

## Women narrow gender gap at tertiary institutions

The gender gap in attendance of tertiary education institutions has narrowed from 8.4 percentage points in 2002 to 4.8 percentage points in 2018, with females outpacing men during that period.



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“Compared to their preceding generation in 2002, millennial women in 2018 had outpaced men in second school completion and in the achievement of a tertiary qualification,” said Statistician-General Risenga Maluleke.

Statistics South Africa released its 2018 thematic report on education and labour market outcomes on Tuesday.

The report’s data analysis compares three generations in South Africa - Generation X (born between 1960 and 1979), millennials (born between 1980 and 1999) and the born-free generation (born in 1994 and after).

The report compares gains made in educational participation and attainment, the gender gap in education and labour market participation of the three generations from 2002 to 2018.

Attendance of a tertiary education institution remained fairly stable for black Africans, from 39.9% in 2002 to 39.4% in 2018, while it declined from 63.1% to 46.5% for Coloureds, and from 73.1% to 60.0% for Whites.

However, attendance of a tertiary education institution grew from 72.0% in 2002 to 95.7% in 2018 among Asians and Indians.

With regards to race, the report shows that the racial gap in tertiary educational attainment had increased between black Africans and Whites, from 28.4 percentage points in 2002 to 35.7 percentage points in 2018.

Furthermore, the percentage of tertiary qualification achievement for all races increased from 10.9% in 2002 to 14.9% in 2018.

A notable reduction was observed for individuals aged 23 – 38, who did not have any schooling, which reduced from 4.3% in 2002 to 0.9% in 2018, and those who dropped out from primary school reduced from 19.5% in 2002 to 6.6% in 2018.

“Among millennials aged 23 - 38 in 2018, close to half (49.5%) were employed, while 23.8% were unemployed, and 26.7% were not economically active.

“This was close to a three percentage points decline from 2002 to 2018 among employed people across Generation X and millennials,” said Maluleke.

Two out of 10 (20.4%) employed millennial adults, aged 23 – 38, had a tertiary qualification in 2018, while in 2002, the same was true for 15.9% Generation X adults.

There was, however, a higher percentage of unemployed millennials with a tertiary qualification in 2018 (9.5%), compared to unemployed Generation X adults with a tertiary qualification in 2002 (5.6%).

Overall, 46.1% of born-free millennials, aged 19 - 24, were not in education, employment or training (NEET) with 23-year-olds having the highest percentage in this category (53.2%).

Furthermore, the gender gap in NEET status was 7.6 percentage points higher for born-free millennial women compared to men. The majority of NEET born-free millennials did not complete secondary school (44.8%), while 40.8% completed secondary school.

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