

Press Release

For immediate release



SOUTH AFRICAN
INSTITUTE OF
RACE RELATIONS

South Africa's Leading Research and Policy Organisation

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Electricity: wired up but switched off

Despite the fact that 84% of South African homes have access to electricity, over a quarter of households do not use it for cooking and over half do not use it for heating, according to the latest *South Africa Survey* published by the South African Institute of Race Relations.

Of the 14.8 million households in South Africa, some 12.4 million (84%) use electricity for lighting, 10.7 million (73%) use it for cooking, and 6.5 million (44%) use it for heating their homes.

Of the 16% of households without electricity for lighting, 10% used candles while the remaining 6% relied on paraffin and other unspecified resources.

Some 27% of households that did not use electricity for cooking used either gas (2%), paraffin (7%), wood (13%), coal, (1%), or other unspecified sources (4%).

Of the 56% of households not using electricity for heating, 28% used paraffin and wood, 2% each used gas and coal, and 24% used unspecified materials. The Institute obtained the data from Statistics South Africa.

Lights consume far less electricity than do household appliances used for cooking and heating such as stoves and heaters. In eight of the past ten years, electricity price rises have been above the inflation rate. 'If this trend continues, it can be expected that the average household will increasingly switch from electricity to other sources of energy for heating and cooking,' said Kerwin Lebone of the Institute's research department.

'Energy sources such as candles and paraffin are also the main contributors to shack-settlement fires that cause untold damage in terms of loss of life and property,' Mr Lebone added.

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