



South Africa's People



People

By mid-2016, Statistics South Africa estimated the population of South Africa as 55,9 million. Between 2002 and 2016, there was an overall increase in life expectancy (55,2 to 62,4 years) and a decline in infant (48,2 to 33,7 deaths per 1000 live births) and under five mortality rate (70,8 to 44,1 deaths per 1000 live births).

Life expectancy at birth for 2016 was estimated at 59,7 years for males and 65,1 years for females. A third of the population was estimated to be under the age of 15, whilst 8% of the population was aged 60 and over.

South Africa is one of the few developing countries experiencing an increase in the proportion aged 60 and over from 6,61% in 2002 to 8,01% in 2016. Declining population growth rates year on year among young people aged 15-34 in conjunction with increasing growth rates among elderly aged 60 and over indicated that South Africa's population was ageing.

With a decline in total fertility rate over time and increased life expectancy, South Africa was expected to experience a continued increase in old-age dependency. Of those elderly aged 60 years and older, the highest percentage 26,1% (1,17 million) reside in Gauteng. Nearly 10% of the population in the Northern Cape were elderly.

Improved access and uptake of antiretrovirals over time in the public and private sector in South Africa has enabled HIV-positive people to live longer and healthy lives, resulting in gradual decline in AIDS-related deaths between 2006 (48%) and 2016 (28%). Despite the gains made in the fight against the HIV and AIDS pandemic by reducing AIDS-related deaths and declining HIV-incidence rates, South Africa has paid a large price.

By mid-2016, the estimated overall HIV-prevalence rate was about 12,7% of the total South African population. The total number of people living with HIV was estimated at about 7,03 million in 2016. For adults aged between 15 and 49 years, an estimated 18,9% of the population was HIV positive.

Migration

Migration is an important demographic process in shaping the age structure and distribution of the provincial population. For the period 2011 – 2016 it was estimated that approximately 247 437 people would migrate from the Eastern Cape.

Limpopo was estimated to experience an out-migration of nearly 305 030 people. During the same period, Gauteng and the Western Cape were estimated to experience an inflow of migrants of approximately 1 216 258 and 363 114 respectively.



Mpumalanga and North West also received positive net migration. The Eastern Cape, Free State and Limpopo experienced the largest proportion of outflow.

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 the 2011 Census, English is most widely used for official and commercial communication. IsiZulu is the most common home language spoken by 22,7% of the population, followed by isiXhosa at 16%, Afrikaans at 13,5%, and English at 9,6%, Sepedi at 9,1%, Setswana at 8%, Sesotho at 7,6%, and Xitsonga at 4,5%. Siswati is spoken by 2,5% of the population, Tshivenda by 2,4% and isiNdebele by 2,1%.

Government passed the Use of Official Languages Act in 2012, as part of promoting social cohesion and nation-building.

Among other things, the legislation requires every government department, public entity and enterprise to establish a language unit and adopt a language policy.

It also encourages national government departments and public entities to use the official languages to enhance communication with the public in order to improve the quality of their lives.