

13 Swaziland

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| COUNTRY CONTEXT STATISTICS | |
|---|---|
|  | <p>Population: 1.1 million (2011) GDP per capita: US\$3 311 (2010) Human development index: 0.522 Unemployment: 40% (2006 est.) Key economic sectors: manufacturing, tourism Principal exports: soft drink concentrates, sugar, wood pulp, cotton yarn, refrigerators, citrus, canned fruit HIV and AIDS prevalence: 25.9% (2009 est.) Gross primary enrolment ratio: 116% (2010) Gross secondary enrolment ratio: 58% (2010) Gross tertiary enrolment ratio: 4% (2006)</p> |
| <small>Country context data were obtained from a variety of sources: CIA (2012), UNAIDS (2011), UNDP (2011), UNESCO (2011).</small> | |

Swaziland, also known as the Kingdom of Swaziland, is a landlocked country bordered by South Africa and Mozambique. It has a population of approximately 1.067 million people. The majority of the population speak siSwati as their first language. Swaziland's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2010 was estimated to be \$3 311 per capita, and the annual GDP growth rate was estimated at 2.0 per cent. Agriculture accounts for approximately 8.3 per cent of the GDP and manufacturing 28.29 per cent (US Department of State 2011). Surrounded almost entirely by South Africa, Swaziland's economy is heavily influenced by its dominant neighbour. The majority of the population depends on subsistence agriculture. Due to its small size, the country relies on export industries, composed of large firms with predominantly foreign ownership. Some of the main export commodities are sugar, wood pulp, citrus and canned fruit (US Department of State 2011). There is a very high prevalence of HIV, with Swaziland ranked highest in the world in terms of HIV infections (US Department of State 2011).

Swaziland gained independence in 1968 and has since been a monarchy. In 2005 King Mswati III endorsed Swaziland's first constitution in over 30 years. This constitution endorsed the king's absolute governing powers, reinforcing the ban on political parties and allowing human rights clauses to be suspended by the king if he finds them in conflict with public interest (although no definition of public interest is provided) (CIA 2012).

Higher education landscape

Higher education is provided by two public and two private institutions. The public institutions are the University of Swaziland (UNISWA) and the Swaziland College of Technology (Kotecha 2008). Since the focus of SARUA's work is on public universities, the data presented in this chapter and the accompanying data profile focuses only on UNISWA.

The University of Swaziland developed from the University of Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland, which was previously known as the University of Basutholand. In 1982 the University of Swaziland was established, initially funded by the Catholic Church (University of Swaziland n.d.). The university consists of three campuses: the Layengo campus (home to the Agriculture faculty), the Kwaluseni campus (which houses the faculties of Humanities, Commerce, Education, Science and Social Sciences), and the Mbabane campus (which focuses on health sciences). The university is affiliated with the teaching college and the nursing school.

The University of Swaziland has not been able to keep up with the demand for higher education. One response has been the opening of an institute for distance learning that caters for the study needs of students who are unable to attend campus full-time (Swaziland Review 2011). Historically, the government has financed the majority of the students going to university (approximately 75 per cent), and the government provides adult education to improve the country's literacy rate.

Besides the University of Swaziland, there are several other tertiary institutions, including three teacher training colleges, two nursing colleges, and the Swaziland College of Technology. In 2011, two private universities were opened: the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology and the Southern African Nazarene University (Mbanza 2011). These new universities provide places for students who want to study architecture and other courses not offered by UNISWA. A third private university, the Swaziland Christian Medical University, is due to become operational in 2013. This new university, funded by the Republic of Korea, will be located near Mbabane and will include three colleges (medicine, nursing and ICT).

National higher education policy context

The Ministry of Education in Swaziland states that the aim of tertiary education is to provide trained personnel who will meet the socio-economic needs of the country, to build research skills and instil a culture of research at all tertiary institutions (Ministry of Education 2008).

There are currently no national policies in place specific to higher education, but there are policies waiting to be approved in parliament. These include the National Qualification Authority and the Higher Education Bill, intended to improve the quality of higher education and set guidelines for good practice (SARUA MoE questionnaires). In 2011, the Ministry of Education and Training published the Swaziland Education and Training Policy, which contains a section on tertiary and higher education (Ministry of Education and Training 2011). The guiding philosophy of the Education and Training Sector is defined as follows:

to produce an enlightened and participant citizenry that has skills and knowledge to contribute positively to economic and social development (Ministry of Education and Training 2011:7).

The following objectives are defined for tertiary and higher education:

- To introduce an inclusive, principled and comprehensive draft Higher Education (HE) policy, aligned to, and consistent with national EDSEC [Education Sector] Policy and the Higher Education Bill.
- To establish a revolving loan fund to ensure equitable access to HE for all suitably qualified high school graduates.
- To ensure student flows into prioritised course options realigned and increased to meet socio-economic development needs.
- To lower unit costs and improve cost-efficiency by an average one-year reduction in course duration.
- To audit and analyse infrastructural and human resource capacity in the Tertiary and HE sector and expand this to provide equitable access for all qualified senior secondary school graduates.
- To accommodate student diversity through flexible entry level assessment which recognises different ways of demonstrating understanding, knowledge and language differences, etc.
- To reserve between 4 per cent and 10 per cent of spaces for disabled and disadvantaged students in every institution to ensure their entry into tertiary or higher education.

- To optimise access to HE through expansion/strengthening of distance learning (Ministry of Education and Training 2011:39).

In the long term, the policy aims to expand the higher education sector to allow for a 40 per cent progression rate from secondary school to higher education (universities and colleges) (Ministry of Education and Training 2011).

Size and shape of higher education

As noted above, Swaziland's higher education system consists of four institutions of higher learning (two privately-funded accredited universities, one public university and one public technical college). The Ministry of Education and Training reported that 24 per cent of students are enrolled at the public university, while only 3 per cent attend the private university and another 5 per cent are enrolled in technical colleges (see Table 1).

Table 1: Number and type of higher education institutions*

| Type of higher education institutions | Number of institutions | Estimated percentage of students enrolled in this type of institution* |
|--|------------------------|--|
| Publicly-funded universities | 1 | 24 |
| Publicly-funded technical colleges | 1 | 5 |
| Privately-funded accredited universities or colleges | 2 | 3 |

Sources: SARUA MoE questionnaires (2011 and 2012)

* 68 per cent of students who completed high school are unaccounted for. This may be because they are studying outside Swaziland or they are not furthering their studies.

Demand for higher education

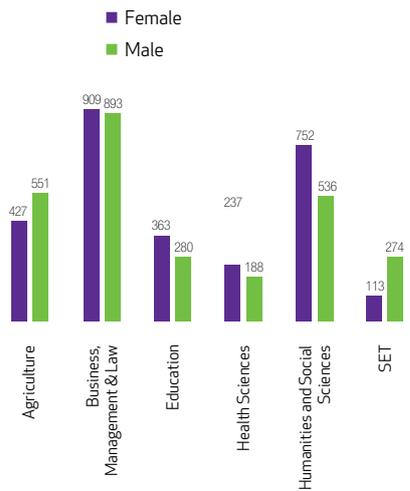
There is a relatively high demand for higher education in this small country, and the University of Swaziland cannot cater for this demand. The university reported that 4 454 students applied for enrolment for the 2009/2010 academic year. Although 2 955 applicants met the admission requirements, only 1 869 students were accepted. The Minister of Education has stated that more universities are needed in Swaziland to cater for the high demand of students leaving high school (University World News 2012). The problem does not only arise with undergraduate students: 20 per cent of students who applied for postgraduate studies were also not accepted. The data do not allow for an assessment of the extent to which these unsuccessful prospective postgraduate students met the requirements for entry to postgraduate study.

Swaziland has a national scholarship policy for pre service training, based on a 50 per cent loan and 50 per cent grant formula. The awarding of scholarships under this policy is rationalised according to the country's needs, and mechanisms are being developed to ensure that beneficiaries pay back their loans (Kotecha 2008).

Student profile and enrolment patterns

Based on the data collected for this study, 86 per cent (5 451) of students at UNISWA are national citizens, with about 11 per cent (62) from other countries in the SADC region. Only ten students enrolled at the university are international students from countries outside SADC. The university consists mostly of contact students, although the number of distance students is growing every year. Most of the students are enrolled for undergraduate studies. The highest enrolment numbers are in business, management and law, with 1 802 students. The only faculty offering postgraduate degrees or diplomas (honours) is education, with 155 students enrolled in the 2009/2010 academic year. On the whole, there is a marginal difference in proportions of male and female students (49 and 51 per cent respectively), but more stark gender differences in enrolment are seen when considered by major field of study (see Figure 1). In particular, much larger numbers of male students enrol for science, engineering and technology and for agriculture compared to female students. Larger numbers of female students are enrolled in education, health sciences and the humanities and social sciences.

Figure 1: Student enrolment by gender and major field of study



Source: SARUA university questionnaire (2011)

Public higher education in Swaziland is dominated by undergraduate education, with 95 per cent of the 2009/2010 academic year enrolment at the undergraduate level. The largest numbers of students are studying business, management and law, closely followed by the humanities and social sciences. Science and technology enrolments account for the smallest proportion of students. The largest numbers of postgraduate students are found in education-related fields. There were no doctoral students enrolled at UNISWA at the time of data collection.

Table 2: Student enrolment by major field and level of study

| Major field of study | Number of students enrolled per level of study | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------|---------|----------|---------------|----------------------------|
| | Undergraduate | Postgraduate < Masters | Masters | Doctoral | Post-doctoral | Other (e.g. short courses) |
| Agriculture | 949 | 0 | 29 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Business, management and law | 1802 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Education | 436 | 155 | 52 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Health sciences | 425 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Humanities and social sciences | 1278 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Science, engineering and technology | 363 | 0 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Source: SARUA university questionnaire (2011)

Staff profile

The table below presents the profile of academic and support staff at the University of Swaziland.

Table 3: Staff profile at the University of Swaziland

| Staffing categories | Nationality | Number of staff |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Academic and research staff | National citizens | 183 |
| | SADC citizens | 25 |
| | Other international staff | 66 |
| Management and administrative staff | National citizens | 60 |
| | SADC citizens | 4 |
| | Other international staff | 4 |

Source: SARUA university questionnaire (2011)

Most of the academic and research staff are Swazi citizens, making up 66.2 per cent of the total staff. Staff from elsewhere in the SADC region represent 9 per cent, while other international staff represent about 24 per cent. This is a relatively large complement of international academics.

In all faculties except for the health sciences there are more male than female academic and research staff. Gender disparities are particularly marked for science, engineering and technology, in which only 14 per cent of academic and research staff members are women. The humanities and social sciences have the largest number of staff members, accounting for 22 per cent of all academic and research staff. The health sciences and business management and law fields have the smallest number of staff, each accounting for about 10 per cent. This disparity is also reflected in student enrolment figures, although the disparity between the staff is not as large as among the students. The student:staff ratio at the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Technology is 6:1, the lowest of all the faculties. The highest student:staff ratio is that of the Faculty of Business, Management and Law which stands at 60:1.

The university currently employs 82 management and administrative staff. More than 85 per cent of these staff come from Swaziland and are full-time employees. The departments of Humanities and Social Science, and Business, Management and Law have the largest number of management staff. The University of Swaziland indicated that there is a shortage of staff in the health sciences and education.

Of the 239 academic and research staff at UNISWA, 120 (50 per cent) have masters degrees, 113 (47 per cent) have doctoral degrees and 6 (0.02 per cent) have undergraduate degrees. The lack of enrolment at postgraduate level (particularly doctoral level) is therefore not due to a lack of qualified academics to provide supervision. Further research is needed to better understand the very low postgraduate enrolment at UNISWA.

National higher education outputs and alignment with policy imperatives

Graduate patterns

In line with enrolment numbers, most of the qualifications awarded were in agriculture, business, management and law and the humanities and social sciences. There was no major difference between the male and female graduate output, with female students accounting for a slightly larger proportion of the graduates (in line with enrolment trends). There is a significantly low throughput rate at masters level, as only 20 per cent of the students enrolled for a masters degree actually graduate.

Quality assurance

At present, Swaziland does not have a national higher education quality assurance system, although there is a quality assurance framework pending approval by the Swaziland Parliament (Ministry of Education 2008, Ministry of Education questionnaire 2011). Nonetheless, the Ministry of Education and Training reported that it provides technical support to UNISWA for quality assurance activities, and UNISWA noted that it is required to report on quality-related issues at the national level.

According to UNISWA's questionnaire response, the university has an internal quality assurance process and there is a specific budget allocated to this function. UNISWA also makes use of peer review processes and has mandatory processes in place for evaluating individual teaching staff. Training is provided for newly appointed staff members and ongoing staff development opportunities are reported to be available. External moderators are used as part of the examinations process. UNISWA indicated that it has procedures in place for gathering student feedback in the areas of academic issues, university governance and student services.

An additional factor that contributes to the quality of educational provision is that of infrastructure availability and quality, including, for example, science laboratories, lecture rooms and library material. In the UNISWA questionnaire response it is noted that staff and students have access to the Internet. A total of 415 computers are available for students, and the ratio of students to computers is approximately 13:1. While UNISWA has science laboratories, a library, computer laboratories, lecturing venues and venues for tutorials available, in each case it was noted that the

facilities are not sufficient to accommodate all the students. There is thus a need for more teaching space (lecture halls and smaller venues) and laboratories at the university (HE questionnaire 2012).

Research output

Research output is increasingly being used as a measure of the standing of a university, since this is the point at which universities contribute to the production of new knowledge. Table 4 shows the research output data provided by UNISWA for the period 2008 to 2010. In comparison with other universities and countries in the SADC region, the research output is average²⁶.

At present, UNISWA does not have a research office or a section dedicated to research. Much of the research funding (54 per cent) is provided for by donations from individuals and trusts, while donations from international funders account for about 25 per cent. The remaining 25 per cent is provided by the university (SARUA university questionnaire 2011).

Table 4: Research output

| Category of research output | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Peer-reviewed journal articles | 80 | 95 | 98 |
| Peer-reviewed books | 4 | 8 | 10 |
| Peer-reviewed book chapters | 1 | 14 | 16 |
| Patents | No data | No data | No data |

Source: SARUA university questionnaire (2011)

Recent developments in higher education

Swaziland as a country has experienced significant financial difficulty in recent years. At the start of the 2011 academic year, UNISWA was closed due to a financial crisis. This affected the number of students admitted, and limited the student numbers for 2011 to less than 500 (compared to 1 200 students in the previous year). The low enrolment rate was due to the lack of financial guarantees from government, as the majority of the students who applied were hoping to be funded by government (The Swaziland Observer 2011). This downsizing in the number of students caused UNISWA to delay operations this past academic year (University World News 2011).

As noted above, two new private universities (the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology and Southern African Nazarene University) have recently been opened in Swaziland, and a third (Swaziland Christian Medical University) is due to begin operations in 2013. The Limkokwing University of Creative Technology is a campus of the Malaysian-based Limkokwing University that currently operates in several countries globally²⁷. Located in Mbabane, Limkokwing offers associate degree courses in the following areas:

- architecture and the built environment;
- business management and globalisation;
- communication, media and broadcasting;
- tourism and hospitality;
- design innovation;
- film, television and broadcasting;
- multimedia creativity;
- lifestyle design; and
- sound and music design²⁸.

Given the country's financial difficulties, together with the demand for higher education, it is likely that private higher education in Swaziland will play an increasingly important role in the sector.

²⁶ Note that no data verification was done to ensure the accuracy of these figures.

²⁷ www.limkokwing.net/swaziland/about/

²⁸ www.limkokwing.net/swaziland/courses_associate_degree/

Regionalisation

Higher education in Swaziland at institutional and ministry level places emphasis on regional collaboration. The Ministry of Education aligned itself with the SADC Charter of Fundamental Social Rights and the SADC Protocol on Education and Training when developing its higher education policies (Ministry of Education 2008). Through the SADC protocol, Swaziland has agreed to engage in collaboration and integration with other higher education institutions in the region. Although several challenges are inherent in the process, some of these collaborative initiatives have been successful. At the policy level, UNISWA is required to make available 5 per cent of spaces to students from the SADC region (SARUA MoE questionnaires 2011). The students from SADC pay the same fees as local students. However, there are relatively few students from the SADC region currently studying at UNISWA. In the 2009/2010 academic year a total of 62 students (1.1 per cent of the student body) were from other SADC countries. With respect to staff, there are significantly more international staff members from outside the SADC region compared to those from SADC.

In the area of collaboration with other universities in the SADC region, the 2008 SARUA study reported collaboration between the Faculty of Science at UNISWA and the universities of Botswana and Witwatersrand in South Africa. The Faculty of Humanities has a collaborative programme with Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique, and the Faculty of Education has a collaborative programme with the University of Pretoria in South Africa (Kotecha 2008). More recently, UNISWA signed a collaboration treaty with the University of Namibia (SARUA MoE questionnaires 2012).

Conclusions

Swaziland, one of the few remaining monarchies in the SADC region, is faced with a range of challenges and opportunities in the higher education sector. The country's political system and recent financial crises have placed a great deal of stress on the public higher education system, and it remains to be seen how these difficulties will be resolved in coming years. To date there has not been a specific policy framework for higher education, although this is changing, with specific reference to tertiary and higher education being included in the recent Ministry of Education's Education and Training Policy (2011), and two higher education policies currently being before the Swaziland parliament.

In the past, the higher education sector was dominated by the University of Swaziland as the only university operating in the country. More recently, the private higher education sector is becoming more established, although the number of students participating in the private sector is still small. The Ministry of Education has plans for significant expansion in tertiary level participation, the long-term aim being for 40 per cent of school leavers to move on to higher education. It is unlikely that this will be possible without significant expansion of private higher education. The vast majority of higher education provision in Swaziland is at the undergraduate level, with no doctoral students being enrolled or graduating in the 2009/2010 academic year. This is cause for concern, particularly with respect to ensuring that a new generation of academics is available to drive the envisaged higher education expansion. Several infrastructural constraints were identified at the current levels of student enrolment. Significant investment in higher education infrastructure will thus be needed as the sector grows.