

Housing and Services - Housing type

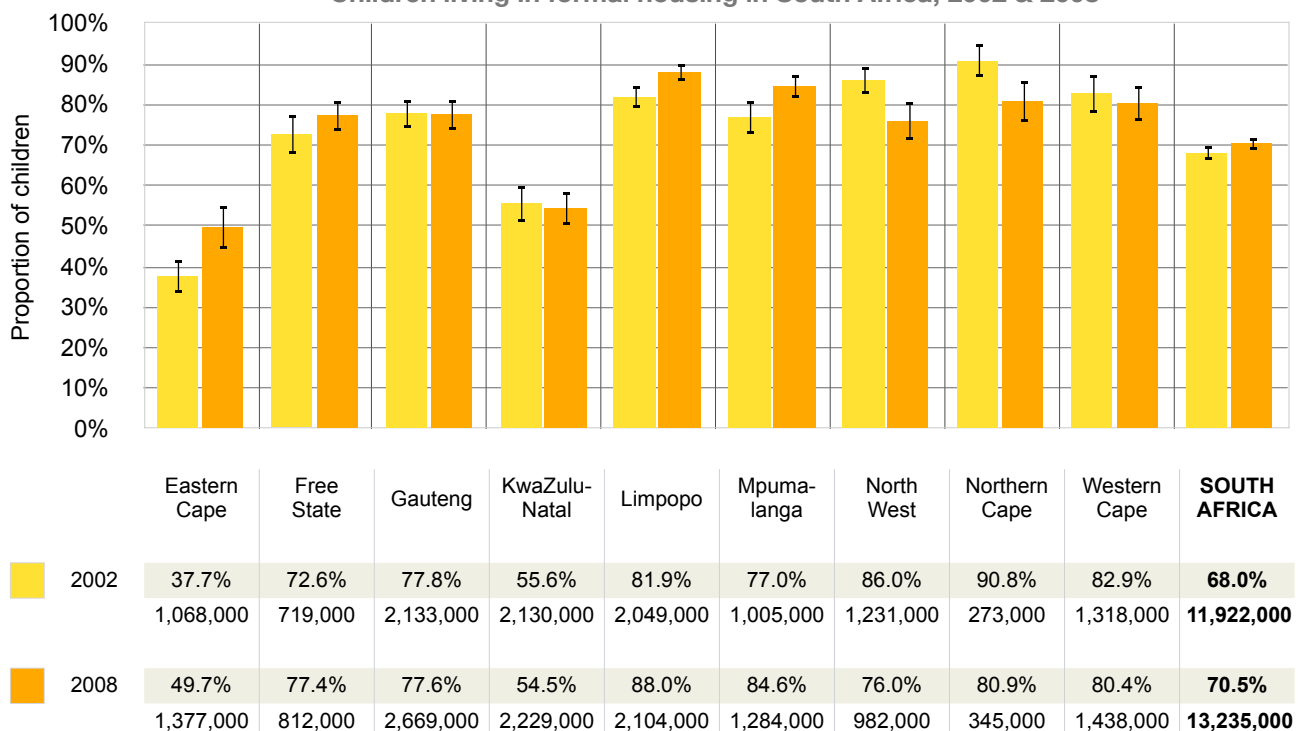
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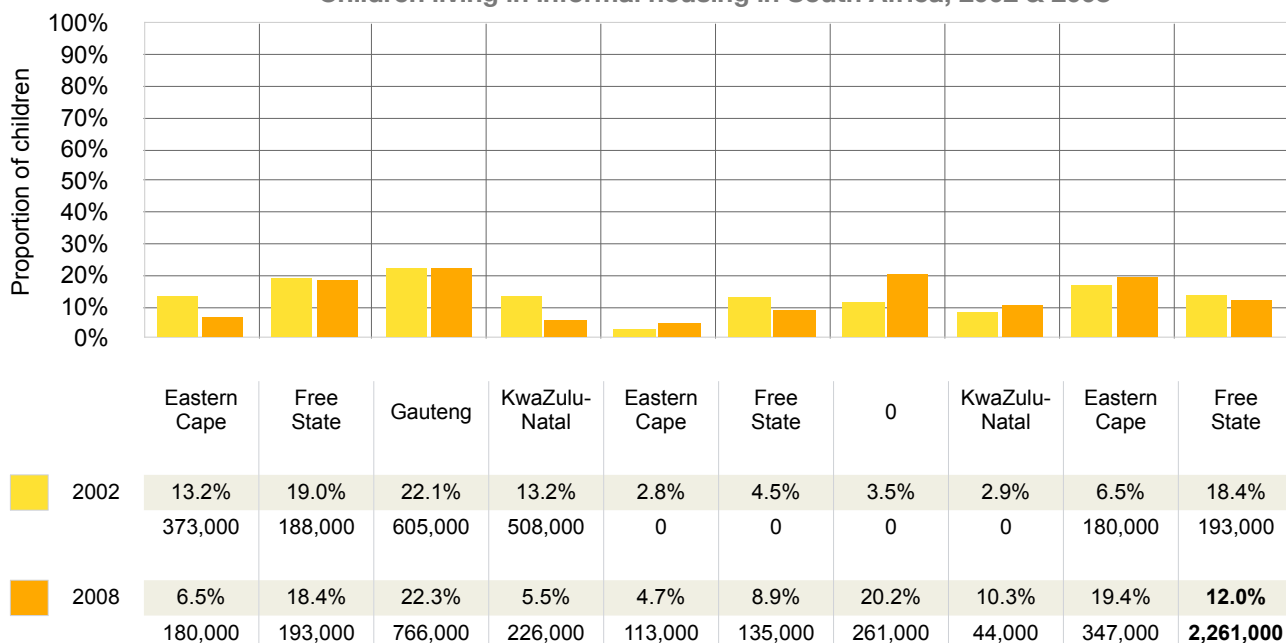
Definition

This indicator shows distribution of children in different types of housing: formal, informal and 'traditional' dwellings. Formal housing is used as a proxy for 'adequate' housing. For the purposes of this indicator, 'formal' housing is made up of the following dwelling types: dwelling or brick structure on separate stand; flat or apartment; town/cluster/semi-detached house; unit in retirement village; room or flatlet on a larger property. 'Informal' housing consists of the following dwelling types: informal dwelling or shack in backyard; informal dwelling or shack in informal settlement; dwelling or house/flat/room in backyard; caravan or tent. 'Traditional dwelling' is defined as a 'traditional dwelling/hut/structure made of traditional materials'. (These dwelling types are listed as options in the General Household Survey.)

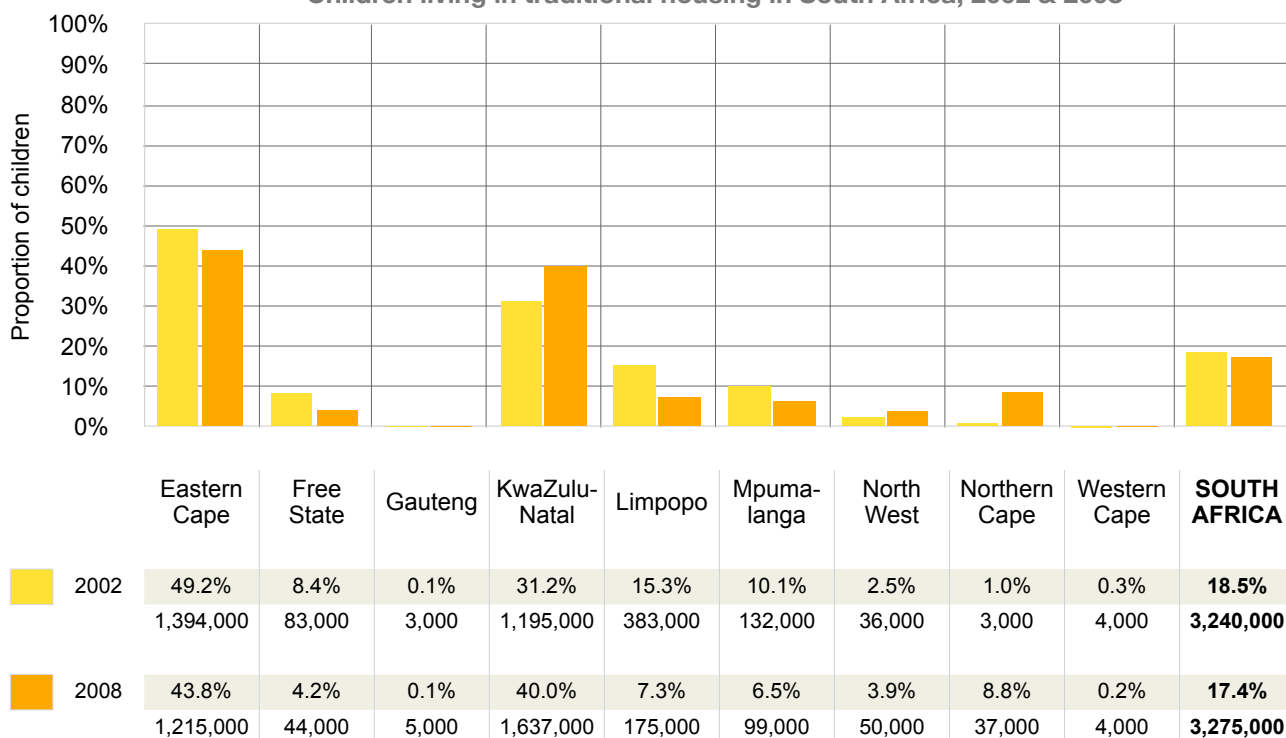
Children living in formal housing in South Africa, 2002 & 2008



Children living in informal housing in South Africa, 2002 & 2008



Children living in traditional housing in South Africa, 2002 & 2008



- Source**
- Statistics South Africa (2003 - 2009) General Household Survey 2002 - 2008. Pretoria, Cape Town: Statistics South Africa.
 - Analysis by Katharine Hall & Double-Hugh Marera, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town.

- Notes**
1. Children are defined as persons aged 0 – 17 years.
 2. Population numbers have been rounded off to the nearest thousand.
 3. Sample surveys are always subject to error, and the proportions simply reflect the mid-point of a possible range. The confidence intervals (CIs) indicate the reliability of the estimate at the 95% level. This means that, if independent samples were repeatedly taken from the same population, we would expect the proportion to lie between upper and lower bounds of the CI 95% of the time. The wider the CI, the more uncertain the proportion. Where CIs overlap for different sub-populations or time periods we cannot be sure that there is a real difference in the proportion, even if the mid-points differ. CIs are represented in the bar graphs by vertical lines at the top of each bar.

What do the numbers tell us?

Children's right to adequate housing means that they should not have to live in informal dwellings. One of the seven elements of 'adequate housing' is that the housing must be 'habitable' (International Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – CESCR). To be habitable, houses should have enough space to prevent overcrowding, and should be built in a way that ensures physical safety and protection from the weather.

Formal brick houses that meet the standards set by the State for quality housing could be considered 'habitable housing', whereas informal dwellings such as shacks in informal settlements and backyards would not be considered habitable or adequate. Informal housing in backyards and informal settlements makes up the bulk of the housing backlog in South Africa. 'Traditional' housing in rural areas is a third category, which is not necessarily adequate or inadequate. Some traditional dwellings are more habitable than new subsidy houses – they can be more spacious and better insulated, for example.

Access to services is another element of 'adequate housing'. Children living in formal areas are more likely to have services on site than those living in informal or traditional dwellings. They are also more likely to be close to facilities like schools, libraries, clinics and hospitals than those living in informal settlements or rural areas. Children living in informal settlements are also more exposed to hazards such as shack fires and paraffin poisoning. The environmental hazards associated with informal housing are exacerbated for very young children. The distribution of children in informal dwellings is slightly skewed towards younger children and babies: 42% of children in informal housing are in the 0 – 5 year age group.

In 2008, nearly over 2.3 million children in South Africa lived in backyard dwellings or shacks in informal settlements. The greatest proportions of inadequately housed children are in the provinces with relatively large metropolitan centres and small rural populations. This is probably associated with urban migration and the growth of informal settlements around urban centres. The main provinces with informally-housed child populations are Gauteng (where 22% of children live in informal dwellings), North West (where there has been a significant increase from 12% to 20% of children informally housed), the Western Cape (19% informal) and the Free State (18%). Limpopo has the lowest proportion (5%) of children in informal housing and the highest proportion in formal dwellings. The Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal also have low proportions of children (both less than 10%) in informal housing, but also have by far the largest proportions of children living in traditional dwellings (44% and 40% respectively). Forty percent of children in informal housing are in the 0 – 5-year age group. These young children are also more vulnerable to environmental hazards such as shack fires and paraffin poisoning.

The distribution of children in formal, informal and traditional dwellings has remained fairly constant over a seven-year period since 2002. This is surprising, given the delivery of over 2.5 million houses since 1994.

Housing units completed or under construction (1994 – March 2008)

Province	Number of houses	Provincial distribution	Provincial distribution of children
Eastern Cape	300,915	12%	16%
Free State	173,732	7%	6%
Gauteng	683,343	27%	16%
KwaZulu-Natal	424,569	17%	22%
Limpopo	199,782	8%	14%
Mpumalanga	186,531	7%	8%
North West	248,306	10%	7%
Northern Cape	57,831	2%	2%
Western Cape	293,053	11%	9%
SOUTH AFRICA	2,568,062	100%	100%

- Source
- Department of Housing, personal communication, September 2008
 - (Data were accompanied by the following note: “Housing delivery in the first five years of democracy varied greatly from year to year and from province to province as different systems of reporting and monitoring had to be unified. It is also important to note that no government elsewhere in the world provides free houses.”)

The General Household Survey shows persistent racial inequalities. Ninety-eight percent of White children live in formal housing, compared with only 66% of African children.

Housing provides the context for family life. In the context of adult mobility and migrant labour many children live apart from their biological parents. Around a quarter of all children in South Africa live apart from their mothers. It is possible that increased delivery and the prioritisation of women in the urban housing process would enable more children to live with one or both parents.

Technical notes

South Africa’s housing policy has no clear or consistent definition of adequate housing since ‘adequate’ includes a range of attributes. Some of these are very technical, for instance minimum standards relating to the quality and size of the dwelling, type of wall and roof materials, provision of services, etc. There are also qualitative descriptors of ‘adequate’ housing, which refer to things like “reasonable living space and privacy” (RDP ¹) as well as “habitability, accessibility, location and cultural adequacy” (National Housing Code ²). However, the main attribute used to determine the housing backlog is the type of dwelling.

The GHS instructs the fieldworker to record dwelling type for the main dwelling as well as any other dwelling that belongs to the household but is situated elsewhere. Only the main dwelling type is used in this indicator.

Strengths and limitations of the data

The data are derived from the General Household Survey ³, a multi-purpose annual survey conducted by the national statistical agency, Statistics South Africa, to collect information on a range of topics from households in the country’s nine provinces. The survey uses a sample of 30,000 households. These are drawn from Census enumeration areas using multi-stage stratified sampling and probability proportional to size principles. The resulting estimates should be representative of all households in South Africa.

The GHS sample consists of households and does not cover other collective institutionalised living-quarters such as boarding schools, orphanages, students’ hostels, old age homes, hospitals, prisons, military

barracks and workers' hostels. These exclusions should not have a noticeable impact on the findings in respect of children.

Changes in sample frame and stratification

The current master sample was used for the first time in 2004, meaning that, for longitudinal analysis, 2002 and 2003 may not be easily comparable with later years as they are based on a different sampling frame. From 2006, the sample was stratified first by province and then by district council. Prior to 2006, the sample was stratified by province and then by urban and rural area. The change in stratification could affect the interpretation of results generated by these surveys when they are compared over time.

Provincial boundary changes

Provincial boundary changes occurred between 2002 and 2007, and slightly affect the provincial populations. Comparisons on provincial level should therefore be treated with some caution. The sample and reporting are based on the old provincial boundaries as defined in 2001 and do not represent the new boundaries as defined in December 2005.

Weights

Person and household weights are provided by Statistics South Africa and are applied in Children Count – Abantwana Babalulekile analyses to give estimates at the provincial and national levels. Survey data are prone to sampling and reporting error. Some of the errors are difficult to estimate, while others can be identified. One way of checking for errors is by comparing the survey results with trusted estimates from elsewhere. Such a comparison can give an estimate of the robustness of the survey estimates. For this project, GHS data were compared with estimates from the Statistics South Africa's mid-year estimates, as well as the Actuarial Society of South Africa's ASSA2003 AIDS and Demographic model.

Analyses of the seven surveys from 2002 to 2008 suggest that over- and under-estimation may have occurred in the weighting process:

- When comparing the weighted 2002 data with the ASSA2003 AIDS and Demographic model estimates, it seems that the number of children aged 0 – 9 years was under-estimated in the GHS, while the number of children aged 10 – 19 was over-estimated. The pattern is consistent for both sexes. The number of very young males aged 0 – 4 years appears to be under-estimated by 15%. Girls in this age group have been under-estimated by 15.8%. Males in the 10 – 14-year age group appear to be over-estimated by 5.7%.
- Similarly in 2003, there was considerable under-estimation of the youngest age group (0 – 9 years) and over-estimation of the older age group (10 – 19 years). The pattern is consistent for both sexes. The results also show that the over-estimation of males (9%) in the 10 – 19-year age group is more than double the over-estimation for females in this age range (3.8%).
- In the 2004 results, it seems that the number of children aged 7 – 12 years was over-estimated by 6%, as well as the number of persons aged 13 – 22 years. The number of very young children appeared to have been under-estimated. The patterns of over- and under-estimation appear to differ across population groups. For example, the number of White children appears to be over-estimated by 14%, while the number of Coloured persons within the 13 – 22-year age group appears to be 9% too low.
- In 2005, the GHS weights seem to have produced an over-estimate of the number of males within each five-year age group. The extent of the overestimation is particularly severe for the 10 – 14-year age group. In contrast, the weights produce an under-estimate of the number of girls – the error seems greatest in respect of the younger age groups. These patterns result in male-to-female ratios of 1.06, 1.13, 1.10 and 1.09 respectively for the four age groups covering children (ie 0 – 4, 5 – 9, 10 – 14 and 15 – 19 years).
- The 2006 weighting process yielded the same results as in 2005. The one exception is that the under-estimation of females is greatest in the 5 – 9 and 15 – 19-year age groups. This results in male-to-female ratios of 1.03, 1.10, 1.11 and 1.12 respectively for the four age groups covering children.
- The 2007 weighting process produced an over-estimation for boys and an under-estimation for girls. The under-estimation of females is in the range of 3 – 5% while the over-estimation is in the range of 1 – 7%. This results in male-to-female ratios of 1.07, 1.06, 1.08 and 1.08 respectively for the four age groups covering children.

- Overall, assuming the ASSA2003 Aids and Demographic model to be the 'gold standard', it appears that the GHS2008 over-estimates both male and female populations under the age of 19 years, except for 0 – 4- year-old females. The extent of over-estimation for boys is in the range 0 – 7%. It is particularly severe for boys aged 10 – 14 years. Over-estimation is in the range of 2 – 5% for girls aged five years and above. For girls aged 0 – 4 years, the ASSA2003 model suggests that these may have been underestimated by about 1%. The GHS2008 suggests a sex ratio of 1.03 for children aged 0 – 4 years, which is higher than that of the ASSA model and Statistics South Africa's mid-year estimates.

The apparent discrepancies in the seven years of data may slightly affect the accuracy of the Children Count – Abantwana Babalulekile estimates. Since 2005 the male and female patterns vary in respect of a particular characteristic, which means that the total estimate for this characteristic will be somewhat slanted toward the male pattern. A similar slanting will occur where the pattern for 10 – 14-year-olds, for example, differs from that of other age groups. Furthermore, there are likely to be different patterns across population groups.

Disaggregation

Statistics South Africa suggests caution when attempting to interpret data generated at low level disaggregation. The population estimates are benchmarked at the national level in terms of age, sex and population group while at provincial level, benchmarking is by population group only. This could mean that estimates derived from any further disaggregation of the provincial data below the population group may not be robust enough.

Reporting error

Error may be present due to the methodology used, ie the questionnaire is administered to only one respondent in the household who is expected to provide information about all other members of the household. Not all respondents will have accurate information about all children in the household. In instances where the respondent did not or could not provide an answer, this was recorded as "unspecified" (no response) or "don't know" (the respondent stated that they didn't know the answer).

References and related links

¹ Office of the President (1994) Reconstruction and Development Programme White Paper. Pretoria: Government Printer.

² Department of Housing (2000) Housing Code. Viewed 9 March 2009: <http://www.housing.gov.za/Content/The%20Housing%20Code/Index.htm>

³ Statistics South Africa (2003-2009). General Household Survey 2002-2008 Metadata. Cape Town, Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.

Hall K (2005) Accommodating the poor? A review of the Housing Subsidy Scheme and its implications for children. In: Leatt A & Rosa S (eds) Towards a Means to Live: Targeted poverty alleviation to make children's rights real. Cape Town: Children's Institute, University of Cape Town.



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