

Life expectancy in Sub-Saharan Africa has improved by quadruple that of North America since 2000

High life expectancy is an indicator of good health in a population; according to the World Bank, 9 of the 10 countries that have improved the most between 2000 & 2012 in terms of life expectancy (additional years gained) are located in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) with Rwanda (+16), Zambia (+15) and Zimbabwe (+14) in the lead. Regionally, life expectancy improved by 12% in SSA which is more than double that of Europe & Central Asia (5%), triple that of Latin America & Caribbean (4%) and quadruple that of North America (3%).

African governments have committed themselves to improving healthcare services, as evidenced by increased expenditure on healthcare, among other indicators. In 2012, total expenditure on healthcare, measured as a proportion of GDP, was higher in countries such as Liberia (16%), Sierra Leone (15%) and Rwanda (11%) than in Japan (10%), Brazil (9%) and China (5%). Furthermore, of the top 20 countries which increased their total healthcare spending the most between 2000 and 2012, 9 were from SSA including Rwanda and Tanzania.

