

# Demopædia - Multilingual Demographic Dictionary Unified Volumes

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The creation of the series of multilingual encyclopaedic demographic dictionaries is one of the longest projects in the history of demography. In 1949, the United Nations Population Commission tasked its Population Division with assembling a team of experts to compile and disseminate the state of the art of demography in a multilingual dictionary that was published in 14 languages, including Anglo-Saxon and Latin, Germanic, Slavic and Arabic, between 1958 and 1971. In 1981, a revision of the work led to the publication of the second French edition, followed by the second English edition in 1982, Spanish in 1985 and German in 1987. Today these works are out of print and it is very difficult to find the few libraries that have them all.

Two decades later, at the Tours Congress in 2005, the work of revising this reference tool was relaunched by the Bureau of the French National Committee - CNF - of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population - IUSSP and the United Nations Population Division. Thus was born the *Demopædia project*, the main goal of which is to make dictionaries accessible again to the greatest number of readers. Several researchers and teachers from many countries, coordinated by Nicolas Brouard, joined the project, most often informally, by developing their own local edition based on these United Nations/IUSSP standards.

It was in June 2007 that a team of specialists was brought together in Paris under the auspices of the United Nations Population Division in order to make the multilingual dictionary available in the six languages of the United Nations as well as in the languages of important emerging countries. Jointly, the French National Committee of the IUSSP, which hosted the first *Demopædia conference* within the National Institute of Demographic Studies, wanted to computerize and update the dictionary in the fourteen languages for which there was at least a first edition.

The computerization process revealed that between the first and second editions, the consistency between languages had deteriorated. In some languages, in fact, certain terms, expressions or even entire paragraphs had not been translated. On the contrary, the German version, published in 1987, included 92 additional terms compared to the French and English versions. There were also differences between the French and English versions, which were the subject of harmonization work from 2012 to 2014'. While in the French, English and Spanish cases a real harmonization was achieved, in the other cases it was decided to proceed with a first translation of the second edition based on the English or French versions, to then harmonize them with the Spanish and German versions.

During the IUSSP conference of Marrakech in 2009, some Asian demographers asked the Population Division of the UN and the Demopædia project to help producing the MDD in their own languages.

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The Chiang Mai workshop in 2013 aimed to train participants to produce volumes of the MDD in 6 new Asian languages (Indonesian, Korean, Malay, Nepali, Thai and Vietnamese). Only two languages, Korean and Thai, were published for the IUSSP International Conference in Busan. The Malay volume is also online but the unified volume is not finished and cannot yet be produced as a printed book by the Demopaedia team.

The MDD is part of a general effort whose authorship has been shared by many demographers for over 65 years. Therefore, all its old content as well as its future development are licensed under Creative Common Share Alike. The most appropriate modern technology to produce such a collaborative work is wiki technology.

Since the last IUSSP conference in Cape Town in 2017, two new volumes are now "unified" and can be downloaded or ordered in paper version at a low price.

- The first volume is the Spanish volume which was updated in 2020 by Jenny Garcia from Latin America (Venezuela) during her stay at INED, and Laia Ferrer, who had participated in the first Wiki training in Paris 2007, from Spain.

- The second volume is the Chinese volume, which was first set up from the 1992 Chinese second edition in 2008 after the Paris 2007 training in which two Chinese demographers, Yeun-chung Yu (UN) and Xiaochun Qiao (Peking University) participated. The first Chinese edition was published in the journal "Population Translation Series" 3, 1982 (but it is untraceable until now). The second edition, published in book form, was also a "translation" of the English volume and the Chinese key terms (those that need to be translated into other languages) were added in parentheses to the English term or expression. It was the only language, along with Japanese (1994), that retained the English terms, without really appropriating the demographic concept. However, the original idea of the UN Terminology Commission in the 1950s, whose technique was inspired by the "Report on Multilingual Scientific and Technical Dictionaries" (John Edwin Holmstrom, UNESCO, 1949), was to describe a "universal" demographic concept by introducing in a paragraph of a few free sentences, also "universal" demographic key terms that would best describe the concept.

Feinuo Sun (University of Texas at Arlington) produced a draft of the volume in unified Chinese during her stay at INED in early 2024, which will be revised, using wiki technology, in October 2024, during Xiachun Qiao's visit to INED.

The written Chinese language has changed a lot since the 1950s, so even the traditional indexing method has been abandoned in favor of the Pinyin alphabetical order.

In the era of artificial intelligence, quality servers, such as Demopaedia.org, are unfortunately harassed, and have had to close access to such resource-intensive online services. At least the PDF and paper versions can be read peacefully.

*Current Demopaedia team includes Nicolas Brouard (INED), Cristina Giudici (La Sapienza), Joseph Larmarange (CEPED), Jenny Garcia (INED), Feinuo Sun (University of Texas at Arlington), Xiaochun Qiao (Peking University) and many contributors (real contributions can be appreciated in the 'Talk' pages of the multilingual demographic dictionary).*