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This Guide

Working abroad sounds to many people like an adventure. However, without thorough preparation, starting with a successful application it is bound to fail. Therefore, Expertise in Labour Mobility (ELM) has prepared a set of country guides describing the main routes to employment in over 40 countries. Are you interested in working in Australia, Italy or Japan? Has your partner accepted a job in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, or the United Arab Emirates? Are you looking for an internship possibility in Spain, Singapore or Switzerland? The Looking for work in... guides from ELM will help you with accurate information and practical tips on working cultures and differences in job hunting in over 40 countries.

As an extra addition to the series – following many requests – ELM introduced a new guide: Looking for work in International Organisations which explains how to successfully look for work in for instance the institutes of the European Commission, UN institutions and NGO's.

This guide contains information on South Africa. It tells you how to apply for a job in South Africa and the cultural differences that you will come across when looking for a job in South Africa. Do not underestimate those national differences. What is common in one country might be very unusual in another country. Despite globalisation, to find a job abroad you need to be aware that national differences manifest themselves not only in different languages, but also in different recruitment practices.

Thus, looking for work in another country involves more than writing your CV/resume in another language.

No matter the country in which you are looking for work, the key focus of your CV should be to persuade the employer to invite you for a job interview. Accordingly, your CV should be regarded as a marketing tool, adapted to the market in which you intend to use it. The information in this guide, together with the sample CV, will help you to adapt your application for the South African job market. However, make sure your application remains a reflection of your personality. Working abroad is one thing, but having a job that does not suit you will definitely cause homesickness!

“In the last 30 years, the torch of sustainable development has traveled from Europe, to the Americas, through Asia, and now burns in Africa. After a protracted journey, it has arrived in the continent that is the cradle of humanity.”

Thabo Mbeki, Former President of South Africa, at the opening of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Johannesburg, South Africa, August 26, 2002

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nannette Ripmeester', with a horizontal line underneath.

Nannette Ripmeester, MA
Managing Director
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Country Profile

The Republic of South Africa occupies the southern tip of the African continent. The country borders the sea on three sides. Its long coastline extends over more than 2,500 km from the desert border with Namibia at the Atlantic coast, southwards around the tip of Africa and then North to the border with subtropical Mozambique at the Indian Ocean. South Africa consists of two geographical regions, the interior plateau - ringed by steep mountains - and a narrow coastal region. Vegetation varies from desert plants to grasslands and forests.

South Africa is a comparatively big country with a surface of 1,219,912 square kilometres. Neighbouring countries are Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. The kingdoms of Lesotho and Swaziland are located within South Africa. The republic's capital is Pretoria and the country has a population of 49.1 million (2009). Other main cities are Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg.

Climate

Although South Africa is located just South of the Tropic of Capricorn it has a moderate climate due to the surrounding oceans. The country is classified as semi-arid; it has a significant variation in topography as well as climate. The great inland Karoo plateau is very dry. It is tremendously hot in summer and it can be icy in winter. While, at the Eastern coastline it is very humid and never gets cold. The southern coast is rather less tropical but also green. The Cape of Good Hope situated at the South-Western corner of the country has a Mediterranean climate. It experiences wet winters and hot, dry summers.

Average temperatures in °C / °F		
	May - August	September - April
Cape Town	13 / 55	20 / 68
Durban	17 / 62	24 / 75
Johannesburg	12 / 53	19 / 66
Pretoria	13 / 5	22 / 71

Population

South Africa has a population of 49.1 million inhabitants (2009 est). The South African nation is of multi-ethnic decent, characterised by a rich cultural diversity. Today, about 79.7 percent of the population classify themselves as black, 9.1 percent are white, 8.8 percent are of mixed ethnicity, while 2.2 percent are of Indian

descent. Hence the nation's motto inscribed in the official coat of arms: '!ke e: /xarra //ke', which is Khoisan and means: 'diverse people unite'.

The people among the black population of South Africa belong to different ethnic groups: the Nguni (comprising the Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele and Swazi people), the Sotho-Tswana, the Tsonga, the Venda, and not to forget those who have immigrated to South Africa from the rest of the continent and who maintain a strong cultural identity. A few remaining members of the Khoi and the San also live in South Africa. Each of these groups has their own culture and language or dialect.

The white population descends largely from Dutch, British, German and French settlers, immigrating to South Africa from the 17th century onwards. Since the beginning of the colonisation, a linguistic – English-Afrikaans – divide has remained among the white people.

History

Many thousand years before the arrival of European settlers on the African continent, civilisations had established themselves on South African soil. In fact, recent archaeological finds in South Africa revealed traces of humanoids, which are over three million years old. As contemporary DNA research indicates, the African continent is where the homo sapiens originates from.

With the discovery of the country and the installation of a refreshment station for traders sailing the so-called Cape Sea Route to South-East Asia in the Mid-17th century, official history writing of South Africa commences. What is known as Cape Town today, developed from the station set up by Jan van Riebeeck by order of the Dutch East India Company. Subsequently, Dutch traders began to settle permanently in Table Bay on the site of present day Cape Town. The majority of Dutch settlers went North, murdering and dislodging the Khoisans, who had lived in the area since prehistoric times, through violence and by diseases, such as smallpox, which they passed on to them. As they intruded further upon the land and water sources, more and more of the indigenous people were dispossessed and incorporated into the colonial economy as servants. In addition, slaves from India and Indonesia were brought to South Africa. Over the years, their numbers exceeded those of the white settlers by far. Towards the end of the 18th century, British forces took over the area on the Cape of Good Hope to prevent this important strategic base from falling into the hands of the French. The Cape Colony was annexed by the British in 1803. It was hoped British settlers would inhabit a buffer zone between Boers (Dutch settlers) and Xhosa, but most of the British immigrant families settled in the towns, marking an urban division that is still evident in South Africa today. The British parliament first stopped its global slave trade in 1807, and consequently abolished slavery in all its colonies in 1833. Nevertheless, the reality of freedom for the ex-slaves was accompanied

by disillusion. As a wage-based economy developed, they remained dispossessed and exploited and discriminated against.

During the 1830s, approximately 12,000 Boers, later known as Voortrekkers, departed from the Cape Colony, where they were subjected to British control, to the Colony of Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal regions.

The discovery of diamonds in 1867 and gold in 1884 encouraged economic growth and immigration. As a result it also intensified the subjugation of the indigenous peoples. Although slavery had been banished, the black/white division of labour served most white people too well for any real attempt to change it. The lack of change in black Southern Africa was not only due to the white invaders. Difaqane was the name given to a terror campaign planned by the Zulu chief Shaka, which wiped out or enslaved other ethnic groups. During this period of chaos irritated Boers started their Great Trek against British rule. The First Anglo-Boer War ended with a victory of the Boers and the South African Republic (Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek) was founded under the Dutch settlers' command. The British backed off until a huge reef of gold was discovered around Johannesburg and then marched in again for the Second Anglo-Boer War. By 1902, the Boers had exhausted their conventional resources and resorted to raids, denying the British control of the countryside and the Boers were compelled to resign. The war had been brutal and inhumane. An estimated 26,000 Boer