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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
EFA	Education For All
GER	Gross enrolment ratio
GHS	General Household Survey
GPR	Gender parity ratio
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
PSET	Post-school education and training
QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SCE	Senior Certificate Examination
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SET	Science, Engineering and Technology
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Disability: According to Washington Group on Disability statistics, an individual is classified as disabled if they have one or more of these categories, 'Some difficulty' or 'A lot of difficulty' or is 'Unable to do'.

Educational attainment: Refers to the highest level of education an individual has completed.

Endorsement: Refers to the endorsement by the education council that a senior certificate candidate has satisfied the requirements for matriculation. A pass with endorsement means that a candidate has obtained a Senior Certificate that fulfils basic requirements for entry into South African universities.

Gross enrolment ratio: Total enrolment in a specific level of education regardless of age, as a percentage of the eligible official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education in a given school year.

Gender parity index: The ratio of the number of female students enrolled at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education to the number of male students in each level. It is a socio-economic index usually designed to measure the relative access to education of males and females.

Gender parity ratio: Gender Parity Ratio (GPR) is a numerical value related to gender equality of women and men, girls and boys, and is often calculated as the ratio of female-to-male values for a given indicator. GPR show equal contribution of women and men to every dimension of life, whether private or public, but does not necessarily imply gender equality.

Graduates: Refers to persons who have obtained a university degree.

Literacy: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines literacy as the "ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts". However, for the purpose of this report, completion of primary school (grade 7) was used as the base to determine literacy.

Net enrolment rate: Defined by UNESCO as the enrolment of the official age group for a given level of education expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population.

Senior Certificate: A high school diploma that is the main school-leaving certificate in South Africa. This certificate is commonly known as the matriculation (matric) certificate, as Grade 12 is the matriculation grade.

FOREWORD

Gender describes the socially-constructed roles that societies assign to men and women. Although gender equality is a fundamental human right, women continue to be deprived of equal power and equal opportunities for financial independence, education, and personal development. Women's empowerment is a critical aspect of achieving gender equality as it provides them with the opportunities to reach their full potential, thereby contributing to the health and welfare of their families, communities and countries. Gender issues are, however, not only focussed on women alone, but on the relationship between males and females.

Due to its transformative power, education is a key focus of gender equality, and the primary focus of this publication is to assess the country's progress towards achieving greater access and improved quality in education through a gendered lens. The report covers for the most part trends observed over the period 2009 and 2018. The effects of various demographic, geographic and socio-economic variables on education are also measured in order to try to explain some of the observed trends. The present publication forms part of an annual series of gender reports that provide more in-depth analyses of different gender focal areas.

Risenga Maluleke
Statistician-General

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The provision of education for the majority of learners in South Africa has historically been neglected. To remedy the resulting inequality, the education system has undergone comprehensive reform over the past quarter of a century. A range of policy and regulatory changes has improved access for all children to education at primary and secondary level.

Education is regarded as an important driving force for economic and social development, and an effective way to reduce poverty and promote prosperity. It has, therefore, been listed as a major global development priority by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[1]

The objective and goal of education is to promote learning, provide knowledge and develop skills, subsequently translating to higher quality of living. Furthermore, education contributes to economic growth and an improved social environment. The economic and social returns to education for individuals and societies are regarded as important outcomes of education.[2] Some of the Agenda 2063 SDGs are aimed at gender equality, poverty reduction and the provision of equitable and inclusive quality education for all. UNESCO supports the undeniable relationship between poverty and educational attainment and also concludes that poverty levels have a direct impact on gender disparities in education.[3]

Education For All (EFA) is one of the most important commitments to education ratified by countries in driving significant global progress in education, especially in developing countries. The vision of the UNESCO Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action is to transform lives through education by recognising the important role of education as a main driver of development, and in achieving the other proposed SDGs. This vision is fully captured in Sustainable Development Goal 4, namely to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".[4] The commitments encapsulated by Education For All are based on a set of priorities and strategies, which include:

- **Goal 1:** Expanding and improving access to education – by providing 12 years of free, publicly funded, equitable quality primary and secondary education.
- **Goal 2:** Inclusion and equity in and through education – by addressing all forms of exclusion and marginalisation, disparities and inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes.
- **Goal 3:** Ensuring gender equality in achieving the right to education for all – by committing to supporting gender-sensitive policies, planning and learning environments.
- **Goal 4:** Committing to quality education and to improving learning outcomes – by strengthening inputs, processes and evaluation of outcomes and appropriate mechanisms to measure progress.
- **Goal 5:** Promoting quality lifelong learning opportunities for all, in all settings and at all levels of education.
- **Goal 6:** Developing more inclusive, responsive and resilient education systems to meet the needs of children, youth and adults.

Part of the report will aim at tracking progress made towards achieving EFA priorities as reaffirmed during the Incheon 2030 Declaration (Korea, 2015). Accordingly, South Africa is one of the countries

[1] Assembly, G. Sustainable development goals. In Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; United Nations: New York, NY, USA, 2015
[2] Psacharopoulos, G. Returns to investment in education: A global update. World Dev. 1994, 22, 1325–1343.
[3] UNESCO, Reducing global poverty through universal primary and secondary education. http://uis.unesco.org
[4] UNESCO: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/

that declared education as a basic human right for every person, and committed to putting legal frameworks, policies and finance in place so that every child, no matter what their circumstance is, could have an education, one that is available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable.

Education is one of the fundamental factors of development, and access to education is key and should be accessible. The basic educational system adopted in South Africa is a school education system which includes pre-primary, primary, lower secondary, and higher secondary education. Also included in the system is the adult education programme (ABET, literacy programmes, and special needs education, etc.). Attending school is compulsory for all children until they have achieved Grade 9, or turned 15 years old, whichever comes first.

In line with one of the EFA priorities, the Bill of Rights contained in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) enshrines the right to equality and access to basic education. Gender equality in education is the participation of both female and male students in all levels of education, as equal citizens and at free will, where both sexes enjoy the social, political, economic and cultural benefits. The realisation of equality between female and male students in education is dependent on the establishment of a social, political, economic and cultural framework that allows both genders to choose various educational courses regardless of their gender and without being bound by rigid cultural and religious beliefs as well as stereotyped gender roles.[5]

Therefore, it is important to look at the disparities between boys and girls, and patterns of these gender differences in school progression because they highlight the importance of moving beyond simple measures of enrolment as many countries have achieved gender parity in primary and secondary education.[6] A concern on gender matters and education is the performance of boys. Research shows that boys are also more likely to leave school early. Some of the negative social impacts associated with boys dropping out of school include crime and gender-based violence.[7]

The report also explores socio-economic dynamics linked to education. These will assist in understanding how gender differences are shaped at different points as girls and boys progress through school and if there are any barriers that effectively exclude them from fully participating in education.

1.2 Legislation and policy frameworks

South Africa has made significant progress in putting in place legislation and policy frameworks for advancing access to education and gender equality. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) contains the Bill of Rights, of which section 29(1) enshrines and protects the right to basic and further education for all. The section states that the government has to make education progressively available and accessible by also eliminating barriers and discrimination.

[5] Rena, Ravinder (2005) “Gender Disparity in Education – An Eritrean Perspective”, USA: The Global Child Journal, Vol.2. No.1, pp. 43-49. (A Biannual Journal of the To Love Children Organisation).
[6] UNESCO, Education and Gender: Between promise and progress.
[7] Richard, L. 1991. School Crime and Juvenile Justice. *Oxford University Press, Order Department, 2001 Evans Road, Cary, NC 27513 (paperback: ISBN-0-19-510165-0, $19.95; clothbound: ISBN-0-19-510164-2).*
Djamba, Y.K. and Kimuna, S.R. 2015. Gender-Based Violence: Perspectives from Africa, the Middle East, and India. ISBN 978-3-319-16669-8, Doi 10.1007/978-3-319-16670-4

With respect to legislation, the following Acts contain key elements that are designed to promote universal access to education in South Africa and to ensure that all learners have access to quality education without discrimination, by making schooling compulsory for children aged 7–15 years. Furthermore, these policies provide for the establishment, governance and funding of public schools.

- The Constitution of South Africa (1996);
- Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (2000);
- National Education Policy Act (1996);
- South African Schools Act (1996);
- White Paper on Education and Training (1995);
- Education White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education (2001);
- Education Laws Amendment Act (2002);
- National Development Plan 2030; and
- Choice on Termination of Pregnancy Act 92 (1996); Amendment Acts (2004, 2008).

The country is also a signatory to key international and regional protocols, such as the Beijing Platform for Action; the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa; the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa; and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. Moreover, South Africa works in partnership with development agencies like UNESCO, UNWOMEN, etc. to achieve inclusive education.

1.3 Data sources

The report will mainly utilise secondary data produced by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) and administrative data obtained from DHET. Although the study predominantly focuses on a comparison between 2009 and 2018, trends analysis is conducted for the whole period for some variables. Please note that the oldest and/or the most recently available survey data were used where data for 2009 and/or 2018 were not available.

The following sources of household, demographic and education statistics were used in this report:

- General Household Survey (GHS) 2009 and 2018;
- Living Conditions Survey 2015/16;
- Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) Q1: 2009 and Q1: 2018.

The household surveys each cover approximately 30 000 households that are representative of all nine provinces, and their data are weighted so as to make the results representative of the overall population of the country. GHS 2009 and 2018 are realised samples, the big difference between the two samples is that, in addition to being representative at national and provincial level, the latter sample was also representative for each one of the eight metropolitan areas in South Africa. Furthermore, the survey is conducted annually. Most analyses cover comparisons over a 10-year period. In the case of administrative data, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) enrolment data were used.

1.4 Objective and layout of the report

The purpose of this report is to provide analysis relating to gender and educational outcomes using secondary data from Stats SA, as well as administrative data obtained from external sources. The general analysis in the report covers trends in education over the past 10 years (i.e. 2009 and 2018). This is done through Chapters 2–5 where a wide range of indicators are analysed using frequency tables.

Chapter 1 is an introduction and briefly highlights important aspects of education in relation to gender. The report also focuses on answering some questions we need to ask to examine the extent of gender variations in education:

- What is the extent of gender differentials in entering or starting school?
- How do boys and girls compare in completing primary education and transitioning to secondary education?
- Gender differentials in terms of leaving school early (drop-out)?
- Does the education system cater for both boys and girls with regard to programmes and infrastructure?
- Gender disparities in education in different geographical locations

Chapter 2 of this report focuses on literacy levels and educational attainment, which highlight gender disparities in accessing education. The data that will be presented in this section will provide a gendered analysis of educational attainment mostly using the General Household Survey (GHS) over the period 2009 to 2018. Educational attainment is often considered a proxy in assessing the skills and potential productivity of a country's labour force or working-age population.

Access to education will also be determined by looking at the population of children who are attending and not attending school. This subject is examined in Chapter 3. These out-of-school children include those who had no schooling and youth not in education, employment or training (NEET). Chapter 4 examines access to education holistically by understanding the learning environment of learners, which will assist in evaluating appropriate conditions that enable learning in schools. For example, lack of sanitary facilities at schools is likely to affect boys and girls differently, and according to the Education for All Global Monitoring Report, South Africa agreed to "create safe, healthy, inclusive and equitably resourced educational environments conducive to excellence in learning, with clearly defined levels of achievement for all".

Gender variations in post-school education and training are analysed in Chapter 5. The South African government has set out strategies to improve the capacity of post-school education and training (PSET) systems to meet the country's needs (White Paper for PSET 2014).[8] In line with this, the chapter assesses enrolments, type of post-school education and training (PSET) institution attended and qualification attainment. Chapter 6 concludes the report by summarising the main findings according to the Education For All goal priorities.

[8] White Paper for PSET 2014, Department of Higher Education and Training.

CHAPTER 2: LITERACY LEVELS AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

2.1 Introduction

Educational attainment is often considered a proxy for assessing the skills and potential productivity of a country's labour force or working-age population. Literature demonstrate that educating females are particularly beneficial. Economically, the education of girls yields higher family incomes and increased productivity, while health benefits include delayed marriages, reduced fertility rates and improved health. All these translate into the improved well-being of the society[9].

The data presented in this section will provide a gendered analysis of literacy rates and educational attainment mostly using the General Household Survey (GHS) time series from 2009 to 2018 or, where applicable, a comparison between the two periods to determine change over time.

2.2 Literacy rates

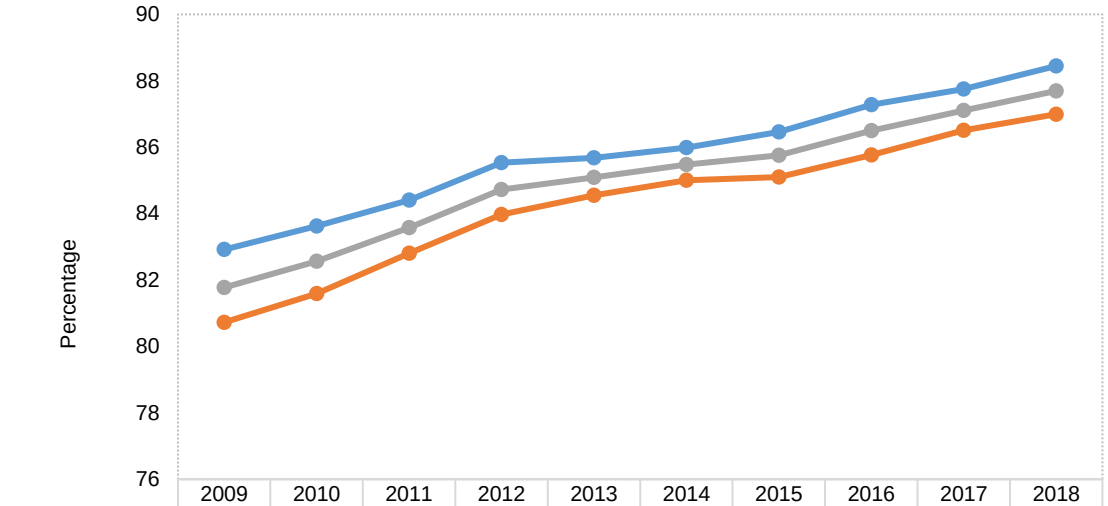
UNESCO defines the literacy rate as the total number of literate persons in a given age group, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group. Literacy measures accumulated achievement of primary education and literacy programmes in imparting basic literacy skills to the population, thereby enabling them to apply such skills in daily life.[10]

One alternative way to obtain information on literacy is to use a proxy indicator such as the highest level of education that has been achieved by an individual, and to assume that the achievement of some basic level of education would imply some functional level of literacy. Individuals that have completed their primary school education (Grade 7) and who have spent at least seven years at school are classified as literate when this measure is used. While it is clear that reading and writing abilities amongst persons who have attained the same level of education might differ, this definition has historically provided useful information in the absence of alternative statistics.

The literacy rate is used as a key indicator of social development as literacy contributes to the ability of an individual to function independently and to contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of society. Since age 15 is the upper age limit for compulsory school attendance, the analysis in this section looks at the literacy rate for persons aged 15 years and older,

[9] Report prepared by the Equate Project, Management Systems international for USAID's office of women in development (2008). Education from a gender equality perspective.
[10] UNESCO. http://uis.unesco.org/

Figure 2.1: Literacy rate for persons aged 15 years and older by sex, 2009–2018

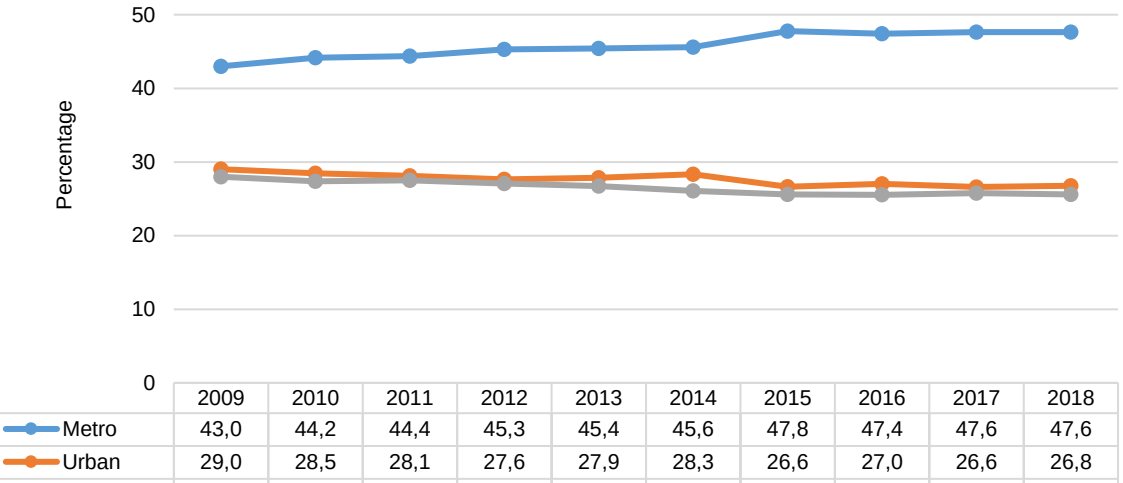


	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Male	82,9	83,6	84,4	85,5	85,7	86,0	86,5	87,3	87,7	88,4
Female	80,7	81,6	82,8	84,0	84,5	85,0	85,1	85,8	86,5	87,0
Both sexes	81,8	82,6	83,6	84,7	85,1	85,5	85,8	86,5	87,1	87,7

Source: GHS 2009–2018

Figure 2.1 shows the literacy rates of people aged 15 years and older by sex for the period 2009 to 2018. Nationally, the completion of primary school education (Grade 7), which is used to compute literacy rates, increased gradually over the years from 81,8% in 2009 to 87,7% in 2018. From 2009, males have consistently showed higher literacy rates than their female counterparts. The male literacy rates are also higher than the average rates for the period 2009–2018.

Figure 2.2: Literacy rate for males aged 15 years and older by sex and geography type, 2009–2018

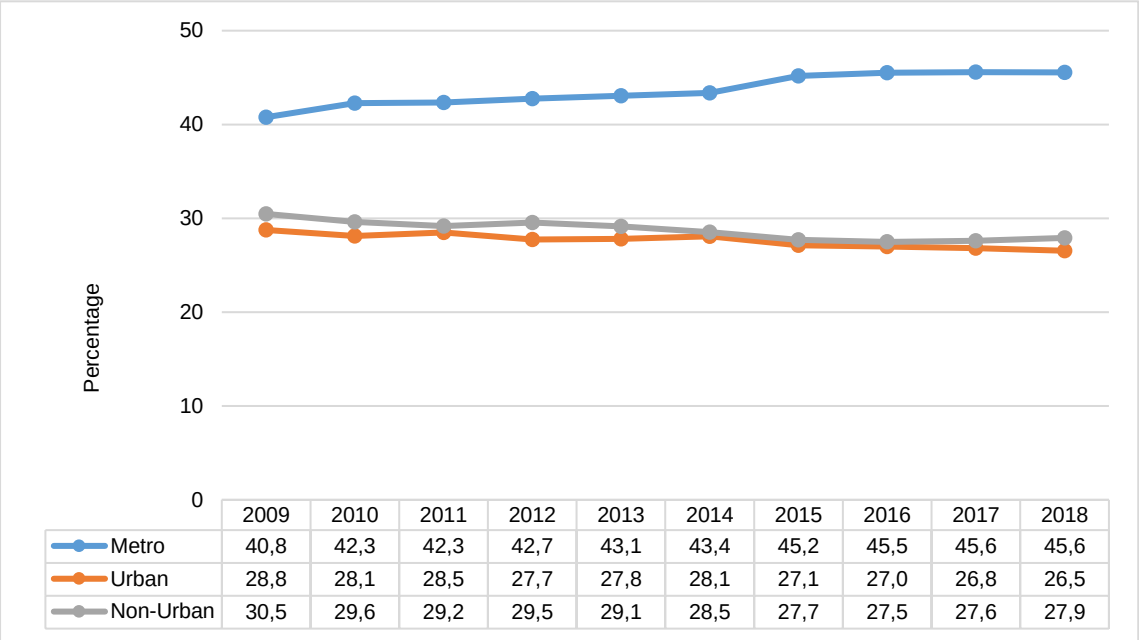


	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Metro	43,0	44,2	44,4	45,3	45,4	45,6	47,8	47,4	47,6	47,6
Urban	29,0	28,5	28,1	27,6	27,9	28,3	26,6	27,0	26,6	26,8
Non-Urban	28,0	27,4	27,5	27,1	26,7	26,1	25,6	25,5	25,8	25,6

Source: GHS 2009–2018

Figure 2.2 and Figure 2.3 show the literacy rates for males and females aged 15 years and older by geography type for the period 2009–2018. Figure 2.2 shows that males that resided in metro areas were noticeably more literate than those in other geography types. The increase was consistent throughout the period of reporting. The literacy rate for males that lived in other urban areas and in non-urban areas were much more similar over the reference period.

Figure 2.3: Literacy rate for females aged 15 years and older by geography type, 2009–2018



	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Metro	40,8	42,3	42,3	42,7	43,1	43,4	45,2	45,5	45,6	45,6
Urban	28,8	28,1	28,5	27,7	27,8	28,1	27,1	27,0	26,8	26,5
Non-Urban	30,5	29,6	29,2	29,5	29,1	28,5	27,7	27,5	27,6	27,9

Source: GHS 2009-2018

As with males in the previous figure, Figure 2.3 shows that literacy rates amongst females were higher in the metropolitan areas than in other geographical areas. The distribution of literate females were very similar in other urban and non-urban areas, while also declining in both areas.

2.3 Income quintile analysis

A quintile is a statistical value of a dataset that represents 20% of a given population.[11] An income quintile is a measure of neighbourhood socio-economic status that divides the population into five equal income groups (from lowest income to highest income) so that approximately 20% of the population is represented in each group. In this section we look at the literacy status of persons aged 15 years and older in different income quintiles among both males and females. The South African society is marked by a stark inequality in incomes. The persistence of these patterns of income distribution has been blamed on the overlap between race, class and education level.[12]

The following income quintiles were derived from the monthly per capita income that was calculated in the GHS 2018**:** R0–628; R629–1 553; R1 554–3 033; R3 034–7 096; > R 7 097.

[11] MCHP Documentation-Rural and Urban Income Quintiles for Manitoba – Tables for 1979 to 2018
[12] Van der Berg, Servaas, et al. "Low quality education as a poverty trap." (2011).

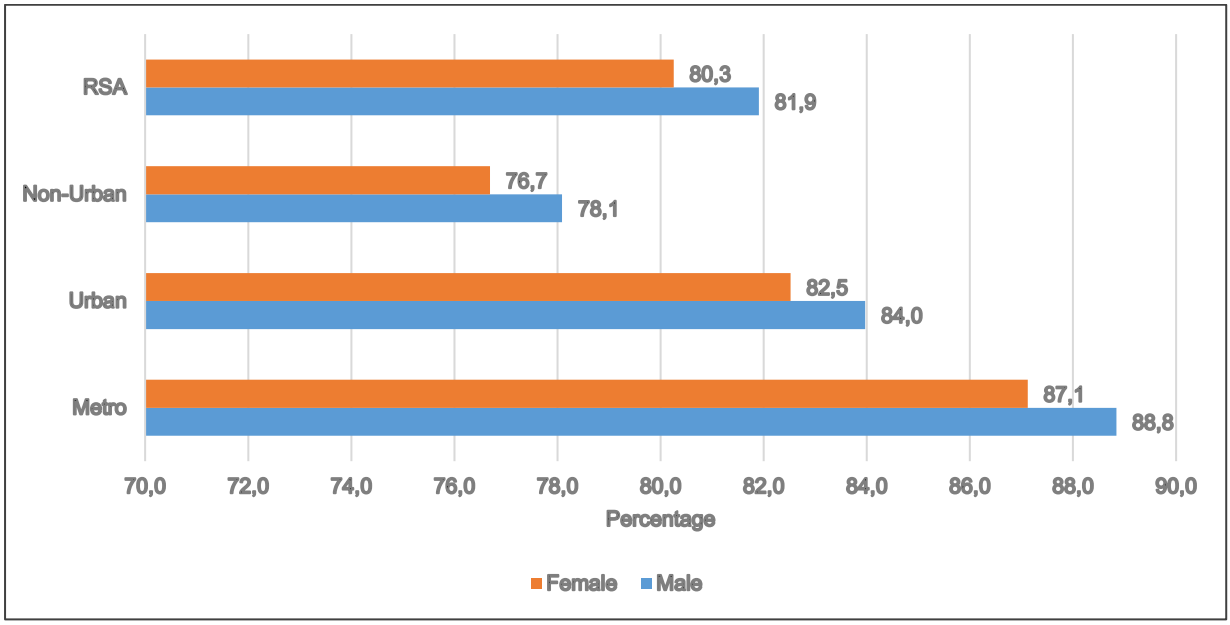
Table 2.1: Literacy status of persons aged 15 years and older by sex and monthly per capita income quintile, 2018

	Male			Female			Both		
	Illiterate	Literate	Total	Illiterate	Literate	Total	Illiterate	Literate	Total
Quintile	N('000)								
1	695	3 146	3 841	1 100	4 472	5 572	1 795	7 618	9 413
2	632	3 191	3 823	872	3 810	4 683	1 504	7 001	8 506
3	486	2 962	3 448	426	3 026	3 452	912	5 988	6 900
4	256	3 645	3 901	185	3 283	3 468	441	6 927	7 368
5	85	3 098	3 183	52	2 521	2 573	137	5 619	5 756
Total	**2 154**	**16 042**	**18 196**	**2 636**	**17 111**	**19 747**	**4 790**	**33 153**	**37 943**
	Percentage								
1	18,1	81,9	**100**	19,7	80,3	**100**	19,1	80,9	**100**
2	16,5	83,5	**100**	18,6	81,4	**100**	17,7	82,3	**100**
3	14,1	85,9	**100**	12,3	87,7	**100**	13,2	86,8	**100**
4	6,6	93,4	**100**	5,3	94,7	**100**	6,0	94,0	**100**
5	2,7	97,3	**100**	2,0	98,0	**100**	2,4	97,6	**100**

Source: GHS 2018

Table 2.1 shows that the share of literate persons consistently increases by income quintile for both males and females, on average increasing from 80,9% in quintile 1 to 97,6% for persons in quintile 5.

Figure 2.4: Literacy rates of persons 15 years and older living in households with income in the 1st quintile by geography type and sex, 2018



Source: GHS 2018

Despite the introduction of no-fee schools in the poorest communities, quality education remains costly and, therefore, out of reach of many children. In the absence of good quality education, children are locked into intergenerational poverty through their inability to improve on their parents' limited earnings potential[13]. By focusing on the lowest income quintile, the analysis highlights the dilemma faced by

[13] Spaull, N., 2015. Schooling in South Africa: How low-quality education becomes a poverty trap. *South African Child Gauge*, *12*, pp.34-41.

middle- and lower-income families who questions the quality of education that their children has access to.

Figure 2.4 depicts the literacy rates of persons living in the poorest households. The figure shows that more than four-tenths of males and females aged 15 years and older who lived in quintile 1 households were literate. Although a high percentage of males and females (88,8% and 87,1% respectively) in the poorest metropolitan households were literate, literacy was noticeably less common for males and females in particularly non-urban areas (78,1% and 76,7% respectively).

2.4 Basic literacy activities

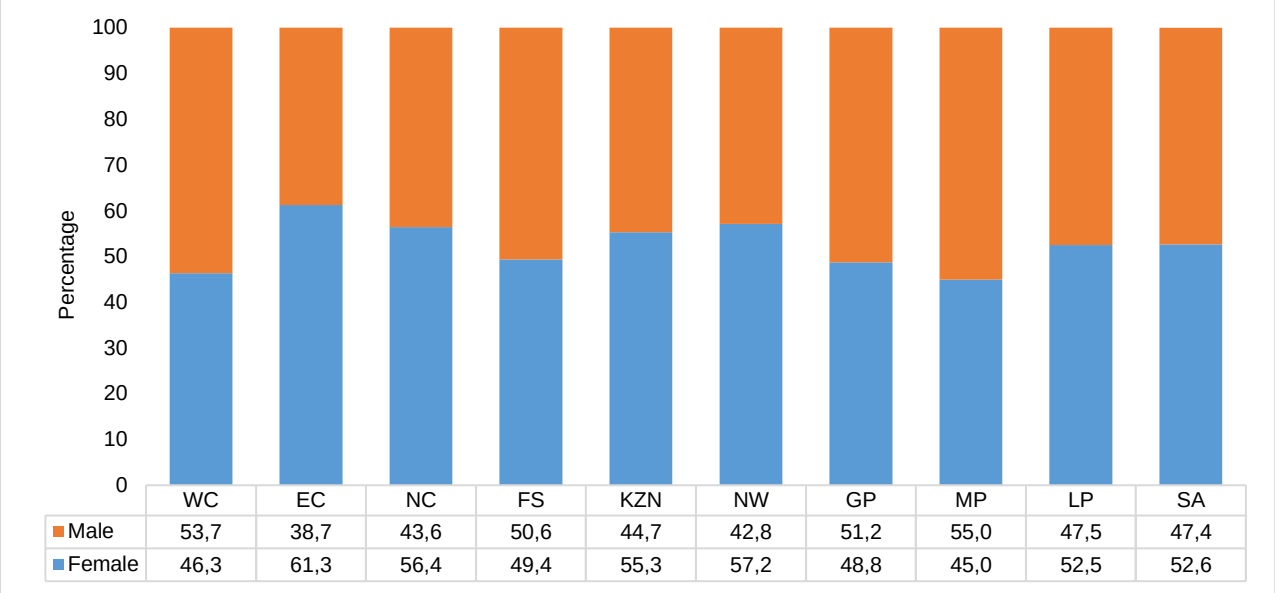
The South African Schools Act (SASA) (Act No. 84 of 1996) aims to ensure that all learners have access to quality education without discrimination. To this end, the Act makes schooling compulsory for children aged 7 to 15 years.[14] The Act and the South African Council for Educators (SACE) regulate teachers. Even though an increasing number of people have acquired a basic primary education, it does not necessarily translate into quality education. According to the World Bank, millions of children, globally, reach young adulthood without even understanding the most basic skills like calculating the correct change from a transaction, reading a doctor's instructions, or understanding a bus schedule, which will impend in building a fulfilling career or educating their children.[15]

This section looks at basic literacy skills among males and females who have completed Grade 7 in different geographical areas. An individual is regarded to have basic literacy skills if they are able to write their name, write a letter in at least one language, and have basic numeric and reading skills, i.e. they are able to read road signs and newspapers. A battery of questions that measures activities related to literacy was introduced in the 2009 GHS. The questions that were used to classify literacy for this report require respondents to indicate the level of difficulty ('no difficulty', 'some difficulty', 'a lot of difficulty' or are 'unable to') they experienced to:

- read newspapers, magazines and books in at least one language;
- write a letter in at least one language.

[14] South Africa Yearbook 2015/16 Education
[15] World Bank. The education crisis: Being in school is not the same as learning. https://www.worldbank.org/

Figure 2.5: Percentage distribution of persons aged 15 years and older who completed Grade 7 and who have difficulty in basic literacy activities by sex and province, 2018

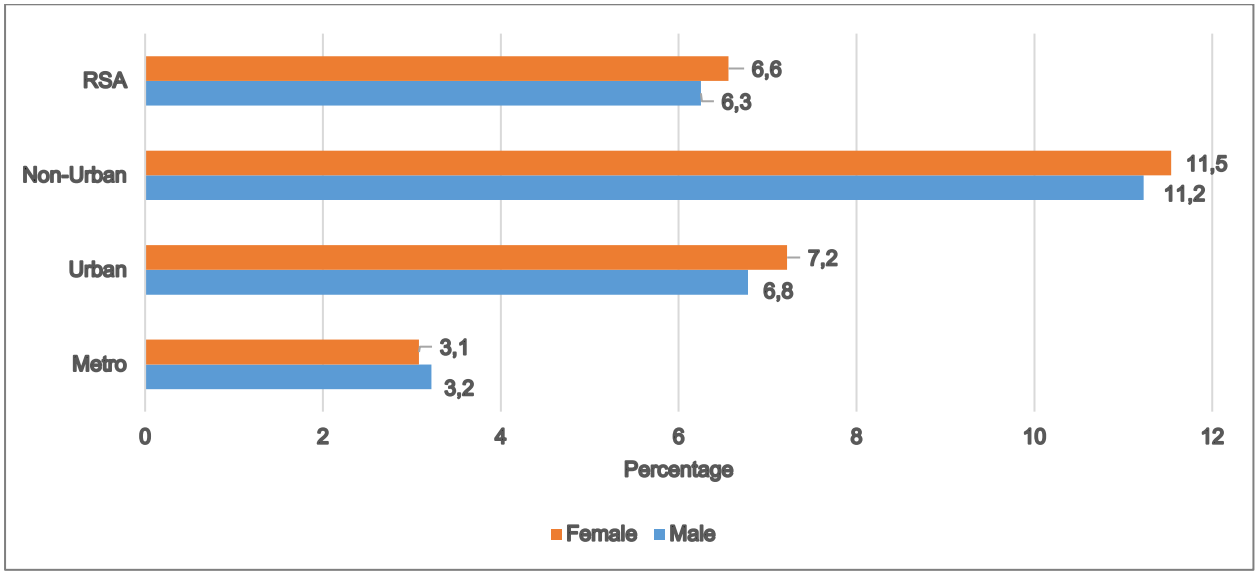


	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	SA
Male	53,7	38,7	43,6	50,6	44,7	42,8	51,2	55,0	47,5	47,4
Female	46,3	61,3	56,4	49,4	55,3	57,2	48,8	45,0	52,5	52,6

Source: GHS 2018

Figure 2.5 shows the distribution of people aged 15 years and older who completed Grade 7 but who still experience some difficulty in reading and writing. Nationally, more than one-half (52,6%) of those that indicated that they experienced difficulty in basic literacy activities were female. Provincially, the highest female shares of persons who found it difficult to read and write are observed in Eastern Cape (61,3%) and North West (57,2%) while the lowest share is observed in Mpumalanga (45,0%) and Western Cape (46,3%).

Figure 2.6: Distribution of people aged 15 years and older who completed Grade 7 and who have difficulty in basic literacy activities, by sex and geography type, 2018

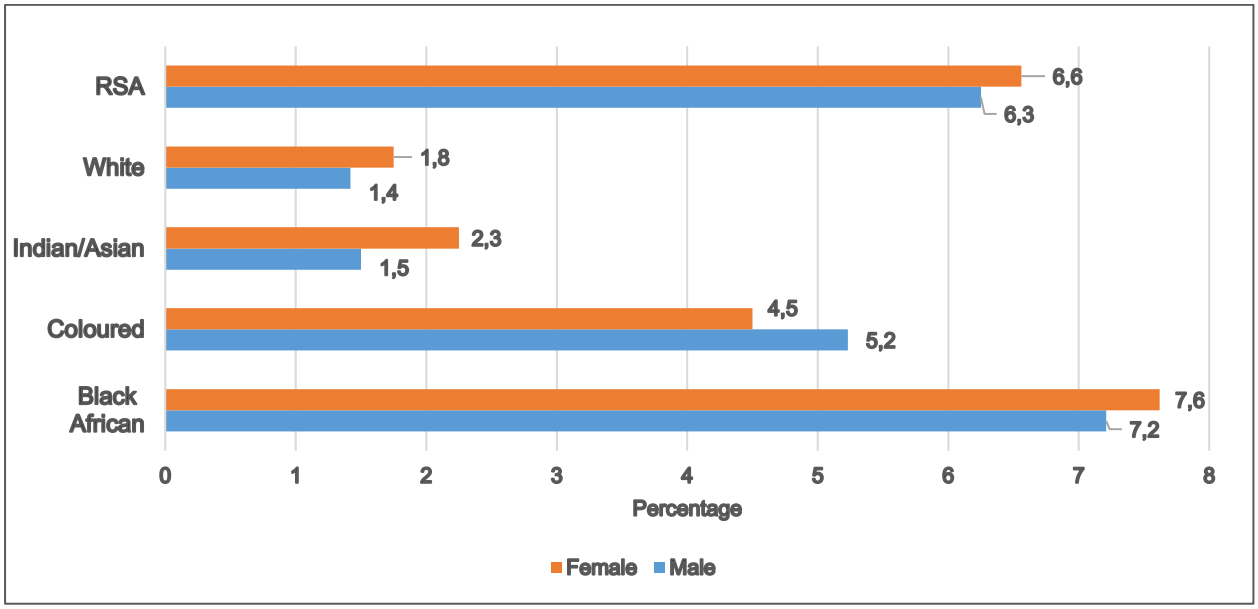


Source: GHS 2018

The estimates illustrated in Figure 2.6 indicate that, nationally, less than a tenth of persons 15 years and older experienced difficulty in performing basic literacy activities even though they had completed Grade 7. Difficulties related to reading and writing were most common in non-urban areas for both

males and females. By contrast, only about 3% of males and females in metropolitan areas reported similar difficulties.

Figure 2.7: Distribution of people aged 15 years and older who completed Grade 7 and who have difficulty in basic literacy activities, by sex and population group, 2018



Source: GHS 2018

A further disaggregation of the aforementioned cohort by population group reveals difficulties related to literacy were most common amongst black Africans, and coloureds, while it was much less common amongst Indian/Asians and Whites. This was true for both males and females. Very similar estimates are observed for males and females across all population groups.

2.5 Educational attainment

The introduction of various policies that address gender inequality has coincided with a marked improvement in the observed gender equity in relation to access to higher education. Disadvantaged females continue to exit the educational system at a lower level than their male counterparts, and ensuring higher educational attainment and quality for women are critical to open up labour market options that were previously inaccessible to them. This would in turn ensure that women are empowered to make good decisions for themselves and their dependents.[16]

In this section, data is presented in terms of educational attainment as measured through the highest level of education completed by sex for those 18 years and above. The section also deals with the gender disparity ratio in different levels of educational attainment. Age 18 is used in this section as it usually represents the age at which learners exit Grade 12.

Table 2.2: Percentage distribution of persons aged 18 years and above by educational attainment and sex, 2009 and 2018

Educational attainment	2009			2018		
	Male	Female	GPR	Male	Female	GPR

[16] The status of women in the South African Economy,2015

Less than Grade 12	62,6	63,8	1,12	54,9	54,6	1,07
Matric	26,1	25,3	1,06	30,1	30,5	1,09
Other tertiary	5,3	5,7	1,19	5,5	6,0	1,18
Graduates	5,0	4,5	0,99	7,8	7,6	1,06
Other qualification	1,0	0,6	0,67	1,7	1,3	0,82
Total (N'000)	**15 190**	**16 661**		**18 138**	**19 494**	

Source: GHS 2009 and 2018

Table 2.2 shows the percentage distribution of persons aged 18 years and above by educational attainment and sex for 2009 and 2018. Generally, educational attainment has improved over the period of analysis for both sexes. The percentage of males and females who left school before completing Grade 12 (indicating 'less than Grade 12' as highest level of education) declined between 2009 and 2018, decreased from 63,8% in 2009 to 54,6% in 2018 for females, and from 62,6% in 2009 to 54,9% in 2018 for males. Inversely, 45,1% of males and 45,4% of females had achieved a level of education equivalent to Grade 12 or higher by age 18.

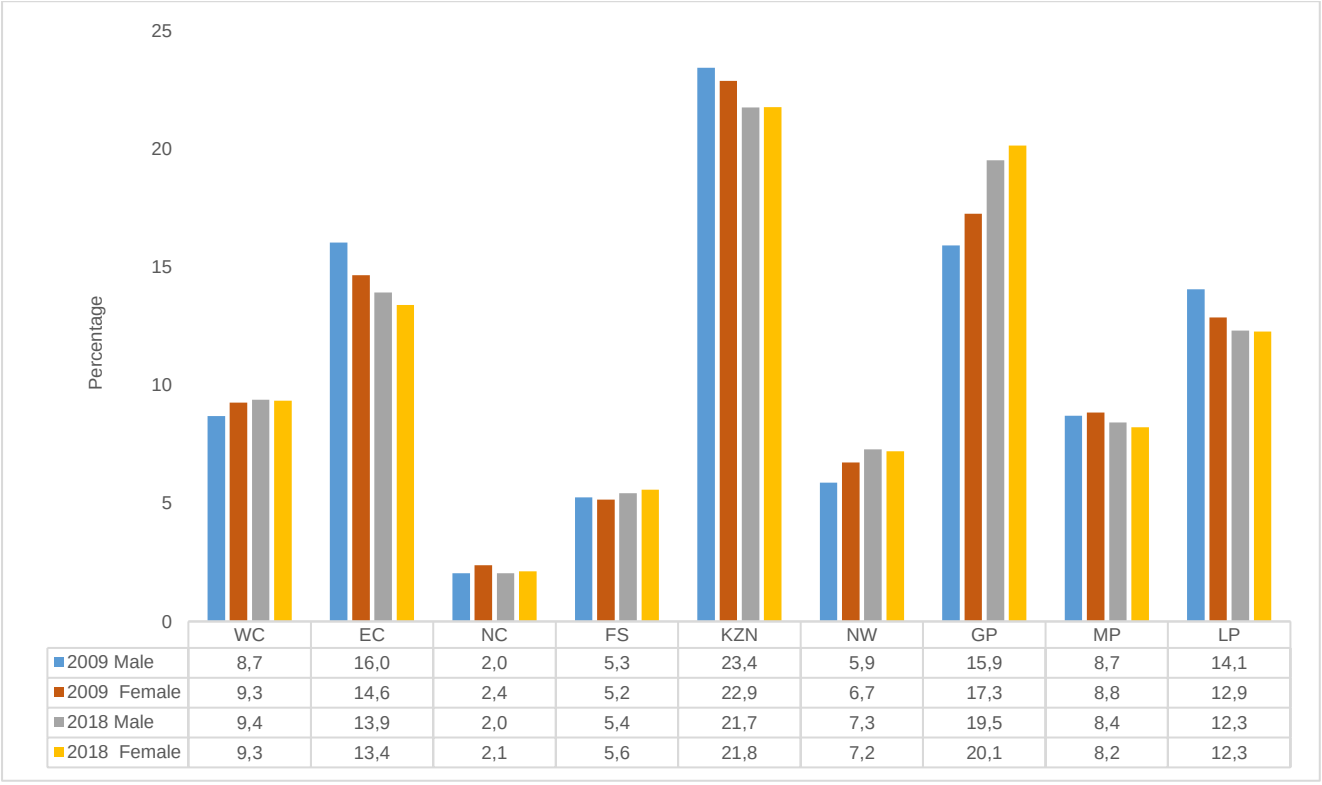
Gender Parity Ratios (GPRs) for 2018 are also presented in Table 2.2. GPRs are statistical measures that provide a numerical value to female-to-male ratios. The GPR is skewed towards females across all categories but the last one, other qualifications, in 2018. The improved access to education for females is further borne out the fact that the GPR for graduates changed from 0,99 in 2009 to 1,06 in 2018.

CHAPTER 3: ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

3.1 Background

The Constitution of South Africa states that the right to education is one of the fundamental human rights. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) points out that "*universal access to quality education is not a privilege but rather a basic human right*"[17] and that equal and quality education has the potential to increase a country's gross domestic product per capita. According to the MDG 2015 report, gender parity had been reached in accessing a basic education schooling. This chapter focuses on access to education by looking at the population of children by school attendance.

Figure 3.1: Distribution of learners attending Grades 1–9 by province and sex, 2009 and 2018



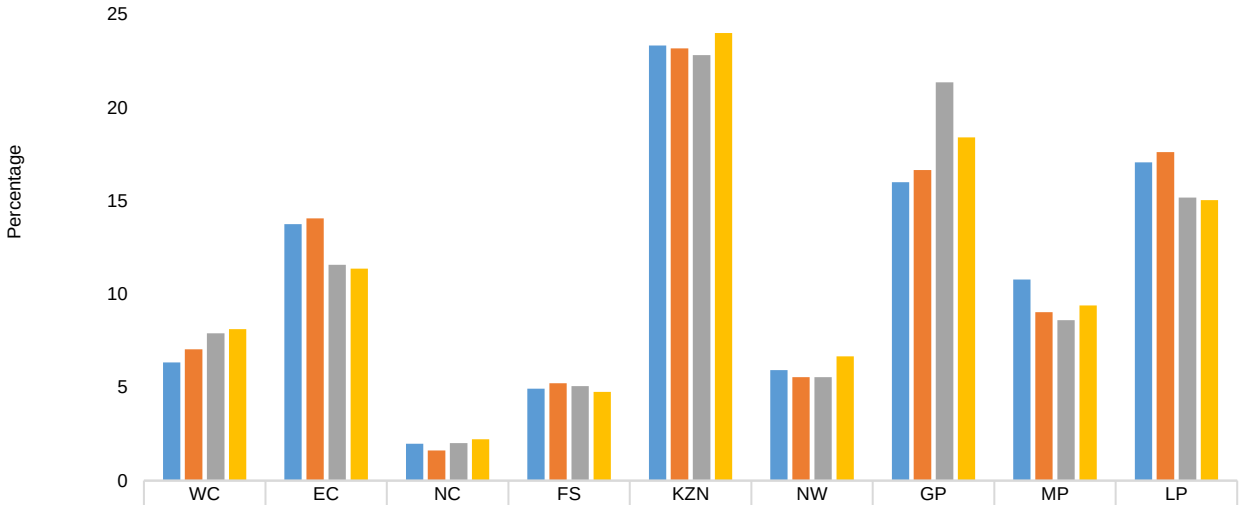
	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP
2009 Male	8,7	16,0	2,0	5,3	23,4	5,9	15,9	8,7	14,1
2009 Female	9,3	14,6	2,4	5,2	22,9	6,7	17,3	8,8	12,9
2018 Male	9,4	13,9	2,0	5,4	21,7	7,3	19,5	8,4	12,3
2018 Female	9,3	13,4	2,1	5,6	21,8	7,2	20,1	8,2	12,3

Source: GHS 2009 and 2018

The analysis focuses on learners starting school to those completing lower secondary school. Figure 3.1 shows the distribution of learners attending Grades 1 to 9 by province and sex for 2009 and 2018. During this period, the largest proportion of learners in this category were found in the most populated provinces, namely KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and Eastern Cape. Ten years on, the number of learners in Grades 1–9 increased amongst both male and female groups by approximately 843 000, with the biggest increase of approximately 482 000 observed in Gauteng. The gender parity ratio, which is the ratio of females to males, shows that males were slightly more likely to attend grade 1-9 across the reference period (0,953 in 2009 and 0,961 in 2018).

[17] UNICEF. http://www.unicef.org/education/bege_61657.html

Figure 3.2: Distribution of learners attending Grades 10–12 by province and sex, 2009 and 2018



	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP
2009 Male	6,3	13,7	2,0	4,9	23,3	5,9	16,0	10,8	17,1
2009 Female	7,0	14,1	1,6	5,2	23,2	5,5	16,6	9,0	17,6
2018 Male	7,9	11,6	2,0	5,1	22,8	5,5	21,3	8,6	15,2
2018 Female	8,1	11,4	2,2	4,8	24,0	6,7	18,4	9,4	15,0

Source: GHS 2009 and 2018

Figure 3.2 depicts the distribution of learners in higher secondary schools (attending Grades 10–12) across all provinces between 2009 and 2018. In general, the number of learners in the higher secondary phase increased by 50 000 during the reference period for both male and female groups. In contrast to the gender parity ratios observed among those attending Grade 1–9 (shown in Figure 3.1), more females that males attended Grades 10–12 as indicated by a GPR of 1,09.

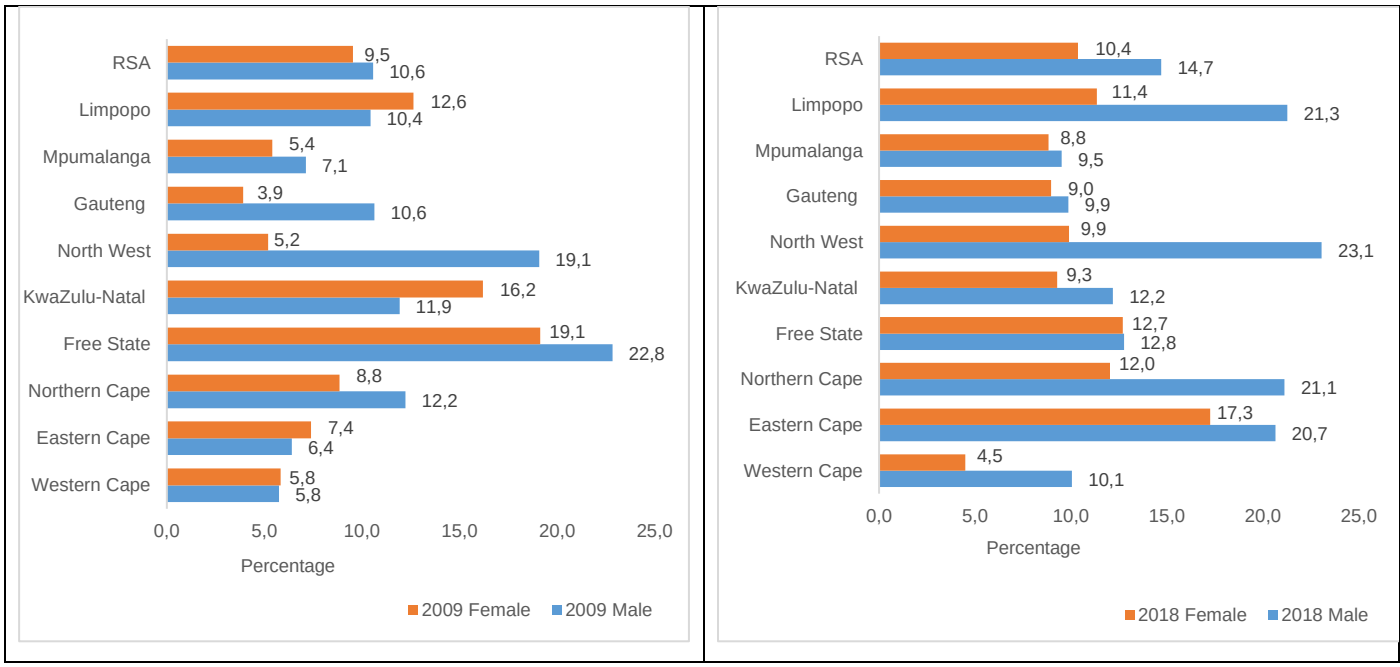
3.2 Disability and Education attainment

The education policy in South Africa promotes equal access to education, including for children with disabilities. This is reflected in a framework policy document called White Paper 6 (WP6) for special needs education which allows for all children, including children with disabilities, to develop and extend their potential and participate as equal members of society.[18]

For the purpose of this analysis, disability was measured using the Washington Group short set questions in the GHS questionnaire, and responses were grouped into some thresholds that were used to categorise a person as either being disabled or not. An individual is regarded as having a disability if they reported to have 'Some difficulty' or 'A lot of difficulty' or is 'Unable to do' for one or more categories. This broad definition of disability was used to capture even those children with minor disabilities which have the potential to hinder with their optimal functionality at school.

[18] Department of Basic Education: http://www.education.gov.za

Figure 3.3: Entry level of learners in Grade 1 by province, sex and disability status, 2009 and 2018



Source: GHS 2009 and 2018

Figure 3.3 shows the entry of learners in Grade 1 by province, sex and disability status between 2009 and 2018. The results show that the national disability prevalence rate among children entering school improved over the years for males and females by 4,1 and 0,9 percentage points, respectively. Provincial variations show that, among males, Eastern Cape, Limpopo and Northern Cape provinces had significant improvements in the proportion of children with disabilities entering Grade1 (14,3 percentage points; 10,9 percentage points; and 8,9 percentage points, respectively). For females, major improvements were reported in Eastern Cape (9,9 percentage points) and Gauteng (5,1 percentage points).

3.3 School non-attendance

According to the South African Schools Act of 1996, schooling is compulsory for all South African children from the age of six (grade 1) to the age of 15, or the completion of grade 9. Despite legislation, many children never attended school. This section examines children who are not attending school by grouping them into three main groups, i.e. children who never went to school; those who are out of school (used as a proxy for drop-outs); as well as those not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Research shows that those who leave school early are more likely to be unemployed and in need of public assistance. Even if they do find a job, they earn substantially less than those with matric. Furthermore, children who are not attending school have also been found to be more likely to be faced with other social problems such as crime and teenage pregnancy.[19]

Different age groups are used in the report, as an indication of different school levels.

[19] Rumberger, R.W. 2011. Dropping Out. *Harvard University Press.*

Figure 3.4: Percentage distribution of primary school leaners (6–13 years) who were out of school by sex, 2009 to 2018

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Female	48,4	49,0	50,9	38,4	41,4	46,5	51,3	56,1	51,1	44,9
Male	52,5	51,0	49,1	61,6	59,6	53,5	48,8	43,9	48,9	55,1

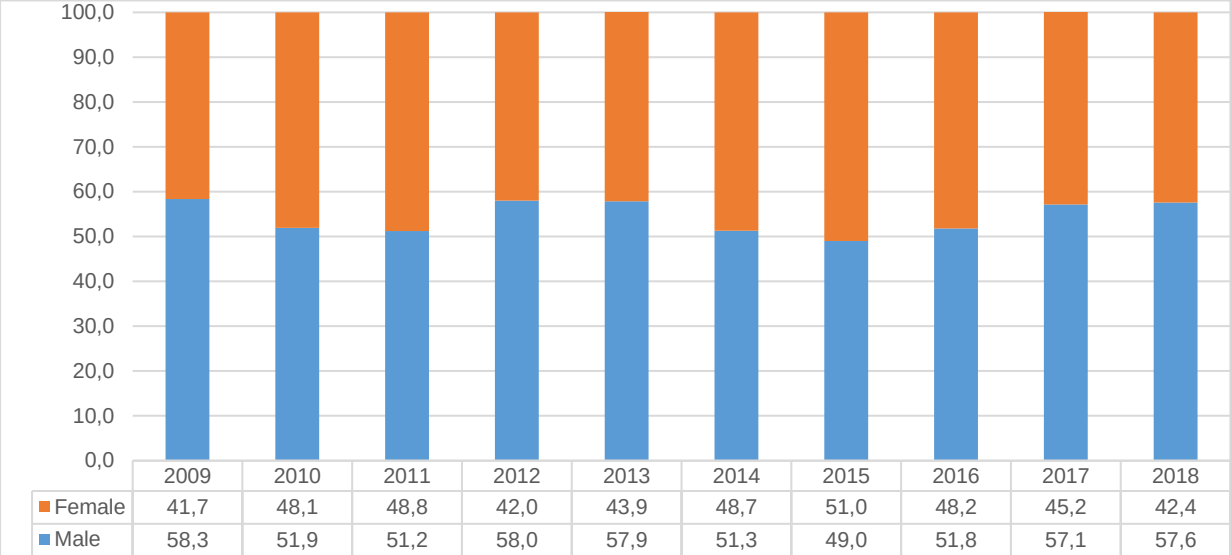
Source: GHS 2009 to 2018

Figure 3.4 shows GHS data on children who were not attending school and who were within the primary school-going age (6–13 years) from 2009 to 2018, by sex. School attendance is encouraged through school fee exemptions, feeding schemes, scholar transport and other forms of subsidies. The implementation of these measures have had a positive impact on school attendance, as the number of children of primary-school going aged decreased from 122 000 in 2009 to 98 000 in 2018. The figure shows that boys generally comprised a larger share of the children in this group that did not attend school.

Figure 3.5 shows that boys comprised 57,6% of all the children aged 14-15 years of age that did not attend school in 2018. An analysis of this nature is important to determine how differences in gender roles, activities, needs, opportunities and rights/entitlements affect women, men, girls and boys in certain situations or contexts. It examines the relationships between females and males and their access to and control of resources, and the constraints they face relative to each other.[20]

[20] UNSD. https://unstats.un.org/unsd/genderstatmanual

Figure 3.5: Percentage distribution of lower secondary school leaners aged 14–15 years who are out of school by sex, 2009 to 2018

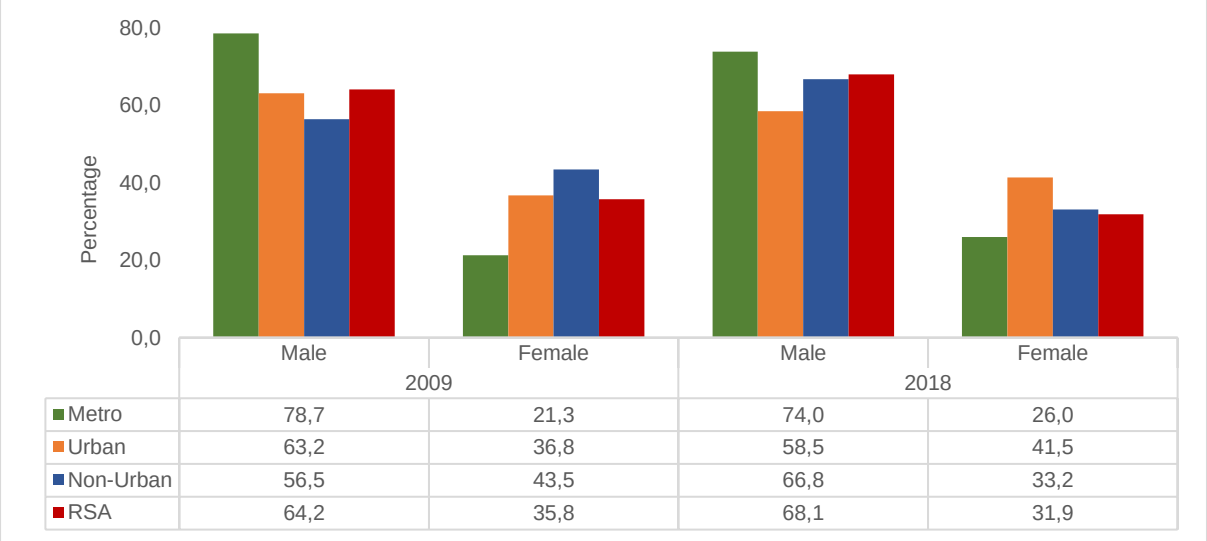


	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Female	41,7	48,1	48,8	42,0	43,9	48,7	51,0	48,2	45,2	42,4
Male	58,3	51,9	51,2	58,0	57,9	51,3	49,0	51,8	57,1	57,6

Source: GHS 2009 and 2018

Figure 3.5 shows sex composition of children who were out of school at lower secondary school age (14–15 years) between 2009 and 2018. The total number of boys and girls who were not attending lower secondary school declined by almost one half (from 60 000 to 33 000) during the ten-year period. The data above shows that even though there was an improvement in lower secondary school attendance, boys were more likely not to attend school than girls for most years of reporting.

Figure 3.6: Percentage distribution of males and females aged 15–19 years who never went to school, 2009 and 2018



	2009		2018	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Metro	78,7	21,3	74,0	26,0
Urban	63,2	36,8	58,5	41,5
Non-Urban	56,5	43,5	66,8	33,2
RSA	64,2	35,8	68,1	31,9

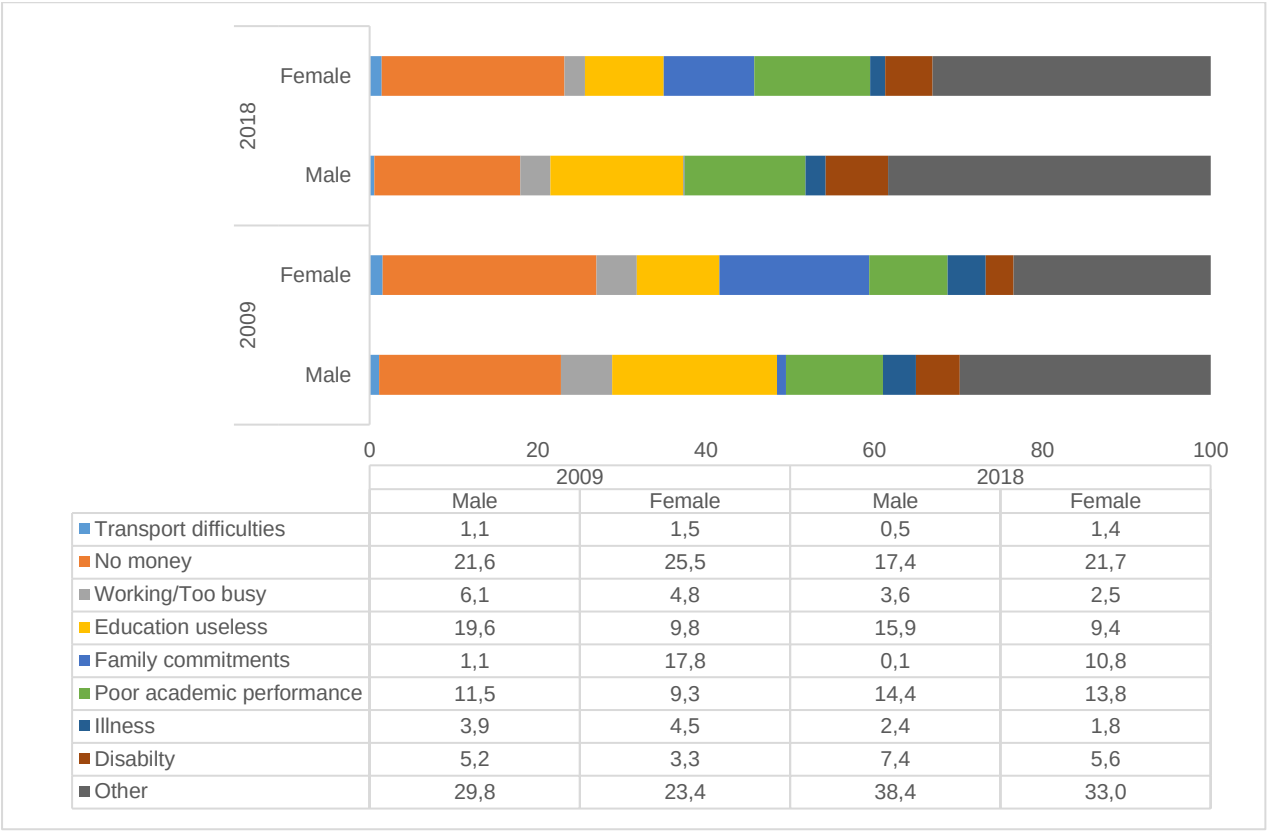
Source: GHS 2009 and 2018

While the analysis in the previous section looked at girls and boys who were not attending school, of greater concern are those who have never attended school. Data in the analysis above accordingly used GHS collected in 2009 and 2018 to ascertain gender and geographic differences for children aged 15–19 years of age who have never been to school. Nationally, less than one percent of this cohort had never attended school. The number of persons aged 15–19 years who reported to have never been to

school declined by approximately two-thirds for both sexes (from 41 000 to 26 000), although non-urban areas recorded the highest decline in the number of those who did not attend school compared to other geographical locations for both periods of reporting.

Figure 3.6 illustrates the percentage distribution of males and females aged 15–19 years residing in metros and in urban and non-urban areas who were reported to have never been to school during the period of analysis. In general, males were more likely to never have been to school for all settlement types. Keeping in mind the population structures of persons aged 16–19 years in metros, urban and non-urban areas, Figure 3.6 indicates that the share of males that have never gone to school were highest in metros (78,8% in 2009 compared to 74,4% in 2018) and lowest in non-urban areas. Since the sample is so small the fluctuation between the two years should be treated with caution.

Figure 3.7: Reason for not attending an educational institution for persons aged 5–18 years by sex, 2009 and 2018



	2009		2018	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Transport difficulties	1,1	1,5	0,5	1,4
No money	21,6	25,5	17,4	21,7
Working/Too busy	6,1	4,8	3,6	2,5
Education useless	19,6	9,8	15,9	9,4
Family commitments	1,1	17,8	0,1	10,8
Poor academic performance	11,5	9,3	14,4	13,8
Illness	3,9	4,5	2,4	1,8
Disabilty	5,2	3,3	7,4	5,6
Other	29,8	23,4	38,4	33,0

Source: GHS 2009 and 2018

The GHS asks respondents to provide the main reason why household members aged five years and above are not currently attending an educational institution. Figure 3.7 illustrates reasons for not attending school for those aged 5–18 years for both sexes, as conditions for boys and girls may differ. “No money” ranked the highest reason for not attending school for both sexes and for both years of reporting.

The results also show that significantly higher proportions of boys (19,6% and 15,9%) for both years perceived education to be useless. This might be linked to the fact that a considerable share of boys also reported an inability to perform at school or failing exams as a reason for non-attendance. These

findings are related to research, which indicates that individuals are more likely to perform better in areas that they are valued or have a liking towards.[21]

It is noticeable that girls are more likely to stay at home due to family commitments such as child minding, which seems to have a bigger impact on girls than boys.

Table 3.1: Percentage distribution among girls aged 12–19 years who fell pregnant and were not attending an educational institution, 2009 and 2018

	2009	2018
Province	**Percentage**	
Western Cape	9,1	14,5
Eastern Cape	20,7	8,6
Northern Cape	5,0	6,2
Free State	2,8	3,6
KwaZulu-Natal	27,8	34,0
North West	9,3	5,2
Gauteng	8,4	19,0
Mpumalanga	5,1	4,1
Limpopo	11,8	4,8
RSA	100,0	100,0
Total	**119**	**69**

Source: GHS 2009 and 2018

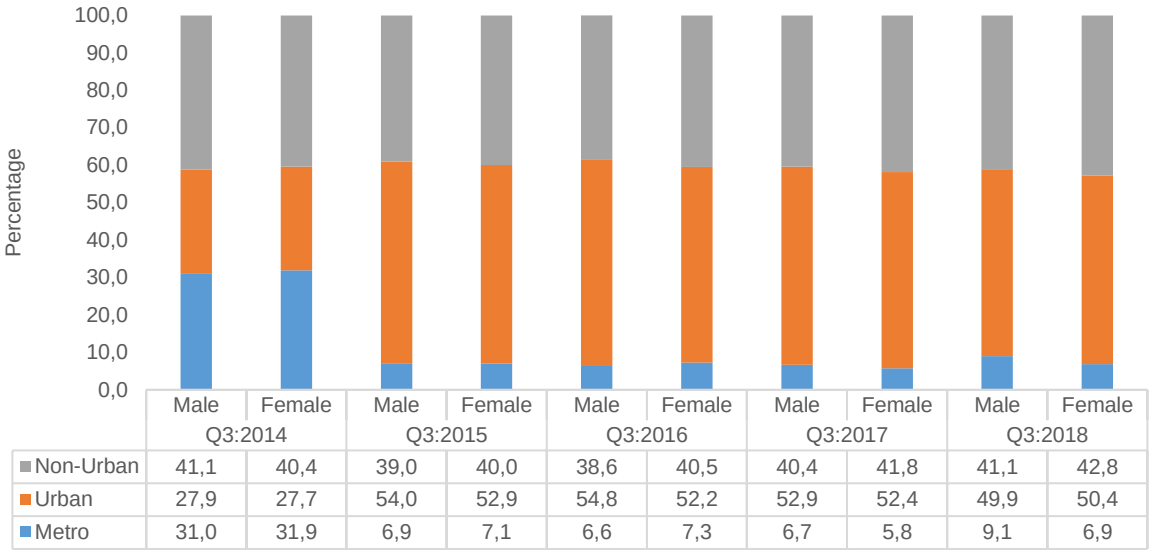
Table 3.1 shows a percentage distribution by province of girls aged 12–19 years who fell pregnant and were not attending an educational institution in 2009 and 2018. During this period, KwaZulu-Natal had the highest proportion of girls who did not attend school owing to pregnancy, followed by Gauteng and Western Cape. Pregnancy acts as a social gender-specific obstacle that hinders access to education for girls. The Department of Education introduced legislation that accommodates the inclusion of pregnant girls to continue with schooling.

3.3 Not in education, employment or training (NEET)

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines the NEET as persons aged between 15–24 who are Not in Education, Employment or Training to describe youth who are disengaged from both work and education and are arguably at a high risk of labour market and social exclusion. This section uses data from the QLFS collected during the first quarters of 2014 to 2018 to analyse gender differences of the NEET population by geographical area.

Figure 3.8: Percentage of youth not in education, employment or training persons aged 15- 24 years by sex and geo-type, 2009 to 2018

[21] Student attitudes and their academic performance: is there any relationship? Liddell[1], Davidson S.K.



	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	Q3:2014		Q3:2015		Q3:2016		Q3:2017		Q3:2018	
Non-Urban	41,1	40,4	39,0	40,0	38,6	40,5	40,4	41,8	41,1	42,8
Urban	27,9	27,7	54,0	52,9	54,8	52,2	52,9	52,4	49,9	50,4
Metro	31,0	31,9	6,9	7,1	6,6	7,3	6,7	5,8	9,1	6,9

Source: QLFS:Q3 2014 to Q3: 2018

Figure 3.5 shows the distribution of male and female NEET youth by geographic type for the period 2014 to 2018. The analysis focused on youth aged 15–24 years in South Africa. During this period, the national number of the NEET fluctuated around approximately 3,2 million persons. During 2014, the highest rates amongst males and females were observed for those living in non-urban areas at 41,1% and 40,4% followed by those in metros at 31,0% and 31,9% respectively. Since 2015, variations in the NEET increased by almost a half for those living in urban areas from 27,9% amongst males to 54,0%, while 27,7% amongst females to 52,9%. For subsequent years this trend remained relatively similar.

CHAPTER 4: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

A learning environment at educational institutions is a multifaceted space which encompasses an array of factors such as educational approach, learner and teacher characteristics, cultural context, physical setting in which teaching and learning occurs, and also considers societal influence on the operations of the institution. To achieve optimal learning, learners need to be in a conducive environment where they feel safe and welcomed.

This chapter of the report will focus on physical conditions of the learning environment, for example, resources, infrastructure and exposure of students to violence at an institution – whether by a teacher or by other students.

4.1 Children who are attending schools not nearest to their homes

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) has historically encouraged learners to consider schools nearest to their homes when applying for schools. This practice was meant to assist the department to conduct adequate demand planning into the future, to cut down on travel time, and to limit the cost and physical effort required to reach school.

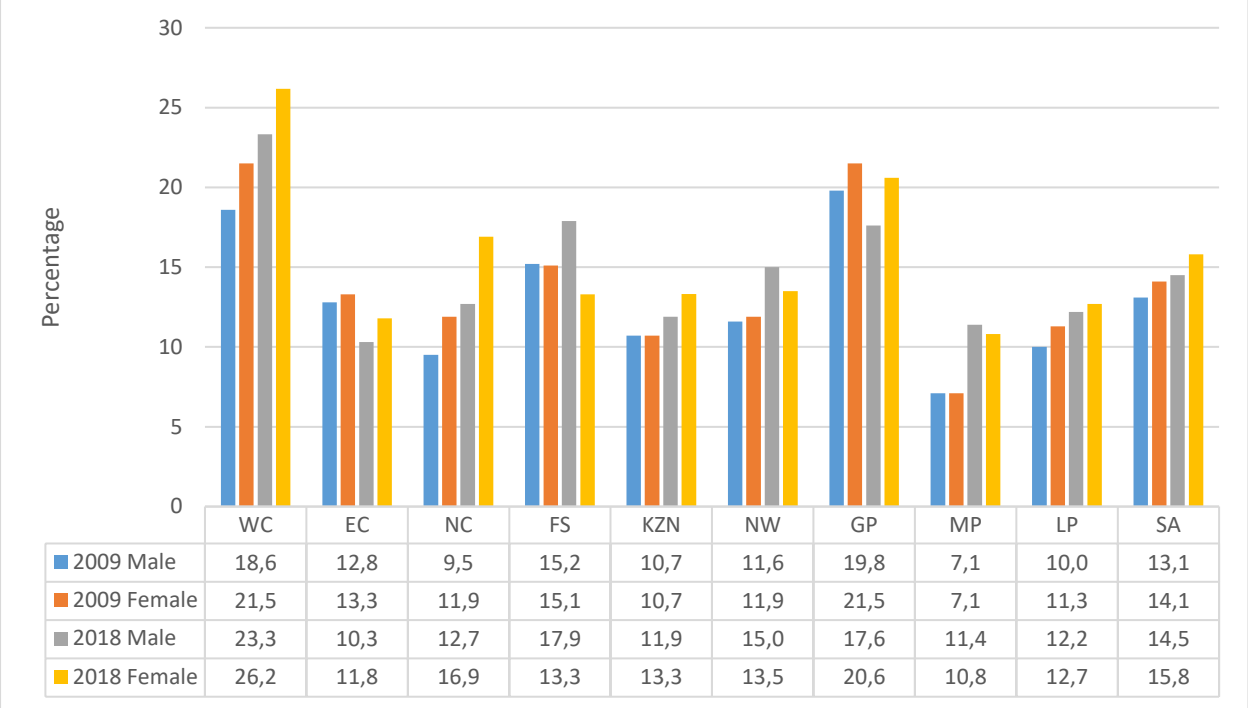
Until recently, the default feeder zone was a 5 km radius, which has now been increased to within a 30 km radius in Gauteng province in a bid to broaden access to a spectrum of schools that learners can choose from.[22] Given the above, all children should therefore theoretically be attending a school closest to their homes; however, it is known that this does not always happen in practice.

Poor, unsafe and difficult learning conditions that are caused by factors such as inadequate infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms with poor ventilation, as well as inadequate furniture and equipment are among the main drivers pushing some leaners to schools that are far from home. The neglected and under-resourced schools are often associated with poor learning outcomes and academic performance.

This section will explore the extent to which learners opt to attend schools not nearest to their homes and the reasons highlighted as catalyst to such a decision.

[22] GDE Policy for the delimitation of feeder zones for schools, 2018

Figure 4.1: Percentage of learners (5–18 years) not attending school nearest from home by province and sex, 2009 and 2018



	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	SA
2009 Male	18,6	12,8	9,5	15,2	10,7	11,6	19,8	7,1	10,0	13,1
2009 Female	21,5	13,3	11,9	15,1	10,7	11,9	21,5	7,1	11,3	14,1
2018 Male	23,3	10,3	12,7	17,9	11,9	15,0	17,6	11,4	12,2	14,5
2018 Female	26,2	11,8	16,9	13,3	13,3	13,5	20,6	10,8	12,7	15,8

Source: GHS 2009 and 2018

There are a number of contributing factors that push parents and students to opt for schools that are further away from home. Figure 4.1 examines the prevalence of this occurrence at various provinces through a gender lens. The number of learners who did not attend the school closest to their homes increased from 1,7 million in 2009 to over 2,1 million in 2018, an increase of more than 400 000 learners over a decade.

Figure 4.1 shows that 14,5% of males and 15,8% of females did not attend the nearest school in 2018, up from 13,1% and 14,1% for males and females respectively in 2009. Overall, the percentage of males and females that did not attend the nearest schools increased by respectively 1,4 and 1,7 percentage points. Provincially, the figure also shows that the percentage of males who did not attend the closest schools to their homes increased in all provinces, but two (Eastern Cape and Gauteng) while the attendance of such schools decreased in three provinces for women (Eastern Cape, Gauteng and Free State).

Not attending the nearest school was most common in Western Cape and Gauteng, and least common in Mpumalanga and Eastern Cape.

Table 4.1: Reasons for learners (5–18 years) not attending school nearest from home by sex, 2018

Reason	Male	Female	Both sexes	GPR
Inadequate facilities, i.e. classroom, laboratories	1,0	1,3	**1,1**	1,46
Lack of resources/equipment, i.e. computers, textbooks, laboratory equipment, sports equipment	4,3	3,1	**3,7**	0,78
Lack of services, i.e. water, electricity, toilets	0,8	0,5	**0,7**	0,74
Quality of teaching is poor	15,7	14,2	**14,9**	0,98
Overcrowded classes	2,8	2,4	**2,6**	0,94
Lack of safety	2,1	1,2	**1,6**	0,63
Weak management	0,5	0,6	**0,6**	1,30
Lack of discipline	1,6	1,2	**1,4**	0,79
No/too few extra -mural activities	1,1	1,4	**1,2**	1,43
Not accepted for enrolment	7,2	6,3	**6,7**	0,96
Preferred courses/subject not offered	11,6	13,3	**12,5**	1,25
Current institution better than closest	30,7	33,2	**32,0**	1,17
Other	20,8	21,2	**21,0**	1,10

Source: GHS 2018

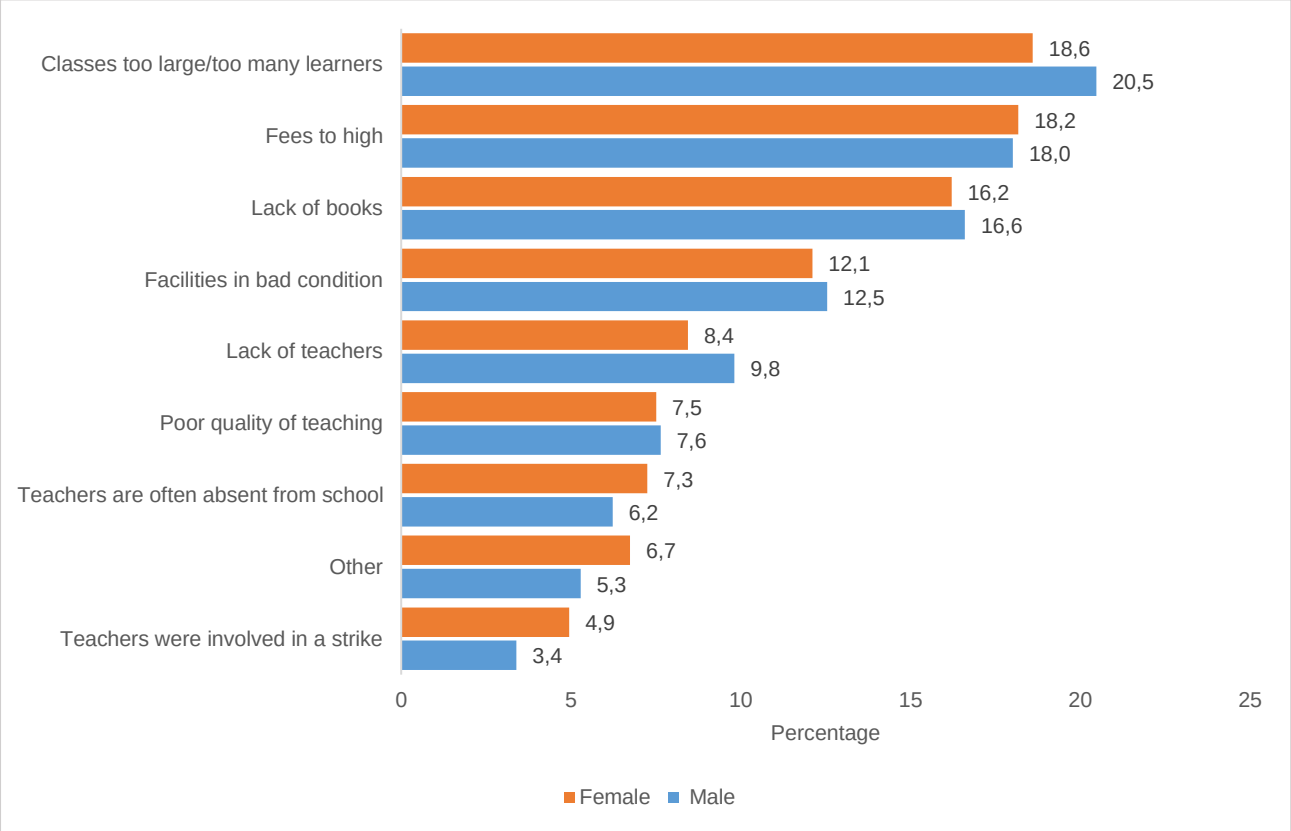
Table 4.1 outlines reasons that were highlighted as stimuli to choose schools that were further away from home. Almost one-third (32%) of respondents indicated that the institution they were currently attending was better than the one closest to home in 2018. This was followed by other reasons (21%), quality of teaching is poor (19,9%) and preferred courses/subjects not offered (15,5%). The option “Other” includes any other reason that is not explicitly mentioned in the above table.

The analysis on gender gaps reveals some differences in some of the reasons that were cited by learners. These included inadequate facilities (GPR: 1,46), no/too few extra-mural activities (GPR: 1,43), weak management (GPR: 1,30), preferred courses/subjects not offered (GPR: 1,25) and current institution better than closest (GPR: 1,17) – where these were biased towards females. On the other hand, lack of safety (GPR: 0,63), lack of services (GPR: 0,74), lack of resources/equipment (GPR: 0,78) and lack of discipline (GPR: 0,79) were biased towards males. Gender parity ratios on some of the stated reasons revealed that learners had more or less the same feeling with regard to these reasons. Reasons included overcrowded classrooms (GPR: 0,94), not accepted for enrolment (GPR: 0,96) and quality of teaching is poor (GPR: 0,98).

4.2 Problems experienced by learners at the schools they attend

A conducive learning environment is crucial to optimise the process of learning amongst learners. The data below looks at problems experienced at their current school as reported by learners for the year 2018.

Figure 4.2: Problems identified by learners in their current school by sex, 2018



Source: GHS 2018

Figure 4.2 examines gender gaps in problems identified by learners in their current schools for 2018. The analysis reveals that the top three problems experienced by learners of both sexes in their current school were that classes were too large ore that there were too many learners, that fees were too high, and that there were not enough books.

Complaints about high fees (18,2%) were most common amongst boys, while boys were more likely to experience overcrowding or large class sizes (20,5%) and lack of books (16,6%).

Table 4.2: Problems identified by learners in their current schools by geotype, 2018

Problems identified	Metro			Urban			Non-urban		
	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes
Lack of books	13,3	13,0	13,1	20,9	19,3	20,1	17,7	18,5	18,1
Poor quality of teaching	8,8	7,5	8,1	8,0	9,5	8,8	5,1	5,6	5,4
Lack of teachers	9,5	8,9	9,2	8,3	7,8	8,1	12,0	8,3	10,0
Facilities in bad condition	12,8	11,0	11,8	9,9	12,0	11,0	14,9	14,0	14,4
Fees to high	24,4	25,3	24,9	15,6	15,6	15,6	9,5	9,4	9,5
Classes too large/too many learners	16,7	14,2	15,4	21,1	18,4	19,7	26,5	25,7	26,1
Teachers are often absent from school	6,4	8,5	7,5	8,0	7,8	7,9	4,1	4,5	4,3
Teachers were involved in a strike	3,7	6,1	4,9	4,0	5,4	4,7	2,1	2,8	2,5
Other	4,4	5,6	5,0	4,1	4,3	4,2	8,2	11,1	9,8
Total %	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**
Total count	**481**	**522**	**1 003**	**302**	**324**	**626**	**276**	**325**	**601**

Source: GHS 2018

Table 4.2 depicts the percentage distribution of learners who experienced problems in their current school by geography type. The perception of learners that experienced particular problems at their current schools varied greatly across geography types. Much greater concurrence is, however, noted within each geography type between males and females.

In metropolitan areas, the analysis reveals consistency in terms of the problems identified by both males and females. The largest percentage of learners, irrespective of their sex, identified problems such as high fees, large classes, a lack of books, and poor facilities as the primary problems they have experienced in 2018.

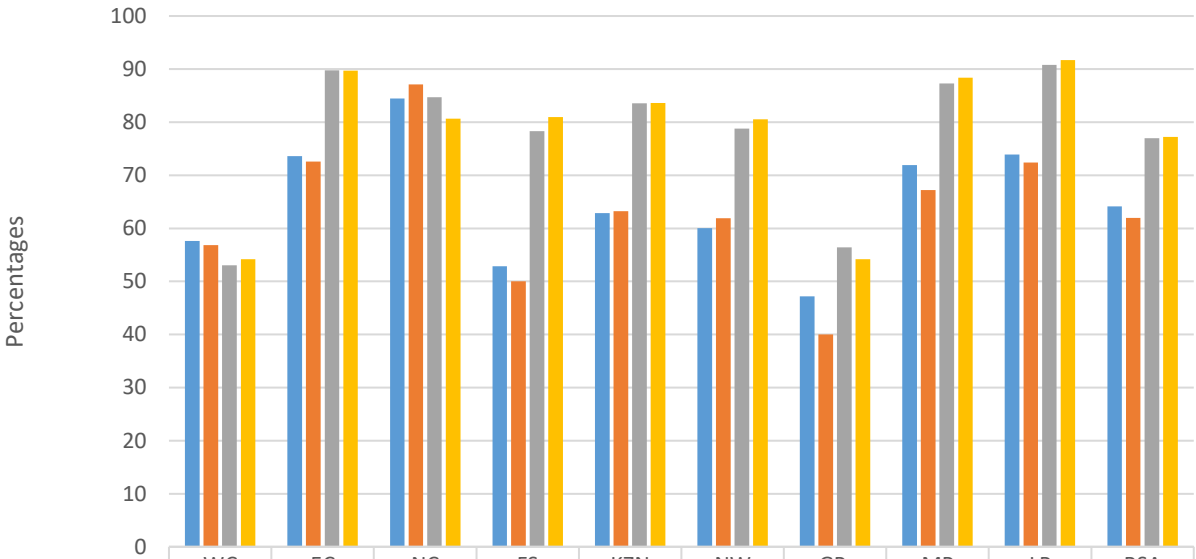
More gender disparities are identified in other urban areas. Large class sizes/overcrowding, a lack of books, high fees, and poor facilities were most often mentioned by males. Although females mentioned the same problems, the ranking was slightly different. Females considered a lack of books as the main problem, followed by large classes / overcrowding, high fees and facilities in poor condition.

Despite slight gender differences in non-urban areas, the ranking for the top three problems was consistent amongst males and females. The analysis reveals that problems such as large class sizes/ overcrowding, a lack of books, and poor facilities were the three most important problems.

4.3 Schools offering a feeding scheme

The school feeding scheme programme serves as a safety net for children living in poverty and/or who have to face the challenge of food insecurity, as this programme is intended to reduce the effects of hunger among learners who go without food. It enhances learning abilities of students, and also reduces the rate of absenteeism. The analysis in this section will examine gender imbalances among the learners who indicated that they were attending schools that offer feeding scheme programmes.

Figure 4.3: Distribution of learners who attend schools offering a feeding scheme by province and sex, 2009 and 2018



	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA
2009 Male	57,6	73,6	84,4	52,9	62,9	60,0	47,2	71,9	73,9	64,1
2009 Female	56,8	72,6	87,1	50,0	63,2	61,9	40,0	67,2	72,4	62,0
2018 Male	53,1	89,8	84,7	78,3	83,5	78,8	56,4	87,3	90,8	77,0
2018 Female	54,2	89,7	80,7	80,9	83,6	80,5	54,2	88,4	91,7	77,2

Source: GHS 2009 and 2018

Figure 4.3 shows the distribution of male and female learners who were attending schools that were offering a feeding scheme between 2009 and 2018. No major gender imbalances were, in general, observed across the provinces.

The percentage of learners who attended schools that offered some food declined for both males (-4,6 percentage points) and females (-2,6 percentages points) in Western Cape and for females in Northern Cape (-6,5 percentage points) between 2009 and 2018. The largest increases for males were noted in Free State (25,4 percentage points), KwaZulu-Natal (20,7 percentage points) and North West (18,8 percentage points). For females, the largest increases were observed in Free State (30,9 percentage points), Mpumalanga (21,2 percentage points) and KwaZulu-Natal (20,4 percentage points).

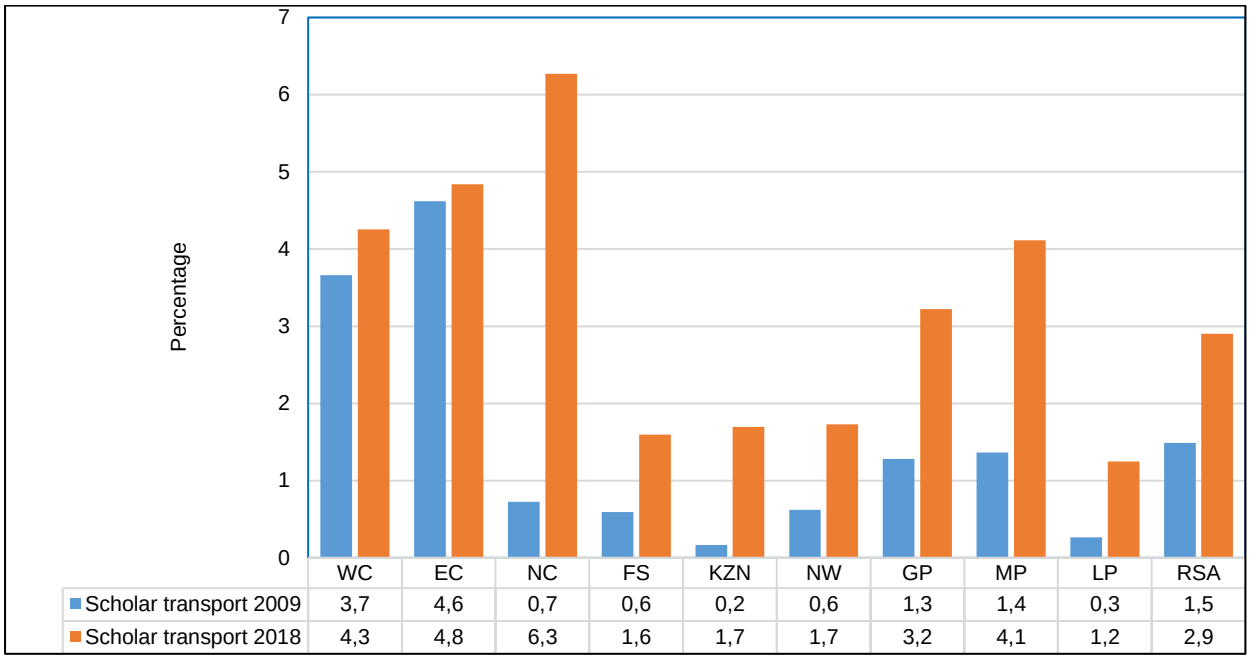
Although the percentage of females that attended schools that had feeding schemes lagged males in six of the nine provinces in 2009, the situation had reversed by 2018 as female access to these schools only lagged those of males in Northern Cape, Gauteng and Eastern Cape.

4.4 Scholar transport

The availability of scholar transport to those learners who are attending schools not nearest from home is one of the important aspects when determining access to education, especially if there are no other schools available in the community or neighbourhood. The introduction of scholar transport was meant to make the long journeys to school more bearable, as walking long distances to school is perceived to contribute greatly to a higher rate of absenteeism, which sometimes leads to school drop-outs, as these long and sometimes dangerous journeys tend to discourage learners in the long run. Scholar transport also serves as a safety net for learners walking long distances to schools, because walking to school might make them vulnerable to abductions and sexual violence.

The analysis in this section examines the extent to which learners utilise the transport provided by the Department of Basic Education.

Figure 4.4: Percentage of learners who use scholar transport by province, 2009 and 2018



	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA
Scholar transport 2009	3,7	4,6	0,7	0,6	0,2	0,6	1,3	1,4	0,3	1,5
Scholar transport 2018	4,3	4,8	6,3	1,6	1,7	1,7	3,2	4,1	1,2	2,9

Source: GHS 2009 and 2018

Figure 4.4 shows the distribution of learners who used scholar transport between 2009 and 2018. Generally, the number of learners who used scholar transport increased from 194 thousand in 2009 to 411 thousand in 2018, constituting an increase of 1,4 percentage points.

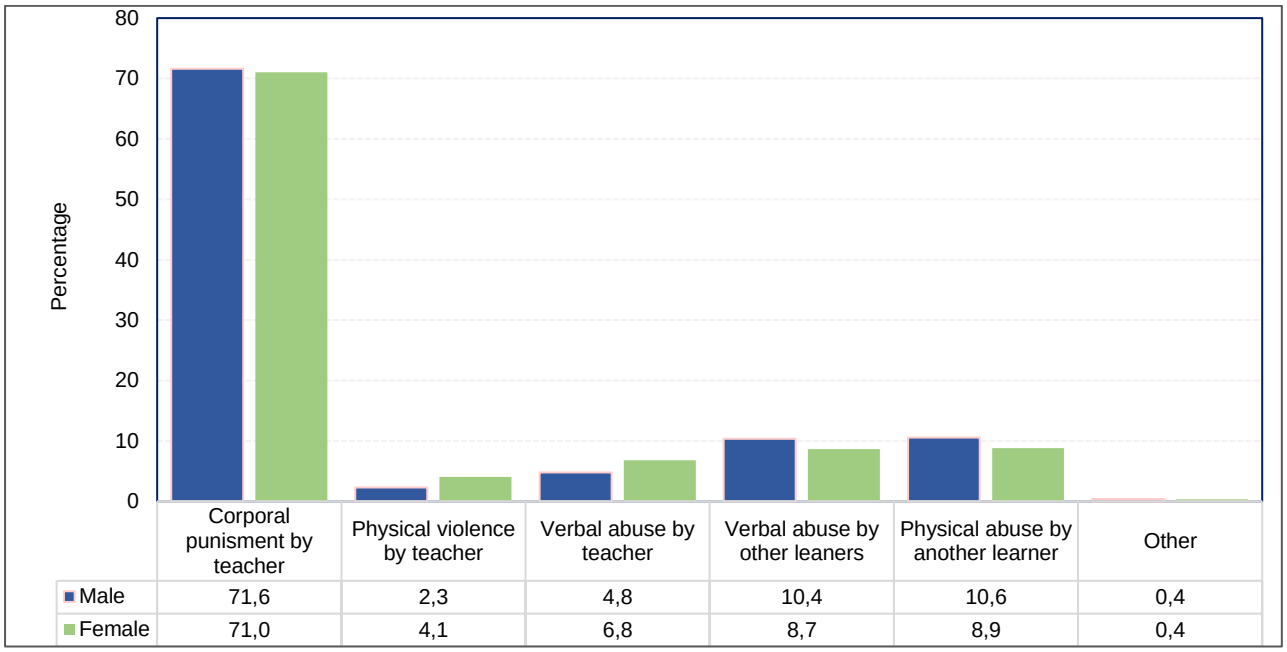
Between 2009 and 2018, the number of leaners using scholar transport across provinces increased significantly, except in Eastern Cape, where the number of learners using this service remained more or less static.

4.5 Violence at school

Violence at school is an act of violence that can either occur between learner-on-learner or educator-on-learner. It is a public health problem and may take the form of bullying, brawls, stabbing, shooting and a host of other physical abuses. The consequences of violence at school are grave, as extreme cases have led to the loss of human lives. It can also impact learning as learners who experience fear at school are likely to have difficulty concentrating on their education.

The analysis in this section will examine the extent to which learners experience different forms of violence, whether by a teacher or by another learner. These include corporal punishment, physical violence and verbal abuse.

Figure 4.5: Violence experienced by learners in their current school by province and sex, 2018



	Corporal punisment by teacher	Physical violence by teacher	Verbal abuse by teacher	Verbal abuse by other leaners	Physical abuse by another learner	Other
Male	71,6	2,3	4,8	10,4	10,6	0,4
Female	71,0	4,1	6,8	8,7	8,9	0,4

Source: GHS 2018

Figure 4.5 illustrates the percentage distribution of males and females who reported to have experienced violence in their schools in 2018. The analysis revealed that girls were more likely to suffer violence by teachers than their male counterparts. In contrast, boys were more likely to suffer violence by other learners.

In 2018, corporal punishment by a teacher was the leading form of violence experienced by learners, and this was the case irrespective of their sex. Among both sexes, 7 in 10 learners experienced corporal punishment by teachers.

Girls were more likely to be victims in other forms of violence perpetrated by teachers against learners compared to their male counterparts. These included physical violence by a teacher and a verbal abuse by a teacher, where larger percentages of female learners reported to have suffered these forms of violence. In contrast, boys were more likely to experience violence by other learners. Over 10 per cent of male learners reported to have suffered verbal abuse (10,4%) and/or physical abuse (10,6%) by another learner.

CHAPTER 5: POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (PSET)

Post-school education and training can be seen as a focal point of knowledge and its application; it is an institution that makes a great contribution to economic growth and development through fostering innovation and increasing higher skills.[23] It equips and empowers students for economic independence by preparing them for participation in the labour market.

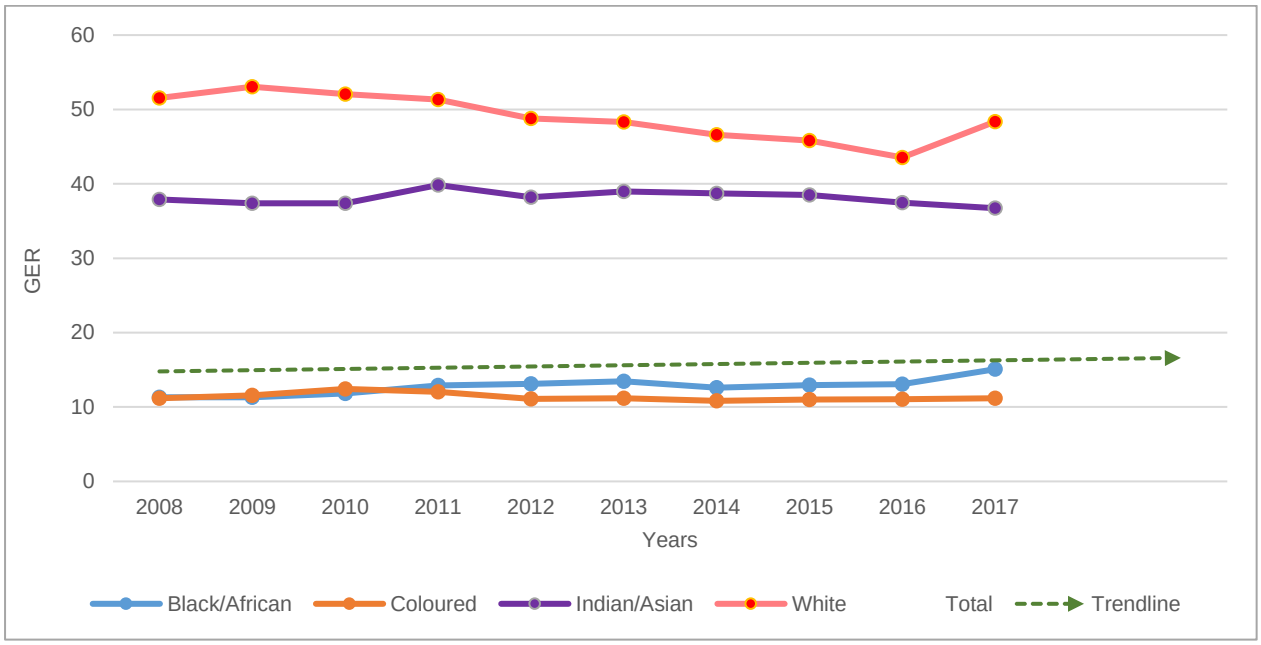
Post-school education and training encompasses traditional universities, universities of technology, Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges (TVET), and private colleges. All these institutions contribute immensely in assisting students to develop a competitive edge in terms of honing their skills.

The analysis in this section will examine the participation levels at post-school education and training institutions and the fields of study that students tend to pursue. Furthermore, the analysis will look at gender disparities in post-school education and training.

5.1 Gross enrolment ratio at post-school education and training institutions

The analysis below looks at gender differentials among those who have enrolled at public higher education institutions. The Gross enrolment ratio (GER) is used to show the general level of participation in a given level of education. This is particularly important as it indicates the capacity of the education system to enrol students of a particular age group.[24]

Figure 5.1: Gross enrolment ratio by population group for males in public higher institutions



Source: Department of Higher Education, HEMIS

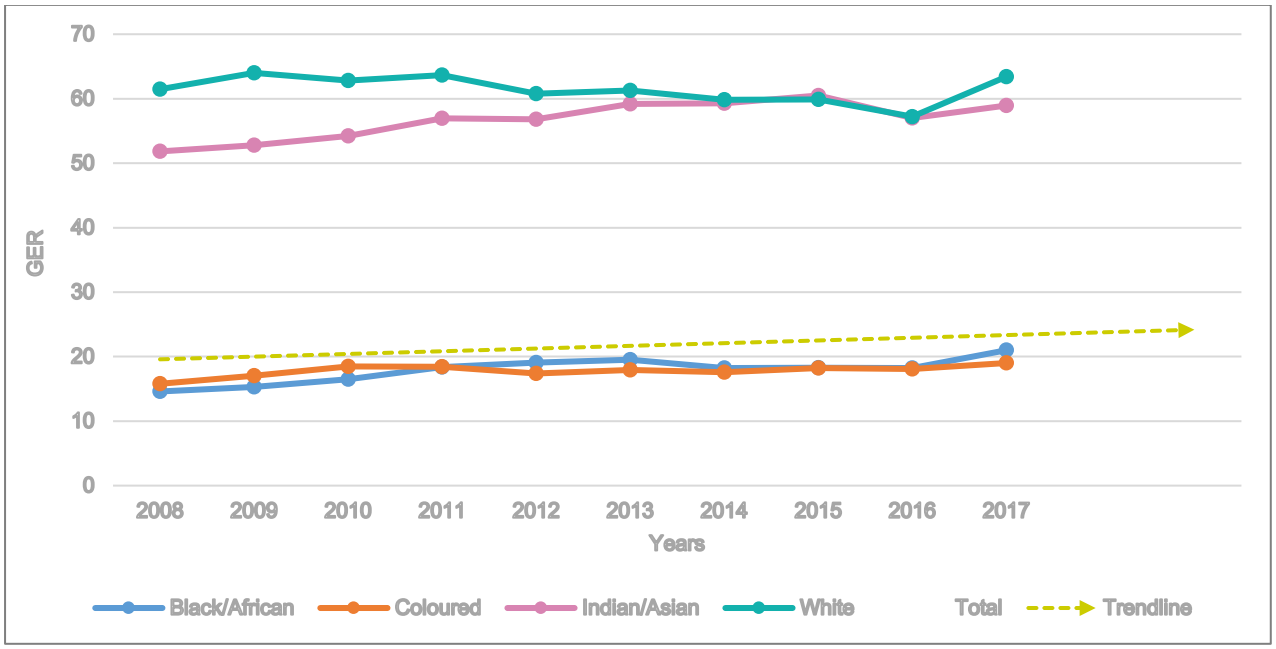
Figure 5.1 shows the GER by population group for males for the period 2008 to 2017. Linear forecasting using the national male GER for this particular group was employed as a method to analyse the trend. The analysis revealed that the white and Indian/Asian population groups recorded a GER that lies above the trend line during this period. However, the white population group recorded a decline in GER from

[23] www.regent.ac.za: Benefits of Tertiary Education in South Africa
[24] http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/gross-enrolment-ratio

2009 (53,1%) until 2016 (43,6%), and then an increase to 48,4% in 2017. Likewise, the Indian/Asian population group declined gradually from 39,8% in 2011 to 36,7% in 2017.

The opposite is true for black African and coloured males who recorded GERs below the trend line, but who maintained stability in GER over time.

Figure 5.2: Gross enrolment ratio by population group for females in public higher institutions



Source: Department of Higher Education, HEMIS

Figure 5.2 depicts an analysis of the GER for females in public higher institutions. Similar to their male counterparts, white and Indian/Asian females recorded a GER that lies above the trend line, which implies that participation for these population groups generally outperformed that of the nation as a whole between 2008 and 2017. However, the increase for the white female population group has been very erratic compared to their male counterparts who recorded an obvious decrease during this period until 2016. On the other hand, little variations were observed regarding participation trends of black African and coloured females when compared to their male counterparts.

5.2 Post-school education and training (PSET) enrolment and type of institution

One of the priorities of the Department of Higher Education and Training is to strengthen and expand the public TVET colleges and turn them into attractive institutions of choice for school leavers.[25] This section of the report will analyse enrolments in different PSET institutions with a gender lens.

Figure 5.3: Post-school education and training enrolment by type of institution for males, 2009 and 2018

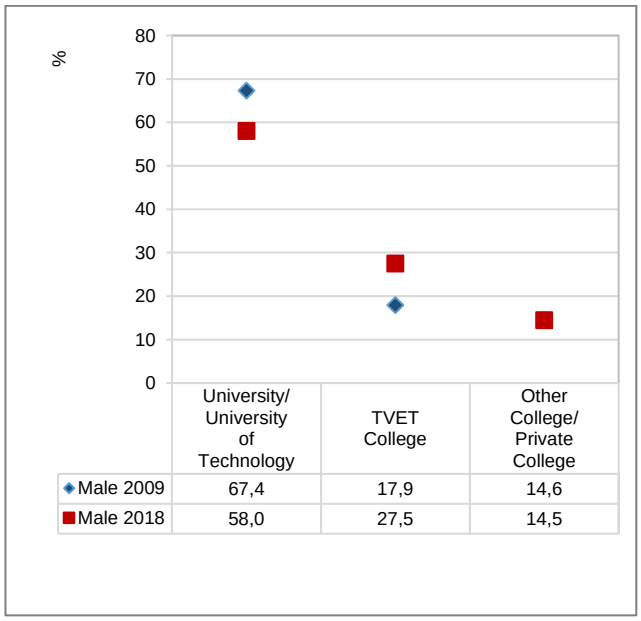
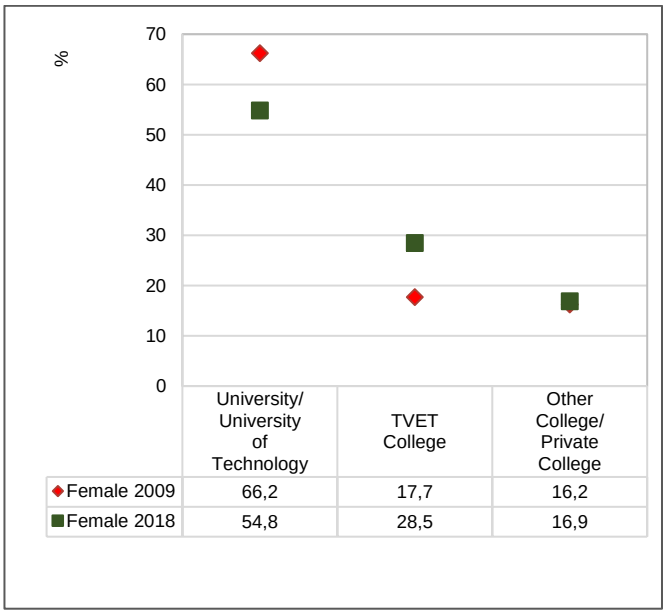


Figure 5.4: Post-school education and training enrolment by type of institution for females, 2009 and 2018

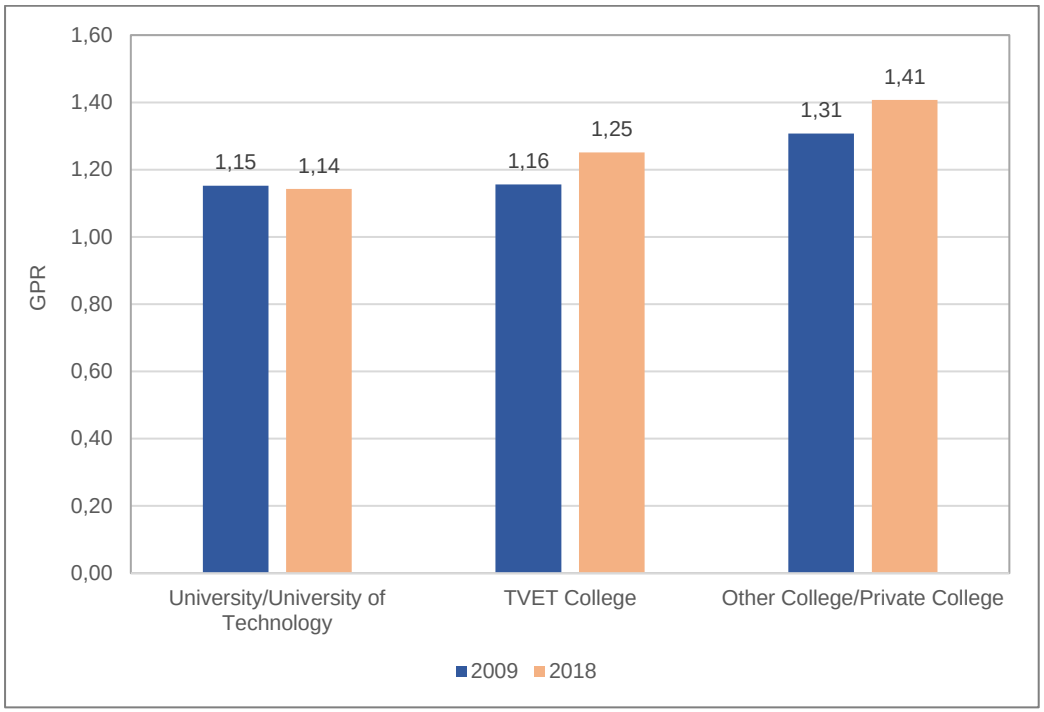


Source: GHS 2009 and 2018

Figures 5.3. and 5.4. show male and female PSET enrolment by type of institution. In 2018, a higher proportion of both males and females were enrolled at universities or universities of technology and TVET colleges compared to 2009. Between 2009 and 2018, both male and female students were equally most likely to be enrolled at a university/university of technology. Although university/university of technology enrolments declined amongst both sexes over the 10-year period of reporting, the decline was largest amongst females (11,4 percentage points compared to 9,4 percentage points for males). The figures also show a marked uptake of enrolments in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) among students. Increases of 10,8 and 9,6 percentage points were recorded respectively among both females and males. The enrolments in other colleges/private colleges remained fairly constant among both sexes.

[25] White Paper for Post-School Education and Training. Retrieved from http://www.dhet.gov.za

Figure 5.5: Gender parity ratios: PSET enrolments by type of institution, 2009 and 2018



Source: GHS 2009 and 2018

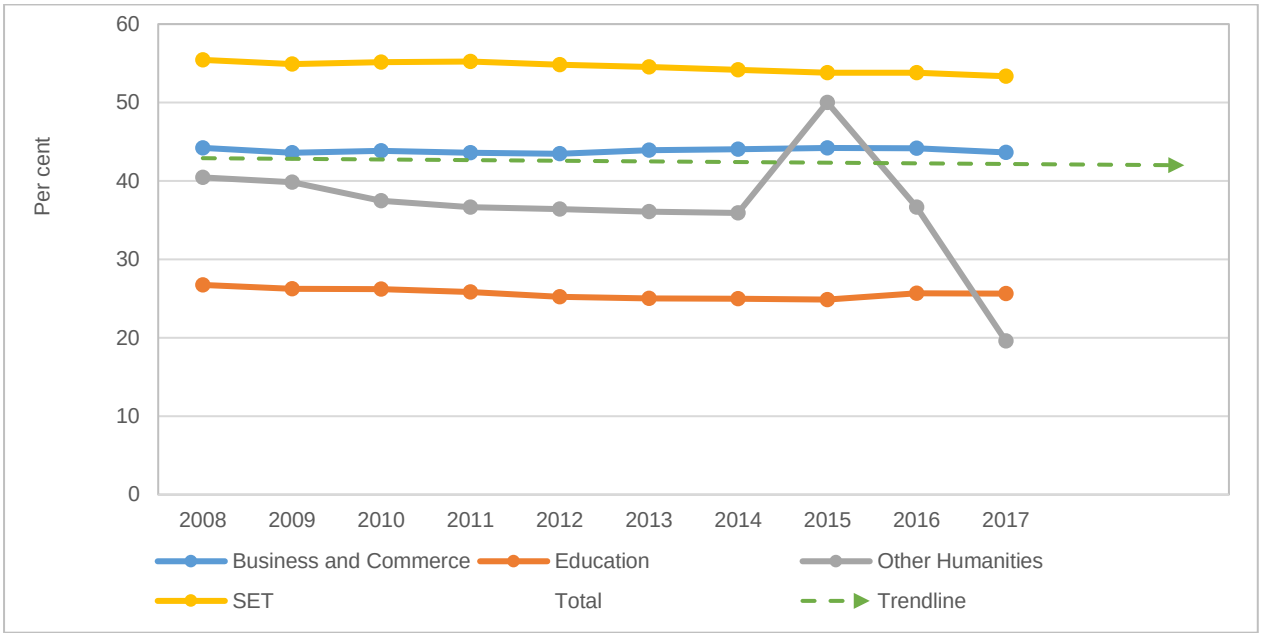
Figure 5.5 depicts gender parity ratios on PSET enrolments by type of institution. Compared to males, females had the highest enrolment uptake across all types of PSET, as displayed in the graph above. The biggest gender differences were recorded for other colleges/private colleges with GPR: 1,31 in 2009 to GPR: 1,41 in 2018 and TVET colleges with GPR: 1,16 in 2009 to GPR: 1,25 in 2018.

5.3 Enrolments by major field of study

One of the goals of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) is to create a post-school education and training system that that conforms to the broader societal and developmental objectives while remaining responsive to the needs of individual citizens, and employers in both the public and private sector.[26] It is therefore important to analyse the alignment between the major field of study that students pursue at different PSET institutions and what is required by employers and the economy of the country. This section of the report will examine gender imbalances in the major fields of study that students pursue when they enter the PSET level.

[26] White Paper for Post-school Education and Training. Retrieved from http://www.dhet.gov.za

Figure 5.6: Male enrolments in public higher education institutions by major field of study, 2008–2017

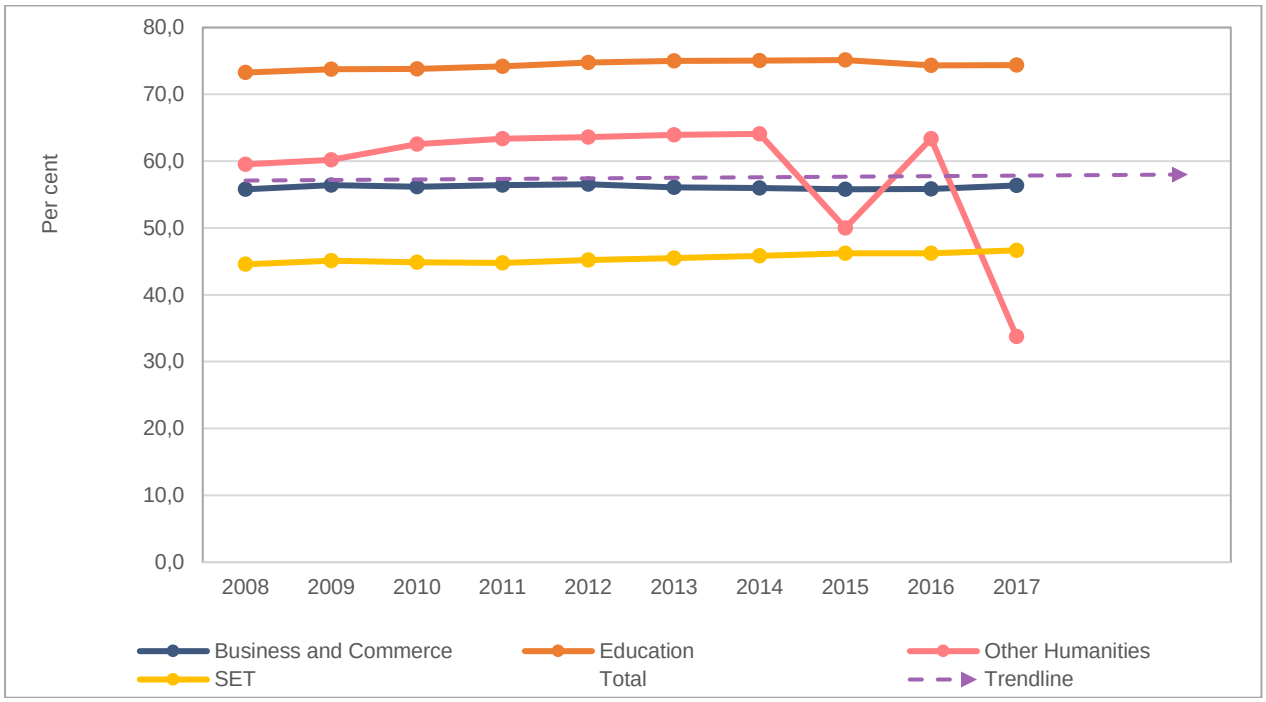


Source: Department of Higher Education, HEMIS

Figure 5.6 illustrates enrolments of males in different major fields of study at universities/universities of technology. Linear forecasting using the national male GER in public higher education institution was employed as a method to analyse the overall trend. The analysis revealed that males were most likely to be enrolled in SET and Business and Commerce subjects, as these subjects lie above the trend line. Between 2014 and 2015, a large male uptake in Other Humanities was observed among males, although the trend immediately dropped sharply, after which it was lower than the Education uptake in 2017.

The enrolment uptake in Education was consistently lower when compared to other subjects throughout the period. Generally, males were less likely to be enrolled in the field of Education, where enrolments continuously fell below the trend line over the period of reporting.

Figure 5.7: Female enrolments in public higher education institutions by major field of study, 2008–2017



Source: Department of Higher Education, HEMIS

Figure 5.7 illustrates enrolments of females in different major fields of study at universities/universities of technology. The analysis revealed that females were most likely to be enrolled in Education and Other Humanities, as these subjects lie above the trend line. Although Other Humanities started manifesting erratic uptakes between 2014 and 2016, there was a sharp decline up to 2017. Generally, females were more likely to be enrolled in the field of Education when compared to their male counterparts.

According to Figure 5.7, males were more likely to be enrolled in SET, and Business and Commerce subjects than their female counterparts, while females were most concentrated in the fields of Education and Other Humanities. The enrolment uptake in the SET subjects remained relatively low amongst females over the period of reporting.

Table 5.1: Gender parity ratios in public higher education institutions by major field of study, 2008–2017

	GPR									
Major field of study	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**
Business and Commerce	1,26	1,29	1,28	1,29	1,30	1,28	1,27	1,26	1,26	1,29
Education	2,74	2,81	2,82	2,87	2,96	3,00	3,01	3,02	2,90	2,90
Other Humanities	1,47	1,51	1,67	1,73	1,75	1,77	1,78	1,00	1,73	1,72
Science, Engineering and Technology	0,80	0,82	0,81	0,81	0,82	0,83	0,85	0,86	0,86	0,87

Source: Department of Higher Education, HEMIS

Table 5.1 depicts gender parity ratios in terms of enrolment by major field of study at a university/university of technology over a 10-year period. Generally, females were more likely to enrol in the fields of Education, Other Humanities, and Business and Commerce, whilst males were more likely to enrol in the fields of Science, Engineering and Technology.

Those enrolled in the field of Education had the highest gender imbalance in favour of females over the reported period. However, the gap was much wider for the years 2013 to 2015 (GPR: 3,00 in 2013, GPR: 3,01 in 2014 and GPR: 3,02 in 2015). The second widest gender gaps were observed for those enrolled in Other Humanities.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The analysis reviewed trends focusing on gender gaps in education over a 10-year period from 2009 to 2018 observed from secondary data provided by Stats SA. Areas analysed include literacy rates, educational attainment, access to education, school attendance, quality in education as measured by assessing pupils' learning environment, and post-school education and training from a gender lens. Demographic, geographic and socio-economic variables were used to further explain variations observed in the analysis.

One of the objectives of this report was to examine South Africa's status in terms of these six priority goals in line with the commitments made by different countries following the Incheon 2030 Declaration and Framework for Action in achieving SDGs and education for all.

Educational attainment and adult literacy were used as proxies to assess the goal of expanding and improving access to education by addressing all forms of exclusion and marginalisation, disparities and inequalities, as well as literacy rates and access to education. The completion of primary school (Grade 7) was used to compute literacy rates. Nationally, literacy rates increased gradually over the years (from 81,8% in 2009 to 87,7% in 2018). For the period 2009 to 2018, males consistently showed higher literacy rates than their female counterparts. An analysis of the educational attainment of both sexes shows that this has improved over the reporting period. Among females, the percentage of those aged 18 years and older who have less than matric as the highest level of education attained declined from 63,8% in 2009 to 54,6% in 2018. The percentages for males similarly declined from 62,6% in 2009 to 54,9% in 2018.

A conducive learning environment forms part of the goals in achieving the right to education for all. This environment was also analysed as another aspect of quality of education. This section looked at various factors such as school infrastructure, the proximity of the school attended, problems experienced at schools, including violence. In terms of proximity to schools, data revealed between 2009 and 2018, there was an increase of over 400 000 learners who were attending schools that were not closest their homes (over 1,7 million in 2009 to over 2,1 million in 2018). Reasons such as the current institution being better than the one closest to their home, poor quality of teaching, and/or preferring courses/subjects not offered by the school closest to home were offered as the primary drivers for learners not attending a school closest to their home. This was true for both males and females.

Another interesting observation made in the assessment of a safe learning environment related to violence in schools. Girls were more likely to be victims of violence perpetrated by teachers against learners compared to their male counterparts. These included physical violence by a teacher and a verbal abuse by a teacher, where larger percentages of female learners reported to have suffered these forms of violence. In contrast, boys were more likely to experience violence by other learners.

In assessing the goal of promoting quality lifelong learning opportunities for all – especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills, completing a certain level of schooling does not always translate to learning and acquiring basic literacy skills. Knowledge is regarded as the most powerful agents of change for communities, and that power is even greater when people can read. According to research, people with low literacy skills are far more likely to live in poverty as compared to those with high literacy skills.[27] Nationally, females comprised 52,6% of all persons aged 5 years and older who completed Grade 7 and who have difficulty in basic literacy activities. Provincially, the highest percentage of females who indicated to have difficulty in basic literacy activities was observed in Eastern Cape (61,3%) and North West (57,2%).

[27] Rotary. https://www.rotary.org/en/illiteracy-traps-adults-and-their-families-poverty

One of the government's priority goals is to develop more inclusive, responsive and resilient education systems to meet the needs of children, youth and adults. Higher educational attainment in terms of recognised qualifications is associated with a range of positive outcomes, including better income, employment, and health. As part of redressing historical injustices, South Africa has an interest in GER at post-schooling education and training institutions. In terms of gross enrolment ratios (GERs), data revealed that black African and coloured males recorded GERs below the trend line, but exhibited an irregular growth in GER over time. On the other hand, little variations were observed regarding participation trends of black African and coloured females when compared to their male counterparts. Notwithstanding that females had the highest enrolment uptake across all different types of PSET, their enrolment in the fields of Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) remained relatively lower throughout the ten-year period of reporting.

The findings in this report also reveal that some of the widest gender gaps between males and females were recorded for those enrolled in SET subjects, holding back the country's SET workforce and productivity growth. With the fourth industrial revolution looming and with uncertainty about the kind of skills the jobs of the future will require, the education system must prepare students, schools and teachers with more than basic reading and writing skills. Gender disparities in technical fields (currently dominated by males) require added focused intervention if females are to become part of addressing developmental challenges related to business, technology, mathematics, engineering and science – both at a national as well as a global level.