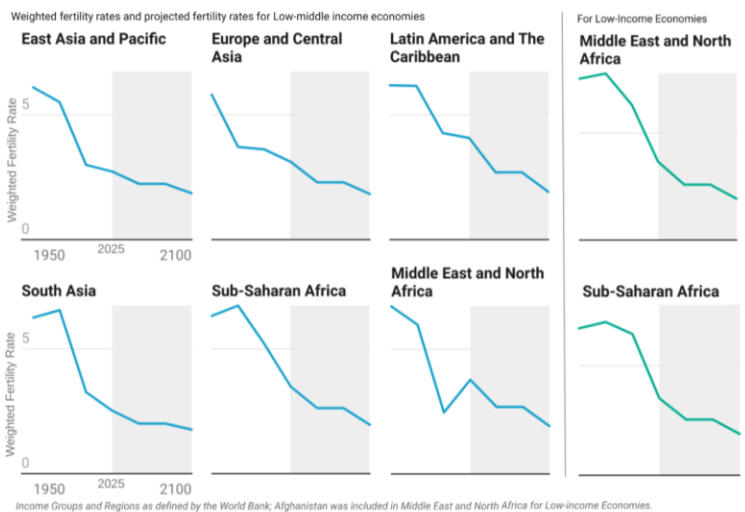
Foster, K. and Hall, M., 2025. "The demographic future of migration is African." *International Migration*, 63(1), p.e13377.

The Demographic Future of Migration is African

Fast Facts

- Sub-Saharan Africa is the only population region projected to keep growing beyond 2050.
- Its young population will drive future labor migration from Africa to other regions.
- Migration favors those with more resources, increasing inequality by limiting opportunities for disadvantaged people to move.
- Internal migration helps reduce economic disparities and often enables people to gather resources needed for international migration, which then affects both origin and destination populations

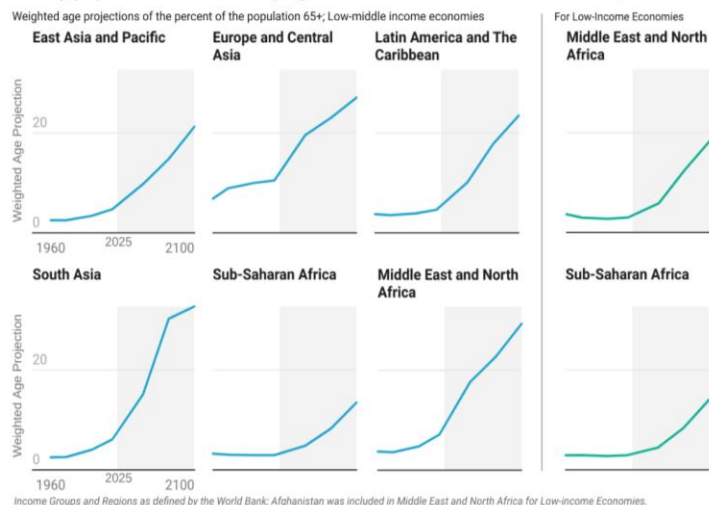
Fertility rates and projections for lower-income countries, 1950 - 2100



Selection

Labor migration relies upon individual access to resources, which may become scarce with increased out-migration. For example, migration often requires purchasing a mode of transportation with limits on capacity. This affects some emigrants' abilities to migrate, especially favoring those with higher socioeconomic status, education, or access to resources. The comparatively younger population of Sub-Saharan Africa can rise to fill the labor gaps left by aging developed countries.

Elderly population shares and projections for lower-income countries, 1950 - 2100



Internal Migration

Internal migration differs from international migration in that it depends heavily on environmental and political factors. Environmental disasters can often drive rural populations to urban areas, governmental policies changing land use can displace communities, and internal conflicts or ethnic tensions can impact populations' feelings of safety. This has three important effects:

1. Internal migration typically helps reduce economic disparities in low- and low-middle-income countries.
2. Internal migration often serves as a stepping stone, allowing individuals to accumulate the resources needed for international migration.
3. Once individuals have migrated internationally, they often continue to impact the population structures and networks of both their destination and sending countries.