



SALGA

South African Local Government Association

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Local Government Briefs are monthly electronic updates for municipalities on critical areas of law, policy, facts and data affecting the sector.

2011 Census Results: implications for municipalities

1. PURPOSE

This brief highlights 2011 census findings regarding the delivery of basic services in the country. It further suggests various ways that census data could be used for by municipalities.

2. BACKGROUND

A population census gives a picture of a country at a particular moment in time. Census provides details about how many people live in the country, their gender, age, living conditions, access to basic services etc. it is the only source for community level data on issues such as migration patterns, economy, education, persons with disabilities, employment status, fertility, mortality all of which are critical for planning.

South Africa's census is conducted by Statistics South Africa (Stats-SA) as mandated by the Statistics Act (Act No.6 of 1999). Census is conducted every ten years in line with international standards. The country conducted its first democratic census in 1996 followed by another one in 2001. The third census was conducted in 2011 and results were released at the end of October 2012.

3. DISCUSSION

The national statistics were made public on 30 October 2012. The department then embarked on provincial launches to present data that is disaggregated at provincial level. More detailed statistics disaggregated at municipal level will be made available in March 2013. The findings of the 2011 census, compared with the 1996 and 2001 Census respectively and 2007 Community Survey (CS) show an upward trend regarding the delivery of basic services to communities. This achievement is worth celebrating. In addition, municipalities can use the statistics as they continue to deliver on their mandates.

3.1 Basic Services

Water

There proportion of households having access to piped water is high in all provinces. The highest proportion of those with piped water inside the dwelling or yard is in Gauteng with 89,4%, followed by Free State with 89,1% and Western Cape with 88,4%. The proportion of households that reported to have no access to piped water is highest in the Eastern Cape with 22,2% followed by KwaZulu-Natal with 14,1% and Limpopo 14,0%.

Toilet Facilities

The proportion of households that have flush toilets connected to the sewerage system is constantly increasing to 57% in Census 2011 from 50% and 55% in both Census 2001 and Community Survey 2007. The proportion of households using pit toilet with ventilation (VIP) increased. The bucket system has declined from 3,9% in 2001 and 2,2% in 2007 Community Survey to 2,1% in 2011. Also the households without toilets had declined significantly from 13,3% in 2001 to 5,2% in 2011.

Energy

The proportion of households using electricity for lighting increased while those using candles and paraffin have decreased. The highest proportion was recorded in the Western Cape with 93,4% and the lowest was recorded in the Eastern Cape with 75%. In addition, the proportion of households using energy for cooking and heating has increased.

Refuse Removal

The proportion of households whose refuse is removed by local authority weekly increased from 52, 1% in 1996 to 62,1% in 2011. While that for those whose refuse was removed less often decreased from 2, 2 in 2001 to 1, 5% in 2011

While municipalities continue to demonstrate successes regarding the delivery of basic services, the developmental role assigned to local government by the White Paper on Local Government, 1998 requires municipalities to deliver on the developmental aspirations. To orientate itself to the developmental outcomes, municipalities are required to structure and manage their administration, planning and budgeting processes efficiently. It is in this regard that accurate and reliable information is required. This information can help municipalities to make better decisions about the whole range of their activities including the provision of utilities, transport, health care requirements and education facilities.

3.2 Implications for municipalities

Municipalities can use the forthcoming detailed census data to estimate how many people needing services like school places and social care and decide the location of those schemes. Similarly travel-to-work data can help to understand pressures on roads and public transport, while housing vacancy rates and overcrowding could shape where new homes are built. The 2011 census also has far more information than previous versions on second home owners and respondents' intentions to stay in the country which helps municipalities recalculate the costs of these temporary residents.

One of the strengths of the census is the provision of detailed population figures at local level on subjects like age, gender, household structures, and disability etc. Figures on these subjects can be used by the municipality to see whether its interventions are working or whether new ones are needed.

Municipalities can further use census data to improve their local economies. Investors can use the census to look at areas where it could invest money. For example, an assessment could be done on which areas of the county do not have specific economic opportunity and deciding whether to invest in it. The municipality can see the gaps and start to understand the characteristics of the communities affected.

Municipalities have plenty of data already but they still need census data because census interviews far more people than a municipality could ever afford to survey. This means it can provide much more accurate information about smaller groups within the population. In addition, it is the quality assurance process and scale, which cannot be done on a local basis that makes census data unique