



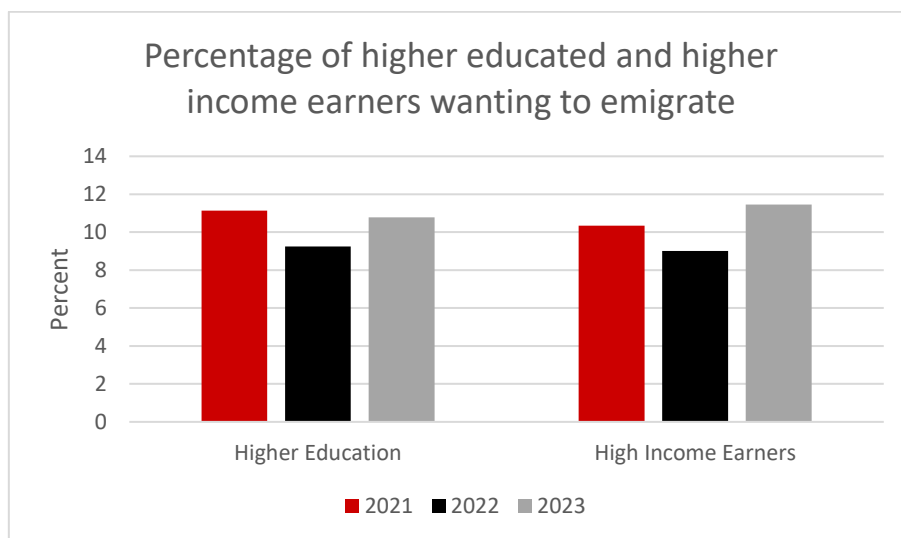
# INCLUSIVE SOCIETY INSTITUTE

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **INTENT TO EMIGRATE REMAINS DISTURBINGLY HIGH** **Findings from the Inclusive Society Institute's *GovDem Poll***

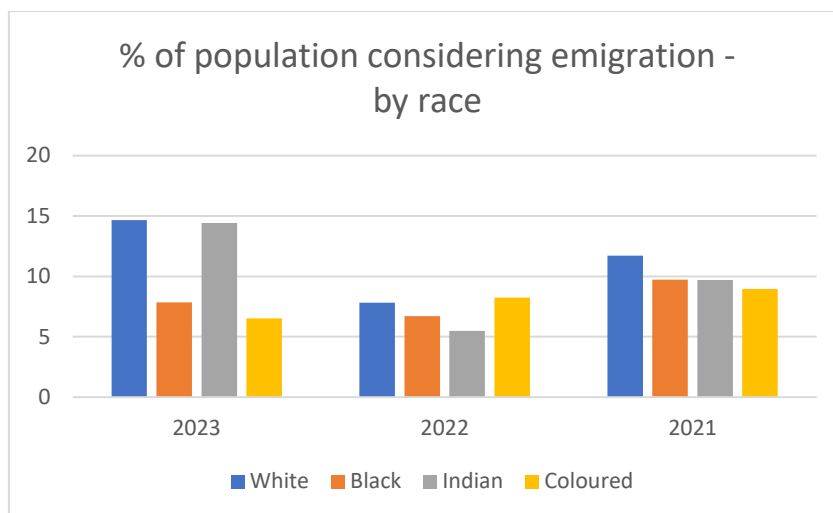
According to a comprehensive survey conducted by the Inclusive Society Institute in late 2023, the number of South Africans considering emigration remains disturbingly high. 8,59% (9,25% in 2022) of adult South Africans over the age of 18 indicated that they either agreed or strongly agreed that they were seriously considering emigrating to another country in the next year or so. For those respondents with higher education qualifications, it was 10,78%, higher than in 2022 where 9,25% indicated that they were seriously considering emigrating in the next year or so.

The trend is confirmed when specifically considering the findings regarding individuals in the higher income brackets. In this regard, the percentage of respondents that indicated that they were seriously considering emigrating in the next year or so, is 11,45%, up sharply from 9,01% in the 2022 survey.



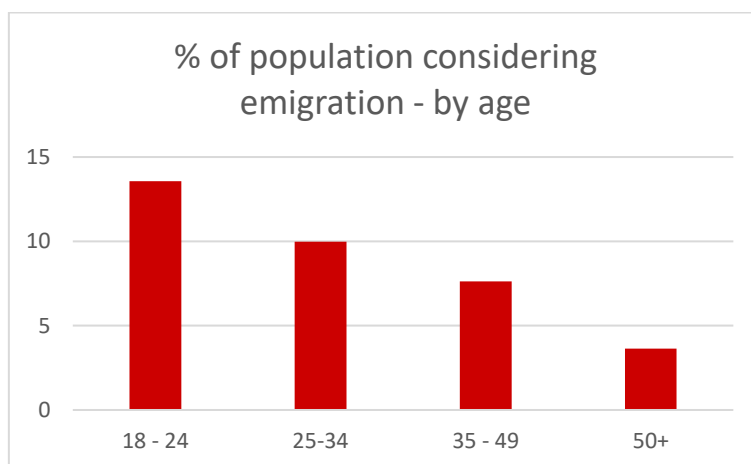
### **Alarming results for whites and Indians**

Whereas in the past surveys similar trends held true across all race groups, in this survey an alarming number of Whites and Indians were far more inclined to want to emigrate than their compatriots from the other race groups. 14,67% of White respondents (all education and income bands), and 14,42% of Indians indicated so, compared with 7,86% of black respondents and 6,53% of coloured respondents.



### Younger people remain most vulnerable group

As may be expected, given the high youth unemployment statistics and greater flexibility of younger people (e.g., single, early stage of career, still building asset base, mobility), South Africa stands to lose a considerable proportion of its young people to other countries. The aspiration to emigrate seems to diminish the older people become. In the category 18-24 years, 13,56% were considering emigration. In the category 25-34 years, it was also 9,97%. In the category 35-49 years this went down to 7,63%. And in the category 50 years and older it was only 3,63%.



### Top five destinations

South Africans who want to look for greener pastures mainly consider developed, English-speaking countries. The United States and the United Kingdom have over the last three years consistently remained the top two destinations. Germany was the only non-English speaking country consistently making the list of top five possible destinations.

	2021		2022		2023	
	Country	%	Country	%	Country	%
1	United States of America	23,88	United States of America	15,80	United States of America	32,26
2	United Kingdom	14,87	United Kingdom	14,87	United Kingdom	9,72
3	Germany	9,94	Australia	9,19	Australia	8,01
4	Canada	6,32	Botswana	7,14	Canada	6,43
5	Australia	4,69	Germany	7,13	Germany	5,97

## **Opportunity and a better life the driving forces**

The driving force behind the intention to emigrate appears to be mainly economic in nature. For 25,48% of those considering emigration, the high unemployment rate is informing their intention; for 19,39% it is to achieve a better life; and for 17,65% it is to secure a better future.

The perception of South Africa as a failing state was also a strong motivator. 21,38% highlighted the infrastructure and service delivery deterioration in South Africa as a reason for them considering emigration.

On the positive side, issues of race hardly registered as a motivator to emigrate. Only 0,41% indicated that race issues were influencing their decisions.

## **Conclusions**

The number of South Africans considering emigration remains stubbornly high. More alarming is the number of skilled and high-income earners (taxpayers) that are considering emigration. For a country with already scarce skills to lose so many more would have a serious impact on the economy's ability to perform optimally. South Africa's image as a failing state is also driving emigration.

Issues of race and inter-community intolerance is not a serious factor motivating emigration.

It should be clear to policymakers that skills retention goes hand in hand with economic performance. Failure to improve the economy will lead to more emigration, which in turn will impede the economic prospects of the country. Economic growth, not social re-engineering, is where the priority should be, otherwise other countries will continue to benefit from recruiting qualified and hard-working young people from South Africa.

## **Note**

The poll was undertaken by Ipsos on behalf of the Inclusive Society Institute. The data was captured in late 2023.

**Issued by:** Inclusive Society Institute  
**Enquiries:** Berenice Marks  
**Cell number:** 081 352 6202  
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