

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines the responses to the three education questions contained in South Africa's 1996 population census. It focuses, in particular, on what the census tells us about the links between education and the characteristics of households and individuals.

Children aged 5-15 years:

- In October 1996, there were 8,1 million children aged 7-15 years. Of these 11% were not attending school.
- The proportions of girls and boys aged 7-15 who were attending school were very similar.
- Indian children tended to start school at an earlier age than children of other population groups, while African children tended to start at an older age than others.
- For every year of age between six and 15 years, a higher proportion of urban than rural children were attending school.

Young people between the ages of 16 and 25 years:

- Of youth aged 16-25 years, 6% had no formal schooling and 13% had not completed primary schooling, while 3% had achieved a qualification higher than matric. The educational achievements of young women and men were very similar.
- More than half of all youth between the ages of 16 and 20 years were still studying at the time of the 1996 population census.

Learners and students who had given birth:

- In every age group, girls and women who had given birth were less likely to be studying than those who had not given birth. For example, among all girls aged 12-15, 2% had given birth. Of this group, 56% were still studying, and 44% were not studying in 1996. Among the group who had not given birth, as many as 95% were still studying.
- Close on half (46%) of women students aged 26 years or more who had given birth to at least one child were studying part-time.

Adults aged 26 years or more:

- Altogether, 23% of South Africans aged 26 years or more had not attended school.
- The percentage of women with no formal schooling (at 25%) was higher than that of men (at 20%).
- Close on a third (31%) of African women of this age and 26% of African men had no formal schooling.
- Approximately a third (33%) of women with post-matric qualifications were qualified in the education field, followed by 12% each in arts and in medical sciences. In contrast, 16% of men were qualified in technical fields, followed by 15% in education and 10% in economics and management.

Employment status and education:

- At the time of Census '96, 9,1 million people aged 15 to 65 years indicated that they were employed. Employment status differed by gender and urban-rural place of residence. This report focuses on employment among those aged 26 and above.
- In October 1996, 61% of men aged 26 years or more were employed, compared to 33% of women.
- In terms of location, 54% of urban people of this age and 32% of rural people were employed.
- Employed women tended to be slightly better educated than employed men.
- Close on a fifth of employed African people aged 26 years or more had no formal schooling, compared to 2% or less of the white and Indian groups.
- In urban areas, only 8% of employed people aged 26 years or more had no formal schooling, compared to over a quarter of employed rural people.

- Unemployed people tended to have lower qualifications than employed people. In each population group, the largest proportion of unemployed people aged 26 years and above consisted of those who had completed primary, but not secondary schooling. However, the remaining African and coloured employed people clustered at lower levels of education, while white and Indian employed people clustered at higher levels.
- Close on a third (31%) of rural unemployed people aged 26 years or more had no formal schooling, compared to 12% of unemployed people in urban areas.
- People who were not economically active tended to be less educated than both employed and unemployed people.
- In October 1996, close on half (47%) of African people aged 26 years or more who were not economically active, and more than half (53%) of rural people had no formal education in October 1996.

Earning and education:

- The 1996 population census confirmed that income tends to increase with education. However, at each level of education, a higher percentage of employed women than employed men had an income of R500 or less per month.
- Among employed people with no formal schooling, a higher proportion of coloured (60%) than African (53%) had a monthly income of R500 or less.
- The disparities in earnings between urban and rural people with similar educational levels are starker than the differences in respect of gender or population group.

Educational characteristics of non-South African citizens:

- About a quarter of non-South Africans recorded in the 1996 population census as having been born elsewhere in Africa had no formal education. A further 63% had less than a matric equivalent.
- Over a third (35%) of non-South Africans born in Europe and close on half (49%) of those born in the Americas had been educated beyond matric.
- Under a fifth of non-South Africans aged 26 years and above were studying at the time of the 1996 population census. Countries in Africa accounted for over half of the recorded students.

Education of household head and access to services:

- In October 1996, 29% of the population were living in households whose head had no formal schooling, compared to only 7% living in households with heads with more than a matric qualification.
- Close on two-thirds (64%) of people living in households headed by people with no schooling were in households containing six or more persons. In general, the lower the level of education of the household head, the larger the size of the household.
- In both urban and rural areas, the likelihood that a household had access to piped water and sanitation facilities, used electricity for cooking and lighting, and had refuse removed by the local authority, increased with increases in the level of education of the household head.
- In respect of every facility, households headed by women tended to have access to fewer facilities than those headed by men, irrespective of the level of education of the head.
- In respect of every facility, households situated in rural areas tended to have access to fewer facilities than those situated in urban areas, again irrespective of the level of education of the head. For every facility investigated, the urban-rural differences are more marked than those between male- and female-headed households.