

GATHERING OPINIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

HOME EDUCATION

12 DECEMBER 2023

AN INDEPENDENT SURVEY: MAKING SENSE OF THE STATS
STACEY VAN DER WALT



CONCERNED CITIZEN



HOME EDUCATION SURVEY

- _____
- An Independent Study by Concerned Citizen
- 12 September 2023 - 21 November 2023
- Focus: Home Education
- Written by: Stacey van der Walt
- Gauteng



**Did you know that the South African Bill of Rights,
Chapter 2, Section 16 states that we have Freedom of Expression:**

- (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of expression, which includes—**
- (a) freedom of the press and other media;**
 - (b) freedom to receive or impart information or ideas;**
 - (c) freedom of artistic creativity; and**
 - (d) academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.**

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Special thanks to...

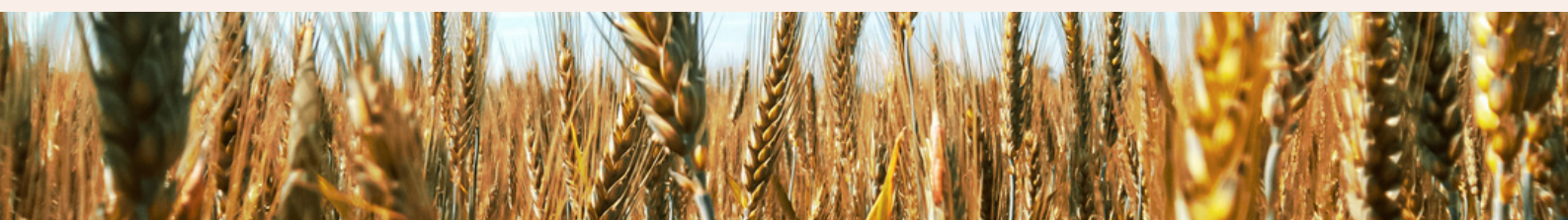
Thanks to each and every individual who took the time to share the Home Education Survey Link on which this study was based! Thanks to the admin of various groups for allowing the mentioned link to be shared on your platforms. Thanks to every individual who engaged in brainstorming sessions regarding this subject matter with me. Thanks to researcher-turned-homeschool-mom, Nicci Malleon for helping me select questions and for making suggestions regarding how to go about asking these.

To all the proofreaders who double (and sometimes triple check) my work. Thank you for providing me with advice and constructive criticism. Your input has been invaluable!

Thanks to each and every home educating parent who is still putting up a fight, and thanks to their spouses and children who often have to make do with less attention than they are used to. We know that this year has been tough on all of you, and we are sorry about that. May you be blessed for all that you have sacrificed!

Stacey van der Walt

Blessed be the LORD, my Rock and my great strength, Who trains my hands for war And my fingers for battle; Psalm 144:1





HOME EDUCATION *Survey*

Introduction

Home educating can be empowering. It involves a parent taking ownership of his or her children's educational journey as opposed to outsourcing such responsibilities. There are many methods and curricula that a family can make use of to homeschool. The most popular programs tend to have one characteristic in common...they liberate families and yet the BELA Bill's proposed amendments are anything but liberating. There seems to be a major mismatch between the methodologies and philosophies we, as homeschoolers, adhere to and the ways in which the BELA Bill proposes we measure to prove success. Can one use a ruler to determine how much something weighs? Or a thermometer to determine how long a piece of thread is? Can one use assessments to measure what impact the Child-led learning approach has had on a child? No!

To date, a number of organisations and individuals have written about the home education phenomenon in South Africa and yet very little has been published on who the home education sector consists of. The reason for this may be linked to the fact that many home educating families fear persecution and will therefore not easily share personal information. As matters stand a parent who does not enroll a learner for school, or does not apply to register to home educate may be criminalised and many home educating families do not register for home education because success is not a given!

Based on the oral submissions made during the BELA Bill related public participation process many were of the opinion that most home educating families do not make use of CAPS or CAPS aligned curricula. Unfortunately, for reasons already mentioned, this theory could not be confirmed and yet...if we want to continue to say "nothing about us, without us", surely we need to know who "we" are and have some form of data to base our stance on. A survey was a good way to go about getting some long overdue answers to our question!

CHE conducted a survey on home education in 2014 and numerous individuals did their thesis' on this subject matter. A transcript of a speech made by the Minister of Basic Education, Ms. Angie Motshekga, during the first home education roundtable discussion held at Sol Plaatjie House Pretoria on 28 February 2020, is also available online. In the last mentioned publication the Minister states that due to non compliance regarding the registration process

Where are we now?



12 DECEMBER 2023

Citizens and residents of South Africa have been invited to make written submissions to the National Council of Provinces. In addition to this we may also be granted another opportunity to make oral submissions, however, many feel like all of this is pointless. After all, did we not take a stand and speak up at the BELA Bill Hearings? Were our plights not ignored? So, what is the point? Well, if everyone in history (who have gone through similar trials) did nothing and simply accepted their fate then the world would be in an even worse condition than it is currently in, so I am still going to try!

Concerned Citizen,
Stacey van der Walt

HOME EDUCATION *Survey*

the DBE knows very little about home education numbers and we believe even less about who we, the majority of home educating families, truly are. (See: <https://www.gov.za/news/speeches/minister-angie-motshekga-1st-home-education-roundtable-28-feb-2020>)

Have you ever been asked who you are? Perhaps during a job interview or at a meeting in which you were expected to introduce yourself? Adequately answering such a question requires more than just providing your name. Most will indicate where they are from, what their personal preferences are and which groups they identify with. All of these clues help us formulate an idea of who a certain individual is (or is not). The same is true of this survey. The many questions asked are really asked to give us clarity regarding our main question: Who are we?

Some of the questions asked in the online survey include the following:

- Where are you located?
- How long have you been home educating?
- Have your children ever been in a public or private school?
- How many children do you have?
- What are your children's ages?
- Do you think homeschooling is affordable?
- What influenced your decision to home educate?
- Which educational methods or curricula does your family make use of?

Personal questions regarding religious beliefs and race were asked, however, these were optional.

Stacey van der Walt



HOME EDUCATION *Survey*



The platform we used

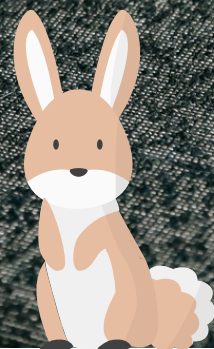
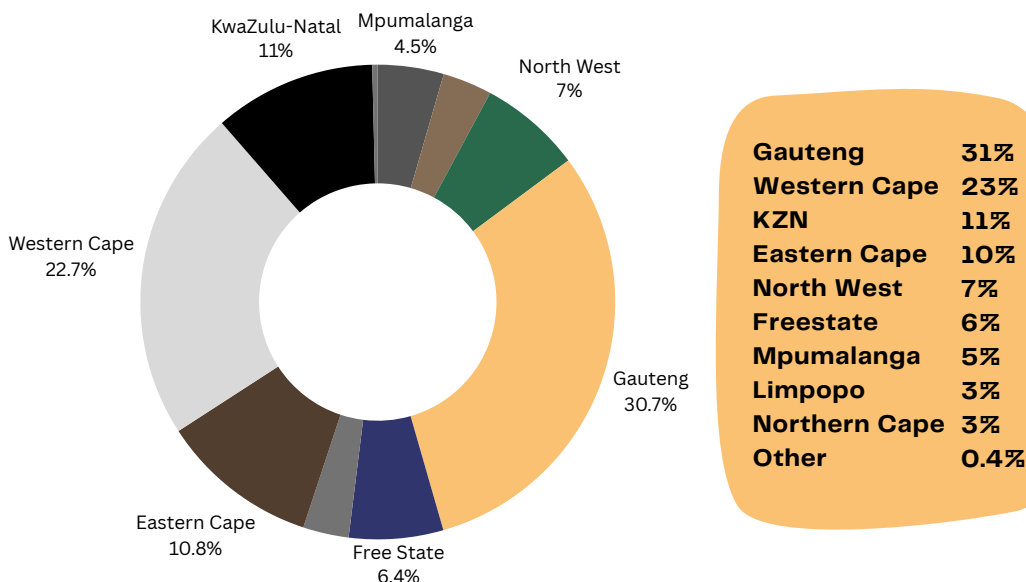
Surveys provide a critical source of data and insights. It is a method of gathering information using relevant questions from a sample of people with the aim of understanding populations as a whole. On a platform, which allowed participants to remain anonymous, we asked one very important question. Home educator...who are you?

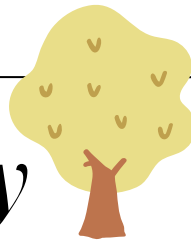
This Home Education Survey covered a period of more than two months (12 September to 21 November 2023). During this time 1605 home educating individuals, from all over South Africa, gave us their input and in so doing, granted us a bit more insight into our question.

The platform we used to conduct the survey on was *Survey Heart*. Because this program only allows a participant to provide his/her opinion once (per device), we could assure that no individual's input would accidentally be recorded more than once. For the same reason this was the only platform we used to collect data from.

Where participants were located

Home educating parents from all provinces contributed to this independent study. 493 of those who filled in our form were from Gauteng, 365 from the Western Cape, 177 from KwaZulu-Natal, 173 from the Eastern Cape, 112 from the North West, 103 from the Freestate, 72 from Mpumalanga, 54 from Limpopo, 50 from the Northern Cape and 6 from elsewhere on the African Continent or World.

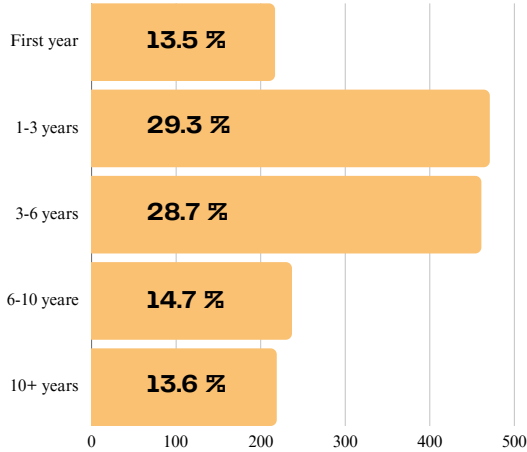




HOME EDUCATION *Survey*

Home education period

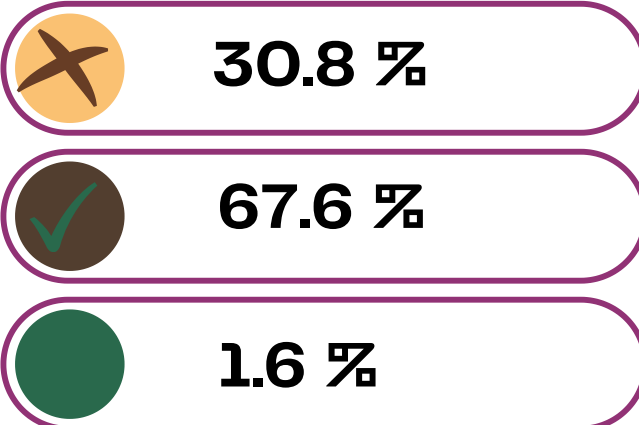
Most participants have been home educating for the last 1-3 years.

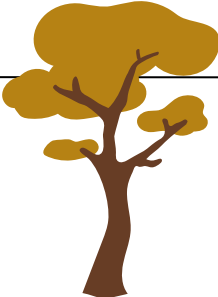


There has most certainly been an exodus of children from the traditional school system. Their parents were introduced to home education during the lockdown period and soon discovered how beneficial and cost effective this alternative could be so they embraced home education. 417 participants have been home educating for between 1-3 years and 217 parents said this was their first homeschooling-year (so 688 of our 1605 participants are relatively new to home education). 461 families have been homeschooling for between 3-6 years, 237 for 6-10 years and 219 for longer than a decade!

Private or public school attendance

The majority (1085) of families have had at least one child in the system before, while 495 have never had one or more of their children attend a public or private institution.

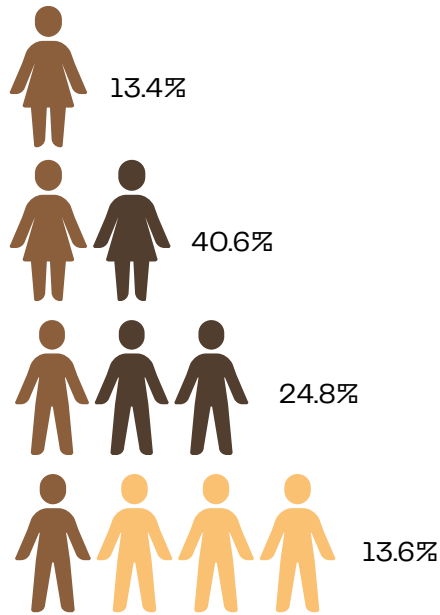




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Children of those who home educate

652 of those who participated in our survey have two children! 216 have 1, 398 participants have 3, 219 have 4 and 110 have more than 4 children.

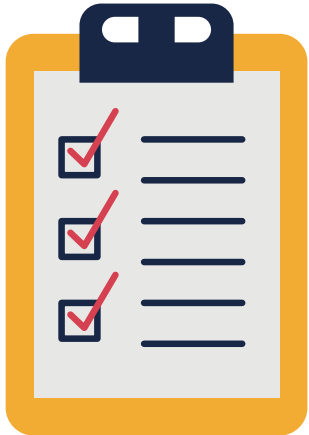


Foundation, Intermediate and Senior Phase

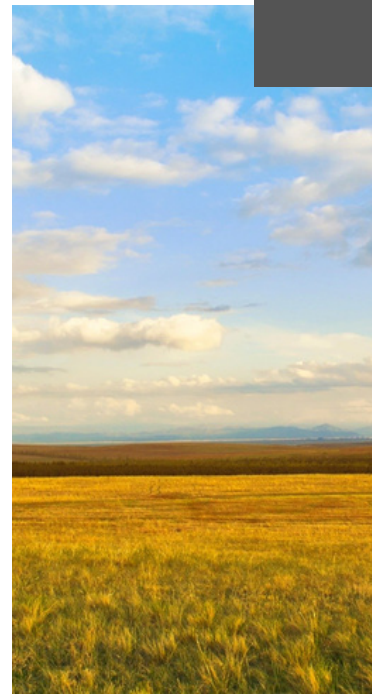
Most of our survey participants indicated that they have at least one child who is in Foundation phase (these children range between 6 and 9 years of age). 751 have kids who are in the Intermediate phase, 523 in the Senior phase and 464 have children who are no longer of compulsory school attending age (but were still being home educated).

Note: Those who submitted information could select more than one category to which the members of their family belonged.

- Foundation Phase: 800**
- Intermediate Phase: 751**
- Senior Phase: 523**
- Other: 464**

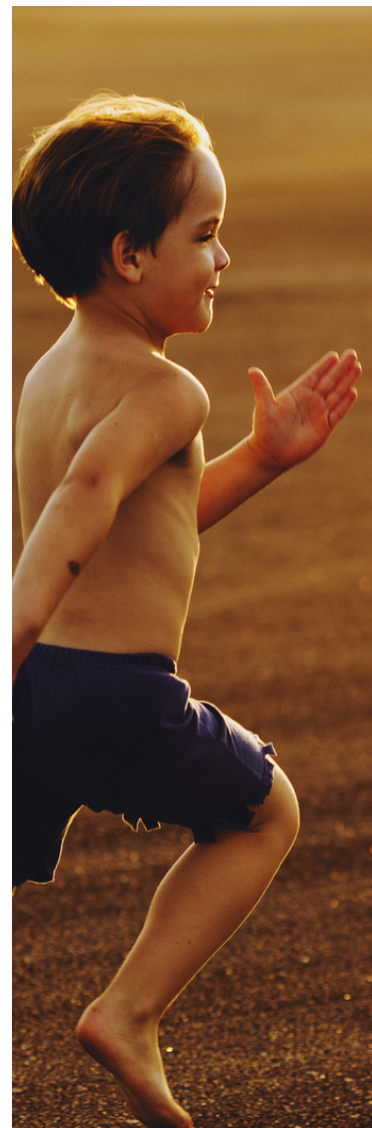


HOME EDUCATION *Survey*



Affordability of home education

Many of those who were in favour of the BELA Bill and who made oral submissions at related hearings were of the opinion that home education is for the elite. 96% of home educating survey participants are of the opinion that home education is not only for the wealthy. It is actually very affordable! In fact, affordability was the top reason behind many parents deciding to home educate instead of exploring other viable options (such as placing their children in private schools).



Top three reasons many home educate

In one section of our Home Education Survey individuals could select a variety of reasons which lead to their decision to eventually home educate their children. The three most selected options were linked to home education being more affordable than other viable options, religion and safety concerns.

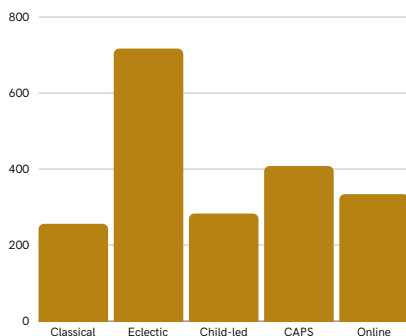
1	Home education is more affordable than private school	775
2	Religious reasons	741
3	Schools are not safe	623

HOME EDUCATION *Survey*



Home education method

Parents may have more than one child and may therefore be making use of more than one curriculum, or they may have one child but may be exploring a variety of options simultaneously (Khan Academy for Math, Under the Home for Geography, The Good and the Beautiful for Language Arts,). For this reason home educating parents were allowed to select more than one option. 717 parents made use of the Eclectic approach, 408 followed a CAPS approach, 334 were dependent on Online/Virtual schools, 283 followed a more laid back approach (Child-led learning) and 256 followed a Classical approach.



717 Eclectic
408 CAPS
334 Online/Virtual
283 Child-led learning
256 Classical

The number of those who selected *Eclectic* as one of (or the only) educational method they made use of was high, and we were not surprised, however, we were taken aback by how many families were making use of CAPS. We analyzed the data that those who selected the CAPS option provided us with. These individuals seem to have been relative new to home education.

Many parents who initially remove their kids from "the system" tend to enroll with one of many home education service providers. These providers usually provide families with CAPS aligned curricula. At first, parents may derive a certain amount of security from this, however, as time goes by learners may still struggle with many of the issues they dealt with while attending school (example: not feeling challenged enough by subjects content). As parents grow more confident in their own abilities to educate their children, they may start exploring other options. (There are so many!) They may begin introducing their children to outside the box subjects that align with their interests: Zoology, Nature Studies, Art, Poetry, etc. Families may become more open to the idea of a tailored education... They may eventually completely embrace the Eclectic approach to education.

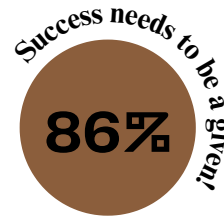


HOME EDUCATION *Survey*



The registration process

During the PCBE's clause by clause deliberation process Dr. Boshoff asked what was meant by "apply to register" in the BELA Bill? He recommended that it should involve an easy process (like an ID-application process), and that success needs to be a given. 1045 of our 1605 participants agreed with this stance.



About assessments

The majority (829) of participating parents feel that assessments are impractical and that not all methods of home education can be assessed. 459 believe that assessments will place unnecessary stress on children and their parents and they are therefore completely against assessments.

655 feel that assessments are good for older learners but not necessarily for younger learners, while 299 were in favor of assessments as they believe that tests will help determine whether children are progressing or not. 235 even feel that assessments by a competent assessor, at the end of each school phase, seems doable.

Note that while participants could select more than one option regarding assessments, they could also decide to skip this part of the survey. (Only 10 participants skipped this section of the questionnaire.)

About race and religion

Many of those who completed the Homeschooling Survey were upset by the fact that the following two questions were included in our questionnaire: Which race do you belong to, and what religion do you identify with?

During BELA Bill Hearings numerous individuals (who were in favour of the BELA Bill) accused home educating families of being religious fanatics with separatist mentalities. Many homeschoolers were offended by these type of statements, as we see ourselves as an inclusive group that celebrates diversity. We hoped that the answers to our survey questions would be reflective of what we believed to be true. Additionally, since religion and race are linked to identity, and we are attempting to ascertain who the majority of home educating families consist of, these uncomfortable questions were unfortunately important and needed to be asked.



HOME EDUCATION *Survey*



According to Wikipedia, Christianity is the dominant religion in South Africa (with 85.3% of our population in 2022 professing to belong to this religious group). We suspected that this would be reflected in the data we collected, and that was indeed the case. 1258 of our participants identified as “Christian”. 91 described themselves as either being part of the Islamic or Muslim community, 15 described themselves as being Spiritual while 10 belong to the Jewish faith.

Many participants felt uncomfortable with disclosing such personal information. They wrote: not applicable. Some didn’t think of themselves as belonging to any specific religious group and filled in “none” while others just skipped the question altogether.

Christian: 1258

Islam: 91

Other:

African spirituality: 4

Agnostic: 4

Atheist: 5

Jewish: 10

Animism: 1

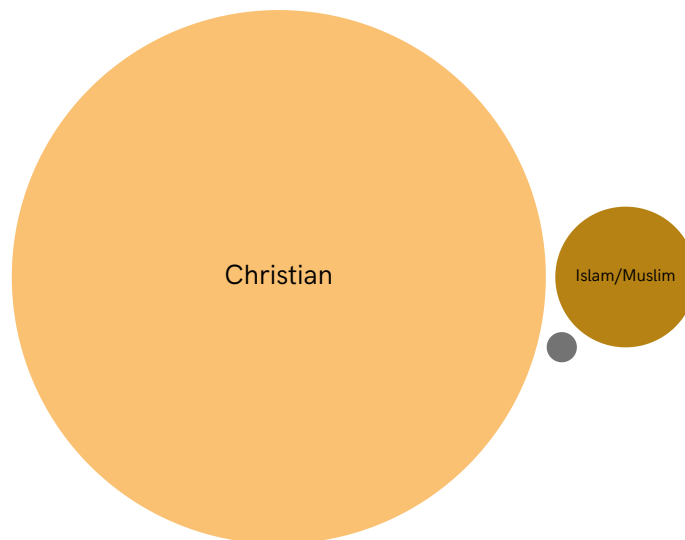
Spiritual: 15

Luciferian: 1

Wicca: 2

Pagan: 1

Yogi: 1



When asked what race participants belonged to some filled in *the Human Race* or described themselves as being *part of the Rainbow Nation*, others objected to this question being asked and declined to answer. One participant described him or herself as being *Colored* then stated: "*I think this section should be omitted*" and another stated, "*South African! Race is a box that people don't need to be put in*". Many others were of the same opinion.

Most who provided us with information regarding their race were Caucasian, however, individuals who identify as Bushmen, Indian, Black, White, Colored, Mixed, Xhosa, Cape Malay, Australian, Slavic, German, Māori and Asian also filled in section 14 of our survey.



HOME EDUCATION *Survey*

Conclusion

Hindsight and what we have come to learn

When asked how long participants had been home educating their children, they selected one of five provided boxes: 1 year, 1-3 years, 3-6 years, 6-10 years, 10+ years. Initially these answers seemed broad enough. Unfortunately, as we worked through the data we felt limited by our own choice of provided options. Many of those who selected the CAPS option, had been home educating for 1 or 1 to 3 years, but some indicated that they had been home educating for longer (3-6years). There was no way of determining whether this meant that participants had just passed the 3-year home educating mark or whether they were closer to the 6-year milestone. Answering this question is important as it will provide us with a better understanding of who is making use of CAPS: "newbies" or other home educators? Regardless of this flaw in our survey, we still discovered that the more experienced home educators (those who have been home educating for 6-10 years and longer) were not making use of CAPS! Interestingly, those who have been home educating for a very long time seem to favor the Classical and Child-led learning approaches.

Due to the efforts of numerous individuals our survey link reached many diverse communities, however, not all who came across our advert participated. The content that I (Stacey van der Walt) create, and the ideas I come up with are often promoted under the *Concerned Citizen* label. This was not a name many had heard of and therefore did not trust. This probably had an impact on the number of participants we got to collect data from, regardless, 1695 was a good sample to work with. This gave us an indication of who the average home educating parent is.



The average home educating parent

Race: Just South African

Religion: Christian

Amount of kids: 2

Province: Gauteng

Years spent homeschooling: 1-3 years

Preferred home education method: Eclectic





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HOME EDUCATION SURVEY 2023



CONDUCTED: 12 SEPTEMBER - 21 NOVEMBER 2023

1605 PARTICIPANTS



Home educating parents from all provinces contributed to this independent study.



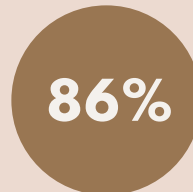
Gauteng	31%
Western Cape	23%
KZN	11%
Eastern Cape	10%
North West	7%
FreeState	6%
Mpumalanga	5%
Limpopo	3%
Northern Cape	3%
Other	0.4%



HOME EDUCATING PERIOD
29% or 471 participants have only been home educating for the last 1 to 3 years. 28% or 461 families have been homeschooling for 3-6 years.



HAVE ATTENDED SCHOOL
Most (1085) families have had at least one child attend a private or public school.



REGISTRATION
1042 of the 1605 participants believe that applying to register should be as easy as applying for an ID Document and that success needs to be a given.

THE MOST POPULAR METHOD

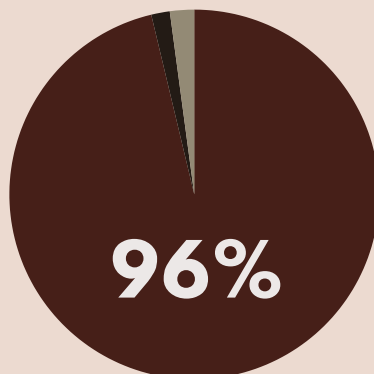
ECLECTIC

Many home educating families make use of more than one homeschooling program. 717 of the 1605 participants selected 'eclectic' as one of or the only educational method they follow.

AFFORDABILITY

1545 of the 1605 participants believe that home education is affordable.

775 of the 1605 participants mentioned this as being one of the reasons they decided to opt for home education instead of other equally viable options.



PARTICIPANTS

41% HAVE TWO CHILDREN

THANKS TO ALL WHO SHARED THE HOME EDUCATION 2023 SURVEY LINK!

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