

Macro Trends in South Africa

October 2023 - Edition



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This note highlights the latest results from Census 2022, focusing particularly on the public service delivery, education, and population growth in the last 11 years.



I. Introduction

“[A]s a young girl, she and her siblings – Wenny, Nico, Olga, Murriel and Ishmael – all had to muck in. The girls would gather firewood over which to cook, and would walk miles to collect water.... [n]ow, it’s modernised (“They have electricity, they have running water”) and teens constantly scroll through social media on their mobile phones” - quote extracted from an interview with World Champion and Olympics gold medalist Caster Semenya, The Guardian (2023).

South Africa’s census is a critical source of information for policymaking, planning, and implementing social and economic programmes. It serves as an opportunity for the government to appropriately allocate resources,¹ address inefficiencies and execute developmental plans or programmes that meet the needs of citizens.

In the last 26 years, the census 2022 shows that significant progress has been made in meeting the basic needs of the underserved segments of the South African society. Improvements have been observed across several socio-economic indicators including health, education, and access to basic services such as electricity, clean water, sanitation, and waste removal. However, the trends and figures indicate that significant gaps remain in the provision and quality of services and that more should be done. In addition, during the period, the population landscape across the country has drastically changed. With a rapidly growing population of 62 million people, demand for economic, environmental, infrastructural and social services has equally increased, calling for greater governmental resources. The NDP vision 2030 had a target of 58 million people in the country by 2030, but this has already been reached and exceeded. This has serious implications for the demand side of service delivery in the country.

Census 2022 further shows that South Africa is becoming a highly urbanized country, with more than 50 per cent of the population now residing in 20 of the largest municipalities. This is putting pressure on urban infrastructures, which are currently in great need of maintenance and expansion, as well as on need for new and modern infrastructure.

Another trend worth noting has been the widespread adoption of technology and increased access to ICT and the internet, suggesting that more and more people are exposed to opportunities for learning, virtual work, and entrepreneurship. If this trend continues, it can help to gradually bridge the information and digital divide that exists in South Africa, particularly in rural areas and informal settlements.

[1] Census 2022 is the fourth population and housing count in post-apartheid South Africa, with the other three being conducted in 1996, 2001 and 2011.



As South Africa accelerates progress towards achieving 2030's Sustainable Development Goals and the National Development Plan, the current census report serves as a reminder of the work that still needs to be done to ensure that no one is left behind. From the households still living without access to electricity for lighting or cooking, and to those without piped water and proper sanitation facilities.

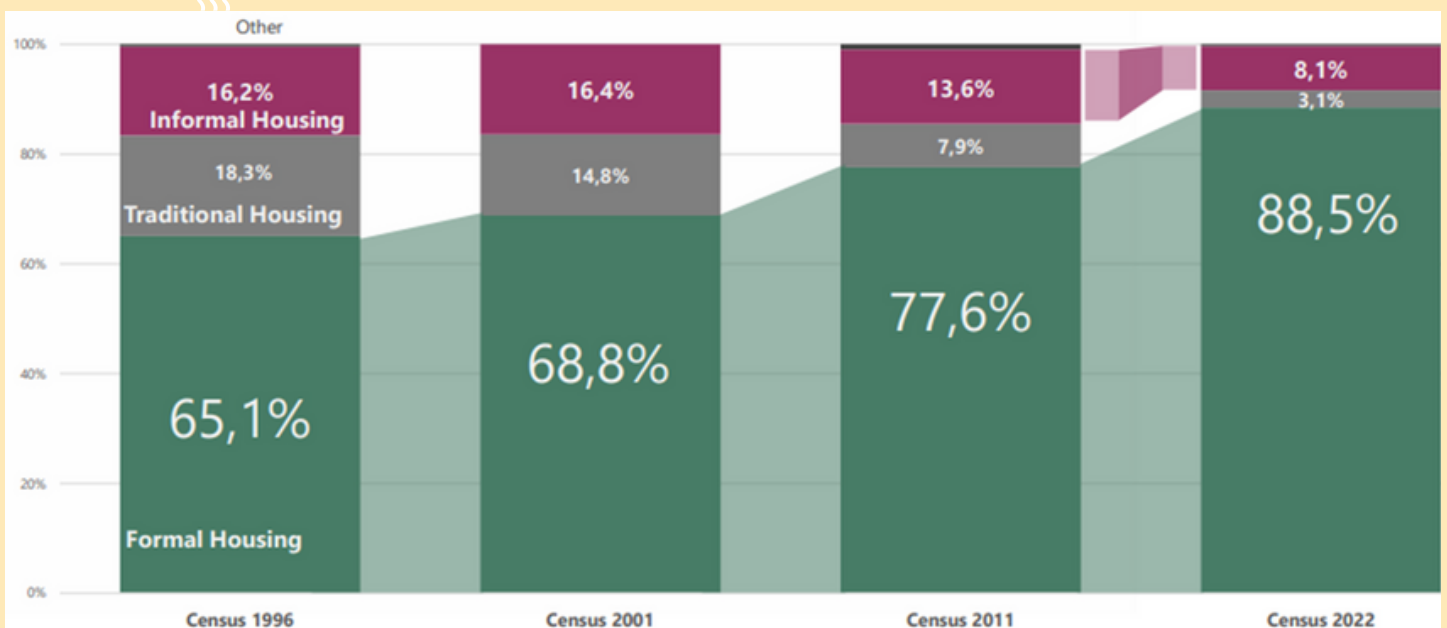
These are some of the challenges, needs and concerns the census exposes. It identifies gaps for the government to address in their development planning, policy making and budgetary planning processes.

II. Public Service Delivery

Some facts and trends of the Census 2022 are summarized below.

The Census 2022 reports nearly 17.8 million households, an increase from 14.4 million in 2011 and 9.1 million in 1996. This suggests that the number of households has nearly doubled since 1996, with Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal concentrating the largest numbers with 5.3 million and 2.3 million households each, respectively. Formal dwellings, including brick/concrete structure, flats and apartments, cluster houses, townhouses, semi-detached houses have increased to 88.5 per cent from 77.6 per cent in 2011. Meanwhile, the percentage of households residing in informal dwellings declined from 13.6 per cent in 2011 to 8.1 per cent in 2022 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Percentage distribution of households by main type of dwelling [1996 – 2022]



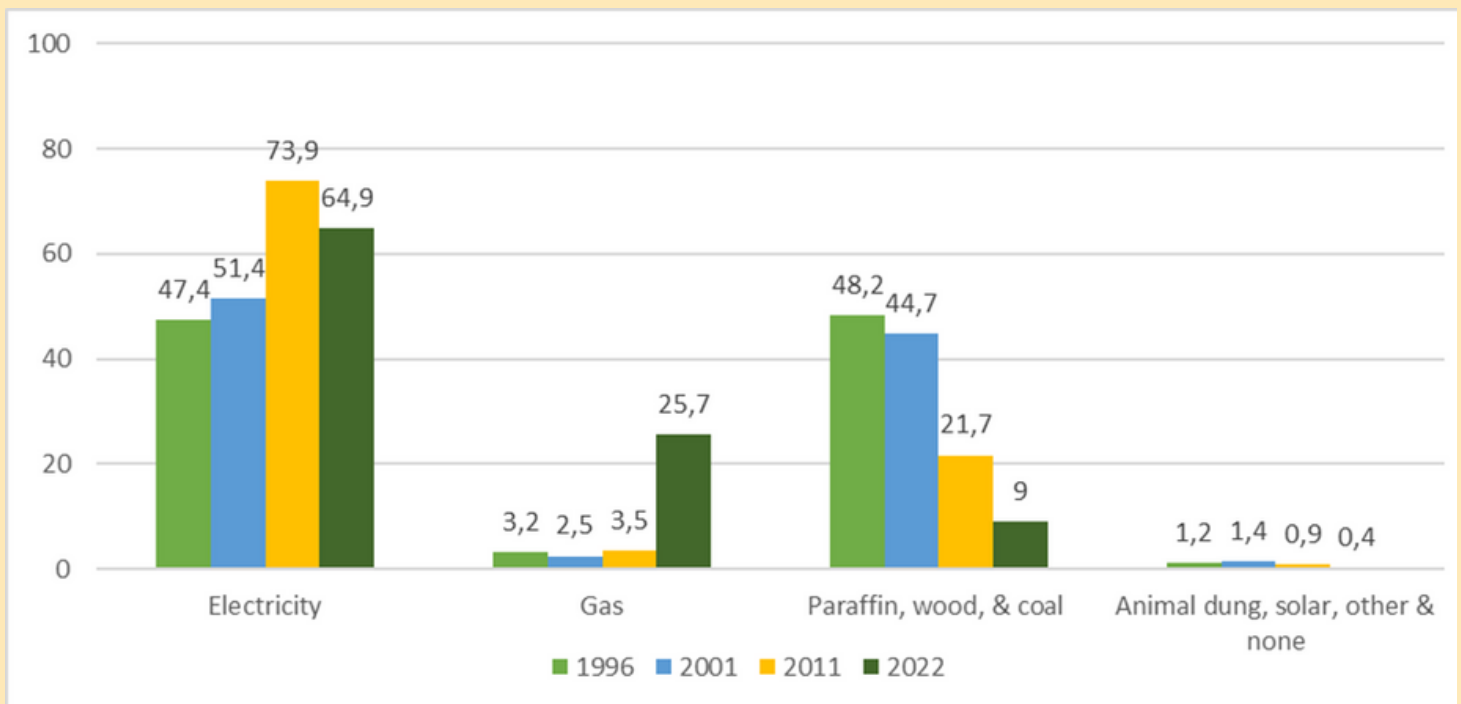
Source: Stats SA (2023b).



Overall access to electricity as the main source of energy for lighting increased substantially, from 58.1 per cent in 1996 to 84.7 per cent in 2011 and 94.7 per cent in 2022, a 10 percentage point upward shift in the past 10 years. Reliance on candles and paraffin, which was prevalent for many households before 1994, has considerably declined to less than noticeable levels. Electricity usage between 2011 and 2022 increased across all the provinces, with the highest rate recorded in KwaZulu-Natal (96.7 per cent), Western Cape (96.5 per cent), and Limpopo (95.5 per cent).

The proportion of households using electricity for cooking, which had increased from 47.4 per cent in 1996 to 73.9 in 2011, decreased back to 64.9 per cent in 2022. This is because, in the last 10 years, there has been a shift from electricity to gas for cooking. The latter increased from 3.5 per cent to 25.7 per cent of the total. All these trends indicate that only a smaller percentage of 9 per cent of households, still rely on wood, paraffin, and coal for cooking (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Percentage distribution of households by main source of energy for cooking [1996 – 2022] %



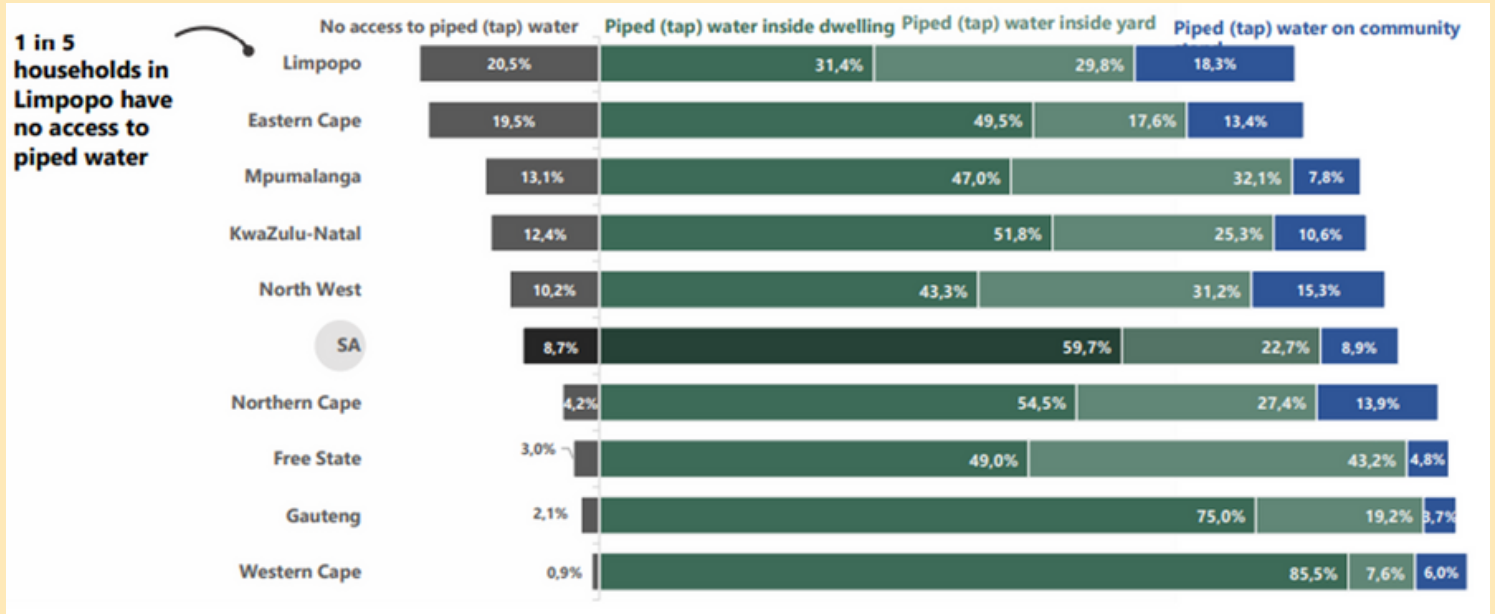
Source: Stats SA (2023a).

Nearly 82.4 per cent of households, in 2022, across the country had access to piped water, either inside their dwellings or inside their yards compared to 73.4 per cent of households recorded in 2011. With more households able to access piped water inside their dwelling (see Figure 3), less and less households, from 17.9 per cent in 2011 to 8.9 per cent in 2022, are becoming reliant on off-site piped water (from outside the yard/a community stand). In 2011, 8.8 per cent of households had no access to piped water and in 2022 only a 0.1 percentage point drop to 8.7 per cent was observed.



Of the nine provinces, a significant proportion of households in Limpopo (20.5 per cent) and Eastern Cape (19.5 per cent) remain without access to piped water. In other words, one in five households in these provinces has no access to piped water – suggesting an array of infrastructure and service delivery challenges affecting these parts of the country.

Figure 3: Percentage distribution of households by access to piped water – 2022



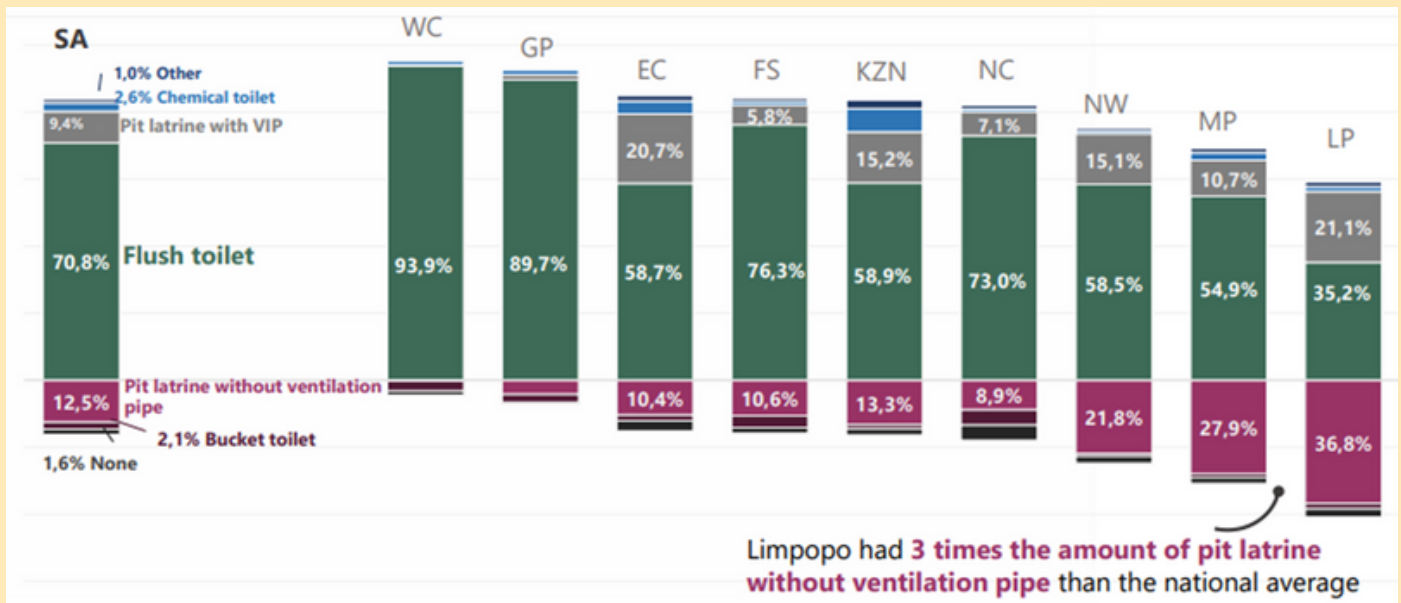
Source: Stats SA (2023b).

In terms of access to proper sanitation, i.e., toilet facilities, households utilizing flush toilets have improved by 10.7 percentage points between 2011 and 2022, reaching 70.8 per cent of the total (see Figure 4). Households in more urban provinces, including Western Cape (93.9 per cent) and Gauteng (89.7 per cent), show far greater access to flush toilets. Nationally, the proportion of households using a pit toilet with ventilated improved pit latrine (VIP)/without ventilation declined from 28.1 per cent in 2011 to 21.9 per cent in 2022.

However, a closer look at less urban provinces suggests a significantly higher reliance, compared to the national average, on pit toilets with/without ventilation pipes as their main type of toilet facility. Examples include the provinces of Mpumalanga (38.6 per cent) and North West (36.9 per cent). The Limpopo province particularly stands out as more than half (57.9 per cent) of the households remain reliant on pit toilets. Households in the Northern Cape and Eastern Cape reported a lack of access to any type of toilet facility, at 4.5 per cent and 3 per cent, respectively.



Figure 4: Percentage distribution of access to toilet facility by province [2022]



Source: Stats SA (2023b).

III. Education

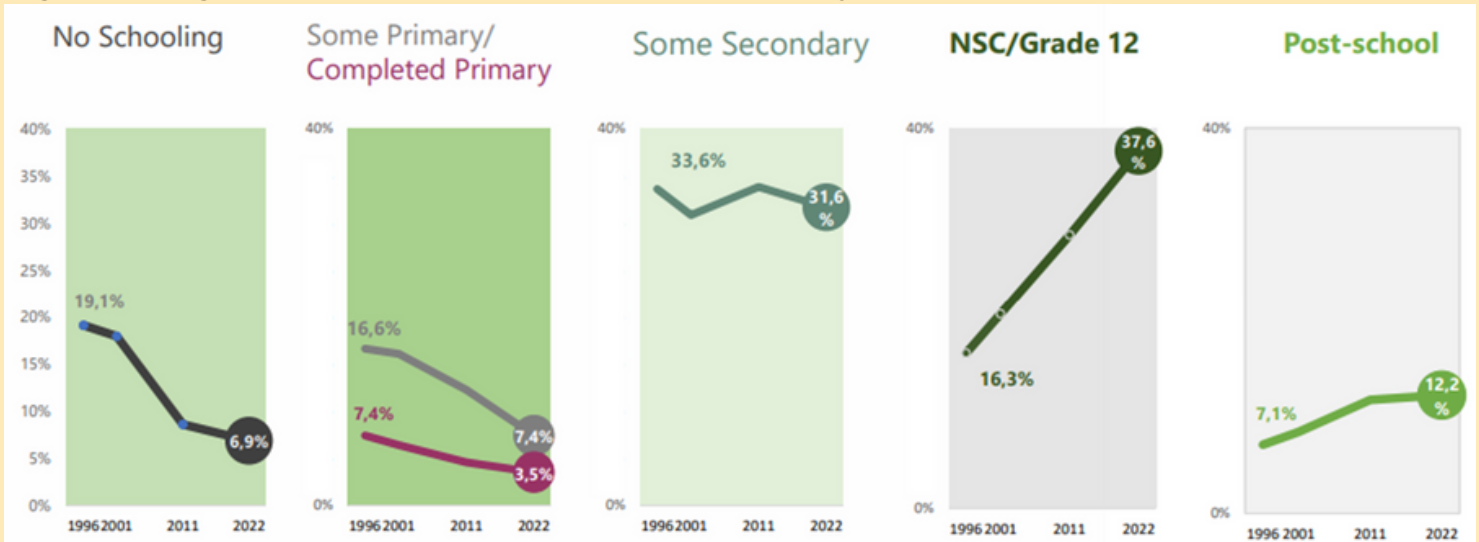
In 2022, more than 3 million children aged 0–4 years participated in Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes across the country. It is estimated that nearly 39.8 per cent (two-fifths) of children were not attending any ECD programmes. The Northern Cape and North West are two of the provinces with the highest proportion of children not attending any ECD facilities, with 56.7 per cent and 52.4 per cent recorded, respectively.

Between the end of Apartheid in 1994 and 2022, only a 3-percentage point increase was observed in the proportion of persons attending educational institutions, from 70.1 per cent in 1996 to 73.4 per cent in 2022. The proportion of persons with no schooling has significantly decreased, from 19.1 per cent in 1996 to 6.9 per cent in 2022. However, the decline from 2011 was only of 1.7 percentage points (see Figure 5).

In 1996, close to one-third of the population aged 20 years and older had attained some secondary education and only 16.3 per cent had completed secondary education. In 2022, more than one-third (37.6 per cent) had completed secondary education.



Figure 5: Highest level of education attained (20+ years) [1996 – 2022]



Source: Stats SA (2023b).

Post-school education shows a 5.1 percentage point increase from 7.1 per cent in 1996 to 12.2 per cent in 2022. This indicates that close to 4.6 million people aged 20 years and older have achieved a tertiary education, a positive sign for educational attainment.

Among racial groups, disparities in tertiary education attainment are striking. The White population group reported the highest percentage of post-school education attainment, with Indian/Asian population following close behind. Black African and Coloured populations tend to show lower levels of post-school education whose attainment are more concentrated in the secondary education level. This can be attributable to rising dropout rates within the secondary level and limited progression to tertiary education among them.

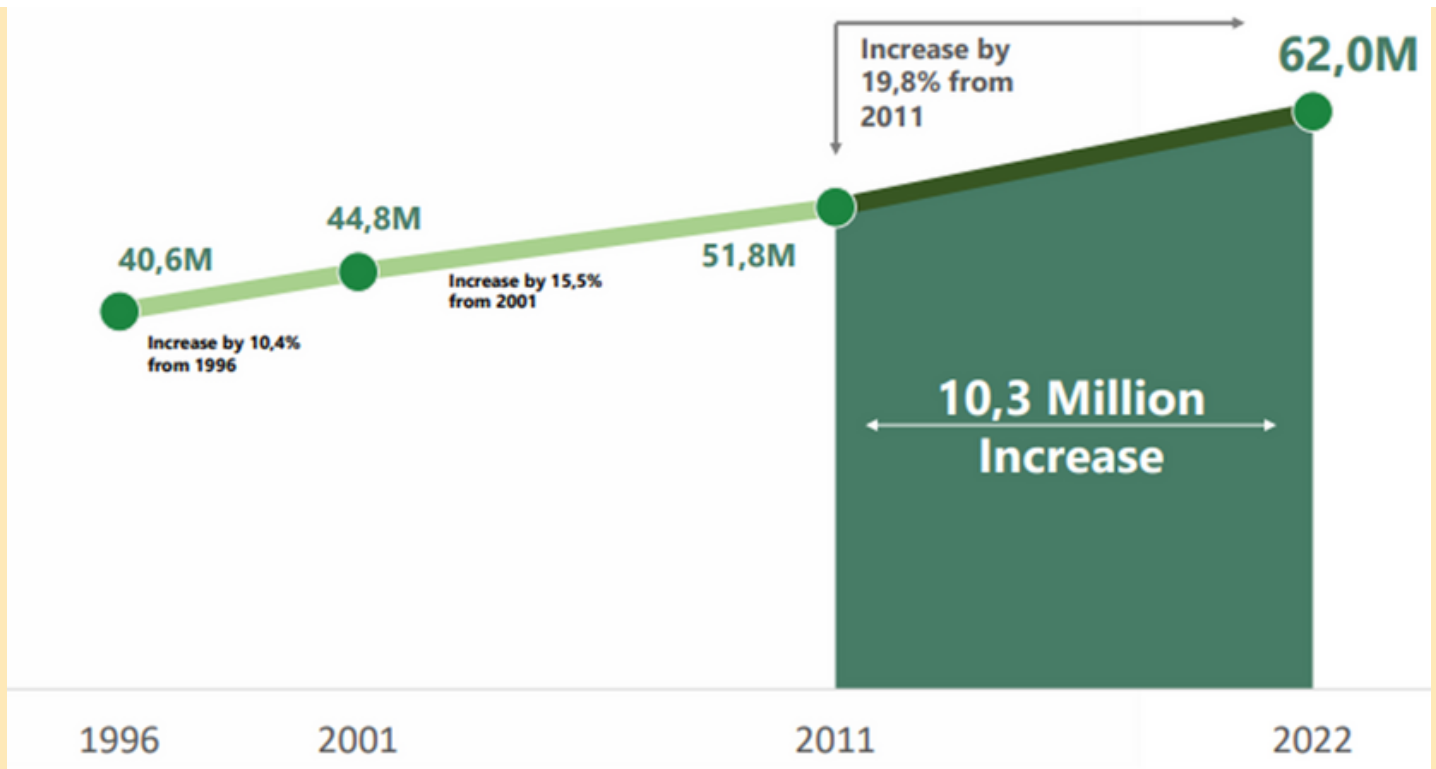
Overall, in 2022, functional literacy of the population aged 20 years and older was 85 per cent from 78.8 per cent in 2011, both reflecting a substantial rise from a low base of 64.3 per cent recorded in 1996.

IV. Population Growth

In the past 11 years, South Africa's population increased by 19.8 per cent, reaching more than 62 million people, from 51.8 million in 2011 (see Figure 6).



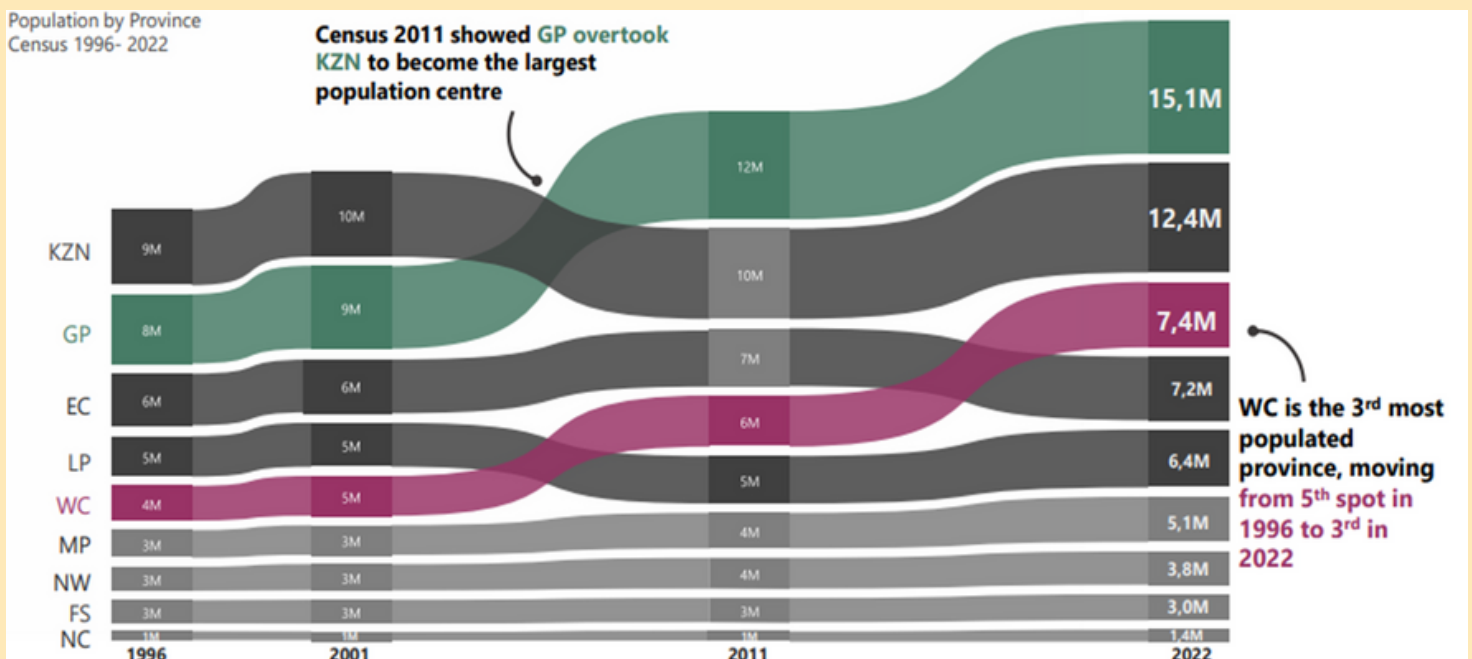
Figure 6: Population growth 1996 – 2022



Source: Stats SA (2023b).

Gauteng has grown by 2.8 million and remains the largest province with 15.1 million people, followed by KwaZulu-Natal with 12.4 million people (see Figure 7). The Western Cape became the third most populated province in 2022, shifting from fifth place in 1996. The Northern Cape and Free State provinces recorded the smallest populations at 1.3 million and 3.0 million people, respectively.

Figure 7: Population distribution by province [1996 – 2022]

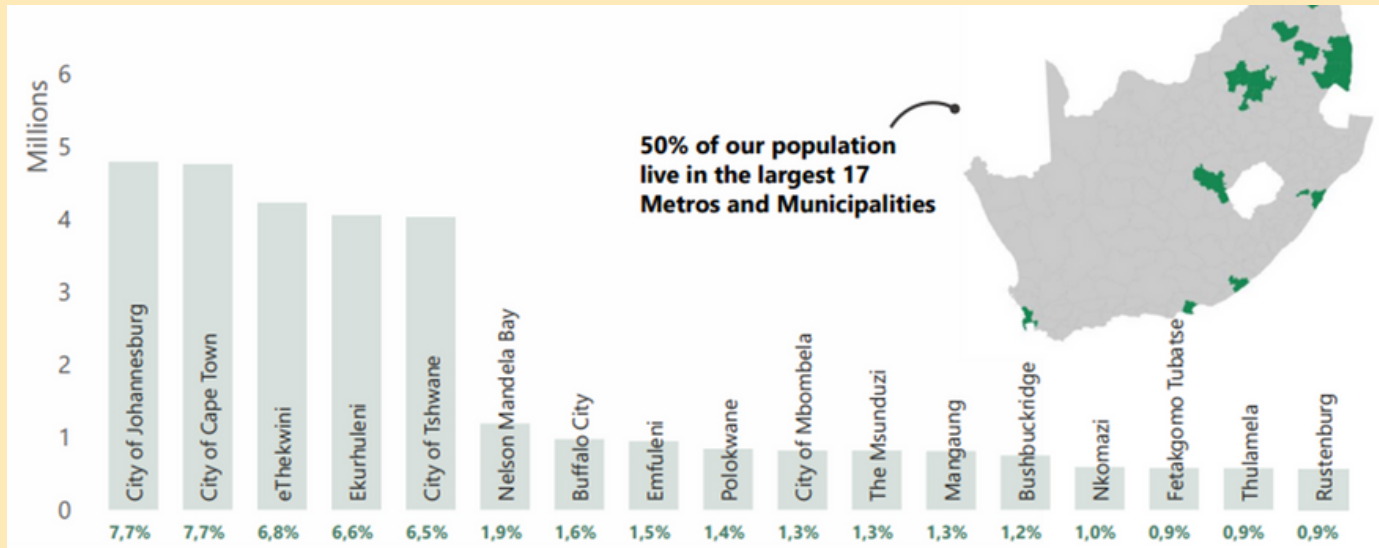


Source: Stats SA (2023b)



South Africa's growing population is broadly distributed across 213 metropolitan and local municipalities. With more than 50 per cent of the population residing in 17 of the largest municipalities, including Johannesburg (7.7 per cent), Cape Town (7.7 per cent), eThekweni (6.8 per cent), Ekurhuleni (6.6 per cent) and Tshwane (6.5 per cent) – see Figure 8.

Figure 8: Top 17 metro and local municipalities by population [2022]



Source: Stats SA (2023b).

It is further reported that nearly 61.2 per cent of the population is under 35 years, indicative of a relatively young and youthful population.

The data shows that 48.5 per cent of the population was male and 51.5 per cent was female in 2022. It further details that close to half, at 49.6 per cent, of the households in South Africa are headed by females. While household headship appears somewhat equal between males and females, the proportion of female headed households in KwaZulu-Natal, the Eastern Cape and Limpopo are higher than the national average, recorded at 53.1 per cent, 51.9 per cent and 51.6 per cent respectively.

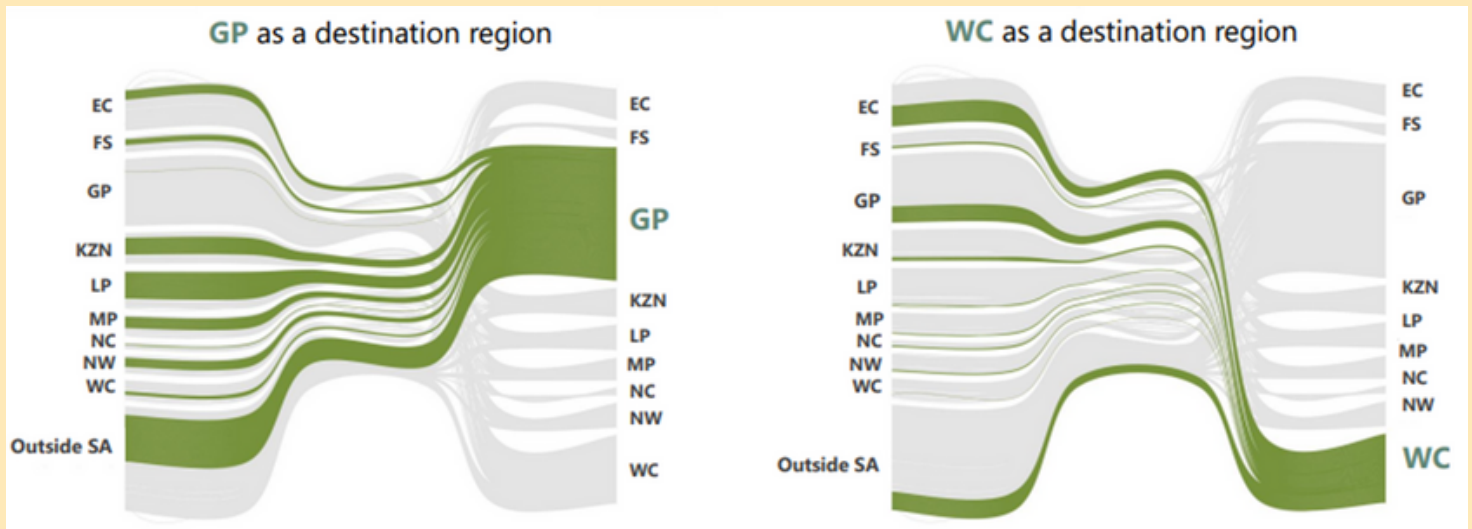
V. Migration Movements

Between Censuses 2011 and 2022, the interprovincial movement patterns indicate a positive net migration towards Gauteng and Western Cape, the provinces where more job opportunities can be found.

As the largest populated province, Gauteng received close to 400 000 persons between 2011 and 2022, with the most significant flows originating in Limpopo, Kwazulu-Natal and outside the country (see Figure 9). In contrast, the Western Cape saw more in-flow movement from Eastern Cape, Gauteng, and outside South Africa. The largest negative net migration is recorded in Limpopo and the Eastern Cape ,with 114 328 and 62 629 people leaving these provinces, respectively.



Figure 9: Distribution of interprovincial migration with Gauteng and Western Cape as the destination regions [2022]

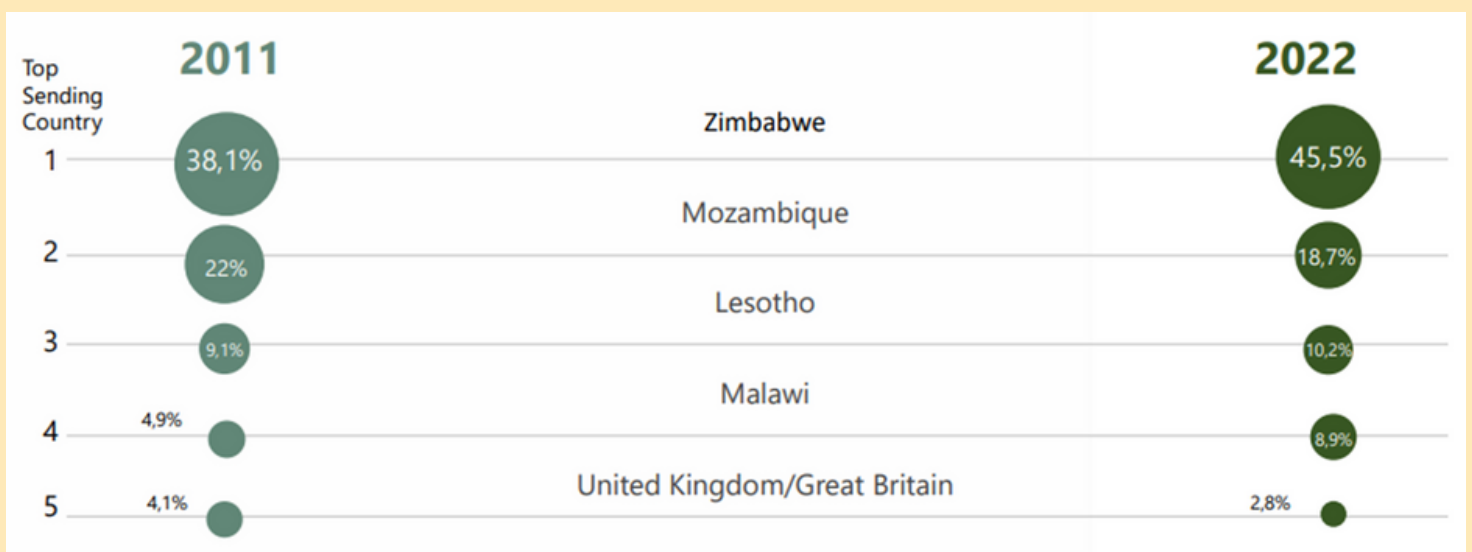


Source: Stats SA (2023b).

In terms of immigration, close to half (50.2 per cent) of all international migrants reside in Gauteng, followed by nearly 16 per cent in the Western Cape. More specifically, movement of migrants into the fastest growing provinces reflects an increase in immigration from 0.8 million people in 1996 to 2.4 million people in 2022, indicating only a slight change from the 2.2 million observed in 2011.

The top five countries with people migrating to South Africa are Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, Malawi and the UK/Great Britain – see Figure 10. This pattern of migration is mainly driven by the quest for economic opportunities, political instability, and environmental shocks.

Figure 10: Top five countries with people moving to South Africa [2022]



Source: Stats SA (2023a).



VI. References

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