

# The Siyaphambili Website

| An interactive platform to track South Africa's post-school qualification attainment |

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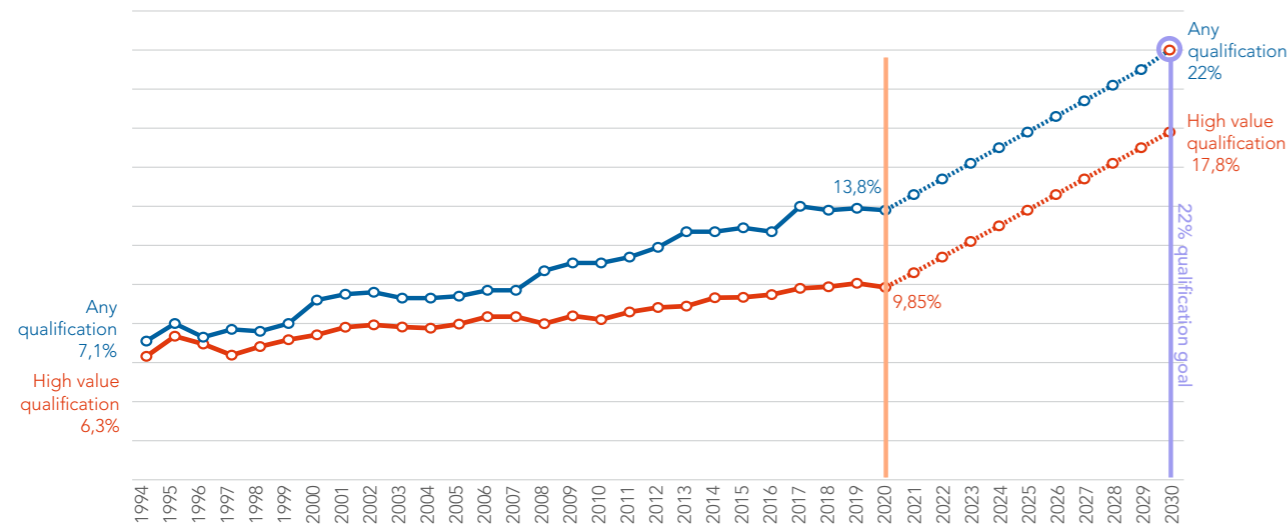
**SALDRU**  
Southern Africa Labour and  
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**Siyaphambili**  
*We Are Moving Forward*

## What is the Siyaphambili website?

The [Siyaphambili website](#) tracks the proportion of South Africans aged 15 to 64 with a post-school qualification; against a target of 22 percent by 2030.

### Qualifications attained

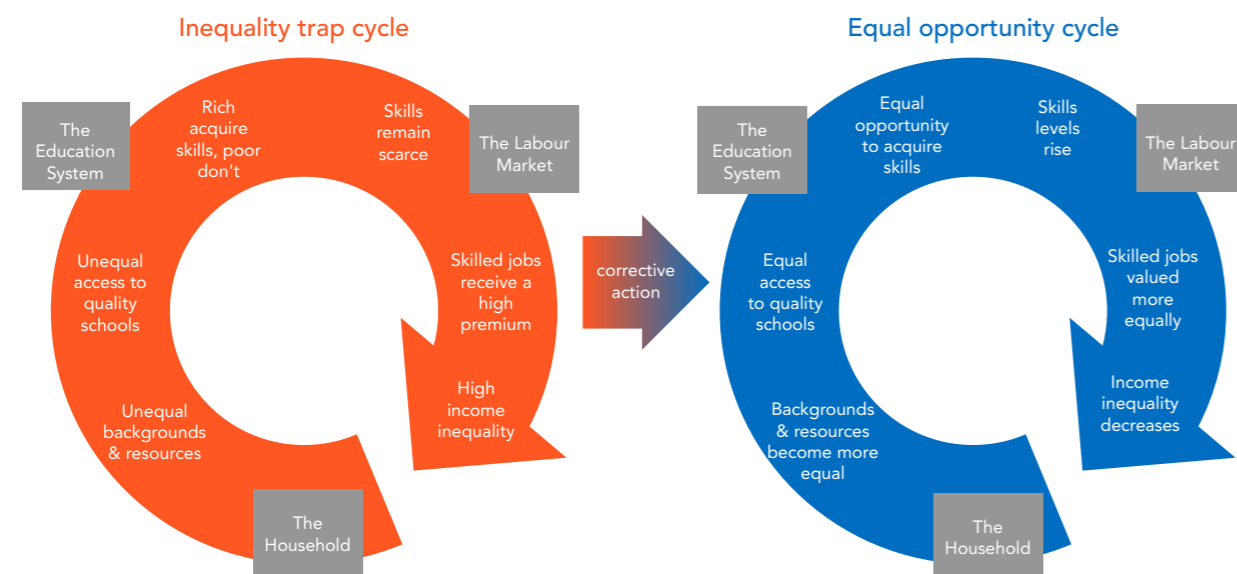


## What is the motivation behind the Siyaphambili website?

In 1994, the year South Africa transitioned to democracy, the proportion of working age South Africans with a post-school qualification was 7 percent. Attainment has since doubled, reaching 13.8 percent in 2020. This growth in post-school qualification attainment is a remarkable feat. At the same time, the attainment rate is a stark reminder

of just how few South Africans successfully reach, and complete, this education milestone.

South Africa has high returns to post-school education by world standards and these have been increasing over time.<sup>1</sup> A university graduate can earn close to three times the amount of



someone with a grade 12 (complete high school) and up to five times the amount of someone with a grade 8 (the first grade of high school). In addition, the unemployment rate among post-secondary graduates is far lower than the national average.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, earnings returns for those with grade 9 to 11 have fallen.<sup>3</sup> These changes in the relative returns to education are an important link in the cycle of sustained inequality in South Africa.

Motivated by the urgent need to reduce South Africa's high level of income inequality, Siyaphambili has set a post-school qualification attainment goal which aligns with the South African National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 goals.

Goal 2030 strives for 22% of South Africans, between the ages of 15 to 64, to hold a post-school qualification by 2030. This goal provides a reference point to track year-on-year progress in qualification attainment.

Social and economic inequalities in South Africa lead to different rates of school completion and varying opportunities to achieve a post-school qualification.

Recognising the need to factor in inequalities, the post-school qualification attainment indicator is also disaggregated by population groups, gender, age groups, and province.

The [Siyaphambili report](#) motivates that increasing the overall level of post-school qualification attainment, particularly by decreasing between sub-group attainment gaps, could contribute towards reducing income inequality.

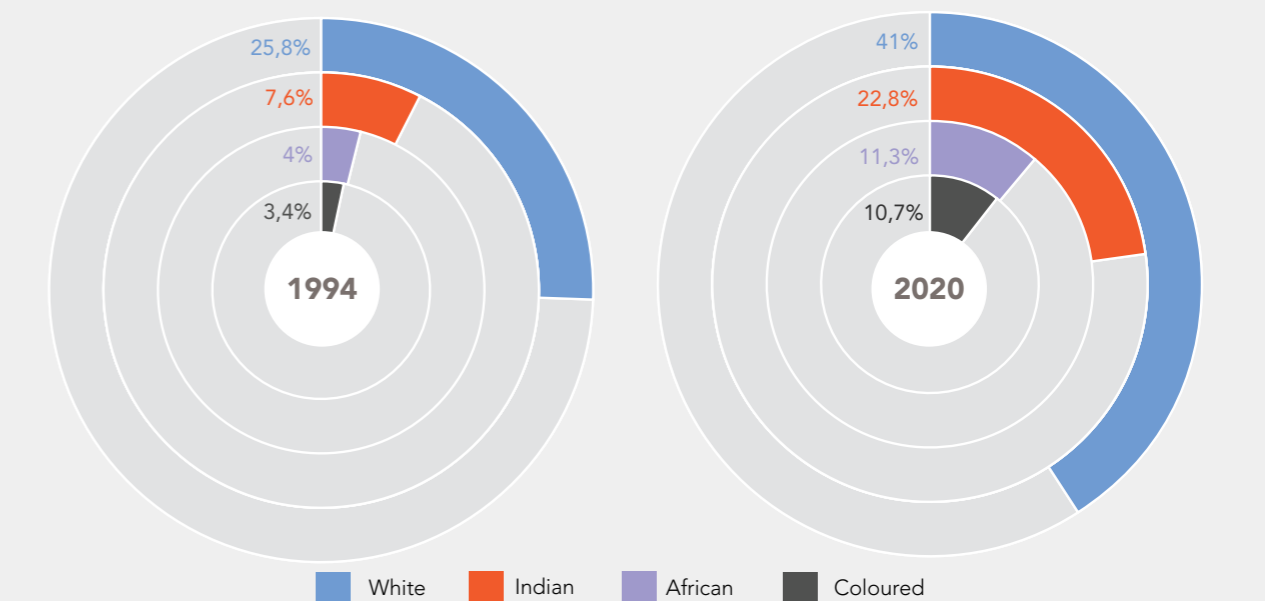
### What inspired the Siyaphambili website?

Lumina Foundation's [Stronger Nation website](#).

In 2009, the Lumina Foundation set a goal: for 60% of Americans between the ages of 25 to 64 to hold degrees, certificates or other high-quality post-high school credentials by 2025. This goal is motivated by the desire to equip Americans with skills for jobs in the knowledge economy.

### How different is attainment for different population groups?

Although all population groups have seen an increase in post-school qualification attainment since 1994, attainment remains unequal across population groups.



## How does Siyaphambili define a post-school qualification?

The Siyaphambili interactive graphs focus on post-school qualifications, **qualifications** at National Qualification Framework (NQF) levels 2 to 10, **obtained outside of basic education** - where basic education refers to all learning from grade R to 12.

### What is the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)?

The NQF is a single system, comprising 10 levels, which maps out all education and training qualifications in South Africa.<sup>4</sup>

Two measures of post-school qualifications are used on the Siyaphambili website: (1) any qualification, and (2) high value qualification. These two measures are defined as:

### Any qualification:

Any qualification refers to all post-school qualifications obtained outside of basic education at NQF levels 2 to 10. This includes: vocational certificates, certificates (for learners with less than a grade 12), certificates (for learners with grade 12), diplomas (for learners with less than a grade 12), diplomas (for learners with grade 12), higher diplomas, bachelor degrees, and post-graduate degrees (honours, masters, doctoral).<sup>5</sup>

These qualifications are obtained from public universities, private universities, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, private colleges, or any other accredited post-school institutions where the qualification programs are 6 months or more in duration and full-time.

### High value qualification:

High value qualifications are a subset of the any qualifications category. They are labelled as high value as workers with these qualifications are less likely to be unemployed and earn higher wages than workers with other qualifications.<sup>6</sup> High value qualifications are at NQF levels 6 to 10 and include: diplomas (for learners both with less than grade 12 and for those with grade 12), higher diplomas, bachelor degrees and post-graduate degrees (at honours, masters, doctoral).

Qualifications at NQF levels above 6 are obtained exclusively from public and private universities, while qualifications at NQF levels 5 and 6 can be obtained from public and private universities, public TVET or private colleges, or any other accredited post-school institutions.

### Where does the data come from?

The analysis on the Siyaphambili website uses the Post-Apartheid Labour Market Series (PALMS) data version 3.3, augmented with the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) 2020:Q1. This is publicly available Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) data. In addition, population estimates from the Thembisa model are used to calculate the number of people with qualifications.<sup>7</sup>

The PALMS data series is useful for measuring and tracking the level of educational attainment as well as other labour market indicators in the post-apartheid South African population. The surveys ask the question 'What is the highest level of education that you have successfully completed?' and respondents choose from a list of post-school qualifications such as degrees, diplomas, certificates or N-qualifications.

The tables containing the values shown in the graphs can be downloaded in Excel format on the Siyaphambili website.

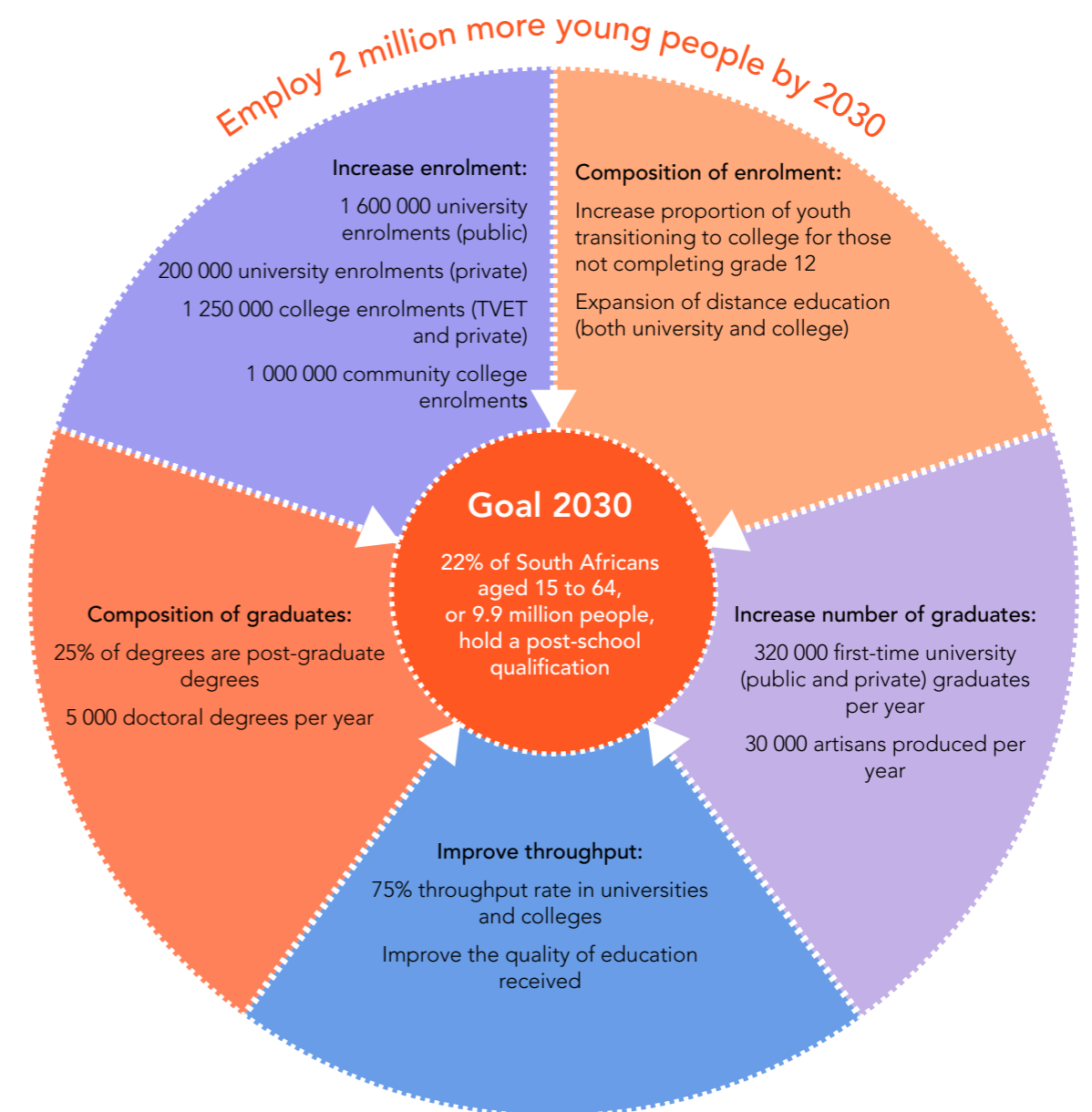
## Where does Goal 2030 come from?

South Africa's NDP is filled with an extensive list of bold goals, which collectively aim to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. Yet, President Cyril Ramaphosa declared in his June 2019 State of the Nation Address<sup>8</sup> that South Africa has made insufficient progress in meeting the NDP targets and proposed focussing on five key indicators.

One of the five key indicators is to **employ 2 million more young people by 2030**. Goal 2030 is derived by **aligning this indicator with the other enrolment and graduation rate targets set out in the NDP 2030<sup>9</sup> for the Post-school Education and Training sector**.

### Goal 2030 – unifying South Africa's NDP 2030

Employment and Post-school Education and Training targets



## Who is the Siyaphambili website designed for?

The Siyaphambili website is a public platform available to everyone to view and use; from policy makers to citizens. Researchers and journalists can rely on the site for quick access to accurate information about post-school education and training attainment in South Africa. The Siyaphambili website also provides a public and transparent platform to monitor progress, via Goal 2030, towards the NDP 2030 post-school education and employment goals.

A study<sup>10</sup> by the Siyaphambili Post-school Research group on the flow of information between university and government stakeholders, finds that web-based dashboards are one of the most used, and most favoured, methods to distribute institutional information. Furthermore, stakeholders recognised the need to pay more

attention to building a culture of collecting, sharing and using evidence for planning, policy and other forms of decision making.

The Siyaphambili website can assist this process by presenting publicly available data in a convenient medium. This platform also holds the potential to co-ordinate future research output.

Institutional providers, the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Higher Education and Training, along with public and private sector partnerships, need to work together to increase post-school qualification attainment in South Africa. This holistic and collaborative effort is necessary to enact the large-scale systematic change needed to reach Goal 2030.

If you are interested in reading further about the development of the Siyaphambili website, please see the report *Developing Siyaphambili: A Stronger South African Nation Website. Moving towards a unified goal to combat inequality and unemployment.*

## Endnotes

- 1 Lam, D., Finn, A., and Leibbrandt, M. (2015). Schooling inequality, returns to schooling, and earnings inequality: Evidence from Brazil and South Africa. WIDER Working Paper no. 2015/050.
- 2 Van der Berg, S., and van Broekhuizen, H. (2012). Graduate unemployment in South Africa: A much exaggerated problem. Centre for Development and Enterprise, Stellenbosch University.
- 3 Ibid, (2015).
- 4 For further information about the NQF, see [Developing Siyaphambili: A Stronger South African Nation Website. Moving towards a unified goal to combat inequality and unemployment.](#)
- 5 These are the post-school qualification categories used by Statistics South Africa.
- 6 Branson, N., Culligan, S., and Tonini, S. (2019). What and where you study matters in the labour market: Unpacking how employment and wages vary by qualification and institution type. Siyaphambili report.
- 7 The weighted survey data falls far short of accurately estimating the number of students enrolled. Recognising this, the number estimates on the Siyaphambili website are calculated by applying the PALMS shares to the population estimate series as presented by the Thembisa model (version 4.2; Johnson, 2019).
- 8 Ramaphosa, C. (2019). State of the Nation Address 2019. Available at: <https://www.gov.za/speeches/2SONA2019>.
- 9 Republic of South Africa. (2012). National Development Plan 2030: Our future – make it work. Available at: [https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis\\_document/201409/ndp-2030-our-future-make-it-workr.pdf](https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/ndp-2030-our-future-make-it-workr.pdf)
- 10 Branson, N., Culligan, S., and Favish, J. (2020). Information Flows in the South African Post-school Education and Training sector: a focus on university and government stakeholders. Cape Town: SALDRU, UCT. (SALDRU Working Paper No. 263).

## Data

- Johnson, L. (2019). Thembisa version 4.2: A model for evaluating the impact of HIV/AIDS in South Africa. Centre for Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Research working paper. Available at: [https://www.thembisa.org/content/downloadPage/Thembisa4\\_2report](https://www.thembisa.org/content/downloadPage/Thembisa4_2report).
- Kerr, A. Lam, D. and M. Wittenberg. Post-Apartheid Labour Market Series 1993-2019 [dataset]. Version 3.3. Cape Town: DataFirst [producer and distributor], 2019. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25828/gtr1-8r20>.
- Statistics South Africa. Quarterly Labour Force Survey 2020: Q1 [dataset]. Version 1. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa [producer], 2020. Cape Town: DataFirst [distributor], 2020. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25828/vkhhb-2j69>.

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