South Africa

Human Capital Index 2020

This brief provides an update to the Human Capital Index (HCI). First launched in 2018, the HCI measures the amount of human capital that a child born today can expect to attain by age 18. It conveys the productivity of the next generation of workers compared to a benchmark of complete education and full health. Worldwide a child born in 2020 can expect, on average, to be 56 percent as productive as she could be when she grows up. All data represent the status of countries pre-COVID-19.

The Human Capital Index

Human Capital Index. A child born in South Africa today will be 43 percent as productive when she grows up as she could be if she enjoyed complete education and full health. This is higher than the average for Sub-Saharan Africa region but lower than the average for Upper middle income countries. Between 2010 and 2020, the HCI value for South Africa remained approximately the same at 0.43. Figure 1 shows how the HCI and each of the components evolved over time.

- **Probability of Survival to Age 5.** 97 out of 100 children born in South Africa survive to age 5.
- **Expected Years of School.** In South Africa, a child who starts school at age 4 can expect to complete 10.2 years of school by her 18th birthday.
- **Harmonized Test Scores.** Students in South Africa score 343 on a scale where 625 represents advanced attainment and 300 represents minimum attainment.
- **Learning-adjusted Years of School.** Factoring in what children actually learn, expected years of school is only 5.6 years.
- **Adult Survival Rate.** Across South Africa, 69 percent of 15-year olds will survive until age 60. This statistic is a proxy for the range of health risks that a child born today would experience as an adult under current conditions.
- **Healthy Growth (Not Stunted Rate).** 73 out of 100 children are not stunted. 27 out of 100 children are stunted, and so are at risk of cognitive and physical limitations that can last a lifetime.

Differences in HCI Across Gender and Socio-economic Groups

In South Africa, the HCI for girls is higher than for boys. Table 1 shows gender disaggregation for each of the HCI components.

In South Africa, there are not sufficient data to disaggregate HCI by socio-economic groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HCI</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survival to Age 5</td>
<td>0.96</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expected Years of School</td>
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<td>Harmonized Test Scores</td>
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<td>359</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning-adjusted Years of School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult Survival Rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Stunted Rate</td>
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<td>0.75</td>
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