



SOUTH AFRICA GENDER LANDSCAPE

This briefing showcases the gender landscape in South Africa on key indicators helpful for monitoring gender equality and designing effective policy interventions. Gender equality fosters productivity gains, minimizes losses in wealth, reduces poverty, boosts shared prosperity, and supports green, resilient, and inclusive development.

Click the measures below to explore the [World Bank Gender Data Portal](#).

Compared to:	Base Year	Region
>10% Higher Value	↗	
Equal/No Change	→	
>10% Lower Value	↘	
No Data	---	

	Country Performance						Peer Comparison		
	Baseline		Latest		Latest				
	Value	Year	Value	Year	SSA	UMC	World		
Foundational Well-being: End Gender-Based Violence and Elevate Human Capital									
Proportion of women subjected to physical and/or sexual violence in the last 12 months (% of ever partnered women ages 15-49)	NA	NA	---	13.0	2018	20.3	8.75	NA	
Women who were first married by 18 (% of women 20-24)	7.90	1998	↘	3.60	2016	NA	NA	NA	
Learning poverty: Share of children at the end-of-primary age below minimum reading proficiency (%)	Female	NA	NA	---	NA	NA	85.9	14.2	50.0
	Male	NA	NA	---	NA	NA	86.8	17.2	53.7
Lower secondary completion rate (% of relevant group)	Female	68.6	2004	↗	99.7	2021	43.3	91.7	77.0
	Male	62.5	2004	↗	94.8	2021	46.4	89.6	76.3
Female share of graduates from STEM programs, tertiary (%)	NA	NA	---	42.8	2017	NA	NA	NA	
Adolescent fertility rate (births per 1,000 women 15-19)	72.6	2011	↘	61.2	2021	100	28.2	42.5	
Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate per 100,000 live births)	194	2011	↘	127	2020	536	61.0	223	
Contraceptive prevalence, any modern method (% of married women 15-49)	59.9	2004	↘	54.0	2016	28.6	71.6	55.7	
Fraction of children under 5 not stunted	Female	0.77	2010	→	0.75	2020	NA	NA	NA
	Male	0.73	2010	→	0.70	2020	NA	NA	NA
Mortality from chronic vascular disease, cancer, diabetes or cardiorespiratory disease between 30 and 70 (%)	Female	25.8	2011	↘	20.4	2019	20.1	12.9	14.8
	Male	35.0	2011	↘	28.5	2019	22.8	21.7	21.7
Economic Participation: Expand and Enable Economic Opportunities									
Labor force participation rate (% 15+)	Female	49.7	2011	→	50.9	2022	60.5	56.1	47.8
	Male	63.4	2011	→	63.5	2022	72.8	73.6	72.9
Wage and salaried workers (% of employment)	Female	71.4	2011	→	72.5	2022	17.9	58.5	53.1
	Male	74.2	2011	→	69.8	2022	25.9	58.6	51.3
Employment in agriculture (% of employment)	Female	20.1	2011	→	19.9	2022	51.6	16.6	25.6
	Male	15.5	2011	↗	18.7	2022	51.8	23.1	26.9
Share of youth not in education, employment or training (% of youth population)	Female	37.8	2007	→	34.5	2022	NA	NA	NA
	Male	27.7	2007	↗	31.3	2022	NA	NA	NA
Age dependency ratio (% of working-age population)	50.4	2011	→	52.5	2022	82.1	46.8	55.2	
Women who do not own land (% of women 15-49)	NA	NA	---	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Men who do not own land (% of men)	NA	NA	---	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
Financial institution account (% 15+)	Female	51.0	2011	↗	84.9	2021	33.8	81.7	71.9
	Male	56.4	2011	↗	83.3	2021	45.9	85.7	76.0
Used a mobile phone or the internet to pay bills (% 15+)	Female	NA	NA	---	30.0	2021	14.1	49.0	31.8
	Male	NA	NA	---	25.2	2021	19.4	54.0	37.0
Female share of employment in senior and middle management (%)	33.7	2011	→	36.5	2022	NA	NA	NA	
Leadership: Engage Women as Leaders									
Firms with female participation in ownership (% of firms)	22.6	2007	↘	10.6	2020	28.1	34.7	33.3	
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%)	42.2	2011	↗	46.5	2022	26.3	27.7	26.5	
Proportion of women in ministerial level positions (%)	34.3	2010	↗	48.1	2022	23.9	21.2	22.8	
Women participating in decisions related to health care, purchases, and visiting family (% of women age 15-49)	NA	NA	---	87.2	2016	NA	NA	NA	

Note: The Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) region includes 48 countries (all income levels), as classified by The World Bank Group. South Africa is an upper middle income (UMC) country, which includes 54 countries with a Gross National Income (GNI) per capita from \$4,466 to \$13,845 (calculated using the World Bank Atlas method). Data and definitions can be found on the [Gender Data Portal](#). Data is as of March 18, 2024.

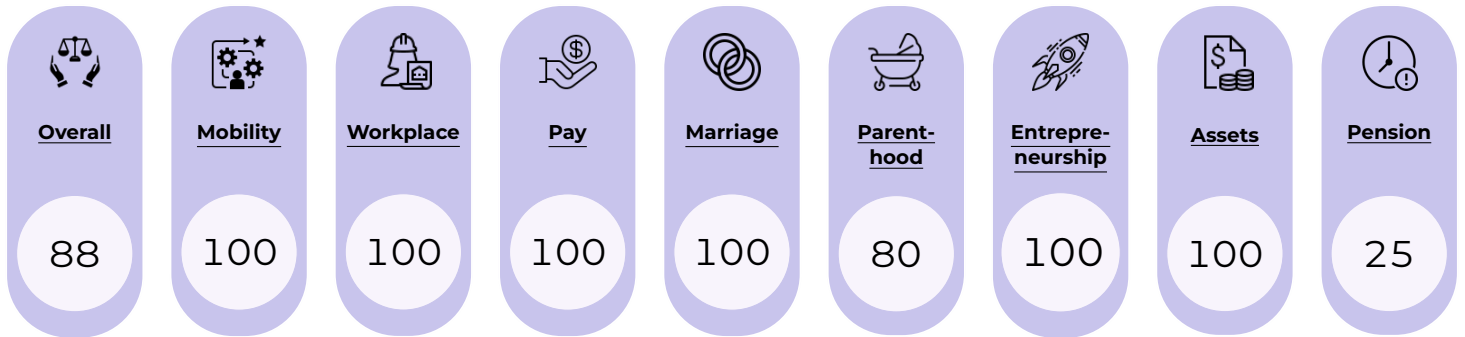
Country Baseline provides a reference from 1990 to 2011. Latest Value shows the latest available value from 2012 onwards. The arrow icon represents country increases or decreases over 10 percent relative to the base year. Peer Comparison shows how South Africa performs relative to its peers in the region, income group, and the world. Color coding represents values 10 percent above or below its peers in the region.



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Women, Business and the Law in South Africa

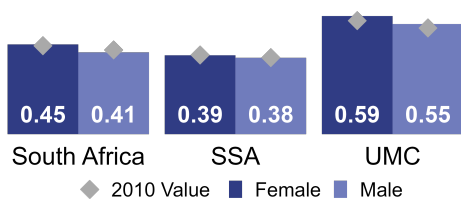
Women, Business and the Law (WBL) 2023 presents an index covering 190 economies, structured around the life cycle of a working woman. In total, 35 questions are scored across eight indicators. **South Africa scores 88 out of 100**, while the regional average across Sub-Saharan Africa is 74.



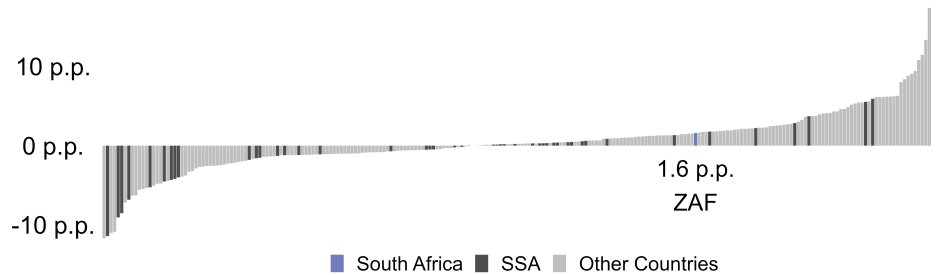
A Closer Look at Gender Equality in South Africa

Despite some progress, gender gaps, gender-based violence, and disadvantageous social norms facing women and girls persist, and gains in human capital of women and girls remain untapped. Turning human capital investments into economic gains means addressing multiple barriers to women's economic empowerment, including improving their voice and agency.

Human Capital Index Score (0-1)
Baseline compared to 2020



Change in Female Labor Force Participation 2012-2022 (p.p.)
Ages 15+



Unpacking the Numbers in South Africa

45 percent

A girl born today will be 45 percent as productive as if she enjoyed full education, health, and employment **(2020)**

4 in 25

16 percent of women 15 to 19 years old have had children or are currently pregnant **(2016)**

5.6 percent

5.6 percent of women report having ever experienced any form of sexual violence **(2016)**

3 in 50

5.5 percent of surveyed women find it justifiable for a man to beat his wife for any reason **(2016)**

0.84 times

A man is 0.84 times as likely to have used a mobile phone or the internet to pay bills **(2021)**

LEARN MORE

The World Bank in Gender: This portal features the latest research, news, and events around gender equality in international development.

Women, Business and the Law: This portal includes reports, data, and news on the laws and regulations that affect women's economic opportunity.

World Bank Gender Strategy (2024-2030): The new Strategy puts forward the bold ambition to accelerate gender equality for a sustainable, resilient, and inclusive future.

World Bank Gender Data Portal: This open data tool shares the latest statistics and research to improve understanding and inform policy choices.

AFR Gender Innovation Lab: This page features policy research by the GIL, evaluating innovative solutions to close priority gender gaps in the region.

