

# FreeFACTS

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## Demographic data shows SA advances but concerns remain

**There is great concern about the path of South Africa today. The economy is moribund and there is a sense of hopelessness and despair that pervades.**

But on a number of metrics there is evidence that South Africa is continuing to grow and advance as a society. If we look at things such as life expectancy and the fertility rates of women then it is clear that – in some ways – this country is improving.

While the life expectancy of the average South Africa is still far below what it is in the developed world there has been significant improvement this century. At the turn of the century a man could only expect to live to his early 50s, while a woman would make it to her late 50s.

However, in 2022 the life expectancy of the average man in South Africa was 60, while for women it was 66.

For men this reflected an increase of 12% and for women 14%.

This growth is partly because we are through the worst of the AIDS crisis but it is also a reflection of better living conditions.

In addition, South Africa has a relatively low fertility rate – this is the average number of children a woman will have in her life.

In 2022 the average woman in South Africa had 2.3 babies, just above the necessary replacement level of 2.1 (this means women must on average have 2.1 babies to keep the population stable). This is quite low compared to other African countries – for example the fertility rate in Zimbabwe is 3.5, it is 4.6 in Mozambique, and 5.2 in Nigeria.

A lower and declining fertility rate is a function of development – as women get more educational and employment opportunities they generally choose to start having children later, which means that they have fewer over their lifetime. In addition, women with more opportunities also have better access to birth control.

Taking a bird's eye of South African demographics shows that some progress is being made in South Africa.

— Marius Roodt

## JOIN US

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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## Demographics

Annual population growth rates, 2002-22				
Year	Children (0-14 years)	Youth (15-24 years)	Elderly (60+ years)	Total
2002-03	-1,16%	3,12%	1,08%	0,96%
2003-04	-0,78%	3,03%	1,25%	1,06%
2004-05	-0,38%	2,51%	1,42%	1,12%
2005-06	0,00%	1,66%	1,55%	1,16%
2006-07	0,34%	1,25%	1,55%	1,25%
2007-08	0,61%	0,87%	1,88%	1,33%
2008-09	0,83%	0,52%	1,95%	1,42%
2009-10	1,01%	0,19%	2,55%	1,49%
2010-11	1,06%	-0,62%	2,82%	1,54%
2011-12	1,26%	-0,96%	2,96%	1,55%
2012-13	1,42%	-1,37%	2,93%	1,55%
2013-14	1,35%	-1,39%	3,04%	1,57%
2014-15	1,30%	-1,37%	3,01%	1,52%
2015-16	1,10%	-1,20%	2,99%	1,47%
2016-17	1,14%	-1,22%	2,95%	1,45%
2017-18	1,19%	-1,05%	2,94%	1,46%
2018-19	0,94%	-0,23%	2,91%	1,48%
2019-20	0,69%	0,23%	2,88%	1,39%
2020-21	0,45%	0,55%	1,47%	1,03%
2021-22	0,19%	1,38%	2,11%	1,06%

Source: Stats SA, *Mid-year population estimates 2022*, Statistical release P0302, 28 July 2022, Appendix 4, p42

## Demographics

Fertility rate <sup>a</sup> , 2002-22		
Year	Rate	GDP per head <sup>b</sup>
2002	2,45	65 118
2003	2,42	66 121
2004	2,54	68 391
2005	2,59	77 186
2006	2,62	74 292
2007	2,65	77 299
2008	2,66	78 709
2009	2,62	76 407
2010	2,58	77 568
2011	2,51	78 811
2012	2,46	79 464
2013	2,42	80 191
2014	2,39	80 077
2015	2,35	79 917
2016	2,27	79 264
2017	2,25	78 988
2018	2,28	78 990
2019	2,33	78 068
2020	2,34	72 142
2021	2,35	74 907
2022	2,34	N/A
2002-22	-4,5%	—

*Source:* Stats SA, *Mid-year population estimates 2022*, Statistical release P0302, 28 July 2022, Table 2, p8; South African Reserve Bank (SARB), [www.resbank.co.za](http://www.resbank.co.za), time series data, accessed 17 August 2022

<sup>a</sup> The average number of children born alive to a woman during her child-bearing span (15-49 years) if she were to bear children. For example, a girl born in 2002 would be expected to have, on average, 2.45 children in her lifetime if she bore children.

<sup>b</sup> At constant 2015 prices.  
N/A — Not available.

Fertility rate <sup>a</sup> by province, 2001-26						
Province	2001-06	2006-11	2011-16	2016-21	2021-26	Change 2001-26
Eastern Cape	3,14	3,22	2,97	2,91	2,87	-8,5%
Free State	2,69	2,84	2,48	2,33	2,27	-15,6%
Gauteng	2,20	2,36	2,10	1,89	1,82	-17,1%
KwaZulu-Natal	2,97	2,98	2,71	2,59	2,53	-14,8%
Limpopo	3,23	3,37	3,16	3,09	3,03	-6,2%
Mpumalanga	2,79	2,88	2,41	2,29	2,27	-18,7%
North West	3,08	3,20	2,78	2,57	2,52	-17,9%
Northern Cape	3,03	3,08	2,83	2,67	2,63	-13,1%
Western Cape	2,31	2,42	2,16	2,04	2,01	-12,7%

*Source:* Stats SA, *Mid-year population estimates 2022*, Statistical release P0302, 28 July 2022, Figure 9, p23  
<sup>a</sup> The average number of children born alive to a woman during her child-bearing span (15-49 years) if she were to bear children. For example, girls born in the Eastern Cape between 2016 and 2021 would in future be expected to have an average of 2.91 children each, if they bear children.

## Demographics

### Total fertility rate<sup>a</sup>, international comparisons, 2021

#### —Selected African countries—

Algeria	2,89
Angola	5,30
Burundi	5,08
Cameroon	4,46
Central African Republic	5,98
Congo (DRC)	6,16
Congo (Brazzaville)	4,17
Eritrea	3,87
Eswatini	2,84
Ethiopia	4,16
Ghana	3,56
Ivory Coast	4,42
Kenya	3,34
Lesotho	3,02
Liberia	4,09
Libya	2,46
Madagascar	3,85
Malawi	3,92
Mauritius	1,41
Morocco	2,33
Mozambique	4,64
Namibia	3,30
Nigeria	5,24
Rwanda	3,82
Senegal	4,39
Somalia	6,31
South Africa	2,37
Sudan	4,46
Tanzania	4,73
Tunisia	2,09
Uganda	4,59
Zambia	4,31
Zimbabwe	3,49

Source: World Bank, [wdi.databank.org](http://wdi.databank.org), *World Development Indicators*, accessed 7 November 2023

<sup>a</sup> The number of children a woman would have by the age of 50. For example, girls born in South Africa in 2021 were expected to have an average of 2.37 children during their child-bearing years.

## Demographics

Recorded live births <sup>a</sup> by sex, 2000-21					
Year	Male	Female	Total <sup>b</sup>	Total population	Births as a proportion of total population <sup>c</sup>
2000	491 435	489 739	981 174	43 685 699	2,2%
2001	482 989	481 434	964 423	44 819 778	2,2%
2002	488 090	486 905	974 995	45 454 200	2,1%
2003	487 273	483 000	970 273	46 429 800	2,1%
2004	517 114	511 621	1 028 735	46 586 607	2,2%
2005	538 403	531 891	1 070 294	46 888 200	2,3%
2006	553 378	548 393	1 101 771	46 888 200	2,3%
2007	547 781	540 376	1 088 157	47 850 700	2,3%
2008	559 151	552 708	1 111 859	48 687 000	2,3%
2009	533 789	526 604	1 060 393	49 320 500	2,2%
2010	521 420	512 223	1 033 643	49 991 300	2,1%
2011	525 859	516 759	1 042 618	51 770 560	2,0%
2012	526 103	516 867	1 042 970	52 274 943	2,0%
2013	519 646	510 138	1 029 784	52 981 991	1,9%
2014	521 336	511 996	1 033 332	54 001 953	1,9%
2015	495 445	487 679	983 124	54 956 920	1,8%
2016	467 304	457 740	925 044	55 908 865	1,7%
2017	473 145	464 644	937 789	56 521 948	1,7%
2018	486 543	476 965	963 508	57 725 606	1,7%
2019	495 728	486 914	982 642	58 775 022	1,7%
2020	504 249	495 260	999 509	59 622 350	1,7%
2021	498 573	491 056	989 629	60 142 978	1,6%
<b>2000-21</b>	<b>1,5%</b>	<b>0,3%</b>	<b>0,9%</b>	<b>37,7%</b>	<b>-26,7%</b>

Source: Stats SA, *Recorded live births 2020*, Statistical release P0305, 11 November 2021, Table 10, p25; *Recorded live births 2021*, Statistical release P0305, 19 December 2022, Table 11, p23; Census counts and population estimates

<sup>a</sup> Generally, more males than females are born. In 2021, the male/female ratio of babies was 102 males per 100 females.

<sup>b</sup> Figures include updated births at 31 July 2022 and are thus higher in number than those in the table that follows.

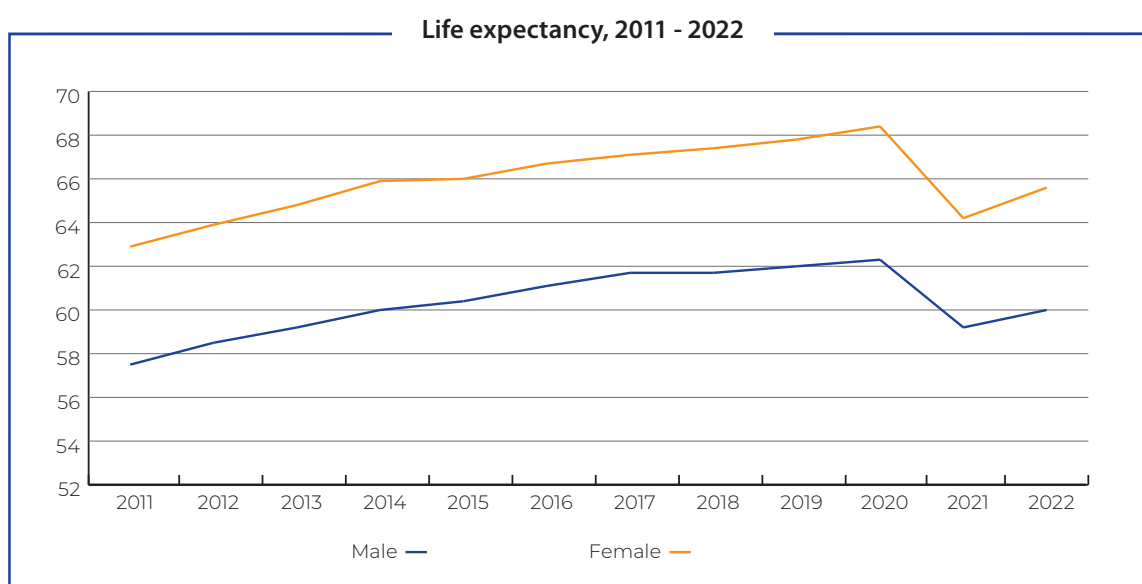
<sup>c</sup> IRR calculations, based on census counts and population estimates.

## Demographics

Life expectancy at birth <sup>a</sup> by sex, 2002-22			
Year	Male	Female	Total
2002	53,2	57,5	55,5
2003	52,8	57,3	55,1
2004	52,5	56,4	54,5
2005	52,2	55,7	54,0
2006	52,1	55,4	53,8
2007	52,6	56,0	54,4
2008	53,3	56,8	55,1
2009	54,4	59,4	57,0
2010	55,8	61,2	58,6
2011	57,5	62,9	60,3
2012	58,5	63,9	61,3
2013	59,2	64,8	62,1
2014	60,0	65,9	63,0
2015	60,4	66,0	63,3
2016	61,1	66,7	64,0
2017	61,7	67,1	64,5
2018	61,7	67,4	64,6
2019	62,0	67,8	64,9
2020	62,3	68,4	65,4
2021	59,2	64,2	61,7
2022	60,0	65,6	62,8
2002-22	12,8%	14,1%	13,2%

Source: Stats SA, *Mid-year population estimates 2022*, Statistical release P0302, 28 July 2022, Appendix 2, p40

<sup>a</sup> Stats SA figures are different from World Bank data, owing to the application of different methodology.



## Demographics

Life expectancy by sex and province, 2001-26										
Province	—Male—					—Female—				
	2001-06	2006-11	2011-16	2016-21	2021-26	2001-06	2006-11	2011-16	2016-21	2021-26
Eastern Cape	51,1	52,7	57,9	58,9	59,8	54,9	57,7	64,0	64,9	66,0
Free State	44,7	47,0	53,7	55,5	56,6	47,3	50,5	58,8	60,6	62,2
Gauteng	54,4	56,9	62,3	63,2	64,3	58,8	61,1	67,0	68,1	69,3
KwaZulu-Natal	46,4	48,6	55,8	56,7	57,8	50,6	53,5	62,0	63,1	64,2
Limpopo	52,7	54,5	59,2	61,2	62,4	57,9	60,8	65,8	66,6	67,7
Mpumalanga	51,3	53,1	58,6	60,7	61,9	55,6	58,3	65,0	65,8	67,1
North West	48,4	51,0	56,5	58,1	59,4	51,5	54,6	62,9	64,5	65,7
Northern Cape	51,1	52,4	56,1	57,1	58,2	55,6	57,9	62,8	63,6	64,4
Western Cape	59,0	60,9	64,4	65,5	66,3	63,5	65,9	70,0	71,1	71,7

Source: Stats SA, Mid-year population estimates 2022, Statistical release P0302, 28 July 2022, Figures 11 and 12, p25