



# THE BURDEN OF A GENDER

Amid widespread legal and policy support for women's rights in South Africa, systemic issues continue to plague South African women. To better understand this perspective a variety of issues need to be unpacked as inequalities often converge in ways that multiply deprivation. In this paper, we discuss possible solutions to deliver better outcomes for South African women.

## BEING A WOMAN IN SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa, female-headed households are predominantly responsible for all tasks related to domesticity, including the provision for and the care of children and extended family members. According to Stats SA (2022) 42.1% of households in South Africa are headed by females and this figure jumps

to 47.8% in rural South Africa. Female-headed households (FHH) on average, contain a larger proportion of children. (Stats SA, 2013).

Another affliction for South African women is the burden of raising children alone. South Africa has one of the highest rates of fatherlessness in the world. Research conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the South African Race Relations Institute (SARRI) over a period of 5 years showed that 60% of SA children have absent fathers, more than 40% of South Africans are single parents and 51% of these mothers struggle to afford day to day household expenses. Women are disproportionately affected by any resulting social and economic downturns as FHH are poorer than male headed households.

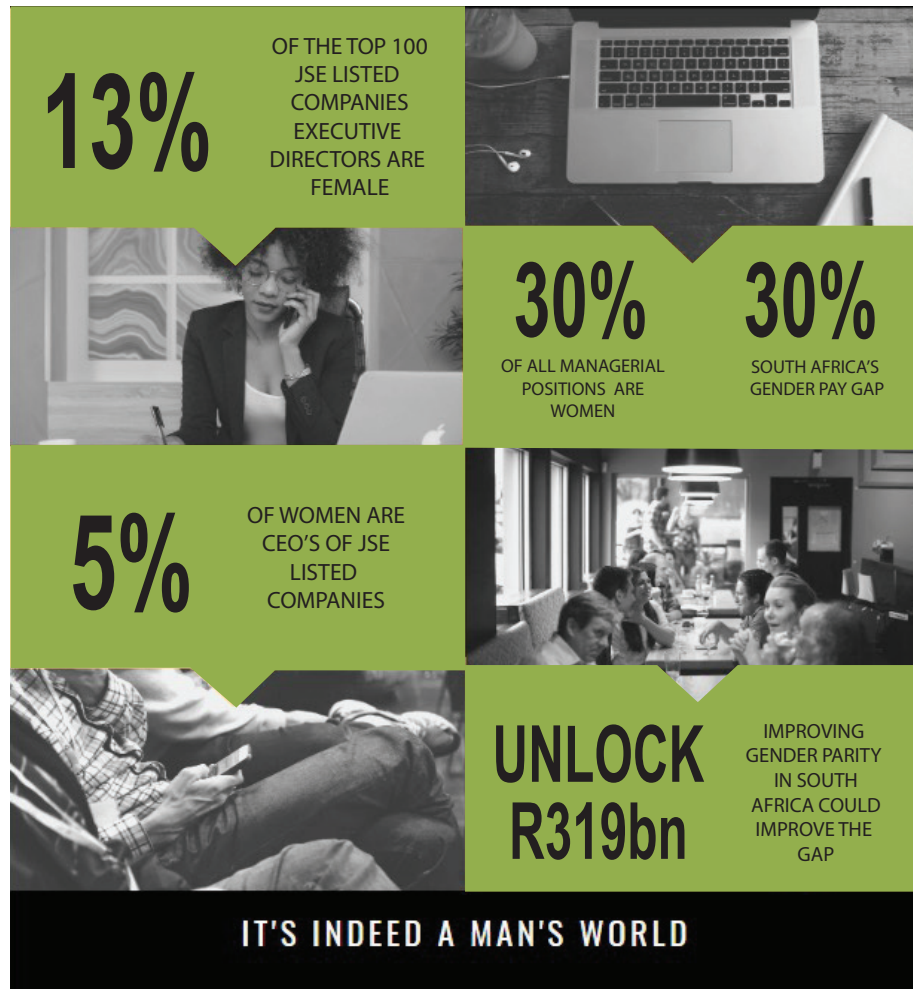


GENDER EQUALITY IS  
NOT ONLY A  
FUNDAMENTAL  
HUMAN RIGHT, BUT A  
NECESSARY  
FOUNDATION  
FOR A PEACEFUL,  
PROSPEROUS  
AND SUSTAINABLE  
WORLD

UNITED NATIONS

# IT'S A MANS WORLD

From a transformation perspective, there are evidently barriers and challenges for women as they face an arguably disproportionate amount of structural scepticism that may not be addressed by even the best-intentioned policies or corporate workshops.



# INVESTORS CAN MAKE IT BETTER:

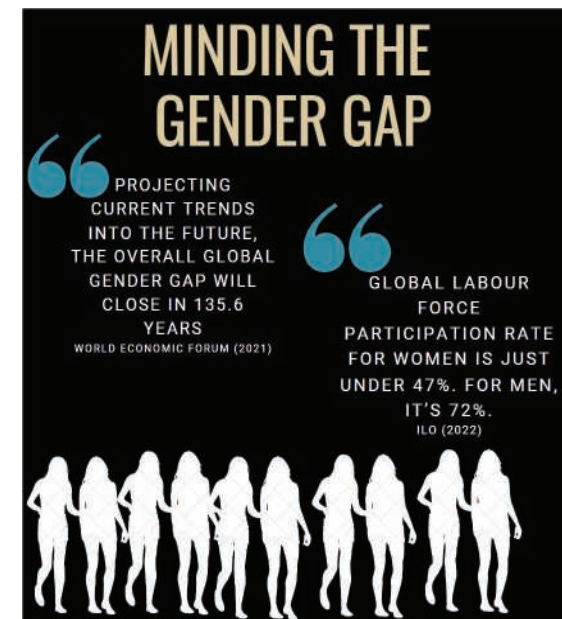
Improving gender parity could unlock R319 billion into South Africa's GDP (Accenture, 2019) as the cost of not including women in the economy compares to a loss of 3.9% of annual GDP in South Africa. Therefore, increasing female workforce participation is a key to boosting South Africa's productivity and innovation.

Practically, as investors we could apply active ownership methods such as engagement with boards of investee companies. This can assist in promoting gender equality in the workplace which will increase organisational performance increase strategic relevance and lastly increase competitive advantage of companies to attract talent and retain employees.

**Investors can engage on the below aspects:**

- Promoting family-friendly policies and working conditions
- Promoting women to senior and leadership positions
- Ensuring female representatives at board and management level.
- Providing employment-protected paid maternity and paternity leave to working mothers and fathers

- Staff benefits for women to have access to housing, data, childcare
- Provide access to work study bursaries for women to study
- Provide incentives for women to participate more hours in the labour force
- Raise awareness of gender stereotypes
- Eliminate the discriminatory gender wage gap through strengthening company frameworks and its enforcement for combating all forms of discrimination in pay, recruitment, training and promotion
- Promoting pay transparency



# Allocating Capital

The Global Impact Investing Network (GIIN) uses the term 'gender lens investing' and defines this as: "Investment strategies applied to an allocation or to the entirety of an investment portfolio, which seek to examine gender dynamics to better inform investment decisions and/or intentionally and measurably address gender disparities."

## This comprises of two broad categories:

1. Investing with a specific focus on women with the intent to address gender issues or promote gender equity
2. Mainstreaming gender in investment decisions.

*Gender Lens Investing encapsulates the following entry points for investors:*

- Providing capital to women-led and gender-forward businesses
- Providing capital to products and services with impact on women
- Providing capital to businesses that have a high percentage of women in the value chain
- Promoting gender diversity by providing opportunities for women to thrive through human capital strategies that include, talent pipeline, retention, recruitment and promotion
- Applying a gender lens across investment processes by mitigating gender bias and identifying opportunities in deal structuring, post investment engagement, deal origination, evaluation and exits

Despite the disparaging numbers, surely as society we need to at the very least concede that reducing gender-based discrimination could yield substantial economic benefits and therefore as investors we should care about how and why gender inequalities affect our investment thesis.

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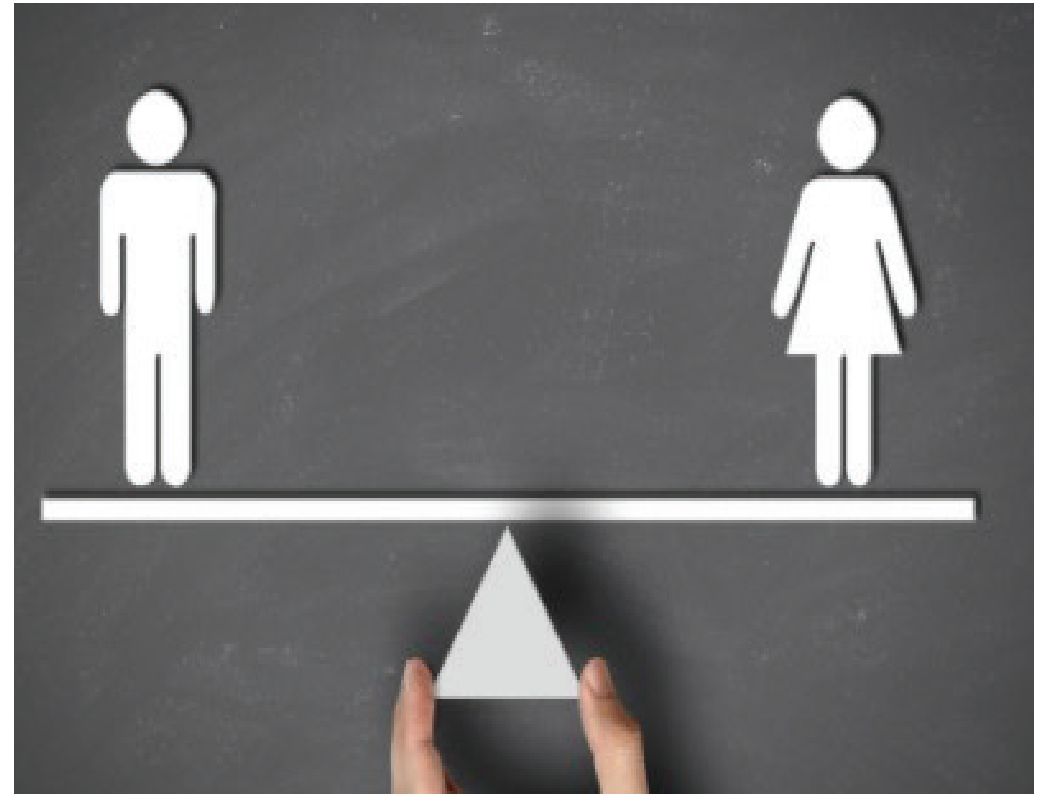
THE SHIFT OCCURS WHEN THERE IS A

MOVEMENT FROM INVESTMENTS THAT BENEFIT

WOMEN, AND, FINALLY, THOSE THAT EMPOWER WOMEN.

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