

Ntabankulu, a small municipality in the Eastern Cape, has the poorest human development index (HDI) score in South Africa. This indicator shows that there are health factors that are reducing life expectancy in Ntabankulu. It also shows that levels of education are so low that people are unable to lift themselves out of poverty, says CRAIG SCHWABE.



# In Ntabankulu, PEOPLE DIE YOUNG

THE HDI IS ESSENTIALLY a measure of the quality of life in values ranging from 0 to 1, with 1 being the highest quality of life. The HDI, introduced by the United Nations Development Programme in 1990, has three main components: life expectancy, levels of education and standards of living.

To create the HDI, life expectancy for males and females is determined at birth for each of the four population groups. In Ntabankulu, the average life expectancy is 42 years. The national average is 49 years.

The standard of living of an area is measured by the purchasing power parity (PPP) and is derived from income data obtained from *Statistics South Africa's Labour Force Survey 2005*. The PPP looks at the ability of a certain area's population to purchase goods and services, thus allowing standards of living to be compared across areas.

The final component of the HDI is education, which is derived from adult-literacy rates and the combined average age at which pupils enrol in primary, secondary and tertiary education.

In 2001, Ntabankulu was also the municipality with the highest number of households living below the poverty line, but this is no longer the case. According to the HSRC's 2004 poverty estimates, Msinga in KwaZulu-Natal is now the poorest municipality in the country.

The figures are based on updated poverty, the gross geographic product (GGP) and HDI statistics for South African municipalities produced by the HSRC for the 2004 calendar year. Statistics for some of these indicators have now been updated to 2006.

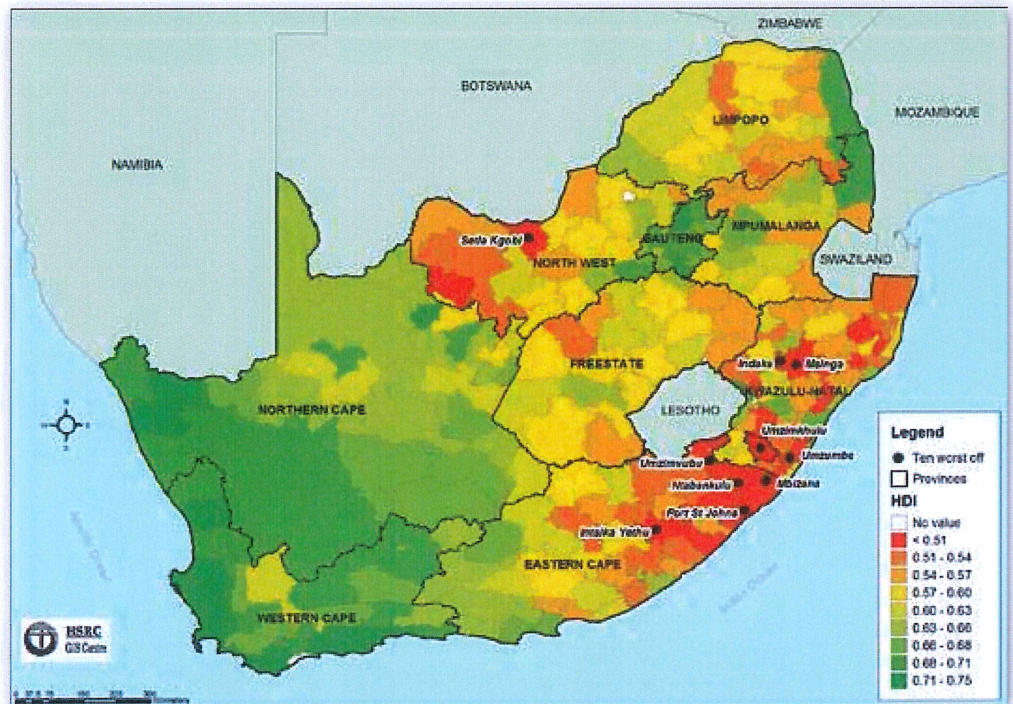
What is disturbing in the case of Ntabankulu is that although this municipality is one of the poorest in the country, it is not the worst off in terms of the GGP. In 2004, the GGP for this municipality was R203 million and it ranked 43rd from the bottom out of 257 municipalities.

Clearly, there is something terribly wrong in this municipality and the government needs to do something drastic about it. It is

critical that the national and provincial governments undertake detailed research in this area to understand the underlying factors that make this the poorest and most underdeveloped municipality in the country. This will enable the government to identify and implement appropriate intervention strategies to solve the problems.

Indaka municipality in the KwaZulu-Natal midlands is the second worst-off in terms of its HDI, followed by the municipalities of Umzimkhulu in the Eastern Cape,

WORST 10	BEST 10
Ntabankulu	Overstrand
Indaka	Langeberg
Umzumbe	Midvaal
Umzimkhulu	City of Tshwane
Msinga	Saldanha Bay
Umzimvubu	George
Intsika Yethu	City of Cape Town
Mbizana	Cape Agulhas
Nqutu	Mossel Bay
Setla Kgobi	Stellenbosch

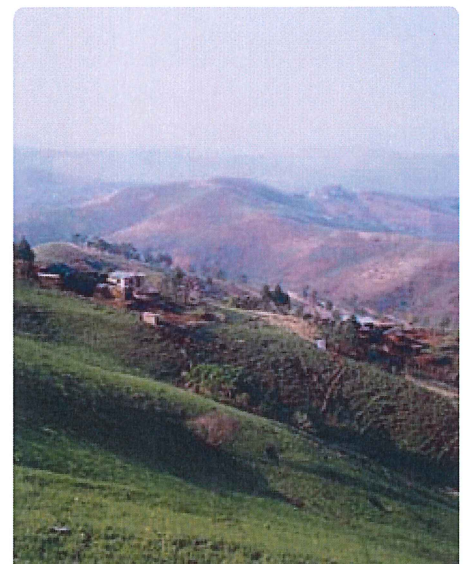


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and Msinga and Umzumbe in KwaZulu-Natal.

The four municipalities with the highest HDI scores are in the Western Cape with Stellenbosch (HDI=0.75) being the best-off municipality in the country. The other municipalities that have high HDI scores are Cape Agulhas, the City of Cape Town and Mossel Bay, all with HDI's of 0.74. In Gauteng, the municipalities of Midvaal and the City of Tshwane (HDI = 0.73) have the highest HDI values, coming in just under those in the Western Cape. ●

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