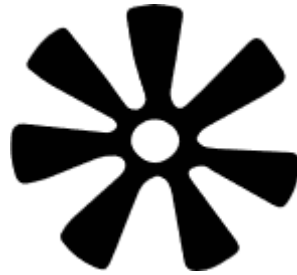


Knowledge Institutions in Africa and their development 1960-2020

Gabon

Introduction

This report about the development of the knowledge institutions in Gabon was made as part of the preparations for the AfricaKnows! Conference (2 December 2020 – 28 February 2021) in Leiden, and elsewhere, see www.africaknows.eu.



Reports like these can never be complete, and there might also be mistakes. Additions and corrections are welcome! Please send those to dietzaj@asc.leidenuniv.nl

Highlights

- 1 Gabon's population increased from 501,000 in 1960, via 950,000 in 1990, to 2.2 million in 2020.
- 2 Gabon's literacy rate is 85% (15 years and older, 2018).
- 3 The so-called education index (used as part of the human development index) improved between 1990 (earlier data not available) and 2018: from 0.473 to 0.636 (it can vary between 0 and 1).
- 4 Regional inequality is consistent and low. Performing best overall is Libreville-Port Gentil. The region with the fastest development is Estuaire (the province where Libreville is located). Performing worst overall is Ogooue Lolo. The slowest developing province is Moyen Ogooue.
- 5 The Mean Years of Schooling for adults improved between 1990 and 2018, from 4.3 years to 8.3 years. There is high regional inequality until 2010.
- 6 The Expected Years of Schooling for children improved somewhat: from 11.1 to 12.1 years. There is low regional inequality throughout the period.
- 7 Gabon has had higher education institutions since the late 1950s. Currently there are about 32 tertiary knowledge institutions in Gabon, 15 public and 17 private ones. There are probably around 16,000 students in Gabon, and there are between 6,000 and 7,000 Gabonese students abroad.
- 8 Gabon's universities are not in the 4icu top 200 of African institutions.
- 9 Think tanks: Gabon has one official think tank (Iboga) and several research institutes.

- 10 Museums: information was found about three museums in Gabon: one in Libreville (Estuaire), two in Moyen Ogooue.

Part 1: The Story

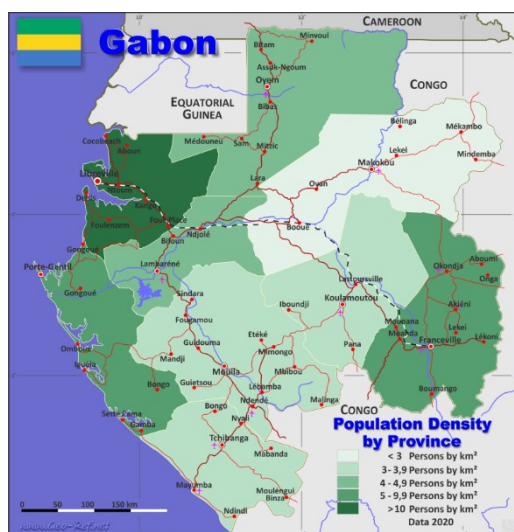
Gabon's demographic and education development

Gabon, officially the Gabonese Republic (French: République gabonaise), is a country on the west coast of Central Africa. Gabon is bordered by Equatorial Guinea, the Republic of the Congo, and the Gulf of Guinea to the west.

Gabon has been under French colonial rule since the late 19th century, and as one of the territories of French Equatorial Africa from 1910 until 1959. These territories became independent in 1960.

Abundant petroleum and foreign private investment have helped to make Gabon one of the most prosperous countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, with the 7th highest HDI and the fourth highest GDP per capita (PPP) (after Mauritius, Equatorial Guinea and the Seychelles) in the continent. GDP grew by more than 6% per year from 2010 to 2012. However, wealth and income in Gabon are distributed unequally.¹

Gabon's population increased from 501,000 in 1960 to 2.2 million in the second half of 2020. In 1960, only 17% of the population lived in cities (only 87,000 people), while the urban population has increased to 87% or 1.9 million people today. Gabon's largest city is the capital Libreville (population 578,000), followed by Port-Gentil (population 109,000). At 267,668 km² Gabon ranks 30th on area size. Gabon has an average population density of 9/km² (compared to about 511/km² in the Netherlands). The population is unevenly distributed:



¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabon>

Source: <http://www.geo-ref.net/en/gba.htm>

Gabon's life expectancy increased from 39 years for males and 42 years for females in 1960 to 65 years for males and 69 years for females currently. The median age first decreased from 27 years in 1960 to 19 years in 1995 (lowest year). Since then, it started to increase and is presently 22.5 years. In 1960 an average woman gave birth to 4.2 live-born children, which increased to 5.7 in 1985. Since then, the fertility rate is decreasing and currently an average woman gives birth to 4 live-born children².



Source: <http://nationsonline.org/oneworld/map/gabon-administrative-map.htm>

Literacy and enrolment

² <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/gabon-population/>

Gabon's adult literacy rate is (2018) 85%: men 86% and women 83%. Of the youth (15-24 years old) 22,000 males and 16,000 females were regarded as illiterate in 2018. For the adult population as a whole these figures are 97,000 for males and 108,000 for females.

Gabon's population of primary school age children (6-10 years) is about 250,000 children³. Education is compulsory from age 6 to age 15 (10 years). In 1997, 91% of the primary school age group attended primary school (later data unavailable). Children with the age to attend secondary school (11-17) are 281,000. 53% (gross) are attending secondary school according to the latest (but old) figures (2002): females 45% (1999) and males 51% (1999). Finally, 179,000 people are in the age category to attend tertiary education (people between 18 and 22). Gross enrolment rates for tertiary education were estimated at 8% in 2003, with females at 6%, and males at 10%⁴. This would mean that there are about 16,000 students in Gabon's higher education institutions. Campusfrance only gives data for Gabonese students in international mobility from 2011-2016. For these 6,000-7,000 students the main countries of destination for tertiary education have been France, Ghana, Morocco, South Africa and the United States. Up and coming are Italy, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Russia.⁵

Regional differentiation of education results, 1990-2018

The information provided by the Globaldatalab about the subregional human development index, its components and its indicators (<https://globaldatalab.org/shdi>) provides data for the period between 1990 and 2018, for nine provinces and a combined urban area of Gabon:

Estuaire
Haut Ogooue
Libreville-Port Gentil
Moyen Ogooue
Ngounie
Nyanga
Ogooue Ivindo
Ogooue Lolo
Ogooue Maritime
Woleu Ntem

³ <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/ga>

⁴ <https://www.indexmundi.com/facts/gabon/school-enrollment>

⁵ https://ressources.campusfrance.org/publications/mobilite_pays/en/gabon_en.pdf



Source: <http://www.mapsopensource.com/gabon-provinces-map.html>

The Globaldatalab provides data about the education index (one of the three indexes that together form the Human Development Index), and about two relevant indicators: mean years of schooling, showing the average education level of the adult population per region, and expected years of education, showing the expected number of years current children will attend schools. This excludes the religious schools and only deals with the official, state-based, school system.

We present the data for the years 1990 (earliest year available), 2000, 2010, and 2018 (the latest year available at the moment). See tables 1-4 in part 2 ('the data').

Education index

The education index has improved in all of Gabon's regions between 1990 and 2018 (see table 1 in part 2). Performing best overall is Libreville-Port Gentil. The region with the fastest development is Estuaire (the province where Libreville is located). Performing worst overall is Ogooue Lolo. The slowest developing province is Moyen Ogooue. Regional inequality is consistent and low.

Is there a correlation between the education index and population figures? We compare 1990 with 2018. See table 2 in part 2. Libreville-Port Gentil and Estuaire have the highest number of inhabitants. The provinces scoring lower on the education index are much more sparsely populated.

Mean years of schooling for adults

According to UNESCO, 'Mean Years of Schooling' is an indicator about the "average number of completed years of education of a country's population aged 25 years and older, excluding years spent repeating individual grades".⁶

The educational standard of the adult population of Gabon has improved in all of the regions in the period 1990-2018 (see table 3 in part 2). Regional inequality has been high at 2.5 until 2010, when it dropped to 1.9. Performing best overall is Libreville-Port Gentil. The regions with the fastest development are Estuaire and Ngounie. Performing worst overall is Ogooue

⁶ <http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/mean-years-schooling>

Lolo. The slowest developing province is Moyen Ogooue which is, however, not far behind Libreville-Port Gentil.

Expected years of schooling for children

UNDP defines the ‘expected years of schooling’ as the: “Number of years of schooling that a child of school entrance age can expect to receive if prevailing patterns of age-specific enrolment rates persist throughout the child’s life”.⁷

For Gabon’s children educational prospects have improved in all of the regions (see table 4 in part 2). Regional inequality has been consistently low throughout the period. Performing best overall is Libreville-Port Gentil. The region with the fastest development is Estuaire. Performing worst overall is Ogooue Maritime. The slowest developing regions are Moyen Ogooue and Woleu Ntem.

Historical Development of Private and Public Universities in Gabon

Gabon currently has 32 institutes for tertiary education. Gabon does not feature in the 4icu top 200 of African institutes.

Type	1960	1970	1980	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020
Public	1	2	7	9	10	10	11	12	12	15
Private	0	0	1	2	2	2	2	5	13	17
Total	1	2	8	11	12	12	13	17	25	32

(Sources: see part 2, tables 5 and 6)

Public Universities

Gabon has about 15 public institutions for tertiary education. Tertiary education started in the 1950s under French colonial rule with the Forestry Training Center (now Ecole nationale des Eaux et Forêts).



Université Omar Bongo⁸

The oldest official university is Université Omar Bongo, established in 1970 as Université nationale du Gabon, renamed in 1978 in honor of President Omar Bongo. Université Omar

⁷ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/expected-years-schooling-children-years>

⁸ Source: <https://lalibreville.com/gabon-a-luniversite-omar-bongo-de-libreville-les-travaux-de-renovation-ont-demarre/>

Bongo ranks first on the 4icu list for Gabon.

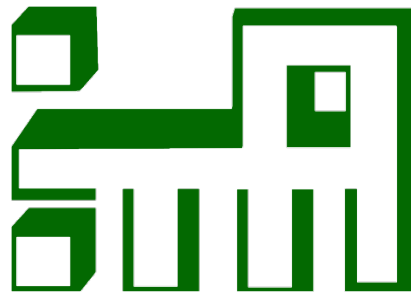


Université des Sciences et Techniques de Masuku⁹

Number two on 4icu's Gabon list is the Université des Sciences et Techniques de Masuku, which was established in the year 1986.

Private Universities

Gabon has about 17 private institutions for tertiary education. Private education started in the late 1970s, and strongly increased between 2010 and 2015.



Institut des Techniques Avancées¹⁰

Number three on 4icu's Gabon list is the private Institut des Techniques Avancées, established in 1989.

One private university, the *Université Virtuelle Privée du Gabon*, seems to have a religious (Islamic) affiliation.

Regional distribution of Gabon's Universities

The vast majority of universities and other knowledge institutions is located in or near the capital Libreville (see table 7 in part 2).

Think tanks and other knowledge institutions

According to the 2018 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report there are two think tanks in

⁹ Source: <http://univ-masuku.org/>

¹⁰ Source: <https://ita-gabon.com/index.php?page=Accueil>

Gabon. The report does not provide any further information. Google search did result in more information, among others Iboga:



Iboga Think Tank, logo

Un corps de garde indépendant, un laboratoire d'idées, d'actions portées par un ensemble d'acteurs culturels et une plate-forme qui accompagne les porteurs de projets liés à la culture en vue du développement à terme d'une industrie culturelle viable.

Autonome, IBOGA THINK TANK est apolitique et développe des projets pour contribuer à l'atteinte des objectifs de développement durables en direction des citoyens, avec une pleine ouverture aux différents acteurs du développement. IBOGA THINK TANK, c'est une plate-forme mettant en réseau les différentes parties prenantes du développement de la culture au Gabon et sa contribution à la diversification de l'économie nationale¹¹.

Gabon is also represented in the **Think Tank Club 2030 Afrique: Le Think Tank Club 2030 Afrique produit des rapports, des études, des analyses grâce à son pôle d'experts à destination des gouvernements africains¹².**

See part 2, table 8 for an overview of Think Tanks.



Musée National des Arts, Rites et Traditions¹³



Museums in Gabon

¹¹ <https://ga.linkedin.com/company/iboga-think-tank#:~:text=IBOGA%20THINK%20TANK%2C%20est%20un,d'une%20industrie%20culturelle%20viable.>

¹² <http://club-2030.com/>

¹³ Source: <https://www.lepratiquedugabon.com/le-musee-national/>

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According to Wikipedia there are two museums in Gabon: Musée National and Musée National des Arts, Rites et Traditions. Comparing locations and photos it seems to be the same museum.

Part 2: the data

Table 1: Gabon: Education index 1990-2018¹⁴

Region	1990	2000	2010	2018	2018/1990
Estuaire	0.437	0.498	0.596	0.641	1.47
Haut Ogooue	0.442	0.502	0.571	0.608	1.38
Libreville-Port Gentil	0.520	0.611	0.646	0.681	1.31
Moyen Ogooue	0.445	0.508	0.518	0.541	1.22
Ngounie	0.396	0.439	0.498	0.529	1.34
Nyanga	0.409	0.456	0.513	0.545	1.33
Ogooue Ivindo	0.417	0.471	0.509	0.537	1.29
Ogooue Lolo	0.386	0.428	0.488	0.519	1.34
Ogooue Maritime	0.422	0.483	0.503	0.527	1.25
Woleu Ntem	0.448	0.503	0.543	0.572	1.28
Total	0.473	0.545	0.600	0.636	1.34
Inequality	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.3	

Table 2: Gabon: changes in regional population between 1990 and 2018; population numbers in millions

Region	1990	2000	2010	2018	2018/1990
Estuaire	0.05	0.07	0.17	0.23	4.6
Haut Ogooue	0.10	0.13	0.15	0.20	2
Libreville-Port Gentil	0.48	0.62	0.87	1.14	2.38
Moyen Ogooue	0.04	0.06	0.06	0.07	1.75
Ngounie	0.06	0.08	0.10	0.13	2.17
Nyanga	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.06	1.5
Ogooue Ivindo	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.08	1.6
Ogooue Lolo	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.08	2
Ogooue Maritime	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.03	1.5
Woleu Ntem	0.08	0.10	0.10	0.12	1.5
Total	0.95	1.23	1.62	2.12	2.23

Table 3: Gabon: Regional data for 'mean years of schooling' for adults

Region	1990	2000	2010	2018	2018/1990
Estuaire	3.54	5.04	7.47	8.42	2.38
Haut Ogooue	3.47	4.93	6.68	7.45	2.15
Libreville-Port Gentil	5.61	7.99	8.84	9.55	1.70
Moyen Ogooue	3.62	5.15	5.65	6.09	1.68
Ngounie	2.24	3.19	4.73	5.33	2.38
Nyanga	2.52	3.59	4.97	5.56	2.21
Ogooue Ivindo	3.09	4.39	5.28	5.78	1.87

¹⁴ The HDI data, and its components go from 0 (worst level) to 1 (best level). We present the figures x 1000. The inequality figure is the highest value divided by the lowest value in a particular year.

Ogooue Lolo	2.23	3.17	4.59	5.16	2.31
Ogooue Maritime	3.52	5.02	5.51	5.94	1.69
Woleu Ntem	3.46	4.92	6.17	6.79	1.96
Total	4.32	6.15	7.57	8.32	1.93
Inequality	2.5	2.5	1.9	1.9	

Table 4: Gabon: Regional data for 'expected years of schooling' for children

Region	1990	2000	2010	2018	2018/1990
Estuaire	11.5	11.9	12.5	13.0	1.13
Haut Ogooue	11.7	12.2	12.5	13.0	1.11
Libreville-Port Gentil	12.0	12.4	12.6	13.0	1.08
Moyen Ogooue	11.7	12.1	11.9	12.2	1.04
Ngounie	11.6	12.0	12.3	12.7	1.09
Nyanga	11.7	12.1	12.5	12.9	1.10
Ogooue Ivindo	11.3	11.7	12.0	12.4	1.10
Ogooue Lolo	11.2	11.6	12.1	12.5	1.12
Ogooue Maritime	11.0	11.4	11.5	11.9	1.08
Woleu Ntem	12.0	12.4	12.2	12.5	1.04
Total	11.8	12.3	12.5	12.9	1.09
Inequality	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	

Table 5: Public universities in Gabon

University	Year of establishment	Location	Rank 4icu (2019)
Ecole nationale des Eaux et Forêts (ENEF) (Founded 1953 as a Forestry Training Center. Became the Forestry School 1959, then the National Institute of Forestry Studies (INEF) 1967, and acquired current title 1976)	1959 (1953, 1967, 1976)	Libreville	Not referred
Ecole nationale d'Administration (ENA)	1962	Libreville	Not referred
Université Omar Bongo (UOB) (https://www.univ-omarbongo.ga/)	1970	Libreville	Worldwide rank 10643, country rank 1
Ecole nationale de la Magistrature (ENM)	1971	Libreville	Not referred
École Normale Supérieure de Libreville (ENS Libreville) (https://ens-libreville.org/)	1971	Libreville	Not referred
Institut africain d'Informatique (IAI) (https://iaisiege.org/) Operates in multiple countries on the continent	1971	Libreville	Not referred
École Normale Supérieure de l'Enseignement Technique (ENSET) (https://www.enset-gabon.com/)	1972	Libreville	Not referred
Institut Universitaire des Sciences de l'Organisation (IUSO)	1984	Libreville	Not referred
Université des Sciences et Techniques de Masuku (USTM) (http://univ-masuku.org/)	1986	Franceville (Haut-	Worldwide rank 12283,

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		Ogooue)	country rank 2
Institut Supérieur de Technologie (IST)	1994	Libreville	Not referred
Université des Sciences de la Santé (USS)	2002	Libreville	Not referred
Institut National des Sciences de Gestion (INSG) (http://insggabon.com/)	2007	Libreville	Worldwide rank 13021, country rank 6
École des Mines et de la Métallurgie de Moanda (E3MG) (http://e3mg.ga/)	2015	Moanda (Haut-Ogooue)	Worldwide rank 13234, country rank 10
Institut de Technologies d'Owendo (ITO) (http://institutdetechologiesdowendo.e-monsite.com/)	?	Owendo (Estuaire)	Not referred
Institut National de la Poste des Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication (INPTIC)	?	Libreville	Not referred

(Sources: Wikipedia: Universities, <https://www.4icu.org/>, World Higher Education Database (https://www.whed.net/results_institutions.php); google, and the websites of the institutions, if available).

Table 6: Private universities in Gabon

University	Year of establishment	Location	Religious affiliation	Rank 4icu (2019)
Centre international de Recherches médicales de Franceville (CIRMF)	1979	Masuku (Haut-Ogooué)	No	Not referred
Institut des Techniques Avancées (ITA) (https://ita-gabon.com/)	1989	Libreville	No	Worldwide rank 12807, country rank 3
Université Africaine des Sciences (UAS)	2006	Libreville	No	Not referred
Université des Sciences d'Informatique Appliquée (USIA-ESSIG)	2006	Libreville	No	Not referred
BBS School of Management (BBS) (https://bbs-school.com/site/)	2008	Libreville	No	Worldwide rank 12969, country rank 5
École de Management du Gabon (EMG) (http://www.em-gabon.com/)	2010	Libreville	No	Worldwide rank 12933, country rank 4
Libreville International Business School (LIBS) (http://esm-libs.com/)	2012	Libreville	No	Worldwide rank 13085, country rank 7

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Université Franco-Gabonaise Saint-Exupéry (UFGSE) (http://ufgse.org/)	2012	Libreville	No	Worldwide rank 13219, country rank 8
École Supérieure de Gestion, d'Informatique et des Sciences (ESGIS Gabon)	2012	Libreville	No	Not referred
African University of Management (AUM) (https://aumgroupga.com/spip.php?rubrique26)	2013	Libreville	No	Worldwide rank 13232, country rank 9
Académie Franco-Américaine de Management (AFRAM)	2013 (2003 according to WHED)	Libreville	No	Worldwide rank 13260, country rank 11
École Supérieure de la Mer (ESM)	2013	Libreville	No	Not referred
Université Internationale de Libreville (UIL) (https://uil-universite.com/)	2014	Libreville	No	Not referred
Université Virtuelle Privée du Gabon (UNIVGA) (https://www.univga-edu.ga/)	2019?	Online (Included in every region in table 7)	Islamic? (member of Réseau inter-islamique COMSTECH)	Not referred
École Supérieure de Gestion et d'Expertise Comptable	?	Libreville	No	Not referred
L'Université Polytechnique de Kougoulev (https://www.universite-gabon.org/)	? (website is uit 2007)	Libreville	No	Not referred
Université Continentale de Libreville (UCL) Not sure if this is a public or private university.	?	Libreville	No	Not referred

Sources: see table 5

Table 7: Regional distribution of universities in Gabon

Provinces (and city)	Public	Private	Total	Number per million inhabitants
Estuaire	1	1	2	8.7
Haut Ogooue	2	2	4	20
Libreville-Port Gentil	12	16	28	24.6
Moyen Ogooue	0	1	1	14.3

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Ngounie	0	1	1	7.7
Nyanga	0	1	1	16.7
Ogooue Ivindo	0	1	1	12.5
Ogooue Lolo	0	1	1	12.5
Ogooue Maritime	0	1	1	33.3
Woleu Ntem	0	1	1	8.3
Total	15	17 ¹⁵	32	14.5

For the last column we used the population numbers as given in table 2.

Table 8: Think tanks in Gabon

Think tanks	Year of establishment	Location
Centre national de la recherche scientifique et technologique (CENAREST)	1976	Libreville
Centre de Recherches Médicales de Lambaréné (https://www.cermel.org/history.php)	2011 (history Albert Schweitzer hospital dating back to the beginning of the 20 th century)	Lambaréné (Moyen-Ogooué)
Iboga Think Tank https://www.facebook.com/pg/ibogathinktank/about/?ref=page_internal	2019	Libreville
Institut de Recherche en Ecologie Tropicale (IRET) Under the authority of CENAREST	?	Libreville?
Institut de Recherches Agronomiques et Forestières (IRAF) Under the authority of CENAREST	?	Libreville

Table 9: Museums in Gabon

Museums	websites	Location
Musée National des Arts, Rites et Traditions		Libreville
Ecomusée de la Lopé		La Lopé (Moyen

¹⁵ 16 'physical' universities, 1 online university. Online university included in every region.

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		Ogooue)
Musée Albert Schweitzer		Lambaréné (Moyen Ogooue)

(Source: Wikipedia, Google) Not included: cultural centres

This report was made by Maaïke Westra, African Studies Centre Leiden. Project supervision: Ton Dietz (also ASCL).