

# Press Release



**South African  
Institute of  
Race Relations**

*South Africa's Leading Research and Policy Organisation*

**For immediate release**

**8 February 2009**

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## **New local government report reveals challenges**

**One of the largest and most comprehensive statistical breakdowns of local government performance to date was released by the South African Institute of Race Relations this week.**

The report, published in *Fast Facts*, assessed 80 indicators from each of 52 metropolitan and district municipalities. These include indicators on demographics, education, employment, housing, access to basic services, transport, social security, health, and crime. The report provides a detailed insight into local government performance. It also allows for detailed comparisons between municipalities. The Institute has released the report to all members of Parliament, all members of provincial legislatures, and councillors in South Africa's eight largest urban municipalities. The report has also been released to the media.

Ms Nthamaga Kgafela, a researcher at the Institute who authored the report, said "This report demonstrates that the challenges facing local government are very diverse. Certain municipalities, for example, perform considerably better on certain indicators than others. The report also challenges certain conceptions of what the real problems facing local government are. For example, the data in the report suggests that municipalities with better income levels and employment indicators have higher levels of informal housing."

Ms Kgafela also said that the report's findings suggested that, "It will not be possible to solve the problems of local government through central policy planning."

Findings on housing showed that:

- Municipalities with the highest percentages of people living in informal housing recorded relatively low poverty rates. For example, the Bojanala Platinum District Municipality, around Sun City in North West, had a poverty rate of 48% while 33% of households in that municipality lived in informal houses. The Bophirima (Dr Ruth Segomitsi) District Municipality, which borders Botswana, had a much higher poverty rate at 66% but an informal housing rate of only 9%. The City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality had a significantly lower poverty rate of 28% but recorded 27% of people living in informal housing. On this point Ms Kgafela said, "Informal housing is often associated with poverty. However there is now some evidence to suggest that more informal housing shows that people are moving from rural areas to urban areas in response to the

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economic opportunities in urban areas, and the lack thereof in rural areas.”

Selected data on education showed that:

- Matric pass rates vary significantly between municipalities, even within the same province.
- The lowest matric pass rate (39%) was in the Umkhanyakude District Municipality, at St Lucia in KwaZulu-Natal.
- The highest pass rate (89%) was in the Namakwa District Municipality in the Northern Cape.

Municipalities with high pass rates generally showed lower poverty rates. The poverty rate in Namakwa was only 34%, whereas the pass rate was 89%. This occasional correlation is shown in other cases too. For example, Alfred Nzo District Municipality, bordering Lesotho and KwaZulu-Natal in the Eastern Cape, has a poverty rate of 76%, while only 40% of matric students passed. In Chris Hani District Municipality, in central Eastern Cape, 69% of households live in poverty while 47% of matric students passed. In the Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality the poverty rate was lower, at 41%, and the matric pass rate was 67%.

Selected data on poverty showed that:

- Poverty rates vary significantly across the municipalities, both nationally and within provinces.
- In the Eastern Cape the poverty rate in Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality at Port Elizabeth was 41%, while in the Alfred Nzo District Municipality, bordering Lesotho and KwaZulu-Natal, the poverty rate was 76%.
- Alfred Nzo District Municipality recorded the highest poverty rate across all the municipalities.
- The lowest poverty rate was 23% in both the West Coast and the Cape Winelands, in the Western Cape.

Selected data on crime showed that high violent crime rates are not necessarily linked to high poverty levels:

- Eastern Cape municipalities had the highest murder rate (54 murders per 100 000 of the population) and had a poverty rate of 62%.
- Limpopo municipalities had the lowest murder rate (13.7) but also had a poverty rate of 62%.
- The Western Cape’s municipalities also had a high murder rate (51) but had a low poverty rate, at 26.5%.

Selected data on service delivery showed that:

- Municipalities in Gauteng showed high levels of access to basic services. In the City of

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Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality only 4% of households did not have access to water, 8% had no access to electricity, and 5% had no access to sanitation.

- In the Eastern Cape there were significant variations in access to services: Alfred Nzo District Municipality showed that 54% of people in the area had no access to water, 58% had no access to electricity and 63% had no access to sanitation. However, in Cacadu District Municipality, which includes Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape, only 9% of households had no access to water, 17% had no access to electricity, and 19% had no access to sanitation.
- Ms Kgafela said “The provision of services was significantly better in more developed areas, while rural municipalities showed more people without access to basic services.”

Selected data on social security showed the following:

- Chris Hani District Municipality had the highest proportion of households receiving child support grants, at 26%. City of Cape Town Metropolitan Municipality recorded the lowest number of households receiving child support grants, at 7%.
- There were significantly more child support grants being received than old age pensions. For example, in the City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, 8% of households received child support grants, while only 3% received old age pensions.
- More social grants were given in areas with higher poverty ratings. Alfred Nzo District Municipality, which had a poverty rate of 76%, had 23% of households receiving child support grants, and 8% receiving old age pensions. On the other hand in Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality 10% of households received child support grants and 4% received old age pensions.

Selected data on health showed the following:

- HIV prevalence was the highest in eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality at Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, where 42% of pregnant women tested positive for HIV. Cacadu District Municipality, in the Eastern Cape, recorded the lowest prevalence, at 15%.
- Cacadu District Municipality also showed one of the highest TB cure rates, at 74%. West Rand District Municipality, in Gauteng, recorded the highest TB cure rate of 76%. The lowest TB cure rate of 37% was recorded in Sisonke District Municipality, bordering Lesotho in KwaZulu-Natal.