



"Sarah"

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## CHAPTER 3

# Education and training

## Article 14



Swaziland's Constitution provides for free primary education.  
*Photo: Trevor Davies*

### KEY POINTS

- With an SGD score of 99% Swaziland is almost reaching full marks in the education sector based on empirical data.
- However, at 55% citizens are more critical in terms of their perceptions of the country's performance against targets contained in the SADC

Gender Protocol. For example, issues such as gender violence in schools, quality of education, gender stereotypes and other factors may have influenced the score.

- The Constitution states that all children are entitled to free primary school education.
- Swaziland has reached gender parity at secondary school before the 2015 deadline; the gender gap is narrowing in primary schools, but boys still outnumber girls slightly.
- Overall, while girls seem to perform slightly better academically in secondary schools; boys fared much better in the sought after subjects like mathematics, science and information technology.
- If a pupil becomes pregnant, the school head is allowed to suspend the girl from school.
- Swaziland has surpassed the 50% target in tertiary education with women outnumbering men.
- Men hold 84% of teaching positions compared to only 16% for women; the lowest percentage of female teachers in the region.

**Table 3.1: SGDI and CSC on education**

	<i>SGDI</i>	<i>CSC</i>
<b>Score</b>	99%	55%
<b>Rank</b>	6	5

Table 3.1 shows that Swaziland has made remarkable achievements in education with an SGDI score of 99%. The country is likely to achieve gender parity at primary, secondary and tertiary levels before the 2015 deadline.

However, the CSC score is much lower at 55% possibly because citizens expected free education to be rolled out at a faster rate than it has been. They probably also considered other qualitative aspects; for example, cultural and social influences that still affect girls' access to disciplines traditionally studied by boys. In addition they considered how girls are more likely to drop out of school, mostly due to pregnancies, early marriages and to care for sick family members.

### **Background**

Gender parity in education is a human right, a foundation for equal opportunity and a source of economic growth, employment creation and productivity.

With only two and half years to go before the 2015 deadline for realising the 28 targets of the SADC Gender Protocol and the MDGs, achieving gender parity in education is one of the goals that Swaziland will likely meet.

Attention needs to shift to ensure retention and improved quality of education as you move to higher levels of education and ensuring adequate resources to maintain gains made in the sector thus far. For girls, staying in school is not just about good grades.

Early marriage and family responsibilities can take girls out of school early, especially because of the burden of care exacted by HIV and AIDS. Some families still do not see the value in educating girls. Poor infrastructure, such as lack of water and sanitation facilities, exacerbates the situation. Sexual harassment, by both peers and teachers, can make girl learners unsafe. All of this can undermine girls' education.

Swaziland has a policy on free education at primary school from the first grade in public schools though in practice not everyone manages to access this facility.



Swaziland is likely to achieve gender parity at all levels of education before the 2015 SADC Gender Protocol deadline - School children brave the cold in Manzini, June 2012 . *Photo: Thandokuhle Dlamini*

## Enrolment and retention



The Protocol provides that state parties shall enact laws that promote equal access to and retention in primary, secondary, tertiary, vocational and non-formal education.

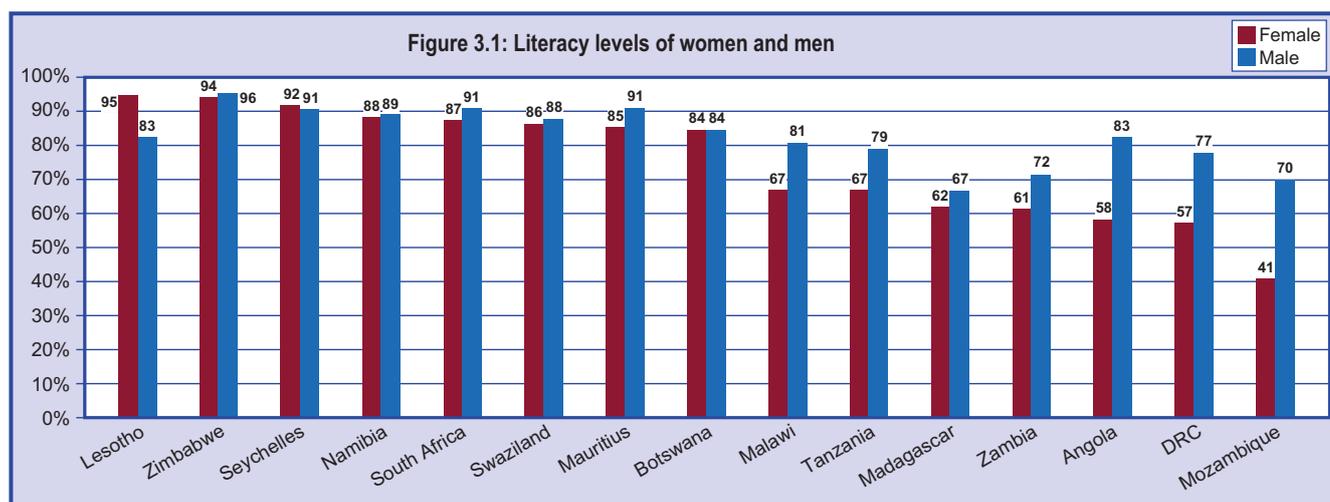
**Table 3.2: Access and enrolment in education sector / 2011**

Type of data	% women/girls	% men/boys
<b>Literacy</b>		
<b>Enrolment</b>		
Primary School	48	52
Secondary School	50	50
University of Swaziland	51	49
Vocational	54	46
<b>Drop out</b>		
Primary school	35	46
Secondary level	62	48

Source: UNICEF Education Specialist Desk for primary school statistics and Report of the Vice Chancellor UNISWA 2009-2010.

Table 3.2 shows that there is almost gender parity at all levels. However, at secondary school more girls drop out than boys.

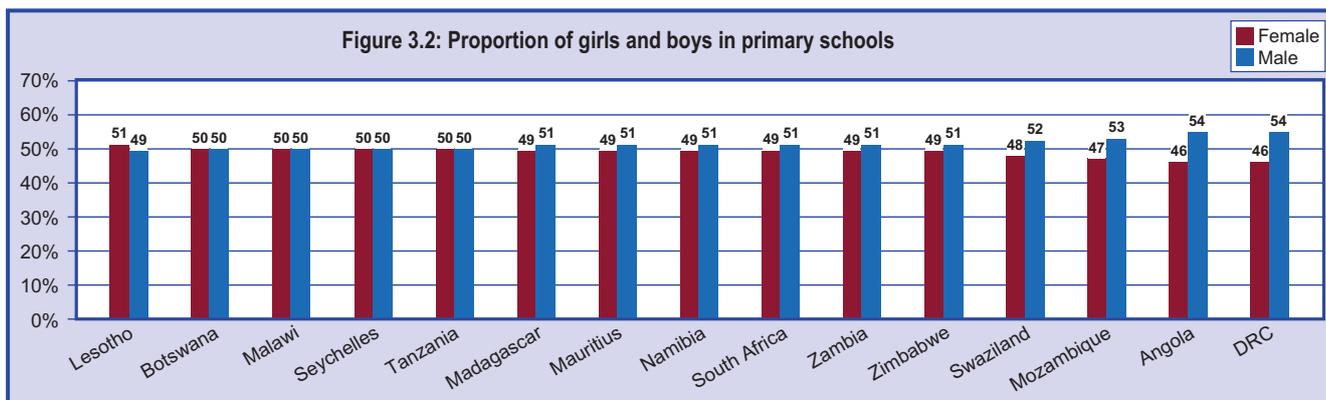
### Literacy



Source: Gender Links Regional Barometer Report, 2012.

Figure 3.1 shows that men in Swaziland slightly outnumber women by only two percentage points in terms of literacy at 88% compared to 86% respectively. Overall, there are lower literacy levels for women in all SADC countries except Seychelles and Botswana where women and men are at par.

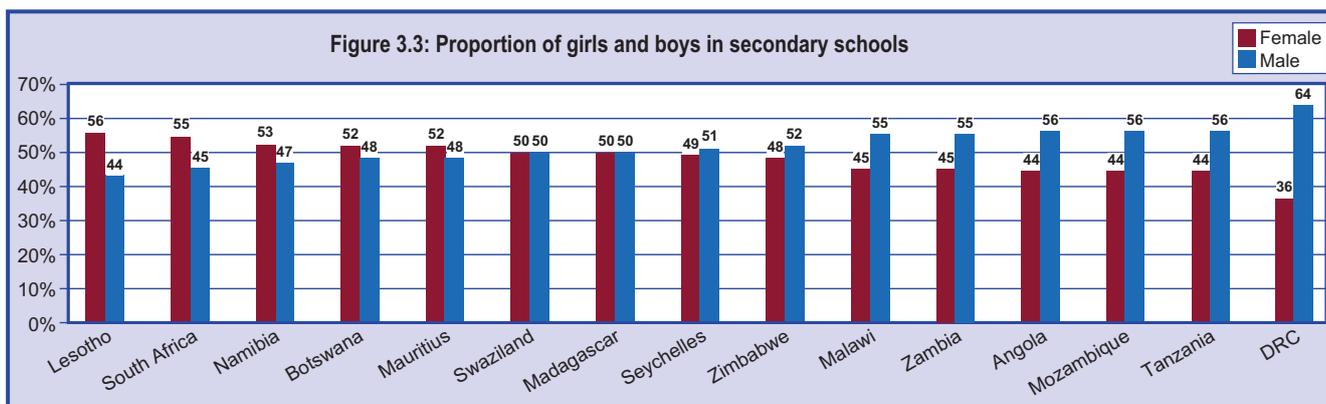
## Primary school



Source: Gender Links Regional Barometer Report, 2012.

Figure 3.2 shows that at 48%, when compared with other countries in the SADC region, Swaziland ranks lower than most other SADC countries on the indicator measuring girls' participation in primary education.

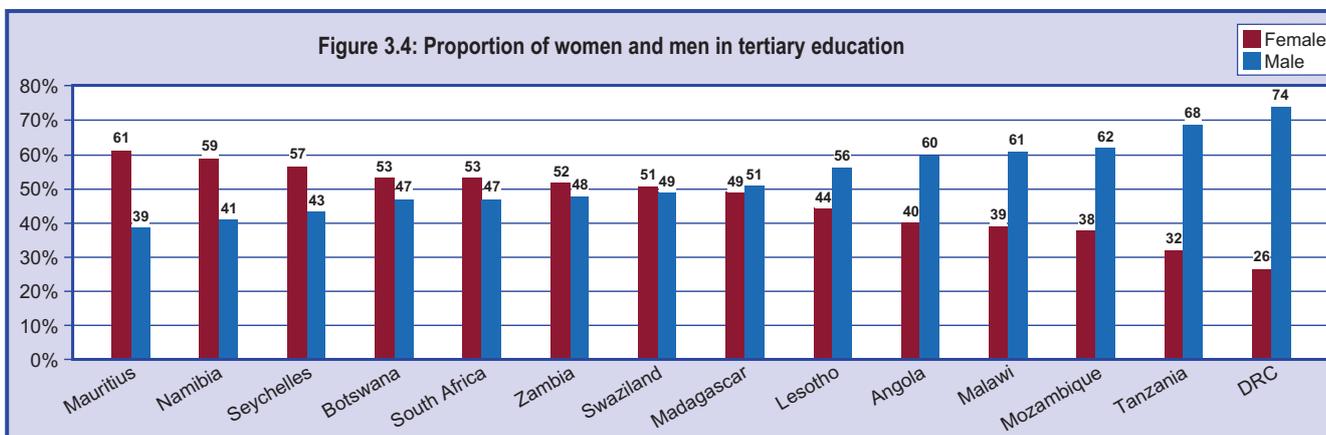
## Secondary school



Source: Gender Links Regional Barometer Report, 2012.

Figure 3.3 shows that SADC countries differ from most other countries in Africa in that gender gap in secondary schools is rapidly narrowing. Swaziland has reached gender parity at secondary school level before the 2015 deadline.

## Tertiary education



Source: Gender Links Regional Barometer Report, 2012.

Figure 3.4 shows that at 52%, Swaziland does relatively well when compared to other countries in the region regarding female representation in tertiary education.

Along with other five other SADC countries, Swaziland now has more women than men studying in tertiary education.

### Student funding mechanisms



Mater Dorołosa High school students; Mbabane; Swaziland.

Photo: Thandokuhle Dlamini

The Constitution adopted in 2005, section 29 (6) reads *“Every Swazi child shall within three years of the commencement of the Constitution have the right to free education in public schools at least up to the end of primary, beginning with first grade.”*

By early 2009, the government had still not introduced free education, so civic groups took the government to court. The groups won the court application and as a result the government introduced free primary education by rolling it out first to grades one and two in 2010. The government proposed an additional grade each year. By 2015 primary education should be free for all.

However, some older children will have lost the opportunity of free primary education. Although orphaned and vulnerable (OVC) grants at primary and high school are available for pupils most in need, the grants are only a part payment. If the children do not have anyone to assist them with the top-up fee, they may miss out on an education altogether or at least have to drop out when they reach the higher grades.

**Table 3.3: OVC grant recipients**

Region	Primary	High
Hhohho	4 145	9 693
Manzini	14 986	9 750
Shiselweni	13 059	12 411
Lubombo	10 372	8 696
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>42 562</b>	<b>40 550</b>

NB: Numbers could be slightly higher since more children were given grants as the year progressed.  
Source: UNICEF: Education Specialist Desk, 2009.

### Policy on teenage pregnancy

The policy does not provide for reintegration of a girl pupil who falls pregnant. The Education Rule section 10 (5) reads, *‘in the event of a pupil being convicted of an offence of the kind referred to in paragraph (4) or in the event of a pupil falling pregnant with a child, the head may forthwith suspend such pupil from attending the school and forthwith report such suspension to the Director, who may take steps in regards thereto as he thinks fit’*. This rule places the immediate discipline of a pregnant child on the head teacher by permitting the head teacher to suspend the girl from attending school.

### Performance

**Table 3.4: Pass rates**

	% boys/men	% girls/women
Primary	87.8	87.4
Secondary	32	33.5
University	Not available	
Vocational	Not available	

Source: Exams Council 2008.

Table 3.4 shows that at the primary school level there seems to be no difference between the performance of boys and girls. In 2008, a total of 164,835 pupils took the Swaziland Primary Certificate, girls accounting for 50% of the total candidates.

According to 2008 results, 67,544 pupils took 'O' levels, with girls accounting for 48%. Overall, girls seem to

perform slightly better achieving 33.7% aggregate of C and or higher, compared to 32.04% of boys. However, when disaggregated by subject, boys fared much better in sought after subjects like mathematics, science and information technology.

A major concern is that men dominate the teaching profession in Swaziland. Men hold 84% of teaching positions compared to only 16% for women, making Swaziland the worst performer in the region on this indicator. Mauritius, Namibia and Lesotho have considerably more women than men in the teaching profession.

## Challenging stereotypes



*The Protocol requires that by 2015 state parties adopt and implement gender sensitive educational policies and programmes addressing gender stereotypes in education and gender-based violence.*

## Gender balance in school administrations

**Table 3.5: Gender disaggregated data on school administration**

Staff category	% women	% men
Primary school	33	67
Secondary school	16	84
UNISWA	49.3	50.7

Source: Teaching Service Commission 2009. University of Swaziland.

Table 3. 5 shows a gross gender disparity in school administration. The Teaching Service Commission (TSC)

report of 2009 says it is a result of the 'low self-esteem' of female teachers; they note that there are no disparities in qualifications.

The TSC, in its development plan of 2007-2011 has mainstreamed gender, noting the few women in administrative positions. They have set a target of increasing female representation by 5% at the end of the planning period. In 2009 the target was surpassed, reaching 33% female representation.

**Table 3.6: Women and men in university faculties**

Faculty	No of women	No of men	Total	% women	% men
Agriculture	419	530	949	44.15	55.85
Commerce	269	271	540	49.81	50.19
Health Sciences	237	188	425	55.76	44.24
Science	101	262	363	27.82	72.18
Social Science	259	314	573	45.20	54.80

Source: Report of Vice Chancellor 2009-2010.

The table 3.6 indicates gender stereotypes in choice of subject still exist, particularly for science with only 28% female students studying science compared to 72% male students. Women tend to opt for the traditionally female disciplines, such as health sciences where they comprise 55.8% of the students.

The education policy has no specific gender component. The main provisions are:

Article 3: Access to Universal Basic Education:

- 3.1 The Ministry of Education shall provide a 10-year universal basic education to all children of school-age.

- 3.4 The Ministry shall develop an integrated system of education that provides equal opportunities to all irrespective of sex, religion, geographical location, special needs political or other factors.

Article 10: Goals on Vocational Education and Training:  
\* Development of a functional gender-sensitive, affordable and efficient VET-system of sufficient capacity according to the needs of the economy, the society and the individual.

There have been no studies on gender and the curriculum. However, the national curriculum centre introduced

the continuous assessment programme in the early 1990s. The slogan was "Every child is a successful learner." During the programme implementation UNICEF and partners trained teaching staff on how to incorporate the girl child training programme into education.

In addition, a panel of experts assisted with the development of new text books using a checklist for the content. Gender sensitivity was one of the indicators that the panel checked, as well as abuse, disability and life skills.

### Gender violence in schools

Schools are no longer safe places. Many teachers have been disciplined for having sexual relationships with pupils; mostly male teachers have sexual relationships with girl pupils although there have also been a few cases of female teachers abusing male pupils. In those cases, the teachers have not been disciplined because the boys have not cooperated with investigations.

The abuse is so prevalent that it is operating in an organised way. Teachers are known to arrange girlfriends for each other, and have tried to protect their colleagues from being detected, according to the 2007 TSC report. For the first time, the TSC report included numbers of teachers dismissed for sexual abuse of their pupils. It stated that the teachers coerced pupils not to report them and teachers ganged up to intimidate abused pupils.

The Ministry of Education study in 2003 to find out the extent and type of abuse in and outside of school revealed that sexual abuse is widespread. The perpetrators in schools are mainly male teachers towards girls and outside school it is mainly uncles towards their nieces. Teachers who knew about the abuse kept silent saying they feared upsetting relationships with their colleagues.



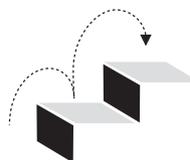
Sporting activities provide safe spaces for children after school.

Photo: Trevor Davies

The study found that physical and emotional abuse are also common. Wounds were often visible from teachers' beatings. Emotional abuse is the most common in the homes. The perpetrators are mostly female, such as mothers, step-mothers and grandmothers who are bringing up children without support. As a result of this study, a toll-free phone line has been established so that children and other people can anonymously report abuse cases.

In addition, the Swaziland National Association of Teachers (SNAT) has developed a code of ethics for teachers. In this code of standards, section 8 (a) bans improper relationships with students under their care. There are also plans to establish a tribunal to manage child abuse cases and the Teaching Service Act (TSA) is currently being revised to take into account GBV in the schools.

When cases are reported to the ministry investigation office, specially trained officers are sent to the school to investigate. If a teacher is found guilty, they are dismissed from service. The 2006 TSC report showed an increase in the number of dismissals of teachers found guilty of having sexual relationships with students. This type of abuse is dismissible in line with School Guide regulation procedures section 20 (F).



### Next steps

- Step up advocacy efforts to review the pregnancy policy, so that girls are allowed to continue their studies while pregnant and after giving birth.
- Special measures need to be put in place to attract girls to opt for Science subjects.
- Research is needed to establish why more women do not teach. Measures need to be put in place to encourage women to enter the teaching profession.
- All children must access free primary school education - especially orphans and vulnerable children.
- Revising text books and school curriculum to remove gender stereotypes.
- Sustained allocation of resources to the education sector that is used in a gender responsive manner.