

FreeFACTS

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Some successes in post-apartheid South Africa – will they continue?

South Africa is facing some serious headwinds at the moment. The economy remains under pressure with a real air of depression and desperation pervading the country. In many ways, South Africa feels like a country that is going backwards.

However, if we take a bit of a longer view, there have been some great successes since the end of apartheid.

This edition of *FreeFACTS* looks at how basic services have been rolled out to ordinary South Africans. In this, the South African government has been relatively successful.

For example, in 2002 about 75% of South Africans had access to electricity – by 2020 this had increased to 90%. If we break this down by province there had been some remarkable increases. In the Eastern Cape, at the turn of the century about 55% of residents had access to electricity, this had grown to over 90% by 2020.

There was similar growth in the proportion of people who had access to improved sanitation (effectively meaning access to some sort of formal toilet). In 2002 only about six-in-ten South Africans had access to such a facility – by 2020 this had risen to 83.2%, with the trend, in general being positive.

There are also large proportions of indigent households which receive taxpayer-subsidised services, although it is debatable whether this is a success. Fewer indigent households and more with one or more members working would be a far greater indicator of success.

A glaring failure, however, has been in terms of transport. Whereas in 2011 nearly 10% of South Africans used a bus or train to get to work, this had fallen by 50% in 2019. This is an indicator of how the government is failing to maintain infrastructure as well as provide services to citizens.

Nevertheless, looking at the longer trend line the direction of travel is clear. But if the country carries on its current trajectory this direction could well reverse and the gains of the past few decades could be lost. It is perhaps a greater probability than we realise.

— Marius Roodt

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The IRR is an advocacy group that fights for your right to make decisions about your life, family and business, free from unnecessary government, political, and bureaucratic interference. FreeFACTS publishes evidence that communities are better off when individuals are free to make decisions about how they want to live, be educated, work, access healthcare, think, speak, own property, and protect their communities. If you agree with the issues we stand for, welcome to the team. There are millions of people just like you who are tired of South African politicians, activists, and commentators attempting to rein in your freedom to decide. Take control and make sure your voice is heard by becoming a friend of the IRR.

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Living conditions

Households with and without electricity by province, 2002 and 2020				
Province	—2002—		—2020—	
	With electricity ^a	Without electricity	With electricity ^a	Without electricity
Eastern Cape	55,3%	44,7%	92,9%	7,1%
Free State	85,1%	14,9%	90,7%	9,3%
Gauteng	87,2%	12,8%	83,4%	16,6%
KwaZulu-Natal	68,6%	31,4%	92,6%	7,4%
Limpopo	72,6%	27,4%	97,2%	2,8%
Mpumalanga	76,0%	24,00%	92,0%	8,0%
North West	82,0%	18,0%	87,3%	12,7%
Northern Cape	81,6%	18,4%	97,3%	2,7%
Western Cape	88,5%	11,5%	93,1%	6,9%
South Africa	76,7%	23,3%	90,0%	10,0%

Source: Stats SA, *General Household Survey 2020*, Statistical release P0318, 2 December 2021, Figure 12.1, p43

^a For example, in 2020, 90% of households in the country were connected to mains electricity only.

Change in household sources and uses of energy, 1996-2020			
Source	1996	2020	Change
—Lighting ^a —			
Electricity	58,2%	98,7%	69,5%
Candles	28,7%	0,2%	-99,2%
None/other	— ^b	1,1%	— ^b
—Cooking—			
Electricity	47,5%	86,5%	82,2%
Gas	3,2%	12,7%	297,3%
Paraffin	21,6%	0,4%	-98,3%
Wood and coal	26,6%	— ^b	— ^b
None/other	— ^b	0,3%	— ^b
—Heating—			
Electricity	46,3%	70,1%	51,5%
Gas	0,2%	7,2%	3499,3%
Paraffin	1,2%	1,6%	32,4%
Wood and coal	42,7%	1,9%	-95,5%
None/other	0,1%	19,1%	19033,7%

Source: Stats SA, *Census 2011*, Statistical release P0301.4 (Revised), 30 October 2012, p61-63; *General Household Survey 2020 Addendum tables*, Statistical release P0318, 2 December 2021, Table 11.3, pp56-58; CRA calculations based on Stats SA data

^a Stats SA does not list wood and coal as sources of energy for lighting in 1996 but does so for 2019. Therefore, this table has no data showing wood and coal as sources of energy since there is no earlier data to compare with.

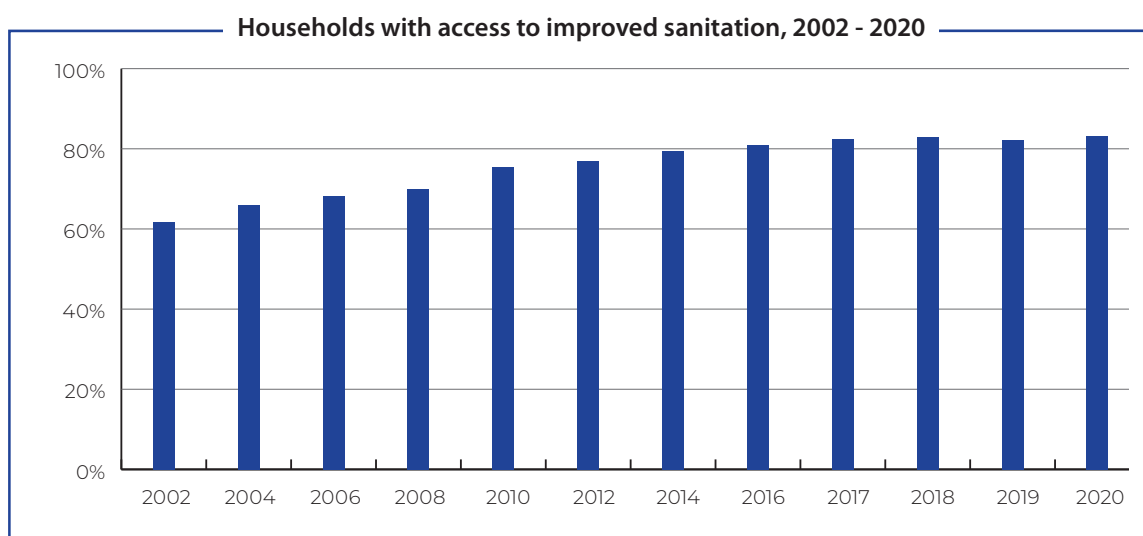
^b Values too small to provide reliable estimates.

Living conditions

Improved sanitation and no toilet facilities, 2002-20		
—Households—		
Year	With access to improved sanitation ^a	With no toilet facility /using bucket toilets
2002	61,7%	12,6%
2004	65,9%	10,7%
2006	68,3%	8,4%
2008	70,0%	7,6%
2010	75,4%	5,8%
2012	77,0%	5,4%
2014	79,5%	4,9%
2016	81,0%	4,2%
2017	82,4%	3,1%
2018	83,0%	2,8%
2019	82,1%	2,4%
2020	83,2%	0,6%

Source: Source: Stats SA, *General Household Survey 2020*, Statistical release P0318,2 December 2021, Figure 10.1, p36; Figure 10.2, p37

^a Households with access to improved sanitation, also known as households with access to RDP-standard sanitation or functioning/hygienic sanitation facilities, are those that have access to a flush toilet connected either to a public sewerage system or a flush toilet connected to a septic tank, a chemical toilet, and have a pit toilet with a ventilation pipe.



Living conditions

Access to piped water in the house and on site, 2002-20					
Year	Total house-holds	—Piped water in the house—		—Piped water on site—	
		Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
2002	11 194 000	4 521 000	40,4%	3 096 000	27,7%
2004	11 719 000	4 698 000	40,1%	3 429 000	29,3%
2006	12 243 000	5 037 000	41,1%	3 695 000	30,2%
2008	12 820 000	5 582 000	43,5%	3 460 000	27,0%
2010	13 456 000	5 757 000	42,8%	3 920 000	29,1%
2012	14 152 000	6 304 000	44,5%	3 902 000	27,6%
2014	14 904 000	6 908 000	46,3%	4 023 000	27,0%
2015	15 307 000	7 045 000	46,0%	4 135 000	27,0%
2016	15 744 000	7 339 000	46,6%	4 214 000	26,8%
2017	16 199 000	7 561 000	46,7%	4 463 000	27,6%
2018	16 671 000	7 722 000	46,3%	4 758 000	28,5%
2019	17 163 000	7 708 000	44,9%	4 898 000	28,5%
2020	17 418 000	8 122 000	46,6%	4 936 000	28,3%
2002-20	55,6%	79,7%	15,5%	59,4%	2,5%

Source: Stats SA, General Household Survey 2020, Statistical release P0318, 2 December 2021, Table 9.1, p33

Households with access to piped water, 2002-20	
Year	Number
2002	9 447 736
2004	10 136 935
2006	10 871 784
2008	11 371 340
2010	12 110 400
2012	12 864 168
2014	13 428 504
2016	14 012 160
2017	14 352 314
2018	14 837 190
2019	15 137 766
2020	15 519 438

Source: Stats SA, General Household Survey 2020, Statistical release P0318, 2 December 2021, Figure 9.1, p32

Living conditions

Selected sanitation indicators by province (proportions), 2020					
—Households—					
Province	With functioning basic sanitation facility ^a	With substandard sanitation facility ^b	Total ^c	Using bucket toilets ^d	With no sanitation facility
Eastern Cape	92,7%	3,1%	100,0%	0,1%	1,8%
Free State	84,2%	3,8%	100,0%	2,1%	0,3%
Gauteng	92,4%	0,9%	100,0%	0,6%	0,1%
KwaZulu-Natal	82,1%	1,0%	100,0%	0,1%	0,7%
Limpopo	58,6%	1,0%	100,0%	N/A	0,7%
Mpumalanga	64,3%	N/A	100,0%	N/A	N/A
North West	77,9%	1,5%	100,0%	N/A	1,2%
Northern Cape	86,2%	2,3%	100,0%	0,6%	1,1%
Western Cape	95,0%	4,6%	100,0%	3,6%	0,7%
South Africa	84,0%	1,7%	100,0%	0,8%	0,6%

Source: IRR calculations based on Stats SA data

^a Households with access to improved sanitation, also known as households with access to RDP-standard sanitation or functioning/hygienic sanitation facilities, are those that have access to a flush toilet connected either to a public sewerage system or a flush toilet connected to a septic tank, a chemical toilet, portable flush toilet or a pit toilet with a ventilation pipe.

^b Households with substandard toilet facilities are those that use pit latrines without ventilation, bucket toilets, other unspecified facilities, or have no access to toilet facilities at all.

^c Figures should add up horizontally but may not, owing to rounding.

^d Includes bucket toilets collected by municipalities as well as those emptied by households. These figures are included under substandard toilet facilities.

N/A—Not available/applicable.

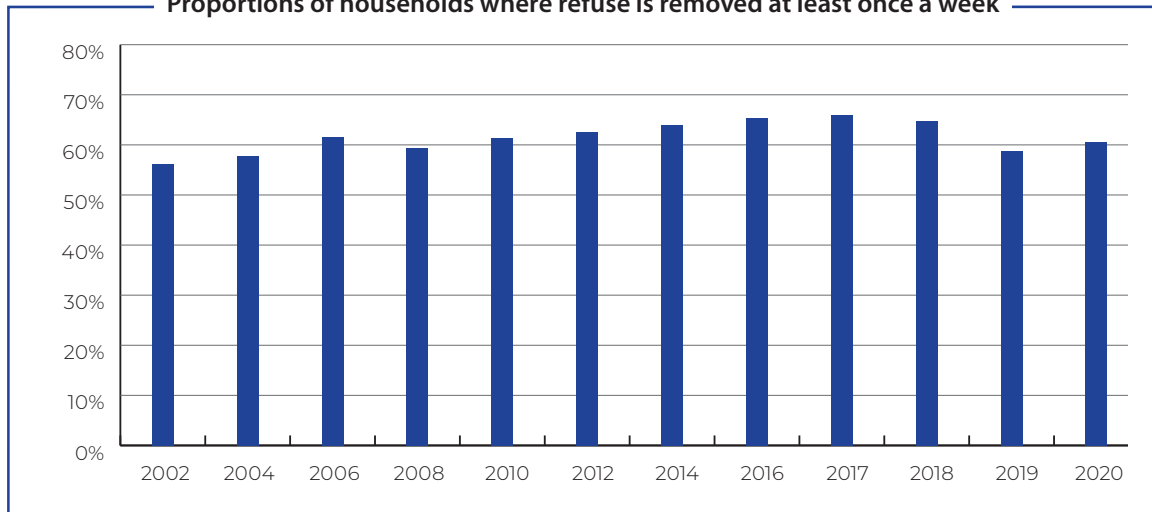
Living conditions

Household refuse removal, 2002-20						
Year	Removed at least once a week ^a	Removed less often than once a week ^a	Communal refuse dump	Own refuse dump	Dump rubbish anywhere	Other
2002	56,1%	2,3%	3,0%	32,4%	5,8%	0,4%
2004	57,8%	1,9%	3,4%	32,8%	3,5%	0,6%
2006	61,5%	1,6%	2,5%	28,6%	4,8%	1,0%
2008	59,4%	2,5%	1,9%	31,1%	4,6%	0,7%
2010	61,4%	2,7%	1,6%	29,8%	3,9%	0,6%
2012	62,5%	2,0%	1,6%	30,4%	3,3%	0,2%
2014	63,9%	2,5%	3,1%	27,8%	2,4%	0,3%
2016	65,4%	2,0%	3,0%	27,2%	2,1%	0,4%
2017	65,9%	1,5%	3,1%	26,9%	2,1%	0,5%
2018	64,7%	1,7%	3,5%	27,7%	2,0%	0,5%
2019	58,8%	2,4%	4,7%	30,4%	3,2%	0,5%
2020	60,5%	2,2%	5,6%	28,8%	2,4%	0,6%
2002-20	7,8%	-4,3%	86,7%	-11,1%	-58,6%	50,0%

Source: Source: Stats SA, *General Household Survey 2020*, Statistical release P0318, 2 December 2021, Figure 11.1, p40

^a Including by local authorities, private companies, communities contracted to municipalities, and community members of their own volition.

Proportions of households where refuse is removed at least once a week



Living conditions

Consumer units ^a receiving free basic services from municipalities by province, 2019								
Province	—Water—		—Electricity—		—Sewerage and sanitation services—		—Solid waste services—	
	Number ^b	Proportion ^c	Number ^b	Proportion ^c	Number ^b	Proportion ^c	Number ^b	Proportion ^c
Eastern Cape	520 322	32,8%	366 355	38,3%	495 783	34,1%	292 268	58,1%
Free State	137 433	15,4%	146 418	16,9%	138 622	17,7%	137 203	18,3%
Gauteng	555 552	15,6%	405 082	21,1%	552 645	17,5%	325 672	15,9%
KwaZulu-Natal	765 633	31,0%	306 318	39,6%	265 833	32,9%	713 348	44,3%
Limpopo	143 544	10,6%	103 130	9,9%	80 661	12,7%	48 839	30,1%
Mpumalanga	146 859	12,1%	82 546	14,4%	84 564	13,2%	86 549	21,0%
North West	88 074	8,2%	112 125	8,3%	80 595	9,6%	89 041	12,0%
Northern Cape	65 704	20,7%	66 284	21,2%	60 394	21,9%	62 442	27,1%
Western Cape	591 999	43,5%	458 960	34,8%	572 546	49,6%	616 553	45,9%
South Africa	3 015 120	21,8%	2 047 218	24,5%	2 331 643	24,2%	2 371 915	29,3%

Source: Stats SA, *Non-financial census of municipalities for the year ended 30 June 2019*, Statistical release P9115, 31 March 2021, Table 13, p24, Table 7, p18

a Most municipalities do not have a system of identifying multiple households served by one billing point or delivery point. Consumer units are thus not comparable to households as defined by Stats SA.

b Units receiving a particular service.

c Units receiving a particular service free of charge as a proportion of total units receiving that particular service. For example, 21.8% of all consumer units receiving water from municipalities receive it free of charge.

Mode of transport	—2011—		—2013—		—2015—		—2017—		—2019—	
	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion	Number	Proportion
Walking	2 558 000	18,8%	3 002 000	18,8%	3 344 000	20,0%	3 466 000	19,9%	3 687 000	21,5%
Bicycle/motorcycle	111 000	0,8%	129 000	0,8%	163 000	1,0%	196 000	1,1%	103 000	0,6%
Minibus taxi/sedan taxi/bakkie taxi	3 381 000	24,9%	3 594 000	22,5%	3 846 000	22,9%	3 982 000	22,9%	4 501 000	26,3%
Bus	758 000	5,6%	941 000	5,9%	927 000	5,5%	812 000	4,7%	717 000	4,2%
Train	519 000	3,8%	601 000	3,8%	532 000	3,2%	448 000	2,6%	236 000	1,4%
Own car or other private vehicle	4 412 000	32,5%	5 363 000	33,6%	5 529 000	33,0%	5 922 000	34,1%	5 664 000	33,1%
Lift club	276 000	2,0%	327 000	2,1%	381 000	2,3%	440 000	2,5%	458 000	2,7%
None, studies/works from home	1 525 000	11,2%	1 971 000	12,3%	1 975 000	11,8%	2 059 000	11,9%	1 681 000	9,8%
Other	44 000	0,3%	48 000	0,3%	70 000	0,4%	57 000	0,3%	80 000	0,5%
Subtotal	13 584 000	100,0%	15 977 000	100,0%	16 767 000	100,0%	17 382 000	100,0%	17 127 000	100,0%
Unspecified	140 000	—	151 000	—	213 000	—	238 000	—	—	—
Total	13 723 000	—	16 128 000	—	16 980 000	—	17 620 000	—	17 127 000	—

Source: Stats SA, *General Household Survey 2011*, Statistical release P0318, 3 May 2012, Table 11, p37; *General Household Survey 2013*, Statistical release P0318, 18 June 2014, Table 15, p53; *General Household Survey 2015*, Statistical release P0318, 2 June 2016, Table 15, p52; *General Household Survey 2017*, Statistical release P0318, 21 June 2018, Table 15, p50; *General Household Survey 2019*, Statistical release P0318, 17 December 2020, Table 14.1, p54