

SOCIETY: SURGE IN EMIRATI BIRTHS WITH AN ESTIMATED 24,000 ADDITIONAL NEWBORNS BY 2031

Addressing obesity enhances societal well-being and supports national priorities in the UAE

Enhanced fertility and family growth:

By reducing obesity rates, more individuals can overcome obesity-related infertility causes, allowing them to conceive and carry pregnancies to term successfully⁶⁴. This leads to an increase in birth rates, contributing to the growth of the Emirati population.

Increased workforce participation and advancement:

Weight loss positively impacts the participation and advancement of women and youth in the workforce⁶⁵.

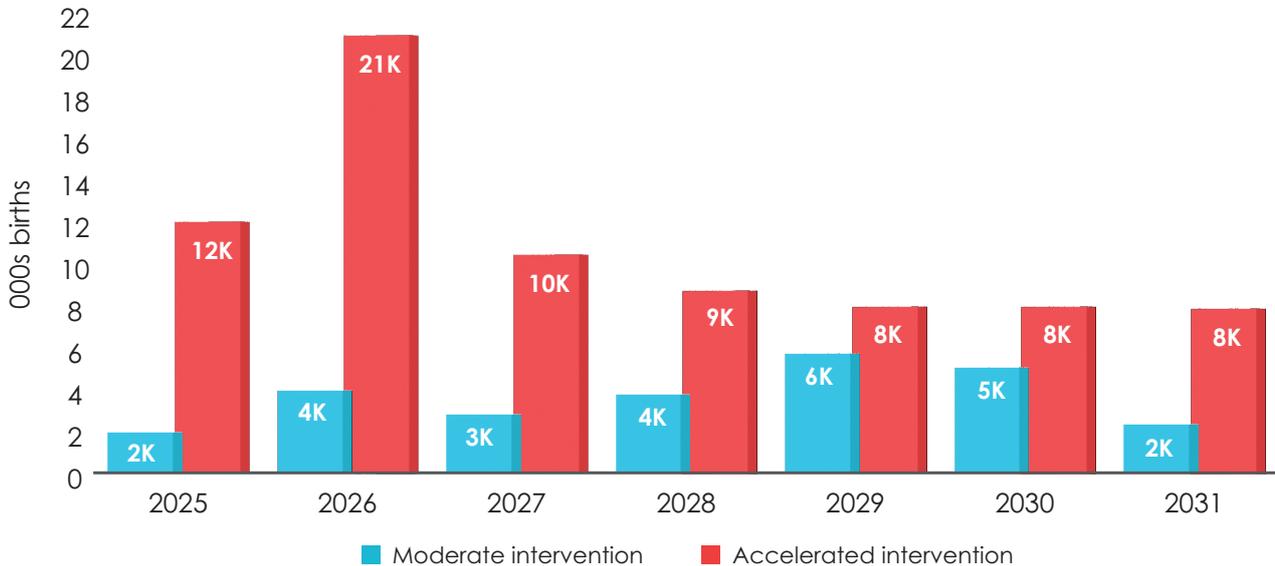
Healthier employees experience fewer chronic illnesses and maintain better mobility, enabling them to perform job duties more effectively and sustain consistent employment.

The UAE government has prioritized increasing the number of Emirati families and enhancing workforce participation. The recent establishment of the new 'Ministry of Families' highlights this commitment, providing support to foster family growth for Emiratis.

Weight loss could increase the total number of births in the UAE and empower women and youth to become a part of the workforce

Figure 16: Additional births (2025-2031)

With Weight loss helps overturn a negative trend in births, as it allows more people to become fertile; 75,000+ additional births occur in the UAE in the high adoption scenario, 25,000+ in the moderate adoption scenario



An estimated 23,000 additional Emirati births take place in the accelerated intervention scenario

At the present pace, an increasing number of people are estimated to experience infertility every year, which contributes to a loss of live birth rate. **Obesity is linked to**

several conditions which may contribute to infertility, for both men and women, such as hormonal imbalance or a loss of periods⁶⁶. Additionally, obesity can have significant impact on mental health⁶⁷, potentially reducing social interactions, and by extent, willingness to start a family.

However, weight loss at the population level could lead to a reversal of this trend, with people averting infertility and increasing birth rates. With weight loss, young adults transitioning out of obesity may see their perspective on

the future brighten. They may have more ease finding employment, feel more self-confident, more willing to meet a partner and marry, and ultimately more willing and able to start a family.

“I was diagnosed with ovarian failure and no more periods, now I am getting my periods back” - Whiteshield Sentiment Analysis

In the UAE specifically, this is reflected in studies evaluating the clients of a fertility clinic, where a disproportionate share

of patients lived with obesity⁶⁸.



Consider the case of Hamdan, the 28-year-old Emirati from Al Ain. He was suffering from obesity with a BMI of 35, and was unable to have children. With weight loss, his BMI has now reached a healthy 24. He no longer finds himself in joint pain and muscle aches, his overall health drastically improved. He was later able to conceive for the first time.

Cumulatively, between 2025-2031, in an accelerated intervention scenario of weight loss, whereby over one million adults could transition out of obesity, **an additional 75,000 births would be estimated to take place, as compared to the status quo scenario.** Out of which, 31%, or 24,000, are Emirati. This is equivalent to around 6,000 new Emirati families being

created. In the moderate intervention scenario, 25,000 additional births take place, out of which 8,000 are Emirati births. This is a vital boost to the local population and is one of the key priorities of government ministries, with programs such as Dubai Social Agenda 33 launched to support the increase of Emirati families in the emirate.

Figure 17: Additional births - Emiratis and expatriates

+75,000 In the accelerated intervention scenario, more than 75,000 additional births take place by 2031

Additional births - Emiratis and expatriates



+24,000
Emirati births



+51,000
non-Emirati births



17,000 new workers could become a part of the workforce

The link between employment and weight loss is supported by academic studies, specifically observing that adults living

with obesity are more likely to be unemployed⁶⁹. This link is further attested by first-hand accounts emerging from the sentiment analysis.

“I have [gained] 30 kilos as I no longer can do many sports activities I used to do, causing me also to be depressed [...] [Weight loss] will improve my life considerably [...]. I can’t even find a job full-time as I cannot handle it”

- Whiteshield Sentiment Analysis

With improved health and reduced bias towards adults living with obesity among employers, citizens would have a greater capacity to seek and secure employment. This could result in an estimated 17,000 additional individuals entering the workforce, 11,000 of which would be Emirati workers, cumulatively between 2025 and 2031 in the accelerated intervention scenario. In the moderate intervention scenario, 3,000 additional Emirati workers are estimated to join the workforce by 2031.

9,000 Emirati women are estimated to join the workforce by 2031

Unemployment rates as well as obesity rates are higher for women in the UAE than their male counterparts, yielding a stronger benefit of weight loss for women.

Reducing obesity will empower women to take up employment opportunities in the public and private sector. There is an estimated addition of 9,000 Emirati women in the workforce in the accelerated intervention scenario and 3,000 additional Emirati women in the moderate intervention scenario by 2031. In terms of expatriate women, there is an

estimated increase of 4,000 women in the workforce in the accelerated intervention scenario and 1,000 women in the moderate intervention scenario.

More than 8,000 youth are estimated to join the workforce, 5,000 of them are Emirati

Youth suffering from obesity face a double challenge, in completing higher education and securing employment. Obesity is linked with reduced educational outcomes and employment opportunities⁷⁰. Helping these individuals overcome obesity would be an especially important contribution to UAE society.

A well-employed youth contributes to higher productivity, drives innovation, and supports the expansion of key economic sectors. Additionally, engaging young individuals in the workforce reduces dependency ratios and fosters a dynamic economy capable of adapting to global market changes. Weight loss is estimated to add close to 8,000 youth to the workforce, 5,000 of which are Emirati youth. In the moderate intervention scenario, this increase in the workforce is around 2,700 youth, 1,800 of which are Emirati.



Remember Shyama who had to quit her job as a customs agent? Losing weight loss will enable her and 10,000+ more women to become a part of the workforce. Out of the 17,000 newly employed Emiratis by 2031, more than half of them are women.

Table 5 : Society indicators

| Category | Indicator (by 2031) | Measure | Status Quo (2024) | Base Scenario (2031) | Moderate Intervention (2031) | Accelerated Intervention (2031) |
|---|------------------------|---------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|  Society | Total births | # | 99,290 | 91,530 | +2,289 | +7,778 |
| | Additions to workforce | # | 7.2 Mn | 9.1 Mn | +5,403 | +16,638 |
| | Women in the workforce | # | 1,456,000 | 1,820,000 | +4,128 | +12,744 |
| | Youth in the workforce | # | 1,800,000 | 2,275,000 | +2,700 | +8,319 |

Analysis by Key Demographics

Significant estimated societal gains for Emiratis, 6,000+ new families could be created, 11,000 could enter the workforce:

Nationality:

- 24,000 additional Emirati births are estimated to take place due to reducing obesity in the population, along with 51,000 non-Emirati births.
- Additionally, a reversal in the declining number of births in the UAE begins thanks to reduced infertility linked to obesity
- **This translates to a change in the total fertility rate from 1.44 children per woman in the status quo scenario to 1.64 children per woman in the accelerated intervention scenario**
- Out of the 8,000 youth added to the workforce by 2031, around 65%, or 5,000 are Emirati youth, in the accelerated intervention scenario. Even though Emiratis form only 8% of the workforce, they suffer from a much higher prevalence of obesity (25.8%), compared to expatriate youth (17.3%). Weight loss benefits are therefore especially visible in Emiratis.
- The impact of additional jobs created is also disproportionate across different demographic cohorts. For Emiratis, who suffer from a high prevalence of obesity, reducing weight enables 11,000 individuals to join the workforce in the accelerated intervention scenario, especially for women, making up the majority of those joining the workforce. The impact of weight loss on employment in expatriates is much smaller, as most of them are already absorbed in the workforce. Still, losing weight enables an additional 6,000 expatriates to enter the workforce by 2031.

