

Press Release

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South African Institute of Race Relations
The power of ideas

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IRR launches a new local government index ahead of polls

The IRR has launched a new comfort and deprivation index that can be used to track and compare the relative standards of living within local authorities in South Africa. The index will allow commentators, journalists, politicians, and ordinary citizens to compare the relative performance of all district and metropolitan municipalities in South Africa.

The comfort index used indicators including the ownership of a refrigerator and the use of electricity of lighting to gauge the relative comfort levels of living within a particular local authority. The deprivation index used indicators such as bucket toilets and the absence of piped water to gauge the levels of deprivation within a municipality.

IRR deputy head of research, Thuthukani Ndebele, said that, “as a rule the more urban municipalities and those in the Western Cape and Gauteng outperformed the more rural municipalities. Those in areas with strong traditional leadership influences often performed the worst”.

The author of the index and accompanying report, Gabriela Mackay, said, “The index showed the benefits of urbanization in allowing people to improve their living standards. South Africa needs more rapid levels of urbanization matched with the economic growth rate to support vastly increased job creation. The combination of urbanization and growth offers the best chance of vastly improving the living standards of poor people in South Africa.”

Watch Gabriela Mackay [here](#).

Ends.
