



OFFICIAL GUIDE TO SOUTH AFRICA 2017/18

South Africa's People

People

For 2018, Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) estimates the mid-year population at 57,73 million, representing an overall increase of 1,55% between 2017 and 2018. Approximately 51% (approximately 29,5 million) of the population is female.

Gauteng comprises the largest share of the South African population, with approximately 14,7 million people (25,4%) living in this province. KwaZulu-Natal is the province with the second largest population, with 11,4 million people (19,7%) living in this province. With a population of approximately 1,23 million people (2,1%), Northern Cape remains the province with the smallest share of the South African population.

About 29,5% of the population is aged younger than 15 years and approximately 8,5% (4,89 million) is 60 years or older. Similar proportions of those younger than 15 years live in Gauteng (21,1%) and KwaZulu-Natal (21,0%). Of the elderly aged 60 years and older, the highest percentage 24,0% (1,18 million) reside in Gauteng. The proportion of elderly persons aged 60 and older is increasing over time.

Migration is an important demographic process in as it shapes the age structure and distribution of the provincial population. For the period 2016-2021, Gauteng and Western Cape are estimated to experience the largest inflow of migrants of approximately, 1 048 440 and 311 004 respectively.

Life expectancy at birth for 2018 is estimated at 61,1 years for males and 67,3 years for females. The infant mortality rate for 2018 is estimated at 36,4 per 1 000 live births.

The estimated overall HIV prevalence rate is approximately 13,1% among the South African population. The total number of people living with HIV is estimated at approximately 7,52 million in 2018. For adults aged 15-49 years, an estimated 19,0% of the population is HIV positive.

Registration of births

In South Africa, the right to identity – which includes nationality, name and family relations – is enshrined in Section 28 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996. The Births and Deaths Act of 1992 governs the registration of births in South Africa.

The Births and Deaths Registration Act has been amended several times, with the last amendment, Births and Deaths Registration Amendment Act, being made in 2010. The registration of births in South Africa falls under the mandate of the Department of Home Affairs.

To better enforce the registration of births, the 2010 amendment Act mandates the registrations of births within 30 days from date of birth.

The Constitution and the Act reaffirm South Africa's commitment to Articles seven and eight of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the rights and welfare of the child.

The agreements mandate the preservation of children's rights to identity, a nationality, to a name from birth, family ties and birth registration immediately after birth. The realisation of the right to be registered is closely linked to the safeguarding of a whole range of fundamental rights, including healthcare, social security, education, participation and protection.

The primary purpose of the records derived from the civil-registration process is to create a permanent record of the birth occurrence and for the issuing of a birth certificate, which is a personal document to attest birth registration and the most visible evidence of the government's legal recognition of the child.

In essence, without a birth certificate the unregistered babies/children essentially do not legally exist.

Languages

South Africa is a multicultural society that is characterised by its rich linguistic diversity. Language is an indispensable tool that can be used to deepen democracy and also contribute to the social, cultural, intellectual, economic and political life of the South African society.

The country is multilingual with 11 official languages, each of which is guaranteed equal status. Most South Africans are multilingual and able to speak at least two or more of the official languages.

According to Stats SA's Community Survey 2016, isiZulu is the most common home language spoken by 24,6% of the population, followed by isiXhosa (17%), Afrikaans (12,1%), Sepedi (9,5%), Setswana (8,8%), and English (8,3%), Sesotho (8%), Xitsonga (4,2%), Siswati (2,6%), Tshivenda (2,4%) and isiNdebele (1,6%).

In terms of the Use of Official Languages Act in 2012, and as part of promoting social cohesion and nation-building, every government department, public entity and enterprise is expected to establish a language unit and adopt a language policy.

Religious beliefs

According to Stats SA's Community Survey 2016, the distribution of religious beliefs in South Africa is as follows:

- Christianity – 43 423 717
- Islam – 892 685
- Traditional African religion – 2 454 887
- Hinduism – 561 268
- Buddhism – 24 808
- Bahaism – 6 881
- Judaism – 49 470
- Atheism – 52 598
- Agnosticism – 32 944
- No religious affiliation/belief – 5 964 892
- Other – 1 482 210
- Do not know – 704 358.