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# Status of gender equality in higher education sector – an East Asia scoping study

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# Acknowledgements

This report was prepared for the British Council by Ridgeway Information Ltd.

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The interpretations offered in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the British Council, its officers, or those individuals who contributed to the research. Similarly, the authors take full responsibility for any errors.

# Foreword

Globally, international higher education is a dynamic space. On the surface it might look like an equal space in respect to gender, perhaps even appear overrepresented from a gender perspective, and other inequalities may be more apparent. However, it is crucial to recognise that the experiences of women within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are markedly different from those of their male counterparts, particularly in terms of campus climate and leadership opportunities. This scoping study aims to shed light on the status of Gender, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (GEDI) within the higher education sector in East Asia and over the last year the report has played an important role in shaping all of our programmes in the region. We are pleased to be able to now share this report more widely.

As you delve into this study, it is crucial to understand that significant change does not happen overnight. It requires a sustained and long-term effort that reaches different parts of society. Collectively, as education leaders and influencers, we need to carefully examine our actions, considering not only their immediate effects but also their potential to create positive change for individuals, families, communities, and society as a whole. The changes we seek should extend to the fundamental structures of institutions and public organisations. We should focus on outcomes, not just participation.

This study was undertaken in conversation with a global report published by the British Council, [Gender Equality in Higher Education - Maximising Impacts](#), published in 2022. The global report identified many salient themes, but it is clear that the gendered experience in Higher Education is markedly different depending on the location, limiting the relevance of global recommendations. If one theme is not relevant, it can be tempting to dismiss all themes. As such, this study was undertaken to get a better understanding for East Asia, driven by the information, data and issues specific to the region. This study takes a broad look at

GEDI among leaders, teachers, and staff in higher education across East Asia. It covers 12 countries and territories, namely China, Hong Kong, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. The study carefully looks at existing research to uncover the challenges women face in higher education institutions.

The study has four main goals: firstly, to check how things are now and give a general picture of GEDI among leaders, teachers, and staff in East Asian nations; secondly, to examine any problematic areas in the regulations and policies of institutions and countries, explaining how these barriers prevent women from being equally represented and affect female leadership in higher education; thirdly, to understand the important role of higher education leaders in supporting social inclusion and strategies for gender equality in their institutions; and finally, to inform the design of the British Council's programmes in East Asia.

The British Council's steadfast emphasis on GEDI over the past five years, as reflected in our [Corporate Plan 2023-24 to 2024-25](#), aligns seamlessly with the goals of this study. True to the spirit of transformative change, this study not only looks closely at current problems but also provides practical suggestions to promote GEDI meaningfully regionwide. It highlights that for women's experiences in higher education to improve, changes are needed in various areas.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the contributors for their dedicated efforts in advancing this critical cause. We hope that the findings within these pages serve as a catalyst for meaningful dialogue, collaborative initiatives, and transformative change in the higher education landscape of East Asia and beyond.

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# Executive Summary

This report provides the overarching status of gender equality, diversity, and inclusion in East Asia higher education leaders, faculty members, and staff. It scopes and analyses existing data on China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam to uncover barriers faced by women in higher education institutions.

The current situation of gender equality, diversity, and inclusion in East Asia higher education varies from one country and territory to another. Rich local cultures impact the perceptions of gender, and local political situations impact women and their rights. Gender equality is a highly important and timely issue for many countries and territories in the region. At national level, this is reflected in the existence of specific government entities dedicated to women's rights and development.

However, while many efforts have been reported on the improvement of gender equality in society, not many fully formed initiatives have been identified in the specific context of higher education. Though women are going through higher education at increasing rates, they are often not seen as viable leaders and underrepresented in leadership positions within higher education. They are experiencing compounding barriers in higher education as they bring multiple identities to the workplace. Cultural and social barriers play a role in women's career progression and their capacity to accede to leadership. For meaningful change, institutions must consciously implement gender-sensitive policies and be supported by national bodies.

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**This Report has been prepared by Ridgeway Information for the British Council as part of the scoping study on gender equality, diversity, and inclusion in East Asia higher education leaders, faculty members, and staff. The scoping study includes a report for 12 countries and territories in East Asia (China, Hong Kong, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam).**

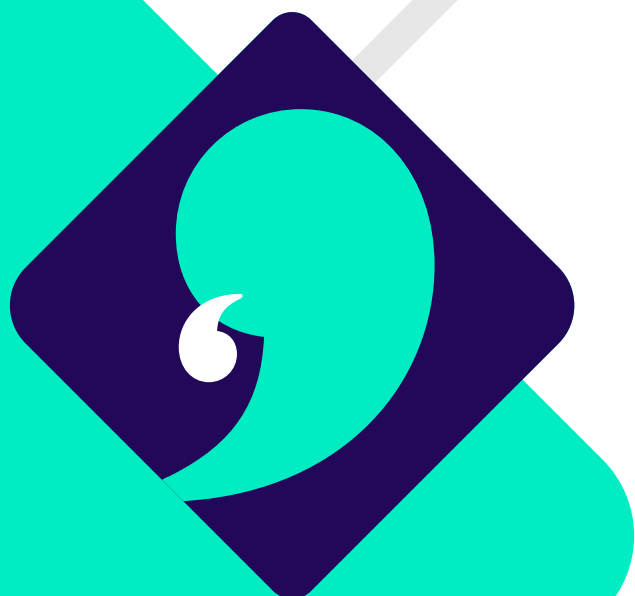
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# List of acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CPD	Continual professional development
EDI	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ILO	International Labour Organization
NGO	Non-Government Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SEAMEO RIHED	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre specialising in Higher Education and Development
STEM	Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
TVET	Technical and vocational education training
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization



# 1. Introduction

Ridgeway Information was commissioned by the British Council to conduct a scoping study on gender equality, diversity, and inclusion among leaders, faculty members, and staff in East Asian higher education. The scoping study includes a report on 12 countries and territories in East Asia (China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam).

This scoping study has three main aims:

1. **To assess the current situation and provide an overview of gender equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) profile of leaders, faculty members, and staff in the 12 countries and territories cited in East Asia.** This assessment draws from observed trends surrounding access to and participation in higher education, both as tertiary education and a profession.
2. **To identify gaps in institutional and national policies and establish how these structural barriers hinder women's representation and equal leadership in higher education (HE).**
3. **To understand the role of HE leaders in taking the lead and promoting and embedding social inclusion and gender equality strategies and practices in higher education institutions (HEIs) in East Asia.**

The recent rapid growth in higher education around the world is undeniable. Women are not only enrolling in and completing higher education at high rates but also transitioning to postgraduate degrees in record numbers. In East Asia, women's participation and completion have accelerated in recent years. In some geographies, the gender gap is now reversed, with more women enrolling and completing tertiary education than men. The experiences of women at HEIs are, however, vastly different from those of men in terms of campus climate and leadership opportunities. This Report scopes existing literature to uncover barriers women face in HEIs.

Section 2 details the methodology of the data collection and analysis. In this regional Report, all data analysis was produced using secondary data. This section includes: (1) secondary data collection principles that underpin the types of data collected and analysed by Ridgeway; (2) the principles and approaches used to establish the HE context in each geography; (3) thematic data used; and finally, (4) outline of the limitations of the study and data collection.

To assess the current situation and identify gaps at national and institutional levels, Section 3 establishes the regional context in each of the 12 countries and territories of interest. The current situation of gender equality, diversity, and inclusion in East Asia higher education varies from one country and territory to another, and rich local cultures impact perceptions of gender roles within education and wider society. Despite the significant variation between countries and territories, gender equality is a highly important and timely issue for many countries and territories in the region. In this section, the analysis of the most recent and complete data available includes: (1) statistics at a glance: selected key numbers on educational institutions, subjects of study disaggregated by gender, and enrolment and attrition rates in tertiary education; (2) the current policy framework: highlighting notable legislation relating to gender equality, with a special focus on education and higher education frameworks adopted nationally; and, (3) the situation of women in the workforce: numbers on labour participation, leadership at national level, and selected findings on women working in HE.

Section 4 provides a thematic analysis of gender in HE based on the secondary data review. This section first (1) profiles women working in HEIs by analysing the macro trends of women in the labour force, women enrolling in higher education, and women working in academia. Then (2) identifies the barriers women face in HE. While the primary focus of this study is to review existing literature on gender, it also utilises intersectionality as a key framework to categorise barriers into two groups: cultural and societal, and structural.

This report concludes with recommendations. For academia to promote true equality (and ultimately equity), diversity, and inclusivity at a national level, the experiences of women within HE must improve. In this section, the recommendations are aimed firstly at institutions, secondly enablers of academia (such as funders or journal editors), and thirdly national and international level organisations.



## 2. Methodology

This scoping study includes desk-based research. All data analysis was produced using secondary data. The desk-based research draws on a wide range of secondary materials. Across all materials produced as part of the scoping study, thorough data collection was of critical importance due to some paucity of national data being expected on women and gender minorities in HEIs.

First, this section details the secondary data collection principles underpinning the types of data collected and analysed by Ridgeway. Second, it details the principles and approaches used to establish the HE context in each geography. Third, it expands on thematic data to expand the understanding of EDI in each local context. Fourth and finally, this section outlines the limitations of the study and data collection.

Ridgeway ensured the report (12 countries and territories) followed the research questions as agreed through consultation with the British Council team and incorporated recommendations provided by the reviewers.

Ridgeway's team conducted an extensive literature review of a wide range of open sources to produce a thorough analysis based on the most updated and comprehensive data on HE – both quantitative and qualitative. The research team prioritised sources less than five years old. All references can be accessed in the bibliography section.

Intersectionality guided the way in which all secondary data sources were collated and analysed. Ridgeway's team paid special attention to each countries and territory's context and focused on the most salient intersections based on the research focus, as suggested in the study by Browne and Misra (2003).

### 2.1 Establishing the higher education context

This report includes a section of the HE context specific to each of the 12 countries and territories. The aim of these sections is to provide the HE context in which gender inequality, diversity, and inclusion occur in East Asian HEIs. Each of these sections (individualised per countries and territory) provides:

- An assessment of the types of HEIs in each country and territory, including numbers, public or private distinction, and special characteristics (such as single-sex or subject focus). These data were collated, where available, from the British Council, Ministries of Education, NGOs, and aggregators, including findings from other work submitted to the British Council, such as the SHARE EDI research from the Asia Research Centre at the Universitas Indonesia.
- The most up-to-date data on women's participation in tertiary education, including progression from secondary education, attrition rates, and disaggregation by subject. These data were collated from national-level administrative records, censuses and household surveys, the World Bank, OECD, UN Women, UNESCO, EU SHARE Gender data, the principles of the EU Gender Equality in Academic and Research tool, and local NGO data.
- Where available, the most comprehensive data on women's progression levels into leadership in HE (strategic positions and progressions within the field) and publication rates. These data were collated from national unions, national professional bodies, EU SHARE Gender data, OECD, and UNESCO.
- An overview of national policies supporting women and gender minorities, including a review of women's human rights, quotas or special measures for women, non-discrimination policies, and policies on violence against women in the workplace. These data were collated using national data from global sources, data from the ASEAN Committee for Women, CEDAW reports, UN Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review (UPR) reports, Beijing +25 national-level reviews, UNESCAP Reports, Voluntary National reviews, and other regional and country-level studies, reports, and statistics.

## 2.2 Thematic data on equality, diversity, and inclusion in East Asia HE leaders, faculty, and staff

Ridgeway conducted a thorough review of existing literature covering a range of topics within EDI in HE with an East Asia lens. Ridgeway sought to cover existing literature on working environments, publication life cycles, gender bias and discrimination, marginalisation in academic communities, and efforts (policy-based or otherwise – such as mentorship groups or informal support) to help women and gender minorities succeed.

Ridgeway's research team first surveyed peer-reviewed academic publications on gender studies, sociology and politics, development studies, labour studies, and feminist studies. Ridgeway also searched for relevant conference proceedings to identify the latest data and fieldwork findings on EDI-related information in East Asia. Ridgeway conducted this element of the review by first establishing the relevant academic sources. Then, Ridgeway reviewed the sources cited by these prominent authors in their texts. The researchers then snowballed their source searching by continuing this process. By starting with these sources, Ridgeway established the existing level of awareness of EDI issues within the academic community itself.

Second, Ridgeway examined data from national bodies such as Ministries of Education across each of the 12 countries and territories on gender marginalisation and corrective actions taken within each countries and territory. In this phase of the research, Ridgeway also looked at major foundations and charities that fund academic research in each countries and territory.

Third, Ridgeway's team looked for best practices across institutions in the region to address EDI issues. Since each geography has distinct approaches to EDI in HE, this data were collated from academic articles in journals concerning organisational dynamics in educational settings or Ministries of Education.

## 2.3 Limitations

The increased digitisation and availability of high-quality secondary data allowed Ridgeway to cover much ground in terms of scoping the EDI landscape and its challenges. One limitation of this study is the timeliness of secondary data. Academic papers are one source of reliable peer-reviewed data on this topic: most who write about the challenges of academics in HEIs and the HE context are themselves academics, publishing their findings in academic publications. Academic papers, though a hugely rich source of insight, have long publication cycles. To address this issue, Ridgeway aimed to supplement this data with any publications from local ministries as well as local or international organisations where possible.

The second limitation of this study is the lack of data on the intersections of gender and other personal identities. The aim of this study is to scope existing work on the impact of gender on faculty members, leaders, and staff in HEIs. Data on intersectional identities and inequality are severely limited. Ridgeway has approached this study with an intersectional lens, bringing in more than just the data on gender wherever these data were available. However, it is beyond the remit of this scoping study to tackle all other identities that may impact leaders, faculty members, and staff in HEIs.

Please note that this report incorporates historical data and information, which may not reflect the most current developments. Despite this, such data has been deemed relevant and essential for the comprehensive analysis and conclusions presented herein. Our use of historical data is in service of providing a nuanced understanding of the subject matter, based on the information available at the time of the report's compilation.

### 3. The regional context

The current situation of gender equality, diversity, and inclusion in East Asia HEIs varies from one country and territory to another. Rich local cultures impact perceptions of gender; in fact, there are contested and varying understandings of the concept of gender, some of which are explored in Appendix 1. Despite these variations, gender equality is a highly important and timely issue for many countries and territories in the region. At national level, this is reflected in the existence of specific government entities dedicated to women's rights and development and also shown in the new policies and directives being implemented to improve gender equality, especially in the workforce. International frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), and the Sustainable Development Goals 4 (Quality Education) and 5 (Gender Equality), provide international standards to promote gender equality. In practice, efforts to monitor progress are improving, and gender-disaggregated data collection is beginning to spread as standard practice. Many of the national reviews of progress under the Beijing Declaration present ambitious targets and look to include women more effectively and sustainably at all levels of society, especially in senior positions and public service. Notably, the active participation of women in the labour force is being further enabled with better and more wide-reaching childcare provisions, improved with more legislation protecting against discrimination and misconduct, and their skills being championed by mentors.

However, despite many efforts being reported on the improvement of gender equality in society, not many fully formed initiatives have been identified in the specific context of HE. Though women are going through HE at increasing rates, they are not seen as viable leaders. Gender tracking is still very present in HE:

*Gender tracking is the “practice of directing the education of students into different paths based on gender and societal norms and expectations. Sometimes, this tracking is systematic and institutionalised, and sometimes, it is unconscious and covert. It is a broad term that can encompass gender segregation in education, such as the establishment of women’s colleges. The term also encompasses more covert subconscious aspects such as gender expectations from teachers and peer pressure to conform to social norms.” (Jones, 2017)*

Women's education still seems to be directed into certain paths based on gender and societal norms and expectations. The most common fields of study for women are business, education, and arts and humanities, with sales and services being their main occupations. It is worth noting that despite outnumbering male students in HEIs, women are underrepresented in the academic field. According to the available data, even in fields where women are numerically over-represented, they hit a so-called “glass ceiling”: senior positions are still occupied by men despite talent pools being primarily female. While countries and territories are increasingly introducing programming aimed at narrowing equality gaps, implementation is the main concern highlighted in progress reports. Legislation and framework creation are widespread, but not the structures to enforce positive behaviour and sanction transgressions.

In this section, we present the broad national context in which HEIs operate for each of the 12 countries and territories of concern. For each of the 12, based on the most recent and complete data available, we present (1) statistics at a glance: selected key numbers on educational institutions, subjects of study disaggregated by gender, and enrolment and attrition rates in tertiary education; (2) the current policy framework: highlighting notable legislation relating to gender equality, with special focus on education and HE frameworks adopted nationally; and (3) the situation of women in the workforce: numbers on labour participation, leadership at national level, and selected findings on women working in HE. The categories used to collect these data are available as fact tables in Appendix 2.

## 3.1 China

### Statistics at a glance

**China is expanding its HE sector on a large scale, and women seem to be benefiting from this expansion at least as much as men.** In 2020, China counted 2,738 higher education institutions, including 1,270 universities and 1,468 higher vocational colleges (The People's Republic of China Ministry of Education, 2021). The gross enrolment ratio in HE was 54.4%, an increase of 27.9 percentage points since 2010 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2021). Women accounted for 50.9% of all students in every type of HE and 50.9% (1.599 million) of all postgraduate students. In 2021, there were 16,742 million women studying in general undergraduate colleges and 4.506 million in adult colleges in China. They accounted for 51% and 58% of enrolled students, respectively (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2021). As of 2020, women were leading by 12% in terms of the gross tertiary graduation ratio<sup>1</sup>, at 41.7% compared with 29.7% among their male counterparts (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020).

Percentage of Women Enrolled in Tertiary Education (China)	
Total students	50.9%
Postgraduate students	50.9%
General undergraduate college students	51.0%
Adult college students	58.0%

### Current policy framework

**In the recent decade, China has put forward policies promoting women's participation in higher education or creating the conditions to influence their participation in the sector.** China has ratified the Status of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in November 1980 and has not signed the Optional Protocol (UN WomenWatch, 1997). Following the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 (BPfA) (United Nations, 1995), China's most recent submission was a Comprehensive National-Level Review Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 2020 (People's Republic of China, 2020). In terms of HE, according to the Review Report,

progress was registered in narrowing the higher education gap: in 2017, women made up 52.5% of students in universities and colleges and represented 52% of all students studying overseas who were sponsored by the government.

In 2011, the "Outline for the Development of Chinese Women (2011-2020)" was introduced to promote gender equality and women's development (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2021). According to its final statistical monitoring report, published in December 2021, significant progress has been made since the implementation of the Outline. For instance, within the purview of the Outline, the coverage of maternity insurance has expanded significantly. The implementation of maternity insurance and employee medical insurance policies was fully promoted. At the end of 2020, 103 million women were benefiting from maternity insurance, an increase of 49.3 million over 2010. In China, improvements on maternity policies have had a significant effect on societal progress (Liu, et al., 2020). Historically, improvements in maternity policies within higher education have led to a higher proportion of women in absolute numbers (Tang & Horta, 2021). Other policies such as the tuition-free policy for secondary vocational education to ensure more women can receive vocational education were also introduced (People's Republic of China, 2020).

**Another milestone is the recent passing of regulations addressing sexual harassment in the HE sector.** In November 2018, the Ministry of Education issued the "Ten Codes of Conduct for Teachers in Higher Education Institutions in the New Era" and the "Guiding Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Addressing Misbehaviours of Teachers in Higher Education Institutions" to respond to sexual harassment at universities and colleges and support women in higher education (People's Republic of China, 2020). In a parallel report to CEDAW for the Ninth Periodic report, experts raised concerns about the implementation of the regulations and the lack of understanding of gender-based violence by law enforcement (Equality Rights Project, 2021). At national level, concerns have been raised regarding an overall lack of the introduction and implementation of comprehensive legislation regarding sexual harassment in the workplace (Beijing Yuanzhong Gender Development Center, 2018), evidenced by low prosecutions (Human Rights Watch, 2021), low reporting rates (Gao & Li, 2021), and cultures permissive of inappropriate behaviour (Liu J., 2017; 2021).

<sup>1</sup>

Gross graduation ratio: number of female graduates from degree programs at ISCED level 6 and 7 as a percentage of the female total population of the theoretical graduation age of the most common degree program at the same level.

**While more and more policies are in place to address gender inequality in HE, women still face institutional barriers.** In 2021, the Ministry of Education announced that HEIs are forbidden from enrolling students based on a predetermined gender ratio, except for institutions and majors involving the military, national defence, and public safety (Chen, 2021). The proportion of women academics in China is on the rise, and their participation evident at each academic rank. According to the latest data published by the Chinese Ministry of Education, 52.0% of educational personnel at HEIs are female and 52.9% of full-time teachers at HEIs are female (MOE, 2024). However, despite larger numerical representation, previous research indicates that women academics are unlikely to occupy senior positions due to limited access to professional opportunities (Gao, et al., 2008). This is exacerbated since, culturally, universities are typically male-centred organisations where women's career progression is impeded by the cultural bottleneck of male superiority to women (Luo, 2013). This has sustained a trend of men occupying the majority of professor positions and accounting for larger numbers of doctoral supervisors (Shuang, 2017). Women are mostly represented in senior positions at local rather than national universities, where they can access better support and resources (Xu & Zhou, 2015). In the employment context, even in situations where women are over-represented, men are generally preferred (Zhao et al., 2013). Despite laws protecting women's equal rights to employment, implementation is weak; social and cultural norms mean that women are not considered to be as qualified as their male counterparts, despite this not being factually correct.

## Women in the workforce

**At national level, although women make up the majority of the labour force, they do not occupy managerial positions.** The labour force participation rate for women is 61.8%, including 67.2% in rural areas and 58.7% in urban areas (ILO STATS, 2021). Most women are employed in services (55%) (ILO STATS, 2021). Despite more women than men graduating from HEIs in 2020, the proportion of women in management and senior positions at companies was 34.9% and 38.2% (China National Knowledge Infrastructure, n.d.), respectively. These figures represent increases of 2.2 and 3.0 percentage points, respectively, compared with 2010.

**The lack of female representation in the highest levels of Chinese politics has been noted across time** (Guo & Zheng, 2008; Zeng, 2014; Yang, 2020). Low female participation in elite Chinese politics is due to a combination of gender norms (women being expected to run households while excelling at full-time jobs) and the ways in which women rise through the ranks of the Chinese Communist Party. As of February 2021, 24.9% of seats in parliament were held by women (UN Women, 2021). Once inside the party, women are usually offered less competitive positions, which subsequently disqualifies them from more senior roles. This is compounded by the earlier retirement age of 55, as opposed to the accepted 68 for men (Jie, 2022). **Progress has, however, been registered at local level.** Successful programming has increased women's influence in local government and strengthened the capacity of government, women's groups, and civil society to monitor Chinese women's political participation and rights (UN Women, 2016; Yang, 2020).



## 3.2 Hong Kong

### Statistics at a glance

**Despite Hong Kong's high level of educational, economic, and social development, some differences persist between the female and male populations.**

In 2020, approximately 79.4% of women aged 15 and over and 85.4% of men had received at least a lower secondary education. In the context of HE, the rapid expansion of HE completion has been noted among women, especially for recent cohorts. Overall, in the 2020/2021 academic year, women represented 72.6% of students enrolled in education, 70.6% in arts and humanities, 65.8% in health, 62.4% in social sciences, 62.2% in dentistry, 57.0% in business and management, and 50.1% in medicine (Census and Statistics Department, 2021). In the 2020/2021 academic year, women outnumbered male students in HE programmes funded by University Grant Committees<sup>3</sup> (UGC), representing 52.3% of total students (Women's Commission, 2022). In 2019, Hong Kong listed 34 HEIs, including eight UGC-funded universities, two self-funded universities, ten accredited post-secondary colleges, eight other post-secondary institutions, and eight other institutions<sup>3</sup> (Census and Statistics Department, 2020).

Percentage of Women Enrolled in Tertiary Education by Subject (Hong Kong)	
Education	72.6%
Arts and Humanities	70.6%
Health	65.8%
Social Sciences	62.4%
Dentistry	62.2%
Business and Management	57.0%
Medicine	50.1%

### Current policy framework

**One national level organization, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)<sup>4</sup>, is in place to ensure equal opportunities between men and women.**

In May 1996, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) was established in Hong Kong as an independent statutory body responsible for the implementation of four types of anti-discrimination laws: the laws on discrimination based on one's (1) sex, (2) disability, (3) family status, and (4) race. The anti-discrimination law on sex-based discrimination outlaws any discrimination in one's societal participation based on one's sex, marital status, pregnancy, and breastfeeding. Notably, the anti-discrimination law on family status has significant implications for women's rights in Hong Kong. In this context, family status refers to having the responsibility of care for an immediate family member. The family status discrimination ordinance in Hong Kong prohibits discrimination in seven aspects of social life based on one's family status: employment, education, provision of goods or services, management of premises, the right to vote and to be elected, right to assembly, and participation in government activities (EOC, 2022).

**EOC provides legal support for Hong Kong citizens experiencing discrimination and serves as a platform for citizens to enquire and make complaints about discrimination.** In 2020/21, EOC reviewed

418 complaints based on the sex discrimination ordinance. 81% of the complaints featured workplace discrimination, with 125 cases of pregnancy discrimination and 151 cases of sexual harassment (EOC, 2021). Although Hong Kong has established legal and institutional mechanisms to address anti-discrimination (a notably positive feature compared to other countries and territories in the region), the lived experiences of women in Hong Kong show that there is still room for improvement. According to the gender equality overview published by EOC (2021), 1 in 5 women in Hong Kong experienced discrimination during and after their pregnancy at their workplace. Only 17% of employers self-reported having policies to support the work-life balance of their employees.

<sup>2</sup>

Universities funded by university grants committee (UGC) are City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University, Lingnan University, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, The Education University of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, and The University of Hong Kong.

<sup>3</sup>

This includes Hong Kong Shue Yan University, the Open University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, Vocational Training Council, Hong Kong Institute of Construction, Clothing Industry Training Authority, Hospital Authority, the Prince Philip dental Hospital.

<sup>4</sup>

Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) of Hong Kong is a statutory body independent of the government while funded mostly by the government. These statutory bodies are independent in the sense that they do not fall under the umbrella of governmental departments, and many non-governmental officials are employed and consulted (Home Affairs Department, 2003). Meanwhile, the EOC is also strongly tied with the government, as they function mostly on government fundings (EOC, 2022).

**Hong Kong has ratified international conventions on gender equality.** The Women's Commission, which is an advisory body to the government, is responsible for assisting the implementation of CEDAW and the BPfA. In 2005, the Commission provided information to the government for its second report on the implementation of the BPfA. In 2005 and 2010 respectively, the Commission also organized and participated in several events to commemorate the 10th and 15th anniversaries of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Women's Commission, 2018). The Commission also provided support to women in the workforce through the implementation of family-friendly employment policies and practices (Women's Commission, 2018).

### Women in the workforce

**The gender gap persists in the Hong Kong labour market in general. In higher education, the gender gap is especially acute for senior positions.**

In the labour market, local Hong Kong women had a 16.6% lower participation rate than their male counterparts in 2020. The female representation in the public sector is especially low, with only 5 out of

32 members of the Executive Council and 16.5% of members of the Election Committee (EOC, 2021) being women. Last year, women accounted for 20.1% of senior academic, 33.2% of junior academic and 48.8% academic supporting staff (Women's Commission, 2022). However, women made up the majority (62.4%) of non-academic grade positions – i.e., administrative, technical, and other non-academic positions – in the education sector.

**The gender gap at publicly funded HEIs has been raised as an area of concern.** Analysis of data from the University Grants Committee in 2017-18 found that faculties at publicly funded HEIs are less male dominated in the lower ranks, suggesting women are struggling to rise in their careers (Lam, 2018). Recent research (Aiston, 2022) suggests that women academics do not feel supported to enter a leadership role, given that being male was the unifying variable of being a fitting leader. Other considerations, such as nationality, age, rank, and length of time in academia compounded on the patriarchal power systems that disadvantage women academics.

## 3.3 Indonesia

### Statistics at a glance

**Women make up most students and graduates in Indonesia's continually developing HE sector.**

In 2021, the number of universities under the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education/ Ministry of Education and Culture in Indonesia was of 3,115, among which 125 were public universities and 2,990 were private (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2021). In 2020, 1,240 religious HEIs were listed (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi, 2020). The 2020 Higher Education Statistics show women made up a majority of newly enrolled students

(women – 56.1%, men – 43.9%) as well as a similar proportion of graduates (women – 56.1%, men – 43.9%) (Directorate General of Higher Education, 2020). Notably, the same report monitors dropout rates: male students are over 1.6 times more likely to drop out than women (dropout rate based on gender was 61.6% for men and 38.4% for women). Although Indonesian men and women between the age of 25 to 34 have one of the lowest rates of attaining tertiary education among OECD countries, the rate is much higher for women (21.6%) than for men (15.8%) (OECD Data, 2022). The positive link between educational attainment and employment rates is particularly strong for women in Indonesia (OECD, 2022):

Percentage Employment Rate by Highest Educational Attainment in Indonesia (2021)	Male	Female
Below upper secondary attainment	88%	47%
Tertiary attainment	87%	74%

**Nationally, despite girls outperforming boys in school (The World Bank EdStats, n.d.), women work less, earn less, and are promoted less** (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Women are still underrepresented in school and governmental leadership positions. A World Bank study shows that women are promoted less often and seek fewer opportunities for promotion

(Yarrow & Afkar, 2020). Women achieve lower scores in the bidding process for promotion and are less able to participate in training for higher echelon positions due to time constraints, responsibilities at home, and a lack of adequate childcare facilities at district, provincial, and ministerial offices.

**Further analysis by the World Bank indicates that a lack of gender parity also impacts the education workforce.** Although both men and women teach at the primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary school levels, men are more likely to occupy management positions. On average, across these three levels, women make up approximately 27.3% of principals, while men account for 72.6% of principals. (Afkar, et al., 2020).

### Current policy framework

**Indonesia has made considerable progress toward gender equality over the past decade, with improved rates of literacy, school enrolment, and employment, as well as policies to pave the way for a more gender-equitable society.** Indonesia ratified CEDAW in September 1984 and signed the Optional Protocol in February 2000 (OHCHR, n.d.). Subsequent to the Beijing Declaration and BPfA in 1995, Indonesia submitted a Beijing+25 review detailing its efforts to promote gender equality in higher education (Government of Indonesia, 2020). According to the Government Guidelines for Implementing Special Assistance Scholarship Programmes, Indonesia developed a scholarship system to help underprivileged vocational students with special expertise programmes in 2019. The government also collaborates with all national universities to promote a Gender Responsive Campus programme which involves academics, as well as youth, in raising awareness about gender equality on campuses and in public spaces. By February 2020, the programme had been carried out in 30 campuses throughout Indonesia (Government of Indonesia, 2020),

However, one recent study indicates that **women are not perceived as being suited to leadership in HEIs and that the implementation of gender-responsive curricula might be limited**, in part due to institutionalised and gendered sociocultural biases (Mustofa & Halim, 2021). Due to this study's small sample size and emphasis on perceptions among students at a private university, as opposed to wider educational professionals, its findings might not be representative of the dynamics of female leadership at a national level. The benefits of girls and women pursuing education, however, are well documented and are closely correlated with wider societal benefits in Indonesia (Fachrunnisa, 2020). The benefits of girls

and women pursuing education are well documented and are closely correlated with wider societal benefits in Indonesia (Fachrunnisa, 2020). The 2003 National Education System Act which mandated the promotion of diversity (Act of the Republic of Indonesia, 2003) is decried as being "merely a discourse", not followed by real implementation (Mustofa & Halim, 2021). Though gender disparities in HEIs are not a new issue, the literature points to women not feeling as confident in their achievements and therefore not pursuing leadership positions (Muhammad, et al., 2021). Previous studies into motivations in HEIs point to the more complex picture going beyond gender and including ethnicity, religious affiliation, and economic background to further explore disparities in leadership (Sutantoputri & Watt, 2013).

### Women in the workforce

**Labour participation for women has been broadly on the rise since 2006 in Indonesia.** In 2021, 39.6% of the total labour force in Indonesia were women, indicating a 3.8 percentage point increase over 15 years. The gender gap is larger in some sectors than others. According to 2020 data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (2021), most Indonesian women worked as salespeople (25.6%), agricultural workers (26.7%), or production workers, transportation equipment operators, and unskilled workers are (19.7%). Although there were few women in skilled industries (9.8% of female workers are professionals, technicians and other personnel, 9.2% were in service business positions, 6.4% were admin staff and 0.7% were leadership and management personnel), in the private sector, Indonesia ranks high on women's share in managerial positions. As 36% of managers in Indonesia are women, Indonesia is among the top 10 economies worldwide with women in senior management positions, higher than the global average of 25% (van Wees, 2019).

**The gender gap in sheer numbers of academia is closing, but data are lacking on the proportion of female academics in different levels of positions and institutions.** In 2018, 43% of all teachers in tertiary education institutions were female; this represents steady progress since the 38% recorded in 1999 (The World Bank, 2022).



## 3.4 Japan

### Statistics at a glance

**In Japan, in contrast to the other countries and territories analysed, fewer young women are enrolled in higher education than men.** According to the Japan Statistical Yearbook 2024, in 2022, there were 807 universities in Japan, including 86 national universities, 101 public universities, and 620 private institutions. There were 2,930,780 enrolled students in Japan's universities in 2022, of which 55.5% were men (1,626,805) and 44.5% were women (1,303,975). In 2022, women accounted for 68.7% of students enrolled in arts, 64.7% enrolled in humanities, 64.3% enrolled in education, and 61.7% of students enrolled in health topics at Junior College, Undergraduate, Master's, and Doctoral level education. However, far fewer women were enrolled in the social sciences (36.7%), sciences (26.9% across Undergraduate, Master's, and Doctoral level with no data on Junior Colleges), and engineering subjects (15.7%) (Statistics Bureau of Japan, 2024).

Percentage of Women Enrolled in Tertiary Education (Junior College, Undergraduate, Master's, and Doctoral level) by Subject (Japan)	
Arts	68.7%
Humanities	64.7%
Education	64.3%
Health	61.7%
Agriculture	44.9%
Social science	36.7%
Science	26.9%
Engineering	15.7%

### Current policy framework

**Japan collaborates with international organisations such as the United Nations to tackle its gender equality issues.** In compliance with the BPfA, Japan submits periodic reports to the United Nations as part of the implementation of CEDAW. In addition, several institutions, including universities, research institutes, academic companies, and private enterprises, are working to facilitate the advancement of women researchers and engineers in fields where women have been critically underrepresented. Support is also provided

to balance engagement in research and childcare with maintaining and improving research and technical skills. Furthermore, in research and engineering, childcare support and training to upscale women's skills have been offered to help them continue engaging in frontline activities (Government of Japan, 2020).

**Since the 1990s, Japan has been working to address gender equality through policies.** In 1994, the Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality was set up within the Cabinet and marked the official political debut of gender equality in Japanese society (Government of Japan, n.d.). Following this establishment, the first national law on gender equality in Japan was enacted in 1999, which outlined the equal rights to political, economic, social, and cultural benefits for men and women (Government of Japan, 1999). Since 2000, the Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office (GEBCO), the successor of the Headquarters for the Promotion of Gender Equality, has been publishing annual white papers on gender equality in Japan with different themes.

**Currently, Japan's national policy direction focuses actions to be taken until 2025 in three main areas:**

(1) expansion of women's participation in all fields, (2) realisation of safe and secure living, and (3) establishment of the foundation for a gender-equal society (Government of Japan, GE Bureau, 2021). Notably for the HE sector, expansion of women's participation includes, among other sub-themes, promotion of gender equality in employment and work-life balance, and promotion of gender equality in science and technology and academic fields.

**In the last decade, the Japanese government has put forward numerous countermeasures to encourage the participation of young women in what have been described as traditionally male-dominated fields in school.** As there is a disproportionately low share of women studying in social sciences, sciences, and engineering, GEBCO started an annual campaign in 2013, "Riko (science and engineering) challenge", to encourage female high school students to advance their study in the sciences and engineering fields (Government of Japan, 2016). In 2018, a survey was conducted by the Cabinet Office to investigate student's attitudes towards female students choosing science and engineering careers. The survey found that female students who were taught science and mathematics subjects by female teachers were more likely to consider themselves 'science type' as those who were not (Libertas Consulting Co., 2018). Another survey published in March 2020 found that 60% students who participated in events organised in the context of the Riko challenge stated that the event triggered an interest in a scientific career path (Libertas Consulting Co., 2018).

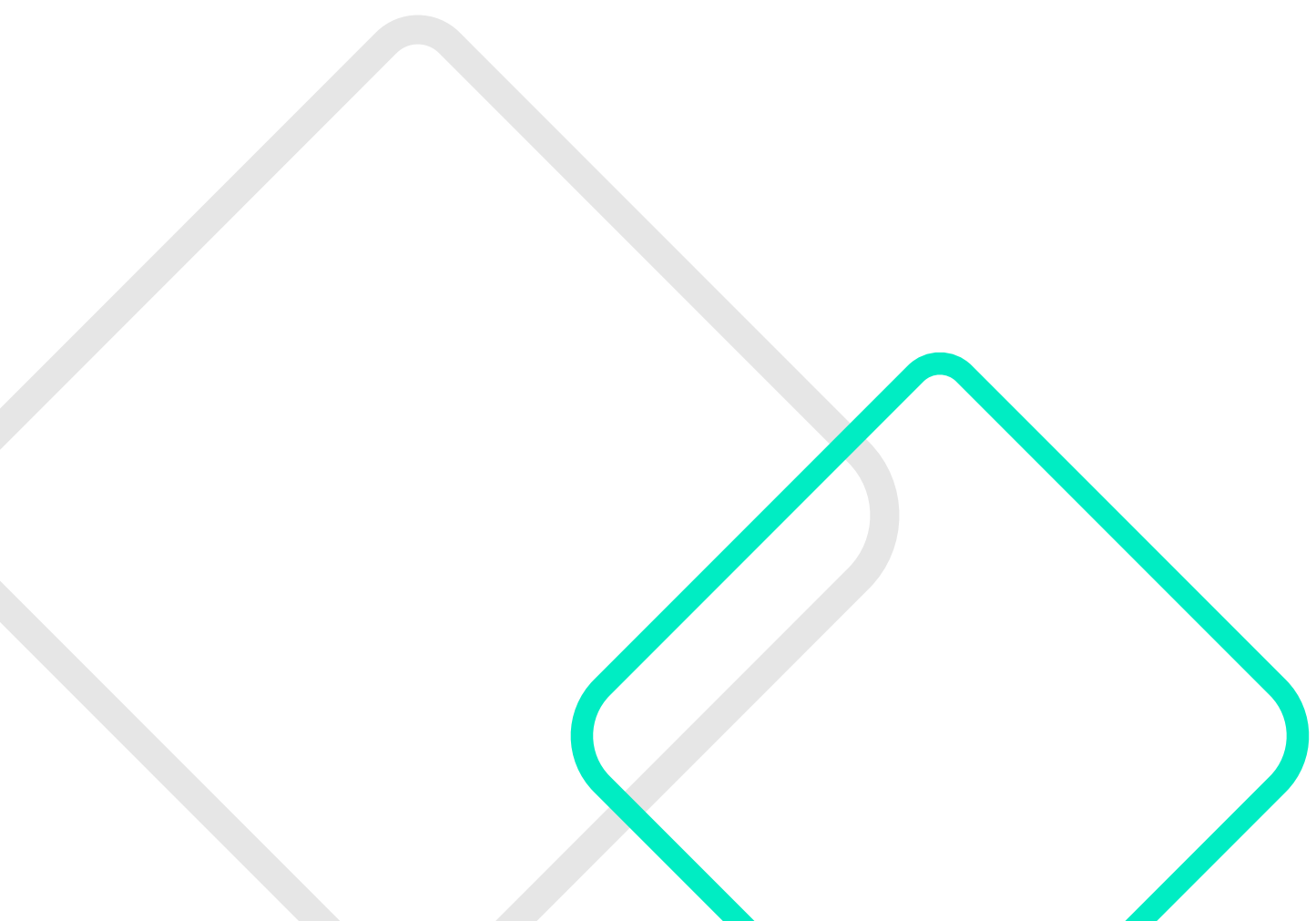
**Despite Japan's comparatively comprehensive policy efforts in gender equality advancement among ASEAN countries, instances of institutional discrimination still impact women.** In one such instance, in 2018, nine medical schools were found to have discriminated against female students in entrance exams by manipulating their exam scores beginning in 2008 (Statistics Bureau of Japan, 2021; Nikkei, 2022). Before the discrimination came to light, there was a persistent gender gap in the acceptance rate across 81 medical schools in Japan over time (Nikkei, 2022). After efforts to address discrimination, women outperformed men by 0.09% in the acceptance rate in 2021 (Nikkei, 2022).

### Women in the workforce

**Women's labour force participation rate has been growing steadily since 2000, although labour force participation for young married women remains at a low level.** The labour force participation rate for women in Japan in 2021 was 53.5%, higher than the OECD East Asian and Pacific member countries' average of 43.9%. In 2005, 62.2% of married women aged between 25 to 34 were unemployed, and only 14.3% were employed full-time. In 2021, the percentage of unemployment among all married women in the same age group almost halved, and 20.1% were employed full-time (GEBCO, 2022).

**In the context of workforce participation, gender roles, reinforced by societal expectations, the education system and media messaging are not questioned by young men and women.** The education system supports perceptions of gender differences, for example through gendered colour-coding of children's name tags, uniforms, and backpacks, and limits ideas about what men and women can do without encouraging young people to challenge and build shared understandings of gender equality. These behaviours seep into adulthood: when young women are faced with choices between a career or marriage and motherhood, this choice is reinforced as a binary one (Elstrom & Miyazaki, 2022). Comparative analysis has shown that 36% of Japanese women agree with the statement that "A woman will always be happier in her role as a mother, rather than her professional life"; by contrast, 26% agreed across G7 countries (Ipsos & Women's Forum for the Economy and Society, 2021).

**In Japan, female academics are scarce.** In 2020, women accounted for 25.9% of faculty positions in Japan. Specifically, women staff accounted for 33.2% of lecturer/assistant professor positions, 25.7% of associate professor positions, 17.8% of professor positions, 14.1% of vice president positions, and 12.8% of president positions (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Japan, 2022).



## 3.5 Malaysia

### Statistics at a glance

**In Malaysia, gender parity has been achieved in higher education participation in recent years, with two exceptions: engineering, and mathematics and computing.** According to the Malaysian Department of Statistics (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2021), in 2020, there were 621 HEIs in Malaysia, among which 186 were public and 435 were private. Public institutions included 27 teacher education institutes, 103 community colleges, 20 public universities, and 36 polytechnics. Private HEIs consisted of 51 universities, 10 foreign branch campus universities, 38 university colleges and 336 colleges. In 2020, the gross enrolment ratio for women in HE was 48.4%, and 54.7% of academic staff were women (The World Bank, 2022). Public institutions accounted for 58.6% of female enrolments (403, 467) and private institutions 41.4% (284,526) (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2021).

In Malaysia, women have enrolled in higher education fields of study at a higher rate than men in recent years, with two exceptions: engineering, manufacturing, and construction; and science, mathematics, and computing. In public institutions, the top three fields of study for women are (1) social sciences, business, and law (36.8%), (2) engineering, manufacturing and construction (18.4%), and (3) science, mathematics and computing (14.9%). In private institutions, the top three fields of study for women are (1) social sciences, business, and law (43.5%), (2) education (12.5%), and (3) health and welfare (12.1%) (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2021).

Percentage of Women Enrolled in Higher Education by Field of Study (Malaysia)	
Education	79.1%
Health and Welfare	74.1%
Social Science, Business, and Law	62.7%
Art and Humanities	56.3%
Services	53.4%
General Programmes	51.0%
Science, Maths, and Computing	49.2%
Engineering, Manufacturing, and Construction	37.0%

Across public and private institutions, women comprise the highest percentage of students in Education subjects (79.1%), Health and Welfare subjects (74.1%), and Social Science, Business, and Law subjects (62.7%) (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2021).

### Current policy framework

**Gender equality is present in the legal framework in Malaysia both generally and specifically in the education sector.** At national level, Malaysia has developed a National Women's Policy and an Action Plan to ensure the development and empowerment of women. In education, the Department of Polytechnic and Community College Education, sitting within the Ministry of Education, is tasked with ensuring that all women and girls in the institutions are given equal opportunities and benefits in every aspect of education, training, and life-long learning (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2020). This sits within Malaysia's commitment to international frameworks. Malaysia has ratified CEDAW in July 1995 but has not signed the Optional Protocol (OHCHR, n.d.). In the 2014-2019 Progress Report on BPfA, progress had been noted on education, health, economy, politics, and decision making (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2020). Though increasing numbers of girls and women had access to education, within the same report, the Department of Women's Development had assessed that challenges remained for those who were multiply marginalised by other identities: single mothers and housewives were experiencing more challenges.

**Despite being economically more advanced than its neighbours, structural inequalities are a barrier to the achievement of gender equality and equity in Malaysia.** One such example is the issue of land ownership. During the process of decade-long urbanisation of Malaysia, urban population grew from 42.0% of total population in 1980 to 72.4% in 2015; overall, in 2015, 2% more women than men resided in urban areas (The World Bank, 2022). However, this reverse gap is likely not due to voluntary mobility, but systematic barriers for women regarding land inheritance. While Malaysian men and women legally have the same rights to immovable property, daughters are still discriminated against when it comes to inheritance from their parents in comparison with sons. This phenomenon can be used to explain, in part, the larger numbers of women than men in tertiary education. As women do benefit from the same financial stability given by control of immovable property, women are more likely to enrol in tertiary education. This is seen as an opportunity to gain more skills and strengthen one's economic standing (Kieran, et al., 2015; OECD, 2019; Jalal, 2022).

## Women in the workforce

**Despite improved female enrolment rates in HEIs, male graduates have slightly higher employability than women.** According to World Bank data from 2022, Malaysia's gender parity index for tertiary education enrolment was 1.25 and has steadily increased from 1.14 in 2017 (World Bank, 2022). In 2021, 51.9% of employed graduates were women; however, they also accounted for 54.2% of unemployed graduates, with a marginal 0.03% increase in the number of unemployed female graduates since 2020. Over the same time frame, the number of male unemployed graduates decreased by 5.3% (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2022). Government data reported to UN Women shows that this is a historic trend, with male graduates being more likely to be employed than female graduates based on data spanning from 2014–18 (UN Women, 2019). In 2020, the labour force participation rate for women was 51.5% versus 77.7% for men (The World Bank, 2022). Women are less likely to be employers, at only 1.8% versus 4.5% for men, but more likely to take on unpaid domestic labour (5.4% versus 2.1% for men) (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2021). The three main occupations for women in 2020 were service and sales (30.4%), professionals (18.6%), and clerical support workers (14.7%). In terms of industry sector, women are mainly present in the wholesale and retail trade (19.6%), manufacturing (17.1%), and hospitality (12.2%). While men are evenly present in these sectors, there is a notable difference in labour force participation in the education sector between men (3.2%) and women (11.1%). Only a small percentage of managerial positions are held by women (24.9%) (ILO STATS, 2021). In 2019, across all primary, secondary, and residential schools within the country, 38.3% of principal positions were held by women, according to data published by the Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2019). According to the Beijing+25 review, these top management women officials are also involved in the “decision-making of policies, management, and operations of the polytechnics and community colleges” (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2020).

**Women's leadership, both in business and politics, is experiencing growth.** In 2007, only 8.7% of firms in Malaysia had top-level female leadership. The rate grew to 26.3% in 2015 (Ministry of Women, Family

and Community Development, 2019). Though this is notable progress, it still reflects the low representation of women's career progression in business. Similarly, in politics, female representation is increasing but not close to parity. Although the proportion of seats held by women in parliament has significantly grown over the years, from 7.8% in 1997 to 14.9% in 2020, the pace of the growth has been slow. In 2018, when the long-ruling BN coalition stepped down, women's representation in parliament saw an approximate 3.5% surge. On the other hand, the proportion of women in ministerial-level positions in Malaysia decreased from 18.5% in 2018 to 16.1% in 2020, according to the latest data (IPU Parline, 2022; MyGovernment, The Government of Malaysia's Official Gateway, 2022). The most recent cabinet reshuffle in December 2023, under the Unity Government which has been in power since November 2022, has reduced the percentage of women in the Cabinet from 17.8% to 16.1%. This is far from the global average of 22.8%, and the national (and global) target of 30% of women in leadership positions. (The Star, 2024).

## 3.6 Myanmar

### Statistics at a glance

**Although Myanmar is regressing in terms of gender equality following the 2021 military takeover and the COVID-19 pandemic, according to UN Women and UNDP's latest report, some limited progress has been registered in the HE sector** (UNDP & UN Women, 2022). Myanmar's HE system is subject to a significant degree of government control, with multiple ministries being involved in HEIs. As of 2018, there were 174 such institutions in Myanmar. Among them, 134 are controlled by the Ministry of Education, while the remaining 40 are under the governance of other ministries (Connecting Higher Education Institutions for a New Leadership on National Education, 2018). There is limited gender-disaggregated data on higher education in Myanmar. Data from The World Bank indicates a 24.0% gross enrollment ratio for tertiary education for women in 2018, compared to a 17.0% gross tertiary enrollment ratio in tertiary education for men. As of 2020, 11.1% of the female population aged 25+ held at least a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, compared to 14.0% of the male population (The World Bank, 2022).

## Current policy framework

### **Myanmar is going through drastic political and social change, directly impacting women's lives and rights.**

Myanmar ratified the CEDAW in July 1997 but has not accepted the Optional Protocol (OHCHR, n.d.). A 2019 National Review on the implementation of the BPfA shows a path forward to progress on gender equality. The report recognised that due to its past historical and political context, Myanmar experienced limited progress in gender equality and women's empowerment, especially in terms of understanding and awareness concerning gender issues as well as establishing effective national mechanisms, capacities, tools, and approaches to address gender imbalances (The Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement & Myanmar National Committee on Women, 2019). Like many aspects of life in Myanmar, gender equality has been severely impacted by military rule. A recent UN Development Programme and UN Women survey indicates a deterioration in women's rights in Myanmar and sends the stark message that fear of violence is preventing women from living normal lives (UNDP & UN Women, 2022). Women are experiencing a reversal in living standards, notably in relation to security (Mra, 2020; Sharma et al., 2021), health outcomes (UN Women, 2021) and economic impacts (International Labour Organization, 2021; The World Bank, 2022).

**Although the 2008 constitution drafted by the military stated that women have the right to receive the same pay as men for similar work, discrimination is prevalent in other pieces of legislation.** The penal code in Myanmar regarding sexual violence does not outlaw it other than penile penetration and acknowledges marital rape only when the woman is younger than 14 years old (Global Justice Center, 2020). Alongside the former political leader Aung San Suu Kyi, women's representation in parliament grew significantly from less than 5% in 2014 to roughly 15.3% in the Lower House and 14.4% in the Upper House in 2020 (IPU Parline, 2022). Despite the progress, even during the demographic transition, the military was heavily involved. The systematic repression of women has always been top-down in Myanmar, deriving from the "embedded patriarchy of the military" (Bardall & Bjarnegård, 2021).

### **Over the past decade, Myanmar's education policy landscape has significantly changed.**

In 2014, Parliament approved a new National Education Law, which was amended in 2015 (Connecting Higher Education Institutions for a New Leadership on National Education, 2018). This law and its amendments aimed to provide a national framework for implementing a series of reforms to the national education system. It includes recognising the right of all citizens to free and mandatory education at the primary level, establishing a standards-based education quality assurance system, and supporting the learning of minority ethnic languages and cultures. In late 2015, the government launched the "National Education Strategic Plan – 2016/2021," which stands out as a comprehensive reform impacting Myanmar's entire education system. However, COVID-19 and the 2021 military coup struck the country before the second edition, the National Education Strategic Plan (2021–2030), could be revised or finalised (Htut, et al., 2022).

## Women in the workforce

**Based on data that pre-dates the coup, women are the leading force in HE in Myanmar.** The leadership and faculty members of the colleges of education (formerly known as Teachers' Training Colleges) are predominantly women. In 2018, of the 25 colleges of education in Myanmar, 24 were headed by women. Women constitute the majority of lecturers (88.3%), assistant lecturers (85.2%), and tutors (80.6%) in colleges of education (Myanmar Statistical Information Service, 2018).

**Despite increased participation levels in HE personnel, women's contributions (and higher education more broadly) are not valued and compensated in the same way as other professions.** Professions that require higher education, such as law, finance, and teaching, are better paid in the private sector than the State sector. Examples include careers in trade, and agriculture, which are typically better paid but do not require HE (Crisp & Clementi, 2021). In other words, although women in Myanmar might have a more advanced education than their male counterparts, they do not reap the same financial benefits for their extra years in education.



## 3.7 Philippines

### Statistics at a glance

#### The Philippines is considered to be a leading figure in gender equality in the East Asia and Pacific region.

The Philippines is considered to be a leading figure in gender equality in the East Asia and Pacific region. According to the latest Global Gender Gap rankings in 2023, the World Economic Forum ranked the Philippines sixteenth out of 146 countries, a rise of three places from the previous year, second only to New Zealand in the entire Asia-Pacific region (World Economic Forum, 2023).

**The Philippines performs well, both for women's rights broadly and in the education sector and academia specifically.** In 2022, there were 2,424 HEIs: 1,729 private and 695 public. Public institutions include state universities and colleges, including satellite campuses (546), local universities and colleges (136), and government schools, special HEIs<sup>5</sup>, and CHED-supervised institutions (13) (Commission on Higher Education, 2022). Women outnumber men both in secondary and tertiary education enrolment. Between 2009 and 2015, the gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education in the Philippines increased for both women and men. In 2016, enrolment for both women and men reached its highest point, at 46% and 35% respectively. This represented a significant increase from two decades ago, since in 1992, the enrolment rate was 31% for women and 21% for men. Despite a sharp decrease in 2017 and 2018, during which time the overall enrolment ratio in tertiary education in the Philippines fell from 40% to 30%, the numbers are once again starting to rise, with female enrolment continuing to lead over male. In 2021, the gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education for women was 41%, significantly more than for men (30%) (The World Bank, 2022).

**Gender tracking still exists in the Philippines, meaning women's education is often directed towards certain paths based on gender and societal norms.** While an increasing number of women are entering medicine and law schools, men dominate in aeronautics, engineering, and technology. While it may be considered less pronounced in the Philippines than in the rest of the region, it is believed that socio-cultural traditions, family preferences, and gender stereotypes still influence the choices of future students (Delavin, et al., 2020). During the 2020-2021 academic year, the most common field of study for both women and men was Business Administration and Related Topics. Among the top five discipline groups studied by students, women were most highly represented in Education and Teacher Training, at 73.2% women compared to 26.8% men, as well as Medical and Allied Fields (69.9% women), and Business Administration and Related Fields (61.6% women). Women were outnumbered by men in IT-Related Disciplines (39.2% women) and Engineering and Tech (33.6% women) (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2024).

Out of all students enrolled in a STEAM subject, 48.3% were women, while 64.4% of those enrolled in non-STEAM subjects were women (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2024)." In technical and vocational education training (TVET) programmes, just over half of the enrollees were women (53%). Completion rates were higher among women (58.2%) than men (41.8%). The majority of women enrollees and graduates from TVET can be found in sectors such as fashion, tourism, community development, healthcare, and other services (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2022).

#### Percentage of Women Enrolled in Tertiary Education for Top 5 Discipline Groups (The Philippines)

Education Science and Teacher Training	73.2%
Medical and Allied	69.9%
Business Administration and Related Studies	61.6%
IT-Related Disciplines	39.2%
Engineering and Tech	33.6%

<sup>5</sup> CHED terminology, not defined.

<sup>6</sup> Science, Technology, Engineering, Agriculture/Fishery, and Mathematics.

## Current policy framework

### **In the Philippines, the reduction in gender disparity is a result of the historical efforts by women and women's groups to drive policy and societal change.**

The constitutional enshrining of women's suffrage in 1937 is often quoted as a site of early feminism in the Philippines (Casambre & Rood, 2012). After gender equality was enshrined in the constitution, additional acts have been rolled out to protect women's rights across multiple areas of life. More broadly, the women's movement in the Philippines has achieved numerous gains in terms of economic, political, and social equality. Legislative victories between 1989 and 2007 include but are not limited to (1) better working conditions and gender non-discrimination, (2) prevention of human trafficking and mail-order brides, (3) provision of daycare, increased maternity benefits, and protections for new mothers, (4) mechanisms for women's participation at local and government level, and (5) legislation protecting against sexual harassment and sexual violence (Hega, et al., 2017). Specific examples include the 1990 Barangay-Level Total Development and Protection of Children Act, which ensures the availability of daycare centres in every barangay. In 2000, the Solo Parents' Welfare Act was developed for the provision of welfare services for single-parent households. The Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act 1995 and its 2009 Amendment, Republic Act No. 10022, as well as the Domestic Workers Act 2012 were all introduced to provide protection for domestic workers, who are almost all women and at increased risk of international and internal trafficking, including for domestic servitude (International Labour Organization, 2022).

A notable piece of legislation in the Philippines is the Republic Act 9710 – the Magna Carta of Women (Philippine Commission on Women, 2009). This is a localised translation of the CEDAW provisions (ratified in August 1981 (OHCHR, n.d.)). The Magna Carta of Women guarantees substantive rights to Filipino women and was enacted to promote women's empowerment since the State "realises that equality of men and women entails the abolition of the unequal structures and practices that perpetuate discrimination and inequality" (Republic of the Philippines, 2009). Under its oversight body, the Philippine Commission on Women, legislative priorities include gender-responsive governance, leadership and political participation, violence against women, and women's economic empowerment. Criticism nevertheless remains that the slow implementation rates for these policies are not translating into gender parity (Sinha, 2017), while patriarchal norms are watering down legislation that could create more radical change (Francisco, 2022).

**In the education sector, progress has included better working conditions.** The 1995 Anti-Sexual Harassment Act stated that all sexual harassment in an education or training environment is unlawful (Philippine Commission for Women, 2018). According to an explanatory note accompanying the House Bill Number 6107 extending the scope of the 1995 Act, 24 complaints were reported from state universities and colleges and 49 from private HEIs in 2011 (Explanatory note, House Bill No. 6107, 2020). In 2015, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) released the CHED Memorandum Order No. 01, series 2015, entitled Establishing the Policies and Guidelines on Gender and Development in CHED and HEIs, to institutionalise gender equality, gender-responsiveness and sensitivity in all HEIs in the Philippines (CHED, 2015).

## Women in the workforce

**Filipino women are not participating in the labour market as much as men.** According to the latest data, only 54.8% of the labour force in the Philippines were women in 2021 (as opposed to 75.5% for men) (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2022). Filipino women's labour participation rate is lower than their male counterparts across all age groups, while the gap is particularly evident in those aged between 25 and 34 years old, with a 40.2% deficit (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2022). According to the latest data published by the Philippine Statistics Authority, although fewer women (51.7%) participate in the labour market than men (75.4%), women held 53% (1,748) of managerial positions (Philippines Statistics Authority, 2024). The top three employment sectors for women in 2018 were elementary occupations (22.8%), service and sales (22.0%), and managerial (21.6%) (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2019). The prevalence of women in political, economic, and public life is also forecast to rise. According to data published in late 2023, the proportion of women holding local government seats is set to reach 50% by 2030 (Philippines Statistics Authority, 2024). This follows recent trends across provincial seats (19.7% in 2016 to 23.5% in 2022), city seats (21.2% in 2016 to 25.7% in 2022), and municipal seats (22.4% in 2016 to 23% in 2022) (Philippines Statistics Authority, 2024).

### **The Philippines has achieved gender parity in the number of researchers and academic staff in tertiary education.**

The earliest available data (dating to 1990) on the share of female academics show that gender parity in the number of researchers at tertiary institutions was achieved in 2001 (The World Bank, 2022). In 2019, 51.7% of faculty members in HEIs were women. The number of women faculty members in HE varies by institution type. According to the CHED, in 2019, private HEIs employed 39,313 women (50.9% of total staff), state universities and colleges 27,113 (52.7% of total staff), local colleges and universities 3,770 (52.7% of total staff), and other government schools 270 (62.5% of total staff) (Commission on Higher Education, 2020).

## 3.8 Singapore

### Statistics at a glance

**Women are not lagging in terms of enrolment in tertiary education but are more highly represented in some fields than others.** In 2021, Singapore counted 34 tertiary education institutions: 18 junior colleges, five polytechnics, three technical institutes, two art schools, and six national universities (Department of Statistics Singapore, 2022). The gross enrolment in tertiary education for women has steadily increased over the past few years, reaching 102% in 2021; the same enrolment rate for men has increased, too, but at a slightly lower rate, reaching 92% in 2021 (World Bank, 2021). For the 2022-2023 academic year, male and female enrolment in full-time and part-time undergraduate colleges, faculties and schools was similar, comprising 50.3% (16,278) female students and 49.7% (16,057) male students (National University of Singapore, 2022).<sup>1</sup> Women accounted for a significant majority of enrolments in some academic fields, including 83.6% in education, 79.2% in mass communication, and 73.3% in health sciences. The representation of women is lowest in engineering sciences (28.5%) and information technology subjects (31.7%) (Data.gov.sg, 2021).

#### Female Students as a Proportion of Total Students in Different Academic Fields (Singapore)

Education	83.6%
Mass Communications	79.2%
Health Sciences	73.3%
Dentistry	65.2%
Business and Administration	59.2%
Architecture	58.4%
Accounting	55.3%
Law	49.7%
Medicine	48.6%
Information Technology	31.7%
Engineering Sciences	28.5%

**The proportion of women with an HE degree experienced sharper growth over time in comparison to their male counterparts.** However, there is still a gender deficit in raw numbers. According to the latest data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2022), 31.7% of all women aged above 25 had at least a bachelor's degree in 2020, demonstrating more than 10% growth since 2010. Meanwhile, 34.4% of men in the same age group had a similar educational background in 2020, but the pace of increase has been slower and even plateaued in recent years.

### Current policy framework

**Gender equality is enshrined in the Singaporean Constitution. The Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) is the principal political body that oversees all gender-related issues** (MSF, n.d.). The government offers schemes and resources for women in many aspects of their lives, including starting a family, work-life balance, business initiatives, skill development, or health care (MSF, n.d.). The White Paper on Women's Development (2022) established new workplace equity legislation, new tripartite guidelines on flexible work arrangements, and greater efforts to promote the values of respect and safety through education. The Paper has been widely celebrated as a positive step towards improving fairness and inclusivity in Singapore – in particular, post-pandemic (Stapczynski, 2022; Han, 2022; Ova, 2022), having included a wide public consultation period (REACH, 2022). This builds on Singapore having ratified the CEDAW in October 1995 but not the Optional Protocol (OHCHR, n.d.). Singapore did not submit a national review for the implementation of BPfA and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly.

### Women in the workforce

**Following a recent rise in the proportion of female politicians in Singapore, gender equality has become a talking point.** Between 2007 and 2019, the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament fluctuated between 23% to 25% without much development. Following the 2020 general election, women's representation in national parliament rapidly expanded to 29% of seats, reaching 30% in the following year (IPU Parline, 2022). Three female ministers led a nationwide gender equality review in 2020, gathering ideas and experiences encompassing Singaporeans in different fields (Tan, n.d.) and leading to the publication of the 2022 White Paper.



**Though an increasing number of women participate in the Singaporean labour market, the COVID-19 pandemic has stalled this development.** The proportion of women in the total labour force grew fairly consistently in the 10 years between 2009 and 2019, from 40.1% to 41.8% (The World Bank, 2022). However, the largest decline took place during the pandemic, bringing the share down to 41.2% in 2020 (The World Bank, 2022). Similarly, while there were usually fewer unemployed women than men, for the first time since 2015, women (50.4%) outnumbered men as unemployed persons in 2021 (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2021).

**There has been limited progress in the presence of women on boards and in management positions, and this also holds true in tertiary education.** According to data published by UNESCO, 38.2% of tertiary education teachers in Singapore were women in 2021 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021). Institutions have begun to acknowledge the gender imbalance and implement policies to change the status quo. For instance in 2021, 31.7% of the faculty at the National University of Singapore (NUS), one of the most prestigious universities in Singapore and the world, were women. This is a slight increase from 28.3% in 2017. To address this, the NUS has implemented work-life balance policies since 2008, such as the extension of the tenure clock for women and men with children (National University of Singapore, 2021). This policy allows faculty members to delay their tenure evaluation by up to a year when expecting a child and need to attend to their parenting duties. It came into place after the university realised that many women were leaving the university setting. Female academics are constrained in their career development due to parenting and housework duties. They are twice as likely to leave academia or change academic positions compared to men (Kerrane, et al., 2022).

## 3.9 South Korea

### Statistics at a glance

**South Korea is experiencing a gender gap in higher education in sheer participation numbers.** In 2021, South Korea counted more than 336 higher education institutions, including 190 universities, 134 colleges, 10 teaching universities and 2 industrial colleges (Korean Statistical Information Service, 2022). In the same year, the total number of undergraduate students enrolled was 1,938,254, of which 45.4% were women. When further divided by subject, women accounted for 58.3% of undergraduate students enrolled in humanities, 47.6% in social sciences, 57.5% in education, 20.3% in engineering, 45.4% in natural sciences, 59.5% in medical sciences and pharmacy, and 55.5% in arts and physical education. (National Center for Education Statistics Korea, 2021).

#### Percentage of Women Enrolled in Tertiary Education by Subject (Korea)

Medical Sciences and Pharmacy	59.5%
Humanities	58.3%
Education	57.5%
Arts and Physical Education	55.5%
Social Sciences	47.6%
Natural Sciences	45.4%
Engineering	20.3%

### Current policy framework

**South Korea was an early adopter of international frameworks on gender equality.** South Korea ratified CEDAW in December 1984 and the Optional Protocol was accessioned in October 2006 (United Nations, 2007). In 2019, progress was recognised in the National Review on the implementation of BPfA in the context of its twenty-fifth anniversary (Republic of Korea, 2019). The most important achievements had been (1) strengthening the basis for promoting gender equality nationally, (2) enhancing women's representation (in the public sector) and decision making-power, (3) strengthening prevention of gendered violence, as well as (4) increasing support for vulnerable women, and (5) improving gender-based discrimination in employment. Most notable in the context of HEIs is achievement 2: progress had been noted in the increase in numbers of female professors at national universities from 14.5% in 2014 to 16.6% in 2018.

**At national level, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF), established in 1988, oversees gender discrimination in South Korea.** MOGEF currently has projects promoting gender equality and women's leadership in four areas: (1) the promotion of gender-equal culture and awareness, (2) work-life balance, (3) women's safety and health, and (4) women's labour and social participation. Women's representation in the public sector has grown rapidly in recent years. For women's participation in government committees and leadership in public schools, increases of 14.5% and 16%, respectively, were registered. However, the change has been less evident in other areas, such as women's leadership in public organizations and the number of female officials at higher levels (MOGEF, 2022).

**MOGEF also took initiatives to protect women's rights from an intersectional perspective.** Policies are in place to set up support centers for multicultural families and immigrants to adapt to South Korea society. Counseling, inquiry, and translation services are available 24/7 in 13 languages for married immigrants and multicultural families. At the same time, additional policies are established to protect female immigrants in the face of sex trafficking and domestic violence, and special attention is paid to North Korean refugees facing a more significant risk of violence and discrimination (MOGEF, 2022).

**Another significant step forward in antidiscrimination in South Korea took place in 2020, when the new antidiscrimination law was submitted, including discrimination against the LGBTQI+community** (Amnesty International, 2020). However, after two years, the bill is still pending. South Korean citizens and activists have raised concerns regarding the bill as the new conservative administration takes over (Kwon, 2022). There are also indications that the current administration may negatively impact women's rights. For example, in 2022, the People Power Party allegedly blamed feminism for the country's plummeting birthrate, and has pledged to abolish the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

**Recent political turbulences in South Korea might also play a role in the achievement of gender equality.** Previously, the predecessor to President Yoon Suk-yeol took measures to support women's career

progression in multiple areas. Most notably, former president Moon Jae-in pushed for a gender quota of 25% from the current 16% female university professors by 2030 and a 30% quota of cabinet seats for female politicians during his term (Pressley & Harris, 2022). However, the progress in female empowerment was viewed negatively by many. One of the primary opponents of so-called "reverse discrimination" is Lee Jun-Seok, South Korea's youngest prominent opposition party leader. According to a sociology professor at Chung-Ang University, Lee Jun-Seok has made his political career through appealing to young male voters by attacking feminism (Kim, 2021). The newly elected president Yoon Suk-yeol has walked away from the commitment of applying a gender quota of 30% women when appointing cabinet seats, and there are concerns that this conservative turn will not stop in the political arena (Pressley & Harris, 2022).

## Women in the workforce

**Although female academics are still a minority in academia in South Korea, especially in more senior positions, slow progress to narrow this gap is underway.** In 2020, the ratio of women full-time university professors was close to the target of the target of 25% female professors set up by the former president Moon Jae-in (24.9%). This is a significant improvement over the 19.0% recorded in 2009. The number of women principal investigators has also considerably increased. In 2009, 51.8% of full-time male university faculty were senior researchers, compared to 40.5% of female faculty. In contrast, in 2020, 58.8% of male and 51.2% of female full-time faculty were principal investigators (National Research Foundation of Korea, 2021).

**Notably, data collection on women and their progression through HEIs in South Korea also includes tracking their academic publications.** According to 2020 data from the National Research Foundation of Korea (Kang, 2021), while women had a higher average number of academic articles published per year in domestic journals, at 0.64 in 2020 compared to 0.45 for men, male faculty members were more likely to publish in overseas journals, which tend to be more prestigious and have higher readerships. In 2020, the average publication rate in overseas journals was 0.27 articles per year for female faculty members and 0.44 for male faculty members.

## 3.10 Taiwan

### Statistics at a glance

**Currently, similar numbers of female and male students are enrolled in HEIs in Taiwan.** Research shows that there were 152 HEIs in Taiwan in 2020, divided into 126 universities, 14 colleges, and 12 junior colleges. In the same year, the total number of students enrolled in these institutions was 1,203,460, with 51% being women (Ministry of Education (Taiwan), 2021).

**According to the most recent data, the ratio of female students decreases as the level of education progresses.** In 2018, female graduates in HE accounted for 52.8%, 45.1%, and 33.2% of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, respectively (Department of Gender Equality, Executive Yuan, 2021).

**The gender gap in the number of graduates is significant for STEM subjects.** In 2018, the proportion of female graduates in natural sciences, information and communication technologies, and engineering accounted for 43.1%, 28.3%, and 18.9% of graduates in each respective field. This is in sharp contrast to the social sciences and humanities, where female graduates accounted for 70.4% of education graduates and 69.7% of graduates in arts and humanities (Department of Gender Equality, Executive Yuan, 2021).<sup>8</sup>

**Percentage of Female Graduates in Tertiary Education by Subject (Taiwan)**

Education	70.4%
Arts and Humanities	69.7%
Natural Sciences	43.1%
Information and Communication Technologies	28.3%
Engineering	18.9%

**Taiwan is one of the earliest champions of gender equality and social inclusion in Asia, ranking first** for Gender Inequality in 2019 and with a higher level of gender equality than Iceland and Germany.

### Current policy framework

**As the highest-level institution, the Gender Equality Committee of the Executive Yuan (GEC) oversees all aspects of gender equality issues in Taiwan.** Since its establishment in May 1986, the GEC has put forward important pieces of legislation. For example, the GEC published the Gender Equality Policy Guidelines in 2011, which ensure gender equality in top-level policy-making by the Taiwanese government (Gender Equality Committee of the Executive Yuan, 2021). The government has further invested in gender equity programmes by introducing the Gender Equality Important Issues Promotion Project, running from 2022 to 2025 (Ministry of Education (Taiwan), 2021). The project outlines current gender gaps and sets up action plans and strategies aimed at achieving gender equality in both private and public spheres. For example, one of the project goals is to help fully-funded government organisations have at least one-third of their directors of the underrepresented sex. Gender equality is featured in education of different levels. In terms of legislation, Taiwan enacted the Gender Equality Education Act in 2004, stipulating (among other regulations) the integration of a gender equity curriculum from kindergarten through to high school and university (Chang, 2018). Educators are also required to receive gender equality training before taking up their posts. The gender gap is still prominent in traditionally male-dominated subjects. To begin addressing this issue, the Gender Equality Education Act also calls upon educators to encourage students to study subjects traditionally deemed to be a better fit for the opposite of their own genders. It also contains a full set of measures to eliminate gender discrimination and create an environment of gender equality, including requiring universities to offer courses on gender studies, protecting the right to education for pregnant students, and creating a safe campus. The Act includes provisions on the prevention and handling of sexual assault, harassment, and bullying on campus with penal provisions for their violations.

<sup>8</sup>

In this case, due to unavailability of data, each subject is considered the 100%. As a result, for each subject, the remainder percentage is made up by male graduates.

## Women in the workforce

**In higher education, women are over-represented as administrative staff and underrepresented as educators.** Across Taiwan's universities and colleges, women made up 35% (14,264) of all professors and instructors in 2023, only a slight increase from 31.2% (13,701) in 2005 (Ministry of Education, 2023). In the same HEIs, however, women made up 80% of the total number of administrative assistants in 2023, an increase from 72% (1,605) of female administrative assistants in 2005 (Ministry of Education, 2023)." Colleges and universities have the lowest proportion of women in senior administration positions, with only 9.9% of university and college presidents being women in 2019 (Department of Gender Equality, Executive Yuan, 2021).

**There has been incremental growth in the raw numbers of female academics, but women still remain underrepresented in higher-level roles.**

The representation of women in associate professor and professor positions was 37.1% and 23.8%, respectively, in 2021, representing respective increases of 10.5 and 7.5 percentage points over the previous 15 years. While public institutions have previously had a higher proportion of female professors than private institutions (17.3% of public institutions and 14.7% of private institution professors were female in 2006), progress has been quicker in private institutions. Private institutions have a higher proportion of female instructors, assistant professors, associate professors, and professors as of 2021 (Ministry of Education (Taiwan), 2021).

Women occupied 41.6% of the seats in the Legislative Yuan, according to 2020 data from the Gender Equality Committee of the Executive Yuan. This reflects visible progress compared to 1998 when female representation in the Legislative Yuan was only 19.1%. However, within Municipal Councils and the Magistrates of Counties, female occupation of administrative positions in 2018 was 35.8% and 37.5%, respectively.

## 3.11 Thailand

### Statistics at a glance

**Higher education in Thailand is experiencing a rapid expansion.** In 2020, Thailand listed 370 universities and colleges compared to 310 in 2018 (Digital Government Development Agency, 2021). Most students followed the public system (80.9%), while only a limited number were at private institutions (19.1%), according to data from 2017 (National Statistical Office, 2020). Within the public system, women represented 59.7% of students in tertiary education. According to 2020 Ministry of Education data, transition rates to tertiary education in Thailand were 96.5% for both women and men (National Statistical Office, 2020).

**Women outnumber men in HE participation in most subjects.** In 2020, female students outnumbered their male counterparts in the following fields: business, administration, and law (64.1%), natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics (72.8%), health and welfare (72.7%), social sciences, journalism, and information (56.6%), agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary (60.3%), arts and humanities (63.08%), education (66.4%), and services (71.8%). Female students were less represented in information and communication technologies (ICTs) (37.9%) and engineering, manufacturing, and construction (34.8%) (Digital Government Development Agency, 2021).

#### Percentage of Female Graduates in Tertiary Education by Subject (Thailand)

Natural Sciences, Mathematics, and Statistics	72.8%
Health and Welfare	72.7%
Services	71.8%
Education	66.4%
Business, Administration, and Law	64.1%
Arts and Humanities	63.1%
Agriculture, Fisheries, and Veterinary	60.3%
Social Sciences, Journalism, and Information	56.6%
Information and Communication Technologies	37.9%
Engineering, Manufacturing, and Construction	34.8%

**Data from 2022 indicates that among the population aged 25 and over, the percentage who have attained a bachelor's or master's degree is higher among women than men.** Among women, 19.6% had attained at least a Bachelor's degree or equivalent as of 2022, and 2.1% of women had attained at least a Master's degree or equivalent. Among men, 14.8% had attained at least a Bachelor's degree or equivalent, and 1.8% had attained at least a Master's degree or equivalent (The World Bank, 2022). There is a negligible difference at the doctoral level, however, with 0.1% of women and 0.2% of men aged 25+ holding a Doctoral degree or equivalent as of 2022 (The World Bank, 2022).

## Current policy framework

**Thailand has made significant efforts to integrate gender equality principles into its legislation.**

Section 27 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand (2017) explicitly codifies the equal rights of men and women, while Section 71 more specifically places the responsibility on the State to protect and promote quality of life for women (Secretariat of the Senate, Kingdom of Thailand, 2008). Thailand ratified the CEDAW in August 1985 and the Optional Protocol in June 2000 (OHCHR, n.d.). In its 2020 review of the implementation of the BPfA, the government identified two key challenges to the promotion of gender equality and women's advancement: traditional gender attitudes and low numbers of women holding political positions or executive positions in the public sector (Government of Thailand, 2020). The 2015 Gender Equality Act prohibits all organisations and individuals from all levels of gender discrimination (The Government of Thailand, 2020). The passing of the 2015 Act has been described as incongruous with the actions of the military government, which, at the time, had appointed just 12 women (4.8%) to its 250-member National Legislative Assembly (Wangkiat, 2019). By the end of 2020, the Act was referred to as "Thailand's Invisible Gender Law" (Sinen, 2017; Chia & Thanaboonchai, 2020). A 2020 UNDP study found that no entities had been sanctioned under this legal framework (UNDP, 2020). Local critics described the Act as limited since it does not make any provisions for the LGBTQI+ community or consider intersectional approaches (Chia & Thanaboonchai, 2020).

**No single document tackles the specific issue of women in HE, although a number of policies have dedicated sections of their plan to the subject.**

The 2017–2021 National Strategy for Women's Development, the Action Plan for Women's Development (2020–2022) as well as the National Strategy (B.E 2018–2037) all aim to foster Thailand's gender equality and women's development in the country. In practice, analysis from Chulalongkorn University, among the first HEIs to assess equality of opportunity in the HE environment, shows that implementation of the gender equality frameworks in the HE context is limited (Global Education News, 2020). Based on primary data, the report shows that gender equality has been equated with almost equal numbers of men and women enrolling in tertiary education. A deep dive into this data shows that female academics encounter "glass ceilings" as they progress through their careers.

## Women in the workforce

**Although Thailand has made significant progress in women's education attainment and leadership in the business sphere, women's leadership in the political and public arena has moved much slower.**

UNESCO (2022) estimated that 45.9% of the total labour force in 2021 were women, higher than the 44.5% OECD members' average. Around 64% of principal owners of Thai companies were women in 2016. However, in politics, women were elected to 16.2% of the seats in the House of Representatives after the 2019 general election, indicating a less than 0.5% increase in the share since the 2011 election. Furthermore, all ministerial positions are currently held by men in Thailand. This represents a significant change from 2017 when 11.1% of positions were held by women (The Secretariat of the Cabinet, 2022).

**There has been limited progress concerning the presence of women on boards and in management positions generally.**

Despite the high share of female business owners, women made up 32% of individuals in leadership positions in 2020, and 39.2% of the total managerial positions for the same year (Government of Thailand, 2020). In HEIs, more men than women occupy high-ranking positions, although women's participation in higher education is higher than men's (Chulalongkorn University, 2020).



## 3.12 Vietnam

### Statistics at a glance

**According to recent trends, more women than men are enrolled as students and employed as staff in HEIs in Vietnam.** In 2020, the country had 242 universities, among which 176 were public ones and 66 private ones (Ministry of Education and Training, 2021). In 2020, there were 1,025,200 women enrolled at HEIs, accounting for 53.8% of enrollees. Men and women were approximately equally represented as teaching staff in HEIs in 2020, with 38,200 female and 38,400 male teachers (General Statistics Office, 2022). Vietnam Statistical Information provides limited gender-disaggregated data by subject for women in tertiary education.

### Current policy framework

**Vietnam has a history of developing national frameworks that address gender inequality.** Vietnam ratified the CEDAW in February 1982 but did not sign the Optional Protocol (OHCHR, n.d.). In the 2020 National Review Report on the implementation of the BPfA, Vietnam noted improvements in the legal and institutional frameworks, increased women's participation in leadership and managerial positions in the political sphere, better gender representation in the economy, and better support for those experiencing gender-based violence (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2020). However, as identified by the same report, widespread gender bias, patriarchal attitudes, and gender stereotypes still often rigidly determine the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and society. The report also noted the lack of a sex-disaggregated database because gender is still not fully mainstreamed into every sector in Vietnam.

In 2009, Vietnam developed its first National Strategy on Gender Equality (NSGE) 2011–2020 (The Prime Minister, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, 2010), laying the foundation for its most recent iteration (UN Women, Australian Aid & MoLISA, 2021). In retrospect, the 2011–2020 NSGE enabled the advancement of gender equality in politics, the economy, education, health care, and other spheres. The review of the 2011–2020 NSGE suggested improvements in accountability and evaluation frameworks, inter- and intra-sectoral collaboration, and better data collection (Gender Equality Department, MoLISA & UN Women, 2021). In this context, the current National Strategy on Gender Equality 2021–2030 (The Government, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2021) aims to further

address pressing issues in gender inequality, with a particular focus on women's leadership in the business context. The 2021–2030 NSGE sets out a plan to increase women's share of directorships and business ownership to 27% in 2025 and 30% by 2030 (VNA, 2021). Encouragingly, this is an achievable target since women already represented 26.4% of directors and business owners in 2016 (Vietnam General Statistics Office, 2018). The 2021–2030 NSGE also aims to reduce women's unpaid housework time to 1.7 times in 2025 and 1.4 times in 2030 compared to their male counterparts. Notably, according to a recent World Bank analysis, a better balance in household responsibilities is likely to narrow the wage gap for women in Vietnam across all industries and qualifications (Chowdhury, et al., 2018). The NSGE 2021–30 also makes provisions for support offered to women experiencing domestic and gender-based violence (VNA, 2021).

**Vietnam has also set out more specific action plans for women in HE.** The Ministry of Education and Training issued a decision (Ministry of Education and Training, Decision No. 4996/QD-BGDĐT, 28 October 2016) to narrow the gap between men and women in terms of opportunities to access, participate, and benefit in the field of education and training (Digital Government Development Agency, 2021). Vietnam has also developed programmes on equal access to education, especially for poor students, ethnic minority children, and children in remote areas (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2020). These include compensation for preschool tuition fees, primary school education, vocational training, and university education, as well as meal subsidies. The NSGE 2021–2030 plans to integrate gender and gender equality into the curriculum at schools and pedagogical universities from 2025 (VNA, 2021).

**Other policies on the issue of gender equality have contributed more broadly to women progressing in HE,** such as the Law on Gender Equality No. 73/2006/QH11 dated 29 November 2006 on the equality of opportunity and treatment. A National Action Programme on Gender Equality for 2016–2020 was introduced with a scheme to implement gender equality measures for women staff, civil servants, and public employees. The then-Prime Minister also issued a Decision on amendments and supplements to the National Strategy on Gender Equality for 2011–2020 that added specific measures to effectively implement policies on gender equality and the advancement of women (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2020).

## Women in the workforce

**Equal participation in education has not translated into equal representation in leadership for women in Vietnam.** The proportion of women in the labour market in Vietnam is higher than the global average. In 2017, the labour force participation rate of Vietnamese women was 71.2% against 61.1% for East Asia and the Pacific region and 49.6% worldwide (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2020). In 2021, women made up 25.3% of the workforce who held managerial positions (ILO STATS, 2021).

**Women are underrepresented both in government and HEIs.** Ministry of Education and Training 2018 departmental data indicate that women account for 14.8% of the Ministry's Party Committee, 13% of Department Directors, 34.8% of Vice-Directors, and 19.8% of Leaders and Managers at the Divisional level (UN Women, 2021). This ratio of women in management and leadership positions is in inverse proportion to their presence in the workforce. In the same year, women accounted for 76.2% of all employees in education: from early childhood education (99.7% of total employees were women) through to basic education (primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary education) (72.2%) and tertiary education (46.9%) (Ministry of Education and Training, 2018).

A primary data study on Vietnamese HEIs showed that women were not progressing in higher positions due to excessive household workloads, subordinates' perception towards women leaders, and social networking; the study noted that the pressure on women to excel and continuously prove their worth was similar to their male counterparts (Maheshwari & Nayak, 2022). Even though attitudes are changing beyond automatically identifying men as managers (Nguyen, 2013), institutional barriers such as lower retirement age compound women's opportunities for leadership (The World Bank, 2021). Enabling factors to help women continue their progression through HEIs include mentor and line manager support, family support, changing the mindsets of employers, and the potential leadership competence of women leaders (Maheshwari & Nayak, 2022).



# 4. Gender and higher education: thematic analysis

**In this section, we present a thematic data analysis based on our secondary data review. Across the region, common themes emerged as having impacted gender equality and inclusion in HEIs. From institutional to national and cultural barriers, women leaders, faculty members, and staff still face many obstacles that hinder their career progression.**

This section first profiles women working in HEIs, starting with the macro picture of (1) women in the labour force. This enables us to build a holistic picture of the potential barriers to women participating as an engaged and productive part of the regional workforce. We then further refine the labour force and look at (2) women who are in skilled labour and analyse enrolment in HE. Finally, (3) we combine the characteristics to analyse the existing data on women who work in HEIs. Each of the three sections includes provocations for the HE sector, which contextualise the broad labour and skilled labour trends in the context of EDI in Asia.

Having identified the profiles of women in HEIs, this section then identifies the barriers women face in HE. Although the focus of this study is to scope existing literature on gender, we address intersectionality as a key lens for understanding barriers. More broadly, our thematic analysis leads to the barriers being split into two broad categories: cultural and societal, and structural.

## 4.1 The current situation: profiles in HEIs

To assess the current situation of EDI, further to the regional context, this section profiles women in the HE sector more broadly. First, by looking at women in the labour force. Second, by looking at skilled women: those who have enrolled in and completed tertiary education. Third and finally, by narrowing the scope to women who work in HE.

### Women in the labour force

To assess the impact of gender on the HE sector, we determined the pool of talent first by looking at women's participation in the labour force. Overall, the data show that women are increasingly participating in the labour force, though their participation fluctuates as they leave to have children. Re-entry into the workforce following maternity leave differs across the 12 geographies of interest.

Provocations for the HE context:

1. *As women are increasingly willing to participate in the labour force, are the conditions for their continued participation appropriate?*
2. *As women make up increasing numbers of the labour force, are they represented in positions across levels of seniority?*





As early as 1990, China, Hong Kong, Vietnam, and Myanmar had higher levels of female labour participation than other countries and territories in the region, where women already made up nearly half of the labour force. All four countries and territories experienced a decline in female labour participation by the end of 2021, except for Vietnam. For China and Vietnam, the high level of female labour participation has roots in communist history and the type of labour governance. According to an empirical study (Harsch, 2013), women's education level and labour participation increased significantly under communist political regimes. On the other hand, higher female labour participation in Hong Kong was primarily impacted by its rapid economic development and industrialisation in the 1980s and the subsequent demand for labour power in factories and service industries. Over time, China, Hong Kong, and Myanmar each experienced a widening gender gap in labour participation, while the same gap is narrowing to different degrees for their neighbours. In the case of China, the opening of its market, while bringing tremendous economic growth, brought to light inadequate state support for working women, especially working mothers. The State cut down funding for public childcare, and gender-based recruitment is alleged to be on the rise, further widening the gender labour gap (Zhang, et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, gender disparity in labour participation was larger in Thailand, Singapore, South Korea, and Japan in the 1990s but has been experiencing a stable decrease over time. As of 2021, Thailand, South Korea, Japan, and Vietnam registered the highest rates of female labour participation in the 12 countries and territories and geographies surveyed. Nonetheless, gender equality has not been achieved in Japan and

South Korea, despite their economic development and industrialisation being earlier and faster than Thailand and Vietnam. The female labour participation rate by age group for both Japan and South Korea tends to exhibit an "M-shape": young women enter employment when they complete schooling, retire when they marry or have children, then re-enter the workforce as their children start school (Kang, 2017; The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training, 2001; Rawstron, 2010), suggesting a need for strengthening childcare support in the national context. In this case, the dip (drop in employment) is the main concern: a young and qualified part of the workforce, which builds up and maintains the human capital, is leaving with its valuable skills.

Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines had the lowest female labour participation in 1990, and there has been little progress over the last two decades. The stagnated low female labour participation is unlikely to be a consequence of women's reluctance to work. According to research conducted by the Asian Development Bank, 25% of economically non-active women in Indonesia (a majority of whom have a secondary school degree or higher) expressed an interest in working. If this group of women was to have joined the labour force, they could have contributed to a 21% overall rise in the number of working women in Indonesia. In 2013, over 65% of Malaysian women stated that childrearing responsibility was the main reason for them stepping out of employment, and a better support system could bring them back to the labour force (The World Bank, 2019). The same trend is also evident in Filipino women. While approximately 60% of non-working women in the Philippines stated family responsibility as their primary reason for their economic inactivity, only 10% of non-working men stated the same (Pacete, 2020).

## Women as skilled labour

We then narrowed the labour market to HE as a sector. Looking at the talent pipeline, data show that an increasing number of women are completing tertiary education.

### Gross tertiary education enrollment rate by sex: 1990 - 2021

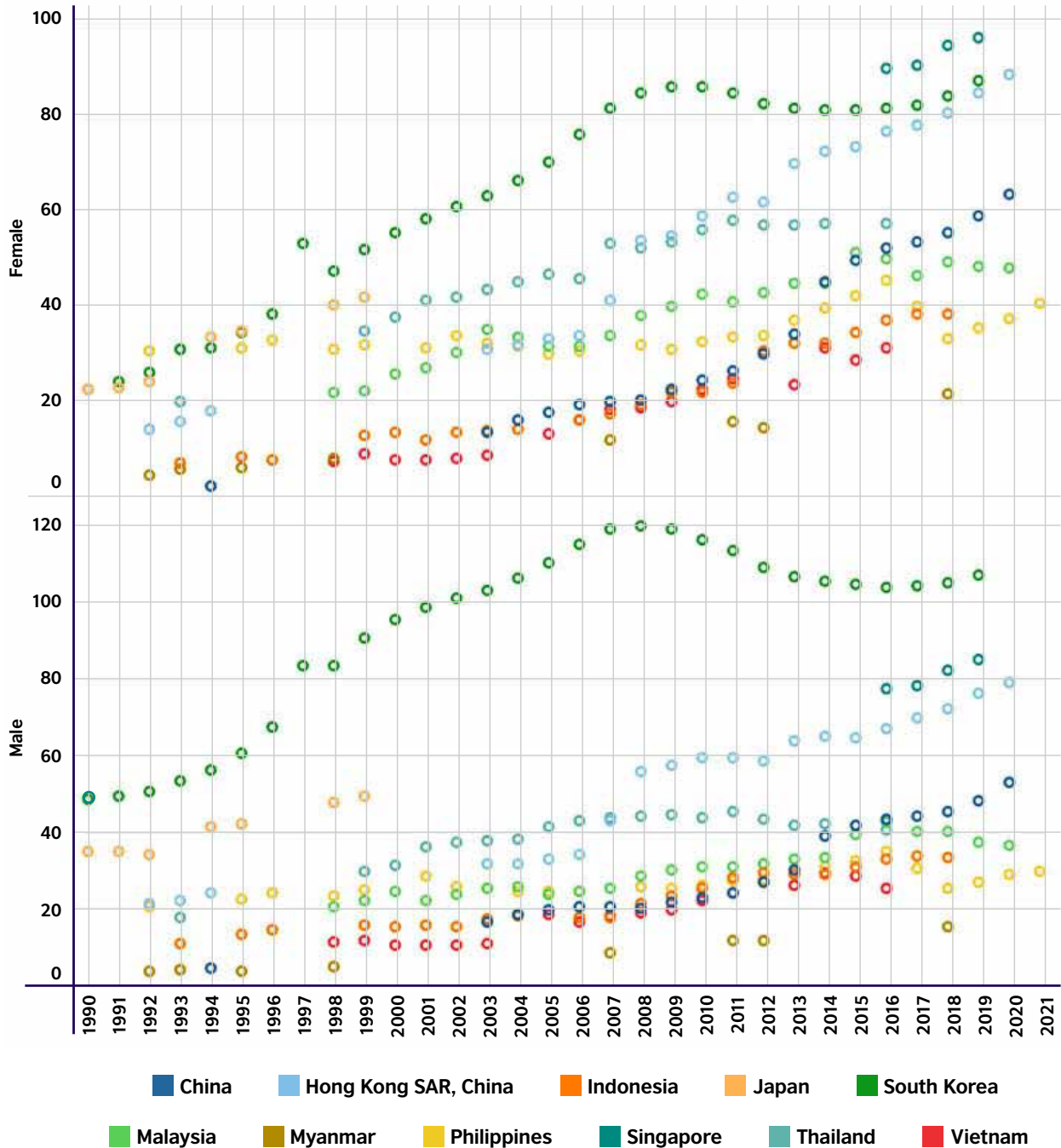


Figure. 1. Gross tertiary enrolment rate by sex (1990-2021), World Bank data.

Except for South Korea, where the gross enrolment ratio has been significantly higher for men than for women since 1990, the enrolment rates for women have outnumbered those for men in all other countries between 1990 and 2021 (Figure 1). The gross tertiary

enrolment ratio is calculated by the ratio of the total tertiary enrolment of a given year in relation to the population of the tertiary education admission age group.

The data show a positive correlation between income per capita and female tertiary education. Singapore, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Japan experienced the most expansion in female tertiary education among the eleven countries and territories. These four countries and territories are also the most economically developed, with the highest income per capita. China, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand follow. Although Vietnam, Indonesia, and Myanmar seem to lag in terms of growth in female tertiary education enrolment, their growth rates, especially those of Vietnam and Indonesia, are actually narrowing the gap at a faster rate than Malaysia and the Philippines.

Data also point to a new trend: the reverse gap in newly enrolled students and tertiary education attainment suggests a rapid expansion of higher education among recent cohorts. This implies that the expansion in access to HE among recent generations benefited women more than men. For example, in Indonesia, according to the OECD report in 2019 (OECD, 2019), while the proportion of tertiary-educated population aged 25 to 64 is similar between men and women, it is much less among women than men aged 55 to 64. In contrast, the proportion of women aged 25–34 in tertiary-educated greatly outnumbered that of men. Therefore, in the future, Indonesia is looking at a population in which more women than men have attained HE qualifications.

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**Since 2006, the World Economic Forum has been compiling a measurement of gender-based gaps and centralising this in the Global Gender Gap Index. This aggregate index measures gender-based gaps across four dimensions: (1) economic participation and opportunity, (2) educational attainment, (3) health and survival, and (4) political empowerment. Each of the countries and territories in the Gender Gap Index is represented on a 0-to-1 scale towards closing the gender gap and achieving full gender parity; this is classed as an ideal outcome and comes with a score of 1 (World Economic Forum, 2022).**



A 10-year analysis of the Index (Figure 2) shows a mixed picture with a powerful message: the geographies in the region are not at gender parity in the four dimensions of measurement. The region is showing some improvement and, therefore, narrowing

the gap, but progress is not linear. Apart from Singapore, all countries and territories included in the Index registered a widening gender gap in 2020 with the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Gender Gap Index, 2012 - 2022

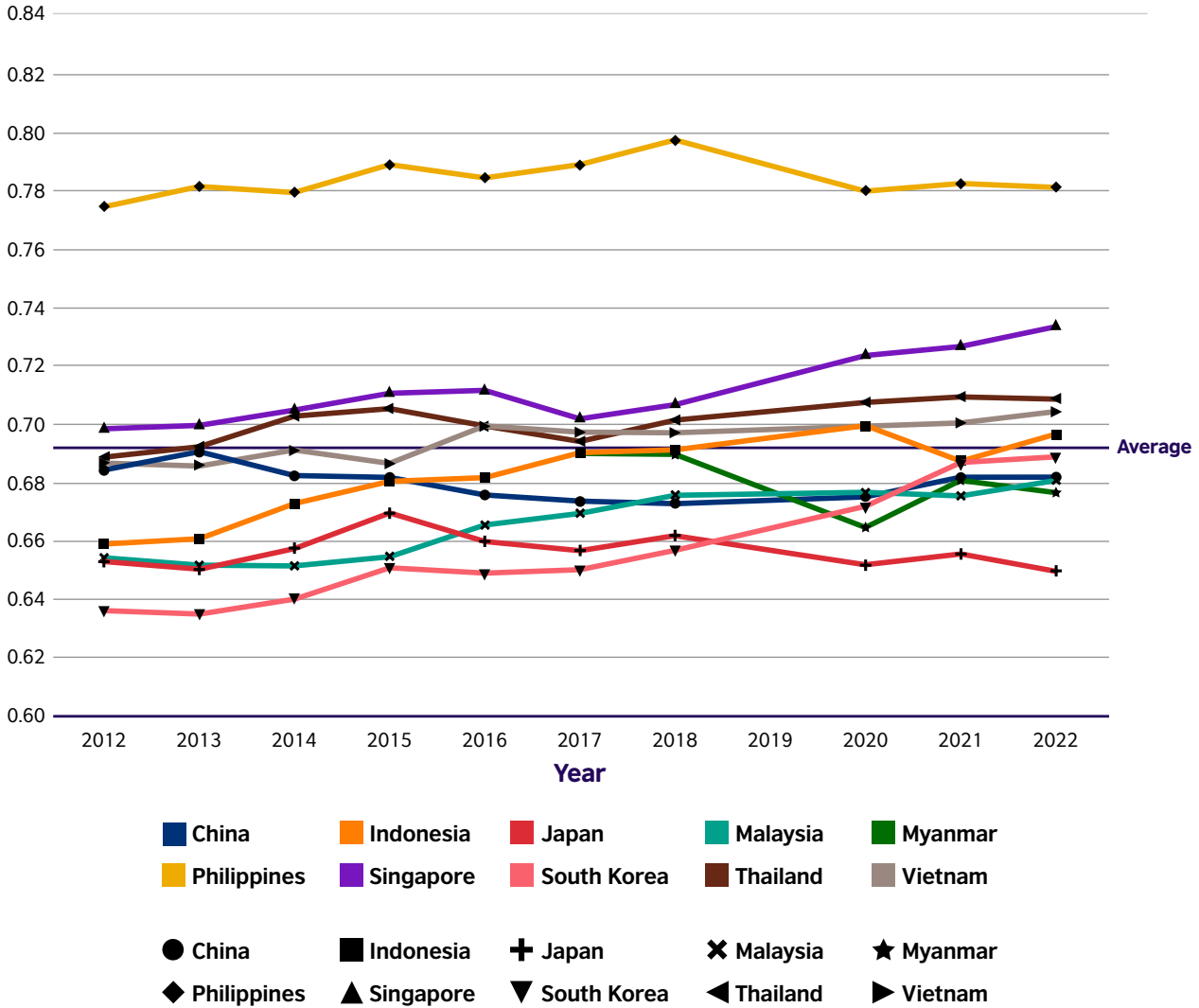


Figure 2. Gender Gap Index, World Economic Forum data.

The year 2020, which marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, was intended to be ground-breaking for gender equality. Instead, even existing advances in women’s equality have been rolled back (United Nations, 2020). A pandemic amplifies and heightens all existing inequalities. A UN Women and Asian Development Bank report on seven countries and territories in the Asia-Pacific region<sup>9</sup>, including Indonesia, has concluded that the crisis continues to affect women disproportionately (ADB & UN Women, 2022).

Looking to the labour market in particular, the report assessed that more women than men were pushed out of the labour market, with many leaving their paid jobs to provide essential services to their families, such as cleaning, caring for the sick, and home-schooling children. In turn, this may be contributing to the widening of gender gaps in poverty since women, who were less likely to have an income prior to the pandemic, have been more likely to lose their income (UN Women, 2022).

<sup>9</sup> Out of the countries and territories of focus in this Report, the ADB Report includes Indonesia.

Provocation for the HE context:

3. Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, given that historically, women increasingly participate in tertiary education, is this translating to a narrowing of the gender gap and, more broadly, the economic opportunity gap?

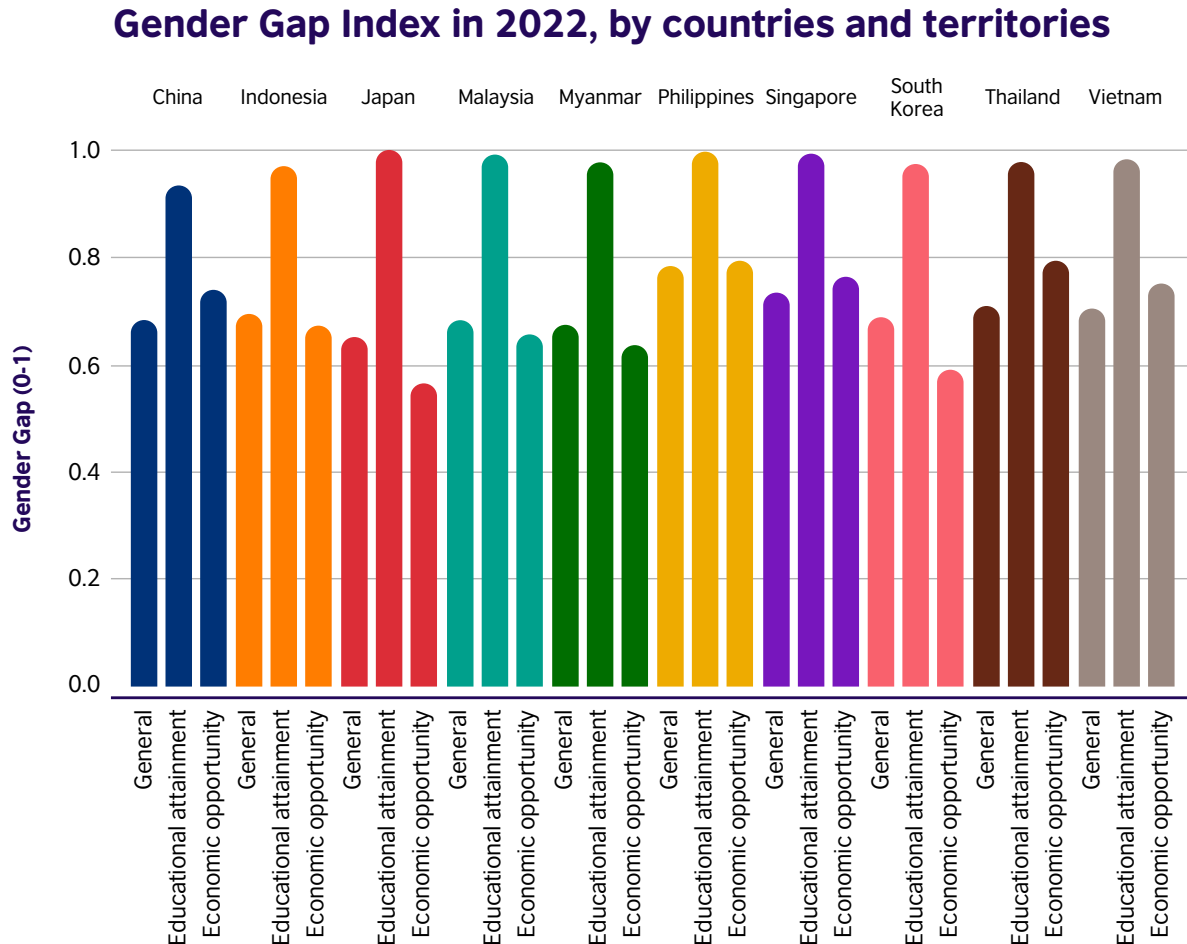


Figure 3. Gender Gap Index in 2022, World Economic Forum data.

By 2022, the East Asia and Pacific region has closed 69% of its gender gap. At this pace, the region will need 168 years to fully close the gender gap (World Economic Forum, 2022). Figure 3 presents a snapshot of the data in 2022. Noting the overall progress of women entering tertiary education (Figure 1) and the overall educational attainment in 2022 (Figure 3), the gender gaps in the workforce represent an emerging crisis. More women have been moving into paid work and, increasingly, leadership positions, yet globally, societal expectations, employer policies, the legal environment, and availability of care continue to play an important role in the choice of educational tracks and career trajectories (World Economic Forum, 2022).

When looking into gender gaps in lifelong learning and skills prioritisation, the 2022 Index data mirrors our regional context findings: women continue to be over-represented in education and health and welfare degree subjects compared to men and underrepresented in STEM fields. Therefore, overall, men's and women's skilling preferences continue to respond to traditional patterns, creating skilling gender gaps for both men and women. This also results in unequal economic opportunities.

Positively, the World Economic Forum report found that:

*While gender segmentation in degree choices continues in traditional education, high-frequency data from Coursera in this year's report finds that more women than ever are skilling, re-skilling, and upskilling online. Furthermore, gender gaps are substantially smaller in online enrolment than in traditional education (World Economic Forum, 2022).*

## Women as labour in the higher education sector

Third and finally, we further narrowed down to look specifically at the HE sector.

Provocation for the HE context:

4. *If women are leading in tertiary education enrolment, is this translating into staff roles?*
5. *If women are over-represented in higher education (and some subjects in particular), do they make up a similarly high proportion of leadership?*

### Ratio of female academic staff in tertiary education by countries and territory: 1990 - 2021

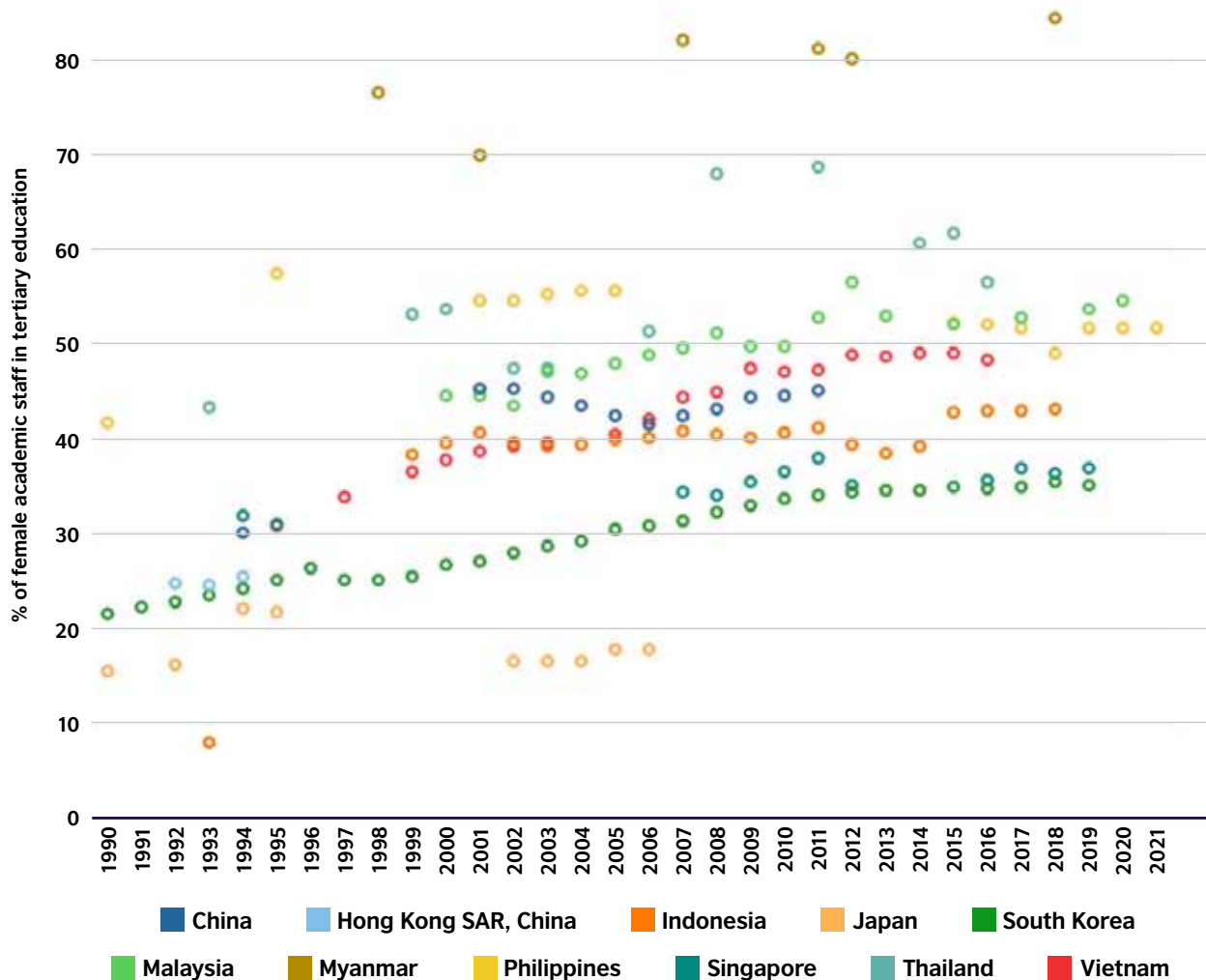


Figure 4. Ratio of female academic staff in tertiary education by country (1990-2021), World Bank data.

When analysing the ratio of female academic staff in tertiary education from 1990–2021 (Figure 4), it is notable that the leading countries and territories in female tertiary education enrolment are not leading in terms of the number of female academics. South Korea, Japan, and Singapore are among the least gender diverse in sheer numbers of academics, with little improvement in the number of female academics noted in the past decade. Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam,

China, and the Philippines, on the other hand, have closer to equal female representation in academic staff. Most strikingly, Myanmar, while being a critically weak economy undergoing political turbulence, has had the highest ratio of female academic staff across the past two decades among all analysed geographies, at over 80% in 2021. Based on existing literature, this high ratio is due to academia being perceived as a poor career choice in Myanmar (Crisp & Clementi, 2021).

Globally, on average, more women have been hired into leadership in industries where they were already strongly represented (World Economic Forum, 2022). This has not, however, happened in the academic sector. By the early 2010s, few countries and territories had achieved Norway's rate of 32% for female vice-chancellors (Morley, 2014). As shown across the regional context, even in cases where more women make up the existing pool of talent, they are not progressing through to leadership. In the following section, we discuss barriers to the choice and entry of careers in academia; once in academia, women experience further obstacles, preventing them from achieving the same levels of seniority as men.

## 4.2 Identifying barriers

Understanding that women make up a large and equally qualified proportion of the HE sector, this section identifies barriers to equality in HE. First, since some women in academia often hold more than one identity, putting them in a position of being further marginalised, this section discusses the issue of intersectionality. This sets the understanding that any of the barriers faced by women in HE are rarely experienced in isolation. The barriers identified are split into two broad categories: (1) cultural and societal, and (2) structural.

### Compounding barriers and intersectionality

The focus of this scoping study is to understand the impact of gender on HE staff. In scoping existing literature on gender and inequality, diversity, and inclusion in the 12 geographies of interest, we assess that only a small amount of the existing literature considers the intersection of gender with any other identity. Little attention is paid to any other identity which may multiply marginalise women in HE, such as religion, ethnic background, disability, or sexuality. It is beyond the scope of this project to tackle all intersections. Read holistically, the challenges presented in this section show that gender cannot be seen as a sole barrier: to achieve true inclusion, diversity, and equality, solutions must focus on more than just gender.

Women in Asia are not a homogenous group. Understanding and appreciating their multiple and nuanced identities requires a process of unlearning: religious and cultural conservatism have long been cited as the key obstacles to gender equality in education (Olson-Strom & Rao, 2020). Focusing on these factors alone is oversimplistic and reinforces false stereotypes.

In East Asia, despite closing the gaps in access to education, social norms continue to put those who are multiply marginalised based on ethnicity, sexuality, disability, and socio-economic background at a greater disadvantage (OECD, 2016). The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated inequity and inequality in all aspects of women's life in HE, specifically research and publication: during the first wave of the pandemic, women submitted proportionally fewer manuscripts than men, a deficit especially pronounced among more junior cohorts of female academics (Squazzoni, et al., 2021). It is also crucial to acknowledge the impact of colonialism in shaping today's gender landscape: gender and class often interact to impede access to and progression through HE. These challenges gain further nuance when analysing the experiences of academics who have migrated to a host institution in a different country and territory: data on the international mobility of scholars continue to be scant, incomplete, and incoherent (Rostan & Höhle, 2014). Yet, navigating the dynamics of social structures in a different country and territory furthers the levels of inequality experienced by scholars: stereotypes of their country and territory of origin add to the barriers they must overcome (Chang, 2021).

Experiences of women are vastly different from those of men in terms of campus climate and leadership opportunities. In 2015, British Council-supported research suggests that women are being rejected or disqualified from senior leadership due to a combination of institutional inequality, structural barriers, and cultural norms (Morely & Crossouard, 2015). The glass ceiling of academic advancement in East Asia remains unbreakable without organisational transformation, with the effect of any intervention being continuously undermined by the "normalised" gender inequality perpetuating processes in HE (O'Connor & White, 2021).



## Cultural and societal

### The talent pipeline: stereotypes and gender tracking

The scope of this study is to focus on the experiences of staff in HE rather than the choices of subject matter in tertiary education. Nevertheless, to better understand inequality and the lack of diversity in the HE field more broadly, it is critical to understand the talent pipeline and the choices women are often directed to. In collecting data to establish the regional context, it became clear that stereotypes impact women's choice of study field. Sometimes known as gender tracking, women's over-representation in certain disciplines and under-representation in others can result from a variety of outside factors, ranging from **societal constructs about which fields are seen as more "feminine" or "masculine"** to outright hostility in male-dominated classrooms and labs (Licuanan, 2015).

**The concentration of female students in humanities, social science, education, the helping professions, and, to some extent, healthcare, is a widely held global belief.** Based on regional UNESCO statistics, this holds true. Women comprise fewer than half of the enrollees in engineering, manufacturing, and construction in all 12 countries and geographies of interest<sup>10</sup>. The dominance of female enrollees in education is almost overwhelming, as it is in health and welfare, and service categories (Neubauer, 2019).

Further exploration of the data on STEM education in Asia shows that girls and women, for a multitude of social, cultural, and psychological reasons, engage and participate at a lower rate than boys and men (UNESCO Office Bangkok and Regional Bureau for Education in Asia and the Pacific, 2020). A recent UNESCO report finds that:

*From a young age, girls are often discouraged from pursuing STEM careers through messages from family, school, or the media that negatively reinforce the misplaced notion that STEM subjects are more appropriate for boys. This leads to fewer girls choosing STEM courses in school and fewer women pursuing advanced studies in STEM. For those who do pursue advanced STEM studies, there may be additional barriers to success, such as discrimination in school or pressure to marry earlier and start a family. These challenges spill over to professional fields where women continue to face obstacles to their success. As they progress through their career, women who overcome these barriers experience "glass ceilings" or "sticky floors" that prevent them from achieving high leadership positions. This creates a scenario in which young schoolgirls do not see many examples of successful women in STEM.*

*Consequently, they acquire the misplaced belief that this field is not meant for them, fuelling a disadvantageous and negative cycle (UNESCO Office Bangkok and Regional Bureau for Education in Asia and the Pacific, 2020, p. 230).*

STEM is a much-popularised case where there have been concerted efforts to encourage girls and women to enter the field. A few examples of interest include the 2019 Singaporean Girl Guides engineering badge "She Solves", focusing on the effects of engineering in daily life and engaging with female engineers as role models (Girl Guides Singapore, 2020), the "WISCI Girls' STEAM Camps" in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, focusing on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Design, Mathematics) subjects (GirlUp, 2022), or the "Women Learning and Leading in Tech in Thailand" project where the Asia Foundation invests in girls' access to education in engineering, manufacturing, and construction (Winijkulchai & Patel, 2022).

### Stereotypes and career paths: hiring, responsibilities, and leadership

From the recruitment upon the assumption of duty to their daily work, women in HEIs are treated differently to their male counterparts.

**Gender-biased hiring** has been noted as a barrier to career entry. In South Korea, gender disparity in academia has been shown statistically to be not merely a supply-side (pipeline) problem but rather a demand-side issue related to subtle gender bias against women (Park, 2020). One study into gender discrimination in the initial stages of hiring for college graduates in China found that female applicants were 7.6% less likely to receive a callback than male applicants with other things being equal. The findings of the study show that higher levels of achievements for female applicants do not narrow the gender disparity in hiring, and female applicants would have to submit 55% more applications than male applicants in order to receive the same number of callbacks" (Zhang, et al., 2021). In some cases, highly educated women's educational achievements are ridiculed as "supposedly too smart and intimidating to attract a husband" (Hong Fincher, 2016, p. 25). The emphasis on marriage and needing to start a family has pushed "some highly educated women to quit their jobs even before getting married, out of fear that they might become "too old" to find a husband" (Hong Fincher, 2016, p. 39). Similar phenomena have been noticed in Japan: when successfully securing a job, female university graduates most often quit after having their first child and try to re-enter the labour market as part-time or non-regular workers after childrearing. Upon this re-entry into the labour market, the effects of academic attainment disappear (Nozaki, et al., 2009).

<sup>10</sup>

Engineering, manufacturing, and construction are the preferred UNESCO categories of data gathering, rather than science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).



As a staff member of an HEI, **the balance of responsibilities between home and work** is also gendered. Broadly speaking, the dual burden of domestic and waged work inhibiting women's career development and career ambitions is a well-documented phenomenon (International Women's Development Agency, 2016; Sengupta & Sachdeva, 2017; Patimo & Pereiro, 2017; Karpe, 2020). In the context of education, recent evidence shows that during the COVID-19 pandemic, women educators shouldered the double burden of being both teachers and spouses. An Indonesia-based case study shows that the move to home-based online teaching created additional burdens for female teachers, and they experienced an increased workload resulting from this dual role, further exacerbated by the expectation of domestic duties primarily enforced on women (Febrianto, et al., 2022). The disparity in balancing these responsibilities particularly affects PhD students and junior faculty members (Corbett & Hill, 2015). This inadvertently perpetuates the idea that a "proper academic" is male (Skelton, 2004; Zhao & Jones, 2017).

Certain discriminating practices can influence the choice of women to stay in a field or prevent them from progressing in their careers. **Sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based violence**<sup>11</sup> significantly impact women in HE (Makhene, 2022; Lundqvist, 2020). In 2015, the China Family Planning Association (CFPA) commissioned research on sexual violence and harassment, conducted by Peking University's School of Public Health (Hong Kong Free Press, 2016). The survey found that, of the 17,966 university students surveyed, 34.8% of female respondents and 35.6% of male respondents had experienced sexual violence or harassment (Hong Kong Free Press, 2016). Female students were more likely to experience violence or harassment by intimate partners, whereas male students were more likely to cite friends or fellow students as perpetrators (Hong Kong Free Press, 2016). Testimonies and research have shown that women still face sexual harassment and violence based on their gender in HE. Preventing sexual harassment and gender-based violence is a declared priority for many of the countries and geographies of interest. In Malaysia, the July 2022 Anti-sexual Harassment Bill aims to protect all genders against sexual harassment in the workplace (Shirodkar, 2022; Malaymail, 2022). In the Philippines, specific provisions of the Republic Act 7877: The Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995 focuses on defining and outlawing education or training-related sexual harassment (Philippine Commission for Women, 2018). In Vietnam, a "Safe Campus" initiative was launched

in three universities with the goal of eliminating gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, within the campuses (Nhan Dan, 2022). In Singapore, the government provides support to prevent and respond to harassment at the workplace in the form of policy development and implementation, as well as workplace training (Ministry of Manpower, Government of Singapore, n.d.). In the British Council-hosted 2022 Going Global Asia Pacific Conference 4.4 Parallel Session of on Addressing Violence against Women within the Higher Education Sector, Adrija Dey describes the challenges and barriers to addressing violence against women in HE:

**Violence against women is a larger societal and structural problem, with patriarchal connotations that are different from one country and territory to another, but the underlying problem is the same. Pedagogy and in-classroom intervention is one way to combat that (Dey, 2022).**

Finally, one stereotype highlighted in the literature was the association between leadership and masculinity. Previous work has argued that female academics face a hostile environment whereby they are expected to "comply with masculine discourses of competitiveness, instrumentality, and individuality, conflicting with feminine discourses of empathy, supportiveness, and nurturing" (Thomas & Davies, 2002). This holds true in Asia, too: in a study involving Chinese female HEI leaders (who simultaneously performed roles as teachers, managers, or leaders while also being wives and mothers), female leaders were described as "sensitive and emotional and male leaders as rational, decisive, and unemotional" (Zhao & Jones, 2017). Further to the perception of leadership being linked to masculinity is that of leadership being perceived by some as a loss. Interviews with female academics from Hong Kong show that unsuccessful applications to become a leader result in a loss of status and self-esteem, whereas successful applications result in a loss of independence, research time, health, and well-being (Morley, 2014).

11

According to the United Nations, "gender-based violence can include sexual, physical, mental and economic harm inflicted in public or in private. It also includes threats of violence, coercion and manipulation" (UNHCR, 2022).

## Structural

### Institutional level

The lack of a holistic approach to the issue of gender equality in HE has emerged as an underpinning theme. At times, the issue is reduced to a one-off initiative or single specific policy that tackles only part of the problem.

In some cases, **improving EDI is conflated with dedicating research time and resources to researching gender and inequality.** It is encouraging that high-quality research is being conducted on these themes since it has the potential to create lasting change and bring in the academic community as an active agent of change. One such example is a project based in Indonesia – where 27% of violence and harassment cases from 2015–2021 occurred in universities – on which a book written by students and lecturers was published in 2022 (International Labour Organization, 2022). The goal is to use the book as an advocacy tool to combat violence and sexual harassment on campus. Conducting such research programmes is a worthwhile start, although it cannot be a solution in itself.

Throughout the region, moving through the ranks of academia is a well-established process, and there appear to be clear **milestones to be achieved in one's career progression.** Staff are evaluated on their teaching, research, and community service. Though these “frameworks” are set up to be gender-equal, they are not gender-equitable. Due to the gendered division of labour, lack of paternity leave, and the need to network, women in academia do not have the same amount of time to allocate to each part of the “framework”. At times, women are not eligible for certain positions, having been unable to focus on one of these criteria.

It has long been documented that a critical element for career progression is recognition and endorsement by colleagues, both nationally and internationally (Siemienska & Zimmer, 2007). This prestige economy (where the exchange of social and cultural capital leads to tangible rewards such as high academic rankings, financial benefits in terms of markets, student recruitment, research grants, and state funding) (Blackmore & Kandiko, 2011) has long favoured men and entrenched these behaviours, impacting on women's career progression (Morley, 2014). Despite an institution's efforts to foster, mentor, and support early career academics through its structures, further progression depends on the **influence exerted outside the institution itself** (Fitzgerald, 2012).

**Gender stereotypes influence the work that academic women undertake.** Recent UK-based research involving both male and female professors has articulated that women are more likely to emphasise the importance of academic citizenship, especially mentoring, compared to their male counterparts. These findings are indicative of the continuing effect of so-called “academic housework” in holding back the academic careers of women (Macfarlane & Burg, 2019). These findings were replicated in a Hong Kong-based study focusing on University Grants Committee-funded universities: women at different levels of seniority described a culture where women were conditioned to take on more “academic housework”, which in turn impacts the allocation of time given to other aspects of their life, particularly research and family (Aiston & Kent Fo, 2021).

The identification of **men as leaders also results in structural inequalities.** Academics from Malaysia and Hong Kong estimated that leadership itself was hierarchicalised, with women allowed entry into less prestigious, inward-looking roles. Women were frequently tasked with teaching and student support, with their male counterparts being encouraged to take on more external-facing roles, focusing on international networks and research (Morley, 2014). In the same study, faculty members from Malaysia and the Philippines observed that women usually hold middle-level and senior-level positions (but not the top-most positions) in most HEIs.

The **economic incentives** offered within HE also affect the trajectory of women in academia. In Vietnam, for example, despite heavy workloads, low wages force academics to take on extra jobs, usually consisting of extra teaching hours for women, while male academics often work on projects outside the academic world (Tran, 2021). Similarly, in Indonesia, the salary of a researcher is less attractive than in other sectors, making the academic career less popular (Yanuar Nugroho, 2016).

The **casualisation of academic work** also impacts women's willingness to continue careers in academia: those working on temporary contracts must contend with multiple forms of uncertainty relating to finances, job-hunting, and forging a career and future (Loveday, 2018). In Hong Kong, the casualisation of the workforce has more significant impacts for women. Women spend 10–17% more hours on teaching compared to their male colleagues (Aiston & Jung, 2015), and the precarious nature of the academic work market makes academia an untenable choice for women who must balance their work and family lives (Singh, 2020).

## National level

The **overarching legal system and political situation have a direct impact on EDI**, both in terms of HE and broadly. For instance, the military seizure of Myanmar's already-stalled democratic transition in February 2021 heavily impacted the HE sector (Human Rights Watch, 2022). University students and staff played a key role in antimilitary protests and strikes following the coup; over the course of 2022, the military seized control of campuses, suspended over 11,000 staff who had protested the military coup, and pressured others into declaring allegiance to the ruling junta (Freedom House, 2022). While Myanmar is an extreme example, the situation does not need to be as critical for the political climate to impact EDI. In South Korea, where the democratic system features regular rotations of power and robust political pluralism, President Yoon Seok-yeol campaigned on a promise of the abolition of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (Jin, 2022). Yoon's campaign rested on the claim that South Korea has no structural gender discrimination despite the country lagging in gender equality measurements. The continued plans to abolish the Ministry have been previously described by the opposition and in-country activists as the instigation of gender conflict (The Korea Times, 2022).

**Conversely, HE can positively showcase internationalisation.** HEI leaders can and do recognise the realities of geopolitics and security challenges. By emphasising collaboration and redoubling efforts on global partnerships, politicians can be actively engaged in HE and be made aware of its positive impact (Brady, 2022).

The **poor implementation of gender policies or concrete measurable action at national level** has been noted as a challenge in most of the geographies of interest. As highlighted in the regional context section, implementation and better measurement were cited as areas for improvement where most progress could be achieved. Inclusive policies and follow-through actions can have a significant impact on narrowing inequality and promoting diversity and inclusion in HE. Taiwan provides a case study of success. As one of the earliest champions among Asian countries and territories regarding gender equality and inclusion, Taiwan upholds gender equality in the national legislature and actively includes it in the curriculum at various levels. Taiwan enacted the Gender Equality Education Act in 2005, stipulating (among other laws) the integration of a gender and sexuality equality curriculum and sex education into students' learning experiences from kindergarten through to high school and university (Chang, 2018). Educators are also required to receive gender equality training before taking up their posts.

## 5. Potential next steps

**The recent rapid growth in higher education around the world is undeniable. Women are not only enrolling in and completing higher education at high rates but also transitioning to postgraduate degrees in record numbers. In East Asia, women's participation and completion has accelerated in recent years. In some countries and geographies, the gender gap is now reversed: more women enrol and complete tertiary education than men.**

Globally, comprehensive analyses and secondary data on the experiences of women choosing to pursue careers in HEIs are scant. Most of the literature on the experience of HEI leaders, faculty members, and staff only speaks to the limited community it analyses. It is beyond the scope of this study to compare the situation in East Asia with the global situation. There is no comparable and comprehensive measurement of EDI, which factors in cultural differences, across all regions of the globe. It is, therefore, difficult to rank the situation in East Asia against other regions.

Given these constraints, several macro-level observations can still be drawn from the data scoped by this study, which remain relevant.

First, gender appears to be increasingly discussed in the context of HE. Be it in the diversity of the student body, grants awarded to a more diverse group of academics, or who takes leadership positions in HEIs, the conversation has begun. However, these conversations seem to be lacking structure and are not followed by real action. Calls for better working conditions and cultural change to support women appear not to be mirrored by time-bound and concrete plans.

Second, at national level, gender and EDI-related policies appear to be continuously expanding. The scope for making gender-sensitive policies remains large, as the gender gap globally remains unabridged. Yet, despite countless pieces of legislation, implementation seems to be lacking. Most critiques of national-level reports and policies are that they are merely box-ticking exercises.

Third, EDI appears to have become more valued in recent years. EDI reporting, communications, and initiatives appear to have taken hold. In many HEIs, though, the EDI issue seems to be considered fixed if gender parity is achieved or a gender studies programme established. Little attention is paid to intersectionality and the real impact of diversity and inclusion in the day-to-day situation of working at an HEI.

Fourth and final, there exists friction between those who wish to pursue further change and others who believe that EDI work has been completed. There are calls for more equality, more diversity, more inclusion, and a focus on intersectionality. There are also countries and territories that act on the basis that EDI has been completed because women can, in theory, access the same opportunities as men. Some consider equality and equity to be interchangeable.

Increasing the number of women (both in terms of overall numbers and participation in change-making roles) in HE in the world's most populous region has the potential to transform the global landscape and influence the path of our joint future. In surveying the HE landscape and conducting a thematic analysis of the barriers faced by women in HEIs, evidence shows HE staff and leaders play impactful roles, being formational in promoting and embedding social inclusion and gender equality not just in academia but in broader society.

As part of the 2022 Going Global Asia Pacific Conference, the British Council hosted a Mid-Plenary Panel on Addressing Gender Gaps in Higher Education. Alison Johns, the Chief Executive of Advance HE, distilled the need for change:

**To make progress happen, four things are needed: strategic focus, a central agency, funding, and international collaboration (Johns, 2022).**

For academia to promote true equality (and ultimately equity), diversity, and inclusivity, the experience of women, as one of the constituent groups, must improve. In this section, we make recommendations aimed at first – institutions, second – enablers of academia (such as funders or journal editors), and third – national and international level organisations.

## 5.1 Institutions

### Increase opportunities for women to enter and progress through HE in all fields

- Offer pre-entry programming targeted at women and multiple marginalised groups to support their entry into less diverse study areas.
- Develop flexible PhD programmes and accompanying development pathways to accommodate women's home responsibilities.
- Increase collaboration between co-ed and single-sex institutions to learn and support best practices and develop concrete strategies for overcoming social and cultural barriers to women pursuing and entering long-term careers in HE.
- Work to increase the availability and legitimacy of online conferences to encourage the participation of those with caring (and other) responsibilities.

### Prioritise and implement gender-responsive policies

- Undertake a policy audit for gender sensitivity, including policies on maternity leave, disability provision, and sexuality.
- Following the creation of gender-related policies, create SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) goals for implementation.
- Appoint gender focal points in departments and centres responsible for the implementation of policies.
- Develop monitoring systems to track the participation and performance of all groups of staff.
- Consider the implementation of temporary special measures, such as diversity quotas at senior level, which include a diverse range of women.

### Create safe campuses and safe workplaces

- Create a clear sexual harassment policy, which includes grievance mechanisms. Offer timelines for remediation and focus on action.
- Educate students and staff about sexual harassment.

### Build staff and student capacity in EDI.

- Require mandatory and regular gender and diversity training for staff and faculty members.
- Offer support on appropriate bystander interventions (how to intervene during misconduct).
- At senior level, include EDI metrics in performance reviews.



## 5.2 Enablers

### Funders: Measure equality as quality

- Monitor the percentage of applications and awards made to women.
- Actively promote more women as principal investigators.
- Include EDI metrics in the assessment criteria.

### Journals and publications: Monitor gender balance

- Review the gender balance in contributors, reviewers, and editors.
- Publish data on publication rates disaggregated by gender.

## 5.3 National and international

### Ministries of education and national-level bodies: Support the creation and implementation of gender-responsive policies in HE

- Work with HEIs to support the implementation of policies addressing gender issues in HE.
- Create monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to ensure such policies are enacted.
- Support institutions in working with men and boys as champions (and challengers) of women's rights while considering and responding to their gender-related vulnerabilities.

### Ministries of education and national-level bodies: Measure equality as quality

- Request institutions to return data on the percentage and location of women professors and leaders.
- Include intersectional metrics in the reporting.

### International bodies: Prioritise intersectionality in creating rankings

- Include gender equality and intersectionality in the international recognition and reputation of universities in league tables.

### National and international bodies: Support the collection and increased availability of disaggregated and inclusive data on HE staff and leaders

- Devise and provide easily accessible data collection tools that have a distinct focus on intersectionality.
- Continue to make existing data available for collection and encourage data transparency where data are not already available.
- Create a database on women and leadership in HE.





# Appendix 1. Gender: selected definitions

## UN Women (UN Women, 2001)

Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male, female, and the interactions between women and men, girls and boys, as well as among women and among men. These attributes, opportunities, and relationships are socially constructed and learned through socialisation processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed, and valued in a woman or man in a given context. In most societies, there are differences and inequalities between women and men in the responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context. Other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group, and age.

## Badan Pusan Statistik, Indonesia (Badan Pusat Statistik, n.d.)

The term “gender” is used to explain the innate differences in the roles of women and men as God’s creations. Gender refers to the differentiation of roles, positions, responsibilities, and division of labour between men and women determined by the community based on the nature of women and men who are considered appropriate according to the norms, customs, beliefs, or habits of the community.

## Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Malaysia (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2006)

Gender refers to the social difference between women and men. It refers to what society has communicated to women and men from different social groups regarding their roles and responsibilities.

Sex (*jantina*) refers to the biological differences between females and males. Gender is something constant and unchanging across time, country and territory, and culture.

## Gender and Development, Provincial Government of Bulacan, The Philippines (Bulacan GAD Focal Point System, Provincial Government of Bulacan, 2018)

\*There is no definition of gender in *The Magna Carta of Women*

Sex and gender – Sex refers to the biological characteristics that categorise someone as either female or male, whereas gender refers to the socially determined ideas and practices of what it is to be female or male.

## Law on Gender Equality 2006, Vietnam (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2006)

Gender (Giới tính) is a concept that refers to the biological characteristics of men and women; Gender (Giới) is a concept indicating the characteristics, positions, and roles of men and women in all social relationships.

# Appendix 2. Gender: landscape data

## 1. China

### Demographic data

Percentage of the female population	48.7% (2020) <sup>12</sup>
Percentage of the female population in rural residence	17.2% (2020) <sup>13</sup>
Percentage of women in the workforce (national labour participation)	Female 15+ (2020, ILO Estimate) <sup>14</sup> 61.8% (rural 67.2%, urban 58.7%)
Main occupations (drawn from the percentage of women in employment)	55.0% Services (2019) <sup>15</sup> 23.0% Industry (2019) <sup>16</sup> 22.0% Agriculture (2019) <sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup>

The World Bank, Population, female (percentage of total population), estimates based on UN Population Division World Population Prospects, revised 2019

<sup>13</sup>

National Bureau of Statistics of China, Bulletin of the Seventh National Population Census (No. 4), published 2021, Chinese

<sup>14</sup>

ILO, Labour force participation rate by sex, age and rural/urban areas - ILO modelled estimates, published 2021

<sup>15</sup>

The World Bank, Employment in services, female (percentage of female employment) - modelled ILO estimate - China, published 2021

<sup>16</sup>

The World Bank, Employment in industry, female (percentage of female employment) - modelled ILO estimate - China, published 2021

<sup>17</sup>

The World Bank, Employment in agriculture, female (percentage of female employment) - modelled ILO estimate - China, published 2021

## Women's and gender minorities' rights nationally

Women in national legislature	24.9% (742 out of 2975; 2018 Elections) <sup>18</sup> 20.4% Female members in the CPPCC National Committee (2018) <sup>19</sup>
Status of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Optional Protocol	CEDAW ratified 4 November 1980; OP not signed
Status of Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	Ratified 1 August 2008
Status of Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	Ratified 4 October 1988
The Beijing Platform for Action and the Revised Pacific Regional Platform for Action – ratification, most recent review Subsequent to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)	People's Republic of China Comprehensive National-Level Review Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (2020) Beijing+25 voluntary national review submitted: "The gender gap in high school education has been narrowed. Female students account for more than half of the total in higher education."  52.54% Female students in universities (2017) 52% Female students studying overseas sponsored by the government (2017)  In 2017, the proportion of female students at universities and colleges was 52.54%. Women represented 52% of all overseas students sponsored by the government, exceeding their male counterparts. <sup>20</sup>
Specific policies regarding women	In response to the sexual harassment at universities and colleges, in November 2018, the Ministry of Education issued the "Ten Codes of Conduct for Teachers in Higher Education Institutions in the New Era" and the "Guiding Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Addressing Misbehaviours of Teachers in Higher Education Institutions." <sup>21</sup>

## Global indexes

Gender Inequality Index 2019 (latest) (UNDP) (Compared to the Human Development Index)	39th (cf. HDI: 85th) <sup>22</sup>
Global Gender Gap Index 2021 Rankings (World Economic Forum)	107th <sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup>

Additional information from the National Bureau of Statistics, Final Statistical Monitoring Report of the Outline for the Development of Chinese Women (2011-2020), published December 2021

<sup>19</sup>

NB. Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC, China's top advisory body for the government, legislative, and judicial organs)

<sup>20</sup>

The People's Republic of China, Comprehensive national-Level Review Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, p. 6, published 2019

<sup>21</sup>

The People's Republic of China, Comprehensive national-Level Review Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, p. 26, published 2019

<sup>22</sup>

UNDP, Gender Inequality INDEX (GII)

<sup>23</sup>

World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2021

## Universities data

Number of universities	2738 (2020) <sup>24</sup>
Type of universities	1,270 Universities and 1,468 higher vocational colleges (2020) <sup>25</sup>
Progression rates to tertiary education	64.0% Female tertiary education enrolment (2020) <sup>26</sup> 54.0% Male tertiary education enrolment (2020) <sup>27</sup>
Percentage of women in tertiary education	50.9% Female graduate students in the country (2020) <sup>28</sup> 51.0% Female general undergraduate college students 58.0% Female adult college students
Women in tertiary education by subject	64.8% Female postgraduates in mathematics (2017) <sup>29</sup> 43.4% Female postgraduates in physics (2017) 33.5% Female postgraduates in computer-related studies (2017) 24.4% Female postgraduates in civil engineering (2020) 88% Female undergraduates in Chinese language and literature 76% Female undergraduates in accounting 76% Female undergraduates in financial management 64% Female undergraduates in mathematics and applied mathematics 46% Female undergraduates in physics 29% Female undergraduates in computer science and technology 15% Female undergraduates in civil engineering
Gross graduation ratio from tertiary education	Female 41.7% (2020) <sup>30</sup> Male 29.7%
National policies for women in education	See above
Publication rates disaggregated by gender	29.6% Female academic authors in Biomedicine (2017) <sup>31</sup> 21.1% Female academic authors in Chemistry 19.7% Female academic authors in Information Technology Science 18.3% Female academic authors in Mathematics and Physics 11.3% Female academic authors in Geology
Any other data on women and education	OECD Education in China (2016) <sup>32</sup>

## Women in leadership

Percentage of women in management/senior positions/boards in the workforce	24.9% Female holders of seats in Parliament <sup>33</sup>
Proportion of women in managerial positions (%)	Data not available
Percentage of women in leadership at universities nationally	Data not available

<sup>24</sup> The People's Republic of China Ministry of Education, Major educational achievements in China in 2020, published 2021

<sup>25</sup> The People's Republic of China Ministry of Education, Number of Schools, Educational Personnel, and Full-time Teachers by Type and Level, published 2021

<sup>26</sup> The World Bank, School enrolment, tertiary, female (percentage gross) - China, published 2022

<sup>27</sup> The World Bank, School enrolment, tertiary, male (percentage gross) - China

<sup>28</sup> National Bureau of Statistics, Final statistical Monitoring Report of the Outline for the Development of Chinese Women (2011-2020), published 2021

<sup>29</sup> L. Lingyu, W. Shen, Li Chao, The Rise of Women in STEM Higher Education in China: Achievements and Challenges, published 2022

<sup>30</sup> UNESCO UIS Data, Gross Enrolment Ratio for Tertiary Education, published 2018

<sup>31</sup> Y. Tao, W. Hong, Y. Ma, Gender Differences in Publication Productivity Among Academic Scientists and Engineers in the U.S. and China: Similarities and Differences

<sup>32</sup> OECD, Education in China - A snapshot, published 2016

<sup>33</sup> UN Women, China

## 2. Hong Kong

### Demographic data

Percentage of the female population	54.1% (2020) <sup>34</sup>
Percentage of the female population in rural residence	54.3% of the total rural population (2021) <sup>35</sup>
Percentage of women in the workforce (national labour participation)	61.8% Female 15+ (2020) <sup>36</sup> Rural 67.2% Urban 58.7%
Main occupations (drawn from the percentage of women in employment)	42.4% Public administration, social and personal services (2020) <sup>37</sup> 22.4% Finance, insurance, real estate, professional, and other business services 16% Retail, accommodation, and food services

### Women's and gender minorities' rights nationally

Women in national legislature	19.4% (88 out of 452) District Council elected members (2019) <sup>38</sup> 14.7% (10 out of 68) Legislative Council-appointed members (2011) 16.5% (191 out of 1160) Members of the Election Committee (2020)
Status of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Optional Protocol	CEDAW ratified 4 November 1980 OP not signed
Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	Ratified 1 August 2008
Status of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	Ratified 4 October 1988
The Beijing Platform for Action and the Revised Pacific Regional Platform for Action – ratification, most recent review	The Women's Commission is tasked with assisting the government in the implementation of the CEDAW and BPfA. In 2005, the Commission provided inputs to the Government for its Second Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. In 2005 and 2010, respectively, the Commission also organised and participated in a number of events to commemorate the 10 <sup>th</sup> and 15 <sup>th</sup> Anniversaries of the Fourth World Conference on Women.
Subsequent to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)	N/A
Specific policies regarding women	Family-friendly Employment Policies and Practices Provision of Health Services for Women Development of Gender-specific Risks and Needs Programme for Women Offenders

<sup>34</sup>

The World Bank, Population, female (percentage of total population), estimates based on UN Population Division World Population Prospects, revised 2019

<sup>35</sup>

UN DATA, HK population, Estimate – de jure, published 2021. NB: No rural/urban disaggregation available.

<sup>36</sup>

ILO, Hong Kong labour force participation by sex and age (annual percentage)

<sup>37</sup>

Census and Statistics department, Table E613: Women and Men in Hong Kong - Key Statistics - Labour Force Characteristics, published 2020

<sup>38</sup>

Census and Statistics Department, Table E618 : Women and Men in Hong Kong - Key Statistics - Public Affairs, Census Statistics Department, published July 2020

## Global indexes

Gender Inequality Index 2019 (latest) (UNDP) (Compared to the Human Development Index)	Not available (cf. HDI: 4th) <sup>39</sup>
Global Gender Gap Index 2021 Rankings (World Economic Forum)	Not included

## Universities data

Number of universities	34 higher education institutions (2019) <sup>40</sup>
Type of universities	8 UGC-funded universities 2 self-financing universities 10 approved post-secondary colleges 6 other institutions
Progression rates to tertiary education	Data not available
Percentage of women in tertiary education	52.3% of students enrolled in programmes funded by the University Grants Committee are women (2020/2021) <sup>41</sup>
Women in tertiary education by subject	72.6% of women students enrolled in education (2020/2021) <sup>42</sup> 70.6% in arts and humanities 65.8% in health 62.4% in social sciences 62.2% in dentistry 57.0% in business and management 50.1% in medicine
Gross graduation ratio from tertiary education	Data not available
National policies for women in education	Data not available
Publication rates disaggregated by gender	Data not available
Any other data on women and education	Data not available

## Women in leadership

Percentage of women in management/senior positions/boards in the workforce	13.5% of women holding Director positions (2021) <sup>43</sup>
Percentage of women in managerial positions	36.6% (2020) <sup>44</sup>
Percentage of women in leadership a universities nationally	20.1% of senior academic positions (2022) <sup>45</sup> 33.2% of junior academic positions 62.4% of non-academic positions

<sup>39</sup>

UNDP, Gender Inequality INDEX (GII)

<sup>40</sup>

Census and Statistics Department, Annual Digest of Statistics, Section 12 Education, published 2019

<sup>41</sup>

Census and Statistic Department, Table E612: Women and Men in Hong Kong - Key Statistics - Education and Training Characteristics (2020/2021)

<sup>42</sup>

Census and Statistic Department, Table E612: Women and Men in Hong Kong - Key Statistics - Education and Training Characteristics (2020/2021)

<sup>43</sup>

MSCI, Women on Boards Progress Report, p. 24, published 2021

<sup>44</sup>

ILO, SDG Indicator 5.5.2 – Proportion of women in managerial positions (%), published 2021

<sup>45</sup>

Women's Commission, Hong Kong Women in Figures, 2021, p. 20, published 2022



### 3. Indonesia

#### Demographic data

Percentage of the female population	49.7% (2020) <sup>46</sup>
Percentage of the female population in rural residence	43.6% (2020)
Percentage of women in the workforce (national labour participation)	53.2% Female aged 15+ (2020) <sup>47</sup> 55.8% Rural 51.2% Urban
Main occupations (drawn from the percentage of women in employment)	27.6% Sales (2020) <sup>48</sup> 26.7% Farming, agriculture, livestock 19.7% Transportation, equipment, and production 9.8% Professional, technical 9.2% Service 6.4% Executive officer 0.7% Leadership force 0.1% Other

#### Women's and gender minorities' rights nationally

Women in national legislature	21.9% (126 out of 575) <sup>49</sup>
Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Optional Protocol	CEDAW ratified 13 September 1984 OP signed 28 February 2000
Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	Ratified 30 November 2011
Status of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	Ratified 28 October 1998
The Beijing Platform for Action and the Revised Pacific Regional Platform for Action – ratification, most recent review	Progress report for 2014–2019 submitted <sup>50</sup>
Subsequent to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)	Data not available
Specific policies regarding women	Scholarships to help underprivileged vocational students Efforts to stop child marriage <sup>51</sup> Violence against Women programme in universities throughout Indonesia <sup>52</sup>

<sup>46</sup> The World Bank, Population, female (% of total population), estimates based on UN Population Division World Population Prospects, revised 2019

<sup>47</sup> ILO, Labour force participation rate by sex, age and rural/urban areas – ILO modelled estimates, Nov. 2021 (%), most recent figure – 2020.  
Note: While observations in referenced dataset are not based on national data, the figures provided for Indonesia represent real values.

<sup>48</sup> Central Statistics Agency, Decent Job Indicators in Indonesia 2020, published 2021

<sup>49</sup> IPU Parline, Monthly ranking of women in national parliaments, published 2022

<sup>50</sup> Indonesia, National Report Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) +25

<sup>51</sup> Indonesian Government, National Report – Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) +25 Indonesia, p. 36, published 2020

<sup>52</sup> Indonesian Government, National Report – Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) +25 Indonesia, p. 40, published 2020

## Global indexes

Gender Inequality Index 2019 (latest) (UNDP) (Compared to the Human Development Index)	121st (cf. HDI: 107 <sup>th</sup> ) <sup>53</sup>
Global Gender Gap Index 2021 Rankings (World Economic Forum)	101st <sup>54</sup>

## Universities data

Number of universities	3115 universities (2021) <sup>55</sup> 4593 HEIs (2020) <sup>56</sup>
Type of universities	125 public universities <sup>57</sup> 2990 private universities  122 public HEIs 3044 private HEIs 187 government HEIs 1240 religious HEIs
Progression rates to tertiary education	13.22 expected years of schooling for women (2021) <sup>58</sup> 12.95 expected years of schooling for men (2021)  36.3% (2018) <sup>59</sup>
Percentage of women in tertiary education	51.2% Female college students <sup>60</sup> 43.6% Female active lecturers <sup>61</sup>
Women in tertiary education by subject	29.4% Female STEM degree holders out of the total female higher education degree holders <sup>62</sup> 31.5% Male STEM degree holders out of the total male higher education degree holders <sup>63</sup>
Gross graduation ratio from tertiary education	25.3% Female (2018) <sup>64</sup> 17.3% Male
National policies for women in education	Programmes under the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection
Publication rates disaggregated by gender	Not available
Any other data on women and education	47.0% of 25–34-year-old women with below upper secondary attainment were employed compared to 89% of men (2020) <sup>65</sup> 12.27% of female school dropouts attributed to marriage (2017) <sup>66</sup>

53

UNDP, Gender Inequality INDEX (GII)

54

World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2021

55

Number of Universities, Educators and Students (Public and Private) under the Ministry of Research, Statistics Indonesia, Technology and Higher Education/Ministry of Education and Culture by Province, 2021, published 2021

56

Directorate General of Higher Education, Higher Education Statistics 2020

57

Number of Universities, Educators and Students (Public and Private) under the Ministry of Research, Statistics Indonesia, Technology and Higher Education/Ministry of Education and Culture by Province, 2021, published 2021

58

Statistics Indonesia, Expected Years of Schooling (EYS) by Gender (Year), 2020-2021

59

The World Bank, School enrolment, tertiary (percentage gross)

60

Indonesia Higher Education Database (PDDikti), College students by gender

61

Indonesia Higher Education Database (PDDikti), Number of active lecturers by gender

62

Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia, Profile of women in Indonesia 2021, p. 51

63

Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection of the Republic of Indonesia, Profile of women in Indonesia 2021, p. 51

64

UNESCO Institute for Statistics

65

OECD, Indonesia Education at a Glance 2021

66

World Bank, Gender and education in Indonesia: Progress with more work to be done, published 2020

## Women in leadership

Percentage of women in management/senior positions/boards in the workforce	20.0% (3 out of 15) Female senior executive civil servants <sup>67</sup> 16.1% (86 out of 533) Female middle executive civil servants 25.6% (24,364 out of 95,226) Female administrator civil servants 52.7% Female civil servants
Proportion of women in managerial positions (%)	32.4% (2021) <sup>68</sup>
Percentage of women in leadership at universities nationally	Data not available

## 4. Japan

### Demographic data

Percentage of the female population	51.2% (2020) <sup>69</sup>
Percentage of the female population in rural residence	8.7% (2015) <sup>70</sup>
Percentage of women in the workforce (national labour participation)	53.2% Female aged 15+ (2020) <sup>71</sup> 51.6% Rural 53.8% Urban
Main occupations (drawn from the percentage of women in employment)	27.4% Clerical workers (2020) <sup>72</sup> 19.3% Professional and engineering 19% Service workers 12.7% Sales workers 8.5% Manufacturing process workers 7.4% Carrying, cleaning, packaging, and related occupations 0.6% Administrative and managerial workers

<sup>67</sup>

Statistics Indonesia, Statistical Yearbook of Indonesia 2022, p. 58

<sup>68</sup>

ILO, SDG Indicator 5.5.2 – Proportion of women in managerial positions (%), published 2021

<sup>69</sup>

The World Bank, Population, female (percentage of total population), estimates based on UN Population Division World Population Prospects, revised 2019

<sup>70</sup>

Statistics Bureau of Japan, 2015 Population Census – de jure, published 2015

<sup>71</sup>

OECD, Japan Country Dashboard

<sup>72</sup>

Statistics Bureau of Japan, Japan Statistical Yearbook 2022, Table 19-3 Employed Persons by Occupation, published 2020

### Women's and gender minorities' rights nationally

Women in national legislature	9.7% (45 out of 465) Lower House members <sup>73</sup> 23.1% (56 out of 242) Upper House members
Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Optional Protocol	CEDAW ratified 25 June 1985 OP not signed
Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	Ratified 20 January 2014
Status of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	Accessioned 29 June 1999
The Beijing Platform for Action and the Revised Pacific Regional Platform for Action – ratification, most recent review	Progress report for 2014–2019 submitted <sup>74</sup>
Subsequent to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)	Yes
Specific policies regarding women	Data not available

### Global indexes

Gender Inequality Index 2019 (latest) (UNDP) (Compared to the Human Development Index)	24th (cf. HDI: 19th) <sup>75</sup>
Global Gender Gap Index 2021 Rankings (World Economic Forum)	120th <sup>76</sup>

<sup>73</sup>

IPU Parline, Monthly ranking of women in national parliaments, published 2022

<sup>74</sup>

Government of Japan, Comprehensive National-level Reviews for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

<sup>75</sup>

UNDP, Gender Inequality INDEX (GII)

<sup>76</sup>

Women's Commission, Hong Kong Women in Figures, 2021, p. 20, published 2022

## Universities data

Number of universities	795 (2020) <sup>77</sup>
Type of universities	86 national universities (2020) <sup>78</sup> 94 public universities 615 private universities
Progression rates to tertiary education	55.6% (2021) <sup>79</sup>
Percentage of women in tertiary education	44.4% (2020) <sup>80</sup>
Women in tertiary education by subject	68.7% Arts (2022) <sup>81</sup> 64.7% Humanities 64.3% Education 61.7% Health 44.9% Agriculture 36.7% Social Science 26.9% Science 15.7% Engineering
Gross graduation ratio from tertiary education	50.8% Male (2019) 46.6% Female
National policies for women in education	Gender Equality Base Plan programmes (2000–2020) <sup>82</sup>
Publication rates disaggregated by gender	16.6% (2019) <sup>83</sup>
Any other data on women and education	Facilitation of female researcher and engineer advancement <sup>84</sup> Support for finding a balance between engaging in research and childcare/nursing Promoting the expansion of women's participation in STEM <sup>85</sup> Focusing on the support of women with disabilities <sup>86</sup>

## Women in leadership

Percentage of women in management/senior positions/boards in the workforce	9% (2021) <sup>87</sup>
Proportion of women in managerial positions (%)	13.3% (2021) <sup>88</sup>
Percentage of women in leadership at universities nationally	12.8% Faculty president <sup>89</sup> 14.1% Faculty vice president

**77**

Statistics Bureau of Japan, Japan Statistical Yearbook 2022, Table 25-13 Universities, published 2020

**78**

Statistics Bureau of Japan, Japan Statistical Yearbook 2022, Table 25-13 Universities, published 2020

**79**

OECD, Japan - Overview of the education system, published 2021

**80**

Statistics Bureau of Japan, Japan Statistical Yearbook 2022, Table 25-13 Universities, published 2020

**81**

Statistics Bureau of Japan, Japan Statistical Yearbook 2024, Tables 25-16, 25-17, and 25-18, published 2024.

**82**

Gender Equality Bureau Cabinet Office, Gender Equality Basic Plan

**83**

R. S. Hori, Progress and problems of gender equality in Japanese academics and geosciences, published 2020

**84**

Government of Japan, Comprehensive National-level Reviews for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, p. 25

**85**

Government of Japan, Comprehensive National-level Reviews for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, p. 42

**86**

Government of Japan, Comprehensive National-level Reviews for the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, p. 11

**87**

Nippon Communications Foundation, Number of Female Directors at Japan's Listed Companies Reaches 3,000 for the First Time, published 2022

**88**

ILO, SDG Indicator 5.5.2 – Proportion of women in managerial positions (%), published 2021

**89**

Japan Ministry of Education, Accelerating the promotion of women in the field of education, p. 16, published 2022

## 5. Malaysia

### Demographic data

Percentage of female population	48.6% (2020) <sup>90</sup>
Percentage of female population in rural residence	23.1% (2020)
Percentage of women in the workforce (national labour participation)	51.5% Female aged 15+ (2020) <sup>91</sup> 43.3% Rural 53.5% Urban
Main occupations (drawn from the percentage of women in employment)	30.4% Sales (2020) <sup>92</sup> 18.6% Professional 14.7% Clerical support workers

### Women's and gender minorities' rights nationally

Women in national legislature	14.0% House of Representatives <sup>93</sup>
Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Optional Protocol	CEDAW ratified 5 July 1995 OP not signed CEDAW reservations withdrawn <sup>94</sup>
Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	Ratified 19 July 2010
Status of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	Not signed

<sup>90</sup>

The World Bank, Population, female (% of total population), estimates based on UN Population Division World Population Prospects, revised 2019

<sup>91</sup>

ILO, Labour force participation rate by sex, age and rural/urban areas – ILO modelled estimates, Nov. 2021 (%), most recent figure – 2020. NB: Estimate number

<sup>92</sup>

Malaysia Department of Statistics, Labour Force Survey Report 2021

<sup>93</sup>

IPU Parline, Monthly ranking of women in national parliaments, published 2022

<sup>94</sup>

OHCHR, Beijing +20



The Beijing Platform for Action and the Revised Pacific Regional Platform for Action – ratification, most recent review	Progress report for 2014–2019 submitted <sup>95</sup>
Subsequent to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)	Data not available
Specific policies regarding women	National Women Policy <sup>96</sup> Women’s Development Action Plan Single Mother Development Action Plan ICT Security Policy

### Global indexes

Gender Inequality Index 2019 (latest) (UNDP) (Compared to the Human Development Index)	59th (cf. HDI: 62 <sup>nd</sup> ) <sup>97</sup>
Global Gender Gap Index 2021 Rankings (World Economic Forum)	112th <sup>98</sup>

### Universities data

Number of universities	621 (2020) <sup>99</sup>
Type of universities	27 institutes of teacher education <sup>100</sup> 103 community colleges 20 public universities 36 polytechnics  Private HEIs: 51 universities 10 foreign branch campus universities 38 university colleges 336 colleges
Progression rates to tertiary education	44.1% (2022) <sup>101</sup>
Percentage of women in tertiary education	48.8% (2020) <sup>102</sup>

<sup>95</sup>

Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development Malaysia, Beijing +25 Malaysia Progress Report

<sup>96</sup>

Malaysia Department of Women’s Development, Latest Programs

<sup>97</sup>

UNDP, Gender Inequality INDEX (GI)

<sup>98</sup>

World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2021

<sup>99</sup>

Department of Statistics

<sup>100</sup>

Department of Statistics

<sup>101</sup>

Education Malaysia Global Services, Malaysia Higher Education in Brief, published 2022

<sup>102</sup>

Malaysia Department of Statistics, Statistics on Women Empowerment in Selected Domains - version available on AnyFlip, published 2021

Women in tertiary education by subject	Education: 79.1% (2020) <sup>103</sup> Health and Welfare: 74.1% Social Science, Business, and Law: 62.7% Art and Humanities: 56.3% Services: 53.4% General Programmes: 51.0% Science, Maths, and Computing: 49.2% Engineering, Manufacturing, and Construction: 37.0%
Gross graduation ratio from tertiary education	17.0% Female (2020) <sup>104</sup> 8.0% Male
National policies for women in education	National Women Policy Women's Development Action Plan
Publication rates disaggregated by gender	Data not available
Any other data on women and education	MEB 2015–2025 (Higher Education) programme outlines the system aspiration of Malaysian higher education to cover access, quality, equity, unity, and efficiency and provide equitable education for all (2020) <sup>105</sup>  Higher female enrolment in Higher Learning Institutions (male-to-female ratio of 39:61) but lower female graduate employability (2020) <sup>106</sup>  In public institutions, the top three fields of study for women are social sciences, business, and law (36.8%), engineering, manufacturing and construction (18.4%), and science, mathematics and computing (14.9%). In private institutions, the top three fields of study for women are social sciences, business, and law (43.5%), education (12.5%), and health and welfare (12.1%). <sup>110</sup>

### Women in leadership

Percentage of women in management/senior positions/boards in the workforce	26.8% Private (2019) <sup>107</sup> 26.5% Public
Proportion of women in managerial positions (%)	24.9% (2020) <sup>108</sup>
Percentage of women in leadership at universities nationally	38.3% Total women in primary, secondary, and residential school principal positions (2019) <sup>109</sup>

<sup>103</sup>

Department of Statistics Malaysia, Statistics on Women Empowerment in Selected Domains, Table 2.14, pp.168-169, published 2021

<sup>104</sup>

UNESCO Institute for Statistics

<sup>105</sup>

Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Malaysia Progress Report 2014 – 2019, p. 35, published 2020

<sup>106</sup>

Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Malaysia Progress Report 2014 – 2019, p. 35, published 2020

<sup>107</sup>

Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Statistics on Women, Family and Community, Chart 7.3 – Percentage of Board Members Registered with Companies Commission of Malaysia by Sex, published 2019

<sup>108</sup>

ILO, SDG Indicator 5.5.2 – Proportion of women in managerial positions (%), published 2021

<sup>109</sup>

Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, Statistics on Women, Family and Community, Chart 6.5 – Women at Decision-Making Level in Education Sector in 2018 and 2019, published 2019

<sup>110</sup>

Department of Statistics Malaysia, Statistics on Women Empowerment in Selected Domains, Table 2.14, p.168, published 2021

## 6. Myanmar

### Demographic data

Percentage of the female population	51.8% (2020) <sup>110</sup>
Percentage of the female population in rural residence	69.6% (2021)
Percentage of women in the workforce (national labour participation)	43.1% Female 15+ (2020) <sup>111</sup> 43.7% Rural 41.6% Urban
Main occupations (drawn from the percentage of women in employment)	47% Agriculture, hunting and forestry (2010) <sup>112</sup> 14% Wholesale and retail trade 11% Real estate, renting, and business activities 9% Activities of private household as employers 7% Manufacturing 5% Education

### Women's and gender minorities' rights nationally

Women in national legislature	15.3% (65 out of 425) Lower house (2020) <sup>113</sup> 14.4% (31 out of 216) Upper house
Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Optional Protocol	CEDAW accessioned 22 July 1997 OP not signed
Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	Accessioned 7 December 2011
Status of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	Not signed
The Beijing Platform for Action and the Revised Pacific Regional Platform for Action – ratification, most recent review	First Beijing Platform for Action report published November 2019 (2019) <sup>114</sup>
Subsequent to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)	Data not available
Specific policies regarding women	National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women 2013–2022 <sup>115</sup>

<sup>110</sup>

The World Bank, Population, female (% of total population), estimates based on UN Population Division World Population Prospects, revised 2019

<sup>111</sup>

ILO, Labour force participation rate by sex, age, and rural/urban areas – ILO modelled estimates, Nov. 2021 (%), most recent figure – 2020. NB: Estimated number

<sup>112</sup>

Japan International Cooperation Agency, Data Collection Survey on Women's Economic Activities in Myanmar – Final Report, published 2016

<sup>113</sup>

IPU Parline, Monthly ranking of women in national parliaments, published 2022

<sup>114</sup>

Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, 27 November 2019 Statement

<sup>115</sup>

Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs, National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (2013–2022)

## Global indexes

Gender Inequality Index 2019 (latest) (UNDP) (Compared to the Human Development Index)	118th (cf. HDI 147 <sup>th</sup> ) <sup>116</sup>
Global Gender Gap Index 2021 Rankings (World Economic Forum)	109th <sup>117</sup>

## Universities data

Number of universities	174 HEIs
Type of universities	134 HEIs under the Ministry of Education (2018) <sup>118</sup> 40 HEIs under other Ministries
Progression rates to tertiary education	22% Female (2018) <sup>119</sup> 15.6% Male
Percentage of women in tertiary education	No data available <sup>120</sup>
Women in tertiary education by subject	No data available <sup>121</sup>
Gross graduation ratio from tertiary education	17.0% Female (2011) <sup>122</sup> 9% Male
National policies for women in education	National Education Law providing a national framework for education reform (2014/2015) <sup>123</sup> National Education Strategic Plan – 2016/2021 as an overarching reform to strengthen higher education governance and improve access to high-quality education without discrimination (2015) <sup>124</sup> Commitment to inclusive education from the Ministry of Education, additionally providing equal opportunities and an inclusive education plan <sup>125</sup>
Publication rates disaggregated by gender	Data not available
Any other data on women and education	Progress in terms of gender parity in education compared to other sectors – achieved gender parity in enrolment in primary, middle, and high school 55% Total female exam takers (2012) <sup>126</sup> 58% Total female students passing matriculation exam (2012) 59% Total female undergraduate students (2012) 80% Total female master's degree students (2012) 81% Total female PhD students (2012) 82.6% Total female higher education academic staff (2012) 59.5% Total female undergraduate-level students (2014) <sup>127</sup>

<sup>116</sup>

UNDP, Gender Inequality INDEX (GII)

<sup>117</sup>

World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2021

<sup>118</sup>

CHINLONE, Myanmar's Higher Education Reform: Which way forward?

<sup>119</sup>

UNESCO UIS Data, Gross Enrolment Ratio for Tertiary Education, published 2018

<sup>120</sup>

Myanmar Statistical Information Service provides limited gender-disaggregated data

<sup>121</sup>

Myanmar Statistical Information Service provides limited gender-disaggregated data

<sup>122</sup>

UNESCO UIS Data, Gross Graduation Ration for Tertiary Education

<sup>123</sup>

CHINLONE, Myanmar's Higher Education Reform: Which way forward?

<sup>124</sup>

CHINLONE, Myanmar's Higher Education Reform: Which way forward?

<sup>125</sup>

Myanmar Ministry of Education, Policies

<sup>126</sup>

The Borgen Project, Recent improvements to girls' education in Myanmar, published 2018

<sup>127</sup>

Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, National Review on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcomes of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly (2000), published 2020

## Women in leadership

Percentage of women in management/ senior positions/boards in the workforce	27% Women among legislators, senior officials, and managers <sup>128</sup>
Proportion of women in managerial positions (%)	27.8% (2020) <sup>129</sup> No data on university leadership
Percentage of women in leadership at universities nationally	96% Female principals among 24 universities participating in the MMIS survey (2018) <sup>130</sup> 88.3% Women lecturers (2018) <sup>131</sup> 85.3% Women assistant lecturers 80.6% Women tutors

## 7. The Philippines

### Demographic data

Percentage of female population	49.7% (2020) <sup>132</sup>
Percentage of female population in rural residence	48.2% (2015)
Percentage of women in the workforce (national labour participation)	54.8% Female 15+ (2022) <sup>133</sup> 41.8% Rural 43.4% Urban
Main occupations (drawn from the percentage of women in employment)	Elementary occupations <sup>134</sup> (22.8%) Service and sales workers (22.0%) Managers (21.6%) <sup>135</sup>

### Women's and gender minorities' rights nationally

Women in national legislature	27.3% (85 out of 312) Lower house (2021) <sup>136</sup> 29.2% (7 out of 24) Upper house
Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Optional Protocol	CEDAW ratified 5 August 1981 OP ratified 12 November 2003
Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	Ratified 15 April 2008
Status of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	Ratified 18 June 1986

**128**

Myanmar Statistical Information Service, Distribution of Employed Population by Occupation and Industry, published 1990 (latest version)

**129**

ILO, SDG Indicator 5.5.2 – Proportion of women in managerial positions (%), published 2021

**130**

Myanmar Statistical Information Service, Female Teachers by Rank, published 2018

**131**

Myanmar Statistical Information Service, Female Teachers by Rank, published 2018

**132**

The World Bank, Population, female (% of total population), estimates based on UN Population Division World Population Prospects, revised 2019

**133**

ILO, Labour force participation rate by sex, age and rural/urban areas – ILO modelled estimates, Nov. 2021 (%), most recent figure – 2020. NB: Estimated number

**134**

Elementary occupation involves the performance of simple and routine tasks which may require the use of hand-held tools and considerable physical skill

**135**

Philippine Statistics Authority, Women & Men in the Philippines fact sheet 2022, published 2022. NB: The PSA provides limited data on gender-disaggregated occupancy of workforce industries

**136**

IPU Parline, Monthly ranking of women in national parliaments, published 2022

The Beijing Platform for Action and the Revised Pacific Regional Platform for Action – ratification, most recent review	Beijing Platform for Action +25 Progress Report submitted in 2019 <sup>137</sup>
Subsequent to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)	Data not available
Specific policies regarding women	Most notably: The Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act No. 9710) <sup>138</sup>

### Global indexes

Gender Inequality Index 2019 (latest) (UNDP) (Compared to the Human Development Index)	104th (cf. HDI: 107 <sup>th</sup> ) <sup>139</sup>
Global Gender Gap Index 2021 Rankings (World Economic Forum)	17 <sup>th</sup> <sup>140</sup>

### Universities data

Number of universities	1975 (2019–2020) <sup>141</sup>
Type of universities	246 public (2019–2020) <sup>142</sup> 1729 private
Progression rates to tertiary education	36% (2021) <sup>143</sup>
Percentage of women in tertiary education	56.1% (2021) <sup>144</sup>
Women in tertiary education by subject	73.2% Education Science and Teacher Training (2021) <sup>145</sup> 69.9 % Medical and Allied 61.6% Business Administration and Related Studies 39.2% IT-Related Disciplines 33.6% Engineering and Tech
Gross graduation ratio from tertiary education	Data not available
National policies for women in education	Republic Act No. 10533 (Enhanced Basic Education act of 2013) <sup>146</sup> Republic Act No. 10931 (Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act of 2017)
Publication rates disaggregated by gender	Data not available
Any other data on women and education	52.7% Female faculty members in state universities and colleges (2019–2020) <sup>147</sup> 52.7% Female faculty members in local colleges and universities 62.5% Female faculty members in other government schools 50.9% Female faculty members in private HEIs

**137**

Philippine Commission on Women, Beijing Platform for Action

**138**

ILO, The Magna Carta of Women (Republic Act No. 9710)

**139**

UNDP, Gender Inequality INDEX (GII)

**140**

World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2021

**141**

Philippine Commission on Higher Education, Higher Education Data and Indicators: AY 2009-2010 to AY 2019–2020

**142**

Philippine Commission on Higher Education, Higher Education Data and Indicators: AY 2009-2010 to AY 2019–2020

**143**

World Bank, School enrolment, tertiary (percentage gross)

**144**

Philippine Statistics Authority, Women & Men in the Philippines fact sheet 2022, published 2022

**145**

Philippine Statistics Authority, 2024 Fact Sheet on Women and Men in the Philippines: Education, published 2024

**146**

Philippine Commission on Women, Education Sector

**147**

Philippine Commission on Higher Education, Higher Education Data and Indicators: AY 2009-2010 to AY 2019-2020



## Women in leadership

Percentage of women in management/ senior positions/boards in the workforce	17.7% (2021) <sup>148</sup>
Proportion of women in managerial positions (%)	51.7% (2018) <sup>149</sup>
Percentage of women in leadership at universities nationally	Data not available

## 8. Singapore

### Demographic data

Percentage of the female population	47.6% (2020) <sup>150</sup>
Percentage of the female population in rural residence	Data not available
Percentage of women in the workforce (national labour participation)	59.5% Female 15+ (2020) <sup>151</sup>
Main occupations (drawn from the percentage of women in employment)	26% Professionals (2022) <sup>152</sup> 21.6% Associate professionals and technicians 16.1% Clerical support workers 13.5% Managers and administrators 12.4% Service and sales 7.9% Cleaning, labourers, and related workers 1.4% Plant and machine operators 0.9% Workers

### Women's and gender minorities' rights nationally

Women in national legislature	29.1% (30 out of 103) <sup>153</sup>
Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Optional Protocol	CEDAW ratified 5 October 1995 OP not signed CEDAW reservations withdrawn <sup>154</sup>
Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	Ratified 18 July 2013
Status of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	Not signed

<sup>148</sup>

Institute of Corporate Directors, Women on Boards: A Snapshot, published 2022

<sup>149</sup>

Philippine Statistics Authority, Women & Men in the Philippines fact sheet 2022, published 2022

<sup>150</sup>

The World Bank, Population, female (% of total population), estimates based on UN Population Division World Population Prospects, revised 2019

<sup>151</sup>

ILO, Labour force participation rate by sex, age and rural/urban areas – ILO modelled estimates, Nov. 2021 (%), most recent figure – 2020. NB: Estimated number

<sup>152</sup> Singapore Ministry of Manpower, Distribution of Employed Residents by Occupation and Sex

<sup>153</sup> IPU Parline, Monthly ranking of women in national parliaments, published 2022

<sup>154</sup> OHCHR, Beijing +20

The Beijing Platform for Action and the Revised Pacific Regional Platform for Action – ratification, most recent review	Singapore did not submit a national review on the implementation of BPfA and the outcomes of the 23 <sup>rd</sup> special session of the General Assembly.
Subsequent to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)	N/A
Specific policies regarding women	The Women’s Charter was passed to protect the rights of women and girls in Singapore (1961) <sup>155</sup>

### Global indexes

Gender Inequality Index 2019 (latest) (UNDP) (Compared to the Human Development Index)	12th (cf. HDI: 11 <sup>th</sup> ) <sup>156</sup>
Global Gender Gap Index 2021 Rankings (World Economic Forum)	54th <sup>157</sup>

### Universities data

Number of universities	34 (2021) <sup>158</sup>
Type of universities	18 junior colleges (2020) <sup>159</sup> 6 national universities 5 polytechnics 3 institutes of technical education 2 art schools
Progression rates to tertiary education	93% (2020) <sup>160</sup>
Percentage of women in tertiary education	39.0% Female teachers (2020) <sup>161</sup> 48.2% Female students
Women in tertiary education by subject	83.6% Education (2020) <sup>162</sup> 79.2% Mass communication 73.3% Health sciences 68.1% Humanities and social sciences 65.2% Dentistry 60.0% Fine and applied arts 59.2% Business and administration 58.4% Architecture, building, and real estate 55.3% Accountancy 53.9% Natural and mathematical sciences 50.6% Services 49.7% Law 46.8% Medicine 32.7% Information technology 28.5% Engineering sciences

<sup>155</sup> Singapore government, White paper on Singapore women’s development, published 2022

<sup>156</sup> UNDP, Gender Inequality INDEX (GII)

<sup>157</sup> World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2021

<sup>158</sup> Singapore Ministry of Education, Post-secondary education

<sup>159</sup> Singapore government, Universities - Intake, enrolment, and graduates by course

<sup>160</sup> The World Bank, School enrolment, tertiary (% gross)

<sup>161</sup> Department of Statistics Singapore, Students and Teachers in Educational Institutions, published 2022

<sup>162</sup> Singapore government, Universities - Intake, enrolment, and graduates by course

Gross graduation ratio from tertiary education	69.2% Female (2019) <sup>163</sup> 53.7% Male
National policies for women in education	The 2022 White Paper on women's development establishes workplace fairness legislation and deeper efforts towards promoting values of respect and safety through education (2022) <sup>164</sup>
Publication rates disaggregated by gender	Data not available
Any other data on women and education	Gender Inclusivity at the Singapore University of Technology and Design Equity and Inclusion at Yale-NUS College Inclusion at the National University of Singapore (NUS) Inclusivity at the Singapore Management University (SMU) Accessibility at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU)

### Women in leadership

Percentage of women in management/senior positions/boards in the workforce	38.1% Female managers and administrators (2021) 19.7% Female participation on boards of the 100 largest companies listed on the Singapore Exchange (2022) 29.7% Female share of Directorships at statutory boards (2021)
Proportion of women in managerial positions (%)	37.2% (2020) <sup>165</sup>
Percentage of women in leadership at universities nationally	34.4% Female teachers at universities (2020) <sup>166</sup>

<sup>163</sup> UNESCO UIS Data, Gross Enrolment Ratio for Tertiary Education

<sup>164</sup> Singapore government, White paper on Singapore women's development, published 2022

<sup>165</sup> Philippine Statistics Authority, Women and Men in the Philippines fact sheet 2022, published 2022

<sup>166</sup> Department of Statistics Singapore, Students and Teachers in Educational Institutions, published 2022

## 9. South Korea

### Demographic data

Percentage of female population	49.9% (2020) <sup>167</sup>
Percentage of female population in rural residence	19.2% (2020)
Percentage of women in the workforce (national labour participation)	53.1% Female 15+ (2020) <sup>168</sup> 55.9% Rural 52.5% Urban
Main occupations (drawn from the percentage of women in employment)	22.8% Expert and related work (2020) <sup>169</sup> 20.6% Office workers 17.6% Service 16% Non-technical labour 12.6% Sales 4.5% Agriculture/fishery 2.9% Device, machinery control, and assembly 2.5% Technician and related work 0.5% Manager

<sup>167</sup>

The World Bank, Population, female (percentage of total population), estimates based on UN Population Division World Population Prospects, revised 2019

<sup>168</sup>

ILO, Labour force participation rate by sex, age, and rural/urban areas – ILO modelled estimates, Nov. 2021 (%), most recent figure – 2020.

Note: While observations in referenced dataset are not based on national data, the figures provided for Republic of Korea represent real values

<sup>169</sup>

Republic of Korea Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, A woman's life in 2021 statistics, published 2021

## Women's and gender minorities' rights nationally

Women in national legislature	18.6% (55 out of 295) <sup>170</sup>
Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Optional Protocol	CEDAW ratified 27 December 1984 OP accessioned 18 October 2006
Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	Ratified 11 December 2008
Status of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	Accessioned 9 January 1995
The Beijing Platform for Action and the Revised Pacific Regional Platform for Action – ratification, most recent review	Progress report for 2014–2019 submitted <sup>171</sup>
Subsequent to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)	Yes
Specific policies regarding women	Plan to Enhance Women's Representation in the Public Sector (2018–2022) <sup>172</sup> Universities advised by the Ministry of Education to offer courses about gender equality and educate university freshers on sexual violence prevention <sup>173</sup> Programmes tailored to increasing women's participation in the media, including information and technology and science sectors <sup>174</sup>

## Global indexes

Gender Inequality Index 2019 (latest) (UNDP) (Compared to the Human Development Index)	11th (cf. HDI: 23rd) <sup>175</sup>
Global Gender Gap Index 2021 Rankings (World Economic Forum)	102nd <sup>176</sup>

<sup>170</sup>

IPU Parline, Monthly ranking of women in national parliaments, published 2022

<sup>171</sup>

Republic of Korea, National Review on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000)

<sup>172</sup>

Government of the Republic of Korea, National review on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000), pp. 27-28

<sup>173</sup>

Government of the Republic of Korea, National review on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000), p. 26

<sup>174</sup>

Government of the Republic of Korea, National review on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000), p. 64

<sup>175</sup>

UNDP, Gender Inequality INDEX (GII)

<sup>176</sup>

World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2021

## Universities data

Number of universities	336 (2021) <sup>177</sup>
Type of universities	190 universities <sup>178</sup> 134 junior colleges 10 education universities 2 industrial colleges
Progression rates to tertiary education	73.7% (2021) <sup>179</sup>
Percentage of women in tertiary education	45.4% Female students in HEIs (2021) <sup>180</sup>  25.4% Female lecturers at universities (2021) <sup>181</sup> 30.8% Female lecturers in education at universities 41.8% Female lecturers at junior colleges
Women in tertiary education by subject	59.5% Medical sciences and pharmacy <sup>182</sup> 58.3% Humanities 57.5% Education 55.5% Arts and physical education 47.6% Social sciences 45.4% Natural sciences
Gross graduation ratio from tertiary education	57.2% Female (2020) <sup>183</sup> 50.32% Male
National policies for women in education	Amendment of the Public Educational Officials Act to increase the number of women faculty members in national/public universities to 25% by 2030 (2020) <sup>184</sup>
Publication rates disaggregated by gender	0.64 female author publications per year (2020) <sup>185</sup> 0.45 male author publications per year (2020)

177

Korean Statistical Information Service, Number of universities,

178

Korean Statistical Information Service, Number of universities,

179

Statistics Korea, Key indicators for enrolment rate and enrolment rate, published 2021

180

Korean Educational Statistics Service, Brief statistics on Korean education, published 2021

181

Korean Educational Statistics Service, Brief statistics on Korean education, published 2021

182

Korean Statistical Information Service, Statistical Yearbook of Education 16-2 Female Students Enrolled by Academic field (University undergraduates), published 2021

183

UNESCO UIS Data, Gross Enrolment Ratio for Tertiary Education

184

Korea Citation Index, Increasing Numbers of Women Faculty as Diversity Policy in Higher Education: Focusing on the Amendment of Public Educational Officials Act, published 2020

185

National Research Foundation of Korea, Changes in female researchers' perceptions of research environment and performance: 2009 vs 2021, published 2021



#### Any other data on women and education

26.0% of new entrants in engineering, manufacturing, and construction programmes were female (2019)<sup>186</sup>  
 76.0% of new entrants in the education sector were women (2019)<sup>187</sup>  
 76.0% of 25–34-year-old women had a tertiary education qualification in 2020 compared to 64% of men aged 25–34 (2020)<sup>188</sup>  
 48.0% of women aged 25–34 with below upper secondary attainment employed compared to 76% of men aged 25–34 (2020)<sup>189</sup>

17.7% Female professors (2020)<sup>190</sup>  
 31.1% Female associate professors  
 39.5% Female assistant professors

42.0% Female professors in education (2020)<sup>191</sup>  
 32.9% Female professors in arts and physical education  
 25.2% Female professors in humanities  
 24.1% Female professors in medicine

56.0% Female associate professors in education (2020)<sup>192</sup>  
 44.5% Female associate professors in medicine  
 39.6% Female associate professors in humanities

61.4% Female assistant professors in education (2020)<sup>193</sup>  
 60.5% Female assistant professors in medicine  
 44.1% Female assistant professors in humanities

#### Women in leadership

Percentage of women in management/senior positions/boards in the workforce	15.7% (2020) <sup>194</sup>
Proportion of women in managerial positions (%)	16.3% (2021) <sup>195</sup>
Percentage of women in leadership at universities nationally	24.9% Women employed full-time as university faculty members (2020) <sup>196</sup>

<sup>186</sup>

OECD, Korea Education at a Glance 2021

<sup>187</sup>

OECD, Korea Education at a Glance 2021

<sup>188</sup>

OECD, Korea Education at a Glance 2021

<sup>189</sup>

OECD, Korea Education at a Glance 2021

<sup>190</sup>

Korean Statistics, Korea Gender Equality Report 2021 - Female professors by discipline, p. 137, published 2022

<sup>191</sup>

Korean Statistics, Korea Gender Equality Report 2021 – Female professors by discipline, p. 137, published 2022

<sup>192</sup>

Korean Statistics, Korea Gender Equality Report 2021 - Female professors by discipline, p. 137, published 2022

<sup>193</sup>

Korean Statistics, Korea Gender Equality Report 2021 - Female professors by discipline, p. 137, published 2022

<sup>194</sup>

Korean Statistics, Korea Gender Equality Report 2021, published 2022

<sup>195</sup>

ILO, SDG Indicator 5.5.2 – Proportion of women in managerial positions (%), published 2021

<sup>196</sup>

National Research Foundation of Korea, Changes in female researchers' perceptions of research environment and performance: 2009 vs 2021, published 2021

## 10. Taiwan

### Demographic data

Percentage of the female population	50.4% (2022) <sup>197</sup>
Percentage of the female population in rural residence	Data not available
Percentage of women in the workforce (national labour participation)	51.3% Female 15+ (2020) <sup>198</sup> 51.3% Rural 49.7% Urban
Main occupations (drawn from the percentage of women in employment)	Data not available

### Women's and gender minorities' rights nationally

Women in national legislature	42.0% (47 of 113) seats in Legislative Yuan (2020) <sup>199</sup>
Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Optional Protocol	CEDAW Ratified 2007 – unofficially Taiwan signed the CEDAW even though not a UN member and further promulgated the 2012 Enforcement Act of CEDAW (2018) <sup>200</sup>
Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	Ratified in 2014 <sup>201</sup>
Status of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	Not a UN member <sup>202</sup> CAT Draft bill approved December 2020 <sup>203</sup>
The Beijing Platform for Action and the Revised Pacific Regional Platform for Action – ratification, most recent review	N/A
Subsequent to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)	N/A
Specific policies regarding women	Women's Policy Guideline in Taiwan (2000) Women's Policy Platform (2004) Building Family-friendly Enterprises (2010) Gender Equality Policy Guidelines (2011)

<sup>197</sup>

The World Bank, Population, female (percentage of total population), estimates based on UN Population Division World Population Prospects, revised 2019

<sup>198</sup>

ILO, Labour force participation rate by sex, age and rural/urban areas – ILO modelled estimates, published 2021

<sup>199</sup>

Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Gender quotas database, elected in 2020

<sup>200</sup>

Taiwan Executive Yuan, Protection of women's rights under CEDAW, published 2018

<sup>201</sup>

Executive Yuan Department of Information Services, Protecting the rights of children and the disabled

<sup>202</sup>

World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), Taiwan

<sup>203</sup>

Executive Yuan Department of Information Services, Cabinet approves draft bill on implementation of UN convention against torture

## Global indexes

Gender Inequality Index 2019 (latest) (UNDP) (Compared to the Human Development Index)	Not included
Global Gender Gap Index 2021 Rankings (World Economic Forum)	Not included

## Universities data

Number of universities	152 (2020) <sup>204</sup>
Type of universities	126 universities (2020) <sup>205</sup> 14 colleges 12 junior colleges
Progression rates to tertiary education	93% Academic upper secondary progression to tertiary education (2019) <sup>206</sup> 80% Vocational upper secondary progression to tertiary education (2019)
Percentage of women in tertiary education	50.5% (2021) <sup>207</sup>
Women in tertiary education by subject	Graduate numbers (2021) <sup>208</sup> 70.4% Education 69.7% Arts and humanities 43.1% Natural sciences 28.3% Information and communication technologies 18.9% Engineering
Gross graduation ratio from tertiary education	Data not available
National policies for women in education	Gender Equity Education Act (2004) <sup>209</sup> Gender Equality Important Issues Promotion Project (2022–2025) <sup>210</sup>
Publication rates disaggregated by gender	Data not available
Any other data on women and education	71.5% Female share of higher education staff employees <sup>211</sup>

**204**

National Statistics Republic of China (Taiwan), Higher Education

**205**

National Statistics Republic of China (Taiwan), Higher Education

**206**

National Centre on Education and the Economy, Top-performing countries and territories: Taiwan

**207**

Ministry of Education Republic of China (Taiwan), Gender Statistics, published 2021

**208**

Executive Yuan Department of Gender Equality, Gender at a glance in ROC (Taiwan), published 2021

**209**

Doris T. Chang, Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Policies in Contemporary Taiwan, published 2018

**210**

Ministry of Education Taiwan, The Ministry of Education (MOE) Implements the Executive Yuan's (2022–2025) Gender Equality Important Issues Promotion Project: Cyber and Internet Gender Violence Prevention, published 2021

**211**

National Statistics Republic of China (Taiwan), Higher Education

## Women in leadership

Percentage of women in management/ senior positions/boards in the workforce	14.25% (2021) <sup>212</sup>
Proportion of women in managerial positions (%)	30.5% (2020) <sup>213</sup>
Percentage of women in leadership at universities nationally	27.5% Female senior administrator positions in colleges and universities (2019) <sup>214</sup> 9.9% Female university and college presidents (2019) 71.5% Female staff at HEIs (2020) <sup>215</sup>

<sup>212</sup>

CommonWealth Magazine, Increasing gender diversity can help Taiwan's tech industry

<sup>213</sup>

Philippine Statistics Authority, Women & Men in the Philippines fact sheet 2022, published 2022

<sup>214</sup>

Executive Yuan Department of Gender Equality, Gender at a glance in ROC (Taiwan), published 2021

<sup>215</sup>

National Statistics Republic of China (Taiwan), Higher Education

## 11. Thailand

### Demographic data

Percentage of the female population	51.3% (2020) <sup>216</sup>
Percentage of the female population in rural residence	Data not available
Percentage of women in the workforce (national labour participation)	59.2% Female 15+ (2020) <sup>217</sup>
Main occupations (drawn from the percentage of women in employment)	38.6% Managers, civil workers, and legislators (2022) <sup>218</sup> 17.1% Technicians and associate professionals 16.8% Craftworkers and related trades 15.2% Plant and machine operators 13.7% Clerks 12.6% Professionals 4.3% Skilled agricultural and fishery workers 3.7% Service workers and shop and market sales workers

### Women's and gender minorities' rights nationally

Women in national legislature	15.8% (77 out of 489) Lower house (2019) <sup>219</sup> 10.5% (26 out of 248) Upper house
Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Optional Protocol	CEDAW ratified 9 August 1985 OP ratified 14 June 2000
Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	Ratified 29 July 2008
Status of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	Ratified 2 October 2007
The Beijing Platform for Action and the Revised Pacific Regional Platform for Action – ratification, most recent review	Submission of period reports on the implementations of the CEDAW to the UN
Subsequent to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)	2020 Review <sup>220</sup>
Specific policies regarding women	Education Provision for Persons with Disabilities Act B. E. 2551(2008) Gender Equality Act B.E. 2558

<sup>216</sup>

The World Bank, Population, female (% of total population), estimates based on UN Population Division World Population Prospects, revised 2019

<sup>217</sup>

ILO, Labour force participation rate by sex, age, and rural/urban areas – ILO modelled estimates, Nov. 2021 (%), most recent figure – 2020.

Note: While observations in the referenced dataset are not based on national data, the figures provided for Thailand represent real values

<sup>218</sup>

National Statistical Office Thailand, The Labor Force Survey 2022 Quarter 1: January-March 2022, published 2022

<sup>219</sup>

IPU Parline, Monthly ranking of women in national parliaments, published 2022

<sup>220</sup>

UN Women, The Government of Thailand's National Review, 2020

## Global indexes

Gender Inequality Index 2019 (latest) (UNDP) (Compared to the Human Development Index)	80th (cf. HDI: 79 <sup>th</sup> ) <sup>221</sup>
Global Gender Gap Index 2021 Rankings (World Economic Forum)	79 <sup>th</sup> <sup>222</sup>

## Universities data

Number of universities	370 HEIs (2019) <sup>223</sup>
Type of universities	80.9% Students enrolled in state HEIs (2019) <sup>224</sup> 19.1% Students enrolled in private HEIs 156 HEIs under Ministry of the Higher Education, Science, Research and Technology (2020) <sup>225</sup>
Progression rates to tertiary education	96.5% (2020) <sup>226</sup>
Percentage of women in tertiary education	59.7% (2020) <sup>227</sup>
Women in tertiary education by subject	72.8% Natural sciences, mathematics, and statistics (2020) <sup>228</sup> 72.7% Health and welfare 71.8% Services 66.4% Education 64.1% Business, administration, and law 63.1% Arts and humanities 60.3% Agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary 56.6% Social sciences, journalism, and information 37.9% Information and communication technologies 34.8% Engineering, manufacturing, and construction
Gross graduation ratio from tertiary education	31.3% Female (2015) 19.5% Male
National policies for women in education	Strategy for Women's Development 2017–2021 tackles policies for women in education Phase 1 Action Plan for Women Development (2020–2022) National Strategy B.E. 2037 (2018)
Publication rates disaggregated by gender	Data not available

<sup>221</sup>

UNDP, Gender Inequality INDEX (GII)

<sup>222</sup>

World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2021

<sup>223</sup>

Digital Government Development Agency Thailand, Basic information of higher education institutions, academic year 2020, published 2021

<sup>224</sup>

Thailand Ministry of Education Office of the Education Council, Education in Thailand 2019–2021

<sup>225</sup>

Thailand Ministry of Education Office of the Education Council, Education in Thailand 2019–2021

<sup>226</sup>

National Statistical Office Thailand, Transition Rate at Secondary and Higher Education Levels: Academic Year 2016–2020

<sup>227</sup>

Digital Government Development Agency, Number of current students classified by educational level and gender, published 2021

<sup>228</sup>

Digital Government Development Agency, Number of current students, academic year 2020, classified by 10 subject groups (ISCED Group), educational level, and gender, published 2021

Any other data on women and education

The Constitution of 2017, Section 54 requires the State to ensure that every child receives quality education free of charge  
The National Education Plan 2017–2036 aims to provide inclusive education for all (2020)<sup>229</sup>  
The Equitable Education Fund Act B. E. 2561 was enacted to establish educational funds to help children living in poverty to have equal access to quality education (2018)<sup>230</sup>  
Women and Family Development Learning Centres across the country promote lifelong learning through informal education – enabling the strengthening of women’s vocational skills, and enabling underprivileged women, in particular, to earn sufficient income and build critical life skills<sup>231</sup>  
Anti-sex-trafficking education programmes in over 3000 schools and universities across the country<sup>232</sup>

### Women in leadership

Percentage of women in management/ senior positions/boards in the workforce	32.0% Women in senior leadership positions (2020) <sup>233</sup>
Proportion of women in managerial positions (%)	39.2% (2020) <sup>234</sup>
Percentage of women in leadership at universities nationally	Data not available

#### 229

Government of Thailand, National Review Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000) in the context of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 2020, p. 40

#### 230

Government of Thailand, National Review Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000) in the context of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 2020, pp. 10–11

#### 231

Government of Thailand, National Review Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000) in the context of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 2020, p. 11

#### 232

Government of Thailand, National Review Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000) in the context of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 2020, p. 29

#### 233

Grant Thornton Thailand, Women in Business Report 2020

#### 234

ILO, SDG Indicator 5.5.2 – Proportion of women in managerial positions (%), published 2021



## 12. Vietnam

### Demographic data

Percentage of the female population	50% (2020) <sup>235</sup>
Percentage of the female population in rural residence	Data not available
Percentage of women in the workforce (national labour participation)	69.7% Female 15+ 74.9% Rural 61.2% Urban
Main occupations (drawn from the percentage of women in employment)	35.9% Simple labour (2020) <sup>236</sup> 23.3% Service, protection, and sales 12.7% Assembling and operating machinery and equipment  67.9% of family labour is done by women

### Women's and gender minorities' rights nationally

Women in national legislature	30.3% (151 out of 499) <sup>237</sup>
Status of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Optional Protocol	CEDAW ratified 17 February 1982 OP not signed
Status of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	Ratified 5 February 2015
Status of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT)	Ratified 5 February 2015
The Beijing Platform for Action and the Revised Pacific Regional Platform for Action – ratification, most recent review	Submission of period reports to the UN on the implementation of the CEDAW
Subsequent to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)	Review documentation available <sup>238</sup>

<sup>235</sup>

The World Bank, Population, female (percentage of total population), estimates based on UN Population Division World Population Prospects, revised 2019

<sup>236</sup>

Vietnam General Statistics Office, Labour Employment Survey Report 2020, p. 21, p. 24

<sup>237</sup>

IPU Parline, Monthly ranking of women in national parliaments, published 2022

<sup>238</sup>

UN Women, UN Women supports Vietnam's review on the implementation of Beijing +25

Specific policies regarding women	<p>Law on Gender Equality No. 73/2006/QH11 (2019)<sup>239</sup>  Circular No. 05/2017/TT-BGDĐT  Decree No. 57/2017/NĐ-CP  Decision No. 66/2013/QĐ-TTg  Decision No. 82/2006/QĐ-TTg  Decision No. 152/2007/QĐ-TTg</p> <p>National Action Programme on Gender Equality for 2016–2020  Controlling the Imbalance of Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) for 2016–2025  Scheme to implement gender equality measures for female staff, civil servants, and public employees for 2016–2020  Scheme on Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response for 2016–2020 with a vision to 2030  Scheme to Support Gender Equality Activities in Ethnic Minority Areas for 2018–2025  Decision on amendments and supplements to the National Strategy on Gender Equality for 2011–2020</p>
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### Global indexes

Gender Inequality Index 2019 (latest) (UNDP) (Compared to the Human Development Index)	65th (cf. HDI: 117 <sup>th</sup> ) <sup>240</sup>
Global Gender Gap Index 2021 Rankings (World Economic Forum)	87 <sup>th</sup> <sup>241</sup>

<sup>239</sup>

Socialist Republic of Vietnam, National Review Report on the 25-year Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action

<sup>240</sup>

UNDP, Gender Inequality INDEX (GII)

<sup>241</sup>

World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2021

## Universities data

Number of universities	242 (2020) <sup>242</sup>
Type of universities	176 public (2019) <sup>243</sup> 66 non-public
Progression rates to tertiary education	35% (2021) <sup>244</sup>
Percentage of women in tertiary education	54.8% Female students in universities (2020) <sup>245</sup> 50.2% Female teachers in universities
Women in tertiary education by subject	Data not available <sup>246</sup>
Gross graduation ratio from tertiary education	20.7% Female (2018) 24.5% Male
National policies for women in education	Action Plan on Gender Equality in the Education Sector (2016) <sup>247</sup>
Publication rates disaggregated by gender	Data not available
Any other data on women and education	Data not available

## Women in leadership

Percentage of women in management/senior positions/boards in the workforce	Data not available
Proportion of women in managerial positions (%)	25.3% (2021) <sup>248</sup>
Percentage of women in leadership at universities nationally	90% of the Department of Education and Training has women on the Board of Directors <sup>249</sup> 90% of higher education institutions have women on the School Council/Board of Directors 40% of the total number of female doctorates are working in educational institutions

<sup>242</sup>

Vietnam General Statistics Office, Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam, p. 794, published 2020

<sup>243</sup>

Vietnam General Statistics Office, Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam, p. 794, published 2020

<sup>244</sup>

The World Bank, School enrolment, tertiary (% gross), published 2021

<sup>245</sup>

Vietnam General Statistics Office, Statistical Yearbook of Vietnam, p. 194, published 2020

<sup>246</sup>

Vietnam General Statistics Office provides limited gender-disaggregated data for the number of graduates of higher education or training and research staff in higher education.

<sup>247</sup>

Institute for studies of Society, Economy & Environment (iSEE), NextGen Hanoi, LGBTQ Education Activists (LEA), Joint Report on the Human Rights Situation of the Community of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex People (LGBTI) in Vietnam

<sup>248</sup>

ILO, SDG Indicator 5.5.2 – Proportion of women in managerial positions (%), published 2021

<sup>249</sup>

G. Maheshwari, Symbolic Intersection of Self-Reflection, Workplace Interaction and Sociocultural Aspects in Shaping Women Identify as Leaders: A Study in Higher Education, Vietnam, published 2022

# Appendix 3. Figures and data references

## Figure 1. Gross tertiary enrolment rate by sex (1990–2021)

The World Bank Data used in this table (The World Bank, 2022) is an aggregate of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics data displayed online in an interactive format.

## Figure 2. Gender Gap Index (2012–2022)

The World Economic Forum is an international non-governmental and lobbying organisation based in Geneva, Switzerland. The Forum engages with political, business, cultural, and other leaders of society to shape global, regional, and industry agendas. The Forum is a well-regarded, independent, and impartial organisation.

The data were collated from the following reports:

- 2012 (World Economic Forum, 2012)
- 2013 (World Economic Forum, 2013)
- 2014 (World Economic Forum, 2014)
- 2015 (World Economic Forum, 2015)
- 2016 (World Economic Forum, 2016)
- 2017 (World Economic Forum, 2017)
- 2018 (World Economic Forum, 2018)
- 2020 (World Economic Forum, 2019)
  - this report was published in December 2019
- 2021 (World Economic Forum, 2021)
- 2022 (World Economic Forum, 2022)

## Figure 3. Gender Gap Index for 2022

The Gender Gap Index 2022 is the most recent World Economic Forum Report (World Economic Forum, 2022).

## Figure 4. Ratio of female academic staff in tertiary education by country (1990–2021)

The World Bank Data used in this table (The World Bank, 2022) is an aggregate of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics data displayed online in an interactive format. The UNESCO data are accurate as of June 2022.



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