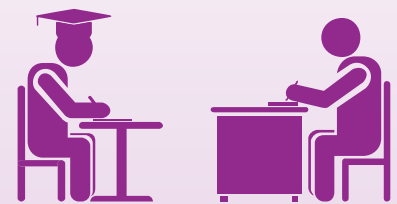


Situation Analysis of SDG 4 with a Gender Lens

Target 4.3



By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.

Target 4.3 expands the scope of the international education agenda by including technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and tertiary education as central concepts. Countries in East Asia and the Pacific are among the fastest growing economies in the world today, and demand for highly skilled workers, who are the foundation for sustainable economic development, is on the rise. For this reason, governments are keen to invest in TVET and tertiary education (Packard & Nguyen, 2014). By integrating Target 4.3 into national policies and education sector plans countries can affirm their commitment to TVET and tertiary education for both women and men.

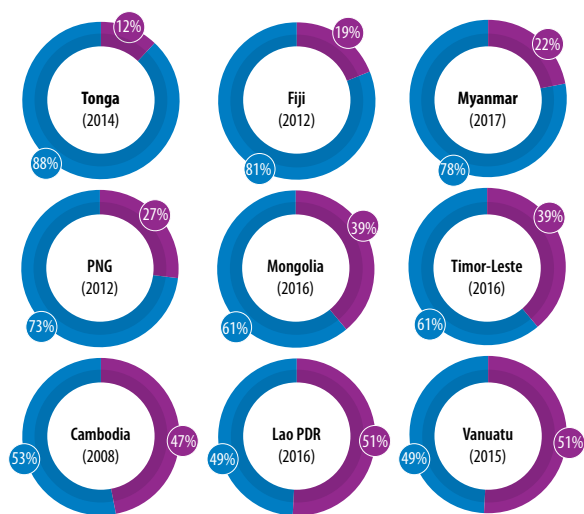
1 Analysis and Overview

TVET – Less attractive to female students?

There were 25 million students enrolled in TVET programmes in formal secondary education in East Asia and the Pacific in 2016, an increase of 18 million over 2000 (UIS Data Centre). The sub-region accounts for 40% of TVET students in the world today (ibid). Secondary education TVET programmes tend to attract more male students. Out of 25 million students, 56% were male (ibid). In fact, in the selected countries in **Figure 1**, male students make up more than half of enrolments. Lao PDR and Vanuatu are exceptions. In these countries, females are more likely to participate in secondary education TVET programmes.

Although TVET programmes are dominated by males, overall participation in TVET is relatively low.

Figure 1: Share of enrolment in secondary vocational programmes by sex, latest year available



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) database, <http://data.uis.unesco.org>, [April 2018].

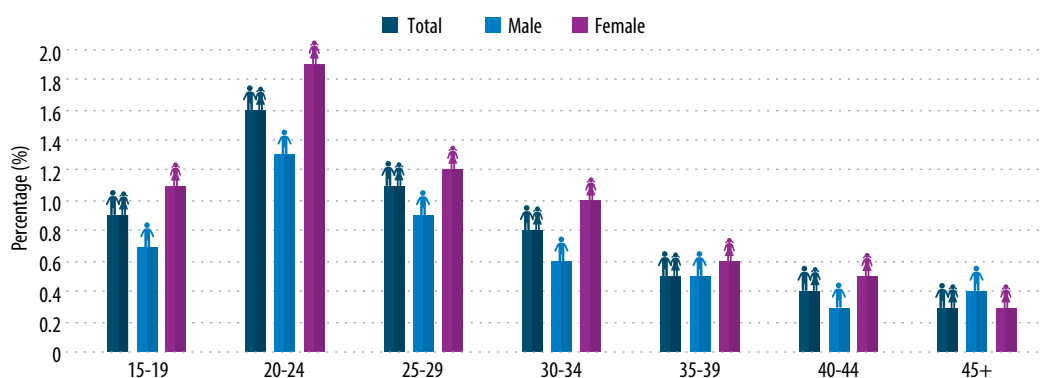
In 2016, the share of male students in TVET in formal secondary education was 17% in East Asia and the Pacific (UIS Data Centre). In the countries shown in Figure 1, male participation ranged from 0.3% in Myanmar to 14% in Mongolia. The majority of male students participating in secondary education attended general programmes. This trend is also true among female students. The share of female students in TVET was 15% in East Asia and the Pacific in 2016, but did not exceed 10% in any of the countries in Figure 1 (ibid). Even outside formal education, TVET is not a popular educational pathway. In Myanmar, only 2% of the working-age population (aged 15+) have participated in non-formal TVET programmes (MoLIP, 2016). The highest participation rate was seen among 20- to 24-year-old women, 3.4% of whom had taken some training (ibid). This age range also had the most significant gender gap. Most of the students enrolled in the previous 12 months were women (Figure 2). However, the gap becomes smaller in older age groups.

Tertiary Education – Expanding opportunities in favour of women, but fewer women pursue STEM education

One of the significant accomplishments of governments and universities across East Asia and the Pacific has been the dramatic increase in access to tertiary education. Tertiary enrolment increased by 46 million between 2000 and 2016 so that East Asia and the Pacific now accounts for 33% of global enrolments at this level (UIS Data Centre). Despite unprecedented progress in expanding access to tertiary education, gender equality remains elusive. Between 2000 and 2016, female enrolment in tertiary education increased by 25 million (ibid), resulting in women outnumbering men at this level in many parts of the sub-region (Figure 3).

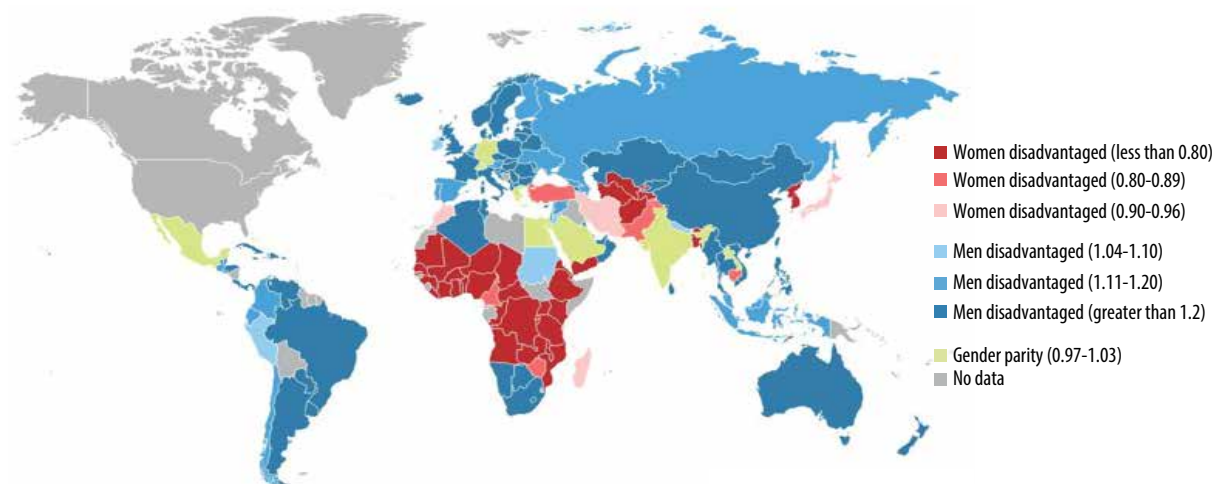
With female enrolment on the rise, women now make up the larger share of graduates in many parts of East Asia and the Pacific. In 14 out of 19 countries in the sub-region, females account for more than 50% of tertiary education graduates (UIS Data Centre). However, in countries where the overall enrolment in tertiary education is low, more men attend and graduate from tertiary education. For instance, in 2010 in Timor-Leste, for every 100 men, there were 72 women enrolled in tertiary education, of which only 57 graduated (ibid). Although women outnumber men as graduates in the sub-region, fewer women obtain STEM degrees. For instance, in Mongolia and Viet Nam, more women graduate from tertiary education, but they account for less than half of all STEM graduates (Figure 4). By contrast, women are more likely than men to graduate from tertiary education and earn STEM degrees in Myanmar.

Figure 2: Percentage of people (age 15+) who had vocational training outside formal education, Myanmar, 2014



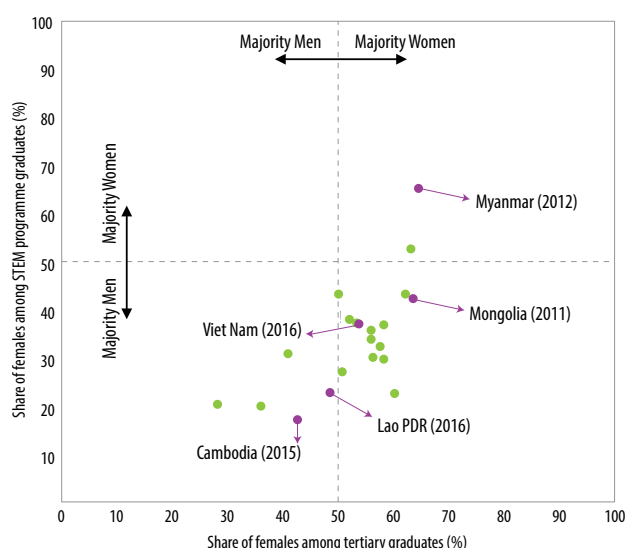
Source: modified based on MoLIP, 2016

Figure 3: Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education, gender parity index, 2016



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) UNESCO eAtlas of Gender Inequality in Education, <https://www.tellmaps.com/uis/gender/#/tellmap/-1195952519>, [March 2018].

Figure 4: Percentage of female graduates from STEM and all tertiary programmes, selected East-Asia and the Pacific countries, latest year available



Note: Green dots represent East-Asia and the Pacific and purple dots represent GPE countries in the region. Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) database, <http://data.uis.unesco.org>, [April 2018].

2 Issues and Challenges

Gender imbalance in participation in TVET and tertiary education

Although Target 4.3 aims to ensure equal access to TVET and tertiary education, in East Asia and the Pacific, women and men have different educational pathways. While TVET programmes are dominated by male students, women surpass men in access to and completion of tertiary education. However,

fewer women graduate from studies in STEM-related. The roots of this imbalance are in the social, cultural and gender norms that shape the learning experiences of girls and boys (UNESCO, 2017). Parents, educators and the broader community undermine girls' confidence and willingness to study STEM subjects (ibid). As a result, women are underrepresented in tertiary-level STEM studies, which only serves to perpetuate gender inequality in scientific occupations (Ramachandran, 2010).

A dearth of research on gender in TVET and tertiary education

The role of gender in education is well-established, but few studies have highlighted gender in TVET (Månsson & Färnsveden, 2012). There is also a dearth of research on gender in tertiary education (Ramachandran, 2010). TVET and tertiary education are vast and complex fields, where the role of gender may vary depending on the social and economic context. Given the diversity of East Asia and the Pacific, more country-specific research would create a foundation for national policies and strategies to make TVET and tertiary education a catalyst for the creation of more sustainable, innovative and equitable societies.

A range of provision and measurement challenges

Disaggregated data are necessary to capture gender equality in education, and ensure evidence-based

planning and policymaking. However, both the TVET and tertiary education sectors face significant measurement challenges across the scope and variety of programmes. Overlapping ministries and authorities are often responsible for managing TVET and tertiary education institutions. This fragmentation makes it difficult to coordinate data collection. The lack of disaggregated data and lack of coordination may hinder governments from designing targeted policies and interventions to address gender disparities in TVET and tertiary education.

3 Recommendations

Widen participation, while promoting inclusion in TVET and tertiary education

Governments must make a political and administrative commitment to ensure gender equality in TVET and tertiary education, while increasing access and participation. Legislation, quotas, financial incentives, and other policies can help men and women overcome the gendered barriers to entry into TVET and tertiary studies. For instance, scholarships and fellowships reserved for female students may encourage more women to pursue studies in STEM-related fields.

Develop data collection mechanisms that capture disaggregated data on TVET and tertiary education

To better understand and analyse the challenges gender disparities pose in these sub-sectors of the education system, countries must take a systematic approach to gathering disaggregated data on the profile of students. Moreover, data on specific constraints males and females face in TVET and tertiary education will help identify the underlying causes of disparity and generate evidence for programmes and policies designed to promote greater access and equity.

References

Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (MoLIP), Myanmar. (2016). Report on Myanmar Labour Force Survey 2015. Nay Pyi Taw: Department of Labour. • Månsson, A. B., and Färnsveden, U. (2012). Gender and Skills Development: A Review Background paper for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2012. New York: United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI). Available at https://www.macfound.org/media/files/UNGEL_Gender_and_Skills.pdf • Packard, T. G., and Nguyen, T. V. (2014). East Asia Pacific at Work: Employment, Enterprise and Well-being. Washington DC: World Bank. • Ramachandran, V. (2010). Advocacy Brief: Gender Issues in Higher Education. Bangkok: UNESCO. • UNESCO. (2017). Cracking the Code: Girls' and women's education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Paris: UNESCO. • UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). Data Centre (website). Available at www.uis.unesco.org • UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). UNESCO eAtlas of Gender Inequality in Education. Available at <https://www.tellmaps.com/uis/gender/#!/tellmap/-1195952519>

These data sheets are a first step in strengthening the gender lens in analyses of data. More disaggregated and nested analyses can result in more specific and nuanced recommendations.

