

Filling the census data gap with complementary information

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Across the world **census data serves as a crucial tool for understanding and acquiring data regarding population dynamics**, socio-economic trends, geographic distribution, and demographic indicators across the world.



Population size, living conditions and household statistics are essential for infrastructure planning, public health planning, education and socio-economic analysis to revise population estimates. The reasonable distribution of resources also relies heavily on an exact understanding of population demographics.

Unfortunately, challenges persist with **the accuracy and completeness of census information**, as highlighted in several news articles and on social media since the release of the data in the latter part of 2023. Concerns were raised regarding the population growth data in certain cities and an exceptionally high population undercount of approximately 31% which directly impacts the demand for employment, housing, welfare, and service delivery. These results influence development and planning across public and private sectors.

According to a recent [article](#) titled “South Africa’s 2022 census: has Johannesburg stopped growing, or are the numbers wrong?” published in “The Conversation”, the following concern was raised: **“The recent census overlooks crucial metrics such as income, expenditure, mortality, employment, and unemployment**, hindering the extrapolation of trends in poverty, inequality, and quality of life. While such data was previously included by Statistics South Africa, it’s now released separately by the agency.” It has, however, not yet been confirmed if and when income data will be released.



Reliable national data sources are needed to supplement census data and fill the gap created by the absence or disputable data points in the latest Census results. [GeoTerra Image \(GTI\)](#) provided updated alternatives with enhanced demographic and population datasets for many years, offering innovations and improvements for traditional demographic and population statistics.

Among the [GeoTerra Image \(GTI\)](#) offerings is the **Neighbourhood Lifestyle Index®© (NLI®©)**, a comprehensive income-based segmentation model that includes demographics of the South African population, lifestyle characteristics, buying power, urban developments, economic landscape, and soon-to-follow, **NLI®© Advanced** with additional segmentation classes, highlighting even more nuance within the South African population. The GTI products and datasets offer valuable insights into population density, demographics, migration patterns, and infrastructure needs, not only in rural and informal settlements but also in the formal urban population where traditional Census methods may fall short.

By strategically combining census data with alternative sources, **South Africa can gain a more comprehensive understanding of its population**, identify underserved communities and understand population health trends that enable informed decision-making. It will ensure that quality education and public health initiatives are tailored to meet the evolving needs of the population.

Additionally, reliable Census data is instrumental in urban planning and infrastructure development, enabling the creation of sustainable cities that cater to the needs of all communities.

In conclusion, the importance of accurate census data in South Africa cannot be overstated. It forms the foundation for evidence-based decision-making and plays a pivotal role in shaping the nation's future. By addressing challenges in data accuracy and incorporating alternative sources, **South Africa can build a better future based on solid information**, ensuring that no community is left behind in the pursuit of progress.

By strategically combining census data with alternative sources like the Neighbourhood Lifestyle Index®© (NLI®©), South Africa can gain a more comprehensive understanding of its population, enabling informed decision-making.

For more information on additional enhanced data solutions, contact [GeoTerra Image](#) on marketing@geoterraimage.com.

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