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Promote gender equality and
empower women
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	African National Congress
AsgiSA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CGE	Commission on Gender Equality
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
EA	Enumerator area
EDR	Economic Dependency Ratio
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
FET	Further Education and Training
GBV	Gender based violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross enrolment ratio
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy
GET	General Education and Training
GHS	General Household Survey
GPI	Gender Parity Index
HEMIS	Higher Education Management Information System
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ILO	International Labor Organization
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDG-3	Millennium Development Goal Three
MTSF	Medium Term Strategic Framework
NDC	National Development Committee
NDP	National Development Plan
NGOs	Non-governmental organisation

NIDS	National Income Dynamics Study
PDR	Population Dependency Ratio
QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SIGI	Social Institutions and Gender Index
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United National Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, SC
VAW	Violence against women
WHO	World Health Organization

ABOUT THE REPORT

This report updates the progress made by South Africa in addressing the Millennium Development Goal 3 (MDG3): *Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women*. A collaborative team [i.e. the Expanded Report Drafting Team (ERDT)] assembled by Stats SA' MDG Secretariat, consisting of representatives from civil society and relevant sector departments, developed and refined the report. The ERDT guided the development of the list of indicators, adoption and verification of various data sources, and gave substantive comments on several draft versions of the report.

This report was prepared using data from a variety of sources provided by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA). In addition, a number of gender and development-related documents, reports and guidelines were instrumental in framing the analysis. For example, the 2013 MDG country and goal reports were instrumental in framing this draft, as well as reports from the Department of Women (i.e. South Africa' Beijing+20 Report). Furthermore, Stats SA survey reports on gender [i.e. *“Women and Men in South Africa” (1998)*, *“Women and Men in South Africa: Five Years On (2002)*, and *“Gender Statistics in South Africa, 2011”(2013)*] informed the analytical approach as they compared the life circumstances and living conditions of women and men in the country.

Stats SA has produced successive MDG 3 goal reports that traced progress on gender equality and empowerment of women. This report builds on these reports. Data was sourced from government departments including Stats SA and other agencies. A range of data sources have informed the drafting of this report, including Stats SA's General Household and Labour Force Surveys, the Global Gender Gap Index, Gender Equity Index, The Gender Empowerment Measure, data from the World Bank Gender Portal, Department of Basic Education Snap Surveys reports and the Department of Higher Education and Training Information System (HEMIS). This current report extends beyond disaggregation of indicators into the categories of female and male. Gender statistics focus on issues of particular relevance to women and men, girls and boys, and their different roles and positions in society. The theoretical and conceptual approach adopted in the analysis highlights the “intersectionality of vulnerabilities”¹, extending beyond mere disaggregation into male and female. The report makes an effort to analyse data that combines gender and other characteristics such as population group (i.e. race), geography, and age. In the South African context, disaggregation by race remains important due to the historical legacies of apartheid. Therefore, where data allow the report illustrates how race and gender interact and intersect to place particular groups at a particular advantage or disadvantage. Similarly, geographical location is often a strong determinant of the

¹The idea of the “intersectionality of vulnerabilities” stems from the recognition that disadvantage, inequality, or privilege is not a function of a single strand of inequality but rather the result of the multiple sites of exclusion and how these interact in the lives of the marginalised to shape their position in society. Unlike classical Marxism that reduces disadvantage of the masses to class and capital to explain social position or reductionist tendencies evident in radical feminism that attributes women's marginalisation to patriarchal oppression, intersectionality presents a non-essentialist view that portrays all women as diversely oppressed.

situation and opportunities available to different women and men, girls and boys. The analysis by province is important, amongst others, as a proxy for the apartheid legacy as provinces, which were made up of former “homelands” tend to have different patterns from those which are made up of mainly “non-homeland” areas. In some cases, and where relevant, the report presents provincial data to foreground the interaction between population group (race) differences, geographic location, and age groups of women and men, girls and boys. The calculations for the gender parity indices in education for example, take age into account, and the standard international literacy indicator focuses on youth. The report extends the discussion of literacy to older adults, and also provides analysis disaggregated by age for some of the employment-related indicators.

There were limitations in the analysis of the data. First, the number of years used to track the progress in different indicators has not been consistent. The analysis was constrained by the non-availability of data in certain years. Second, data that complements certain indicators was taken from secondary data sources and links were made in the analysis to explain and further elaborate on what the data suggest with an understanding that these are mere evidence-based commentaries and explanations. While care has been taken to make sure there is consistency between different sources, this invariable might account for some of the slight variation between years. Third, the analysis only used data which were verified and approved by Stats SA, thus some of the data which is widely available but has not been verified were left out. Finally, the scope of this exercise was limited to widely used indicators in MDG3. Thus, some useful indicators, particularly domesticated indicators (i.e. GBV, access to land tenure and so forth) were not included in the analysis, but an effort was made to discuss these in the post-2015 SDG section of the report.

The report is organised into seven sections. The first section gives an overview of the status of the indicators at a glance, summarising key achievements and failures in meeting the targets for MDG3. This section is followed by an executive summary that briefly synthesises key findings and observations, conclusions, and proposed recommendations. Section three offers a background and introduction to major contextual issues informing the current analysis. In this section, a brief review of the historical context and policy/legislative framework in the struggle for gender equity is summarised to contextualise the current analysis. Section four offers an introduction to the current analysis on the MDG 3, detailing key indicators analysed, methodology adopted, and briefly the theoretical/conceptual frameworks that guided the analysis. Section five discusses the findings, elaborating on the current status and trends in gender parity in education, employment, and leadership/political participation. This section also discusses key recommendations based on the data analysed. Section six of the report links the data, conclusions, recommendations observed in section five to post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) challenges and imperatives. Guided by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) 2014-framework document, this section frames the imperatives, discusses challenges and opportunities moving forward. The final section of the report offers concluding remarks.

Table 1: Status at a glance

	<i>Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2013.</i>						
Indicators	1994 baseline (or nearest year)	2010 Status (or nearest year)	2013 Status (or nearest year) 2015	Current status (2014 or nearest year) 2015	2015 Target	Target achievability	Indicator type
<i>GER & GPI at Primary School</i>	0.97:1 (1996)	0.98:1 (2009)	0.96:1 (2011)	0.99:1 (2013)	1:1	Achieved	MDG
<i>GPI Secondary</i>	1.13:1 (1996)	1.01:1 (2009)	1.07:1 (2011)	1.03:1 (2013)	1:1	Achieved	MDG
<i>GPI Tertiary</i>	0.86:1 (1996)	1.32:1 (2009)	1.38:1 (2011)	1.41:1 (2013)	1:1	Achieved	MDG
<i>Ratio of literate females to literate males 15-24 years</i>	1.1:1 (1996)	1:1 (2009)	1.0:1 (2011)	1.05:1 (2013)	1:1	Achieved	MDG
<i>Female share of non-agricultural wage employment (%)</i>	43 (1996)	45 (2010)	45 (2012)	45 (2013)	50	Not achieved	MDG
<i>Ratio of female unemployed to male unemployed 15-64 years</i>	1.1:1 (2001)	1.0:1 (2010) (government initiatives must focus on addressing key structural drivers of gender inequality, including patriarchal and harmful attitudes 2010)	1.0:1 (2011)	1.0:1 (2013)	1:1	Achieved	MDG
<i>Proportion of seats held by females in national parliament (%)</i>	25 (1996)	44 (2009)	44 (2009)	42 (2013)	50	Not Achieved	MDG

Sources: Snap Survey, DBE; HEMIS (DHET); Labour Force Surveys; Secretaries of Provincial Legislators

STATUS AT A GLANCE 2015

The table above summarises the achievements on indicators for Goal 3: *Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*. As illustrated in Table 1 above, South Africa has achieved 5 of the 7 indicators (including parity in education and employment security, and excluding the female share of non-agricultural wage and proportion of seats held by women in the national assembly).

Gender parity in education is reached when the gender parity index (GPI), defined as girls' gross school enrolment ratio divided by the corresponding ratio for boys, is between 0.97 and 1.03. Current trends in GPI show important gains at all levels of education with primary ratio at 0.99:1; secondary ratio at 1.03:1; and tertiary ratio 1.41:1 respectively, meaning that there are slightly more women enrolled in secondary schools and tertiary educational institutions. At the level of primary education the ratio of girls to boys enrolled is more or less equal. Moreover, the ratio of literate women to literate men ages 15 to 24 has also stabilised. This is significant improvement in the last 21 years since democracy. The indicator at secondary level mirrors the achievement of access with respect to tertiary level. At tertiary level, enrolment ratios have improved substantially over the years with more women enrolling in higher education and training; but considerable disparities in retention exist. Enrolment ratios of young women are higher than those of young men, which greatly impact the economic empowerment of women and girls in the long run.

With regard to indicators that relate to employment security and labour force participation, South Africa has made some notable progress since 1996. Employment rates for females have slightly increased but it is marginal and it remains lower than the employment figures for males. One of the indicators that measures gender disparity in the labour market is the time-related underemployment rate. It measures the percentage of employed men and women who are willing and available to work at a given time. In South Africa, the ratio of female unemployed to male unemployed for 15 to 64 years is 1.0:1, which indicates parity (i.e. ratio of women and men who are unemployed is similar, meaning that both genders have a lower likelihood of being employed).

Even though women's status and participation in the labour market is improving, gender disparity in access to paid employment still exists. The indicator that measures women's share of wage employment (wage earners or salaried employees) in the non-agricultural sector was targeted at 50% for the 2015 MDG and South Africa's score was 45%, resulting in the country not achieving the target. This means that more males are employed in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector than women. The proportion of women in non-agricultural employment is associated with a number of factors, including gender inequality in family roles, the absence of adequate and affordable childcare facilities, gender norms and/or other social perceptions, which play a significant role in the participation of women in wage employment, in their occupational choices, and in the employment patterns that reinforce gender disparities in the labour market. South Africa has enacted positive policies that include legislation on flexible time, parental leave, other codes of conduct and new working practices, as well as support in child and eldercare. These policy initiatives support family-friendly policies and encourage work/family balance, while acknowledging the multi-faceted reality of women's work both in the domestic realm and in the labour market.

The MDG3 indicator that measures the degree to which women have equal accesses to decision-making is the proportion of seats held by women in parliaments. The rationale behind this indicator is that a stronger presence of women in parliament allows women voices to be heard and new concerns

to be highlighted on political agendas, new priorities to be put on practice through the adoption of policies, initiatives and laws. Consistently, South Africa has seen a steady increase in the number of women represented and participating in politics, but glass ceilings remain. The proportion of women increased from 25% in 1996 and is currently at 42% in 2015, falling short of the MDG target of 50%. This is significant progress and the country has shown increased political commitment to levelling the playing fields in ensuring women are represented in political structures. Legislated or voluntary quotas were used to encourage equal representation. Such measures impact positively on women's access to opportunities for participant decision-making. However, quotas alone are not enough: leadership from political parties is needed to field more women candidates and to ensure that women are strategically positioned to lead and contribute to the country's progress.

Equally important is the representation of women in leadership positions. The percentage of women in ministerial posts at the executive level of government has also improved since 1996. A positive trend has been observed in the appointment of ministers, deputy ministers, speaker of the house, portfolio committee chairs, and other influential governance positions. For example, the country has opted to diversify leadership opportunities for women beyond traditionally so-called "soft" portfolios (such as Social Development, Education, Public Works, or Human Settlements), which continue to be more commonly held by women ministers; but also to more so-called "hard" ministerial portfolios (such as International Affairs, Defence, Mining and Industry, and the Environment). This is a positive development. Progress with respect to women representation in governance and the political will executed through such appointments will likely facilitate a culture of inclusion where women's participation in political decision-making becomes a norm. An area in which more focus is needed is in the senior managerial level both within the public and private sectors. Women are under-represented in senior level leadership positions both in the private and public sector. For example, female representation is low in the CEOs in parastatals (at 23%) and there are fewer female ambassadors (only at 30%) compared to men. In the private sector, women account for only 3.6% of CEO positions, 5.5% chairperson positions; 17.1% of directors are women and 28% of managers according to the Businesswomen's Association of South Africa (2011; 2012) annual censuses. These trends highlight that notwithstanding progress in advancing women in leadership, their representation is still low at the top levels of management. South Africa is, however, aggressively pursuing a robust private/public sector collaborative framework to address these gaps.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The dawn of democracy in 1994 presented South Africa with an opportunity to transform the country and its people economically, socially, and politically. Emerging from a historically challenging past where discriminatory laws and policies based on race, gender, and other markers of difference cemented access to opportunity and life chances, the country embarked on a transformation agenda aimed to redress past inequalities, transform oppressive systems, and respond to the need to increase the skills and life opportunities of all South Africans. Since 1994, government has implemented major policy reforms, legislations, and development frameworks all aiming to sustain democracy and progressively root out all forms of discrimination, including gender inequity. The *South African Constitution* commits the government to the achievement of equality between women and men by providing for the prohibition of racial, gender and all other forms of discrimination. The *Constitution* also emphasises that measures must be taken to promote the achievement of equality in all spheres of society. The right to fair employment, basic education, and civic participation has been made constitutional rights, with further opportunities for employment, education, and training having to be made progressively available.

Within the MDG framework, three indicators were identified to address gender equality and the empowerment of women:

- a. *Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education*
- b. *Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector*
- c. *Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament*

Progress towards the achievement of gender equality in education is measured through the ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education. The second indicator of progress towards the achievement of gender equality is the increasing share of women in non-agricultural wage employment. The final indicator of progress towards women's empowerment is the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament. Thus, while the key indicator here is the number of seats held by women in parliament, it is important to capture women's representation in political structures at lower levels as well. The participation of women in political decision-making bodies is critical for the achievement of gender equality in other areas because it enables them to prioritise gender equality in general and the empowerment of women in particular. Furthermore, women's leadership in other sectors such as the private sector must be prioritised to ensure that the glass ceiling is cracked open and significant progress towards women's empowerment is reflected in all sectors.

Gender parity in primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education

Gender parity in education is fundamental; it is a determinant of the likelihood of a country's successful attainment of all other targets and indicators. Education parity is a necessary precursor to securing improved levels of women's literacy, employment, participation in leadership and political stewardship of the country, and to bring about improvements in the quality of life for all women, especially those who have been historically marginalised. By 2015 gender parity in access / enrolment had been achieved, but substantive educational parity at especially secondary and tertiary levels remains a challenge.

- South Africa has, since 2002, achieved gender parity in enrolment of girls and boys in primary school. Since 2002, the rate of participation of girls has increased from 90.2% to 97.5% in 2013, thus indicating an improvement in access to primary school for girls and associated potential improvements in their basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- The rate of primary school completion is lower for historically marginalised girls – black African female girls are at a far greater risk of dropping out and not completing primary school (80% in 2013 completed) compared to white females (99% completed in 2013). However, the number of this greatly marginalised group completing primary school has increased substantially since 2002 when only 66% completed Grade 7.
- Gender parity in enrolment rates at secondary level where the rate of enrolment of girls has consistently exceeded that of boys.
- The proportion of girls enrolled has not, however, increased between 2002 and 2013. Enrolment of girls in secondary schools has never been universal and the proportion of girls enrolling in secondary schooling in 2013 has not increased, compared to 2002. Starting at 89% in 2002, it increased to a high of 91% in 2011, and dropped off again to 89% in 2013. On the other hand, the proportion of boys enrolled in secondary education has increased consistently from 87% in 2002 to 90% in 2013.
- Whilst parity has been achieved in broad enrolment rates at primary and secondary levels, there is still evidence that girls do not enjoy the same substantive educational opportunities as boys, and their participation in education is at a greater risk than boys, especially at secondary school level, as evidenced by the slower rate of increased participation at this education phase.
- Education parity is not evident in the numbers of boys and girls doing and completing certain subjects essential to girls' full participation in employment and the economy, such as mathematics, science, business administration and computer technology. This is particularly true for girls from poorer families and for girls from certain historically marginalised race groups.
- Girls are at risk of dropping out because of social, cultural and economic vulnerabilities. Early pregnancies, poverty, and violence creates an unsafe learning environment for girls, increasing their likelihood of dropping out. Thus, whilst fertility rates among adolescents have generally dropped, South Africa has a higher teen-pregnancy rate than similarly placed developing

countries such as Brazil and the rate increased in at least two provinces. There is a strong correlation between pregnancy in teen girls and their dropping out and not completing secondary schooling.

- Teen pregnancy and the associated risk of dropping out intersect with socio-economic vulnerabilities, with girls from poor backgrounds more at risk of early pregnancy and dropping out. Thus teen pregnancy poses a particular risk to advancing gender equality more broadly, especially among historically marginalised groups of young women.
- At a tertiary level, similar trends are observed – parity in enrolment has been achieved at an undergraduate level, but not at a post-graduate level and not substantively – with much lower levels of enrolment of women in Science, Engineering and Technology courses and degrees. The rate of enrolment in these courses has not improved since 2002.

Gender equality in employment

- The second indicator of progress towards the achievement of gender equality is the increasing share of women in wage employment in various sectors including non-traditional sectors such as mining, agriculture, and so forth. Gender parity in education is a significant factor behind the achievement of gender parity in wage employment. Globally, the proportion of women in vulnerable employment declined; yet the gap between women and men differ in terms of employment and due to pervasive occupational segregation, women being overrepresented in low paid jobs, women having less access to social protection, and women being paid on average less than men for work of equal value.
- In South Africa, the current status of women employed in the non-agricultural sector was reported at 45.0% in 2013, indicating just over 1% growth in the space of one year. The current status also shows the status 45.0%, which falls short of the target of 50%. Furthermore, the current data displays a significant regional and racial variation status of women employed in the non-agricultural sector, suggesting the reality that women’s employment opportunities are further limited by structural, cultural and disproportionate amounts of unpaid care work that they perform in households and beyond.
- South African women generally bear the brunt of unemployment, constitute the majority of casual or contract workers, generally occupy positions in low-wage sectors, and are poorly represented in senior and top management positions.

Gender equity in political participation and leadership

Progress towards women’s empowerment is measured in terms of the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament. It has been noted, however, that there has been an erosion of women representation in some areas, particularly in the number of mayors (African National Congress, 2012). Thus, while the key indicator here is the number of seats held by women in parliament, it is important to capture women’s representation in political structures at lower levels as well. The

participation of women in political decision-making bodies is critical for the achievement of gender equality in other areas because it enables them to prioritise gender equality in general and the empowerment of women in particular. Despite South Africa not achieving its target of 50% representation of women, significant progress has been made in the participation of women in all levels of government, public sector and the private sector.

- South Africa has made great progress since the first democratic elections in increasing the proportion of women in the national and provincial legislatures. At a national level, at 42%, it is only 8 percentage points below the MDG target of 50%.
- There has been an increase in the proportion of women in senior administrative positions. However, the increase has been more robust at a lower director-level, and less robust at the most senior – director-level.
- Within local government administration, women have considerably lower levels of representation (11%). It is arguable that this is the most critical level of representation and leadership, given that local government decisions impact on the daily quality of lives of women.
- High levels of representation at national and provincial (and local) levels within the legislative branch of government have not translated into political authority among women and influence over the allocation of resources to substantively improve the quality of women's lives.
- Women's representation in senior leadership positions in business has declined between 2010 and 2014.

Challenges to progress

- Measuring the change in relationships between females and males, as a measure of gender equality, is more difficult. If HIV and AIDS and Gender-based Violence (GBV) are indicators of gender relations and hence, gender equality, we are confronted with a huge challenge.
- The levels of GBV and prevalence and impact of HIV/AIDS on females and girls prevent the full realisation of gender equality in South Africa.
- While funding for research on treatment and delivery of treatment of ARVs is multi-fold, there are few interventions that focus on the catalysts that drive the HIV prevalence rate among females, are limited and often temporary.
- Institutional barriers to address GBV and/or HIV and hence, gender inequalities remain within education, health and social development structures.

While South Africa has been successful at addressing gender parity in education there is a need to address the issue of quality and the related "hidden inequality" in the content and context of learning materials, financial burden of schooling girls, attitudes of educators to female learners, the racialised, classed, and gendered context in which learning occurs, and institutional mechanisms that transmit and reinforce gender values and norms. South Africa has made significant progress in mobilising

female leadership, particularly in political participation. More effort is, however, necessary to enhance representation and leadership of women in municipal management, director-general positions, parastatals, and private sector. Increasing female participation in the labour force remains a challenge. Clear progress is being made in having females enter the formal non-agricultural labour market, but as seen in the current analysis, gender disparity remains. The findings illustrate that economic empowerment for women remain an intractable drawback. Although limitations still exist in achieving gender equity, there are signs that South Africa is moving in the right direction liberating both men and women from class, racial and cultural oppression.

The following recommendations are proposed:

- Direct programmatic interventions aimed at empowering girls and women with an emphasis on social and economic empowerment.
- Strengthen protection and expand labour rights for women who are involved in vulnerable “own account” work, particularly in the small-scale informal sector and unpaid family work.
- Invest in rural infrastructure to promote women’s access to agricultural transformation as a way to boost income for rural women.
- Facilitate stricter enforcement of equal pay laws and affirmative action programmes to ensure that qualified women are treated fairly in recruitment, remuneration, and retention processes.
- Remove structural barriers to economic mobility for women who choose to access higher paying and secure employment, particularly within the public and private sector.
- Enforce the implementation of social protection mechanisms targeted at supporting families and include at the very least, paid leave and/or maternity/paternity leave. These initiatives should target the poorest and most marginalised families.
- Invest in education infrastructure and environment, including providing quality teachers, equipped classrooms, and safe learning environments to improve the quality of education for women and girls.
- Address gender-biased cultural and religious practices² that marginalise women and girls.

² The debate in South Africa about the meaning of harmful cultural and religious practices is inconclusive. Commentators such as Ncobo-Mbele, 2009 have argued that cultural practices such as “ukuthwala” constitute early forms of forced marriages in which girls between the ages of 12 to 15 years are abducted and forced to marry adult males. This practice is also common in other non-African communities and is often manifested in many forms such as early marriages, forced marriages, human trafficking and so forth. Such practices directly and indirectly impact negatively on the development of the girl child resulting to social isolation, denial of the right to education, poor life skills, psychosocial harm, early pregnancy and childbirth and risk of exposure to HIV and AIDS. According to many researchers, this constitutes GBV as it is harmful to girls and it violates a number of national and international protocols. Nationally, Section 12(1) of the *Children’s Act*, No 38 of 2005 states that “a child has a right not to be subjected to social, cultural and religious practices which are detrimental to his or her well-being”. Section 12 (2) (a) further argues that “a child below minimum age set by law for a valid marriage may not be given out in marriage or engagement” and Section 12 (2) (b) states that “a child above the minimum age may not be given out in marriage or engagement without his or her consent”. Internationally, protocols such as the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, the *Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography*, the *UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime*, the *Palermo Protocol (1995)*, *The United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2000)* and so forth prohibit the exploitation and abuse of children based on cultural and religious practices.

- Strengthen interventions and sustainable funding geared towards addressing gender-based violence (GBV), particularly violence against women initiatives, gender empowerment programmes, and victim/survivor empowerment interventions. These should be complimented with increased initiatives targeting men and boys to address the root causes of GBV.

CONCLUSION

Gender equality in South Africa cannot be understood in a vacuum that only focuses on what has happened in the last 15 years. The gender inequalities that are structural in South Africa are embedded in race³. Women in every racial category (black African, coloured, Indian and white) are generally worse off than men of the same race and human endowment level (Ndinda & Uzodike 2012). There is a need to address structural inequalities (and vulnerabilities) alongside gender inequality to ensure that the most marginalised and oppressed women (black African and coloured) are uplifted. Race remains a key variable in understanding the achievements and vulnerabilities of diverse women in South Africa. South Africa has gifted the world with high-profile women (AU and UN women), yet having such powerful individuals on the international scene does not translate into gains for the ordinary masses of women who have to work out a living in insecure and de-regularised labour markets. The attainment of gender parity in education is a remarkable achievement. Yet such achievement does not give readers a glimpse of the experiences girls and women go through daily to attain their individual goals. Gender-based violence, which pervades both the public and private spheres (including schools, workplaces, and so forth), affects the qualitative experiences of women in South Africa and might explain the perceived barriers in leadership advancement. There is a need to qualitatively affirm and value the lived experiences of women and girls if the numbers that reflect parity or the lack of it are to be understood in context.

There is great value in collecting longitudinal qualitative data in that it aids and complements quantitative data on gender equality in diverse contexts. Yet the value placed on the quantitative indicators needs to be placed on the qualitative indicators to ensure greater understanding of the contexts in which gender parity or lack of it occurs. While the MDG goal report is about the achievements in gender equality and empowerment, the voices of women regarding these same issues remain silenced because of the reporting requirements. Going forward towards the SDG process, this report recommends the inclusion of quantitative domesticated indicators, complemented by qualitative accounts of women's lives in order to explicate deeper the diverse experiences of women, all working collectively towards gender equality and empowerment.

³ One cannot speak of inequality in South Africa without discussing race. Race has been and continues to be a lens in which advantage and disadvantage is structured in South Africa. Years of colonialism and race-based apartheid frames the manifestations of inequalities.

1. BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

“We, the women of South Africa, wives and mothers, working women and housewives, African, Indians, European and Coloured, hereby declare our aim of striving for the removal of all laws, regulations, conventions and customs that discriminate against us as women, and that deprive us in any way of our inherent right to the advantages, responsibilities and opportunities that society offers to any one section of the population.” (Preamble, Women’s Charter of 1954, 17 April: Johannesburg)

This monumental declaration is a preamble to an influential movement in the history of South Africa. As thousands of women visionaries marched sixty-one years ago at the Union Building in 1954 to declare their opposition to, amongst other things, colonialism and apartheid and its oppressive laws against women, their words of wisdom inspired a nation. Stemming from the triumphant march was a Charter for Women adopted at the founding conference of the Federation of South African Women a year before the historic Freedom Charter of 1955 was adopted. It expressed the philosophy and aims of achieving the empowerment of women and outlined the aspirations of women for the national liberation, emancipation, including political participation, and equality for women. It is within this historic and heroic context that this report analyses the progress made in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in South Africa: 61 years after the adoption of the Women’s Charter of 1954; 21 years after the advent of democracy in South Africa; 21 years after the adoption of the Women’s Charter for Effective Equality of 1994; 21 years after the country signed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and 15 years after the country signed the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Declaration.

This report serves as an ideal opportunity to reflect on South Africa’s progress in achieving women empowerment and gender equality in the context of critical areas highlighted in the 1994 Women’s Charter for Effective Equality that was informed in many ways by the Women’s Charter of 1954, and which are in congruence with the 12 critical areas identified in the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995, and the MDG process. Specific focus in the MDG process is women’s inclusion in educational, economic, and political empowerment. South Africa is committed to undertake a comprehensive national-level review of the progress made and challenges encountered in achieving gender-related indicators for the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women. It was envisaged that this review would contribute in understanding how gender equality and the empowerment of women can be strengthened in a post-2015 Development Agenda.

Since the dawn of democracy, the government has committed to a determined human rights framework. For example, the Women’s Charter for Effective Equality was adopted in 1994 to form the basis for all political, legal and legislative strategies on women. The *Women’s Charter for Effective*

Equality gave expression to the common experiences, visions and aspirations of South African women, providing the platform for women to voice their call for respect and recognition of their human dignity, rights and change in their status and material conditions in a future South Africa. Further international agreements include the *Dakar Framework for Action* (2000), the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (1995) and the *World Declaration on Education For All* (1990), and most importantly the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (2000), which this report comments on. The MDG process specifically addresses the issue of gender equity and women's empowerment. In addressing key MDG targets related to gender equality, the MDG framework focused on three indicators: firstly, the representation of women through the number and ratio of women to men and girls to boys in different societal sectors such as education, labour and employment, political representation, health, land and housing; and secondly, structural gender relations that manifest in the everyday power relationships between women and men. In the 2013 assessment of South Africa's progress towards attaining MDG 3, South Africa rated fairly successfully (particularly in terms of legislation and policy on gender equality and women's empowerment) and on its way to reaching its MDG targets.

Undoubtedly, government legislation on redressing racial and gender discrimination in education, labour market, and politics including legislation on gender equity, Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BEE), and other policy directives have helped to re-shape the apartheid landscape since democratic elections which brought the ANC into office in 1994. Government machinery/institutions were enacted through legislation, in particular the Chapter Nine Institution, *the Commission on Gender Equality*. Initially in addition to the *Commission on Gender Equality*, there was also an Office on the Status of Women within the Presidency, and accompanying provincial structures, and the Joint Monitoring Committee on the Improvement of the Quality of Life and Status of Women. In 2009, the Office on the Status of Women was restructured and a separate *Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities* was established and subsequently changed to a department in the presidency responsible for women in 2014. Other structures introduced included the *National Council on Gender-based Violence* (NCGBV) aimed at addressing sexual and gender-based violence, the *South African Integrated Programme of Action Addressing Violence against Women* (2013–2018), and the inter-ministerial committee to investigate the root causes of violence against women and children. These initiatives focused chiefly on addressing GBV, a phenomenon negatively impacting the nation.

The SA Constitution (1996) remains a central document that laid the foundation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. The constitutional vision of the realisation of equality, including equality between women and men, is an ideal to be pursued and achieved through the implementation of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. Subsequent to the Constitution, the following legislation and policy directives have been enacted (amongst others) and then the establishment of national and provincial gender machinery assisted in meeting the achievement of MDG 3. Many were implemented to comply with international human rights standards and obligations related to women's human rights and others were in response to South Africa's long

history of women's activism and advocacy for equity the duty of parties to take measures to eradicate inequality between women and men in all spheres of life, including the justice system, the family, societal practices and the economy. There are a range of laws enacted since the dawn of democracy that are key contributors to an enabling environment for women empowerment and the achievement of gender equality as well as aimed at combating, preventing, eliminating and eradicating all forms of crime including violence against women, trafficking in women and girls and promoting women's rights. These are indicated below.

1.1 LEGISLATION/POLICIES

- Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act No. 4 (2000), Amended: Judicial Matters Amendment Act No. 22 Section 16 (2005)
- Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act No. 23 (2007)
- Domestic Violence Act No. 116 (1998)
- Recognition of Customary Marriages Act No. 120 of 1998
- The Civil Union Act No. 17 of 2006
- National Contraception Policy: Guidelines within a Reproductive Health Framework (2001) à revision
- The Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Person Act No. 7 of 2013
- Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act No. 92 (1996); Amendment Acts (2004, 2008)
- National Directives and Instructions on Conducting a Forensic Examination on Survivors of Sexual Offence cases in terms of Act No. 23 (2007)
- Guidelines for Maternity Care in South Africa: A Manual for Community Health Centers and District Hospitals (2007)
- Sterilisation Act No. 44 (1988); Sterilisation Amendment Act No. 3 (2005)
- Government Notice 223, 6 March 2009
- Maintenance Act No. 99 of 1998
- National Development Plan 2030

In fact, the National Development Plan (NDP 2030) notes that the empowerment of women is central to the country's development agenda, particularly the empowerment of marginalised women (i.e. rural women) who comprise the majority among the poor. The NDP underscores that developing interventions aimed at promoting gender equality and women's advancement variables such as race and geography have to be considered. Among the targets and milestones listed in the National Development Plan (NDP) (National Planning Commission, 2012) which encapsulate the country's development targets for achievement before 2030, are those that relate to the attainment of gender equality and empowerment: "Ensure that skilled, technical, professional and managerial posts better reflect the country's racial, gender and disability make-up" and "Broaden ownership assets to historically disadvantaged groups", which presumably include women.

To promote women's empowerment and advancement, the NDP makes eight (8) recommendations with a view to dealing with the persistent poverty, marginalisation and exclusion of the masses of women who happen to be poor, rural African women. Some of the recommendations include the prioritisation of women in public employment, greater participation of women in the economy, women's participation in all levels of leadership, provision of basic infrastructural services (water, electricity and sanitation) with a view of freeing women from unpaid work and ensuring their involvement in paid work, ensuring the protection of women and children from crime, providing security of tenure, nutrition interventions for pregnant mothers and children, and expanding the coverage of anti-retroviral treatment as well as ensuring access to effective microbicides for the prevention of HIV when these are available (National Planning Commission, 2012). The implementation of these measures from the perspective of the NDP would improve the status of women and lead to greater empowerment of the most marginalised women in South Africa.

1.2 GLOBAL AND AFRICAN COMPARISONS: PROGRESS TOWARD GENDER PARITY

Compared to global trends, South Africa's progress on achieving Goal 3 targets is encouraging, with many improvements on achieving gender parity in educational and political access (i.e. primary and secondary school, number of seats females hold in national parliaments, and so forth). The composite gender parity index – capturing gaps in economic participation and opportunity, education attainment, health and survival and political empowerment – show increased improvement for South Africa and many countries. At the tertiary level, enrolment increased for females almost twice as fast as that for males over 1991–2010, and 10 countries substantially improved their gender parity in tertiary education. Given the importance of tertiary education to females, especially for enhanced income and social status, more countries are now emphasising it. South Africa's good performance in gender matters is evident on both international and regional indices, on the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) of the Organization for Economic index and was the top-ranked country in Africa (OECD Development Centre, 2012). On the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Gender and Development Index, South Africa ranked second in 2012, with a score slightly lower than that of the top performer, Seychelles (Lowe-Morna and Nyakujarah, 2012).

However, there remain challenges: Female non-agriculture employment is lower in South Africa and the trend is similar in the rest of the continent. For example, more than 60% of female workers are in vulnerable employment, compared to a third of male workers; and wage rates for males and females for similar work are still unequal in many African countries, with a female–male wage ratio of less than 0.5 in some. Most African countries have yet to benefit from a robust structural transformation from agriculture to non-agricultural industry and services. Nevertheless, women in Africa overall have fewer job opportunities in the non-agricultural industry than males do; females are more likely to work in services, which seems to be less skill-demanding. In 2012, only Latin America and developed regions surpassed its achievement.

South Africa has made steadier progress on increasing the proportion of seats females hold in national parliament than have other regions. However, women are generally underrepresented in local councils, provincial legislatures, and national leadership levels. A review of data from the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) worldwide shows a world average of 24% representation by females (the data combine female representation in both single chamber houses and with senates). Data on regional representation show Nordic countries have the highest representation of women (at 42%), followed by Europe (with 24%), the Americas (with an average of 24.2%) and sub-Saharan countries have a representation of approximating world averages (of around 21.3 %), with the exception of Rwanda and South Africa. For example, South Africa and Rwanda were ranked 14 and 16 in the global parity index in 2012, ahead of Canada and the United States of America.

2. INTRODUCTION

The report focuses on Goal 3 of the MDGs, which relates to the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment. The indicators are: (a) ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education; (b) share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector; and (c) proportion of seats held by women in national parliament. A range of data sources have informed the analysis and synthesis of the data including Stats SA's General Household and Labour Force and QLF Surveys, the Global Gender Gap Index, Gender Equity Index, The Gender Empowerment Measure, data from the World Bank Gender Portal, Department of Education Snap Surveys reports and the Department of Higher Education and Training Information System (HEMIS). Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data and trace progress (or lack thereof) and trends longitudinally in the achievement of gender parity. Table 2 below describes key indicators in our analysis, stakeholders, and data sources that have informed the analysis.

Table 2: MDG 3 indicators, data sources, and key stakeholders

Overall Focus	Stakeholders	Statistical sources
<i>Indicator:</i> gender parity in education (Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary)	The Office of the Status of Women; The Commission for Gender Equality; Department of Women; Department of Basic Education, Department of Higher Education and Training; Department of Labour; Portfolio Committee on Women; Trade Union Federations; Civil Society organisations; and universities, FETs, and SITAs.	Department of Basic Education Snap Survey, Department of Higher Education and Training (Hemis), Stats SA's General Household and Labour Force Surveys; publications of the Research Institute for Education Planning, QLFS.
<i>Indicator:</i> gender parity in wage employment for all women including non-agricultural and so forth)	The Office of the Status of Women; The Commission for Gender Equality; Department of Women; Department of Basic Education, Department of Higher Education and Training; Department of Labour; Portfolio Committee on Women; Trade Union Federations; Businesswomen's Association; Civil Society organisations; and universities, FETs, and SITAs.	Stats SA's Labour Force Surveys and QLFS; and the Global Gender Gap Index, Snap survey, HEMIS data, ASF.
<i>Indicator:</i> gender parity in political decision-making and leadership	The Office of the Status of Women; The Commission for Gender Equality; Department of Basic Education, Department of Women; Department of Higher Education and Training; Department of Labour; Portfolio Committee on Women; Trade Union Federations; Businesswomen's Association; Civil Society organisations; and universities, FETs, and SITAs.	GCIS, Global Database of Quotas for Women; the Gender Equity Index; the Gender Empowerment Measure; and World Bank Gender Portal.

The abovementioned indicators of progress towards the achievement of gender equality in education includes the ratio of females to males in primary, secondary and tertiary education; gender parity index

(GPI) for gross enrolment in primary education; and the ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education. Progress towards the achievement of gender equality in education (measured through the ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education) has been significant in South Africa. South Africa has made great strides in achieving good enrolment rates for girls and boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education over the years. According to South Africa's 2013 MDG country report, gender parity at the primary school level was almost achieved by 2009, while gender parity had already been achieved at the secondary and tertiary levels in the same year. Education is a universal social institution that takes different forms and contents, reflecting local specificities and historical contingencies. In South Africa, these specificities have been heavily influenced by the colonial legacies, apartheid, and the continued global-local dynamics that constitute an intrinsic part of education processes and policy formulation and design after apartheid. The current analysis of gender parity in education is located within such a context and background. Thus, it is important to acknowledge that parity between males and females loses significance if both males and females have low levels of achievement.

The second indicator of progress towards the achievement of gender equality is the increasing share of women in wage employment in various sectors. Gender parity in education is a significant factor behind the achievement of gender parity in wage employment. Progress towards the achievement of gender equality in the share of women in wage employment in various sectors is critical in facilitating social mobility and economic stability. Specifically, increasing the share of females in wage employment in various sectors including non-agricultural sectors such as mining, construction and so forth is key in the South African context because of the focus on access to the global knowledge economy. Globally, the proportion of women in vulnerable employment declined; yet the gap between women and men differ in terms of employment and due to pervasive occupational segregation, women being overrepresented in low paid jobs, women having less access to social protection, and women being paid on average less than men for work of equal value. Furthermore, women's employment opportunities are further limited by structural, cultural and disproportionate amounts of unpaid care work that they perform in households and beyond. In South Africa, women generally bear the brunt of unemployment, constitute the majority of casual or contract workers, generally occupy positions in low-wage sectors, and are poorly represented in senior and top management positions.

For example, the share of females employed in the non-agricultural sector in South Africa was 44% in 2008, according to a Stats SA report. In 2009 this proportion rose to 45.1%, indicating just over 1% growth in the space of one year. However, the 2010 MDG country report and the recent report of 2013 indicated that there was significant provincial and racial variation. Most importantly in this regard, however, the 2010 report noted that there was a need to develop measurements that better capture the complex dynamics of gender and employment in South Africa. One omission that both reports have made was looking at the plight of females with disabilities. Women with disabilities face multiple discriminations on the grounds of both their gender and impairment(s).

Gender discrimination in a disability context indicates that females and girls with disabilities are often at greater risk of abuse and violence, injury and neglect (Ellsberg & Heise, 2005). Violence against women can be a significant cause of preventable disability in the first place. In addition to causing injury, violence increases women's long-term risk of several health problems, including physical disability. According to a recent study (Khalema et al, 2014), violence and abuses against females with disabilities are often hidden, and there remains deep-seated stigma and shame connected to both sexuality and disability. This arises from the wide range of socio-economic, social, and cultural challenges that underpin aspects of gender inequalities that are not reflected in these indicators. One of these is racial variation, and another is women's access to senior occupational categories. This report presents data to outline:

- ✓ The share of women in wage employment (non-agricultural sectors) aggregated by race and region; and
- ✓ The ratio of females to males in selected occupational categories.

The final indicator of progress towards women's empowerment is the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament. It has been noted by the ANC, however, that there has been an erosion of women representation in some areas, particularly in the number of mayors (African National Congress, 2012). Thus, while the key indicator here is the number of seats held by women in parliament, it is important to capture women's representation in political structures at other levels as well. Thus, measuring the participation of women in leadership and decision-making bodies at both the public and private sector is also critical in understanding trends in gender equality. The participation of women in political decision-making bodies is critical for the achievement of gender equality in other areas because it enables them to prioritise gender equality in general and the empowerment of women in particular. The Constitution does not provide for quotas to ensure adequate representation of women in elected public bodies, nor are any legal quotas established for national or provincial elections. The report presents:

- ✓ The representation of women in the national assembly (i.e. number of seats);
- ✓ The representation of women in others structures of government (provinces, local government, mayors, ambassadorships, and so forth); and
- ✓ The representation of women in cabinet positions, parastatals, private sector and so forth.

2.1 THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS GUIDING THE MDG-3 REPORT

The analysis in this report draws on the theory and concept of intersectionality⁴ as useful theoretical lenses in understanding and explicating trends in gender inequality and women's empowerment 21 years into democracy. Intersectionality is deep-rooted in the work of oppressed marginalised peoples of the world from indigenous peoples, racialised minorities in pluralistic western societies (i.e. African-Americans), to activists in the developing world. The concept was, however, named and coined by Kimberle Crenshaw (1993) and has since become a subject of analysis in social theory. In simple terms the concept examines how multiple forms of oppression, exclusion and structural inequality interact in the lives of marginalised peoples to shape their experiences (Crenshaw, 1993).

Most commonly used in gender studies, intersectionality explores how the multiplicity of various forms of oppression intersects to shape the experience of marginalised women, particularly black African women. Having emerged from an oppressive apartheid past, intersectionality becomes a useful lens for interrogating how gender and race persist in entrenching the marginalisation of some women while at the same time privileging others in the same society. Intersectionality, therefore, argues that race is gendered and gender is raced and such conceptions compel us to interrogate the development programmes and outcomes aimed at gender equality and their effectiveness in transforming the lives of ordinary women.

Drawing from intersectionality as a theoretical construct, we postulate that women's status is not just a function of gender but also rather the result of how their different identities (such as sexual orientation, social class, geographic location, ethnicity, disability status, and so forth) interact to shape their experiences both in the private and public spheres. In the South African context analyses have employed intersectionality to explicate the status of women (Ndinda & Uzodike, 2012) in the economy and to examine women's position in different levels of leadership (both public and private sector). These analyses suggest that the position of women in the South African economy is mediated by a range of factors of which race and gender are central (Ndinda & Uzodike, 2012). Using the gender lens only in tracking transformation can be limiting due to the vast differences among women classified as black (Africans, coloured and Indians). We use the terms "women" and "females" interchangeably to explain the situation women and girls encounter within a lifespan context. The heterogeneity among women suggests that there is a need for the deconstruction of loaded classifications such as race and disaggregation of data if the nature of equality is to be understood and if measures taken to ensure women's empowerment are to have a lasting impact on the targeted groups.

⁴ Equally important theoretical framework was Bourdieu's (1977) concept of 'habitas', which questions structuralist interpretations of society and culture that is, the "primary experience of the social world" (Bourdieu, 1977: 32 quoted in Ndlovu, 2014). Bourdieu (1977) advises to take account of the environment in which people live, one that comprises of practices, habits, cultures, inherited expectations and rules. Regarding the empowerment and status of women in the South African context, Bourdieu's theoretical intervention foregrounds the reality in the South African context that a sense of deprivation may thus be linked to historical deprivation brought about by colonialism and apartheid and as such, redressing such deep-rooted inequalities requires a structural overhaul to break the perpetuation of inequalities.

3. CURRENT STATUS AND TRENDS IN EDUCATION

Since 1994, South Africa has tirelessly pursued transformation measures in all aspects of education, including those aimed at the advancement of girls and women. As an initial step towards transforming the education system, the White Paper on Education and Training was adopted in 1995. It provided the blueprint for the transition to a single, national non-racial education system. Law reform measures followed the adoption of the *National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996* and the *South African Schools Act 84 of 1996* was enacted to promote access to education for all. The *Basic Education Laws Amendment Act 2011* set the age admission into the first grade as a year in which the child turns seven.

Gender parity in education is reached when the gender parity index (GPI), defined as girls' gross school enrolment ratio divided by the corresponding ratio for boys, is between 0.97 and 1.03. Current trends in GPI show important gains at all levels of education with primary ratio at 0.99:1; secondary ratio at 1.03:1; and tertiary ratio 1.41:1 respectively, meaning that there are slightly more women enrolled in secondary schools and tertiary educational institutions. At the level of primary education the ratio of girls to boys enrolled is more or less equal. Moreover, the ratio of literate women to literate men ages 15 to 24 has also stabilised. This is significant improvement in the last 21 years since democracy.

The South African education system has fared well in advancing gender parity in early childhood development (ECD), Grade R and the enrolment of 7–15-year-olds attending schools and educational institutions. Statistics South Africa's General Household Survey (GHS) for 2002–2013 reports that in 2013, 44.7% of children aged 0 to 4 years old were attending an ECD facility. This is an increase of 37.4 percentage points since 2002, when only 7.3% of this cohort attended an ECD facility. With regard to attendance of ECD facilities of this age group by gender, there is gender parity. Although there were more female children in 2002, this changed from 2006 to 2012 where the percentage of children attending ECD facilities by gender is almost equal.

Table 3: Percentage of 0–4-year-old children attending ECD facilities by gender, 2002 to 2013

Gender	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Male	6.8	11.4	11.4	13.7	16.0	16.5	16.6	29.4	32.3	34.3	36.2	44.2
Female	7.7	11.8	11.5	14.9	16.1	15.7	16.7	29.4	32.4	34.7	36.9	45.2
Total	7.3	11.6	11.5	14.3	16.0	16.1	16.7	29.4	32.3	34.5	36.5	44.7
GPI	1.14	1.04	1.01	1.09	1.01	0.95	1.01	1.00	1.00	1.01	1.02	0.98

Source: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2002–2013, DBE.

In 2013, approximately 85% of 5-year-old children were attending ECD educational institutions as opposed to 39% in 2002. This indicates an increase of 46 percentage points of 5-year-old children attending educational institutions between 2002 and 2012 (Statistics South Africa, GHS, 2002–2013, DBE). In 2002, there were fewer female children aged 5 years attending educational institutions. However, this changed between 2004 and 2005, when almost equal numbers of male and female children in this age cohort were attending educational institutions. Gender parity was achieved in 2012 among 5-year-old children attending educational institutions. Gender parity for children 7–15 years attending schools in 2013 was achieved. Between 2012 and 2013, there are no noticeable differences between the percentage of males and females in this age group who were attending an educational institution (Statistics South Africa, GHS, 2002–2013, DBE). Compulsory schooling in South Africa is specified from 7–15-year-olds according to South African law. Data confirm that participation of 7–15-year-olds by gender shows that South Africa has reached gender parity at primary level. In 2013, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) for 7–15-year-old children was 1. According to the report “Education for All (EFA) 2013 Country Progress Report: South Africa”, gender parity in early childhood development has been achieved between 2007 and 2012 for female and male learners aged 0–4 years. The compulsory education age group is characterised by high enrolments, with 99% of children aged 7–15 years accessing schooling.

Table 4 : Percentage of 7–15-year-old children not attending an educational institution by gender, 2002 to 2014

Gender	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Male	3.9	3.2	2.6	2.3	2.5	2.4	2.2	1.7	1.4	1.3	1.5	1.4	1.2
Female	3.3	2.4	1.8	2.0	2.2	1.8	1.9	1.3	1.3	1.2	0.9	1.1	0.9
Total	3.6	2.8	2.2	2.2	2.4	2.1	2.1	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.0

Source: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey, 2002–2014, DBE.

The 2013 GHS found that over half a million children aged 7–18 years were out of school. That means that they were not attending any form of educational institution. In 2013, there were 1.3% of children aged 7–15 years who were not attending educational institutions; of this number 1.1% were female and 1.4% were male. Previous GHS surveys indicated that in 2002, more male compared to female children were out of school, with the gap closing between 2010 and 2013. In 2013, almost the same proportions of female and male children aged 7–15 years were out of school.

Older females are more likely to be out of school than males in this age group. The 2013 GHS found that 15% of females aged 16–18 years were not attending an educational institution compared to almost 13% of males in the same age group. While the percentage of females that were not attending

educational institutions had decreased from approximately 21% in 2002 to almost 15% in 2013, the percentage of males remained stable at an average of 14% between 2002 and 2013.

One of the indicators of MDG 3 is the educational attainment of girls relative to boys. By the year 2002, a high level of enrolment of boys and girls was estimated at 96.7%. The overall level of enrolment has increased to 99.3% that was recorded in the year 2013. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) was used to measure the relative access to education of females and males. It is calculated as number of women enrolled at school over number of males. The current status (2015) indicates substantial progress in the ratio of the equality of enrolment of boys and girls in primary, secondary and tertiary education with the ratios of 1:1 in all indicators. As shown in Table 5 below, the gender parity ratio oscillated between 1.01 and 0.99 between 2002 and 2008, and has been stable at 1.00 in the period 2009–2013.

Table 5: Participation of 7–13 year olds in educational institutions and gender parity index at primary school, 2002–2013

Year	Female	Male	Total	GPI
	Per cent			
2002	97.1	96.4	96.7	1.01
2003	97.9	96.9	97.4	1.01
2004	98.5	97.9	98.2	1.01
2005	98.4	98.1	98.2	1.00
2006	98.4	97.9	98.2	1.01
2007	98.0	98.6	98.3	0.99
2008	98.0	98.2	98.1	0.99
2009	99.0	98.8	98.9	1.00
2010	99.1	99.0	99.0	1.00
2011	99.1	99.0	99.0	1.00
2012	99.4	99.0	99.2	1.00
2013	99.4	99.1	99.3	1.00

Source: SNAP Survey, Department of Basic Education; Mid-year population estimates, Statistics South Africa

Additionally, Table 6 below shows the level of access of males and females aged 14–18 years. Males and females thus have equal opportunity to go to school and stay in school in South Africa. The first two numerical columns show the proportion of females and males who are at educational institutions. The GPI is slightly above one, thus indicating that at this age girls have

higher access to school. That said, it should be noted that the ratio has been declining over time, indicating that more males at age 14–18 years have been accessing school over time.

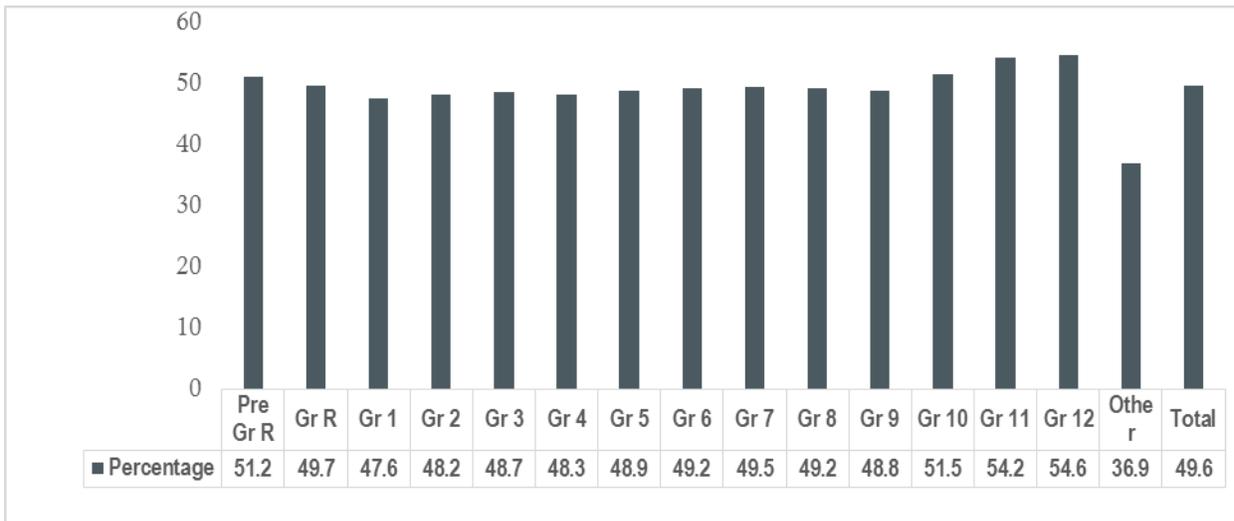
Table 6: Participation of 14–18-year-olds in educational institutions and gender parity index at primary school, 2002–2013

Year	Female	Male	Total	GPI
Per cent				
2002	89.3	85.9	87.7	1.04
2003	89.5	86.5	88.1	1.03
2004	89.9	87.2	88.6	1.03
2005	90	86.6	88.4	1.04
2006	88.9	87.1	88.1	1.02
2007	90	88.8	89.4	1.01
2008	89.6	88.7	89.2	1.01
2009	89.1	88.5	88.8	1.01
2010	89.6	87.6	88.6	1.02
2011	90.7	89.6	90.2	1.01
2012	89.8	91.1	90.5	0.99
2013	89.6	91.0	90.3	1.02

Source: SNAP Survey, Department of Basic Education; Mid-year population estimates, Statistics South Africa, 2003–2013.

The distribution of female learners in ordinary schools shows that more female learners access schooling increasingly. Figure 1 below shows trends of the percentage distribution of female learners in ordinary schools in 2014. At pre-Grade R there were slightly more girls than boys. From Grade 1 to Grade 10 there were more boys than girls in ordinary schools. Then at Grade 11 and 12 there were more girls than boys. This trend suggests that access to schooling has improved for women at the school age. There are barriers, however, in keeping more girls in school between Grade 1 and Grade 9. Figure 1 shows that, in the schooling system, there were more male than female (49.6%) learners. The lowest percentage of female learners in ordinary schools nationally was in Grade 1 (47.6%) and the highest percentage was in Grades 11 and 12 (54.2% and 54.6% respectively).

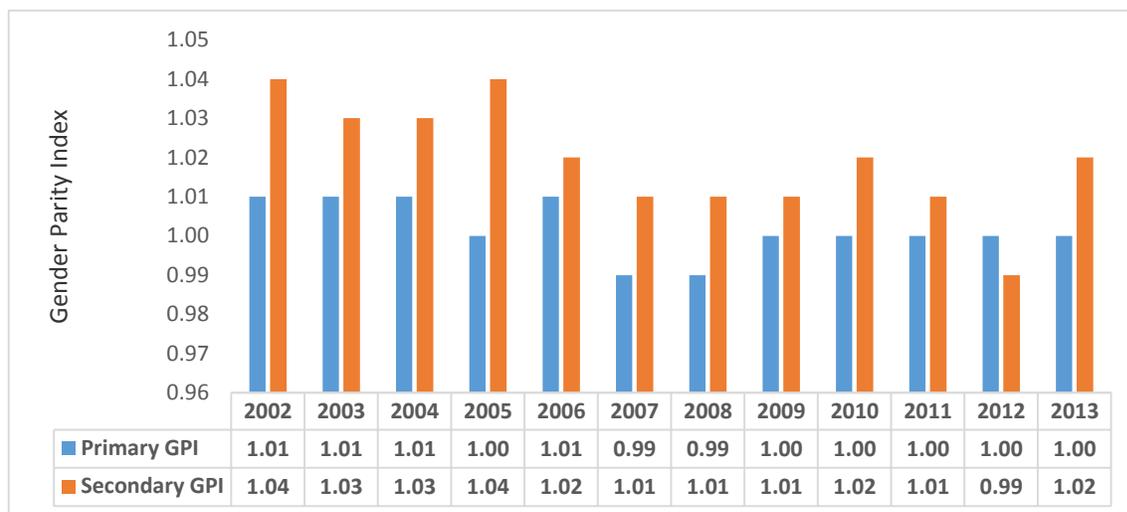
Figure 1: Percentage distribution of female learners in ordinary schools by grade in 2014



Source: Department of Basic Education 2014 School Realities; EMIS 2014.

Figure 2 below show that both in primary and secondary levels, the gender parity have remained at 1. As stated above, the parity is slightly higher at secondary school than primary, showing that male registration in secondary school is lower than that of females.

Figure 2: Gender Parity Index at primary and secondary school levels, 2002–2013



Source: SNAP Survey, Department of Basics Education; Mid-year population estimates, Statistics South Africa.

Researchers have offered explanations about this trend ranging from school dropout, unsafe learning environments, cost, teen pregnancies, and so forth (Bezuidenhout & Frans, 2003; Panday et al, 2009;

UNESCO, 2011; Swartz & Bhana, 2009; and Prinsloo, 2005). According to the African Development Bank (2008), secondary education is more costly per student in most African countries than primary education, and few low-income countries provide that level of education for free. Also, distance to school often increases at the secondary level, which is a barrier to entry. Dropouts in secondary education are a growing phenomenon in countries where youth are particularly affected by problems such as school violence, drugs and HIV/AIDS (African Development Bank, 2008).

Research by Branson, Hofmeyr, & Lam (2013) show how understanding the relationship between progress through school, cumulative socio-economic disadvantage, household income and parental support by controlling for these characteristics at the point just before the respondent dropped out. School completion presents a significant hurdle with very few youth successfully completing matric. In terms of the impact of poverty levels (or SES), Branson, Hofmeyr, & Lam (2013) conclude that students who are behind due to a number of stressors but were attending higher quality schools are partially protected from dropping out. For example, the estimates of progression through school are broadly aligned with those reported in the Grade Retention Report (Department of Education, 2007). Researchers identify the reasons for school dropout for girls as pregnancy or childbirth (Gustaffson, 2011; Marteleto et al, 2008; Rosemberg et al, 2015). Over 24% of girls who had dropped out reported that this was due to being pregnant or having a baby. This is lower than the estimate by Gustaffson (2011) who found that 42 per cent of female dropouts reported teenage pregnancy as their reason for dropping out. The most common reason given by males (23%) is that they could not afford to stay in school. This is also the second most common reason given by females (18%). Survey paints a similar picture; of young adults under the age of 21 who are not enrolled in any form of education, almost 30% cited financial constraints (Gustafsson, 2011).

The link between teen pregnancy, socio-economic status, and girls dropping out of school has been explained in various ways. In this study Marteleto et al (2008) show that enrolment rates are above 95% for both African and coloured girls up to age 13. Girls who will eventually experience a teen pregnancy begin to show declines in enrolment rates around age 14, including those who do not get pregnant until age 17. For example, 11% of black Africans and 35% of coloured girls who had a first pregnancy at age 17 were not enrolled in school at age 16. This an important point, as most research on pregnancy makes the assumption that young women who report that they dropped out of school due to a pregnancy would have stayed in school otherwise. A number of researchers in the area also suggest that factors such as lack of social and economic opportunities for young women may result in school dropout and poor academic performance (Mensch et al 2001; Rosemberg et al, 2015). About 50% of African girls who get pregnant before completing high school were enrolled in school in the year after the pregnancy. Coloured girls, on the other hand, have mostly dropped out of school by the year following the pregnancy, and rarely return to school after the birth of a child. Rosemberg et al (2015) argue that school dropout is associated with sexual risk behaviours including multiple

partnerships, older partner age, unprotected sex and transactional sex, and with higher HIV prevalence.

Other studies have suggested that teen pregnancy among school enrollees leads to subsequent school dropout (Grant et al, 2008; Panday, 2009) though, in the South African context, teen pregnancy is not completely incompatible with further schooling (Marteleto et al, 2008). Conversely, school dropout among non-pregnant teens may lead to subsequent pregnancy. Young women who receive incentives to stay in school report fewer pregnancies (Baird et al, 2010), though the effects of school enrolment cannot easily be isolated from the effects of the incentive itself.

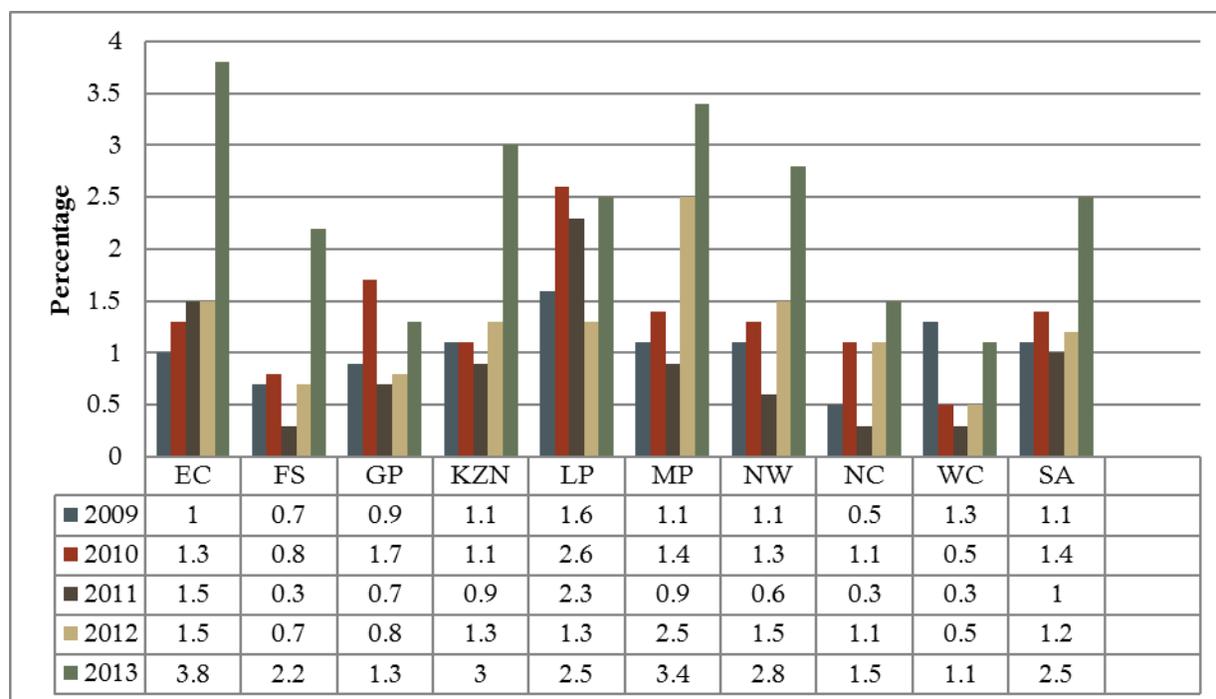
South African researchers have identified multiple drivers of high levels of teenage pregnancies. For example, even though South Africa has witnessed a decrease in the adolescent fertility rate (births per 1 000 women aged 15–19) from 80.6% in 2000 to 59.2% in 2010 as reported in the UNDP (2014) report, teen pregnancy still remains higher than other countries such as Brazil (whose rate is 4.3%) according to Kanku & Mash (2010). The rate varies, however, among different groupings of teenagers in South Africa, with socio-economic status noted as a significant factor in the likelihood of girls becoming pregnant (Swartz & Bhana, 2009). Research also shows that “teenage pregnancy, particularly in poor communities, is embedded in a web of social relationships” (Mkhwanazi, 2010, p. 5). For example, learner pregnancies occur more frequently in schools that are poorly resourced, those located in poor neighbourhoods (no-fee schools and schools located on land independently owned), as well as in schools that involve considerable age mixing (combined schools) (Panday et al, 2009).

Other factors that affect young women’s likelihood of falling pregnant include: access to sexual information, health services and contraceptives; knowledge of contraception; sexual debut and partner’s age; violence and coercion; cultural practices; and poverty (Macleod & Tracey, 2010). Thus, poverty, inequalities, sexual abuse, poor information, stigma and limited access to health services create conditions which limit young girls’ abilities to prevent and address unintended pregnancy. Girls dropping out of school due to pregnancy often prevent them from achieving a better quality of life. While being vulnerable to pregnancy, teenage girls are also at risk of contracting HIV and AIDS as well as other forms of sexually transmitted diseases. The impact of youth falling pregnant in schools will leave an indelible gap when it comes to having skilled and educated youth going out into the workplace. The Basic Education Department has mentioned that they are having problems in closing the gap of teenage pregnancies. Life Orientation classes in schools are there to inform the learners of the dangers of teen pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. Researchers have also indicated that there health, economic, and social consequences associated with teen pregnancy (Panday et al, 2009; Swartz & Bhana, 2009; Bezuidenhout & Frans, 2003). Bezuidenhout and Frans (2003) state that the causes of teenage pregnancy include home conditions of the unmarried mother, early independence, lack of information, problem-solving behaviour, peer group influence, beliefs about fertility, poor self-image, the influence of the media, the attitude of the community, risk-taking behaviour, early menarche, loneliness, low education level, contraceptives, coercive sexual relations and role models in their

communities. Girls who give birth at a young age have a higher risk of maternal death and infant mortality. Those who survive, often have to face obstetric complications and the challenges surrounding low birth weight. Furthermore, economic consequences include girls being forced to drop out of school, which lowers their chances of finding employment. This in turn lowers the family income and leads to a higher dependency ratio as they are forced to depend on parents or grandparents to provide for the newborn.

This situation further exacerbates the poverty cycle already prevalent within illiterate communities and in this way the shackles of poverty are passed from one generation to the next. Social consequences include girls facing stigma and discrimination from both peers and elders. They have less support and spend their days in a home environment, which is not stimulating. Their education will take a back seat, as pregnancy issues will first lead to poor academic performance and school absenteeism before they become school dropouts. These girls very rarely return to school after they have given birth, which means that they must catch up to the rest of their peers while juggling to take on the new role of motherhood.

Figure 3: Percentage of female learners that fell pregnant, 2009 to 2013



Source: Statistics South Africa, General Household Survey (DBE own calculations), 2008–2013.

Figure 3 above shows that in 2013, the percentage of learners attending schools that fell pregnant increased compared to 2009. In 2013, 2.5% of female learners nationally were pregnant in schools compared to 1% in 2009. Additionally, Table 7 below shows the number of pregnant learners in different provinces between the years 2008 and 2011. As seen in Table 7, most provinces in the

country have seen a decline in a number of pregnant school learners. Some provinces have achieved more reduction than others. Gauteng remains the largest province to report teen pregnancies at 5 273 cases in 2012, followed by Mpumalanga at 4 296 cases, and the Eastern Cape at 4 130 cases in 2012. The Free State and North West provinces remain low in the country with 338 cases and 292 cases in 2012 respectively. The notable difference has been in the Western and Northern Cape, where there has been an increase in the number of learners who fell pregnant.

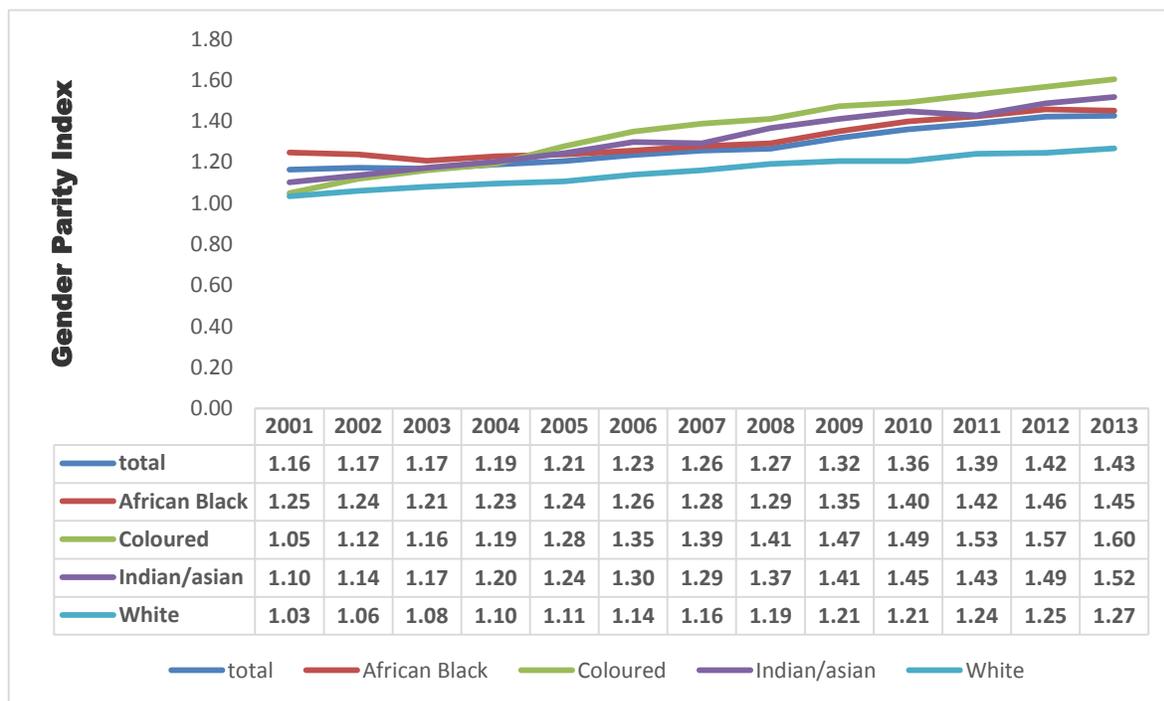
Table 7: Pregnant school learners by province, 2008–2012

Province	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Eastern Cape	8 674	8 420	6 516	5 126	4 130
Free State	1 390	798	809	672	338
Gauteng	3 923	5 272	4 013	4 217	5 273
KwaZulu-Natal	14 688	12 954	14 340	10 577	3 562
Limpopo	10 823	10 323	2 310	1 508	1 041
Mpumalanga	5 479	5 794	5 280	4 719	4 296
Northern Cape	780	232	929	869	840
North West	1 878	271	372	222	292
Western Cape	1 983	1 212	2 133	2 095	2 516
Total	49 618	45 276	36 702	30 005	22 288

Source: Annual School Survey, Department of Basics Education 2008–2012.

With regards to gender parity in tertiary level, access for women has been increasing over time with enrolment rates widening. Figure 4 below shows the Gender Parity Index at tertiary level by race. Among all racial groups in South Africa, more females than males are registered at tertiary level. The gender gap is highest among coloureds, and lowest among whites.

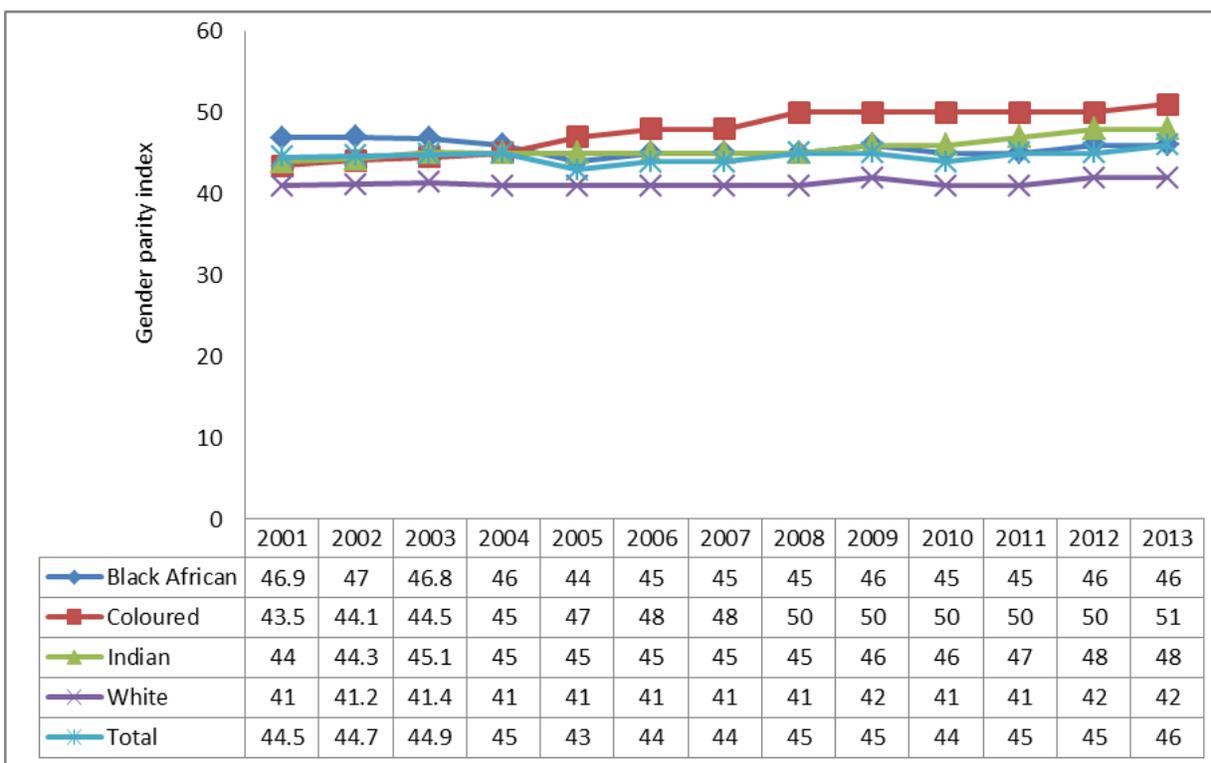
Figure 4: Gender Parity Index at tertiary level by race, 2001–2013



Source: Education Management Information System, Department of Higher Education and Training; Mid-year population estimates, Statistics South Africa.

In contrast to the gender distribution of registration in tertiary education, the gender distribution in tertiary Science, Engineering and Technology is in favour of men. Whites have the lowest proportion of females registered in these ‘hard’ sciences; on the other hand, coloureds have a greater proportion of women registered. Figure 5 below describes the distribution of the representation of women by race in tertiary Science, Engineering and Technology between 2000 and 2013.

Figure 5: Representation in tertiary Science, Engineering and Technology, 2001–2013



Source: Department of Higher Education and Training.

The indicator at secondary level mirrors the achievement of access with respect to tertiary level. At tertiary level, enrolment ratios have improved substantially over the years with more women enrolling in higher education and training; but considerable disparities in retention exist. In terms of enrolment in higher education, Table 8 below reveals considerably higher proportion of women at the undergraduate level, and this proportion declines at the postgraduate level, as more men are likely to register at these levels.

Table 8 : Female share of tertiary students by type of institution and level, 2013

	Total	Masters and above	Total postgraduate
Comprehensive	482 518	15 401	60 336
Female	293 756	7 226	36 089
Male	188 760	8 175	24 247
Unknown	2	0	0
Female share (%)	60.9	46.9	59.8
Universities	342 174	48 616	93 468
Female	200 352	23 630	51 508
Male	141 812	24 983	41 957
Unknown	10	3	3
Female share (%)	58.6	48.6	55.1
Universities of Technology	159 006	4 239	5 946
Female	79 590	1 893	3 027
Male	79 416	2 346	2 919
Female share (%)	50.1	44.7	50.9
Total	983 698	68 256	159 750
Female	573 698	32 749	90 624
Male	409 988	35 504	69 123
Unknown	12	3	3
Female share (%)	58.3	48.0	56.7

Source: Higher Education Management Information System, Department of Higher Education and Training.

When it comes to literacy rates, Table 9 shows that girls' and boys' illiteracy rates have declined in recent years, making their options to enrol in higher education possible in the long run. Among all races, literacy rates are higher among women aged 15–24 years. The gender disparity is higher among Africans and lowest among whites and Indians/Asians.

Table 9 : Ratio of literate females to males aged 15–24 years by population group, 2002–2013

Population group	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Black African	1.07	1.07	1.08	1.06	1.05	1.06	1.04	1.05	1.05	1.05	1.05	1.05
Coloureds	1.01	1.00	1.01	1.01	1.02	1.01	1.02	1.05	1.01	1.01	1.03	1.04
Indian/Asian	1.01	1.03	1.01	0.95	0.99	1.02	1.01	1.01	1.01	0.99	1.00	1.00
White	1.01	1.00	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.00	1.01	0.99	1.02	1.01	1.02
Total	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.05	1.04	1.05	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.05

Source: General Household Survey 2002–2013, Statistics South Africa.

Table 10 below shows the distribution of the female to male ratio of literacy over provinces. The table reveals that there is a high spatial difference. Eastern Cape has a considerably higher female ratio of literacy than other provinces.

Table 10: Ratio of literate females to males aged 15–24 years by province, 2002–2013

Province	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Eastern Cape	1.17	1.15	1.15	1.13	1.08	1.17	1.15	1.12	1.14	1.12	1.12	1.12
Free State	1.06	1.03	1.03	1.04	1.05	1.05	1.04	1.04	1.03	1.05	1.02	1.02
Gauteng	1.04	1.04	1.03	1.01	1.04	1.02	1.00	1.02	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.04
KwaZulu-Natal	1.04	1.07	1.03	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.03	1.05	1.04	1.03	1.04	1.03
Limpopo	1.08	1.06	1.09	1.07	1.06	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.02	1.02
Mpumalanga	1.03	1.09	1.08	1.06	1.07	1.05	1.02	1.03	1.02	1.06	1.05	1.03
North West	1.09	1.00	1.03	1.03	1.02	1.05	1.00	1.05	1.06	1.04	1.02	1.07
Northern Cape	0.94	0.99	1.00	1.09	1.05	1.11	1.04	1.03	1.03	1.06	1.05	1.02
Western Cape	1.03	1.01	1.08	1.05	1.03	1.05	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.03	1.03

Source: General Household Survey 2002–2013, Statistics South Africa.

While there has been an increase over time in the overall completion rate of Grade 7, Table 11 and Figure 6 show that the completion rate is racialised and gendered. Table 11 below shows the completion rates for males as consistently higher than that of females since 2002, where 84.9% of males completed Grade 7 in 2013 as compared to the female rate of 82.5% in the same year. When aggregated by race or population group, a clear pattern emerges that shows higher rates for white men and women (98.9% and 99% respectively), followed by Asian/Indian men and women (95.9% and 89.7% respectively), followed by coloured men and women (87.5% and 87.8% respectively), and finally black African men and women (82.2% and 79.3% respectively) in 2013. The racialised pattern shows that when it comes to Grade 7 completion rate, white South African men have larger numbers than all other population groups. There is also variation amongst women of all races whereby white females complete Grade 7 in larger numbers than all other females in the same grade.

Table 11 : Grade 7 school completion of population 20+ by sex, 2002–2013

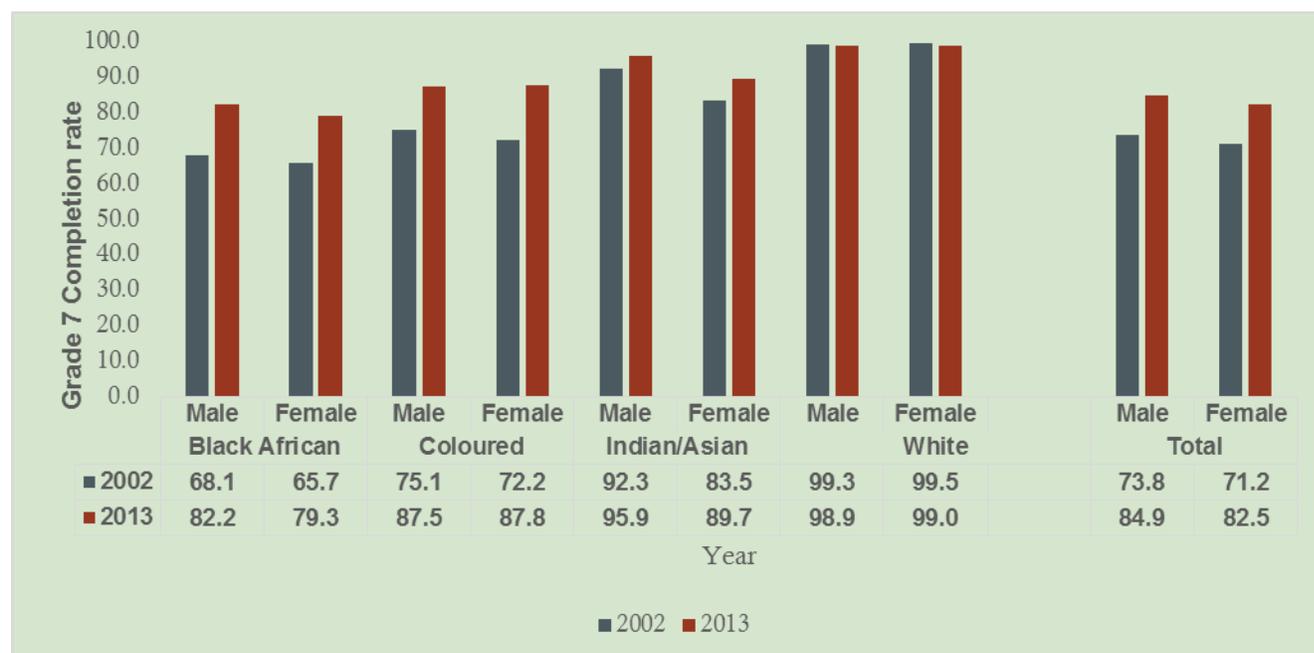
Educational level	Gender	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
	Male	73.8	76.3	76.1	77.7	78.1	78.7	79.7	82.4	82.8	83.7	84.7	84.9
	Female	71.2	72.5	73.8	73.7	74.4	75.7	75.3	78.8	79.5	80.7	82.0	82.5
% Grade 7+	Total	72.4	74.3	74.9	75.6	76.2	77.1	77.4	80.5	81.1	82.1	83.3	83.6

Source: General Household Survey 2002–2013, Statistics South Africa.

The primary, secondary and tertiary education enrolment and completion rates are an indication of the success of South African policies and educational strategies for gender equality. In South Africa access to primary and secondary education is high with a nearly full enrolment rate for both girls (98.6%) and boys (98.3%) between 7 and 15 years. Government policies such as ‘no fee’ schools and the school nutrition programme have contributed to the high enrolment rates (OECD, 2012).

The success is unevenly distributed across the educational sector, for example males remain the highest enrolment in Science, Technology and Engineering disciplines. This is an indication that we have to focus on increasing the enrolment rates of girls and young women to enter these disciplines. In addition to the provision of access to education, we also need to focus on the quality of education at primary, secondary and tertiary schools. Literature indicates the challenges of the dual educational system (private and public schooling) and highlights that a “minority of learners (roughly 25%) who attend mostly functional schools and perform acceptably on local and international tests while the majority of learners (roughly 75%) perform extremely poorly on these tests” (Fleisch, 2008 and Fleisch et al, 2012) cited in Spaul, 2013, p437. The quality of education is determined through what is described as ‘functionality’ where schools have the necessary infrastructure, resources and teachers to stimulate and sustain learning of children and young adults.

Figure 6: Grade 7 school completion of population 20+ by sex and population group (race), 2002–2013



Source: Labour Force Survey 2001–2007 Statistics South Africa; Quarterly Labour Force Survey 2008–2013 Statistics South Africa.

In addition schools often have to deal with the socio-economic challenges of the communities they are located in, hence the provision of food at schools and a safe learning environment. The safe schools initiatives that have been advanced nationally aim to provide safe environments for learning that allow educators, learners and communities to work without fearing for their lives (Prinsloo, 2005). School safety foregrounds the issue of quality and research has indicated that in addition to access –which the current MDG 2 report on education suggests is positive – quality is equally critical (Prinsloo, 2005; Stats SA, 2012; Medical Research Council, 2010). For example, among the reasons stated for not attending schooling in the *General Household Survey 2012 Report* focusing on schooling was “lack of transport” (1%) and “safety at school” (1%). School safety is a prerequisite for effective teaching and learning and for the delivery of quality education. Regrettably, many children attending schools in South Africa do not feel safe. A survey undertaken by the Medical Research Council (MRC) in 2010 also found that more than one-quarter of learners (27%) felt unsafe at school. This was the case for both girls and boys. Significantly fewer white (13.8%) and Indian (13.7%) learners felt unsafe at school when compared to black African (27.6%) and coloured (28.5%) learners (MRC, 2010).

The violence that most learners encounter in schools takes place against the backdrop of a violent South African society. Women and girls are often most vulnerable, particularly to various forms of gender-based violence – violence that is either directed against women and girls because they are female, or violence that affects women and girls disproportionately. Additionally, schools have become

spaces for violence to flourish. South Africa's written submission to the *World Education for All Forum*, an assessment of the state of education in the country, identified the possession of weapons by students, sexual abuse, the use of alcohol and drugs on school premises, and burglaries as having a debilitating effect on the morale of school managers, educators, and governing bodies.

School violence emanates from a variety of sources: violence may be perpetrated by teachers, by students, and even by strangers to the school community. Teachers continue to inflict physical violence on their students in the form of corporal punishment. Although corporal punishment is illegal in South Africa, many teachers still see violence as an appropriate tool for child discipline and continue to physically assault children by caning, slapping, and beating them to maintain classroom discipline, or to punish poor academic performance or improper behaviour. High levels of racially motivated violence among students in formerly white, coloured, and Indian schools that are being integrated have been reported. The insecurity of the school environment presents a situation in which children are routinely exposed to violence, which makes learning difficult and dropout possible.

The achievement of education for all has been fast-tracked by national education policies that greatly impacted on access to learning. They include the introduction of the *No-Fee Schools Policy*, the *National School Nutrition Programme* and other initiatives aimed at retaining learners in schools that have led to dramatic increases in both primary and secondary school enrolment. Many young children living in poverty are food-deprived and are therefore not able to participate fully in their own development. The National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) aims to promote better quality education for the poorest learners by providing a daily meal to learners benefiting from the programme. In the 2010–2011 financial year, a total of 8 281 927 learners in 20 815 schools were reached: 6 536 744 learners in 17 315 primary schools and 1 745 183 learners in 3 500 secondary schools. Since 2008, the budget of the programme has progressively extended to include poor learners in secondary schools and in 2013, it provided over 8 million learners in over 20 000 schools.

The *No-Fee Schools Policy* has been of support to children from poor families as well as orphans, where in 2012 at least 6% of all children attending school were orphans. In 2012, 97.5% of learners who did not pay schools fees indicated that schools did not ask for fees or the school was a “no fee-paying school”. There was an increase in the percentage of children who are not paying school fees from 94% in 2009 to 97.7% in 2012. The increase in the percentage of learners not paying school fees augurs well with the government for making schooling more accessible through the introduction of no fee schools. Furthermore, it confirms that the national education policies are being implemented successfully in the provinces.

In 2012, Government introduced the Integrated School Health Policy, which is linked to the National Health Insurance (NHI) and the revitalisation of primary health care in schools. The policy aims to provide a more comprehensive package of services, which addresses not only barriers to learning, but also other conditions which contribute to morbidity and mortality amongst learners during both

childhood and adulthood. The programme also includes a new, more prominent emphasis on the provision of health services in schools, which previously only conducted health screenings and referrals. School-based health services are also set to expand over time, as are services for learners with special needs. More effort is also required on training public servants to assist with implementation of the policy.

4. CURRENT STATUS AND TRENDS ON EMPLOYMENT

“Women, like their male counterparts, have access to more economic opportunities in urban areas than in rural areas. This is because urban labour markets offer a wide variety of occupations, from manufacturing and services to clerical activities. Thus, an increased urbanisation rate is expected to lead to higher levels of gender equality in employment.” (Anyanwu, & Augustine, 2013)

With regard to indicators that relate to employment security and labour force participation, South Africa has made some notable progress since 1996. Employment rates for females have slightly increased but it is marginal and it remains lower than the employment figures for males. One of the indicators that measures gender disparity in the labour market is the time-related underemployment rate. It measures the percentage of employed men and women who are willing and available to work at a given time. In South Africa, the ratio of female unemployed to male underemployed for 15–64 years is 1.0:1, which indicates parity (i.e. ratio of women and men who are unemployed is similar, meaning that both genders have a lower likelihood of being employed).

Even though women’s status and participation in the labour market is improving, gender disparity in access to paid employment still exists. The indicator that measures women’s share of wage employment (wage earners or salaried employees) in the non-agricultural sector was targeted at 50% for the 2015 MDG and South Africa’s score was 45%, resulting in the country not achieving the target. This means that more males are employed in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector than women. The proportion of women in non-agricultural employment is associated with a number of factors, including gender inequality in family roles, the absence of adequate and affordable childcare facilities, gender norms and/or other social perceptions which play a significant role in the participation of women in wage employment, in their occupational choices, and in the employment patterns that reinforce gender disparities in the labour market. The current data displays a significant regional and racial variation status of women employed in the non-agricultural sector suggesting the reality that women’s employment opportunities are further limited by structural, cultural and disproportionate amounts of unpaid care work that they perform in households and beyond. South African women generally bear the brunt of unemployment, constitute the majority of casual or contract workers, generally occupy positions in low-wage sectors, and are poorly represented in senior and top management positions. South Africa has enacted positive policies that include legislation on flexible time, parental leave, other codes of conduct and new working practices, as well as support in child and eldercare. This calls for more family-friendly policies, which not only encourage a better work/family balance, but also that values and complements the multi-faceted reality of women’s work both in the labour market and the household level.

While there is a lower share of women in both agricultural and non-agricultural employment, the proportion of women in wage agricultural employment is lower than in wage non-agricultural

employment, as shown in Tables 12 and 13 below. Eastern Cape has the higher share of women in non-agricultural wage employment and North West has the lowest. Table 12 below show that in 2013, the overall share of women in South Africa was 44.7%, and the distribution in various districts varied from 40.2% in North West to 48.3% in Eastern Cape.

Table 12: Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, 2002–2013

Province	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Western Cape	48.5	47	47	46.4	47.4	48.9	46.7	43.9	45.0	45.9	46.6	47.2	46.8
Eastern Cape	51.8	53.2	50.8	49.6	49.3	48.8	48.4	47.9	48.3	48.7	48.4	47.2	48.3
Northern Cape	50	46.4	46.8	47.2	43.9	45.5	42.2	44.3	47.5	49.3	45.5	47.7	46.3
Free State	45	47.9	43.6	43.6	44	45.4	44.7	44.7	46.0	45.4	43.2	43.7	46.7
KwaZulu-Natal	46.9	47	47.3	47.8	45.4	47	46.3	45.4	46.7	45.7	45.1	45.1	46.6
North West	39.2	36.6	38.5	37.4	39.5	38.1	40.1	39.4	39.0	39.1	38.8	40.7	40.2
Gauteng	41.3	42.3	41.3	40.4	40.2	40.8	40.7	41.4	41.5	40.0	41.6	41.7	42.3
Mpumalanga	40.9	40.4	40.4	38.6	37.7	39.1	39.7	44.0	45.2	44.9	43.6	44.3	42.5
Limpopo	48.3	48.6	48.8	46.4	43.7	43.3	48	47.3	46.0	44.0	44.9	43.3	46.7
South Africa	44.9	45.2	44.5	43.8	43.3	44.1	43.9	43.7	44.2	43.6	43.9	44.0	44.7

Source: Department of Agriculture, LFS 2001–2007; Quarterly Labour Force Survey 2008–2013, Statistics South Africa.

As stated above, Table 13 below shows that the share of women in wage employment in the agricultural sector is considerably lower than that of the non-agricultural sector. Thus, in 2013, 31.4% of women were found in this sector. The share varies widely between provinces. In Northern Cape, for instance, only 25% of the agricultural employees are women. KwaZulu-Natal has the highest share of women in wage employment in the agricultural sector, estimated at 41.6%.

Table 13: Share of women in wage employment in the agricultural sector, 2002–2013

Province	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Western Cape	36.0	38.9	40.2	39.5	40.7	39.6	35.7	31.9	39.4	36.3	36.2	35.7
Eastern Cape	25.7	19.5	22.3	19.6	18.1	22.7	29.9	31.4	31.6	29.4	29.3	31.6
Northern Cape	14.6	16.1	13.5	21.6	23.7	25.0	25.6	24.9	29.1	17.2	23.7	25
Free State	17.6	15.5	21.2	21.5	20.5	21.1	24.2	18.6	18.7	16.1	28.8	25.5
KwaZulu-Natal	40.2	34.8	35.5	37.7	37.0	37.0	40	41.7	42.1	43.9	40.2	41.6
North West	24.1	20.3	18.8	15.2	21.1	21.8	23.8	13.8	18.0	11.5	15.0	23.3
Gauteng	14.2	29.6	40.6	50.3	40.4	46.6	23.7	28.4	46.2	40.3	41.9	30.6
Mpumalanga	28.7	34.2	33.2	28.8	33.8	38.6	34.1	37.8	32.1	34.2	27.9	27.4
Limpopo	44.7	49.2	47.8	40.3	38.3	37.6	48.5	51.1	45.9	45.3	38.6	30.0
Total	30.5	30.8	32.6	30.9	31.4	34.1	32.9	32.6	35.0	33.1	33.3	31.4

Source: Department of Agriculture, *Labour Force Survey 2001–2007*; Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Statistics South Africa, 2002–2013.

Table 14 below shows the sex distribution of employment in different employment sectors. The gender distribution displayed in Table 14 shows that females are mostly found in sectors that are associated with low income. Thus, there are a higher proportion of women employed in private households compared to those in formal employment. Evidence on wage employment for women, more specifically in the informal sector (i.e. domestic work) identifies private households as place of work for women. Women’s employment in South Africa is structured through the ‘private’ and public worlds of work. Valodia (2001) identifies that 57% of women’s work is in the informal economy and that domestic work is the largest component of the informal or unrecorded economy (875). Dinat and Peberdy (2007) describe the poor conditions and low incomes of domestic workers and argue that this sector is often unregulated, which leaves many women in vulnerable work environments. Valodia (2001) further argues that while government has developed policies for the labour sector, it has done very little for the ‘survivalist sector’ where mostly women are concentrated, and in particular the Department of Trade and Industry has done very little to support women. Furthermore in wage employment in the formal sector, Grun (2004) states that African women are discriminated against at the hiring stage, whereas white women experience direct age discrimination.

As indicated in Table 14 below, there is a higher distribution of females in low-income employment (informal sector and private households), whereas males mostly dominate higher income jobs, expressing a consistent decline in the proportion of women as the income level increases. Table 14

further shows that a larger proportion of men occupy the formal sector as opposed to women who mostly are concentrated in the informal and private household sector.

Table 14: Employment by sex and sector, 2008 and 2014

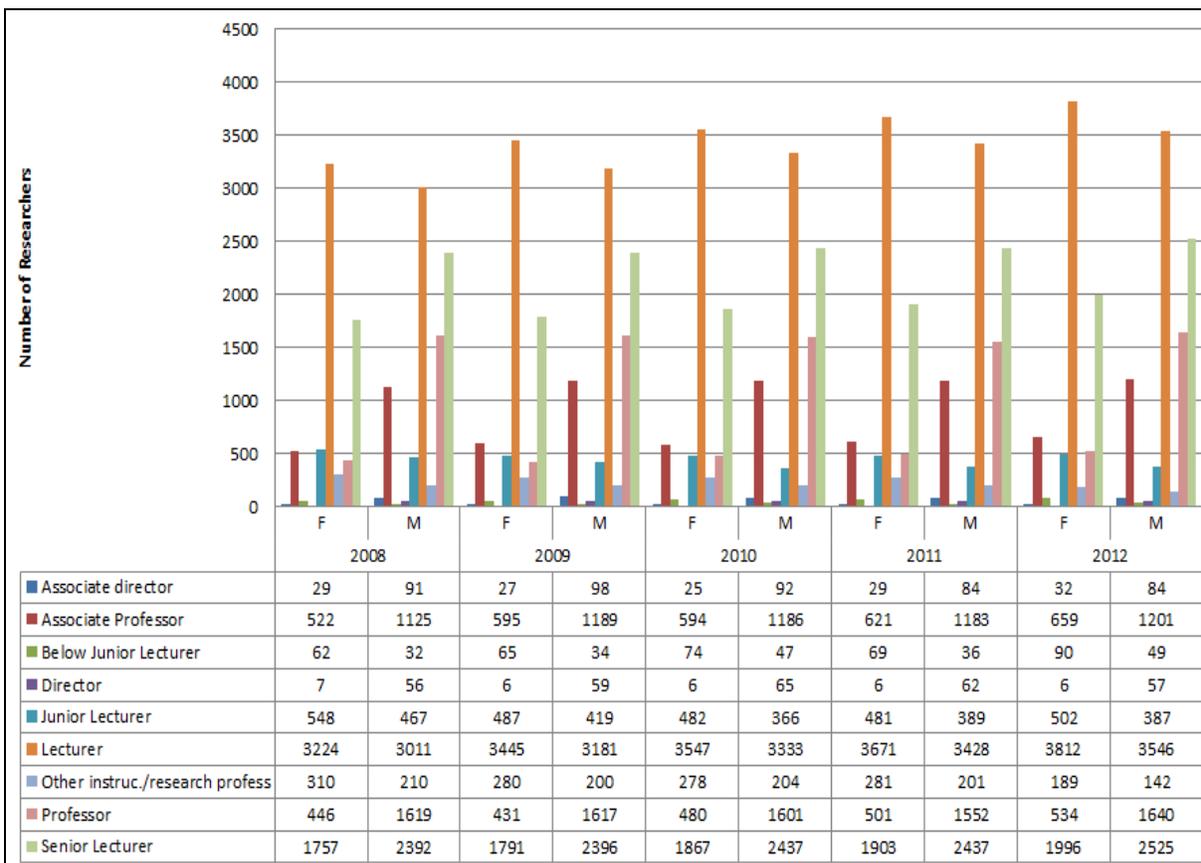
Sector	2008		2014	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Formal	6 081	3 853	6 278	2 277
Informal	1 339	1 094	1 375	2 336
Agriculture	544	294	496	709
Private households	272	961	254	1 231
Total	8 236	6 202	8 402	6 553

Source: Gender Series Volume 1: Economic Empowerment, 2008–2014.

To illustrate this point, Figure 7 below illustrates the representation of gender in the composition (rank) of academic staff in South Africa’s institutions of higher learning. The data reveal that despite policies within the educational sector to transform universities (i.e. university transformation charters), men still dominate higher ranks and presumably paid positions than women in universities. It is clear from the figure that the majority of leadership positions are still occupied by men (i.e. Professor, Senior Lecturer, Director, Associate Professor) as compared to females who are relegated to lower paying ranks (i.e. junior lecturer, other research staff). In terms of rank, the majority were white associate professors in 2012 followed by the majority of white professors. According to the data the representation of black African and coloured South African academics is very low. The difference is further complicated by the intersection of race in determining ranks.

Figure 7 further suggests that even though the majority of academics at the lecturer level are women (i.e. more female lecturers than male lecturers over the years), at the level of associate professors, more males are observed over the years than females. The number of female associate professor is improving, but very slowly. At a level of professor, females represent 1/3 compared to the number of males. There are more male senior lecturers and junior lecturers than female. Considering demographic facts in terms of the increased number of the population in South Africa, the number of permanent staff can be seen to be almost constant (this may mean, transformation seem to be occurring but is not impacting on anything, the progressive bar is only increasing in numbers as the demographic number in terms of population increases).

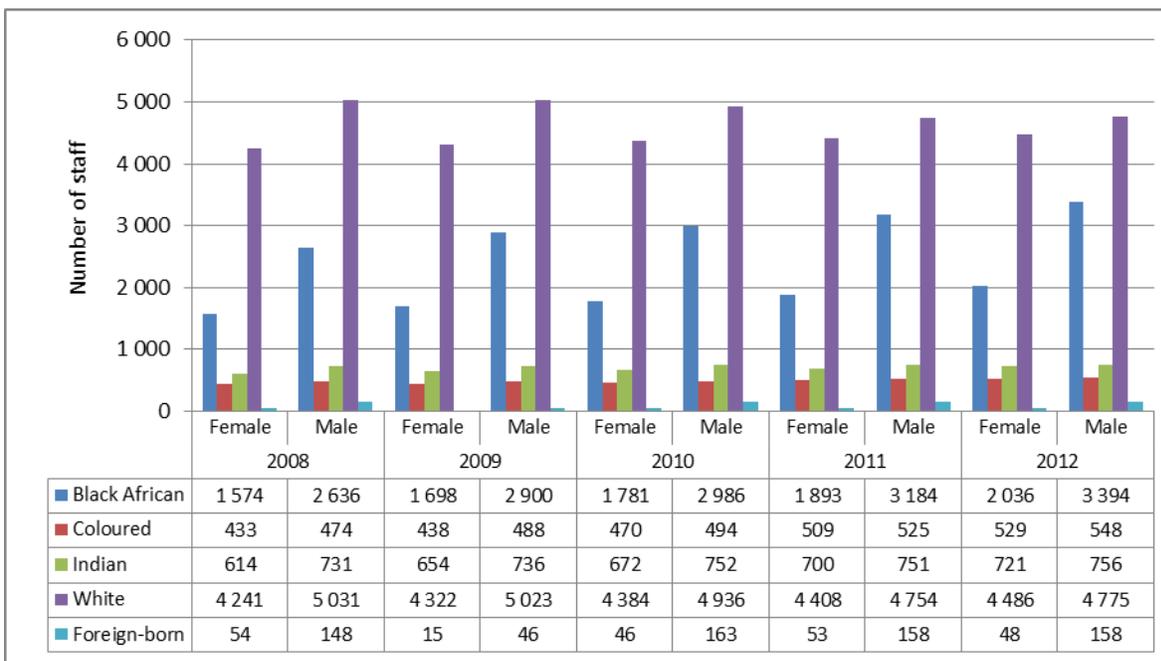
Figure 7: Employment and staff composition (rank) in South Africa’s educational institutions by gender and race, 2008–2012



Source: Higher Education Management Information System, Department of Higher Education and Training, 2008–2012.

South Africa needs to come up with multiple strategies to boost the transformation agenda with promotion and retention programmes that are responsive to women (particularly black African and coloured women) in academia who, according to the data above, are still marginalised.

Figure 8: Employment of academic staff by race and gender in South Africa’s educational institutions, 2008–2012



Source: Higher Education Management Information System, Department of Higher Education and Training, 2008–2012.

In addition to rank, Figure 8 depicts the complex interaction of gender and race in terms of the equality of opportunities for different racialised academics in South Africa’s institutions of higher education. The data indicate that despite efforts to transform universities, white men and women continue to dominate staff composition in most universities in the country, followed by white women, and black African male academics. Thus the graph shows that there are more whites than other groups. Even though the number of white males in academia has decreased over the years, this number is still higher than black African males. Both black African females and males have increased over the years. However, there are still more black African males than black African females (represented by blue bar). In general it can be said that there are more males in the academic system than females. The penetration of black African females into the academic environment seems to be slow. Considering the South African demographic statistics, the representation of white academics in South African universities is still very high out of a population estimated at 54 000 000, the black African majority representing more than 43 000 000 and whites more than 4 000 000 instead of being the first statistically representative group in academic environments. There is a need to increase the number of women academics, specifically black African women into the tertiary environment in South Africa.

Table 15: Percentage distributions of employed females and males by earnings, 2014

Monthly earnings	2001		2014	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
R1-R1 500	46.3	53.7	44.1	55.9
R1 501-R2 500	66.9	33.1	53.0	47.0
R2 501-R3 500	62.6	37.4	57.9	42.1
R3 501-R5 500	57.7	42.3	63.6	36.4
R5 501-R7 500	61.8	38.2	65.9	34.1
R7 501-R11 500	76.4	23.6	60.0	40.0
R11 500+	82.6	17.4	59,6	40.4

Source: Labour Force Survey March 2001 and Quarterly Labour Force Survey Q1: 2014.

Table 15 above shows the distribution of earnings by gender in 2001 and 2014. While there has been a notable increase in the proportion of women in high-paying jobs, high-paying jobs are still dominated by males. In 2001, only 17.4% of earners who were employed in jobs with an income of more than R11 500 were women. By the year 2014, women in this income bracket have increased to 40.4%. According to Statistics South Africa (2013c), men spend an average of 7 hours a day in the formal workplace as compared to 5.5 hours for women. It is noteworthy that women who are employed also spend an average of 4 hours a day doing unpaid work around the home, as compared to half (2 hours) for men.

For the unemployed, women spend an average of 5.5 hours a day on work in the home, compared to 2.5 hours a day for men, although unemployed men allegedly compensate for this by doing slightly more (13 minutes) community work than women. Whereas single and divorced men spend 100 minutes a day doing work around the home, single and divorced women spend twice that time on household chores. But once men get married, their contribution to household chores dramatically falls to 77 minutes a day, with a commensurate increase in women's work at home. This suggests that, although on the one hand there is an increase in the proportion of women in the lowest income category (from 53.7% in 2001 to 55.9% in 2014 as seen in Table 15), during the year 2002, the ratio of unemployment was higher among females than males. This has changed over time, as the parity ratio of female to male unemployment was reached in the year 2011.

Table 16: Ratio of female to male unemployed by province, 2002–2013

Province	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Eastern Cape	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9
Free State	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.0
Gauteng	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.1	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
KwaZulu-Natal	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.9	0.9
Limpopo	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8
Mpumalanga	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2
North West	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.2	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.8
Northern Cape	1.5	1.4	1.1	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
Western Cape	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9
South Africa	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.1	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0

Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Statistics South Africa, 2001–2013.

The race and gender profiles show that the ratio of female to male unemployment ratio is low among coloureds and Indians. Among these population groups there is a higher unemployment rates among women based on race. The trajectory in terms of the trend at this level indicates that more efforts must be made to address both gender and race equity in employment in South Africa.

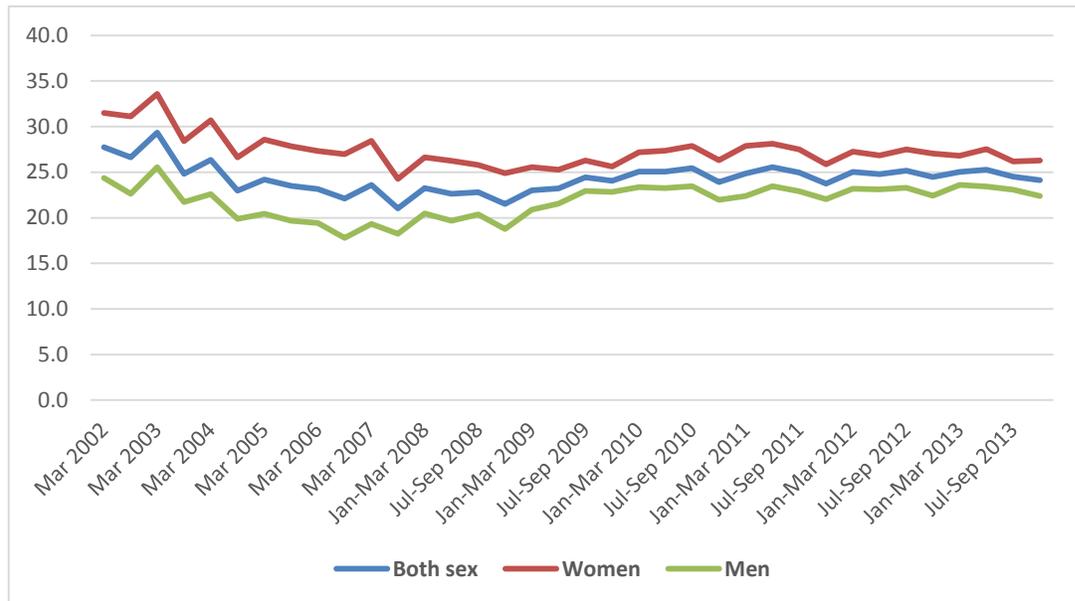
Table 17: Ratio of female to male unemployed by population group, 2002–2013

Population group	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
African Black	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
White	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.0	0.9	1.2	1.1	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.0
Coloured	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8
Indian/Asian	1.1	1.0	0.8	0.9	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.7
Total	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.1	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0

Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Statistics South Africa, 2001–2013.

Figure 9 below shows the official unemployment distribution of female to male ratio for the 2008–2013 periods for women in the youth ages of 20–25 and 26–35. Official employment rates (as compared to expanded employment rates that include “discouraged work-seekers”) indicate that unemployment rates have been consistently higher among women than men.

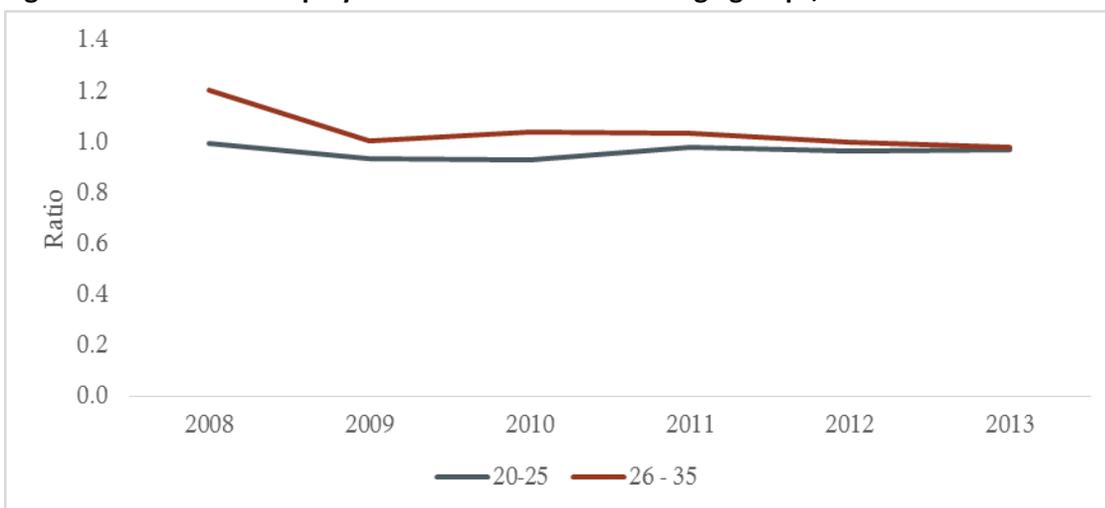
Figure 9: Official unemployment rate by sex, 2001–2013



Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Statistics South Africa, 2002–2013.

Figure 10 below shows that over time, the ratio in both age groups has converged to 1. Thus, by the year 2013, the unemployment rates of both young males and females have tended to be equal. This indicates that men are more likely to become discouraged work-seekers. This is the case in both 20–25 and 26–35 age groups.

Figure 10: Ratio of unemployment for 20–25 and 26–35 age groups, 2008–2013



Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Statistics South Africa, 2008–2013.

The data presented on employment corroborates previous findings with regard to women and employment. For example, of those who were employed in 2011, women were more likely to be in unskilled occupations, with 20.8% working in elementary jobs and 14.6% working as domestic workers, whereas only 22.7% of employed men worked in unskilled occupations (Stats SA 2013b). Employed women also earned less than employed men, with the proportion of women who earned R1 000 or less per month being double that of men (20.5% vs 9.7%), whereas men were more likely to be in the top earning category of R16 000+ (11.0% vs 5.4%) (Stats SA, 2013b). Employed women from all race groups were more likely to spend more time doing unpaid housework, care of others, and collecting fuel and water than their employed male counterparts in 2011 (Stats SA 2013b). This implies that although we are seeing equal enrolment of girls and boys in education, we are not seeing these same trends in employment, particularly wage employment.

The challenge moving forward will be to translate the gains made in education into wage employment for women. The assumption that improved educational levels for women results in increased employment, although true to some extent (i.e. formally educated women are more likely to be employed and to earn more income than women who were not formally educated) does not result in the majority of educated women being employed in their level of expertise.

To remedy these challenges, the government enacted several initiatives: the *Basic Conditions of Employment Act* (BCEA) and the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), just to name a few. The EPWP is one of many programmes contributing towards supporting employment generation. It provides short-term job opportunities for the unemployed (to unskilled unemployed people in particular). In addition, the aim of the EPWP is to provide training for participants. Most EPWP work opportunities result from using more labour-intensive construction and maintenance methods in public infrastructure projects. Further upscaling of the EPWP resulted in more than 3 million work opportunities being created between 2009 and the end of March 2013. This included the introduction of the Community Works Programme (CWP) in 2009, with funding for employment creation projects prioritised by communities.

The employment created through the EPWP programmes is still small compared with the number of unskilled unemployed people. Nevertheless, public employment programmes are crucial income-supporting programmes. Another initiative is the *Basic Conditions of Employment Act* (BCEA), which aims to protect employees during and after pregnancy. The act does not require that maternity leave be paid leave (this is paid at the discretion of the employer).

However, in the event that employers do not provide payment, employees are entitled to unemployment benefits (UIF), provided they have made contributions to the fund. In 2010 the BCEA was amended to accommodate foreign nationals working in the country on valid work authorisation documents. Although there are laws in place to guarantee maternity leave and benefits for women in the work place, there are several factors that often make it difficult for women to retain employment

during or after pregnancy. Both the EPWP and the BCEA have been successful in targeting women. In addition to providing income, the opportunity to be supported financially provides dignity and meaning in their lives. Generally, besides accessing income, these initiatives support negative effects of unemployment, which include social isolation, erosion of self-esteem, drug and alcohol abuse, as well as a loss of knowledge, skills and habits associated with having a job.

5. CURRENT STATUS AND TRENDS IN LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Chapter 3 of the South African constitution provides for three spheres of government namely: national, provincial and local (municipal). At each of these spheres there are elected representatives who make up the legislators in the national and provincial tiers of government and constitute the council in the local government sphere. These structures are responsible for governance and determine social and economic policies and practices. Participation in these structures gives power to those elected in these positions to make decisions. Within the MDG framework, quantitative arguments for gender balance in representation in decision-making where women and men equally have a right to representation have been prioritised.

The MDG3 indicator that measures the degree to which women have equal access to decision-making is the proportion of seats held by women in parliaments (including the number of seats). The analysis in this report extends representation to other spheres, as well as to other elected and non-elected key political decision-makers such as ministers, deputy ministers, and other government positions of influence. The rationale behind this indicator is that a stronger presence of women in parliament allows women voices to be heard and new concerns to be highlighted on political agendas, and new priorities to be put into practice through the adoption of policies, initiatives, and laws. Thus, if it is the role of governments to plan for development (i.e. allocate the needed resources to make transformation plans happen), both men and women must be equally represented to ensure that these resources and strategies adequately serve the needs of both males and females. Although women are not all the same, there are certain issues that they feel more strongly about than men, because of their life experiences and shared priorities.

Equally important is the representation of women in leadership positions. When considering performance in respect of representation of women in leadership, it must also be borne in mind that the presence of women does not necessarily translate into an improvement in the situation of poorer women, or those who are disadvantaged in other ways (i.e. women with disabilities, rural women, LGBTI, urban informal, race, and so forth). Progress with respect to women's leadership in governance must be viewed from their leadership in ensuring that all women's issues are championed to facilitate inclusion in political decision-making. In South Africa, inclusion of women in the senior managerial positions, both in the private and public sector is an important indicator of prioritising women's voices in decision-making. For example, female representation as CEOs in parastatals, mayors, ambassadors, and in other government structures is critical in ensuring access to political decision-making. In the private sector, the representation of women as CEOs, chairpersons, and directors/managers is also equally important in driving the economic transformation of the country.

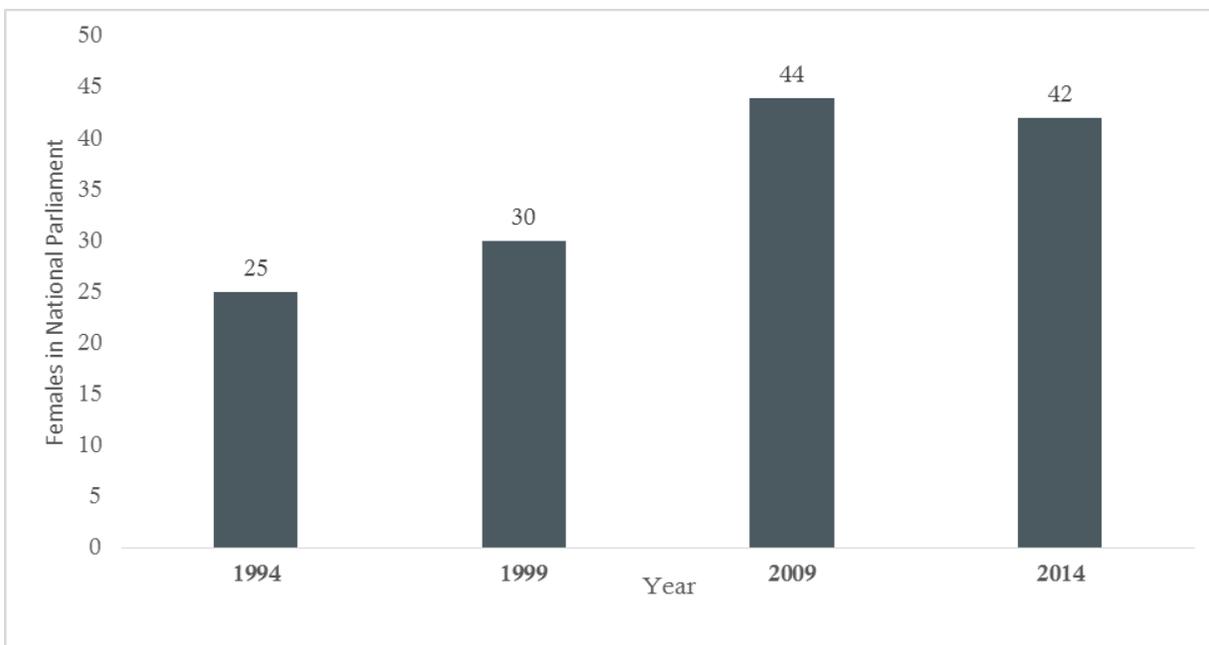
During the apartheid era, there were very few women members of parliament. In 1985, only about 3% of the members of the white parliament were women. Since 1994, national elections have ushered in a

positive shift in women representation in parliament. Largely due to the African National Congress' (ANC) commitment to initially include a 33% quota for women on their election party list, there were 101 women out of 400 seats in the first post-apartheid National Assembly in 1994 and by 1997; 111 of the 400 members of the National Assembly were women due to redeployments, resignations and other political changes in the national assembly.

According to Hausmann et al (2008), South Africa is amongst the top six countries in the world where women hold more than 40% of parliamentary seats (Hausmann et al, 2008: 10; 16; 28; 316). South Africa's ranking in political empowerment increased the proportion of women in the national parliament from 25% in 1994 to 30% in 1999 and 44% in 2009 respectively. The proportion slightly decreased to the current 42% in 2014, falling short of the MDG target of 50%. Figure 10 below shows the proportion of female representatives in the National Parliament of South Africa since 1994. Apart from the National Council of Provinces (NCOP), South Africa's performance in respect of political representation of women is firmly above the 30% which the CEDAW committee felt it was necessary for "critical mass" and which is recommended in the Beijing Platform for Action.

Clearly, great strides have been made on the political front, particularly when one considers that women comprised less than 3% of parliamentary seats at the end of the apartheid regime's rule in 1994. This shows significant progress and the country has shown increased political commitment beyond the 30% inclusion of women to 50% representation.

Figure 11: Proportion of women in the national parliament, 1994–2014



Source: Parliament of the Republic of South Africa; Hendricks, 2005; Lowe-Morna et al, 2009.

In recent times voluntary quotas have been encouraged to ensure equal representation. Because implementation of quotas depends on party platforms and manifestos, it is not guaranteed that all political parties will implement a gender quota system to increase the political representation of women so as to lead to a critical mass of women who will be able to influence political decision-making. For example, in 1999, the high number of women elected is largely attributed to the ANC quota system that ensured that women constituted at least 30% of list candidates. At the local level, government through legislation introduced the *Municipal Structures Act* that focused on institutionalising a quota system of 30% for women. This meant that political parties had to prioritise that women constitute at least 30% of candidate’s lists to ensure gender parity.

To date, the ANC is the only political party to state publicly its commitment to reach this target and beyond. Such measures impact positively on women’s access to opportunities for participant decision-making. However, quotas alone are not enough; leadership from political parties is needed to field more women candidates and to ensure that women are strategically positioned to lead and contribute to the country’s progress.

Equally important is the representation of women in leadership positions. The percentage of women in ministerial posts at the executive level of government has also improved since 1996. A positive trend has been observed in the appointment of ministers, deputy ministers, and speakers of the house, portfolio committee chairs, and other influential governance positions. For example, the country has opted to diversify leadership opportunities for women beyond traditionally so-called “soft” portfolios (such as Social Development, Education, Public Works, or Human Settlements), which continue to be more commonly held by women ministers; but also to more so-called “hard” ministerial portfolios (such as International Affairs, Defence, Mining and Industry, and the Environment).

Progress with respect to women representation in governance and the political determination executed through such appointments will likely facilitate a culture of inclusion where women’s participation in political decision-making becomes a norm. The proportion of female ministers has considerably increased from 11% in 1994 to 42.9% in 2014. Similarly, the proportion of deputy ministers has also shown an increase over the years from 25% in 1994, to a noteworthy decline of 0% in 1999, to a significant increase in 2004 at 50%. However, in the year 2009, there was a slight decline of deputy ministers who are women at 39% and women deputy ministers make up 48.6% in 2014.

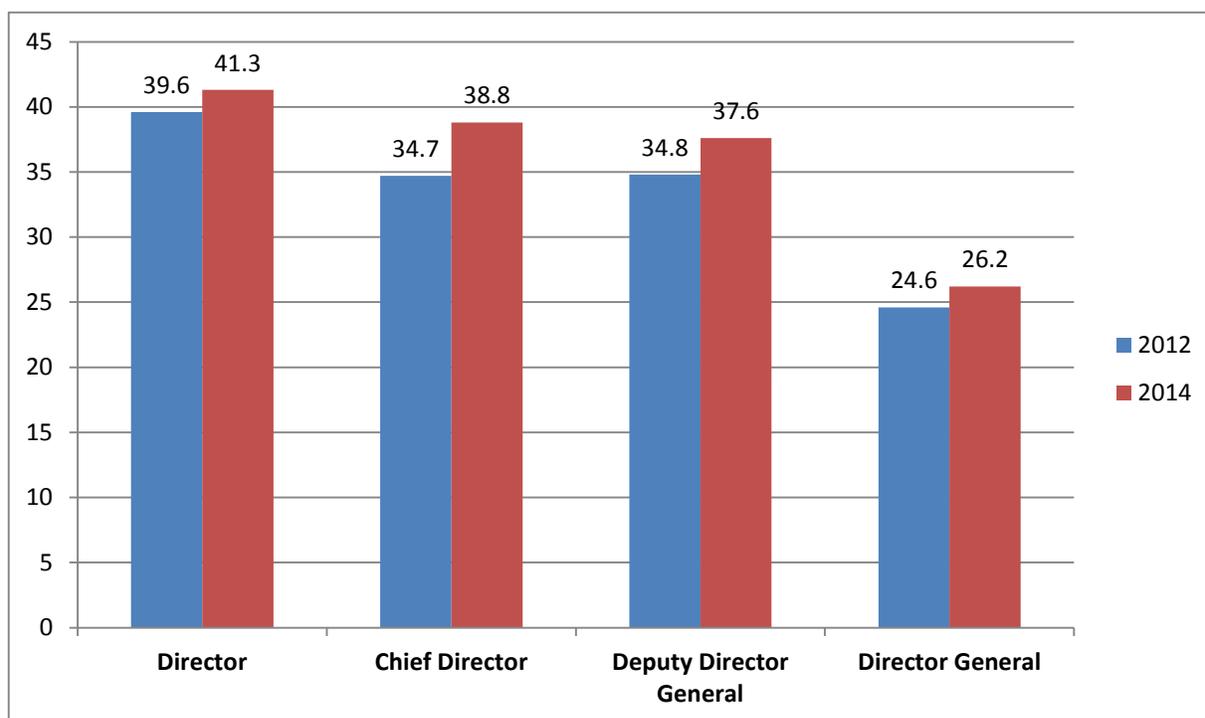
Table 18: Percentage of female ministers and deputy ministers, 1994, 1999, 2004, 2009, and 2014

	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
Ministers	11	33.3	43	41	42.9
Deputy ministers	25	0	50	39	48.6

Source: Government Communication and Information System (GCIS), 1994–2014.

In addition to ministers and deputy ministers, there has been an upturn in female representation at senior levels of government officials including directors, deputy directors, directors-general, and deputy directors-general. Figure 12 below shows that, although there was a rapid increase in women’s representation at the top management level from 2012 to 2014, men still continue to dominate this level. There are fewer women represented in the highest administrative positions. For instance, there is lowest female representation among directors-general, and highest among directors. This trend was identified previously in women’s positions in higher education in the academic sector.

Figure 12: Female representation at senior management level, 2012 and 2014

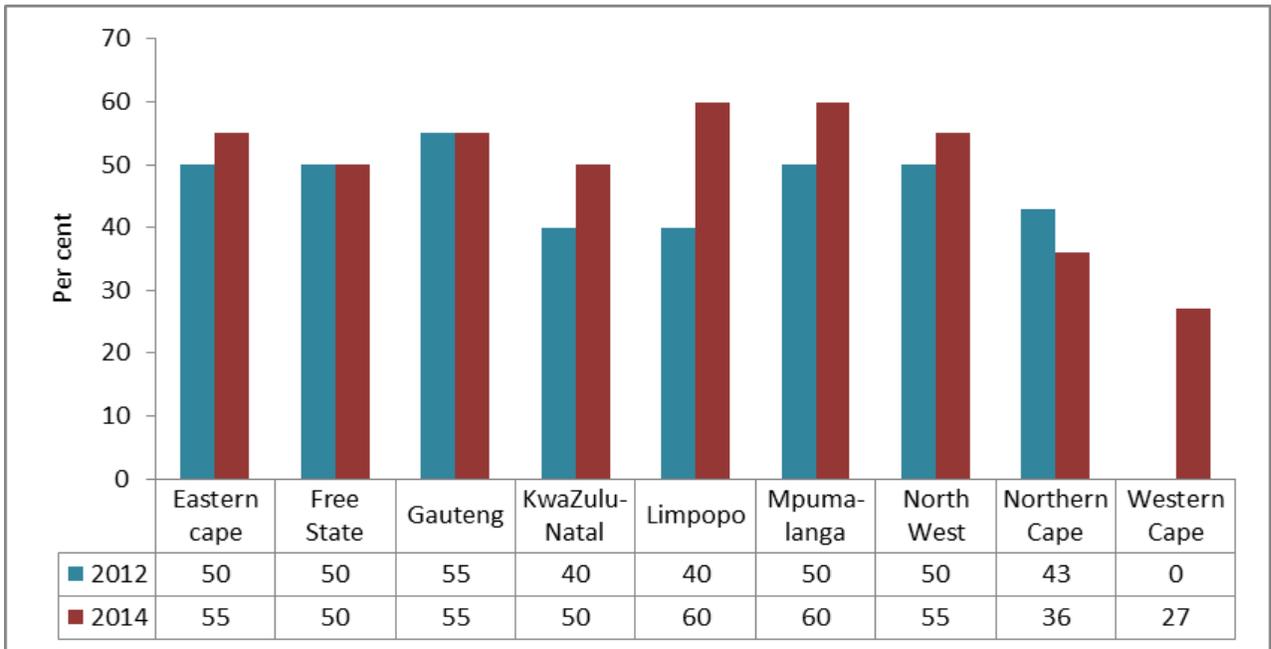


Source: *Personnel and Salary System (Persal)*, Department of Public Service and Administration, 2012 and 2014.

A similar trend is evident with other government senior positions; senior government officials have seen increases in the positions occupied by women. This is the case in all senior government positions. On the other hand, Figure 13 below shows that fewer women are represented in the highest administrative positions. For instance, female representation among directors-general is lowest, and highest among directors.

Female representation among provincial members of the executive council (MECs) differs among different provinces as seen in Figure 13 below. In 2014, Female representation is lowest in Western Cape and highest in Limpopo and Mpumalanga. A progress was made in terms of female representation at provincial level, where five of nine provinces have more than 50% female representation, which is a sign of progress at the provincial level.

Figure 13: Representation of females in MEC positions in the provincial legislatures, 2012 and 2014

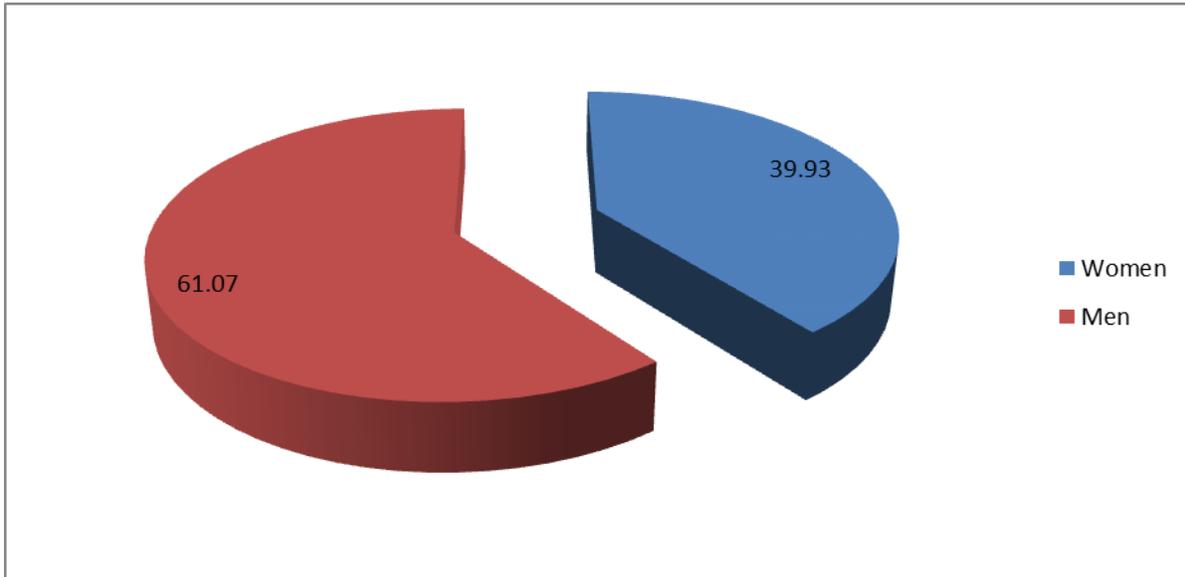


Source: Provincial Legislatures, 2012–2014.

South Africa has fared well with regards to women’s numerical political representation. The reasons for this start with women’s negotiations at the CODESRIA table, where gender equality was part of the political transformation agenda. The ‘new’ democratic government has ensured that gender equality is actively implemented through the appointment of women in political positions and 21 years later it has continued to remain an integral part of South Africa’s development. As discussed in the introduction, numerical equality has to be accompanied by substantive equality. A report on women’s political participation revealed that women political leaders have dual loyalties (to their respective political parties as well as to women as a constituency) and therefore women’s political representation does not necessarily translate into political influence for women in communities and bring about change in women’s lives (Hassim, 2011: p. 9).

The data presented in Figures 14 and 15 reflect fewer women as mayors and municipal managers and according to Hassim (2011, 2009) this is due to the reality that: “State institutions are saturated with hierarchies and power. New entrants, like women, can find it difficult to make their way in the hostile environment created by male resistance. This is especially true at lower levels of government, where the political will to support equality may be less evident” (p. 11). Figure 14 data show that male mayors are still the majority compared to their female counterparts, with 61.07% males and 39.93% females.

Figure 14: Representation of women in high-level positions in the public service (mayors, 2014)

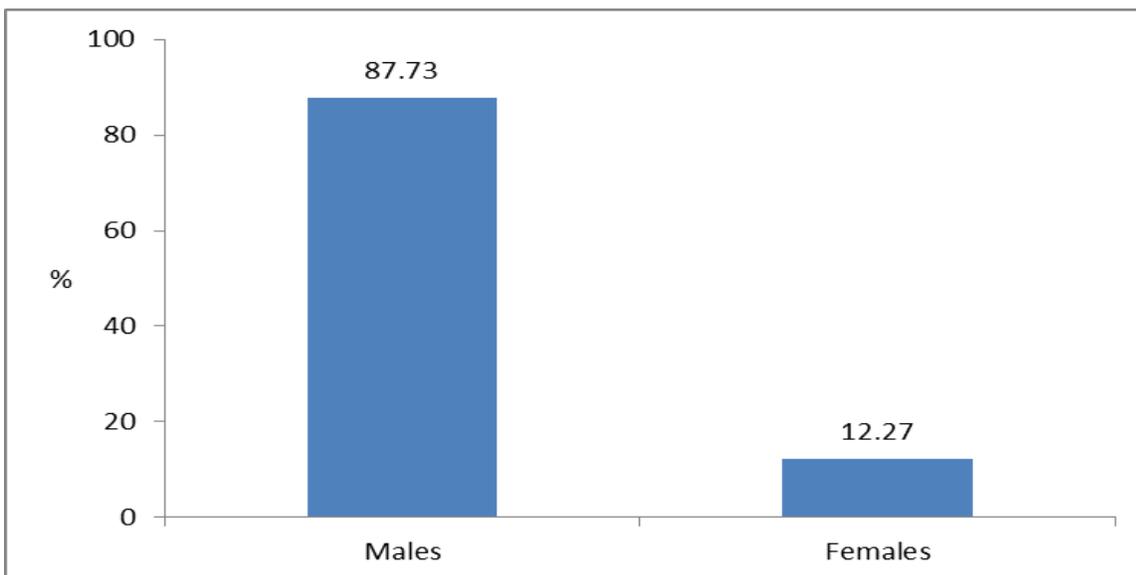


Source: Yes Media, Statistics South Africa and South African Local Government Association, 2014.

At the local level, a mixed system that includes both proportional representation and first-past-the-post is used for election of councilors. In the first system seats are allocated in proportion to the number of votes cast by each party. In the second system seats are allocated to the individual candidates for whom most votes are cast. Thus party lists are used for the proportional representation seats, while for the ward seats residents vote for a candidate of their choice.

Because participation and representation at local level depends on party platforms, manifestos, and voluntary quotas, transforming representation largely lies on political parties' commitment to transformation. Political will from political parties in encouraging female candidacies at the local level will improve the representation and efforts by current leaders in succession plans positioning women candidates will also assist. Figure 15 below shows that male municipal managers are still in the majority compared to their female counterparts, with 87.73% males and 12.27% females.

Figure 15: Gender representation of municipal managers, 2014



Source: Yes Media, Statistics South Africa and South African Local Government Association, 2014.

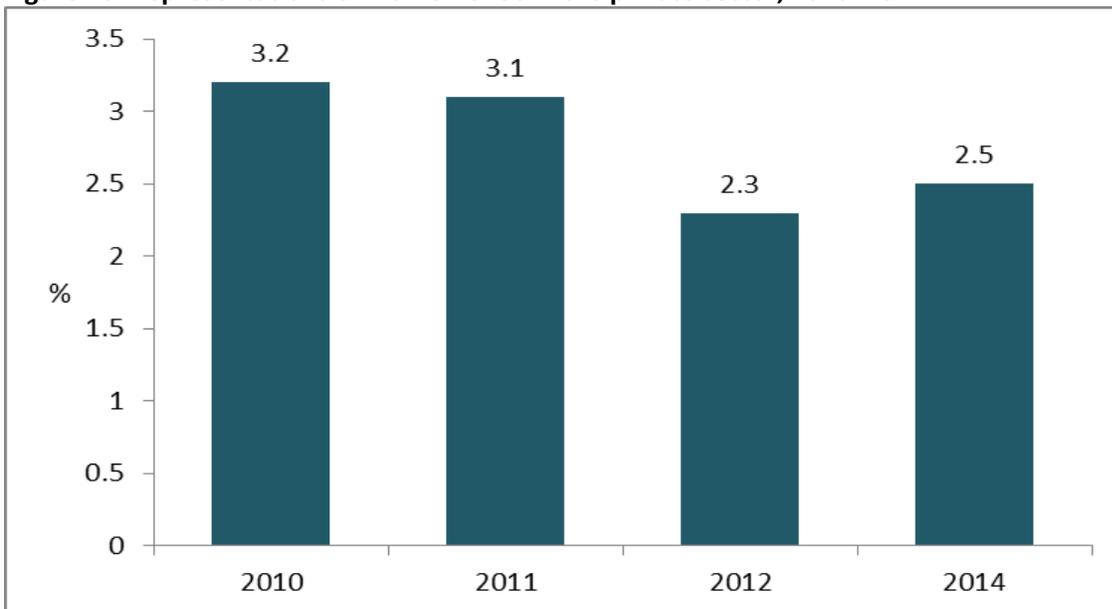
Article 11(3) of the *Municipal Structures Act* (No. 117 of 1998) provides that every party must “seek to ensure that fifty per cent of the candidates on the party list are women and that women and men candidates are evenly distributed through the list”. If this article was implemented fully by all parliaments, parity in representation would be achieved among local government representatives. Legislative remedies such as the *Municipal Structures Act* aim at institutionalising a quota system for representation of women, which is a positive directive. This directive is in line with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development Protocol (SGP), and the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality (WEGE) Bill aimed at ensuring 50% representation of women in all decision-making structures in government and the economic sector.

However, implementation depends on political parties to prioritise women’s representation in candidate lists to ensure gender parity. Also, reaching a quota of 50% does not guarantee that an agenda of empowerment of women is materialised. In most cases, if women are elected to local government structures, their effective participation is often limited by patriarchal norms, unfamiliarity with rules and language, and lack of training and support. These obstacles, and others, influence their retention rates in such structures. As such, more efforts are necessary beyond numerical representation, but also in nurturing an inclusive environment.

Another area in which more focus is needed is in the senior managerial level both within the public and private sectors. Women are under-represented in senior level leadership positions both in the private and public sector. For example, female representation is low in CEOs in parastatals (at 23%) and there are fewer female ambassadors (only at 30%) compared to men. In the private sector, women account

for only 3.6% of CEO positions, 5.5% chairperson positions; 17.1% of directors are women and 28% of managers according to the Businesswomen's Association of South Africa (2011; 2012) annual censuses. These trends highlight that notwithstanding progress in advancing women in leadership, their representation is still low at the top levels of management. Males overwhelmingly dominate senior positions, and this dominance has been increasing over time as seen in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Representations of women CEOs in the private sector, 2010–2014



Source: Businesswomen's Association of South Africa, 2010–2014

According to previous analyses by Ndhlovu and Spring (2009) and the Businesswomen's Association of South Africa (2012), women directorships in major companies increased from 14.7 per cent in 2009 to 16.6 per cent in 2010, falling to 15.8 % in 2011 and rising again to 17.1 per cent in 2012 (p. 40). These figures are higher than in the USA (16.1 per cent), Canada (14.5 per cent), Israel (15.0 per cent) and Australia (8.4 per cent) (BWASA, 2012: 17). Again the inclusion of subsidiaries resulted in the huge surge in absolute numbers, from 558 women directors in 2009 to 1 056 in 2010 (16.6 per cent). Subsequently women directors have increased from 1 127 (15.8 per cent) in 2011 to 1 224 (17.1 per cent) in 2012. Most of the increases have taken place in SOEs and the oil and gas industries, which were previously the preserve of white men (BWASA, 2010: 12; 54; 2012: 14; 16; 19).

South Africa is, however, aggressively pursuing a robust private/public sector collaborative framework to address these gaps. In the private sector, gender parity in senior positions continues to be a challenge. Much work is required in the private sector and it is much more difficult to monitor the implementation of gender equity policies such as the Employment Equity Act in the private sector. The *Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill* proposes stricter compliance and monitoring of gender equality within the private sector, and hence the finalisation of this bill is urgent. This data

presented above is an indication of the positive trend to advance gender equality and promote the empowerment of women. As indicated at various points in the report, gender equality is uneven and particularly so in the more traditional domains of leadership for men, such as the Science, Engineering and Technology disciplines but also the highest academic positions at universities as well as employment in the non-agricultural sector and wage employment for women.

Similarly, women are well represented in national political positions yet remain poorly represented on the level of municipal management. The fact that women then still have less access to jobs and finance means that the economic and social livelihoods remain insecure and unstable and therefore, going forward, we have to start translating girls and women's access to education into meaningful, paid employment. Reducing poverty for women must become the most important priority in the national development agenda.

The challenge moving forward will be to build on progress made since 1994 to ensure adequate representation of women in national, provincial, and local levels. Furthermore, women's leadership in other sectors such as the private sector must be prioritised to ensure that the glass ceiling is cracked open and significant progress towards women's empowerment is reflected in all sectors. As indicated, all of the targets except the female share of non-agricultural wage employment and the proportion of seats held by women in national parliament have been achieved.

The indicator for the gender parity index (GPI) at primary level mirrors the achievement in respect to secondary and tertiary levels, which greatly impacts the empowerment of women and girls in the long run. With regards to indicators that relate to employment security and political leadership and engagement, South Africa has made some notable progress even though the target of the female share of the proportion of seats held by females in national parliament was not achieved. The progress in respect to seats in the National Assembly has been substantial and with the political will and leadership from all political parties in the country, this progress is likely to increase women's voices in political decision-making.

6. TOWARDS THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) – FRAMING THE IMPERATIVES, ADDRESSING CHALLENGES, AND IDENTIFYING POSSIBILITIES

The Sustainable Development Goals 5 (SDG5) builds on some of the targets that began in the MDGs, specifically MDG 3, which aimed to provide a springboard for development of policy and practices that promoted gender equality and women’s and girls’ rights. As seen in our analysis in this report, women and girls continue to face challenges across economic, social and political spheres and entrenched gender disparities remain a major driver of poverty and inequality. The aim of SDG 5 is to promote socio-political transformation for women’s empowerment at local, national and global levels. Specifically, the indicators aim to increase social justice and gender equality and provide an environment where all women and girls will be able to realise their rights free from discrimination.

SDG 5 also aims to benefit from a focus on the boy child. The boy child is also vulnerable in some countries to withdrawal from education, enforced labour, and sexual abuse and trafficking. Table 19 below outlines the SDG goals that relate to Goal 3 including: Goal 5 (achieve gender quality and empower all women and girls); Goal 1 (poverty eradication); Goal 2 (health and wellbeing for all); Goal 4 (access to quality and inclusive education); Goal 8 (access to decent employment, work that is sustainable for economic empowerment; and Goal 10 (reducing inequality among countries). These SDGs are critical in moving the post-MDG agenda forward. Several challenges still persist in transitioning to SDGs within the South African context. These include: unaddressed cultural barriers, policy and implementation gaps related to gender equity, institutional reach by government in policy interventions, gender based-violence, addressing societal/cultural norms and attitudes towards women, and service delivery issues.

Table 19: Proposed SDG goals

Goal 1	End poverty in all its forms everywhere
Goal 3	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
Goal 4	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
Goal 5	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
Goal 8	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
Goal 10	Reduce inequality within and among countries

6.1 SDGs: UNADDRESSED BARRIERS

Although the MDG process recognised the importance of women empowerment in education, employment, and political decision-making, it failed to offer solutions to address cultural traditions causing inequality. Discussing general frameworks for women's empowerment is important; however, without property rights, women will continue to be economically, socially and culturally marginalised.

The Millennium Summit latched onto an important constraint in the equality between the genders and overall societal progress. However, by not addressing specific governments' approaches to either the formulation of laws supportive of women's equal rights and equal access, or instituting a global compact that specifically targets socio-cultural practices detrimental to women, the role and opportunities for women in society remain unaddressed. Ogbor (2010) captures the essence of this argument, stating "for example, property laws impose constraints on females, who do not always have the rights to acquire and own property. This limits their ability to have access to needed capital for business development as they lack property to use as collateral. This applies also to the labour policies when they lead to discrimination in employment and benefits" (p.152).

Without addressing socio-cultural traditions that limit property ownership, achieving MDG 3 in South Africa will lag behind other regions, and the post-2015 SDG agenda will be a long struggle. It is near impossible to achieve these goals without addressing the underlying fundamentals of equal access to resources, especially by women.

6.2 POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE GAPS

The Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill (WEGE) still remains incomplete (this bill has not moved in parliament in 2014 and 2015). A Gender Equality Bill should enable South Africa to move towards 50/50 gender parity in all decision-making positions and the bill will have mechanism for enforcement. Furthermore the WEGE bill will ensure that South Africa is in line with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. Research (Boonzaier & De la Rey, 2003; Gopal & Chetty, 2006; Matthews & Abrahams, 2001; Mesatywa, 2008) indicates numerous implementation challenges with legislation such as lack of support from criminal justice and health personnel, reduced sentences for rape convictions and lack of police stations in rural and semi-rural communities, amongst others.

6.3 INCREASING GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONAL REACH

Government machinery (institutions) needs to be resourced and remain stable. The constant shifts in the gender machinery results in fragmented and ineffective service delivery to females and girls, for example the National Council on GBV must be reinstated. Monitoring and evaluation of implementation becomes difficult and inadequate in the absence of permanent, formalised structures to fulfil this function.

- ✓ There needs to be increased emphasis on females in public and private leadership positions, particularly at local government level.
- ✓ An Annual National Survey on Violence Against Women as a surveillance mechanism on the incidence and prevalence of violence against women and children is urgently needed.
- ✓ Dedicated funding mechanism for programmes on improving females' and girls' empowerment and gender equality programmes.

6.4 ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW)

GBV is probably one of the most serious problems that communities undergo, with females and young girls suffering the brunt of this violation. Although there is limited statistical data on GBV prevalence in South Africa, anecdotal evidence maintains that females and girls experience extreme manifestations of GBV in homes, workplaces, sport areas, boardrooms, and public corridors in South Africa regardless of race and socio-economic status. In terms of sexual offences, current data suggests that between 2012 and 2014 at least 0.2% of individuals aged 16 years and above experienced at least one incidence of sexual violence (Statistics South Africa, 2014). In the same period there were 72 000 sexual offences in total but only 39 000 (72.4 %) of these were reported to the police. The severity of crime experienced by women in South Africa included intimate partner violence⁵, sexual offences (including rape), family-based violence, and so forth. According to the *Victims of Crime Survey, 2013/2014* reported in a Statistics South Africa report, the number of people aged 16 and older who reported having experienced at least one individual sexual offence (including rape) crime in South Africa was 54 000; of those who reported this type of offences, 44 000 were black African⁶. Of these, the victims knew their perpetrators that included relatives, spouses, employers, teachers, friends/acquaintances, police, known community members and so forth. Table 20 below describes the distribution of crime by type and Table 21 describes the percentage victims who indicated that they knew their perpetrator.

⁵ The term "intimate partner violence (IPV)" describes physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner or spouse. This type of violence can occur among heterosexual or same-sex couples and does not require sexual intimacy.

⁶ This was calculated by population of the household head between April 2012 to February 2014. Although the household data collection methods are not suitable for the measurement of sexual offences due to its sensitive nature, the data presented by the Victims of Crime Survey provides some information on trends in gender-based violence in the country.

Table 20: Number of people aged 16 and older who experienced at least one individual crime by population group of the household head, (April 2012 to February 2014)

Type of Crime	Thousands				
	Black/African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	South Africa
Total number of individuals	27 071	3247	1051	3663	35032
Theft of personal property (including pick pocketing and bag snatching)	634	96	22	93	485
Hijacking of car (including attempted hijacking)	*	*	*	*	17
Robbery (excluding home robbery and car/truck hijackings)	184	42	*	18	249
Assault	263	54	*	12	330
Sexual offence (including rape)	44	*	*	*	54
Consumer	51	*	*	41	103
Corruption	540	30	*	44	618

Note: Numbers below 10 000 are too small to provide accurate estimates. Sensitive cells are indicated by an asterisk. Due to rounding, numbers do not necessarily add up to totals.

Source: Victims of Crime Survey, January 2013/2014, Statistics South Africa.

Table 21 below indicates that in most cases victims of assault are victimised by known perpetrators from their community (34%), followed by spouse or lover (16.8%). With regards to sexual crime and offences, 25.1% were victimised by relatives, followed by known community members at 24%, followed by unknown people from outside at 16.1%. In terms of households, at least 54 households report having experienced some form of sexual violence. About 94.5% of victims of sexual violence reported having been victims once and 5.5% were repeat victims who had experienced sexual violence more than twice. Most victims of sexual violence know the perpetrators and their relationship. From the data, perpetrators are often people known to the victim such as a relative, spouse/lover, boss/teacher, friends/acquaintances, police, and someone known in the community. There are, however, cases where the perpetrator is unknown to the community and is from outside the community.

Table 21: Percentage distribution of selected individuals who indicated that they knew their perpetrator, 2014

Perpetrator	Types of Crime	
	Assault	Sexual offence
Relative	9.2	25.1
Spouse/lover	16.8	6.1
Boss/teacher	0.3	0.0
Friends/acquaintances	7.7	2.1
Police	1.1	2.9
Known community member	34.2	24.0
Known people from outside	7.2	5.9
Unknown community member	10.0	13.2
Unknown people from outside	7.7	16.1
Other	5.8	4.6

Source: *Victims of Crime Survey, Statistics South Africa, January 2013/2014.*

Sexual violence in South Africa is accompanied by brutality with victims reporting that perpetrators attack them with weapons such as knives, guns, pangas, sticks/clubs and other weapons to cause grievous bodily harm. Out of a total of 54 000, the majority of the victims of sexual crimes at the household level are black Africans (44 000) while the rest do not indicate population group.

- ✓ Reliability of data on GBV remains an issue particularly because data are not easily accessible or not well coordinated and easily available.
- ✓ Relying on police statistics is also problematic in a sense that most victims of sexual violence and crime hardly report their ordeal, and they stand an unfortunate chance of being re-victimised in the courts.
- ✓ Nationally in South Africa, a woman dies every six hours at the hands of her partner, and there are thousands of cases of rape reported daily. Thus, despite advances in legislation designed to combat violence against women, as well as education campaigns such as the 16 Days of Activism, GBV still impacts most families in the country. Numerous qualitative data reported that GBV manifests itself diversely with multiple victims and scars. For example, a national study entitled *Violence against Women (VAW)* baseline study revealed that 36% of women in KwaZulu-Natal have experienced some form of violence (emotional, economic, physical or sexual) at least once in their lifetime, both within and outside their intimate relationships during their lifetime.
- ✓ The focus group data in this study supported the trends revealed in the VAW study and revealed the invisible nature of GBV issues in most South African families whereby extreme violence remains a private matter and is “normalised” in the lives of its victims. In the conversations with women in the focus groups of the VAW study, it was revealed that intimate

partner violence was presented as a routine occurrence that is often silenced and at times overlooked. It was also reported that although still a hidden phenomenon, violence against elderly women also exists in most communities and remains undocumented. Anecdotal evidence of elder abuse and harassment due to their access to social grants and other resources is something that the post-2015 agenda could further address.

6.5 ADDRESSING SOCIETAL NORMS, CUSTOMS, AND CULTURAL PRACTICES

South Africa continues to struggle to address cultural and societal norms and practices that perpetuate gender inequality in society. Patriarchal societal norms and unequal power relations drive GBV. Despite the notion of gender equality being broadly accepted by women and men, patriarchal norms of male control and dominance influence the prevalence of GBV in the nine provinces. Such cultural and social norms limit female access and participation in education, employment, and political decision-making; constrain women's ability to reach their potential. Even with South Africa's strengthened legal and legislative framework that protects women and girls, attitudinal change on the ground is challenging due to the entrenched cultural and social practices such as early marriage, gender socialisation, inheritance of land by women, discriminatory attitudes towards women, patriarchy and its perpetuation of rigid gender roles, and so forth. These norms and practices produce different educational outcomes for males and females and thus increase female marginalisation.

6.6 REFINING SERVICE DELIVERY AND PROGRAMME INTERVENTIONS

- Government programmes to address GBV and HIV/AIDS have to be sustained; it cannot be temporary, adhoc, and fragmented. A multi-modal intervention that addresses the intersection of poverty, inequality and violence, and that is adequately resourced and funded has to form the basis of addressing gender equality programmes.
- There needs to be a focus on prevention programmes on both HIV and AIDS and GBV. Prevention initiatives must be wide-ranging and programmes must measure behavioural changes as well as attitudinal changes of men who commit acts of violence and/or who participate in men's programmes that focus on shifting attitudes as well as developing evidence-based prevention models that include both women (females) and men (males) and research that focuses on specific groups of survivors/victims, such as the rape of babies and toddlers and/or the rape and sexual assault of mentally and physically disabled women (females), and children and sexual minority groups.
- Additionally, research on GBV needs to prioritise the needs of female immigrants and African foreign nationals (migrant communities) that enter the country in times of displacement from their home countries and are vulnerable to brutal violence.
- Linking empowerment efforts with Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights issues. Best practice HIV prevention programmes, such as IMAGE (Intervention with Microfinance for AIDS and Gender

Equity) and Sinamandla Project on gender and poverty that combine interventions on the economic empowerment of women (females), knowledge on HIV and AIDS and support on GBV have signs of effectiveness (Dunkle and Decker, 2012). Similarly, innovative programmes are emerging that try to take the complexity of females' health needs into consideration by developing integrated services for HIV-positive females that include the options of counseling on gender and sexual violence (Muller and McGregor, 2013). In the Western Cape, an NGO, MOSAIC, currently provides an integrated package of services to females that include SRH services as well as options for counseling and support on issues of gender and sexual violence. The South African government must address these development challenges in order to move more substantively to a country where there is equality between females and men, girls and boys.

To conclude, it is important for SDG 5 to go beyond MDG3, and in order to do that the targets need to have outcome statements, they need to be time-specific, domesticated, and there needs to be inclusion of a number of key economic and social targets on employment, violence, education, mental and physical health. There is also a need for better understanding of the dynamics and linkages that impact gender inequality, and for pointing out interlinkages and synergies between SDG goals. Establishing consistent and transparent protocols, common conceptual frameworks for indicators that reflect systemic perspectives and principles for best measurement and assessment practices will be needed. Furthermore, the growing emphasis on a wider range of quantitative targets calls not only for reporting on status and trends, but also progress with regard to targets. This goes beyond statistical reporting of facts and evidence and requires a more analytic qualitative approach.

7. CONCLUSION

The empowerment of women in South Africa is about dealing with the legacies of colonialism and apartheid and the transformation of society, particularly the transformation of power relations between women, men, racialised institutions and laws. It is also about addressing gender oppression, patriarchy, sexism, racism, ageism, and structural oppression, and creating an environment that enables women to take control of their lives. From the analysis of the indicators South Africa chose to focus on, the MDGs process has afforded the country a good-faith effort to address gender development and transformation challenges South Africa is facing. MDG 3 also has assisted the country in focusing its development trajectory towards assisting women/females and girls according to the UNDP definition, to "expand their choices." To address the abovementioned question, we have to acknowledge the successes and propose how these successes can be enhanced moving forward.

Firstly, South Africa has been successful at addressing gender parity in education as seen in the remarkable progress with regard to enrolment of girls and women/females in all levels of education. Indeed, a number of efforts, strategies and programmes have been implemented to address this goal quantitatively; however, it is necessary to further explore the quality of education girls receive in the post-2015 era. It will be necessary, for example, to unpack the often "hidden inequality" within the content and context of learning materials, financial burden of schooling for girls, the attitudes of teachers and educators towards their female students, the racialised, classed, and gendered context in which learning occurs, and institutional mechanisms that transmit and reinforce gender values and norms.

Secondly, South Africa has made significant progress in mobilising female leadership and political participation. The country ranks among the best in the world in terms of the political participation and representation of women in legislative assemblies. Although significant strides have been made in ensuring representation at provincial and municipal levels, more effort is necessary in the representation and leadership of women in municipal management, director-general positions, parastatals, and the private sector. This will require commitment on behalf of government and the political establishment that regardless of political affiliation, gender equality ought to be prioritised. Thirdly, despite progress in female access to and enrolment in education at all levels, increasing female participation in the labour force remains a challenge. Clear progress is being made in having females enter the formal non-agricultural labour market, but as seen in the current analysis, gender disparity remains. In summary, the MDG process arguably gives insights into the difficulties and possibilities involved in tackling issues of gender equality and empowerment of women in the post-apartheid context.

The analysis adopted herein offered a synthesis that foregrounded the intersectionality of race, class, gender and other markers of difference, together with the ideological, structural, and social

glue that binds the interaction of these markers together in the areas of educational attainment, labour force participation, and leadership in the public and private sector. In this report, it was explained why there has been progress in reshaping gender inequalities and what strategies have been utilised to do so. The findings illustrate that economic empowerment for women remain an intractable drawback, particularly for top professional women in public institutions, the private sector, and so forth. Apart from economic participation, the report also traced progress in women's access and participation in education, wage employment, and politics despite past deep-seated gender, racial and patriarchal relations. For example, there has been considerable progress in girls' access to basic, secondary, and tertiary education. Furthermore, women's political representation since democratic elections in 1994 has increased dramatically. Although limitations still exist in achieving gender equity, there are signs that South Africa is moving in the right direction, liberating both men and women from class, racial and cultural oppression.

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