

Analysis Of the Global Gender Gap Index

Its Inclusiveness and Future of Growth and Competitiveness for Zimbabwe

A man and a woman are sitting back-to-back on a large globe. The man is on the left, wearing a yellow t-shirt and blue jeans, with his arms crossed. The woman is on the right, wearing a blue denim shirt and dark jeans, also with her arms crossed. They are both looking forward, away from each other. The globe shows a view of the Earth from space, with blue oceans and white clouds. A green circle is overlaid on the bottom right of the image.

2025

1. Introduction

1.1. The Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) is produced annually by the World Economic Forum (WEF), based on the Executive Opinion Survey (EOS). The survey is coordinated by the National Competitiveness Commission (NCC) as a local Partner Institute of the WEF. The GGGI benchmarks the current state and evolution of gender parity across four key dimensions (subindexes), namely:

- Economic Participation & Opportunity;
- Educational Attainment;
- Health & Survival; and
- Political Empowerment.

1.2. The GGGI measures gender parity on a score of 0 – 1, or in percentage terms, ***0 or 0% indicates complete gender inequality and 1 or 100% complete gender equality, that is no gap between men and women across the dimensions***. GGGI considers gender inclusiveness through promotion of equal opportunities for everyone across all the four dimensions.

2. Global Gender Gap Results

2.1 The average global gender gap score in 2025 for all 148 economies stands at 68.8%. This indicates a +0.4 percentage points global gender gap close from 68.4% realised in 2024 on the 145 economies. When considering the 100 economies that have been continuously covered since 2006, the gap narrowed by 0.4 percentage points, from 67% in 2007. Based on the collective speed of progress of those 100 economies, it will take 123 years to reach full global parity. Figure 1 shows the GGG results by income group.

Figure 1: Gender Gap Results by Income Group and Pillars, 2025



- 2.2 North America ranks as the region with the most gender parity, with an average score of 75.8% followed by Europe (75.1%), and Latin America and the Caribbean (69.8%). Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is a distant 6th with a score of 68.0%. SSA performs better than only two regions, Southern Asian (64.6%) and Middle East and Northern Africa (61.7%). In SSA, the highest ranked economy is Namibia (81.1%), and is ranked 8th globally, while Chad is ranked 146th globally, with a score of 57.1%.
- 2.3 Even though Europe is second to North America, however, European economies dominate the top 10, occupying eight of the top spots. These are Iceland (92.6%, 1st), Finland (87.9%, 2nd), Norway (86.3%, 3rd), and Sweden (81.7%, 6th), which have been consistently ranked in the top 10 in every edition since 2006. Compared to the 2024 edition, the United Kingdom (83.8%, 4th) and the Republic of Moldova (81.3%, 7th) moved up in the rankings from last year to join the top 10. Germany (80.3%, 9th) and Ireland (80.1%, 10th) are also among the top 10 this year, marking their 7th and 18th appearances, respectively. New Zealand (82.7%, 5th) and Namibia (81.1%, 8th) have held the two remaining spots in the top 10 since 2021.

3. Zimbabwe Global Gender Gap Performance Analysis

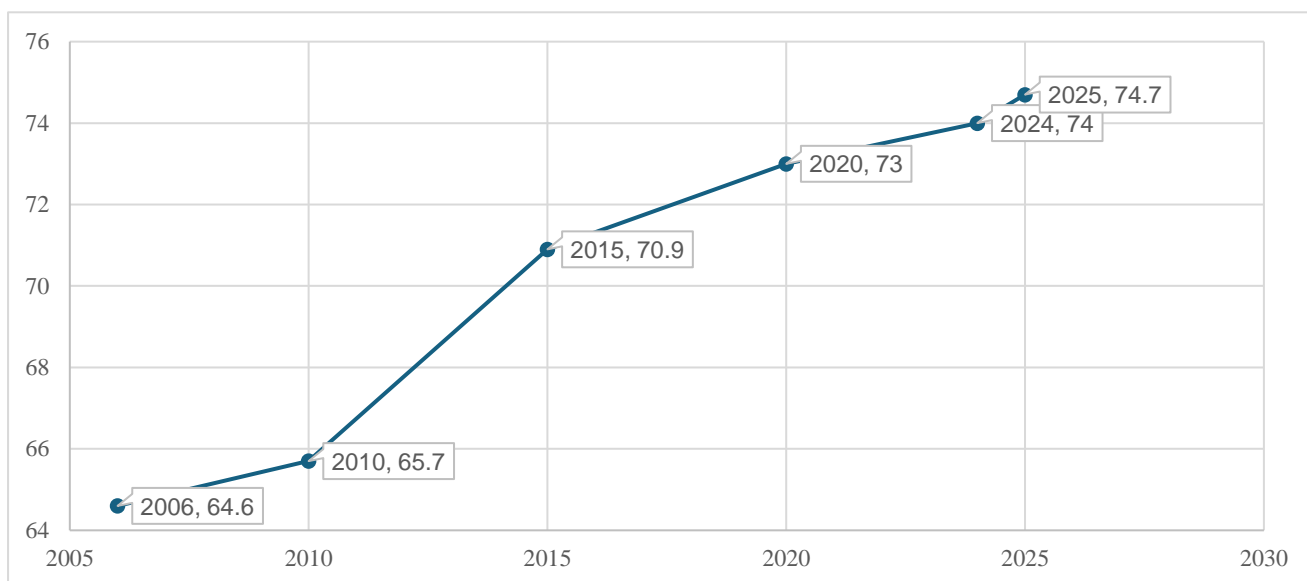
3.1 Since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Zimbabwe has made remarkable progress in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. This is attributed to Government policies, namely:

- Implementation of National Gender policy frameworks, strategies and action plans to promote the achievement of gender equality;
- Enforcement of gender equality laws, such as Section 17 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe, which provides for gender balance in all spheres of life, section 52(2), provides for equal rights, equal treatment, and equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural, and social spheres; Section 65 of the Constitution - equality in employment and equality of remuneration for similar work among men and women.”
- Enactment of the Domestic Violence Act; and
- Establishment of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission in promoting accountability and gender-responsive budgeting.

3.2 Development Partners, particularly the United Nations Women Generation Equality and UNDPs Women's Economic Empowerment and Sustainable Livelihoods have also been working with the Government to promote gender-responsive budgeting, that address the specific needs and priorities of women and men, girls and boys, and persons with disabilities.

3.3 Figure 2 shows an analysis of Zimbabwe's overall GGG score performance from 2006 to 2025.

Figure 2: Zimbabwe's Global Gender Gap Score Performance, 2006 – 2025

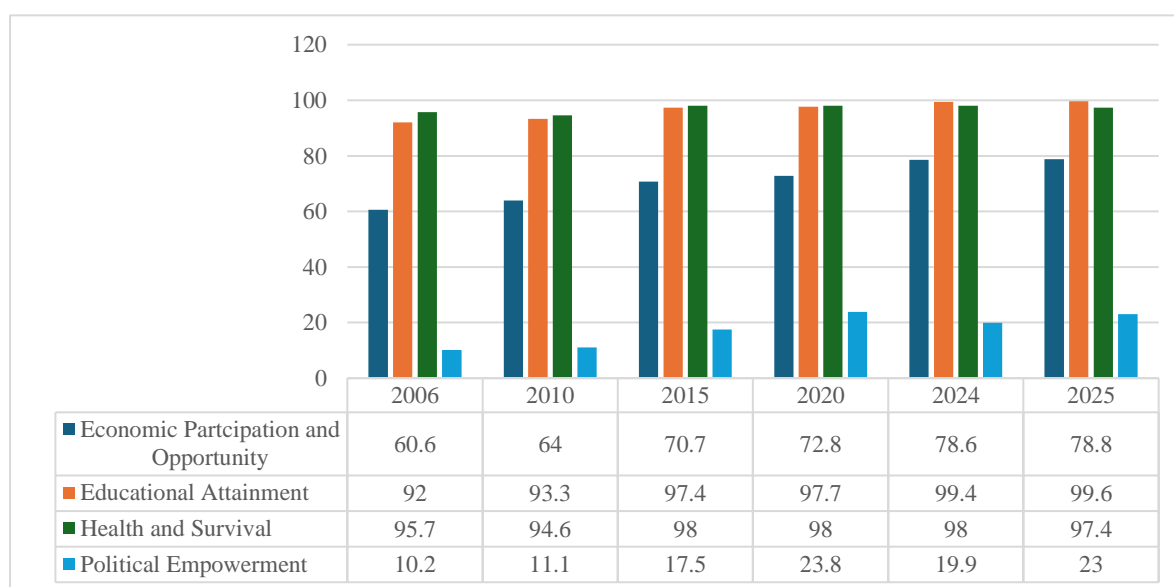


Source: WEF, (2025)

3.4 In 2025, Zimbabwe was ranked 49th globally, and 8th in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a GGG index overall score of 0.747 or 74.7%. This is above the global average of 68.8% and most of other income groups. Only two income groups, namely, Northern America (75.8%) and Europe (75.1%) have GGG average scores which are better than Zimbabwe. The country's performance on the GGG position in comparison with other countries has been improving over the years from being ranked number 92 globally to number 52 in 2024 and number 49 in 2025.

3.5 Below is the graph indicating Zimbabwe's performance for each pillar.

Figure 3: Zimbabwe's Global Gender Gap Sub-Indices Performance, 2006 to 2025



Source: WEF

- 3.6 Zimbabwe's top performance is in education attainment, nearing full parity at 99.6%, hence was ranked 56th globally. On literacy rate and enrolment in primary school sub-indicators, there is gender parity, and the country was ranked 1st. However, negligible gender disparity still exists in tertiary education, as evidenced by a score of 97.6% under this indicator. Government's initiatives such as Basic Assistance Education Module (BEAM) and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs that does not discriminate against the girl child have been instrumental in bridging the gender gap. The Girls' Education Accelerator, launched in collaboration with UNICEF and the Global Partnership for Education, assist girls in Zimbabwe overcome barriers like early marriage and financial hardship.
- 3.7 Zimbabwe has also been performing quite well on health and survival (second best performer), since 2006 until 2025, with the gender gap under the pillar closing from 95.7% in 2006 to 97.4% in 2025 and is ranked number 47 globally. There is significant healthy life expectancy amongst female more than their male counterparts. Zimbabwe is ranked number 1 globally on sex ratio at birth with a score of 0.944. Zimbabwe last year in 2024 was ranked 1st globally with a score 0.98 and this year it has slide back by 0.006 points.
- 3.8 On Economic Participation & Opportunity, the country was at 60.6% in 2006 and then improved over the years to reach over 78.8% in 2025, resulting in the country ranked 15th globally. Women have been given equal opportunities with the establishment of the Zimbabwe Women's Microfinance Bank (ZWMB) giving more impetus for women to participate in national economic affairs. The bank enables women to expand businesses, graduate into formal employment and secure financial independence, through provision of low-interest loans to women in financial difficulties. In 2024, the ZWMB disbursed ZWG205 million worth of loans to 4,135 beneficiaries, with 3,498 of them being women. The bank also opened 11,120 savings accounts and aimed to finance over 10,000 projects.
- 3.9 Zimbabwe performs poorly on political empowerment, which is the worst amongst all its pillars, with less women occupying high positions in the political arena. Zimbabwe was ranked 77th globally in 2025, with a score of 23%. Women representation in parliament has a score of 43.1% and ranked 61st globally, whilst women in ministerial positions scored 38.9%, and ranked number 58th globally. The country has never had a female head of state, hence the 0.00% score. Despite the poor performance, the country has been improving from

below 10.2% in 2006 to 23% in 2025. This improvement is attributed to the women's quota system that allocates 60 additional seats specifically for women in the National Assembly under the List Proportional Representation.

- 3.10 Find 4 is a snapshot of Zimbabwe's performance on each pillar globally and the ranks for 2024 and 2025 for each respective pillar.

Figure 4: Zimbabwe's Performance Under the Global Gender Gap Index by Pillars and Sub-Pillars, 2025

Global Gender Gap Index Indicators						2025	
	Indicator	Rank	Score*	Compare with Global average	Difference F-Male	Female vs Male	Min-Max
Economic Participation and Opportunity						Min - Max	
	Labour-force participation rate %	57th	0.836		-12.26	62.10 → 74.36	0-100
	Wage equality for similar work 1-7 (best)	20th	0.752				0-100
	Estimated earned income with 1,000	10th	0.824		+0.67	3.12 → 3.79	0-100
	Legislators, senior officials and managers %	47th	0.838		+22.10	38.35 → 61.05	0-100
	Professional and technical workers %	51st	0.919		+4.20	47.00 → 52.10	0-100
Educational Attainment		56th	0.896		-	-	-
	Literacy rate %	1st	1.000		0.28	95.08 → 95.38	0-100
	Enrolment in primary education %	1st	1.000		2.05	99.84 → 99.89	0-100
	Enrolment in secondary education %	=	=	=	=	=	=
	Enrolment in tertiary education %	111th	0.978		-0.26	10.57 → 10.84	0-100
Health and Survival		47th	0.974		-	-	-
	Sex ratio at birth** %	1st	0.944		-	-	0-100
	Healthy life expectancy*** years	56th	1.041		-	-	0-100
Political Empowerment		77th	0.200		=	=	=
	Women in parliament %	51st	0.431		-39.78	35.11 → 60.00	0-100
	Women in ministerial positions %	58th	0.389		-44.00	25.00 → 72.00	0-100
	Years with female/male head of state (last 50)	81st	0.000		-50.00	0 → 50.00	0-100

4. Global Gender Gap and Competitiveness

- 4.1 Gender equality is not only a fundamental right but an economic imperative. Gender parity is part of the development agenda, with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5, underscoring the need to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Greater female participation in the labor market and in international trade have been recognized as important drivers for economic growth and essential targets in the context of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- 4.2 According to World Bank, productivity can be enhanced if disparities between male and female are diminished by giving them equal access in all spheres of the economy.
- 4.3 Over the past decades, countries have increasingly negotiated and adopted gender provisions in Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). About one-third of FTAs notified to the WTO contain commitments on gender equality. Europe has the highest percentage of FTAs with gender-specific provisions (78%), followed by North America (38%), Africa (32%), South America (20%), and the Asia-Pacific region (14%).
- 4.4 The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Treaty provides for the need for gender equality. The Treaty Establishing the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), concludes with Chapter 24 on Women in Development and Business. This chapter recognises women's contribution to socio-economic development and provides for a set of binding obligations and actions to close gender gaps. Based on this chapter, parties committed to eliminating discriminatory laws, regulations, and customs against women, and those that prevent them from owning land or accessing credit.
- 4.5 Further, under Article 3(e) of the Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), one of the objectives of the AfCFTA is to ***'promote and attain sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development, gender equality and structural transformation of the State Parties'***. In Article 27(2)(d) of the AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in Services, which is one of the AfCFTA protocols, there is reference to ***'improving the export capacity and informal service suppliers, with particular attention to micro, small and medium-size, women and youth service suppliers'***. Under this Article and the AfCFTA preamble provision on gender, the AfCFTA State Parties negotiated the AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade. The Protocol aims at supporting and enhancing the effective participation of women and youth in trade in intra-African trade as well as supporting the inclusion of women and youth into regional and continental value chains. Further, the e-

Protocol has provisions on how State Parties should ensure that their domestic policies and regulations aim at ensuring women and youth participate more in trade.

- 4.6 Based on this, gender parity is crucial for shaping national, regional, and global competitiveness. The GGGI scores are not just indicators of gender equality but are essential metrics for understanding and improving national, regional, and global competitiveness. By bridging gender gaps, countries and regions can unlock their full potential, drive sustainable growth, and improve their standing in an increasingly interconnected and competitive world.



5. Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1 Zimbabwe's gender gap index has shown improvement. Zimbabwe's performance on the Global Gender Gap Index shows a mixed picture that likely has corresponding impacts on its national competitiveness. The country performs well in areas like education and health but has a significant gap in political empowerment, which can hinder overall economic potential. For Zimbabwe to improve its GGGI, focus should be on:

- Incentivising companies to hire and promote women through tax breaks or subsidies;
- Ensure women have equal rights to property ownership and financial services;
- Increase funding for maternal health services and rural clinics to bridge the divide between urban and rural, as women in the latter are more vulnerable to gender inequity;
- Strengthen implementation of domestic violence laws both against male and females for equity and provide safe shelters;
- Implement a reasonable quota for women in parliament and local councils; and
- Conduct awareness campaigns to boost women's political engagement and provide capacity-building programs for aspiring female politicians.

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