

MARCH 2021

FACT SHEET

Gender Parity in Post-School Education and Training Opportunities

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& training

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Khuluvhe, M. and Negogogo, V., (2021). *Gender Parity in Post-School Education and Training Opportunities*, Department of Higher Education and Training, Pretoria.

This Fact Sheet is available on the Department of Higher Education and Training's website: www.dhet.gov.za

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Date of publication: March 2021



1. Background

The consolidation of democracy in our country requires the eradication of social and economic inequalities, especially those that are systemic in nature, which were generated in our history by colonialism, apartheid and patriarchy¹. Although significant progress has been made, post-1994, in restructuring and transforming our society and its institutions, systemic inequalities both in terms of race and gender remain deeply embedded in social structures and practices. These conditions undermine the aspirations of South Africa's constitutional democracy. The basis for progressively redressing and transforming our institutions lies in the Constitution² which, amongst others, upholds the values of equality and the creation of a non-sexist society where all may flourish. The constitution is further supported by the National Development Plan³ (NDP) which sets out national development priorities to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by the year 2030 to unite all South Africans.

In South Africa, education has long been recognised as a way of promoting equality of opportunities. The Post-School Education and Training (PSET) system as envisaged in the White Paper⁴ for PSET is expected to be equitable, accessible and affordable to all sections of the population. South Africa also has international obligations under binding policies in the field of human rights which promote equality and prohibit unfair discrimination. Among these obligations are the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 which calls for an inclusive and quality equitable education for all, and Goal 5 which aims to achieve gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.

This Fact Sheet monitors the strides made within the PSET system to enhance equity and promote transformation, particularly in terms of gender. It uses the Gender Parity Index (GPI) to measure the relative access to post-school education and training opportunities of males and females. GPI is often used internationally to compare relative access to education between males and females across various countries. Such comparisons serve as a barometer for how countries perform in terms of equity and transformation that speaks to the proportional representation of historically and currently disadvantaged groups within all levels of the education system.

¹ Republic of South Africa (2000). The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act No. 4 of 2000.

² Republic of South Africa (1996). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The Bill of Rights in chapter two of the Constitution.

³ National Planning Commission (2012). National Development Plan 2030. Our Future-make it work. The Presidency, Republic of South Africa.

⁴ Department of Higher Education and Training (2013). White Paper for Post-School Education and Training. Building and Expanded, Effective and Integrated Post-School System. Republic of South Africa.

2. Purpose

This Fact Sheet provides a comparative analysis of the gender profile of students in the PSET system, with a specific focus on access and success. It uses the GPI to measure progress towards gender parity in post-school education and training. This Fact Sheet tracks progress towards gender equity in the PSET system with a view to drawing attention to interventions required to address any challenges.

3. Terms and Definitions

3.1. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)

The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) measures access. It usually shows enrolment relative to the population in a core age group, even if those enrolled do not all fall into that age group. For instance, the GER for public universities shows their enrolment as a percentage of the age group 20 to 24 in the population in that year, though many university students may be younger than 20 or older than 24.

3.2. Gender Parity Index (GPI)

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) is the ratio of the female GER to the male GER. A GPI value equals to 1 indicates parity between males and females, a value less than 1 indicates a disparity in favour of males, and a value of greater than 1 means that there are proportionally more women than men enrolled.

It is possible to define the GPI relative to any indicator by dividing its value for females by its value for males. In this Fact Sheet, GPI is also calculated using the following indicators: completion rate, graduation rate, unemployment rate and employment rate.

4. PSET Institutions

The share of female enrolments is higher than the male enrolments in all of the PSET institutions. Table 1 shows that the Gender Parity Index (GPI) at universities (both public and private), TVET colleges and CET colleges was 1.5, 1.4 and 2.2 respectively, in 2019.

Table 1: Gender Parity Index for enrolment by institution type, 2019

Institution	GPI
Universities (Public and Private)	1.5
TVET colleges	1.4
CET colleges	2.2

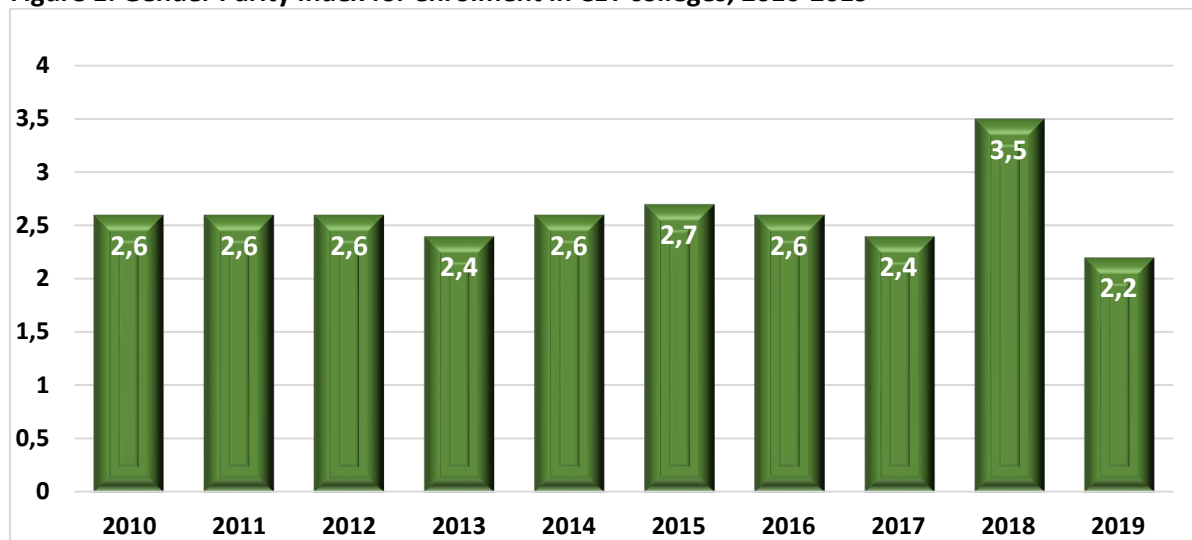
Sources: DHET Higher Education Management Information System 2021
DHET TVET Management Information System
DHET Statistics on Post-School Education and Training in South Africa 2019
DHET Annual report submitted by PHEIs for the 2019 year of reporting
Statistics South Africa mid-year population estimates 2020

Note: A GPI of 1 indicates equitable gender participation. A GPI above 1 is indicative of higher female participation. A GPI below 1 is indicative of higher male participation.

5. Community Education and Training (CET) colleges

The extremely high Gender Parity Index in CET colleges is a matter of concern as it indicates that the level of male participation in CET colleges is significantly lower than that of females. Figure 1 shows that the CET's Gender Parity Index stood at 2.2 in 2019. As indicated in Figure 1, disparity in favour of female students is likely to continue given the consistent trend overtime. The reasons for this high level of disparity are not quite understood as yet and therefore requires deeper research.

Figure 1: Gender Parity Index for enrolment in CET colleges, 2010-2019



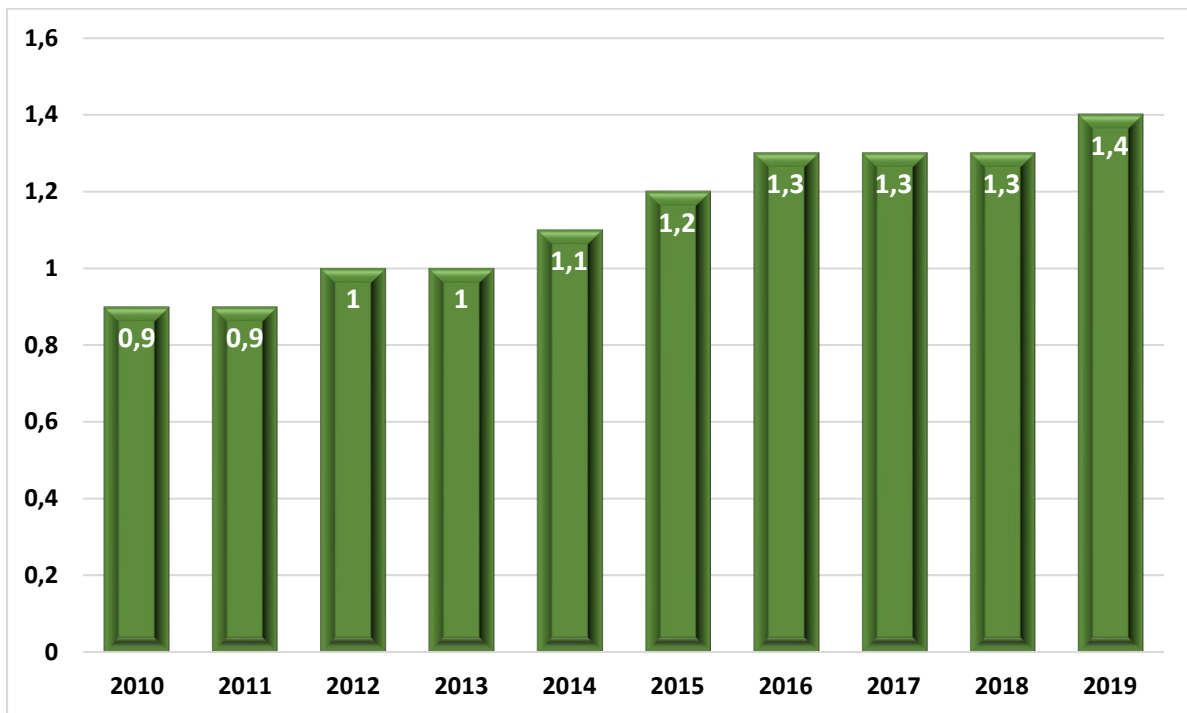
Sources: DHET Statistics on Post-School Education and Training in South Africa: 2010-2019
Statistics South Africa Mid-year population estimates 2020

Note: A GPI of 1 indicates equitable gender participation. A GPI above 1 is indicative of higher female participation. A GPI below 1 is indicative of higher male participation

6. TVET colleges

Figure 2 shows that in 2019, the participation rate of females far exceeded that of males, with the GPI at 1.4. This pattern contrasts with that obtained a decade ago, when male participation rates were higher than females'. Gender parity was attained in 2012 and 2013, but tilted in favour of females over the past 5 years. In 2019, female enrolments in TVET colleges was 40% higher than that of male students.

Figure 2: Gender Parity Index for enrolment in TVET colleges, 2010-2019

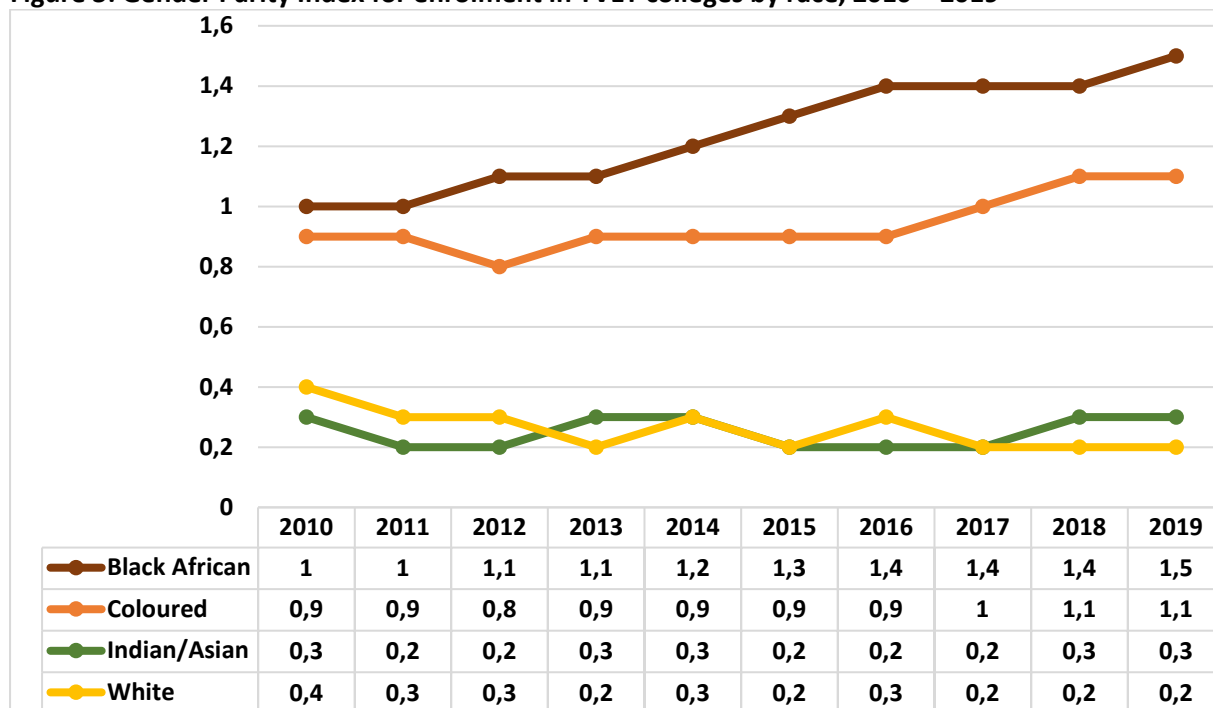


Sources: DHET Statistics on Post-School Education and Training 2010-2019
Statistics South Africa Mid-year population estimates 2020
TVET Management Information System

Note: A GPI of 1 indicates equitable gender participation. A GPI above 1 is indicative of higher female participation. A GPI below 1 is indicative of higher male participation

Figure 3 shows that, in 2019, GPI was very high among Black African students, while the converse was true for White and Indian/Asian students. The substantial change in GPI over the 2010-2019 period was primarily driven by changes in GPI among Black African students, which increased from 1.0 in 2010 to 1.5 in 2019.

Figure 3: Gender Parity Index for enrolment in TVET colleges by race, 2010 – 2019

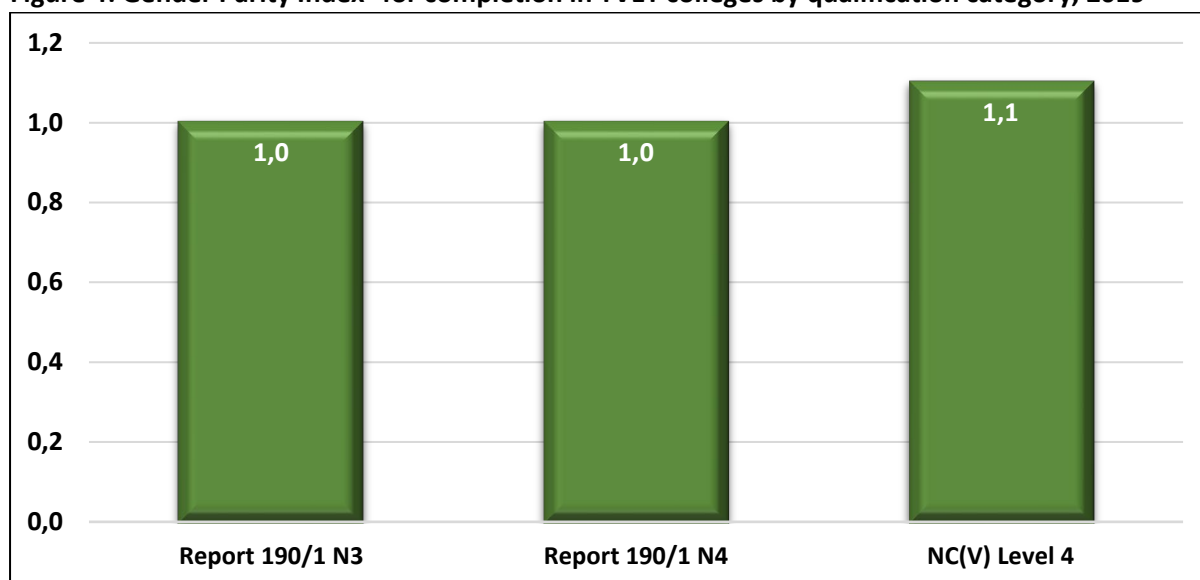


Sources: DHET Statistics on Post-School Education and Training 2010-2019
 Statistics South Africa Mid-year population estimates 2020
 TVET Management Information System

Note: A GPI of 1 indicates equitable gender participation. A GPI above 1 is indicative of higher female participation. A GPI below 1 is indicative of higher male participation

TVET Colleges offer two main qualification types, namely the National Certificate (Vocational), referred to as the NCV, and the National Technical Education Diploma (referred to as NATED). NATED comprises six components/part qualifications, namely N1 to N6, with each component being assessed separately via a national examination. Figure 4 presents gender parity index for certification rates for the N3 and N6 part-qualifications, and the NC(V) level 4; and shows that gender parity was attained in the completion of N3 and N4 qualifications. However, 10% more female than male students completed NC(V) level 4 qualifications in 2019.

Figure 4: Gender Parity Index⁵ for completion in TVET colleges by qualification category, 2019



Source: Statistics on TVET and Private Colleges in South Africa 2019

Note: A GPI of 1 indicates equitable gender participation. A GPI above 1 is indicative of higher female participation. A GPI below 1 is indicative of higher male participation

7. Universities (Public and Private)

Table 2 shows that more females than males participated in both public and private universities for the period 2011 to 2019 resulting in a Gender Parity Index of 1.5 in 2019. This indicates that female student enrolment was 50% higher than that of the male students. Table 2 also shows that despite significant increases in GPI at private universities since 2011, GPI in public universities was higher than that of private universities in 2019.

⁵ The Gender Parity Index is the ratio of the female completion rate to the male completion rate.

Table 2: Trends in Enrolment Gender Parity Index for enrolment: Public and private universities, 2011 - 2019

Year	Public universities	Private universities	Total
2011	1.4	1.1	1.4
2012	1.4	1.2	1.4
2013	1.4	1.2	1.4
2014	1.4	1.1	1.4
2015	1.4	1.2	1.4
2016	1.4	1.3	1.4
2017	1.4	1.4	1.4
2018	1.5	1.4	1.5
2019	1.5	1.4	1.5

Sources: DHET Higher Education Management Information System 2021
 DHET Statistics on Post-School Education and Training in South Africa 2011 - 2019
 DHET Annual report submitted by PHEIs for the 2019 year of reporting
 Statistics South Africa mid-year population estimates 2020

Note: A GPI of 1 indicates equitable gender participation. A GPI above 1 is indicative of higher female participation. A GPI below 1 is indicative of higher male participation

Table 3 shows higher female than male participation in universities across all race groups for all the years under review, indicating that South Africa has done fairly well in terms of gender transformation within the universities' student composition. In 2019, the GPI was highest among Coloured students at 1.7 and lowest among White students at 1.3.

Table 3: Gender Parity Index for enrolment in public and private universities by race, 2011 – 2019

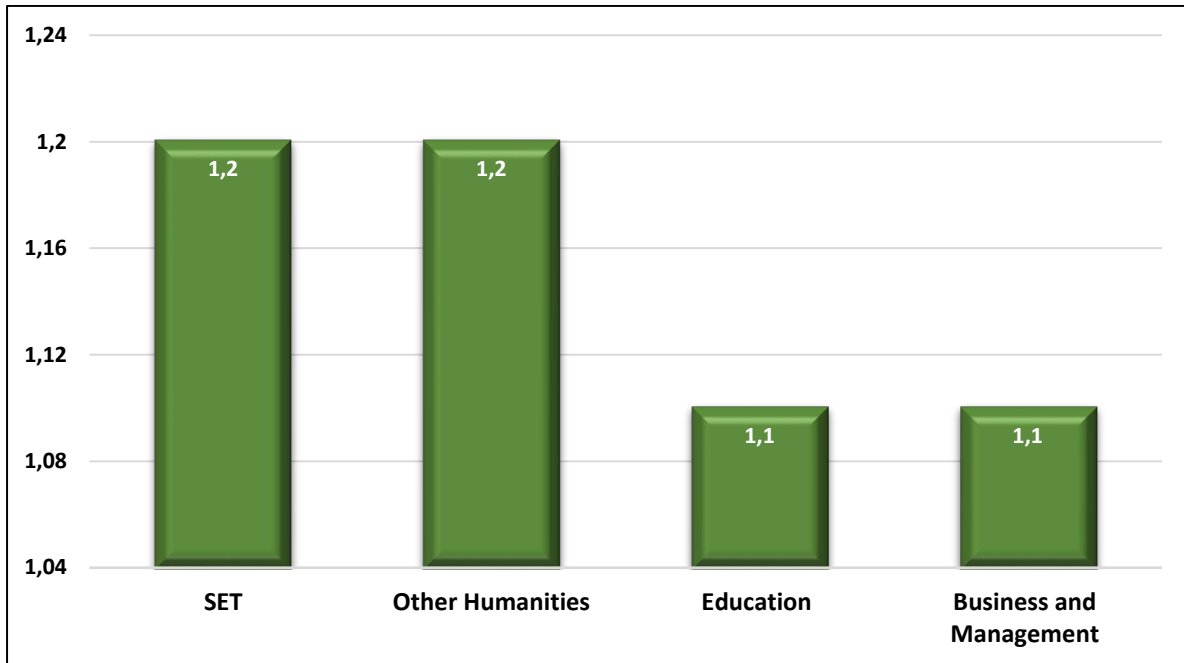
Year	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	Total
2011	1.4	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.1
2012	1.4	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.2
2013	1.4	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.2
2014	1.4	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.1
2015	1.4	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.2
2016	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.3
2017	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4
2018	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.4
2019	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.5

Sources: DHET Higher Education Management Information System 2021
 DHET Statistics on Post-School Education and Training in South Africa 2011 - 2019
 DHET Annual report submitted by PHEIs for the 2019 year of reporting
 Statistics South Africa mid-year population estimates 2020

Note: A GPI of 1 indicates equitable gender participation. A GPI above 1 is indicative of higher female participation. A GPI below 1 is indicative of higher male participation.

Figure 5 shows that more female students are graduating than male students in all fields of study. In 2019, the GPI values for Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) and other Humanities stood at 1.2, indicating that the numbers of female students graduating were 20% higher than the numbers of male students graduating with SET and Humanities qualifications.

Figure 5: Gender Parity Index⁶ for graduation in public universities by field of study, 2019



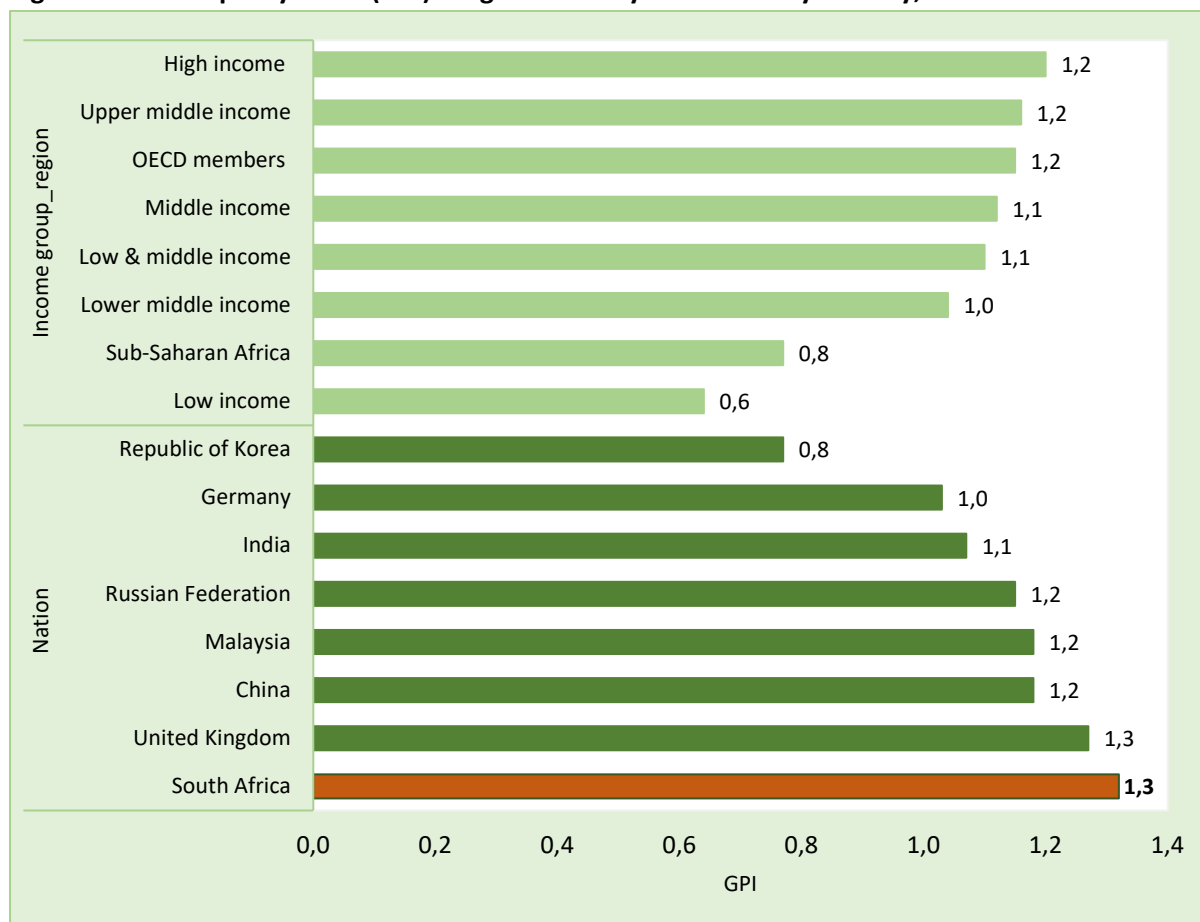
Source: DHET Higher Education Management Information System 2021

Note 1: A GPI of 1 indicates equitable gender participation. A GPI above 1 is indicative of higher female participation. A GPI below 1 is indicative of higher male participation.

⁶ The Gender Parity Index is the ratio of the female graduation rate to the male graduation rate.

Figure 6 compares South Africa’s GPI to that of other international countries and averages of selected regions. South Africa’s GPI for tertiary education is among the highest in the world. In 2018, the GPI for South Africa stood at 1.3 compared to the averages for high income countries (1.2), upper middle income (1.2), OECD members (1.2) and Sub-Saharan African region (0.8).

Figure 6: Gender parity index (GPI) for gross tertiary enrolment by country, 2018



Source: World Bank 2020

Note 1: The countries included in this Figure were selected based on availability of latest data.

Note 2: A GPI of 1 indicates equitable gender participation. A GPI above 1 is indicative of higher female participation. A GPI below 1 is indicative of higher male participation

8. Employment status

While the previous sections indicated that more females are participating and succeeding in the PSET system, both in terms of enrolment and graduation, Table 4 shows that there are more unemployed females than males. However, it appears that the gender gap both in terms of unemployment and employments is narrowing.

Table 4: Gender Parity Index by employment status, 2020

Employment status	GPI
Unemployment ⁷	1.09
Employment ⁸	0.96

Source: Statistics South Africa Quarterly Labour Force Survey (Quarter 4) – data downloaded from NESSTAR

9. Conclusion

This Fact Sheet demonstrates that South Africa fares very well in terms of female representation in the post-school education and training institutions. Both access and success favours female over male students. The Gender Parity Index for universities is among some of the highest in the world suggesting the prevalence of other deeper issues in the South African fabric of society that account for other forms of gender inequality in the country. Although the unemployment rates of women have remained higher than that of males over the past decade, the positive effects of high female participation and success rates in post-school education and training are bearing fruit as the unemployment rate between the males and females is narrowing.

⁷ The Gender Parity Index is the ratio of the female unemployment rate to the male unemployment rate.

⁸ The Gender Parity Index is the ratio of the female employment rate to the male employment rate.