

# South Africa



## REGION: SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

**Also included in this region:** Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania

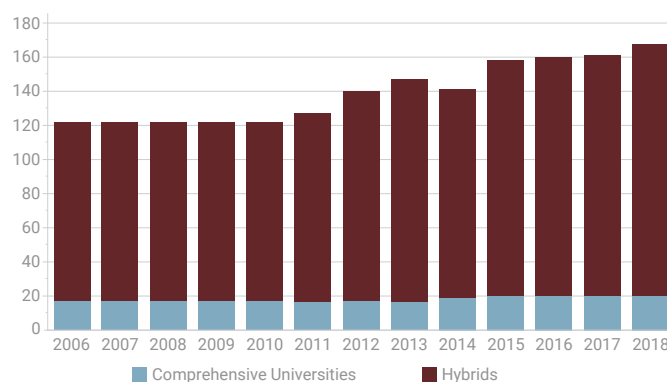
## PART I: ENROLMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS

The South African HE system follows the Northern European model. About 70% of all HE students were enrolled in comprehensive universities in 2018, with the rest attending hybrids. Enrolments rose by about 60% between 2006 and 2018, from just over 800,000 to just under 1.3 million. This overall growth was slower than across the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa and the Global South. The number of HEIs also increased over this period, mainly in the private hybrid sector, but more modestly such that average institution-size grew over the period. Just under 85% of students attended public providers in 2018, which was close to the average in the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa.

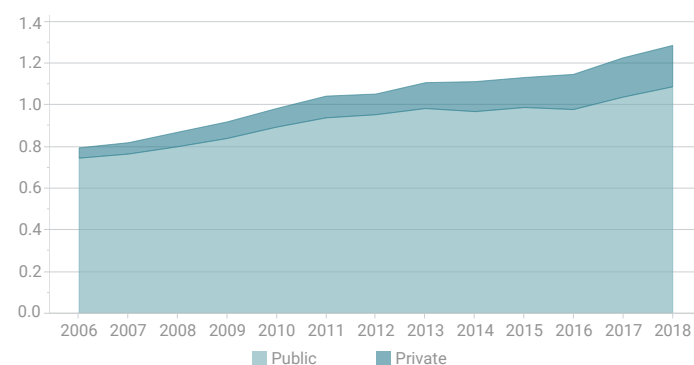
**TABLE 1** – Types of higher education providers

CATEGORY	INSTITUTIONS	INSTITUTIONS COUNT IN 2018		
		PUB.	PRIV.	TOTAL
<b>Comprehensive universities</b>	Universities; Comprehensive universities	20	0	20
<b>Hybrids</b>	Universities of technology; Private higher education institutions	6	141	147

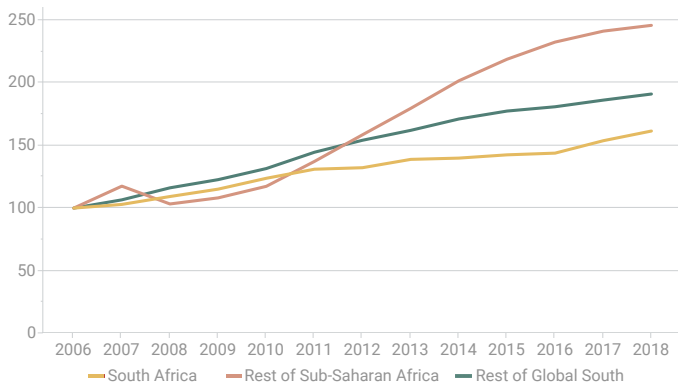
**FIGURE 1** – Numbers of institutions by type, 2006-2018



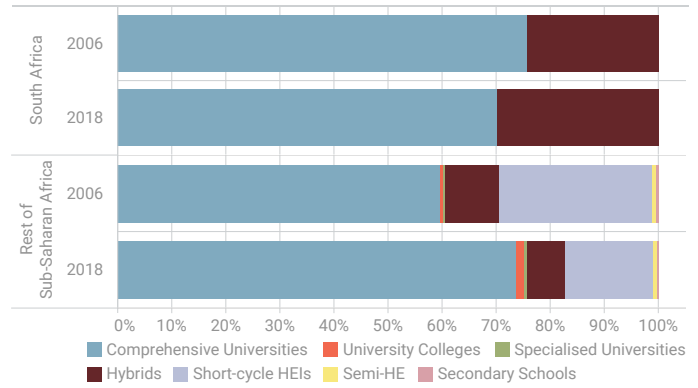
**FIGURE 2** – Total enrolments with public and private higher education providers, 2006-2018 (Millions)



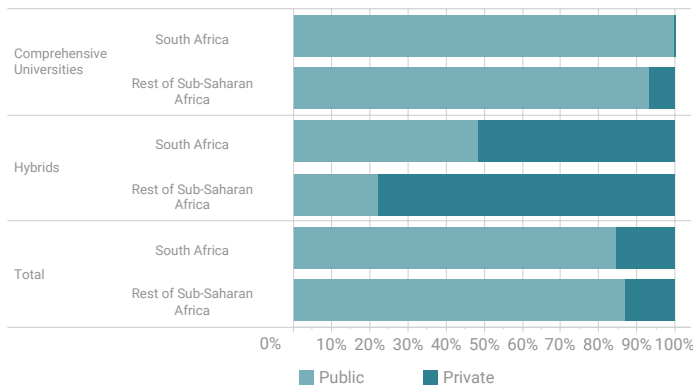
**FIGURE 3** – Changes in enrolment, in South Africa, the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the Global South, 2006-2018



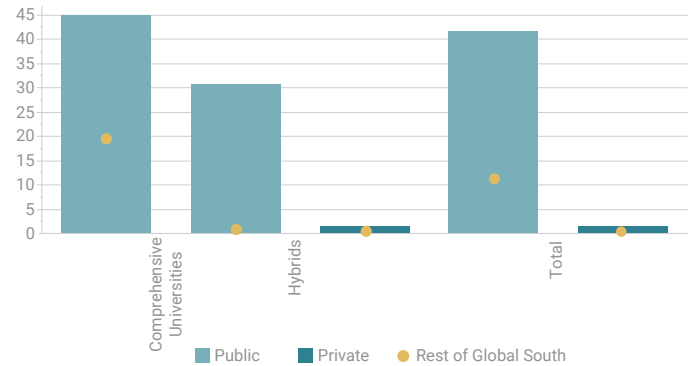
**FIGURE 4** – Share of enrolments by institution type in South Africa and the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, 2006 and 2018 (2006=100)



**FIGURE 5** – Share of enrolments in public and private institutions, by institution type, in South Africa and the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, 2018



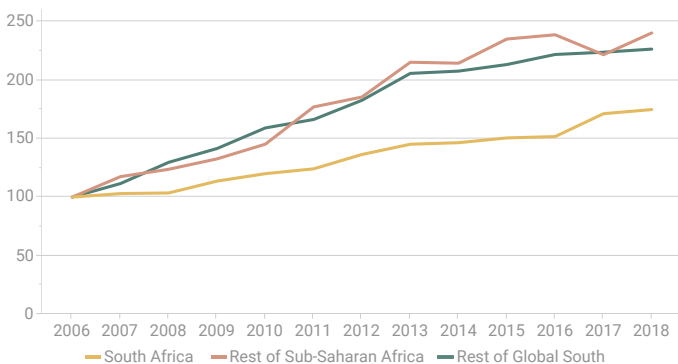
**FIGURE 6** – Average institution-size by institution type in South Africa and the rest of the Global South, 2018 (Thousands)



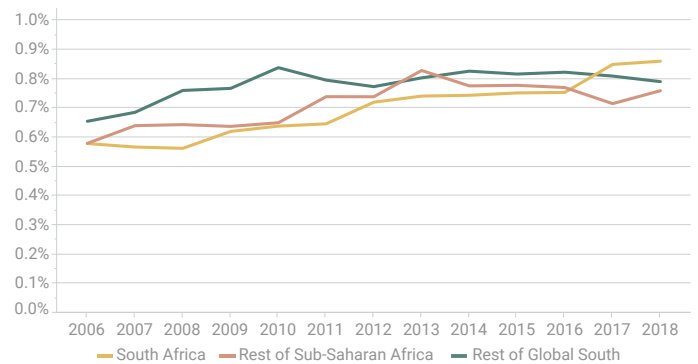
**PART II: HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCING**

Public HE spending in South Africa rose by approximately 75% between 2006 and 2018. Transfers to public HEIs rose slightly more slowly than overall public HE spending, and only slightly faster than enrolments, such that transfers per-student increased by less than 10%. South Africa public spending on HE rose relative to GDP from under 0.6% in 2006 to 0.85% in 2018, going from below to above the averages for the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa and the Global South.

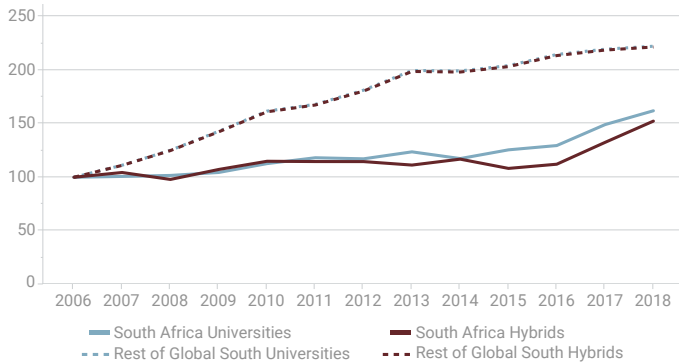
**FIGURE 7** – Change in real total public spending on higher education in South Africa, the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the Global South, 2006-2018 (2006=100)



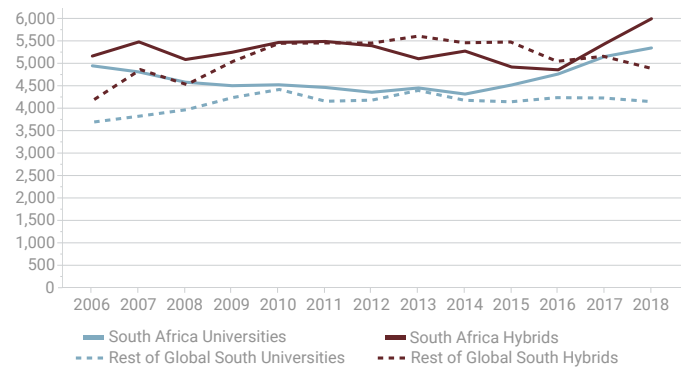
**FIGURE 8** – Total public spending on higher education relative to GDP South Africa, the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the Global South, 2006-2018



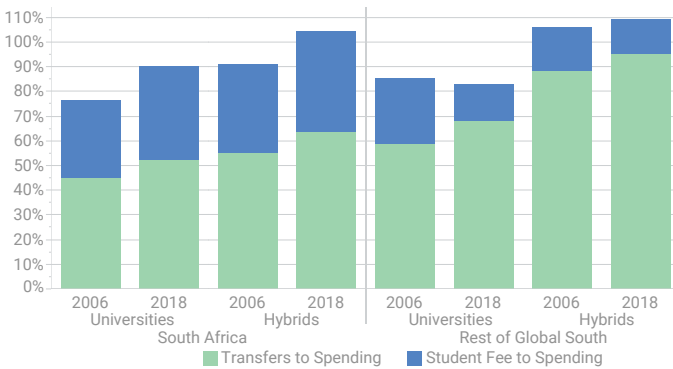
**FIGURE 9** – Change in real government transfers to public institutions by institution-type in South Africa and the rest of the Global South, 2006-2018 (2006=100)



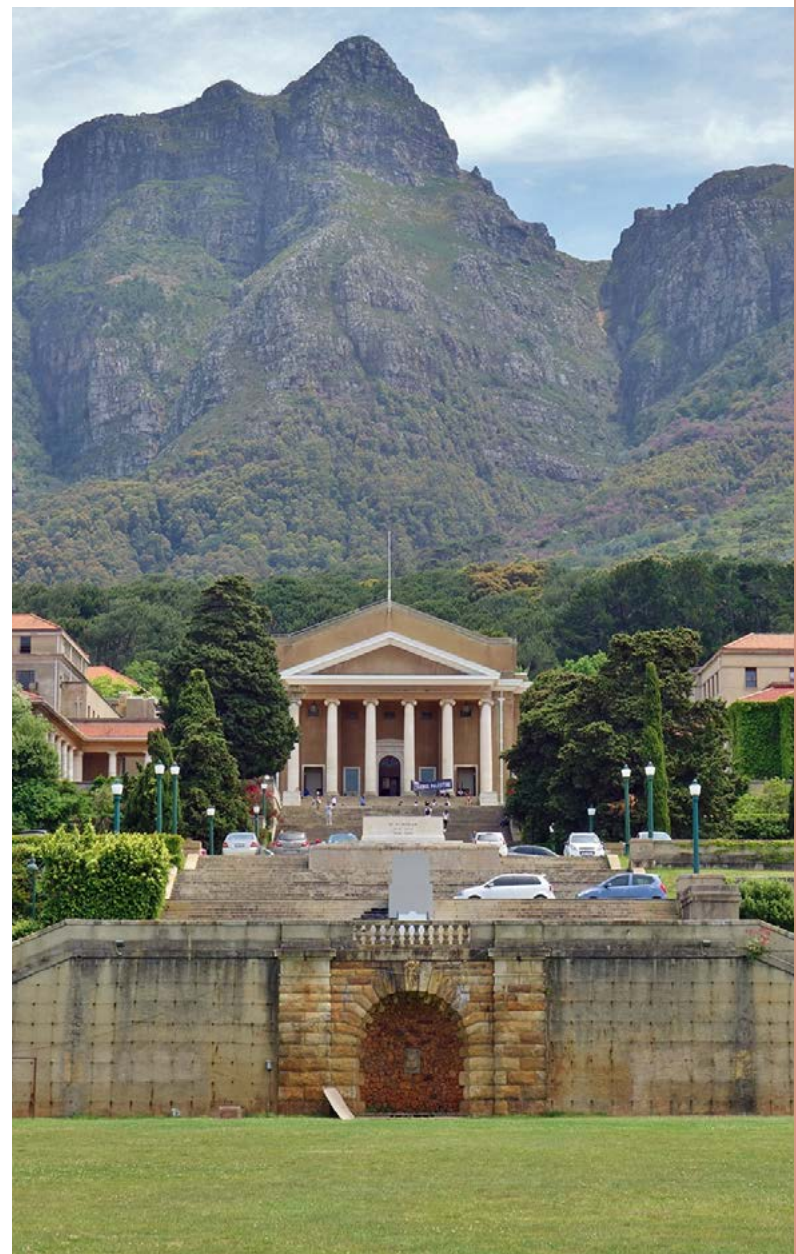
**FIGURE 10** – Per-student government transfers to public institutions by institution-type in real PPP, in South Africa and the rest of the Global South, 2006-2018



**FIGURE 11** – Government transfers relative to total institutional spending of public institutions by institution-type in South Africa and the rest of the Global South, 2006 and 2018



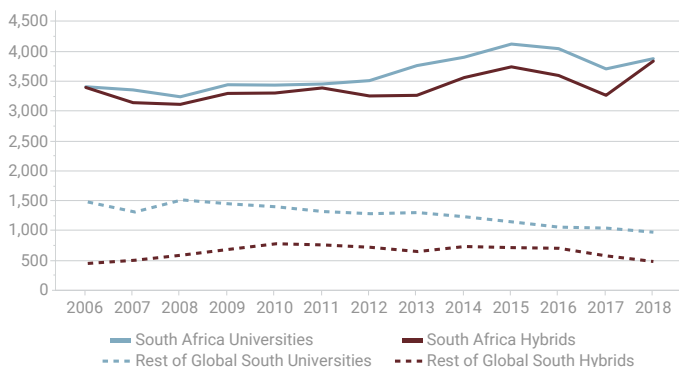
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**PART III: STUDENT FEES**

All students in South Africa pay tuition fees under an undifferentiated regime. Fees at public HEIs remained relatively consistent over our period of interest, although there was a small increase of less than 15% just before the country’s “#feesmustfall” movement launched in 2015.

**FIGURE 12** – Fee revenues per student paying typical rates at public institutions by institution type in PPP, 2006-2018



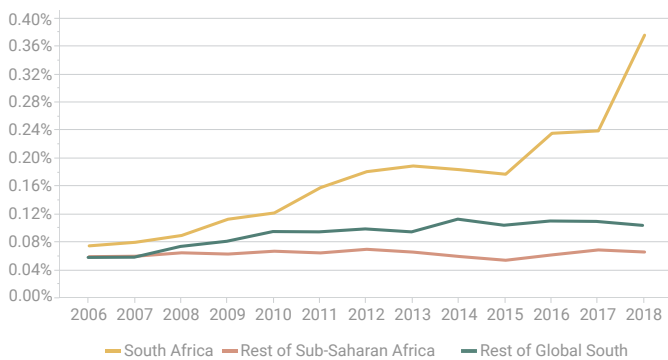
**PART IV: STUDENT FINANCIAL AID**

Government student financial aid in South Africa is a mix of loans and grants. Loan disbursements outstripped grants by about 9:1 in 2018. Both the proportion of students receiving loans and the average size of loans rose substantially over time, in particular following the 2015 “#feesmustfall” protests. Relative to GDP, total student aid disbursements rose from 0.08% to over 0.36% between 2006 and 2018. This put South Africa far above the averages for the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa and the Global South.

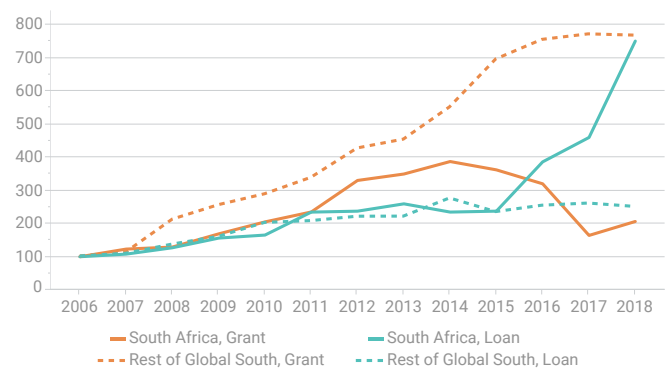
**TABLE 2 – Student financial aid regime, including recipients and amounts disbursed in 2018**

CATEGORY	PROGRAMS	BASIS OF ALLOCATION	RECIPIENTS	AMOUNTS DISBURSED (USD)
<b>Grants</b>	National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) grants, including those for students with disabilities, under the National Skills Fund, under the Thuthuka Fund, Funza Lushaka teacher bursaries, funds under sector education and training authorities and other funds.	Need-based	33,388	290,630,362
<b>Loans</b>	National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) loans, including for the general allocation, first year entrants, the final year program and the teacher allocation.	Need-based	370,001	2,526,725,087

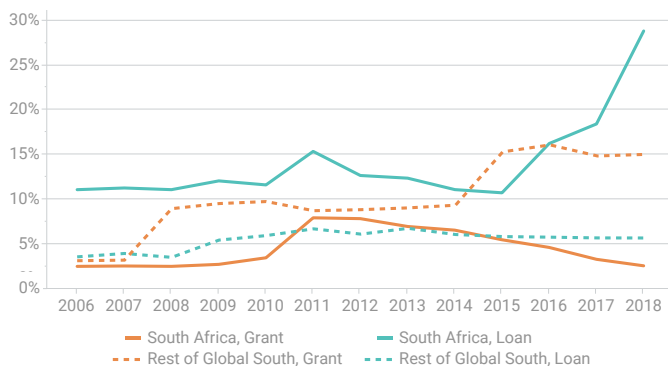
**FIGURE 13 – Total disbursements to students in financial aid relative to gross domestic product in South Africa, the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the Global South, 2006-2018**



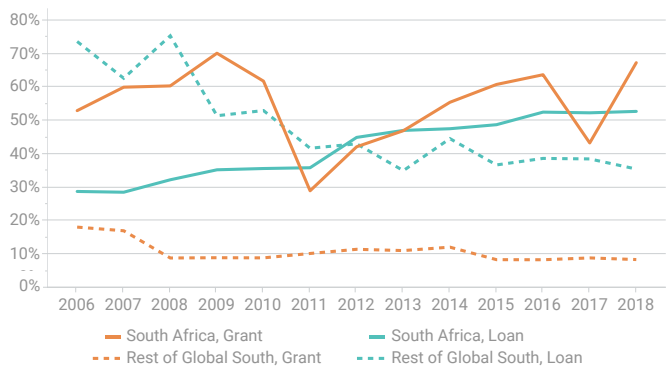
**FIGURE 14 – Change in amounts disbursed to students by form of financial aid in South Africa and other Global South countries that offer financial aid of this type, 2006-2018 (2006=100)**



**FIGURE 15 – Share of higher education students receiving student financial aid by type in South Africa and other Global South countries that offer financial aid of this type, 2006-2018**



**FIGURE 16 – Financial aid per recipient relative to GDP per capita by form of financial aid in South Africa and other Global South countries that offer financial aid of this type, 2006-2018**



**\*Note: For more on methodology and data quality please see Appendices A and B.**