

Press Release

For immediate release



SOUTH AFRICAN
INSTITUTE OF
RACE RELATIONS

South Africa's Leading Research and Policy Organisation

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White men still top of the pay scale

South Africa's highest-paid employees are, on average, white men who live in Gauteng, work in the community and social services industry (including government) in skilled jobs, belong to a union, and are between 55 and 64 years of age. This is according to the latest *South Africa Survey*, published by the South African Institute of Race Relations in Johannesburg.

Earnings are assessed using the median monthly income of employed people in both the formal and the informal sector broken down in various ways, such as by race, sex, province, and age. The median is the level that divides the relevant segment of the working population in half, meaning that half earns less than the median and half more.

According to these medians, on average the lowest paid employees are African women living in Limpopo, working in private households, not belonging to a union, and aged between 15 and 24.

In 2011, the median monthly wage for African earners was R2 380, for coloured earners R3 030, for Indian earners R6 800, and for white earners R10 000.

The Institute's analysis is based on data from Statistics South Africa, which measures the gross earnings of employees and the net earnings of employers and own-account workers, across all sectors.

According to the *Survey*, median wages of white earners are four times as high as those of African earners, of skilled employees six times as high as those of unskilled employees, and of unionised employees twice as high as those of non-unionised workers.

Georgina Alexander, a researcher at the Institute, said 'The data shows where the discrepancies in earnings lie. It must be noted, however, that it takes into account those who earn salaries only. The largest and most enduring inequality in South Africa is between those who are employed and those who are not.'

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