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Unpacking the Status of Youth Development in South Africa

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The population of South Africa is estimated at **63,02 MILLION** in mid-2024



The population annual **growth rate is 1,33%**, up by 835 513 people since 2023

Source: Mid-Year Population estimates 2024



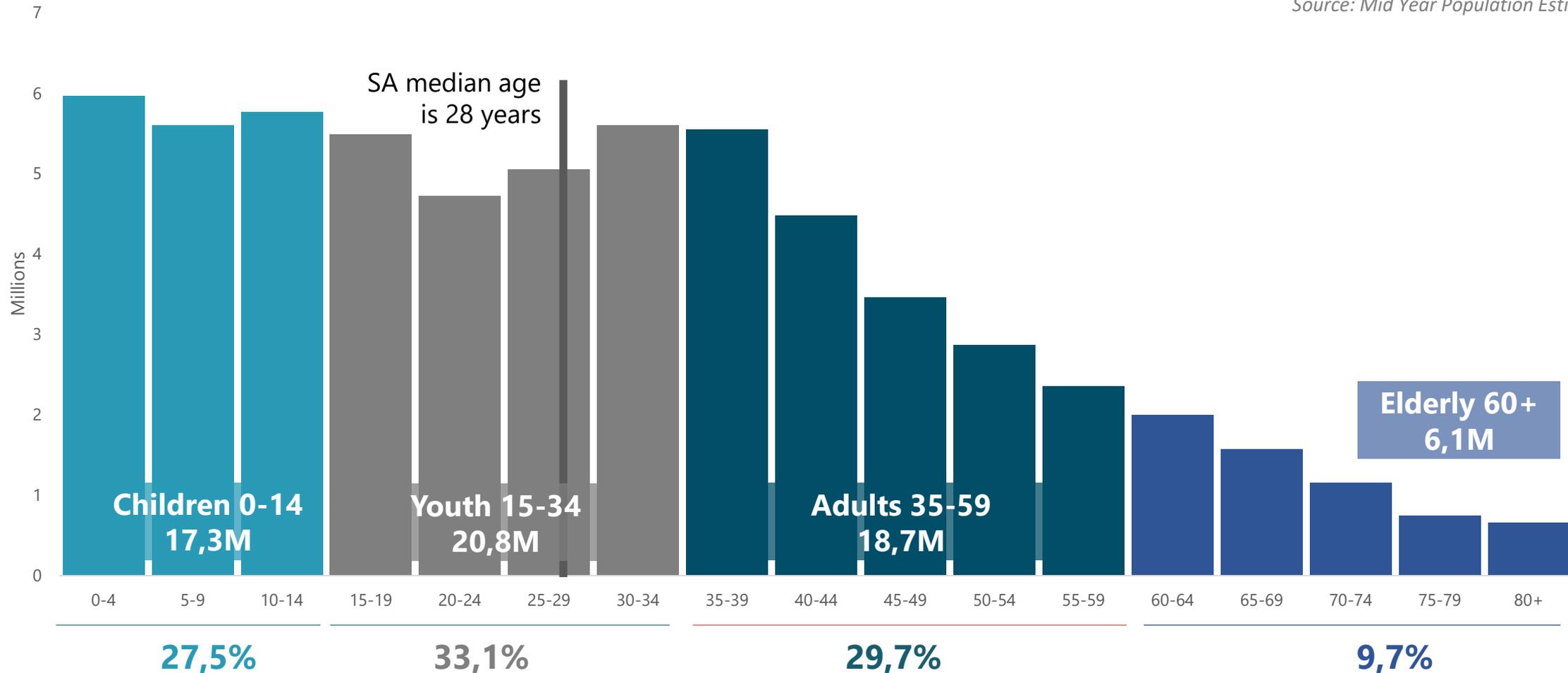
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Children and youth amount to just over 38 million in SA

Population age structure 5-year age groups, 2024

Source: Mid Year Population Estimates 2024



*Due to rounding totals may not add up to 100%



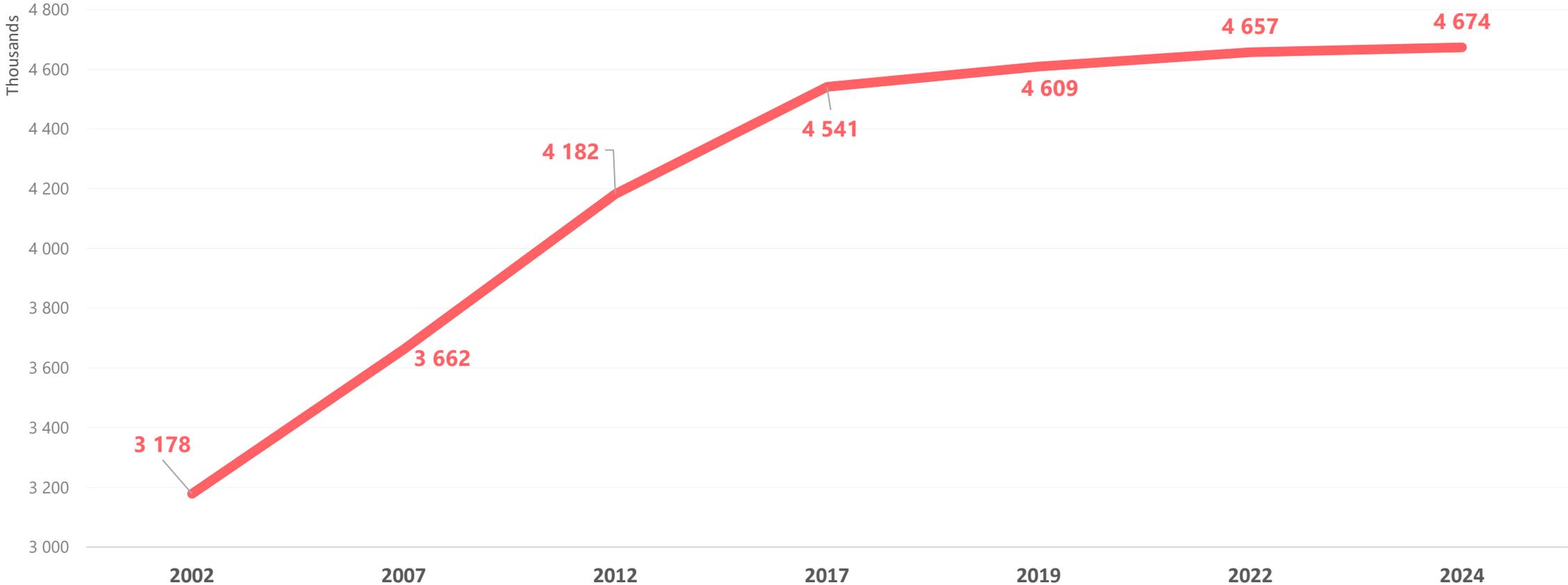
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The number of **youth-headed households** has increased from 3,2 million to 4,7 million between 2002 and 2024

Number of youth-headed households since 2002



Birth Occurrences and Registrations

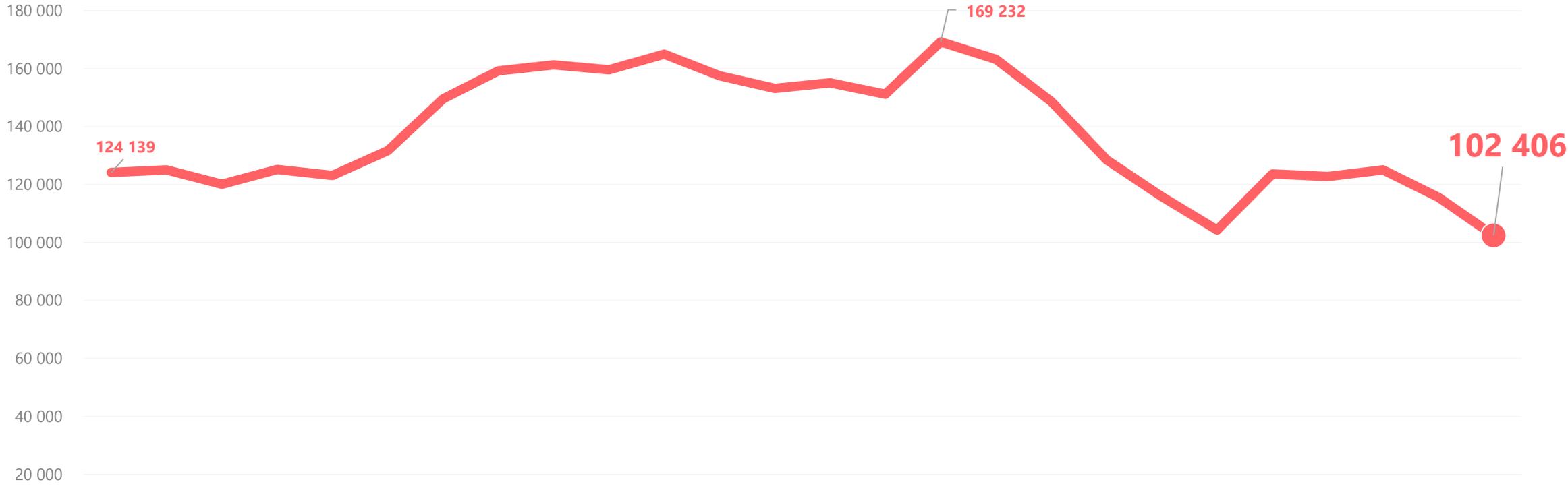


Focus on **mothers 19 and younger**



Births occurring to young mothers (10-19 years) represent between 11% and 12% of all births

Birth Registrations over time for mothers aged 10- 19 in SA

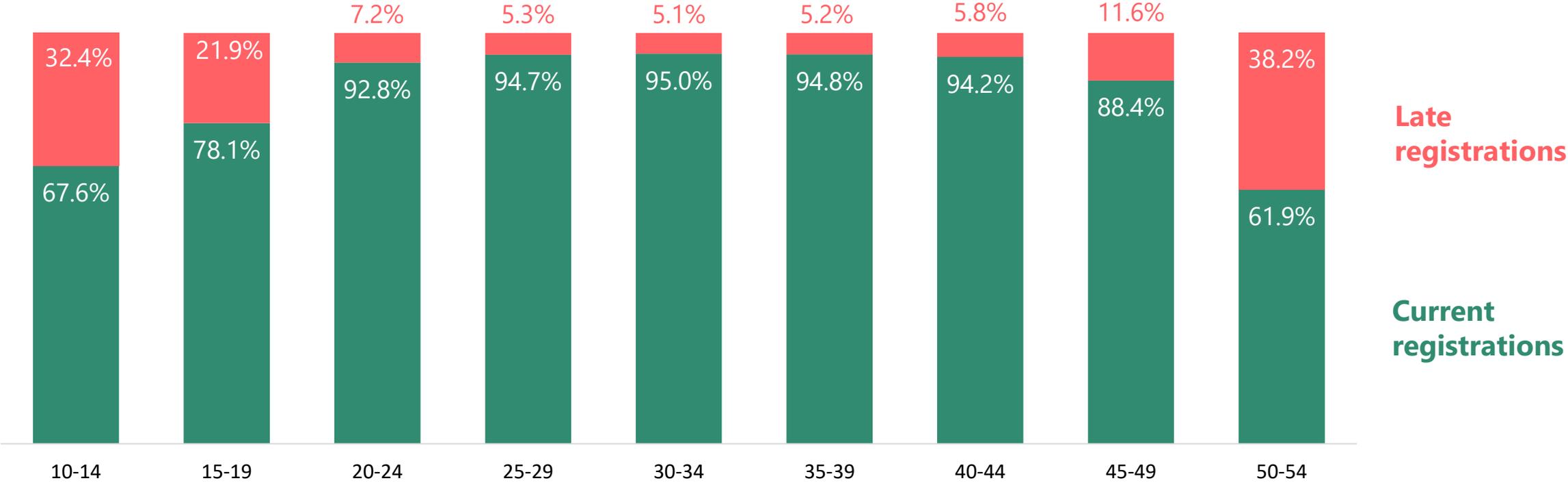


| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|---------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Registrations | 124 13 | 125 01 | 120 10 | 125 22 | 123 14 | 131 69 | 149 58 | 159 24 | 161 30 | 159 61 | 164 98 | 157 54 | 153 20 | 155 10 | 151 16 | 169 23 | 163 23 | 148 63 | 128 54 | 115 79 | 104 28 | 123 64 | 122 76 | 125 01 | 115 61 | 102 40 |

Late registration persist among certain groups, particularly **teenage mothers (aged 10-19)** and **older mothers (aged 50-54)**

Source: Recorded Live Births, 2023

Timeliness of Registration



Living arrangements and Education of Youth



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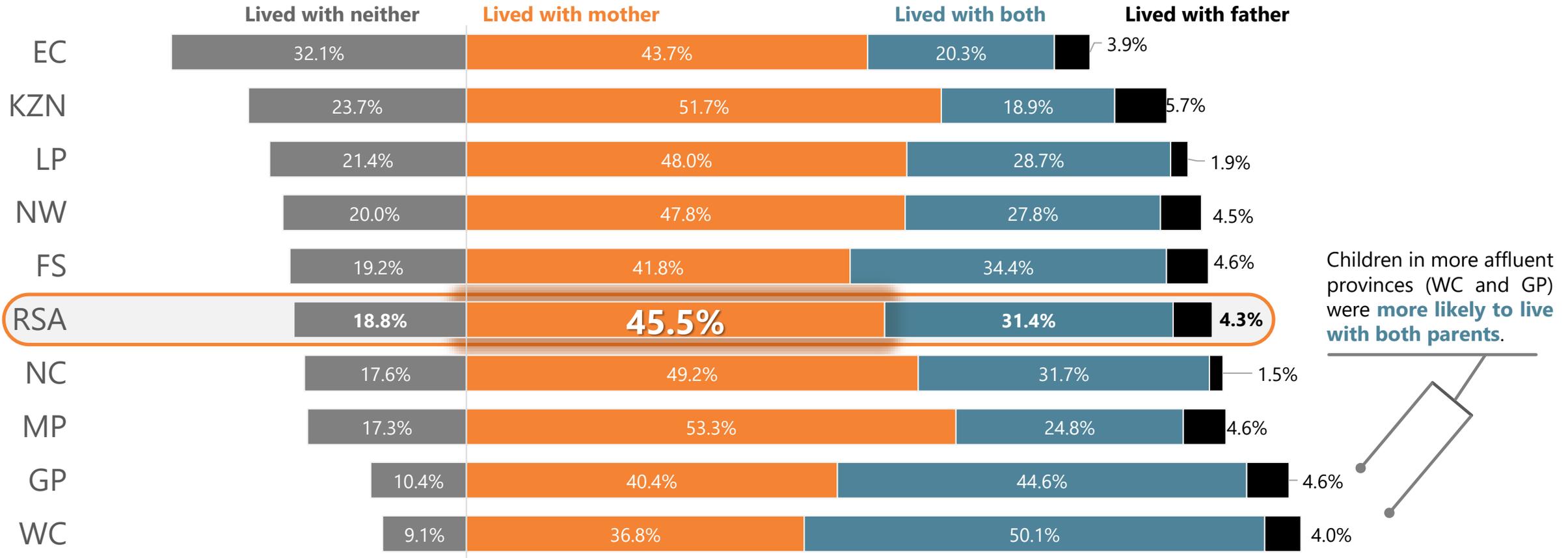
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Nationally, **45,5% of children lived with mothers only** while less than a third (31,4%) of children lived with both parents

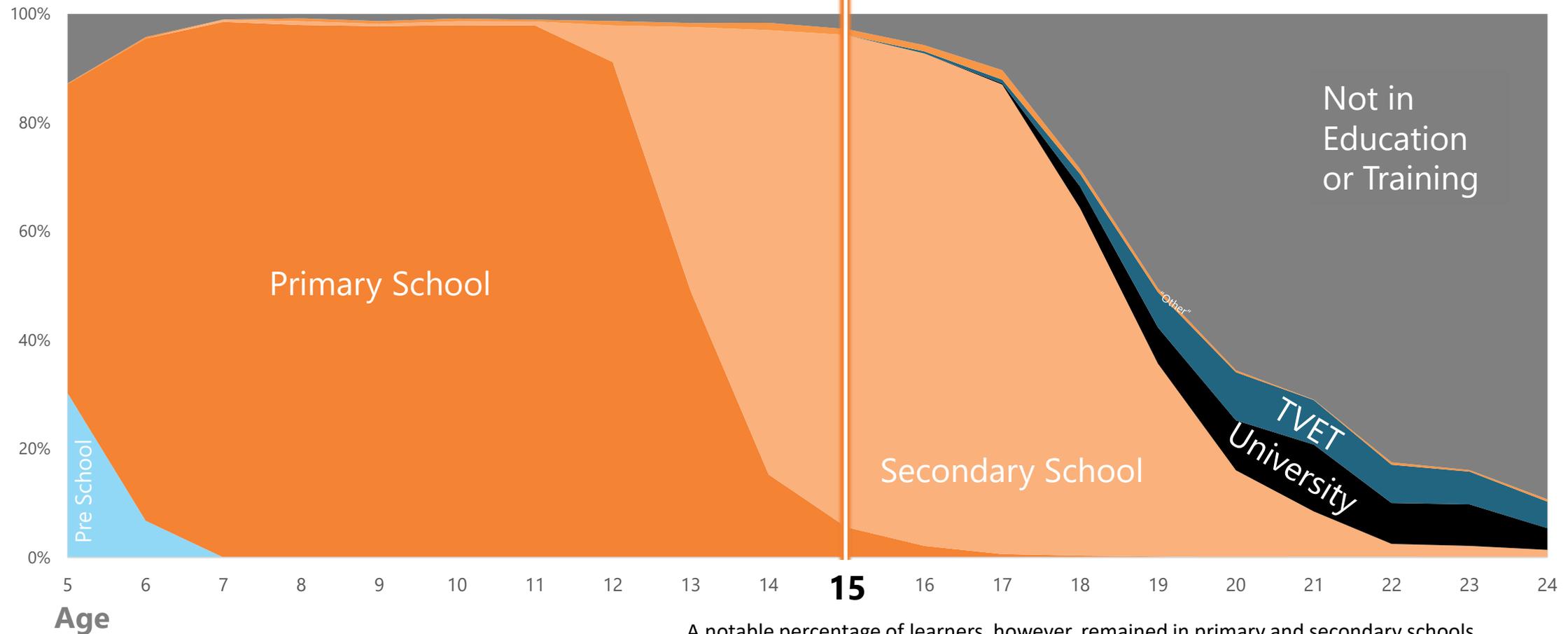
Percentage of children living arrangements by province, 2024

Source: General Household Survey (GHS) 2024



Participation in education institutions was **virtually universal (96,1%)** by the age of 15 years (the last compulsory school age).

Type of educational institution attended by individuals aged 5–24 years, 2024

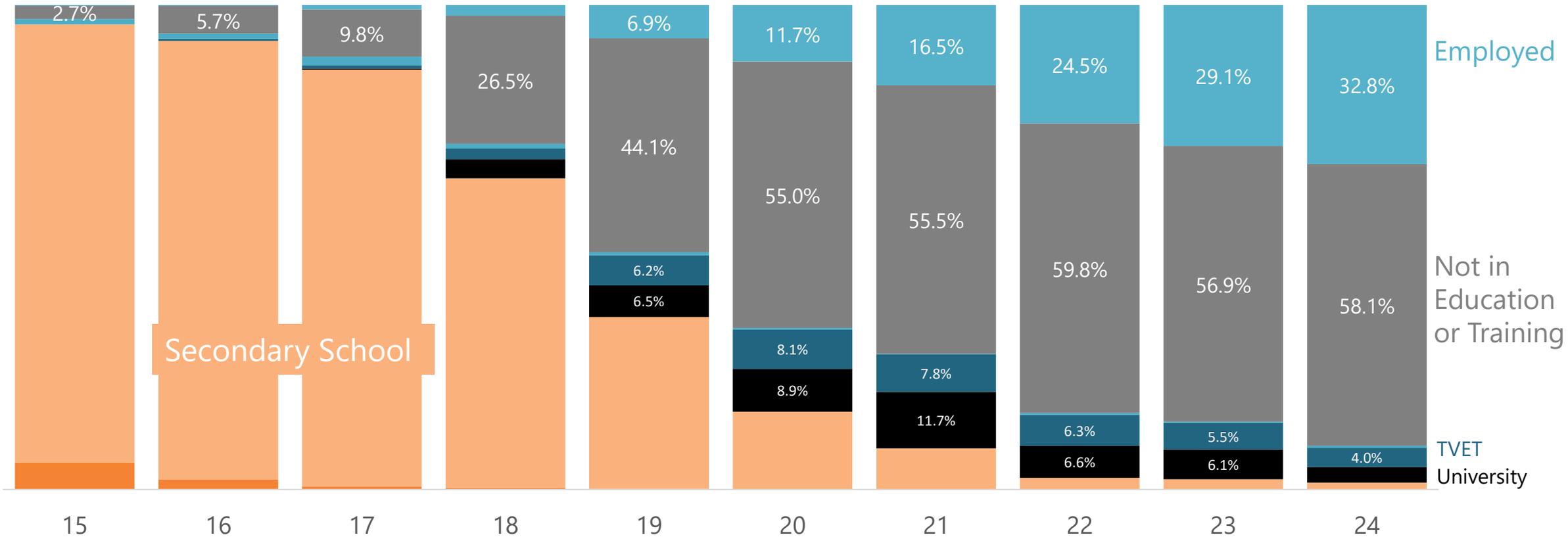


A notable percentage of learners, however, remained in primary and secondary schools long after they should have exited those institutions

Source: General Household Survey (GHS) 2024

Almost **three-fifths (58,1%)** of youth **aged 24 years of age** were not in education or training in 2024.

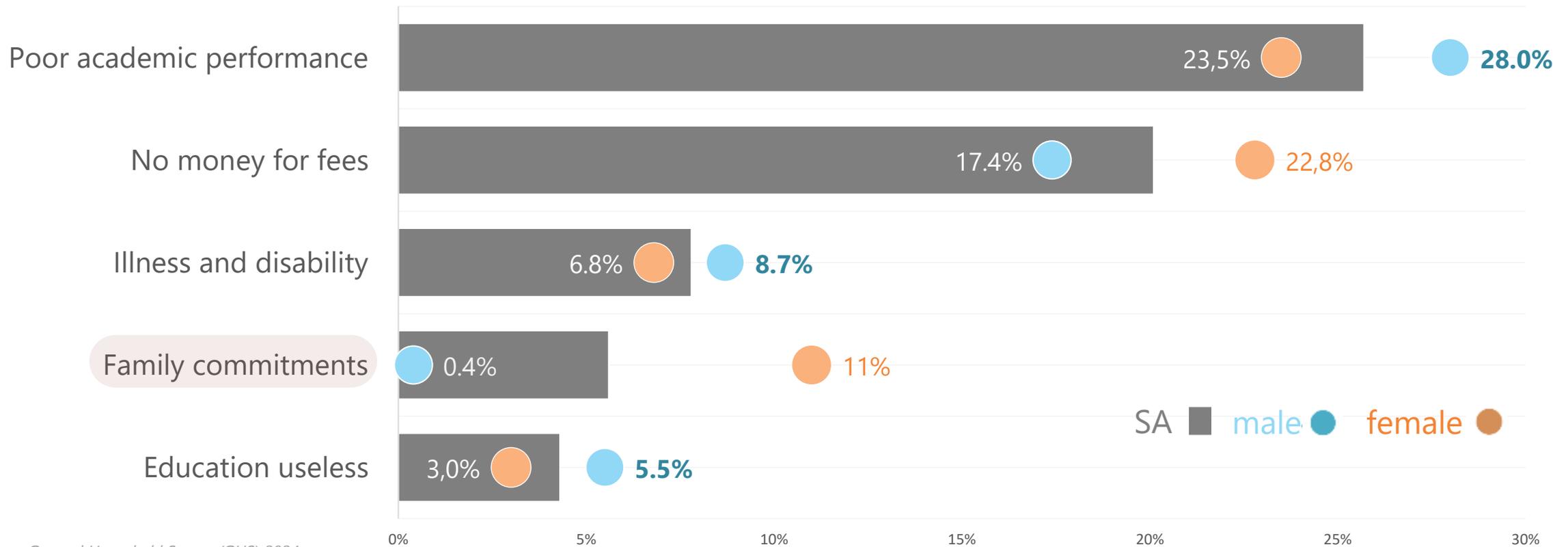
Type of **educational institution** attended by youth aged 15-24, 2024



Source: General Household Survey (GHS) 2024

Top reasons for males not attending school was **poor academic performance**, with large gender disparity in **family commitment** as a reason for not attending school.

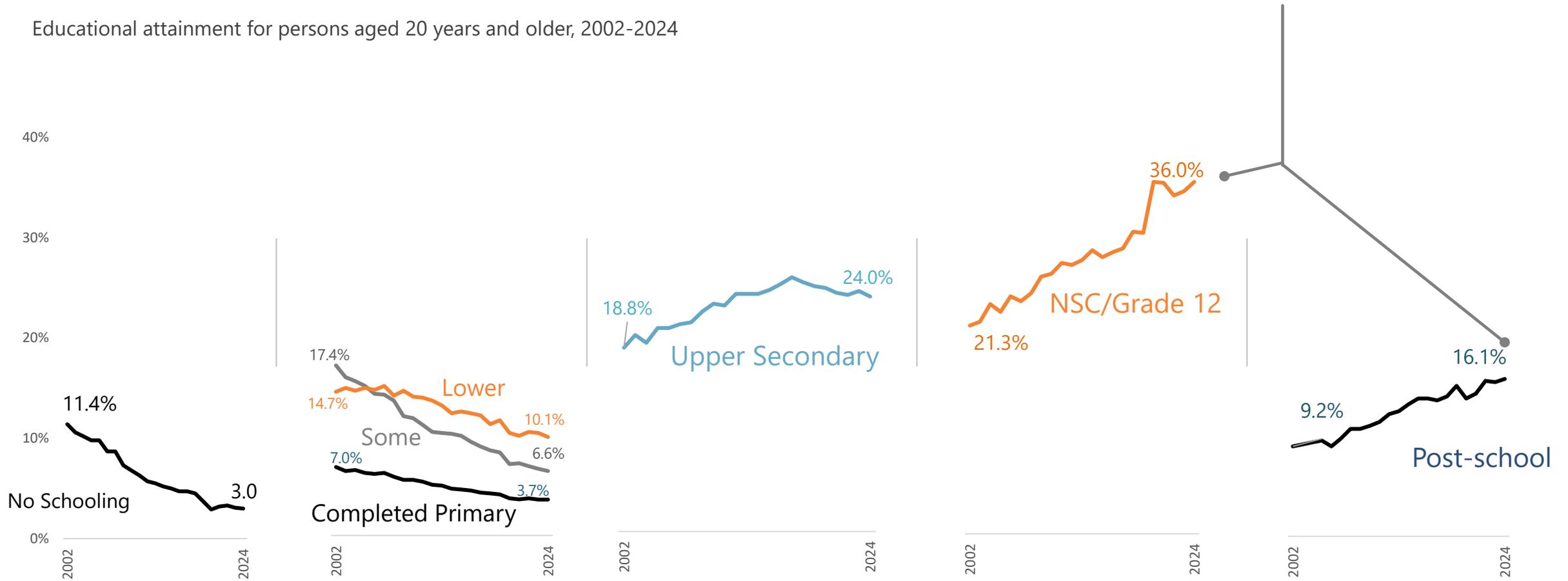
Percentage distribution of selected reasons given by individuals aged 7 to 18 years for not attending an educational institution, by sex, 2024



Source: General Household Survey (GHS) 2024

The percentage of individuals aged 20 years and older with at least a grade 12 qualification (*NSC + Post School*) increased from **30,5%** in 2002 to **52,1%** in 2024.

Educational attainment for persons aged 20 years and older, 2002-2024



Source: General Household Survey (GHS) 2024

Understanding Labour market outcomes among youth



The official unemployment rate increased by 1,0 percentage point to **32,9%** in Q1:2025 compared to Q4:2024.

41,7 million

People of working age in South Africa (15 – 64-years old)

Labour force

Not Economically Active

25,0 million

16,7 million



SA's official unemployment rate stands at

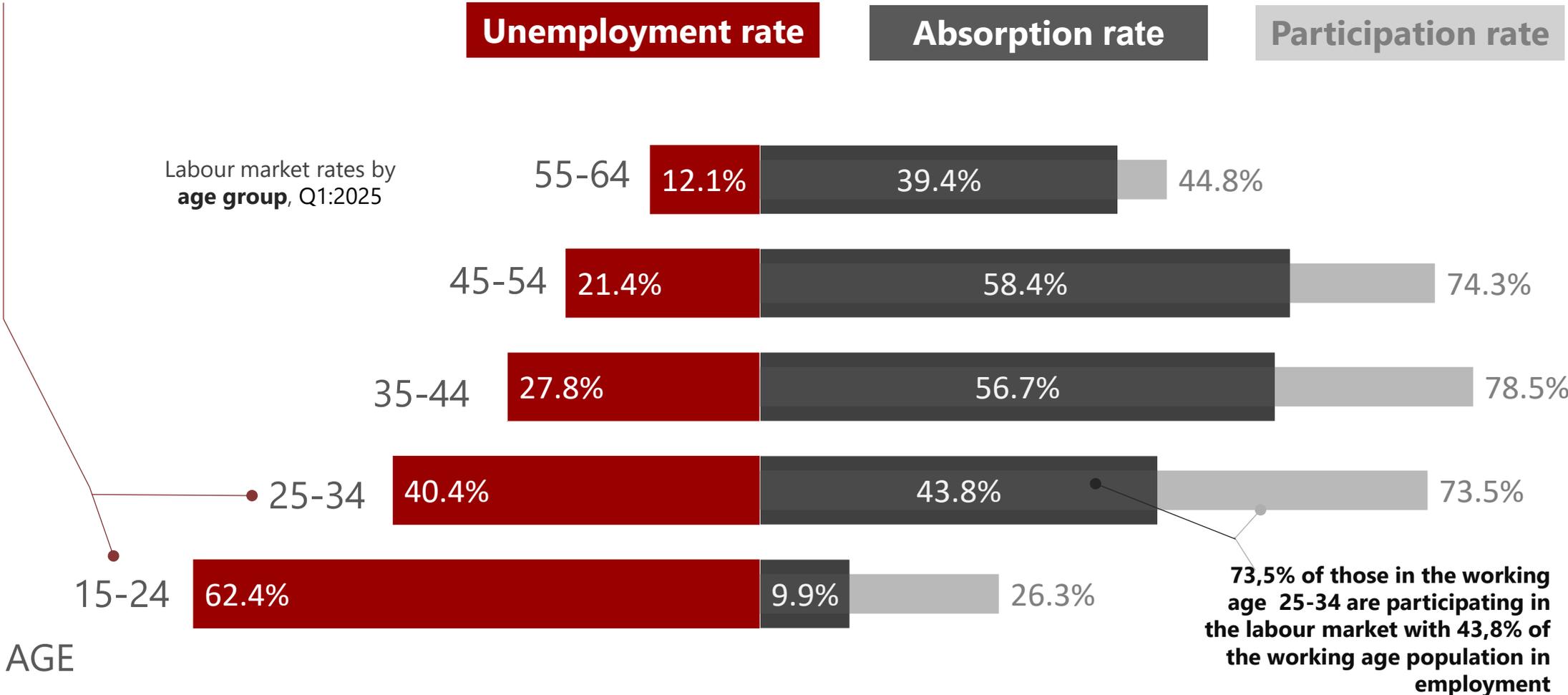
32,9%

Increased by 1,0 percentage point between Q4:2024 and Q1:2025

ILO hierarchy – Employed first then unemployed and the remainder is NEA (including discouraged job-seekers). 3 mutually exclusive groups. Cannot be in two groups at the same time.

Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) Q1:2025

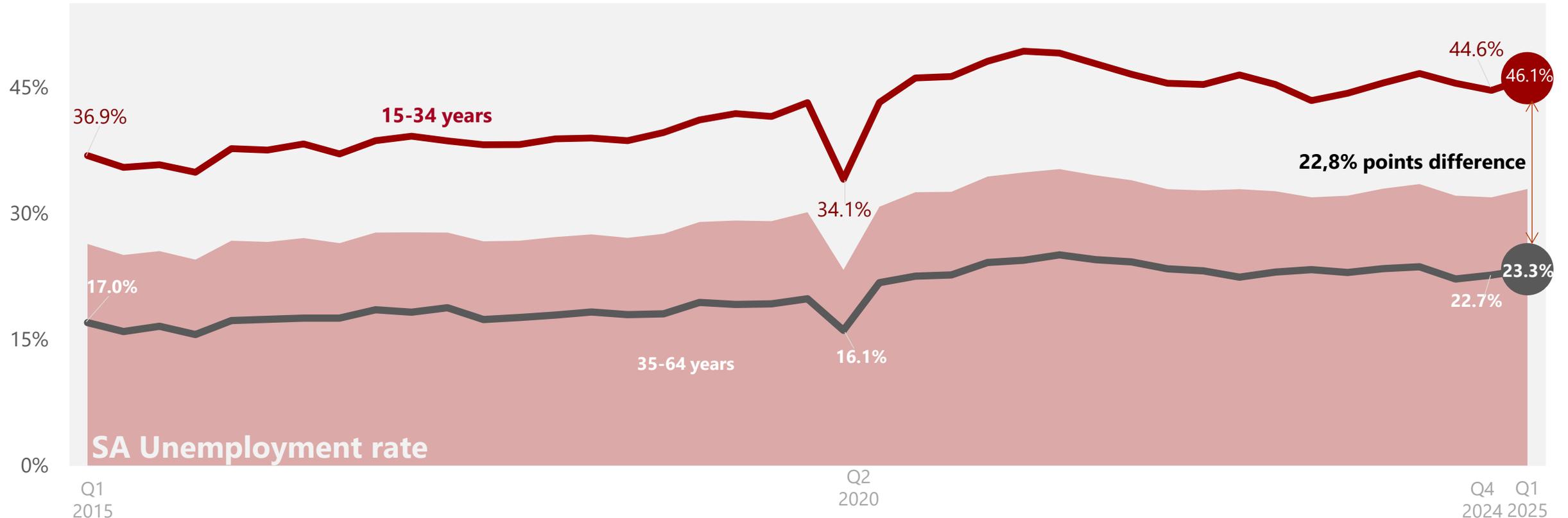
Youth aged 15-24 years and 25-34 years continue to have the highest unemployment rates at **62,4%** and **40,4%** respectively.



Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) Q1:2025

Youth unemployment remained high over the past decade. Official unemployment rate among youth aged 15-34 years stood at 36,9% in Q1:2015 and a decade later, in Q1:2025, that figure increased to 46,1%; a 9,2 percentage points increase, [signaling worsening conditions for the youth](#).

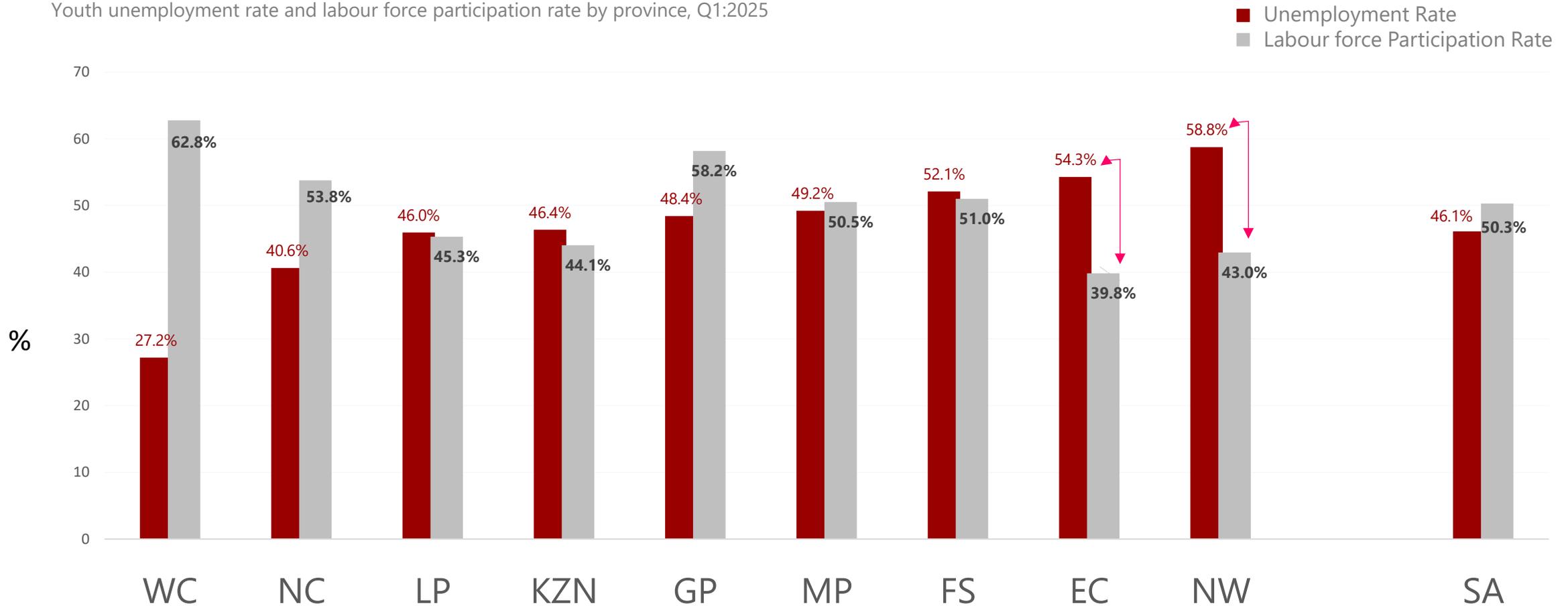
Official Unemployment rates by age group,
Q1:2015-Q1:2025



Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) Q1:2025

NW and **EC** showed both the *highest unemployment rates and the lowest participation* rates amongst youth(15-34 years).

Youth unemployment rate and labour force participation rate by province, Q1:2025



Due to rounding numbers may not add up

Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) Q1:2025

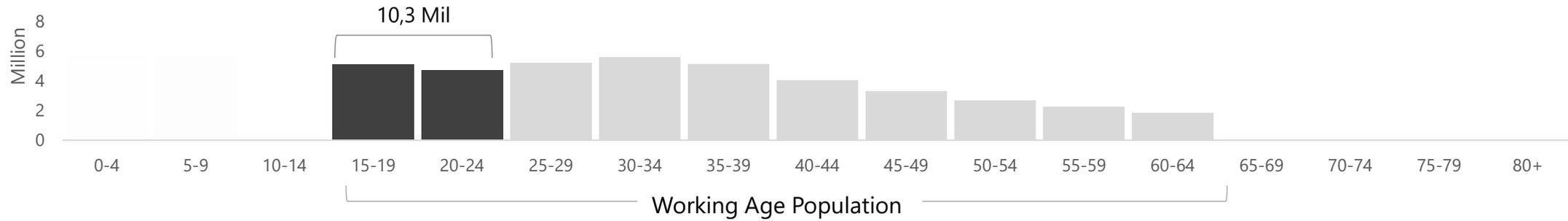
Approximately 2,0 million out of 3,5 million discouraged work-seekers, were young people aged 15-34 years in Q1: 2025

Discouraged work-seekers by age-group, Q1:2025

Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) Q1:2025



Approximately **3,8 million out of 10,3 million (or 37,1%)** young people aged 15-24 years were not in employment, education or training (NEET).



Number of NEET for ages 15-24
Q1:2025

**3,8 Million
NEET**

6,5 Million

**Employed or in
Education or Training**

Due to rounding numbers may not add up

Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) Q1:2025

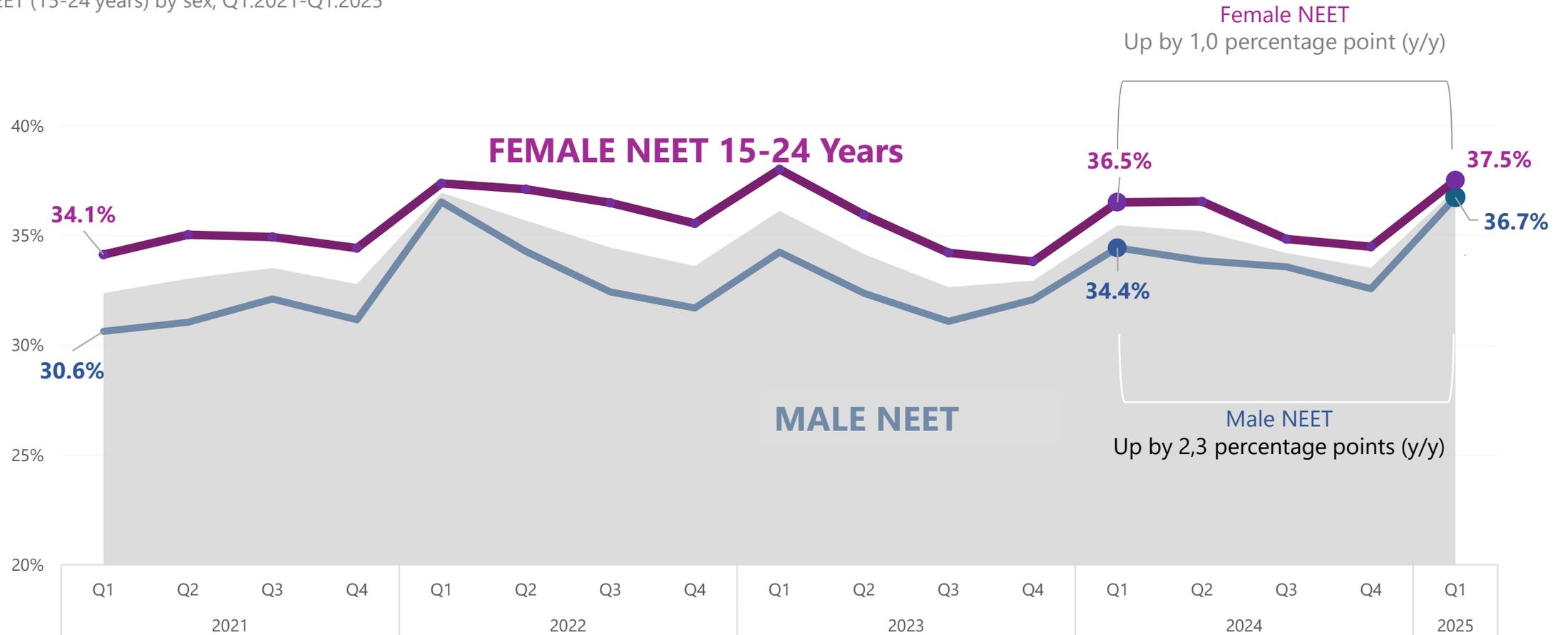


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37,5% of young females aged 15-24 years were not in employment, education or training (NEET) in Q1: 2025. This is a 1,0 percentage point increase compared to Q1: 2024.

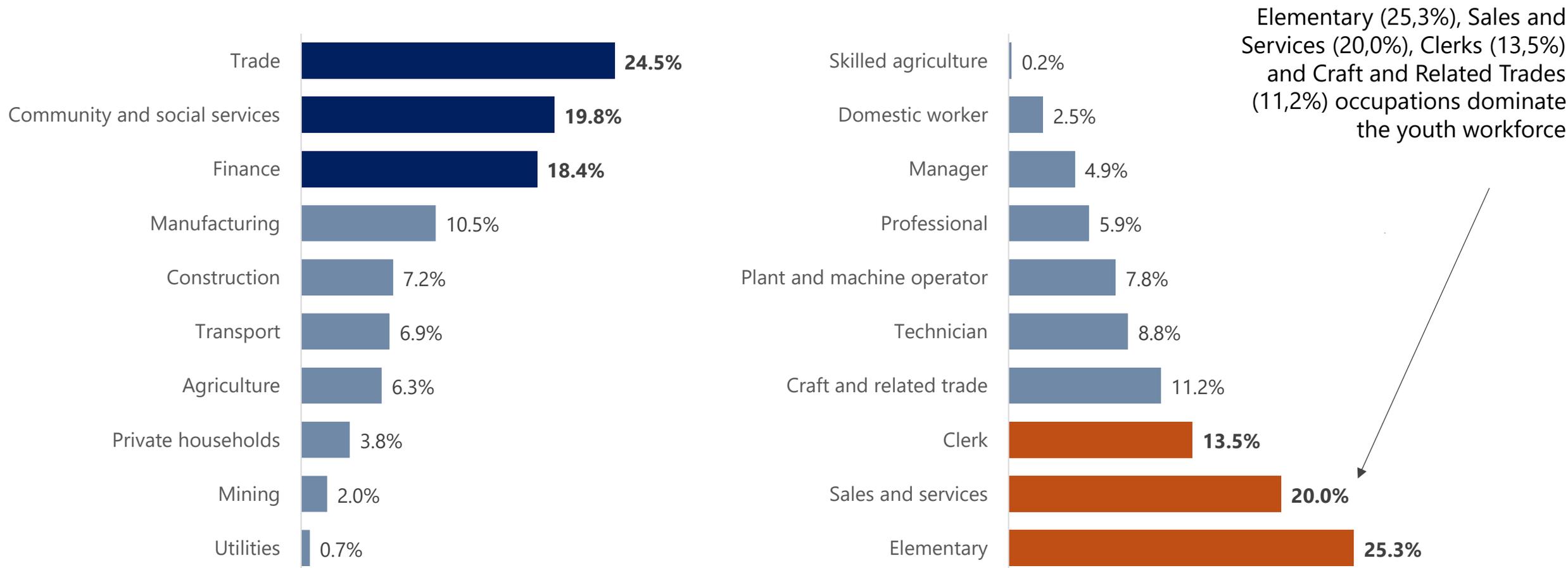
NEET (15-24 years) by sex, Q1:2021-Q1:2025



Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) Q1:2025

More youth are employed in **Trade, Community & Social services, and Finance industries.** **Elementary, Sales and Services and Clerks** occupations dominate the youth workforce

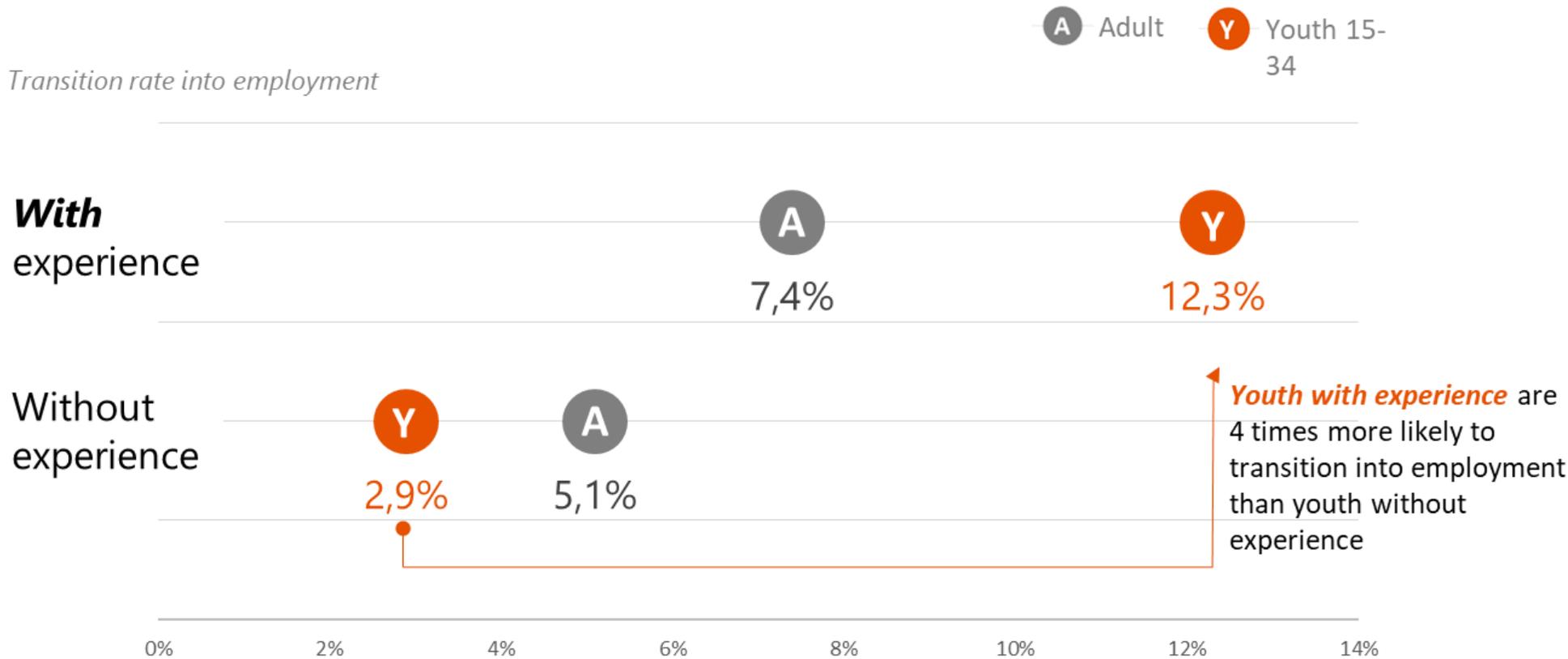
Youth (15-34 years) Employment by Industry and Occupation Q1: 2025



Source: Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) Q1:2025



Between quarters **Youth with experience (12,3%)** are far more likely to transition from unemployment or inactivity into employment surpassing even their adult counterparts with experience (7,4%)



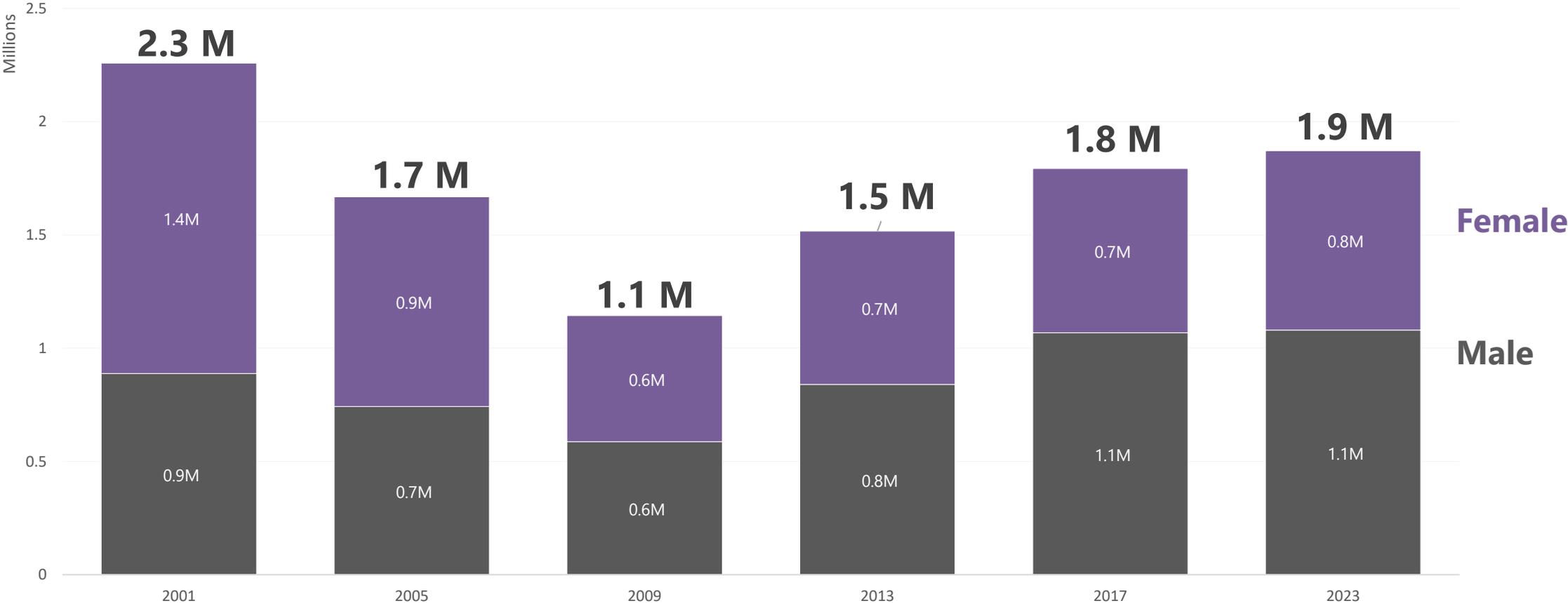
Source: Source: Statistics South Africa, QLFS Annual data 2022

Understanding Informal Sector and Youth



The informal economy has shown resilience, **with 1,9 million South Africans running non-VAT registered businesses in 2023**, up from 1,5 million a decade earlier.

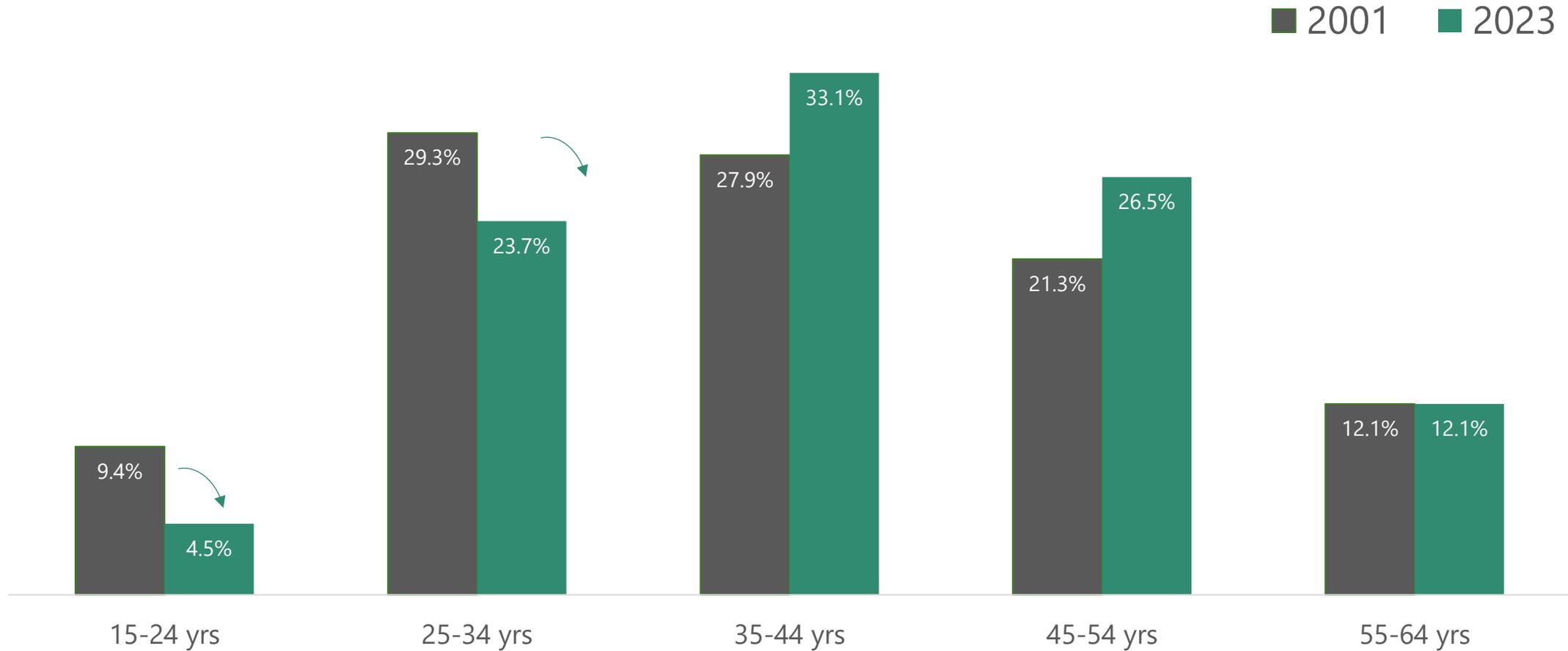
Individuals running at least one non-VAT registered business, 2001–2023 by sex



Source: Survey of Employers and the Self-Employed (SESE) 2023

Compared with 2001, in 2023 a **fewer youth were running a informal business.**

Percentage of individuals running non-VAT registered businesses by age group , 2001–2023



Source: Survey of Employers and the Self-Employed (SESE) 2023



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Grants and sources of income

Social grants remain a vital safety net, particularly in the poorest provinces.



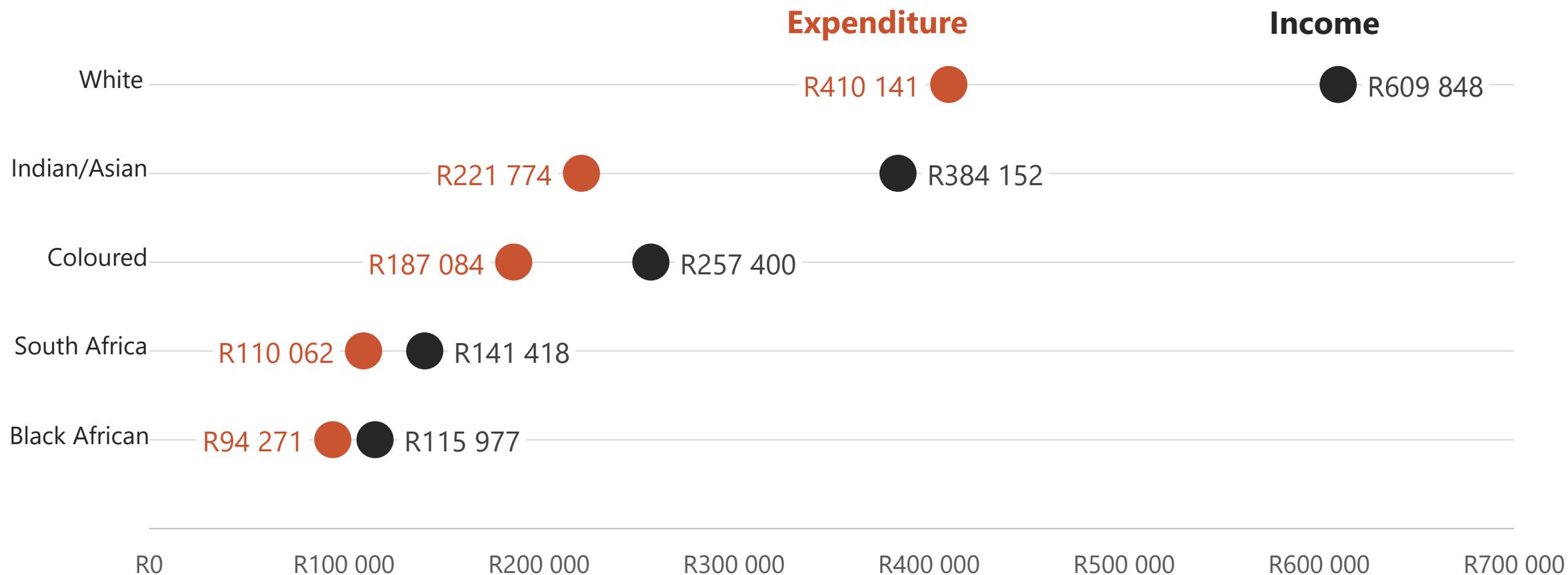
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White headed-households earned five times more than black African-headed households

Source: Income & Expenditure Survey 2022/2023

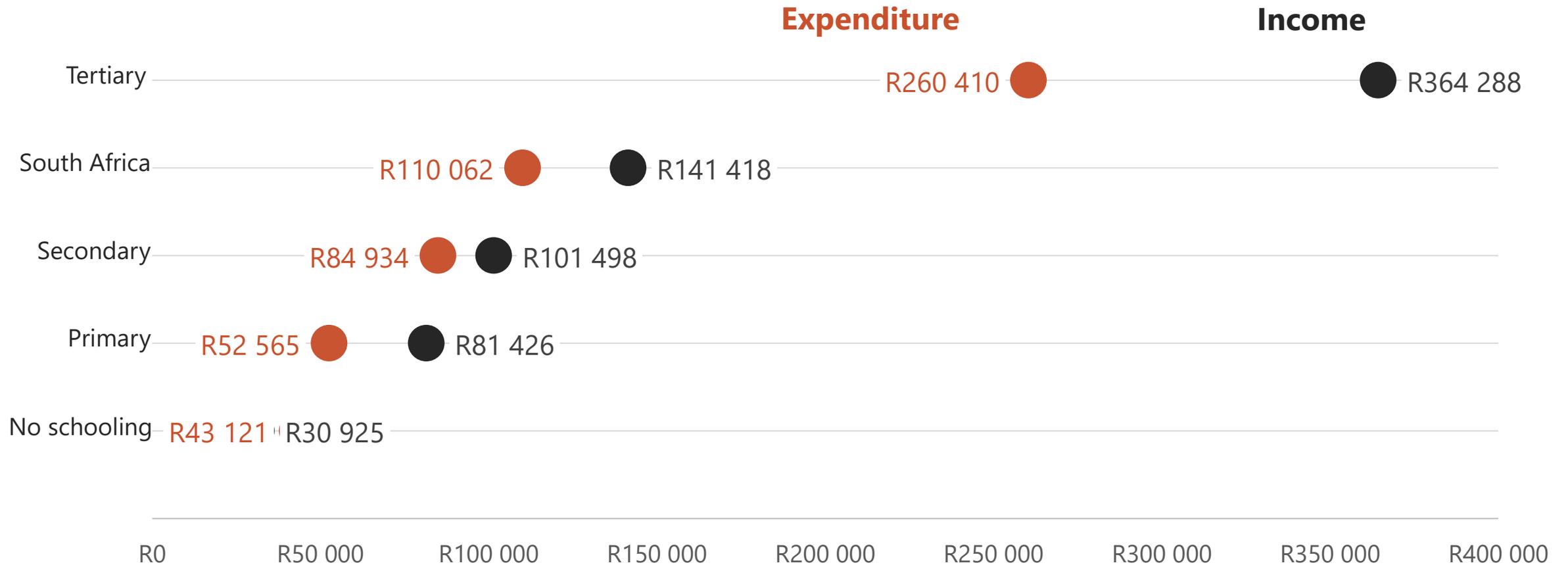
Distribution of **average** annual household consumption expenditure and income by population group of youth (15 – 34) household head



Households headed by those with tertiary education earned twelve times more than those with no schooling

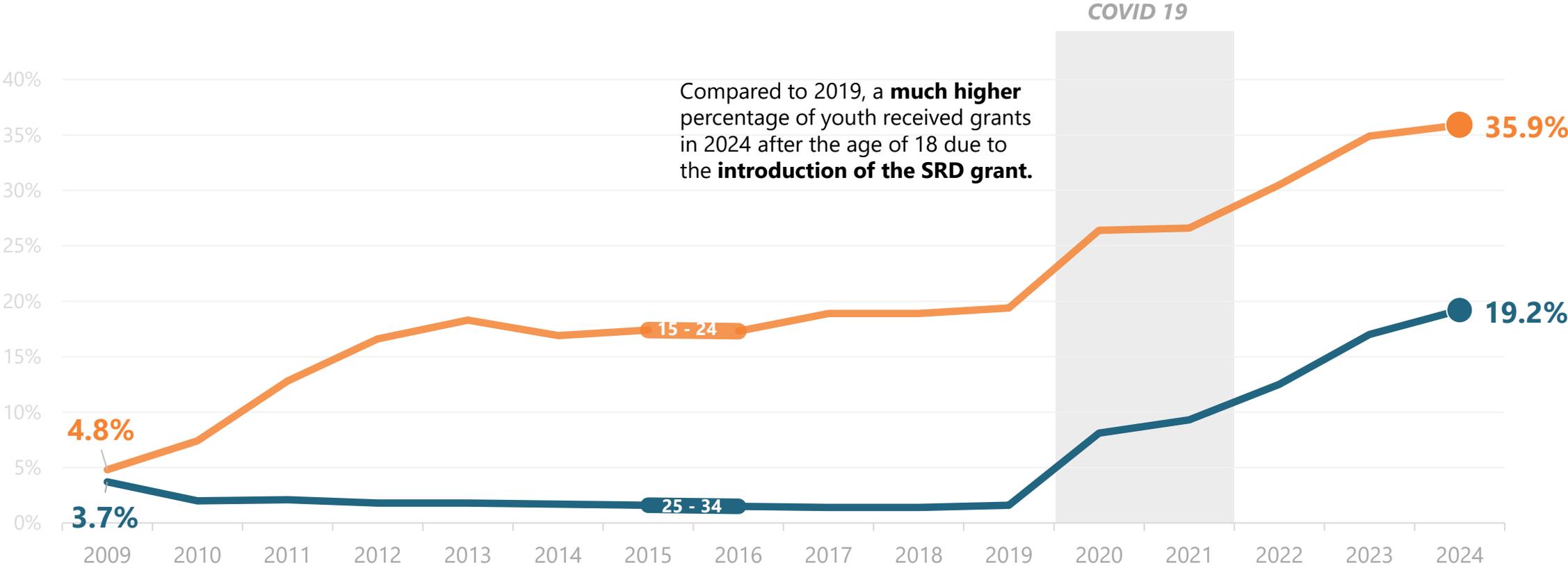
Source: Income & Expenditure Survey 2022/2023

Distribution of average annual household consumption expenditure and income by education level of youth (15 – 34) household head



The percentage of **youth** that benefited from **social grants** increased steadily from 2009 to **2024**.

Percentage of individuals who have benefited from social grants, 2009–2024

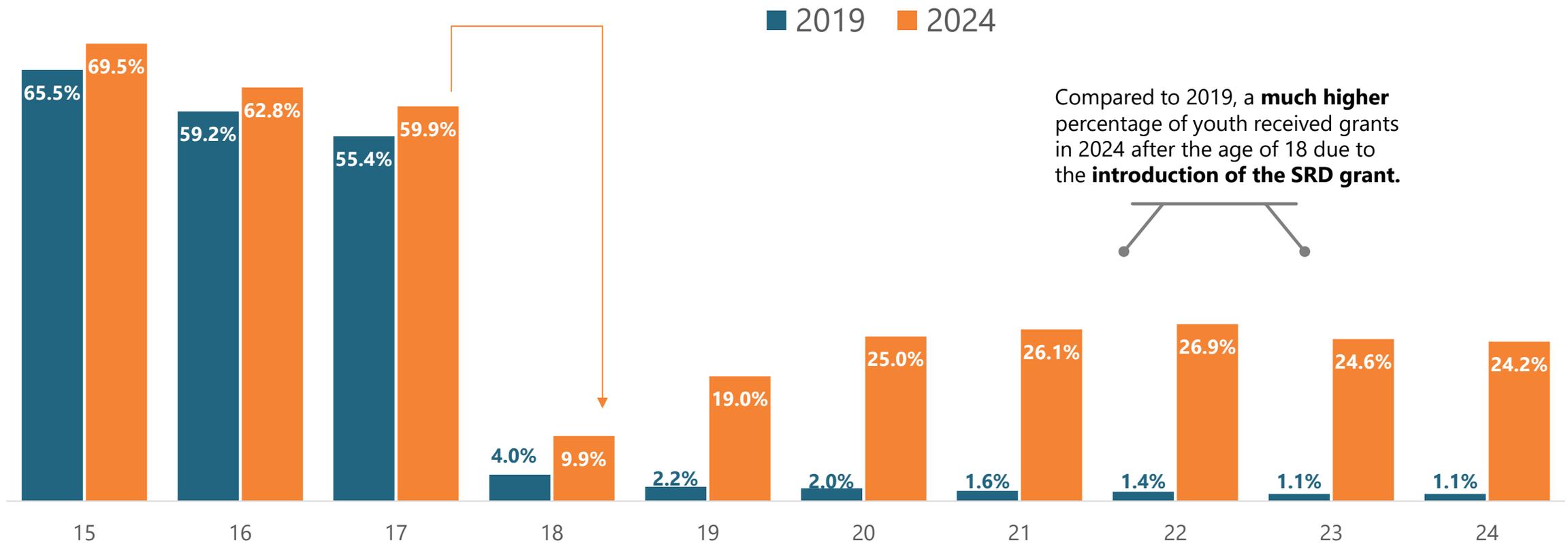


Source: General Household Survey (GHS) 2024

The percentage of **youth (15-24)** that benefited from **social grants** decreased sharply after age 17, dropping from 59,9% to 9,9%.

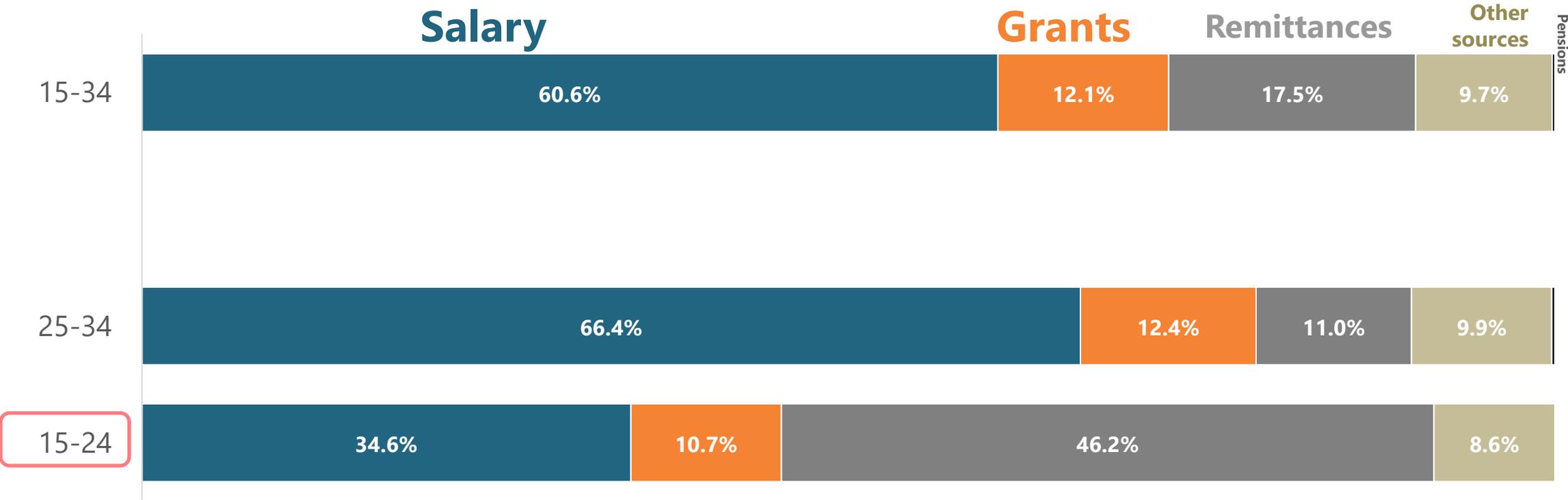
Percentage of youth aged 15-24 that benefited from social grants by single age, 2019 and 2024

Source: General Household Survey (GHS) 2024



For youth **aged 15 – 24** remittances were the main source of household income

Percentage of households by age of household heads and main source of income, 2024



Source: General Household Survey (GHS) 2024

Poverty

Social grants remain a vital safety net, particularly in the poorest provinces.



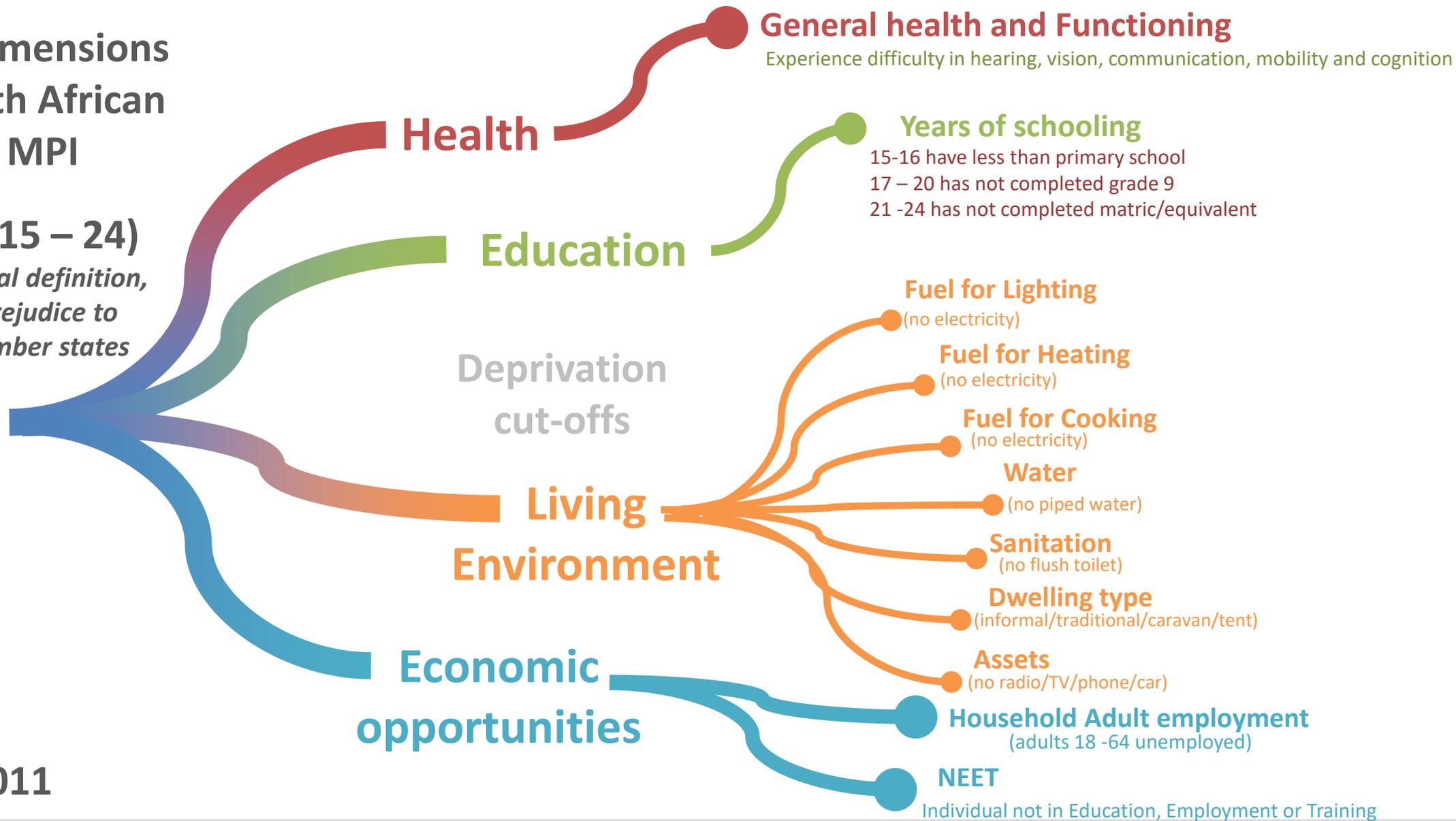
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The four dimensions of the South African Youth MPI

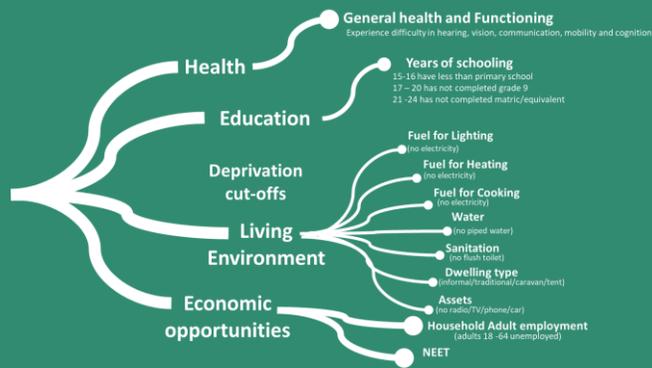
Youth (aged 15 – 24)
Narrow international definition, by UN without prejudice to definitions by member states



Census 2011



Multidimensional youth (15 – 24) poverty



The **largest contributor to the Youth MPI** was **deprivation in educational attainment** (35%).



Adult household employment was the second largest contributor to youth poverty at 16.4%.



Third largest contributor to the poverty situation was NEET (young people Not in Education, Employment and Training) with a rate of 14.6%.



Headcount Multidimensional poverty levels for young (15 – 24) people in SA stood at 33,4%

Source: Census 2011



Money-metric poverty levels for young (25 – 34) people of SA: 2011 – 2015

| Year | Poverty headcount | Poverty Gap |
|-------------|--|--|
| 2011 | 30.7% | 11.7% |
| 2015 | 34.7% | 13.8% |
| 2023 | To be published in September 2025 | To be published in September 2025 |



Poverty headcount and gap increased from 2011 to 2015 for young people aged 15 to 24

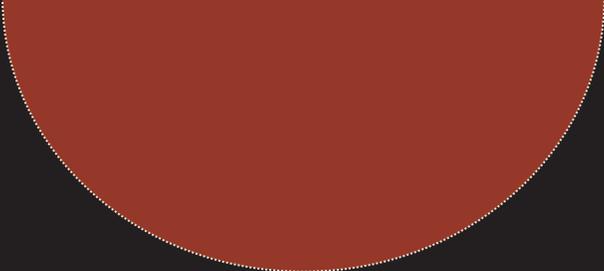
*Poverty headcount: number of people living below lower bound poverty line
Poverty gap: the rand amount needed to lift people out of poverty



The IES 2023 poverty numbers not published yet – to be published in September 2025

Source: Poverty Trends Report (03-10-06)





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