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ANNUAL
REPORT:
SDG REPORT

5 GENDER
EQUALITY



SDG 5: GENDER EQUALITY

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UJ SDG REPORT 2023
SDG 5: GENDER EQUALITY

5 **GENDER**
EQUALITY



Report on the University of Johannesburg's Contribution to Sustainable Development Goal 5

SDG 5: Gender Equality

OVERVIEW: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the University of Johannesburg's (UJ) contributions to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) on Gender Equality during the 2023 academic year. UJ has made significant strides in fostering gender equity across its academic, administrative, and social environments. UJ's efforts to achieve gender equality are encapsulated within its Gender Equity Framework, which serves as a cornerstone for a broad range of initiatives aimed at improving gender parity at the institution. The framework provides a comprehensive approach to policy development, programme interventions, and awareness-raising activities.

Throughout 2023, UJ implemented key programmes such as the UJ Women's Leadership Development Programme (UJWLDP), which provided leadership development for women within the university. The university also tackled gender-based violence (GBV) through targeted campaigns and support systems, while engaging in the mentorship of emerging female leaders across various disciplines. UJ has firmly integrated gender equity into its

institutional transformation efforts, demonstrating a long-term commitment to inclusivity and empowerment for all.

This report highlights UJ's gender equity policies, activities, and outcomes achieved in 2023, underscoring the university's role in shaping a more inclusive higher education system and contributing to the broader global agenda of SDG 5.

INTRODUCTION

The University of Johannesburg's (UJ) commitment to promoting gender equality aligns with its strategic objectives, reflecting a deep commitment to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5, which aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Gender equality has been a core value at UJ, influencing the university's policies, teaching and learning practices, research, community engagement, and leadership development.

In 2023, UJ undertook numerous initiatives to enhance its gender equality efforts. These included the development of gender-sensitive policies, the launch of gender-based violence (GBV) awareness campaigns, the creation of mentorship and leadership development opportunities for women, and the establishment of a robust Gender Equity Framework. These efforts underscore UJ's role as a progressive institution that prioritises gender equality and aims to create an inclusive, safe, and empowering environment for its staff and students.

This report offers a comprehensive overview of UJ's gender equity activities in 2023, detailing specific programmes, initiatives, and achievements. It explores the university's ongoing work to eliminate gender-based discrimination, increase women's representation in leadership roles, and enhance gender sensitivity across the institution.

GENDER EQUITY POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

At the heart of UJ's gender equality initiatives lies its Gender Equity Framework, which was launched as a strategic component within the university's Institutional Transformation Plan. This framework aims to integrate gender equity into every aspect of UJ's operations, ensuring that gender considerations are embedded in policies, procedures, and practices across academic, administrative, and student services.

In 2023, UJ took significant steps toward formalising its commitment to gender equity with the development of two essential policies: the Anti-Discrimination Policy and the Gender Inclusion Policy. The Anti-Discrimination Policy provides clear guidelines for preventing and addressing discrimination based on gender, ensuring that all students, staff, and faculty can work and study in an environment free from bias and inequality. The Gender Inclusion Policy, on the other hand, is aimed at promoting inclusivity for individuals of all genders, fostering a culture of respect, and ensuring that women and gender minorities have equal opportunities in all areas of university life.

These policies serve as the foundation of UJ's broader gender equity strategy and align with the university's goal of achieving a more equitable and inclusive institution. UJ's Transformation Unit, tasked with overseeing institutional transformation initiatives, has been central to the implementation of these policies. In 2023, the Transformation Unit collaborated with key stakeholders across the university to assess existing gender imbalances and propose solutions to enhance women's representation, particularly in leadership positions.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

Addressing gender-based violence (GBV) remains one of UJ's most urgent priorities, particularly as the university community, like many other institutions, continues to grapple with the pervasive impacts of GBV. In 2023, UJ intensified its efforts to prevent GBV and provide support for those affected by violence.

One of the standout initiatives was the university's GBV Awareness Campaign, launched by the Transformation Unit in partnership with the Student Wellness Committee and UJ Sport. This campaign sought to raise awareness of GBV within the university and educate the community on how to recognise, prevent, and report incidents of violence. The campaign featured several pop-up activations during major events, including televised games hosted by UJ Sport, where informational materials on GBV prevention and resources for victims were distributed.

In addition to these awareness efforts, UJ established comprehensive support systems for students and staff affected by GBV. These included dedicated counselling services, a GBV Support Hotline, and campus-based workshops focusing on mental health and recovery. UJ's commitment to supporting victims of GBV was demonstrated through its proactive stance on providing immediate assistance and advocating for systemic changes that foster a safer environment on campus.

UJ also organised GBV awareness workshops in student residences and during key student events, ensuring that all members of the university community were educated on the importance of mutual respect, consent, and safe behaviour. These workshops were delivered by trained professionals and were designed to equip students with the knowledge and tools to act responsibly in preventing GBV and supporting survivors.

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

A central pillar of UJ's gender equality strategy is the development of female leadership across all sectors of the university. In 2023, the UJ Women's Leadership Development Programme (UJWLDP) emerged as one of the university's flagship initiatives aimed at empowering women in leadership roles. The programme provides emerging female leaders with the skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary to navigate leadership positions, while addressing gender-specific challenges in the workplace.

The UJWLDP focuses on leadership training, mentorship, and practical experience. In 2023, the programme graduated 20 delegates who participated in a year-long action learning project, where they worked on gender-related challenges at UJ and developed real-world solutions. These projects were specifically designed to create lasting impacts within the university, addressing issues such as gender inequality in academic leadership and the underrepresentation of women in key administrative positions.

In addition to the leadership programme, UJ also launched the Women in Leadership Journey Book Project. This project documented the experiences of women in leadership roles at UJ, offering a platform for them to share their leadership journeys and the obstacles they have overcome. The project aims to inspire other women within the university to pursue leadership roles, fostering a sense of community and support among female leaders.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC DIALOGUE ON GENDER EQUALITY

Beyond the university's internal initiatives, UJ also played a vital role in shaping the public discourse on gender equality. In 2023, the university organised several high-profile events aimed at advancing the conversation on gender empowerment and the challenges faced by women in South Africa.

International Women's Day was commemorated at UJ with a series of events hosted by the Women's Forum. These events featured influential speakers, including Monica Geingos, the First Lady of Namibia, who spoke about the importance of creating equitable spaces for women in all sectors of society. Geingos' participation highlighted the university's ongoing commitment to fostering public dialogue on gender equality, both locally and internationally.

Additionally, UJ hosted the Helen Joseph Memorial Lecture, an event that commemorates the legacy of Helen Joseph, a South African anti-apartheid activist and feminist. The lecture featured prominent gender equality advocates and provided an opportunity for university staff and students to engage with leaders in the gender

equality movement. These events not only raised awareness but also allowed UJ to position itself as a thought leader in the fight for gender justice.

GENDER EQUALITY IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

Gender equality is also embedded in UJ's approach to teaching and learning. The university has made strides in creating an inclusive curriculum that challenges gender norms and promotes the study of gender-related issues. In 2023, UJ continued to offer courses that address gender equality from interdisciplinary perspectives, ensuring that students from all disciplines are equipped with the knowledge to address gender issues in their careers and communities.

Programmes such as the Women's Leadership Development Programme (UJWLDP) and gender-sensitive course modules focus on the representation of women in areas such as business, science, technology, and the arts. These programmes aim to empower students to challenge gender stereotypes and advocate for gender equality in the workforce and society at large.

Furthermore, UJ has emphasised the importance of female representation in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) disciplines, which are traditionally male-dominated fields. The university continues to offer scholarships, mentorship programmes, and networking opportunities for women pursuing studies in STEM, ensuring that they have equal opportunities to succeed and thrive.

CONCLUSION

The University of Johannesburg has made remarkable progress in advancing gender equality in 2023. Through the development of the Gender Equity Framework, the implementation of the UJ Women's Leadership Development Programme, GBV awareness campaigns, and extensive community engagement activities, UJ has demonstrated its commitment to creating a gender-inclusive environment both within and beyond the university. These initiatives reflect UJ's ongoing efforts to eliminate gender-based discrimination, empower women, and create a campus culture that supports gender equity.

As UJ continues its transformation, the university remains committed to furthering these efforts and expanding its initiatives to ensure that gender equality remains at the forefront of institutional priorities. The work done in 2023 sets a strong foundation for the university's future contributions to SDG 5 and its continued role as a leader in gender equity within higher education.

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