

SA government does not impress in its control of cost of living

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Less than four in every ten (38%) adult South Africans believe that the government is doing "very well" or "fairly well" in its efforts to control the cost of living in the country.

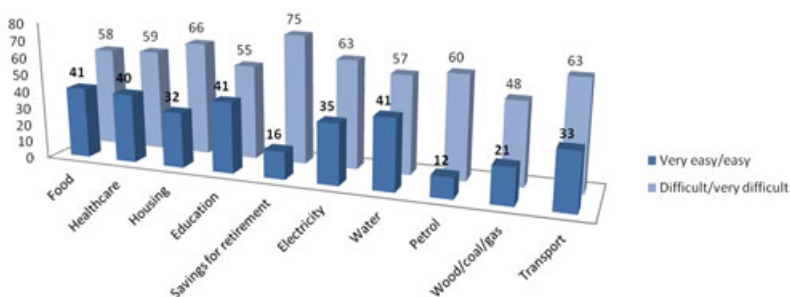
This was one of the important findings from the Ipsos "Pulse of the People" poll of 3 500 adult South Africans conducted from 26 October to 7 December 2011. In the poll, randomly chosen respondents were asked whether they thought the government was performing very well, fairly well, not really well or not at all well in various policy areas - including "Controlling the cost of living".

To explore the concerns of South Africans about the cost of living in the country, Ipsos probed ten items that households typically would spend money on. The question was: "How easy or difficult is it for you and your family to afford the following? Is it very easy, easy, difficult or very difficult to afford....". The following items were included: food, healthcare, housing, education, savings for retirement, electricity, water, petrol, wood/coal/gas and transport. If the household did not make use of one of these items, it was recorded as "not applicable".

According to the chart below, more than half of South Africans find these basic items either difficult or very difficult to afford. The *high cost of petrol is posing a problem* - it is also having a spin-off effect on the cost of transport.

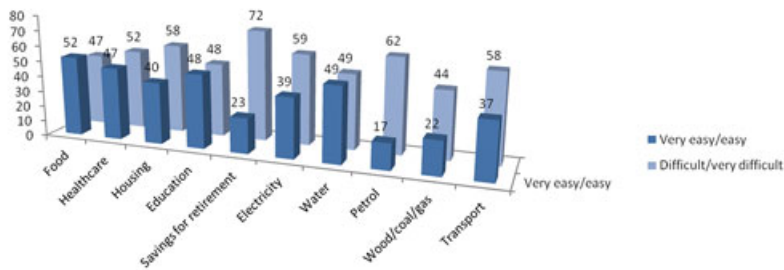
It is clear from this picture that *very few South Africans are saving for their retirement*. The money available in most households is not enough to afford necessities and saving is probably seen as a luxury that most people can ill afford.

It is difficult or very difficult for most South Africans to afford necessities:



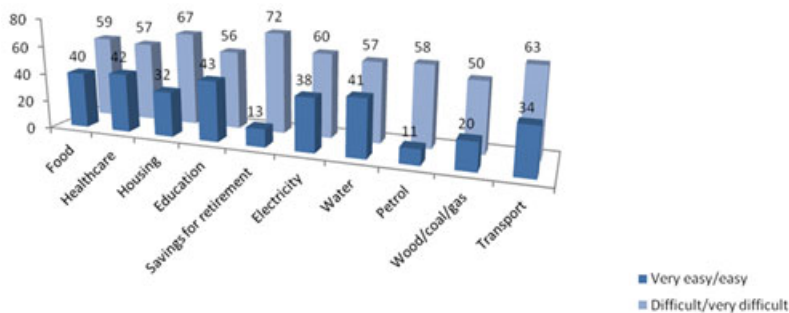
When looking at the results for *working South Africans only*, the pattern looks very similar, although higher proportions have indicated that they can afford most items, especially food, healthcare, housing and education, the price of petrol is still an issue, while just less than a quarter (23%) are saying that they find it easy or very easy to make provision for retirement.

Working South Africans are slightly better off:



For young people from 18-24 years old, the cost of living is a grave concern - with only about four in every ten indicating that they find it easy or very easy to afford food, healthcare, education, electricity and water. A third can afford housing and transport and those who do use wood/coal or gas for cooking or heating find it expensive. The cost of petrol is still a huge issue, while savings for retirement are very low on the list of necessities.

Young people are struggling to afford necessities:



In an international survey, also released today, South Africans participating have indicated that they are not very optimistic about the economic growth in the country for the next six months - only a quarter (26%) of the rather affluent group who participated in an online survey indicated that they expect the regional economy to be stronger a few months from now. However, when looking at their evaluation of the current situation, opinions in South Africa have shown the greatest improvement.

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