

# South Africa

Country profile

**2016**  
October



[www.devinit.org/p20i](http://www.devinit.org/p20i)

This country profile is produced by Development Initiatives to support the National Dialogue on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As one of the founding partners of the Leave No One Behind partnership, established in July 2015, our role is to provide data at a national level to help track progress against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) so we can make sure that no one is left behind.

## Poverty profile

- The national poverty line in South Africa is South African Rand (R) 25.61 per day. According to the most recent data (2011), 53.8% of the population live below this line, of which 54.1% live in rural areas.
- In South Africa, extreme poverty, defined as those living on less than PPP\$1.90 a day, has on the whole been decreasing since 1999, falling from 33.7% in 1999 to 16.0% in 2013.

**National poverty line**  
(R per day)

**25.61**

Note: 2011 data. Source: Stats SA  
(Statistics South Africa).

**% of population living  
below the national  
poverty line**

**53.8**

Note: 2011 data. Source: Stats SA  
(Statistics South Africa).

**% of population living  
below the national  
poverty line in rural  
areas**

**54.1**

Note: 2011 data. Stats SA  
(Statistics South Africa).

**Mean household income  
per month (2011 PPP\$)**

**162.92**

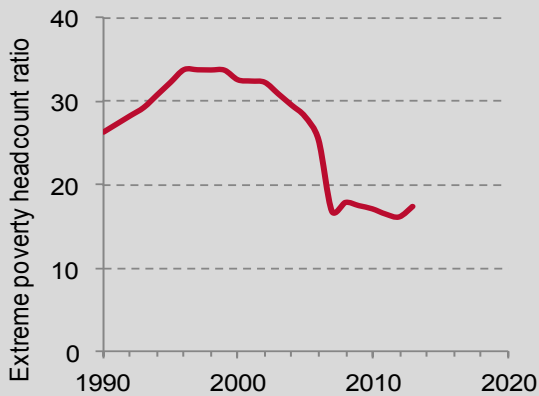
Note: 2013 data. Source: World Bank's PovcalNet.

**% of population living below the  
international extreme poverty line**

**16.0**

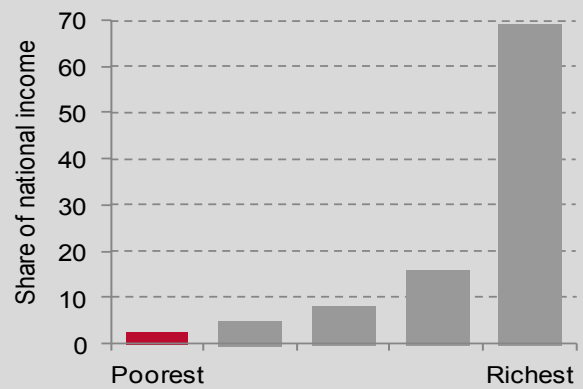
Note: 2013 data, international extreme poverty line is  
2011 PPP\$1.90/day. Source: World Bank's PovcalNet.

### Is poverty reducing over time?



Source: Development Initiatives based on World Bank's PovcalNet.

### How is income distributed?



Note: 2011 data. Source: World Development Indicators.

- As of 2011, the richest 20% in South Africa owned 68.9% of national income, in contrast to the 2.47% shared by the poorest 20%, a stark disparity.

## Economic profile

- In 2015, South Africa's GDP per capita was PPP\$12,390 compared with a regional average of PPP\$3,477 for sub-Saharan Africa.
- The Gini index measures the income distribution of a country's residents where 0 means everyone earns the same, and 100 that one person earns everything. In South Africa in 2011, the Gini index was 63.4, up from 57.8 in 2000, reflecting an increasingly uneven distribution of income.
- Out of 188 countries, South Africa is ranked 116 on the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s Human Development Index (HDI, 2015), with a score of 0.666.

### GDP per capita (2011 PPP\$)

12,390

Note: 2015 data. Source: World Development Indicators.

### Human Development Index Ranking

116/188

Note: 2015 data. Source: United Nations Development Programme.

### Gini index

63.4

Note: 2011 data. Source: World Bank's PovcalNet.

## Education outcomes

- In 2014, the South Africa government spent PPP\$753.17 per capita on education, this compares with a regional average for sub-Saharan Africa of PPP\$132.65.
- In 2015, South Africa's adult literacy rate stood at 94.6%, up from 82.4% in 1996.

## Adult literacy rate (%)

94.6

Note: 2015 data. Source: World Development Indicators.

## Per capita public expenditure on education (2011 PPP\$)

753.17

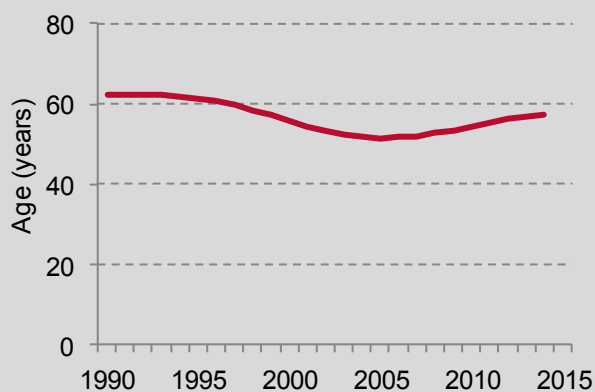
Note: 2014 data. Source: Development Initiatives based on World Development Indicators.

- The total number of people attending school in South Africa has increased from 12.8 million in 1996 to 17.3 million in 2016. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
- While the number of children going to school has increased, the ratio of attendance vs none attendance has worsened over the years, with a big drop in 2016, especially in girls' attendance which is down to 36% from 53% in 2011.

## Health outcomes

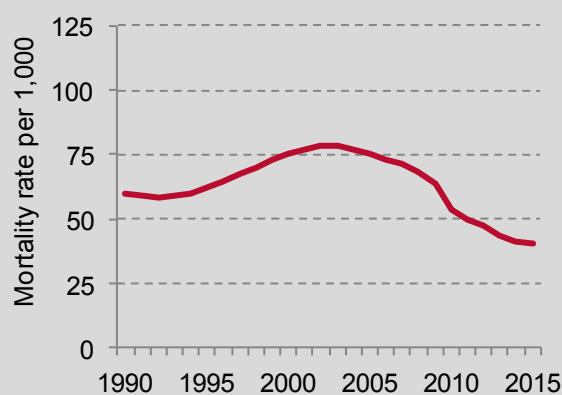
- Life expectancy in South Africa has decreased from 62.1 in 1990 to 57.2 in 2014.
- Since 1990, the mortality rate of children under 5 has fallen from 59.9 per 1,000 down to 40.5 per 1,000 in 2015.
- In 2014, public spending on healthcare in South Africa was PPP\$527.70 per capita, compared with a regional average for sub-Saharan Africa of PPP\$80.12.

### Life expectancy at birth **Error! Bookmark not defined.**



Source: Development Initiatives based on World Development Indicators.

### Under five mortality rate per 1,000



Source: Development Initiatives based on World Development Indicators.

## Per capita public expenditure on healthcare (2011 PPP\$)

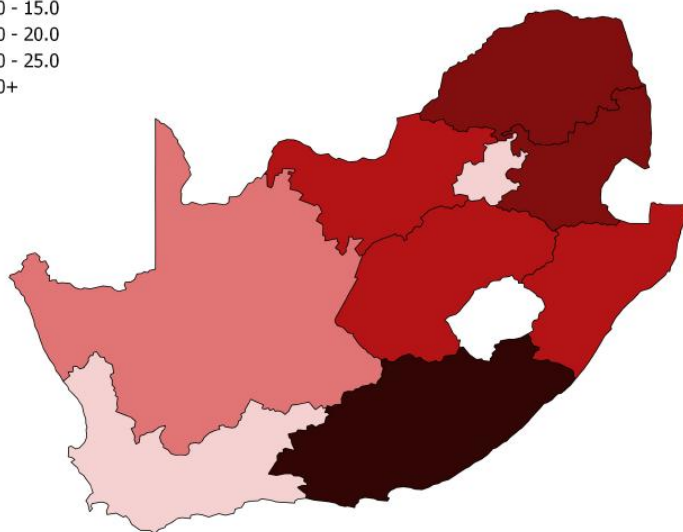
527.70

Note: 2014 data. Source: Development Initiatives based on World Development Indicators.

## Access to water and housing

- In the 2016 census, respondents stated access to safe drinking water as a key challenge in their daily lives. Between provinces, the percentage of the population with no access in 2016 varies from only 6.8% in Western Cape up to 27.3% in Eastern Cape. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
- There are more people living in informal dwellings in 2016 (squatters, informal settlements) in more urban provinces such as in North West (18.4%) and Gauteng (17.7%).

Percent of households with no access to safe drinking water



Note: Economic, health and education data in this profile are Development Initiatives' calculations based on the World Bank's World Development Indicators and the UNDP's HDI; please refer to these sources for full definition of public spending. Poverty data are Development Initiatives' calculations based on the World Bank's PovcalNet. According to a news report, South Africa has two poverty lines, official and non-official. The official line is backed by a survey of the people's consumption spend, and we have used it for this profile. The non-official poverty line appears to be the official poverty line adjusted for inflation for government planning and progressing reporting.

## Achieving the SDGs

South Africa epitomises the case of a middle income country (GDP per capita of \$12,390) with an unusually high inequality rate (Gini Index of 63.4) and relatively low investments in social infrastructure. The result is a poor HDI score and disparity between regions in access to water and housing. The overall picture is one of growing poverty amid expanding affluence.

If global efforts to end poverty and achieve the SDGs are to be reached, it is essential that no one is left behind; the SDGs will not be considered met unless they are met for everyone. However, current data is not good enough to tell us exactly who is being left behind, where they live and why. To better target resources and track their progress we need to better understand who they are. To achieve this we need more and better data disaggregated by at least geography, gender, age and disability.

A new project from Development Initiatives, the P20 Initiative, will be doing just this. The P20 Initiative will provide data on whether things are improving for the poorest 20% of people globally. It will do this by gathering and using existing data and promoting better disaggregation of data on people so we can ensure that those furthest behind are reached first and included in progress so the SDGs can be achieved for all.

### Contact:

If you would like more information on the any of the data provided in this summary or on the P20 Initiative please contact Cat Langdon on [cat.langdon@devinit.org](mailto:cat.langdon@devinit.org)

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Community Survey 2016 (2016) Statistics South Africa. Available at: [http://cs2016.statssa.gov.za/?portfolio\\_page=census-2011-fact-sheet](http://cs2016.statssa.gov.za/?portfolio_page=census-2011-fact-sheet)

### Data use survey

Do you use data in your work? How would you rate your use of data? What data sources do you use? We are interested to hear about the ways in which you use data in your work. Please complete our [short survey](#)

Link - [goo.gl/iEJdZb](http://goo.gl/iEJdZb)

---

The Leave No One Behind partnership seeks to drive global momentum to make sure that happens. Made up of three international non-profit organisations (CIVICUS, Development Initiatives, and Project Everyone) with the support of the United Kingdom's Department for International Development we have come together as founding partners to catalyse a global movement to ensure that the pledge to Leave No One Behind turns from words into reality.

For more information on the Leave No One Behind partnership please email [info@leavenoonebehind.global](mailto:info@leavenoonebehind.global) or visit [www.leavenoonebehind.global](http://www.leavenoonebehind.global)

SUPPORTED BY



Development Initiatives (DI) is an independent international development organisation working on the use of data to drive poverty eradication and sustainable development.