

FACT SHEET ON “NEETS”

(Persons who are not in employment, education
or training)

An analysis of the 2011 South African census

2013

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BACKGROUND

“NEETs” refers to young people who are not employed and who are not in education or training. Many countries world-wide are currently using information about NEETs to monitor the labour market and the social dynamics of young people. It is generally acknowledged, both nationally as well as internationally, that NEETs constitute one of the greatest threats to social stability. Consequently, the monitoring of NEET trends and strong interventions to address the challenge of NEETs are key to promoting peace and stability in a society. In addition, information about NEETs has been known to strengthen the position of young people on the political agenda (Eurofound, 2012)¹.

According to Cloete and Butler-Adam (2012)², youth unemployment is both a demand-side, as well as a supply-side problem in South Africa. It is a demand-side problem since the number of jobs created in the economy is too small to absorb thousands of young school-leavers searching for jobs. On the other hand, youth unemployment is a supply-side problem, since many young South Africans lack the appropriate skills, work-related capabilities and higher education qualifications required for a high-skills economy.

This fact sheet provides a brief analysis of NEETs in South Africa, based on the findings of the 2011 South African Census.

METHODOLOGY

The data for this report has been obtained from the Census Supercross programme available from Statistics South Africa. The unit of analysis for the investigation is persons aged 15 to 24³.

¹Eurofound (2012). *NEETs – Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe*. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg

²Cloete, N and Butler-Adam, J (2012). *Match policy with reality and young people stand a chance*. Mail and Guardian, 10 Aug 2012.

³This age group has been selected to facilitate international comparability of findings and is in line with reporting of NEETs by Statistics South Africa Quarterly Labour Force Survey.

For the purpose of this report, “persons who are not employed” include persons who:

- a) were not employed in the reference week of the census survey and;
- b) actively looked for work or tried to start a business in the four weeks preceding the survey interview and;
- c) were available for work, i.e. would have been able to start work or a business in the reference week or;
- d) had not actively looked for work in the past four weeks but had a job or business to start at a definite date in the future and were available⁴.

The definition of “persons who are not employed” as described above, excludes persons who were not looking for work (that is, discouraged work-seekers) or those who were not available to work.

Persons who are “not in education or training” refer to people who are not attending an educational institution. The percentage of NEETs (the NEET rate) has been calculated by dividing the number of persons aged 15-24 years who are NEET, by the total 15-24 year old population in the country.

FINDINGS

Table 1: Number and percentage of NEETs by census year

Year	Total number of persons aged 15-24 in thousands (000’)	Number of persons who are NEET in thousands (000’)	NEET rate
1996	8 166	2 049	25.1%
2001	9 271	3 155	34.0%
2011	10 378	3 199	30.8%

Source: Statistics SA, Census 2011 Supercross, extracted 09 April 2013 (calculation by DHET)

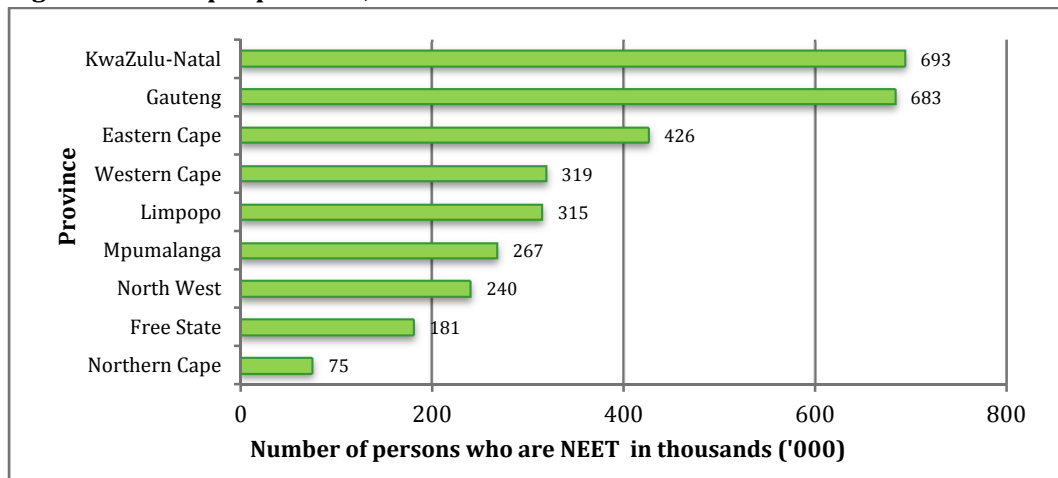
In 2011, close to 3.2 million persons in South Africa, aged 15 to 24 years old were not employed and were not in education and training. This figure comprises almost one-third (31%) of young persons in South Africa. Table 1 shows that the total number of NEETs increased from about 2.0 million in 1996 to almost 3.2 million in 2011. While there has not been a significant change in the number of NEETs between the 2001 and 2011 census years

⁴Definition obtained from 2013 Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Statistics South Africa.

(with a difference in the number of NEETs between 2001 and 2011 being approximately 44 000), the latest Quarterly Labour Force Survey shows that there are currently 3.5 million NEETs in South Africa (Quarter 1:2013)⁵.

South Africa's NEET population is significantly higher than that of many other countries. For instance, the proportion of NEETs in Brazil is about 19%, whilst the average in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries is about 16%⁶.

Figure 1: NEETs per province, 2011



Source: Statistics SA, Census 2011 Supercross, extracted 09 April 2013 (calculation by DHET)

Figure 1 shows that in 2011, KwaZulu-Natal had the highest number of NEETs (693 000), followed closely by Gauteng province with 683 000 NEETs. These figures suggest the need for high-level interventions to mitigate the deleterious effects of youth marginalisation in these two provinces.

Although Northern Cape had the lowest number of NEETs in relation to other provinces, Table 2 below indicates that over one-third of 15 to 24 year olds in the Northern Cape (35.4%) were NEET in 2011. Similarly, although North-West province had a relatively lower number of NEETs, it had the highest proportion of NEETs relative to other provinces (at 36.4%). Surprisingly, Limpopo had the lowest proportion of NEETs relative to other provinces (at 26.8%).

⁵ Statistics South Africa (2013). *Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Quarter 1 2013*, Statistics South Africa.

⁶ OECD (2013), *Education at a Glance 2013: OECD Indicators*, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2013-en>

Table 2: NEETs per province, 2011

Province	Total number of persons aged 15-24 in Thousands(000')	Number of persons who are NEET in Thousands (000')	NEET Rate
Eastern Cape	1 349	426	31.6%
Free State	545	181	33.2%
Gauteng	2 299	683	29.7%
KwaZulu-Natal	2 222	693	31.2%
Limpopo	1 175	315	26.8%
Mpumalanga	852	267	31.3%
North-West	660	240	36.4%
Northern Cape	212	75	35.4%
Western Cape	1 064	319	30.0%
Total	10 378	3 199	30.8%

Source: Statistics SA, Census 2011 Supercross, extracted 09 April 2013(calculation by DHET)

Table 3: NEETs by highest level of education attainment

Highest level of education attainment	1996 in Thousands(000')	2001 in Thousands(000')	2011 in Thousands(000')
No schooling	290	380	110
Primary or less	563	661	414
Secondary education less than Grade 12	390	592	1482
Grade 12	339	660	1102
Grade 12 with Certificate/Diploma	415	853	74
Degree ⁷	2	9	11
Other and Unspecified	50	0	6
Total	2 049	3 155	3 199

Source: Statistics SA, Census 2011 Supercross, extracted 09 April 2013(calculation by DHET)

As indicated in Table 3, in 2011, two groups of persons aged 15 to 24 comprise a high proportion of NEETs: (a) those with a matric certificate as their highest level of qualification, and (b) those who have secondary education which is less than Grade 12 as their highest level of qualification. It is of grave concern that over 1 million persons, who have Grade 12 as their highest level of qualification, were NEETs in 2011.

The number of persons aged 15 to 24 who have Grade 12 as their highest level of education attainment and who are NEETs has increased significantly over the years – from 339 000 in 1996 to over 1 million in 2011.

Table 3 also shows that 11 000 persons who had a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education, were NEETs in 2011. This figure too, has increased significantly over the years.

⁷Degree includes the following: persons who have completed a Bachelor's Degree, and/or a post-graduate Diploma; and/or an Honour's degree; and/or a Higher Degree (Masters/PhD).

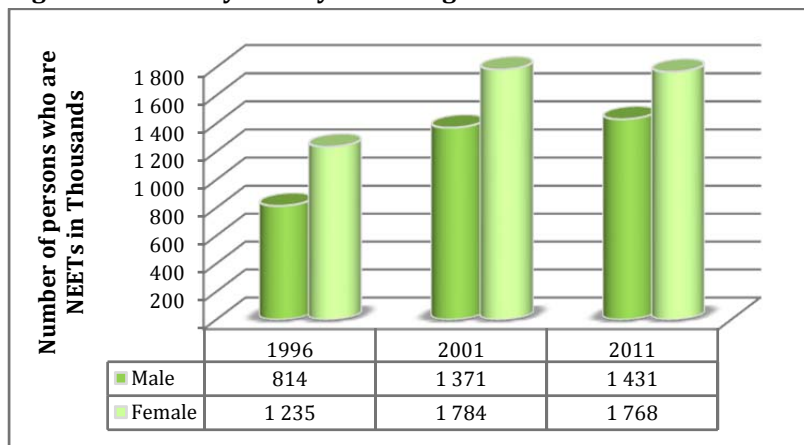
Table 4: NEETs by highest level of education attainment by single ages, 2011

Education level	Age										Total
	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
No schooling	4 885	5 592	6 702	8 193	10 425	12 710	14 786	15 075	15 930	15 339	109 637
Primary or less	23 228	28 976	35 029	38 013	42 749	47 177	50 436	47 807	51 054	49 267	413 736
Secondary education less than Grade 12	25 055	43 105	70 430	105 556	147 099	191 275	223 171	224 849	230 216	220 837	1 481 593
Grade 12	-	-	9 802	52 492	115 576	163 710	191 424	193 857	191 182	184 074	1 102 117
Grade 12 with certificate/ Diploma	-	-	-	1 267	3 484	7 444	11 757	15 079	17 042	17 496	73 569
Degree ⁸	-	-	-	-	-	298	902	2 422	3 486	4 129	11 273
Other and unspecified	119	169	225	332	564	820	987	1 050	1 078	1 099	6 443
Total	53 287	77 842	122 188	205 853	319 897	423 434	493 463	500 139	509 988	492 241	3 198 332

Source: Statistics SA, Census 2011 Supercross, extracted 09 April 2013(calculation by DHET)

Table 4 above shows that NEETs are, in the main, aged from 20 to 24 years. It is also evident from Table 4 that school-dropout begins to increase sharply when young people reach the age of 17.

Figure 2: NEETs by trend years and gender



Source: Statistics SA, Census 2011 Supercross, extracted 09 July 2013(calculation by DHET)

In 2011, there were close to 1.8 million female NEETs as compared to 1.4 million male NEETs in South Africa. Figure 2 shows that the number of female NEETs far exceeded the number of male NEETs significantly over all three census years.

⁸Degree includes the following: persons who have completed a Bachelor’s Degree and/or a post-graduate Diploma; and/or an Honour’s degree; and/or a Higher Degree (Masters/PhD).

CONCLUSION

The South African government has embarked on a number of initiatives to reduce the number of young people who are NEET. Improving young people's access to higher education and vocational education and training is one such strategy. To this end, the government's National Development Plan targets to increase access to Further Education and Training (FET) colleges to 1.25 million students by the year 2030, and to Higher Education Institutions, to 1.6 million by 2030. The Plan also aims to provide second chance opportunities to young people to complete Grade 12 by offering an adult matric qualification reaching 1 million adults by 2030.

The Department of Higher Education and Training has placed great emphasis on channeling youth towards artisanship, and aims to produce at least 10 000 artisans per annum by 2014 as part of its contribution towards skills panning. This initiative will contribute to the reduction in the number of NEETs in South Africa.

Furthermore, the Youth Employment Accord commits itself to connect young people to employment opportunities through job placements. In terms of the Accord, all government departments are required to employ interns, the number of which equates to 5% of the total number of their employees. In addition, state-owned enterprises are expected to expand placement opportunities for FET College and University students who need work experience as part of completing their studies. The Youth Employment Accord also calls for Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and other institutions to play a stronger role in addressing the challenges faced by young people in sector and workplace training programmes.

Over and above the strategy to promote the expansion of education and training opportunities to curb the high number of NEETs in South Africa, dedicated programmes of support for youth enterprises and youth co-ops through public agencies such as the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA), and the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA), are planned to be strengthened.

It is evident from this report that youth unemployment is a major national challenge which requires urgent and coordinated responses. The monitoring of NEET rates will provide evidence on whether interventions to improve education, training and work opportunities for young people in South Africa are bearing fruit.