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Statistics South Africa
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Education Series Volume VIII

COVID-19 and barriers to participation in education in South Africa, 2020

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COVID-19 Impact on Education

- ❖ President Cyril Ramaphosa declared a **national state of disaster** in South Africa on 15 March 2020 to combat the spread of COVID-19.
- ❖ Schools closure was announced on 18 March 2020 interrupting the learning of almost **17 million learners from pre-school to secondary school**.
- ❖ Also affecting close **to 2,3 million students** enrolled in **post-school education and training institutions**.
- ❖ **New educational regulations** which included the adjustment of the academic timetable, new teaching programmes, mode of delivery, catch up of the curriculum, health and safety measures as well as financial relief packages were designed for the education sector.
- ❖ However, the pandemic had **different effects** on households' and individuals' educational related activities.

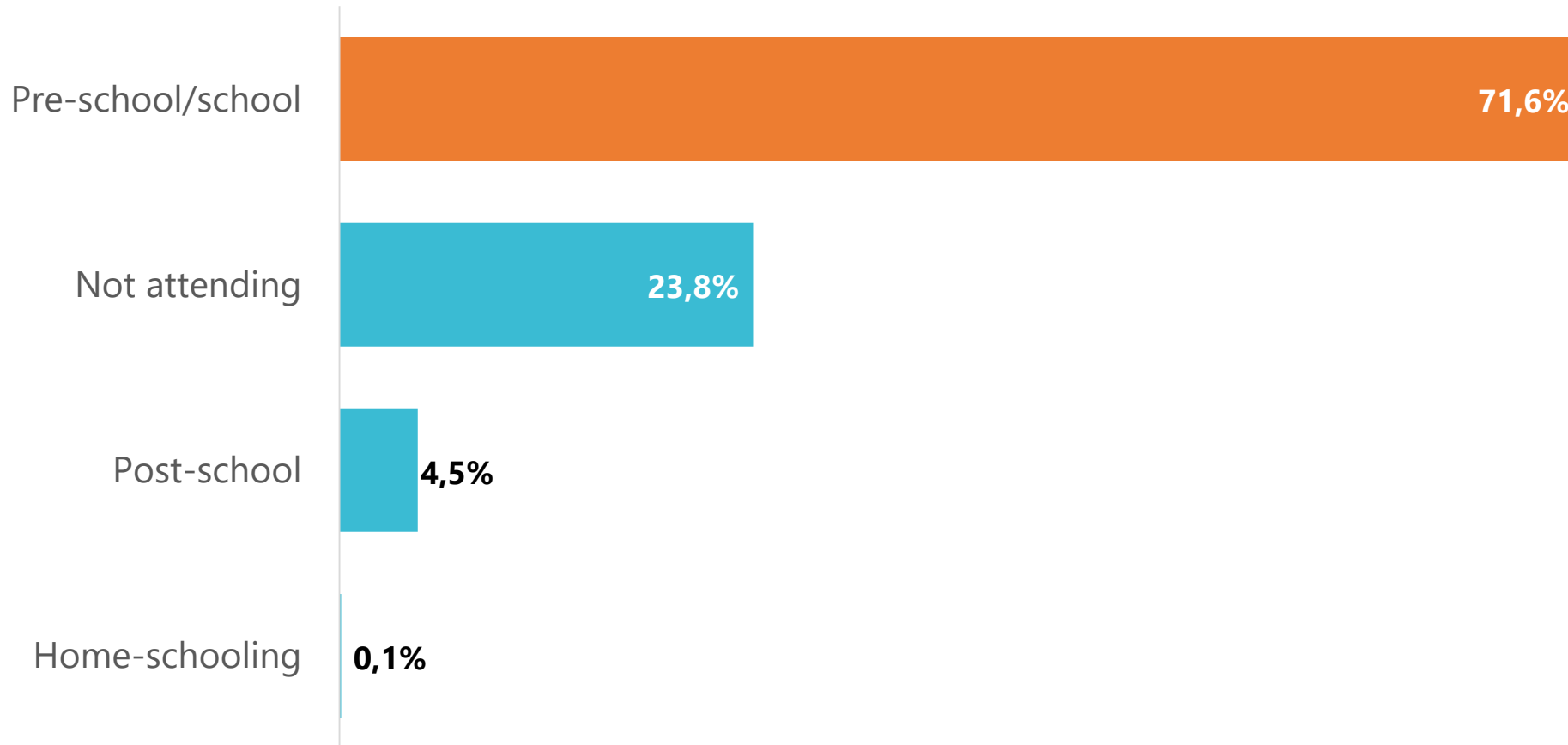




School attendance

Close to three-quarters (71,6%) of South African individuals aged 5–24 were attending pre-school or schools (grade R-12), whilst close to one-quarter (23,8%) were not attending any educational institutions.

Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who attended educational institutions, 2020

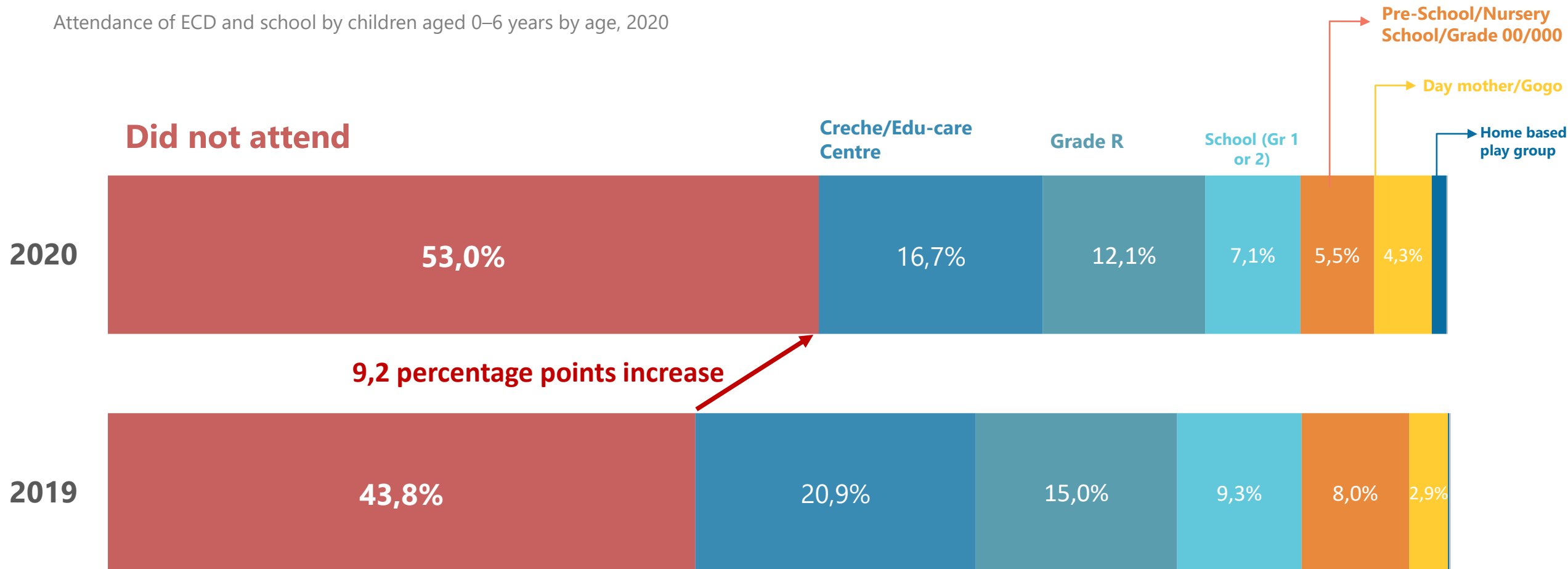


Source GHS 2020

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There was a 9,2 percentage points increase in the percentage of children aged 0–6 (ECD) who did not attend any educational facilities between 2019 and 2020.

Attendance of ECD and school by children aged 0–6 years by age, 2020

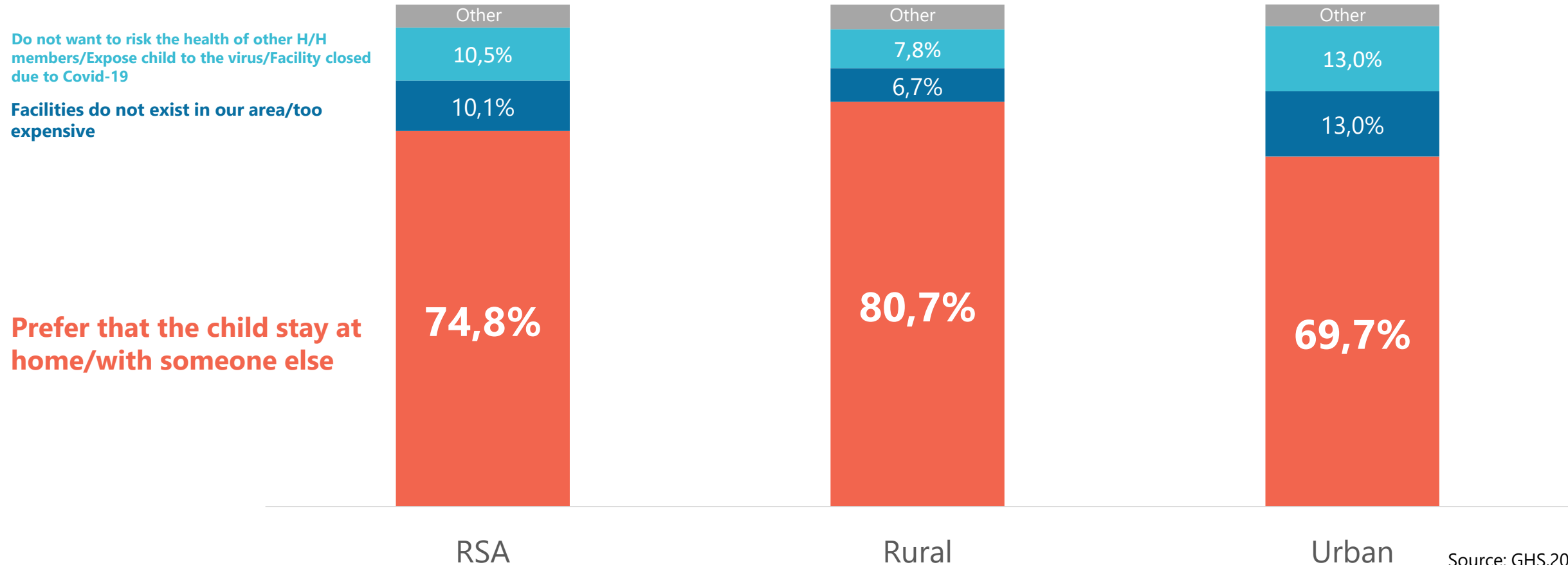


Source GHS 2020

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Nationally, in 2020, **close to three-quarters of children (74,8%)** aged 0-6 years were not attending any educational institutions, mainly because parents preferred that their child stay at home with parents or guardians or under the care of someone else. 10,5% did not attend due to COVID-19 related reasons.

Main reasons for individuals aged 0–6 years not attending an educational institution, 2020



Source: GHS,2020

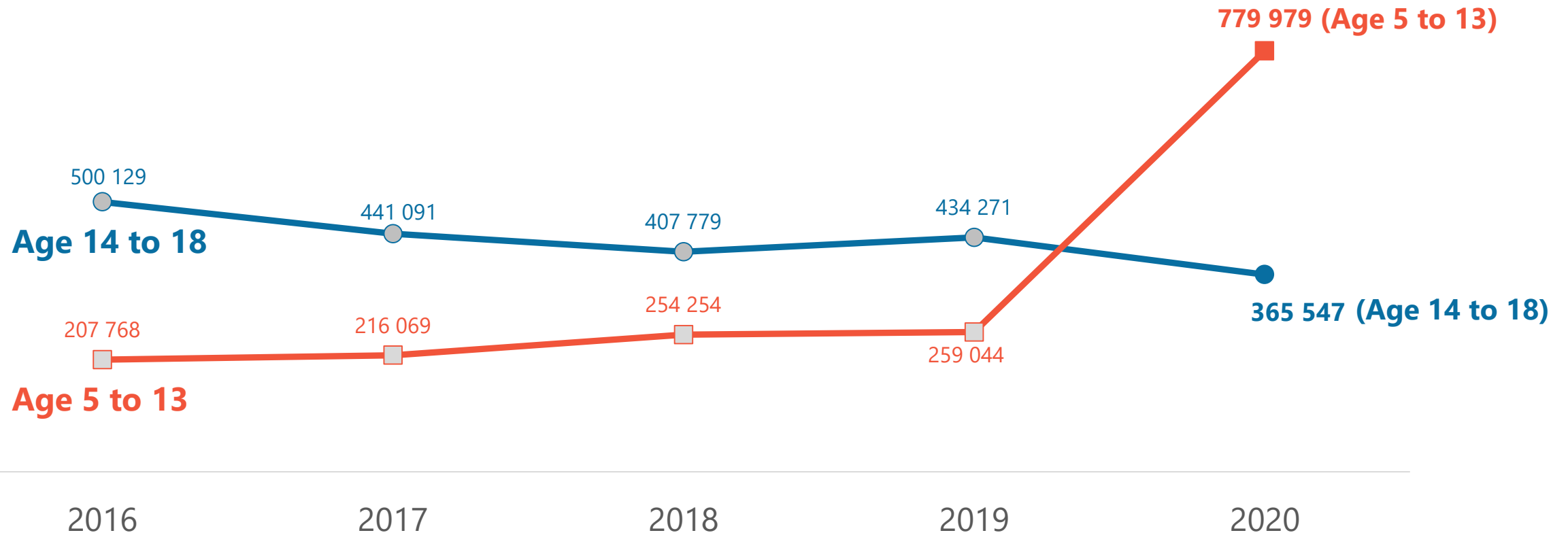
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Out-of-School Children

Just **over 1,1 million children aged 5-13 and 14-18** were out of school in 2020. Those aged 5-13 started from a low base of 207 768 in 2016 and increased to 779 979 in 2020. The increase in out-of-school children was attributed to COVID-19.

Number of children aged 5–13 and 14-18 who were out-of-school from 2016 to 2020

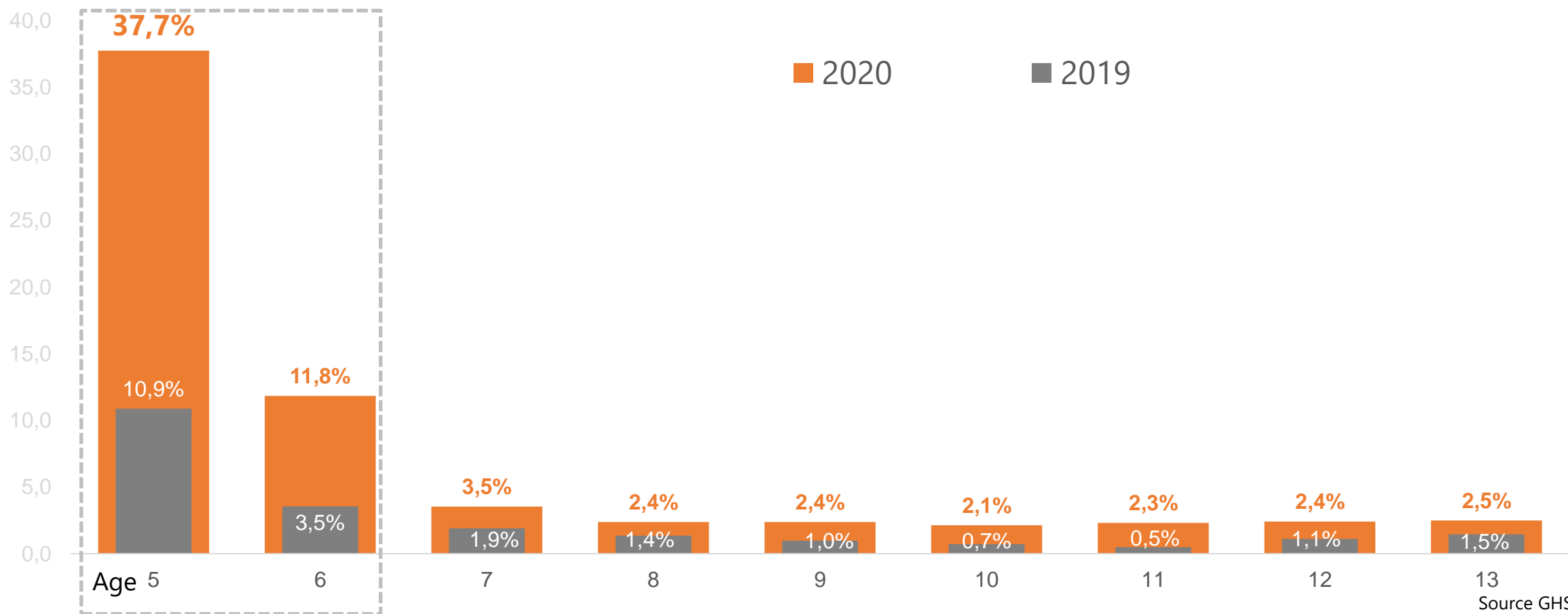


Source GHS 2016-2020

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In 2020, the percentage of **out-of-school 5-years-olds was the highest (37,7%)** compared to the other age groups, followed by those 6 years old at 11,8%.

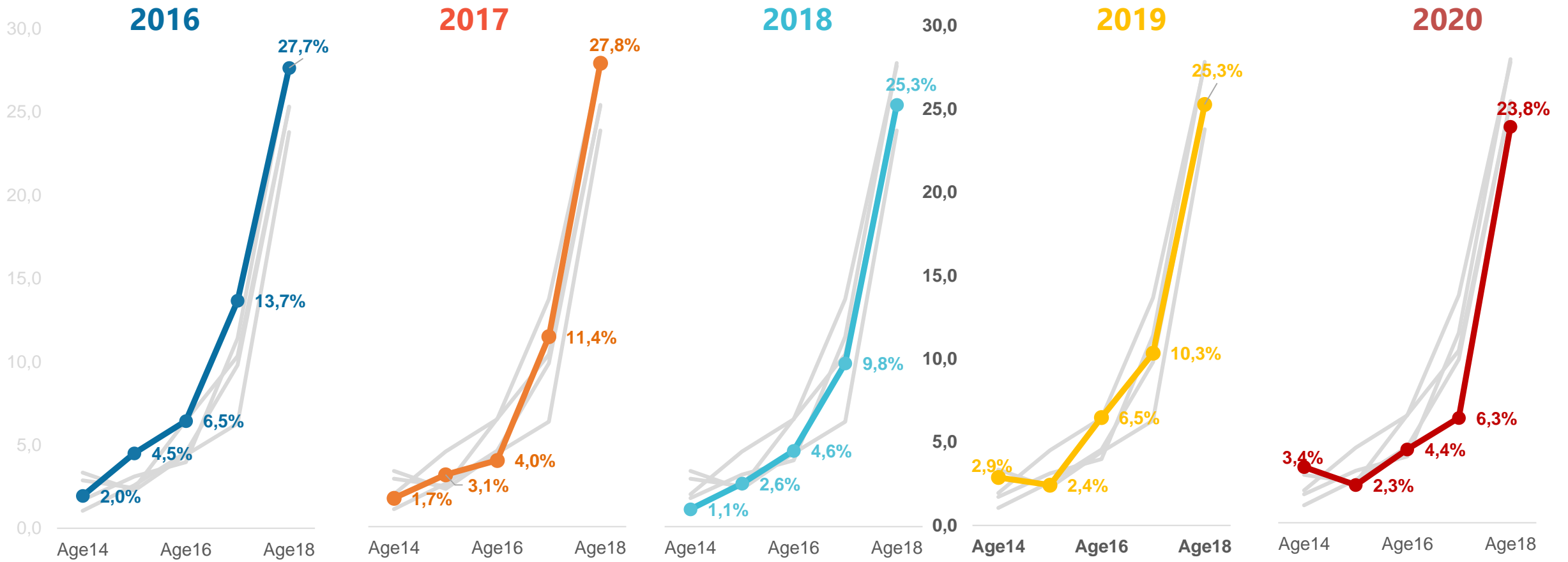
Out-of-school children aged 5–13 as a percentage of total children by age, 2019-2020



Source GHS 2019-2020

The percentage of 18 years-olds who were **out-of-school** was **higher from 2016 to 2019** and declined slightly in 2020. It declined by (-3,9 percentage points) between 2016 and 2020.

Out-of-school children aged 14–18 as a percentage of total children by age, 2016-2020



Source GHS 2016-2020

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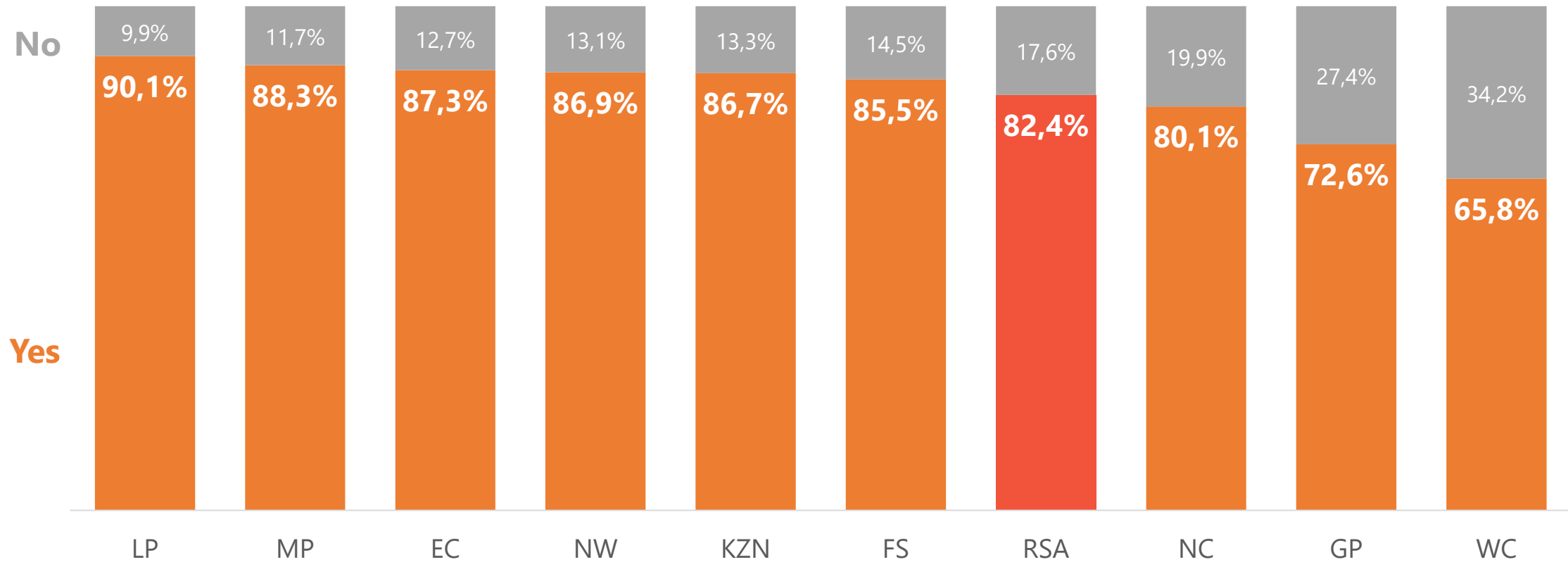


The school feeding scheme/government nutrition programme



In 2020, **eight out of ten (82,4%)** individuals **aged 5–24** attended schools where food was given as part of the school feeding scheme.

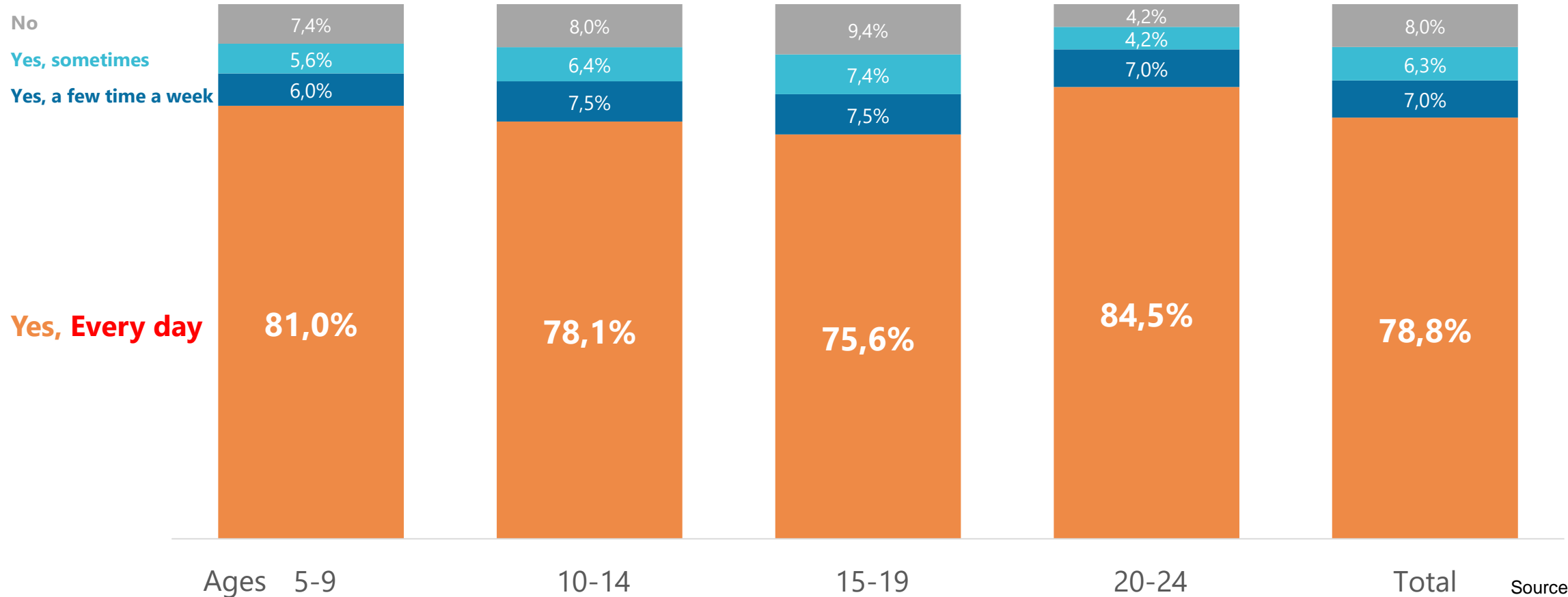
Individuals aged 5–24 who attend a school where food was given as part of the school feeding scheme/government nutrition programme, 2020



Source: GHS 2020

Of those that were provided food, learners in the youngest age group (5–9) and oldest age group (20–24) benefitted the most from the school-feeding scheme. **81% and 84,5%** were daily consumers of the food respectively.

Individuals aged 5-24 years who ate the food provided as part of the school feeding/government nutrition programme, 2020



Source: GHS 2020

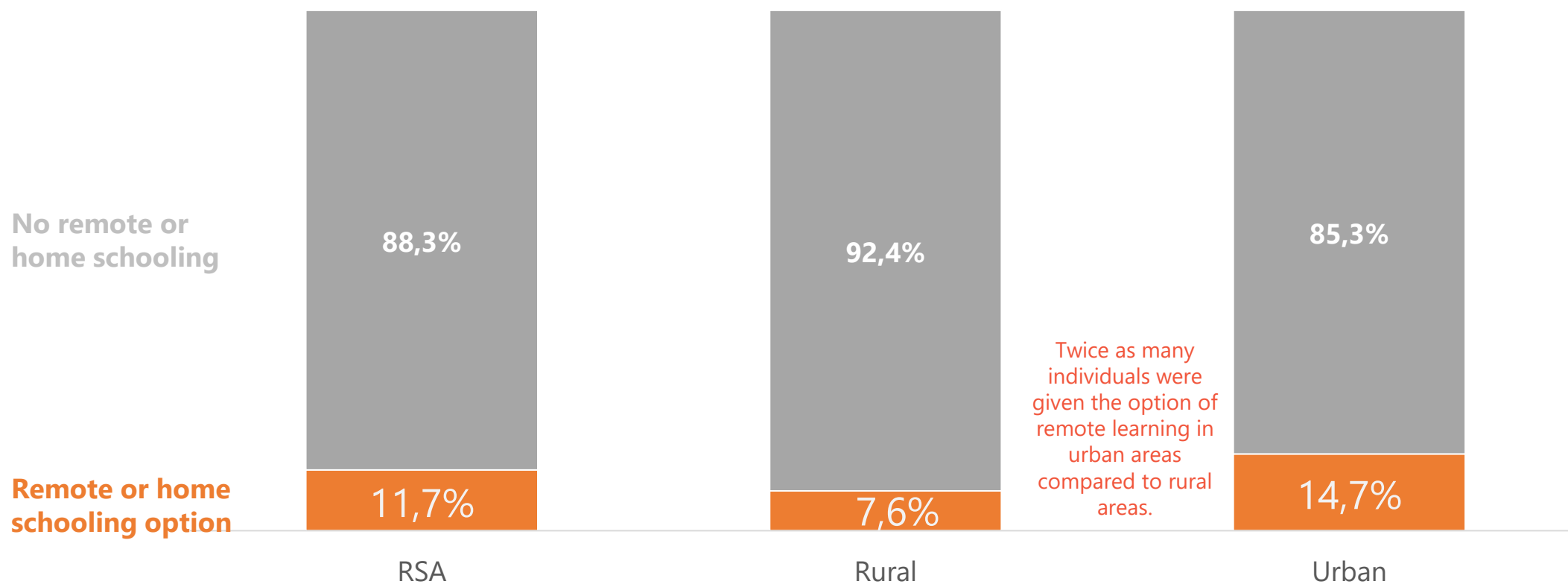


Remote Learning/Home Schooling Options



Nationally, in 2020, only 11,7% of schools offered remote learning options. **Most schools offered rotational** options instead of remote learning.

Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who attended educational institution/school that offered remote learning as a measure taken to contain the spread of COVID-19 virus in 2020

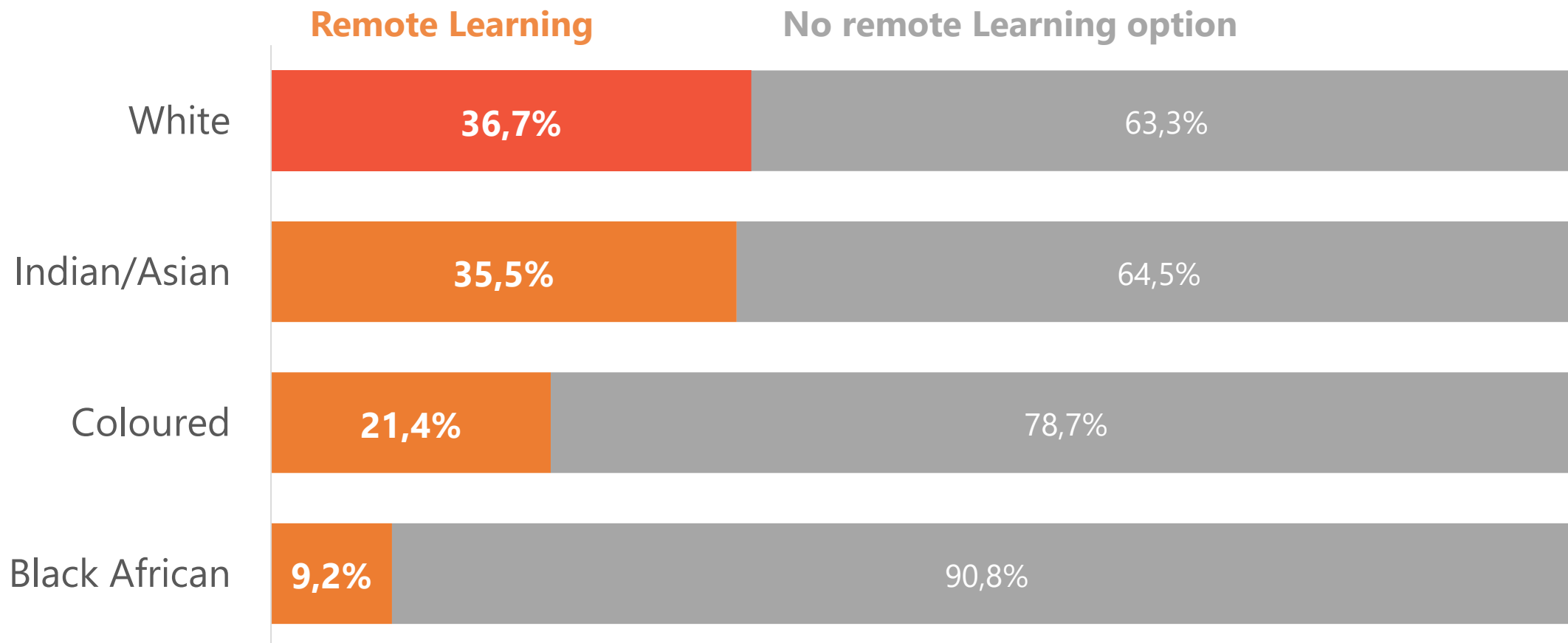


Source GHS 2020

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Whites (36,7%) were four times more likely to have been offered remote learning options by schools compared to black Africans (9,2%) in 2020.

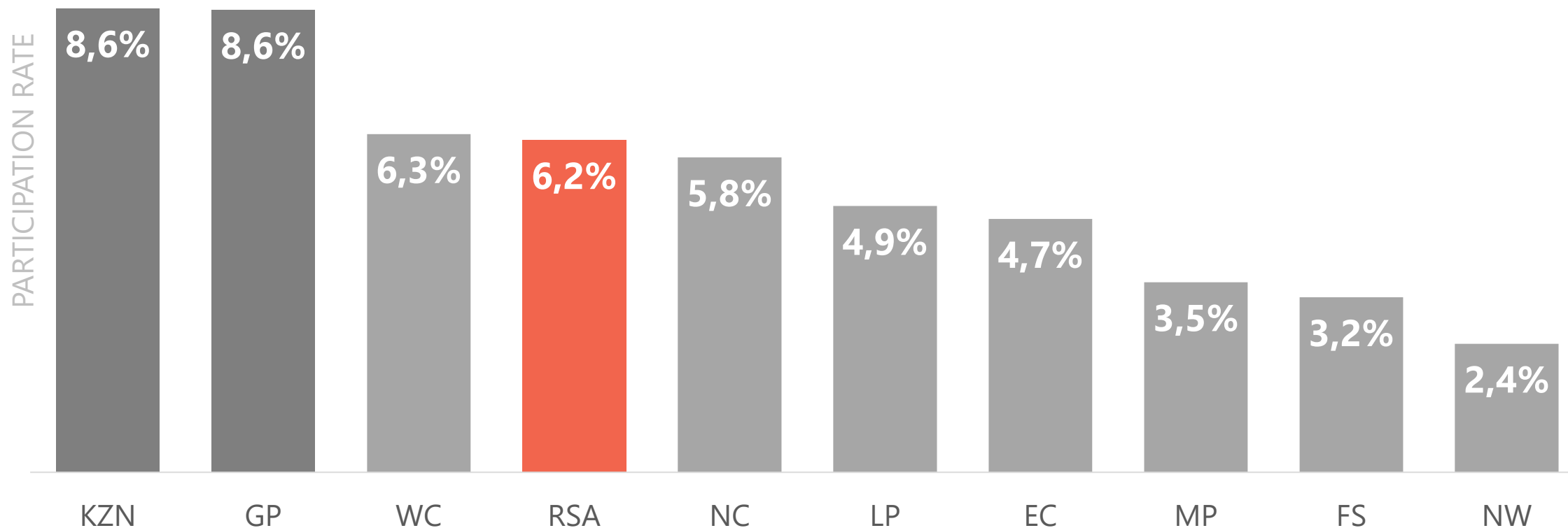
Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who attended educational institution/school that offered a remote or home schooling option by population group, 2020.



Source: GHS 2020

At 8,6%, **KZN and GP** had the highest participation rate in remote learning. North West had proportionately lower participation rates in remote learning at 2,4%, far lower than the **national average** and rural areas.

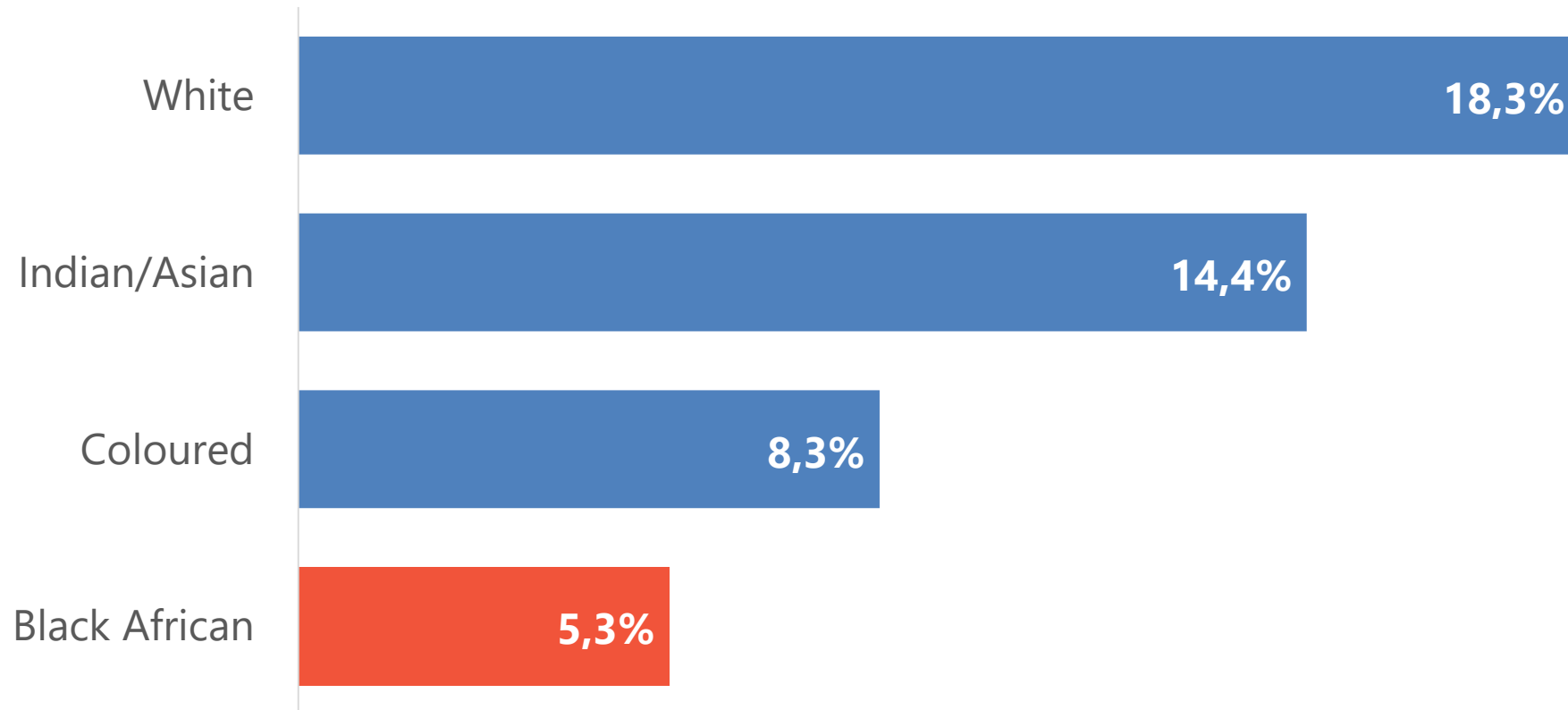
Individuals aged 5–24 years who participated in home schooling as the measures taken to contain the spread of COVID-19 virus in 2020



Source GHS 2020

Black Africans were less likely to have participated in remote learning compared to the other population groups.

Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who participated in home schooling or remote learning by population group, 2020



Source GHS 2020

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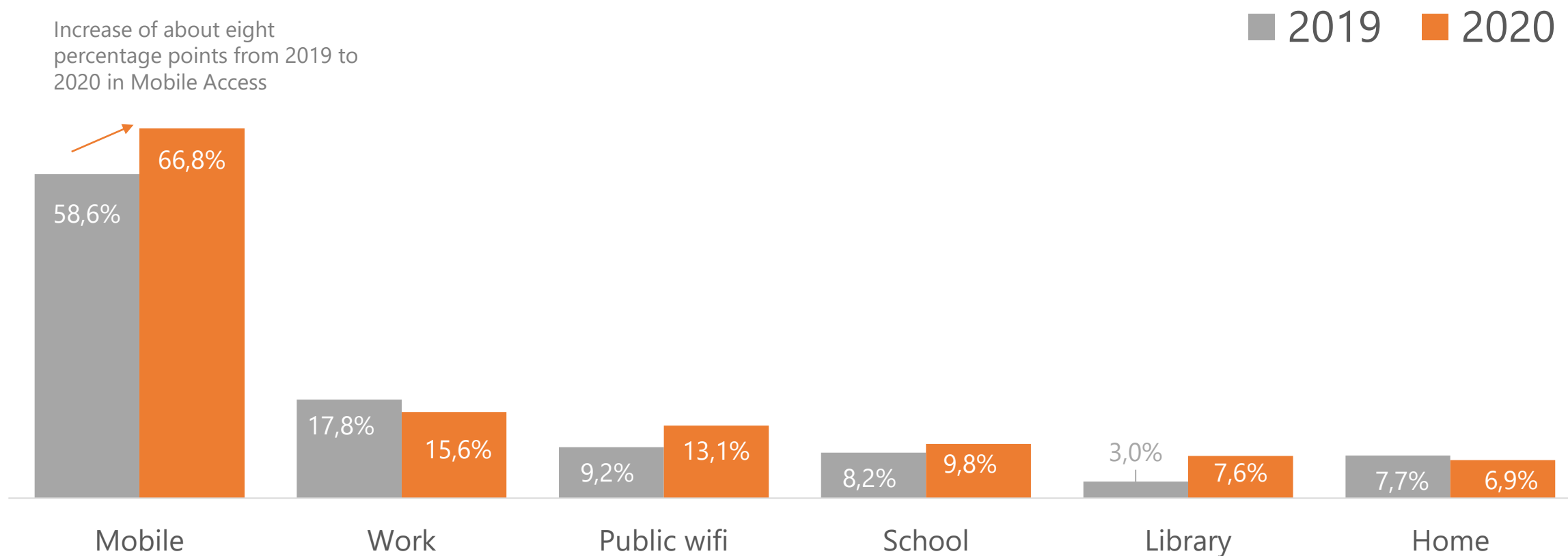


Household Internet Connectivity



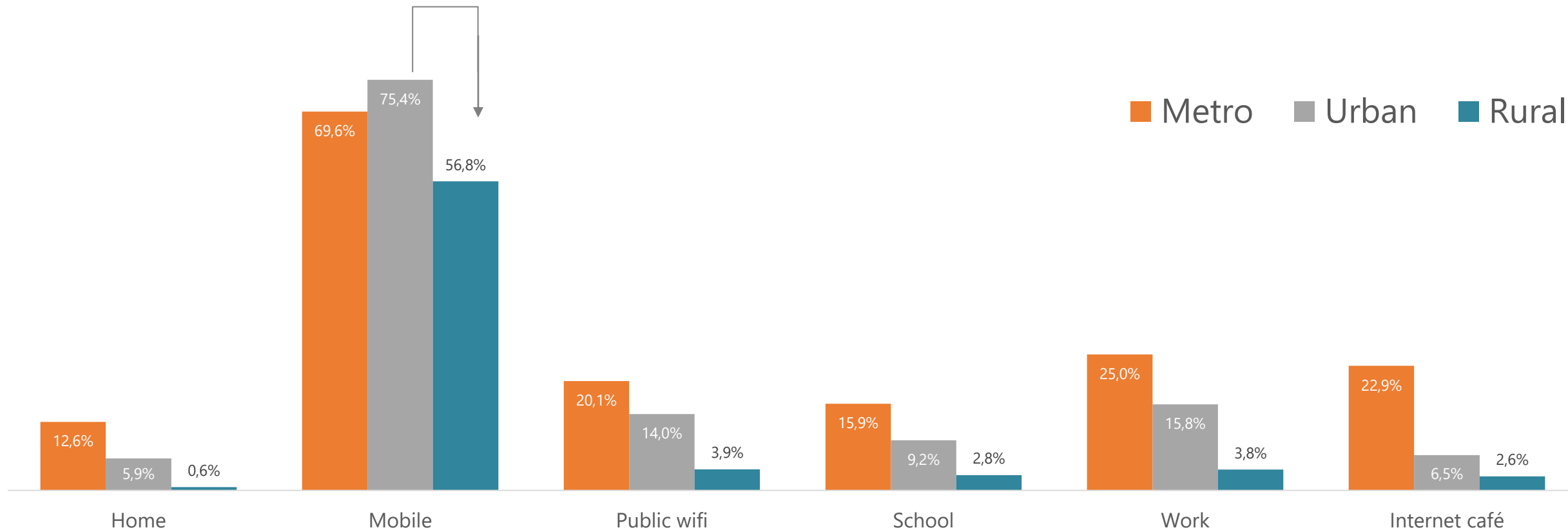
More than two-thirds (66,8%) of households with individuals 5-24 years were likely to access the internet through mobile phones.

Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years by internet access in South Africa 2019-2020



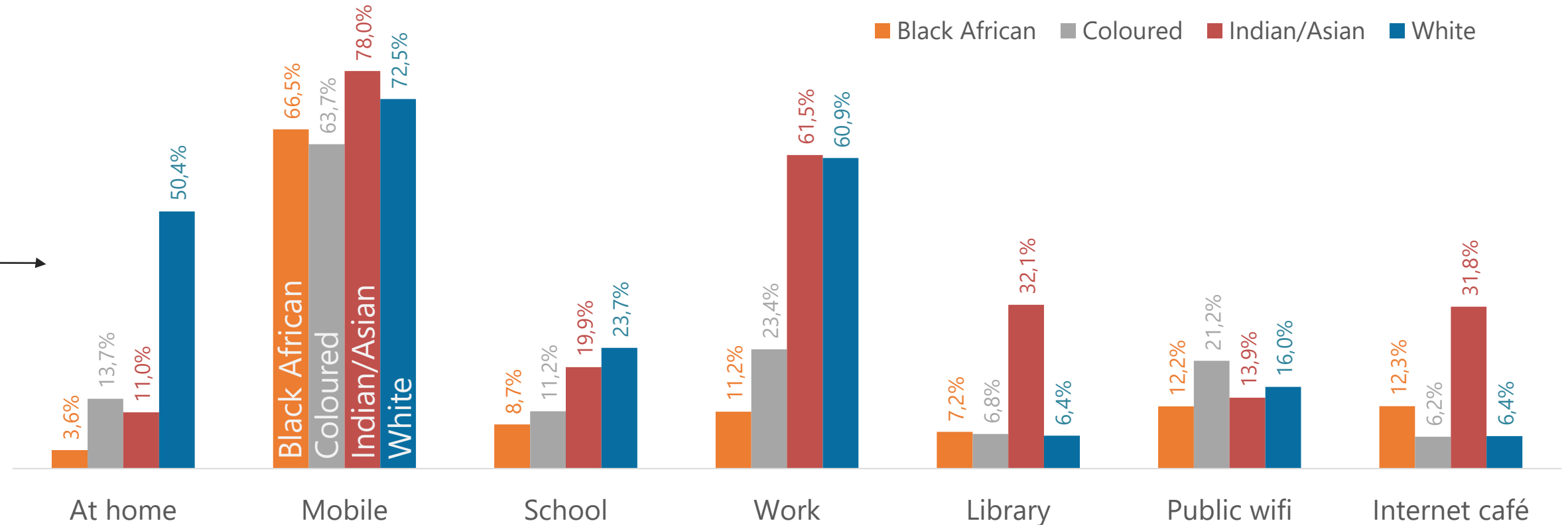
The majority (69,6%) of households with individuals aged 5–24 in metropolitan areas were more likely to access the internet by means of mobile phones.

Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years by internet access by geographic area, 2020



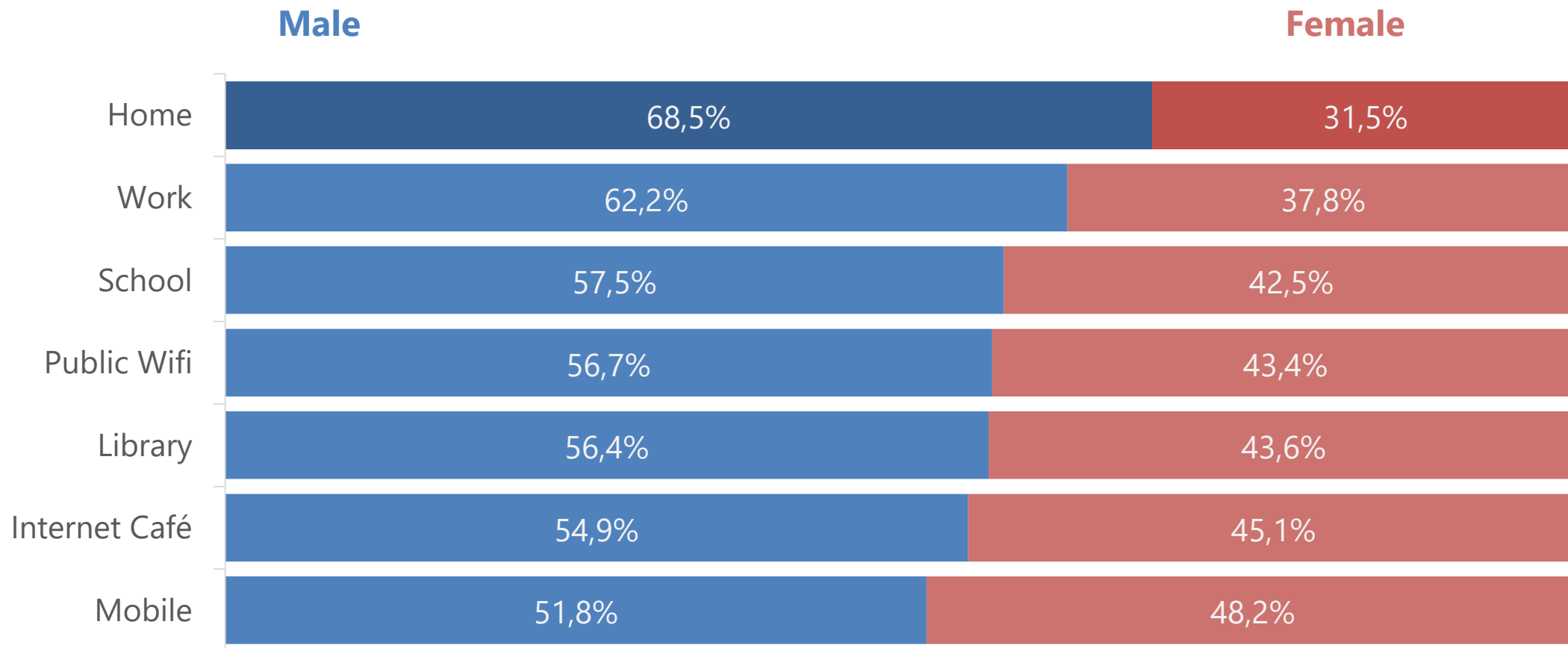
About half (**50,4%**) of **white-headed households** with individuals 5-24 years had internet connectivity at home compared to about **3,6% of black African-headed households**.

Population group of head of households with individuals aged 5–24 years by internet connectivity, 2020



More than **two-thirds (68,5%) of male-headed household** had internet access at home, **compared to 31,5% of female-headed households.**

Gender of head of households with individuals aged 5–24 years by internet connectivity, 2020

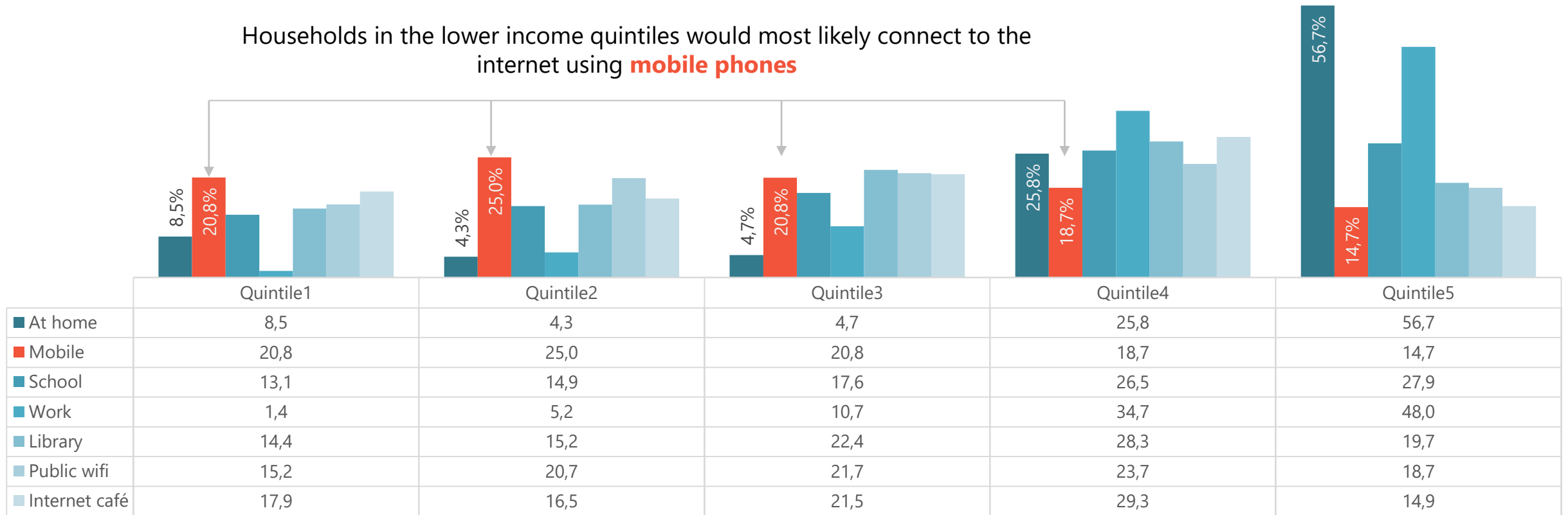


Source: GHS 2020

Most households (**56,7%**) from the **highest income group** (Quintile 5) had internet connectivity at home compared to around 9% from the lowest income quintile (Quintile 1).

Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years connected to the internet by household income quintiles, 2020

Households in the lower income quintiles would most likely connect to the internet using **mobile phones**



Source: GHS 2020

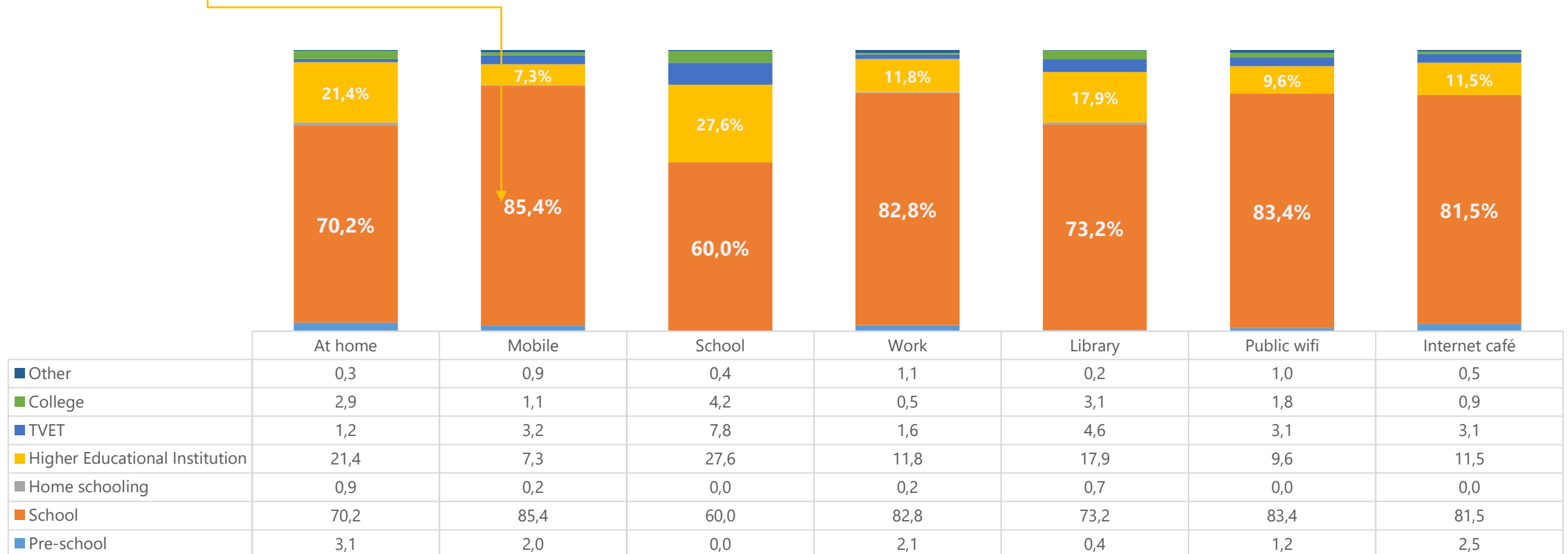


Internet connectivity, access to mobile phones and school attendance



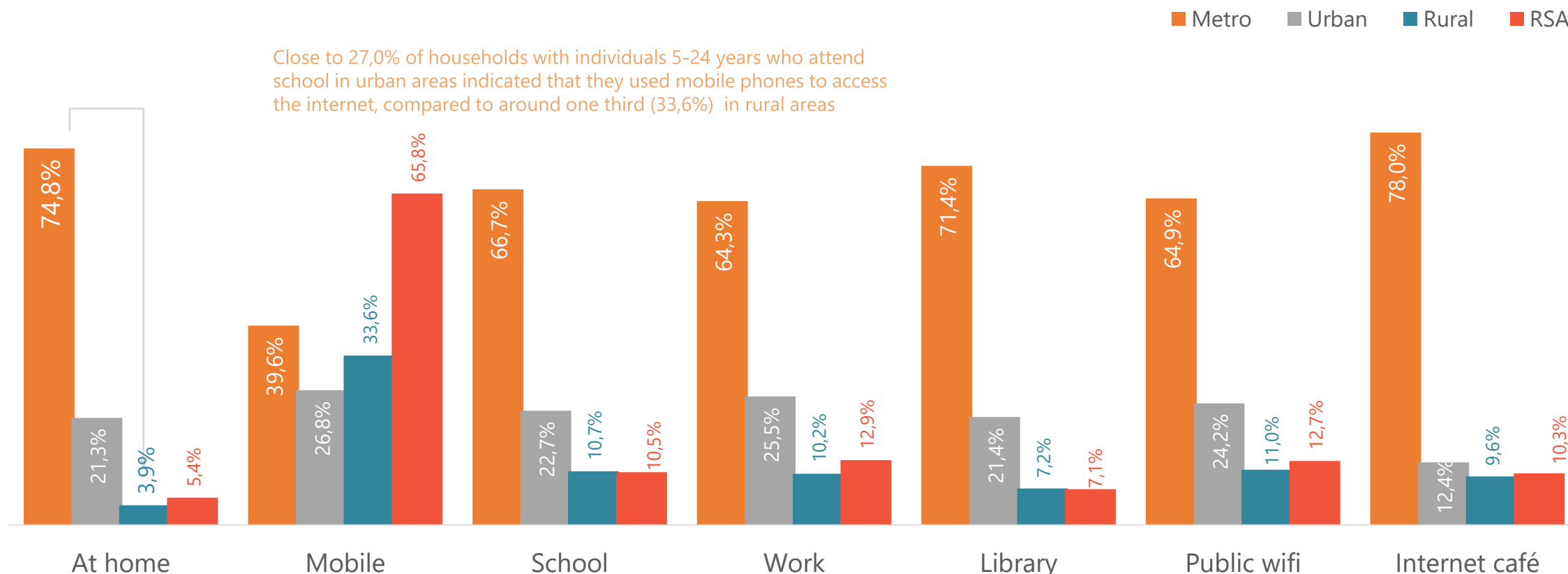
Four-fifths (85,4%) of households connected to the internet through cell phone had children attending school.

Households with individuals aged 5–24 years attending educational institutions by internet connectivity, 2020



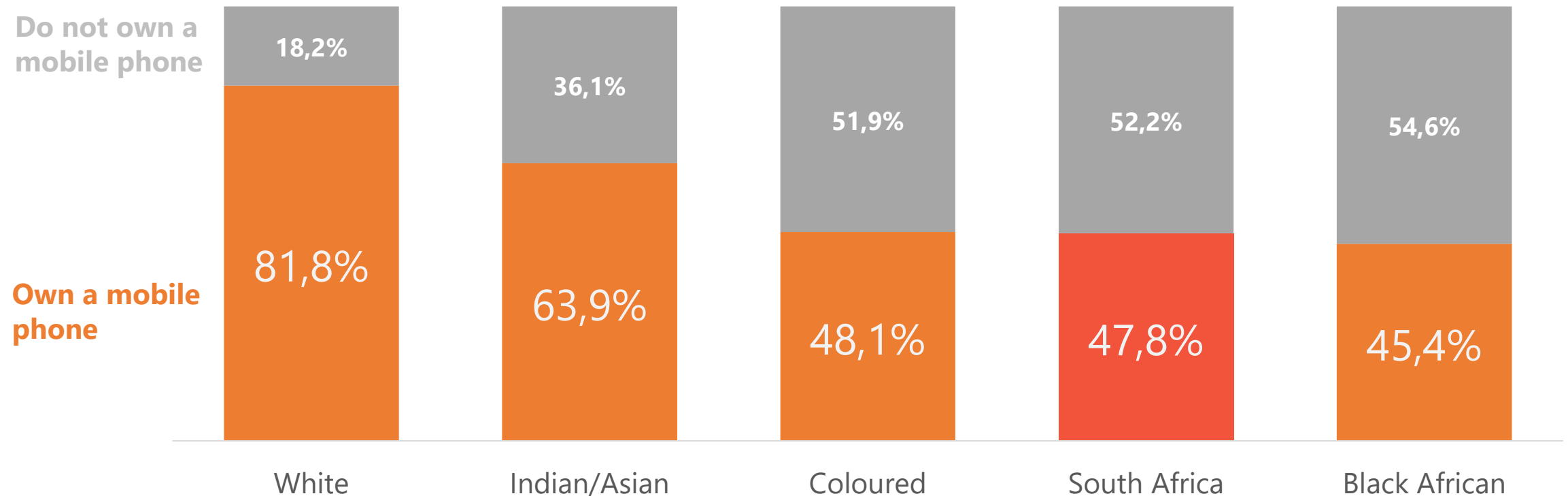
Households in urban areas had close to **five times more internet connectivity** at home compared to those in rural areas.

Households with individuals aged 5–24 years attending educational institutions by internet connectivity and geographical location, 2020



45,4% of black African individuals attending school owned mobile phones as compared to their **63,9%** Indian/Asian and **81,8%** white counterparts.

Individuals' mobile phones ownership among 10-24 years olds, 2019



Source: GHS 2019

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Among individuals aged 10–24 years attending **public schools**, the majority (54,6%) did not own mobile phones while close to **45% were likely to own mobile phones**.

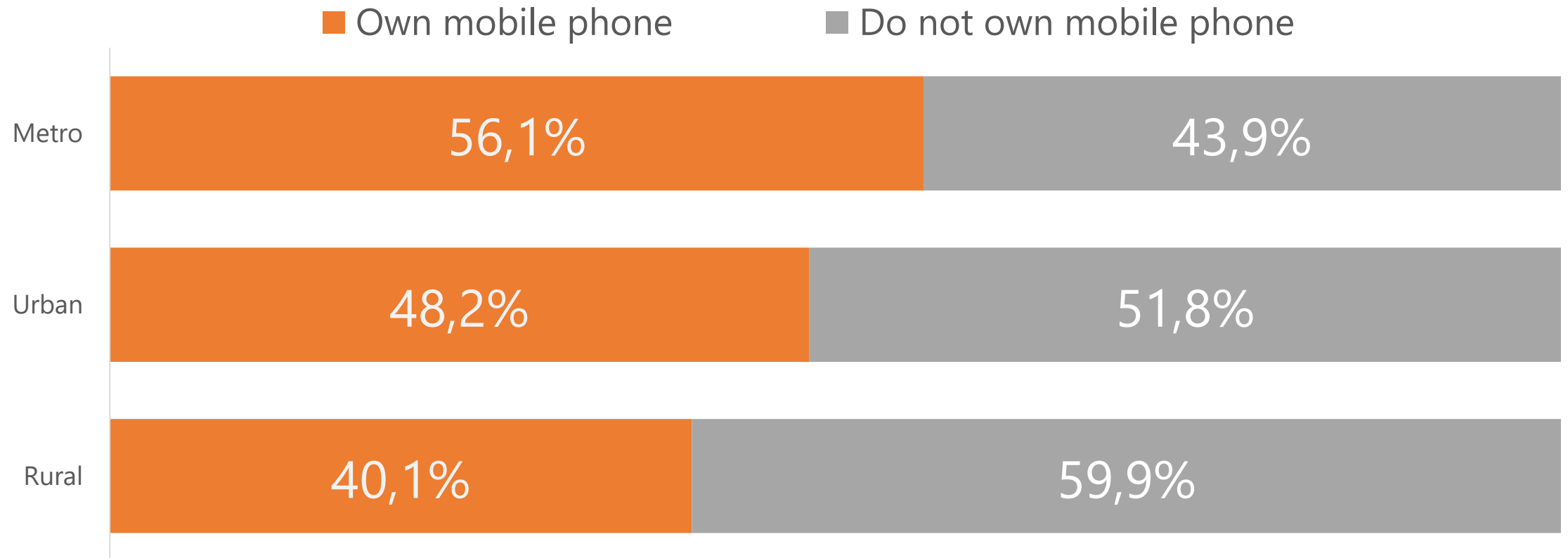
Individuals aged 10–24 who owned mobile phones and attending public or private school, 2019



Source: GHS 2019

Metropolitan areas had a higher rate of individuals who owned mobile phones.

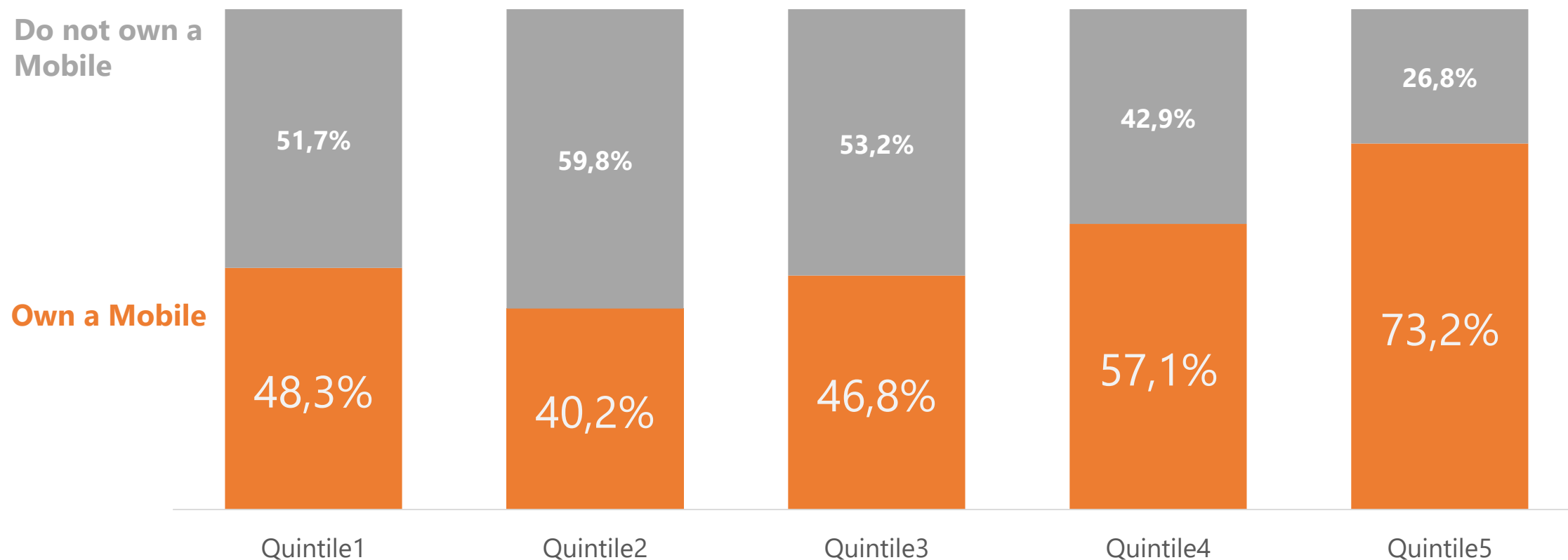
Individuals aged 10–24 years attending school who owned mobile phone in public or private school, 2019



Source: GHS 2019

Individuals aged 10-24 in households' in the highest income quintile group were more likely to own mobile phones than those in households in the lowest income quintile group.

Individuals aged 10–24 years attending school who owned mobile phone by income quintile, 2019



Source: GHS 2019

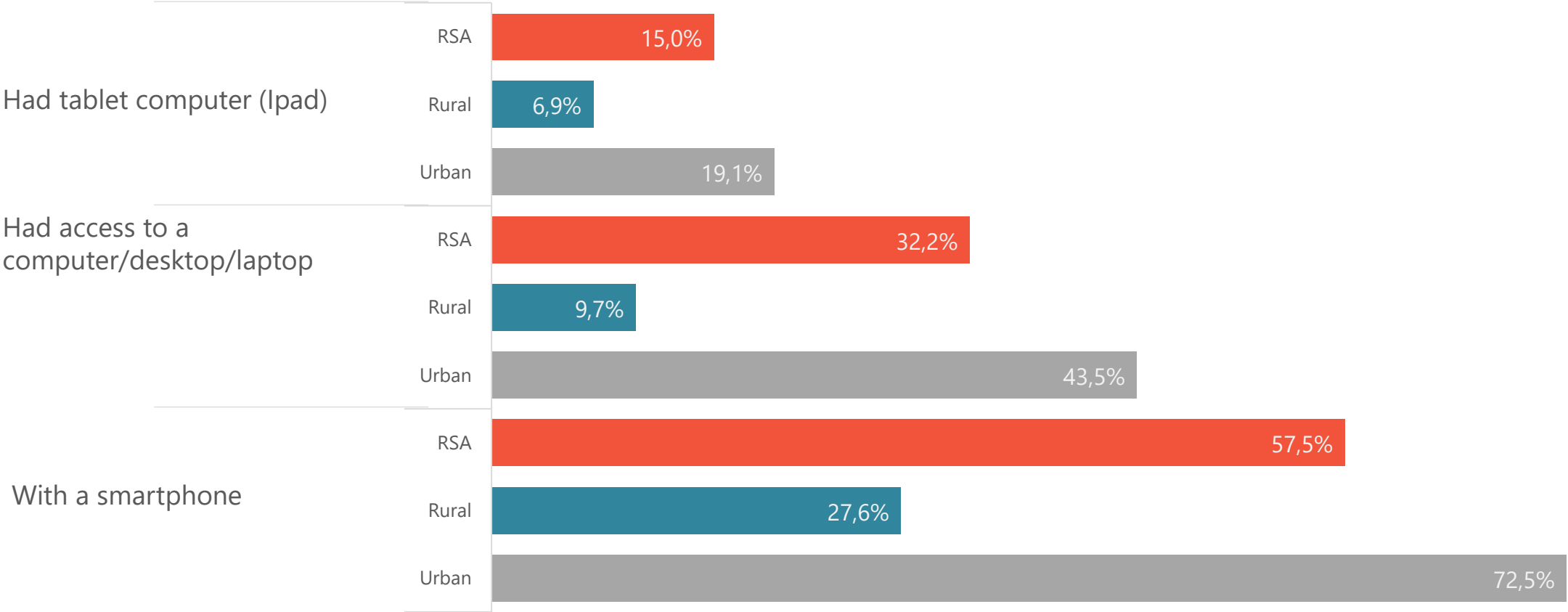
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A person is seen from the side, sitting at a desk and looking at a laptop. The laptop screen displays a video call with a man in a pink shirt who is speaking and gesturing. The person at the desk is holding a white marker and appears to be taking notes on a piece of paper. The desk is white and has a grey felt pen holder with several pens and a small black wire basket with a white mug. The background is a dark, textured wall.

**Access to other tools
used for remote learning**

Individuals who lived in urban areas were almost **three times more likely** to have access to tablet computers (iPad) to assist with distance learning compared to those who stayed in rural areas.

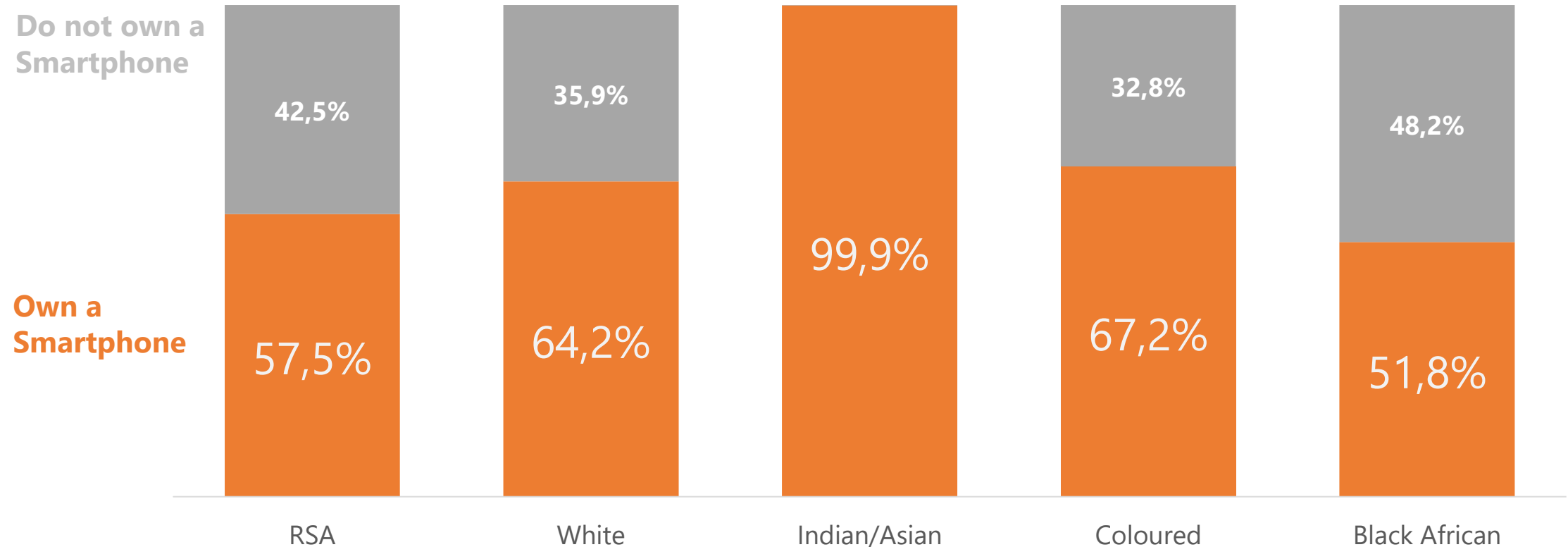
Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who had smart phones, computers or tablet (iPad) to assist with distance learning, 2020



Source GHS 2020

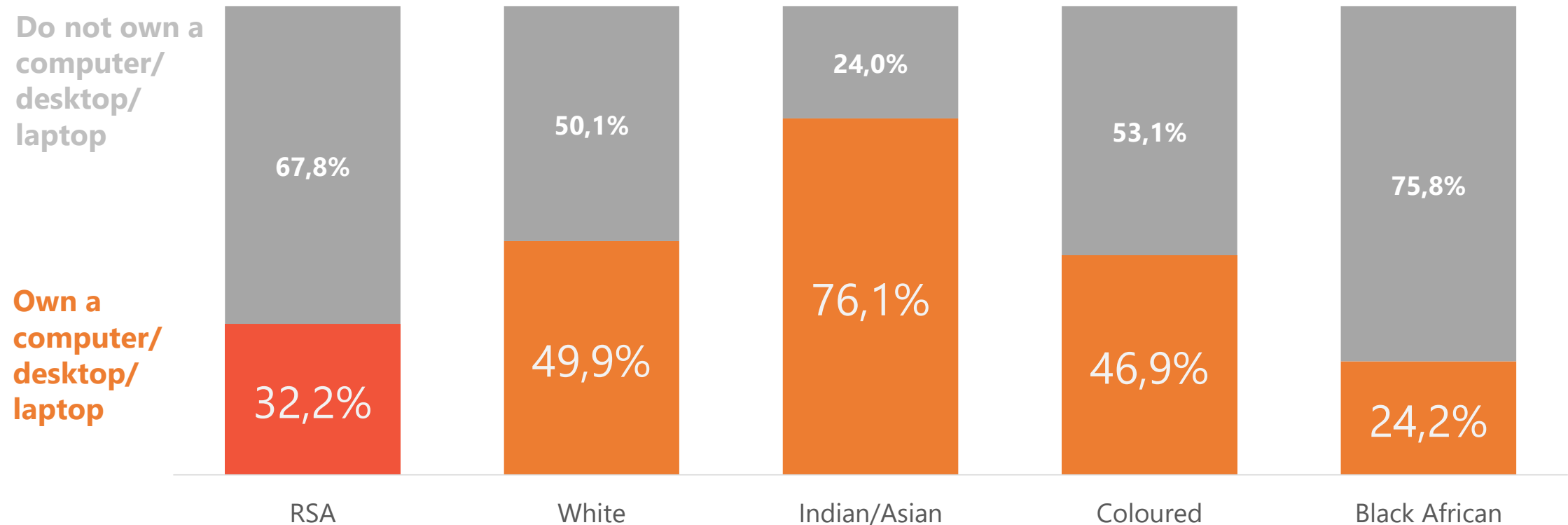
57,5% of South Africans aged 5-24 had a smart phone to assist with distance learning.

Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who had **smart phones** to assist with distance learning, 2020



Close to on-third (32,2%) of South Africans aged 5-24 had a computer/desktop/laptop to assist with distance learning

Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who had computer/desktop/laptop to assist with distance learning by population group, 2020

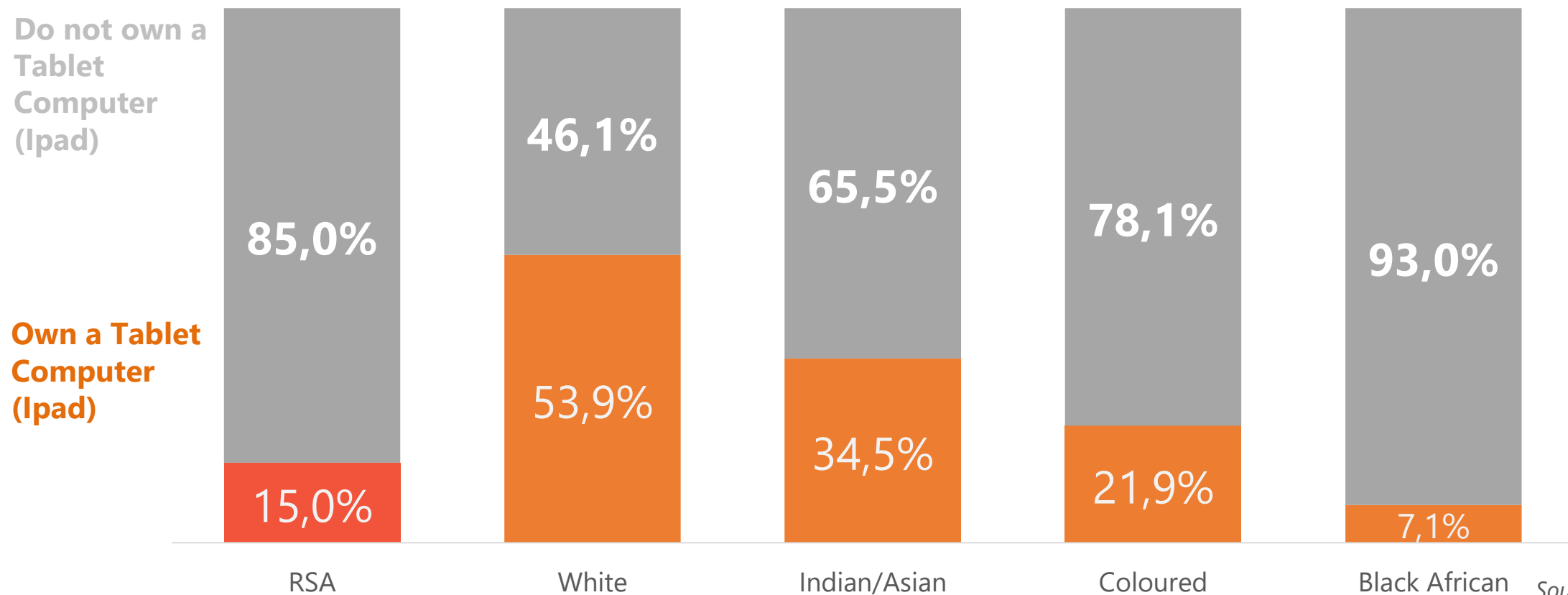


Source GHS 2020

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Only 15% of South Africans aged 5-24 had a **tablet computer (iPad)** to assist with distance learning.

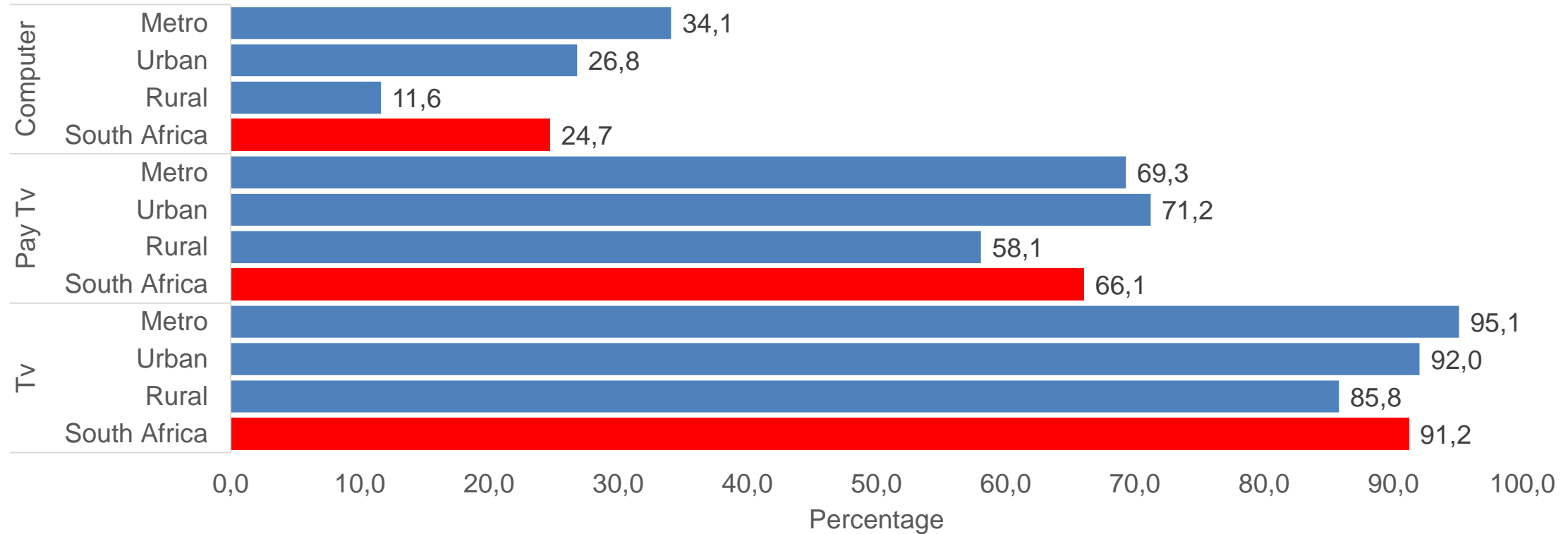
Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who had **tablet computer (iPad)** to assist with distance learning by population group, 2020



Source: GHS 2020

In 2020, nationally, about **one quarter (24,7%)** of households with individuals aged 5-24 years owned a computer, compared to **34,1% of households in metropolitan** areas, **26,8% in urban** and **11,6% rural**.

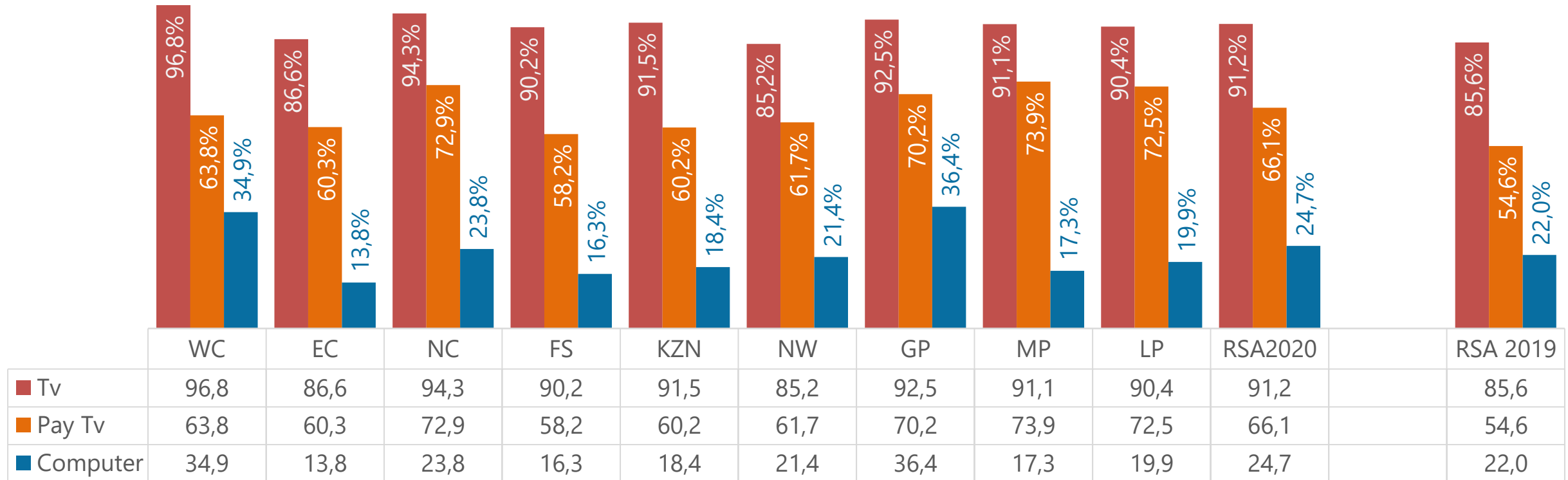
Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years with paid subscription TV, owned television, and computer/laptop by geographic area, 2020



Source: GHS 2020

More than one-third (36,4%) of households with individuals aged 5-24 years in Gauteng owned computers, compared to 34,9% in Western Cape and 13,8% in Eastern Cape.

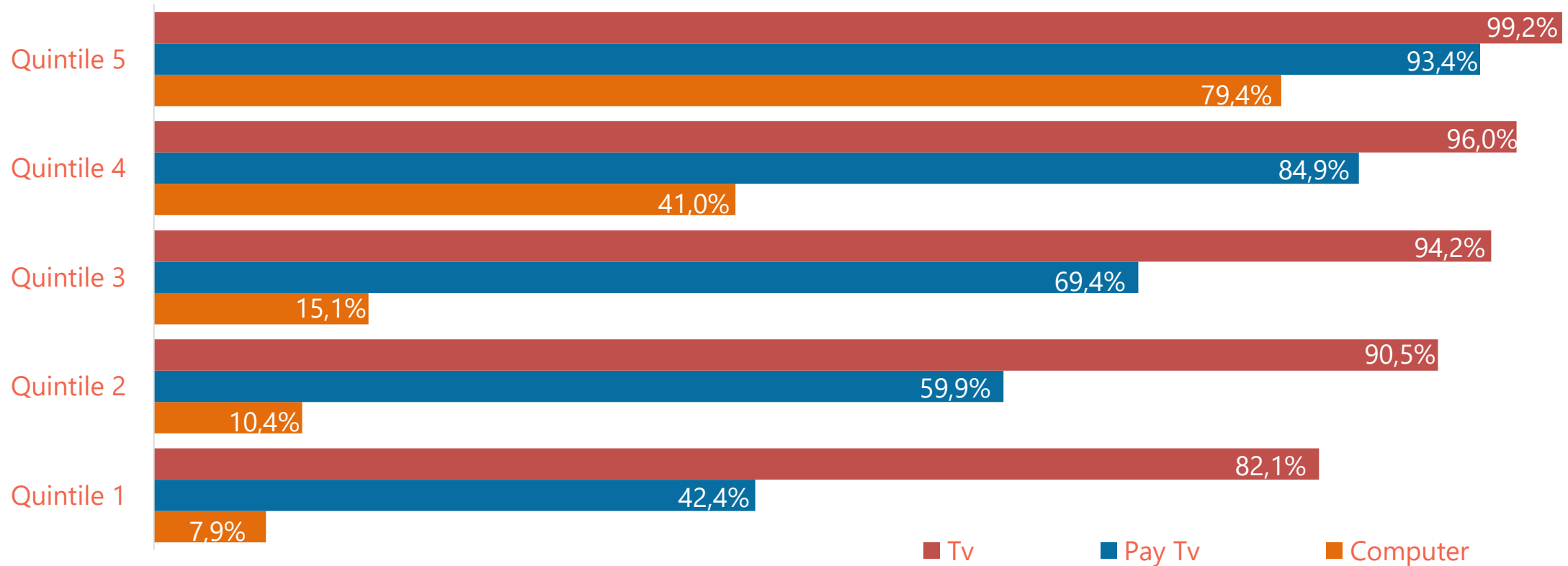
Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years with paid subscription TV, owned television and computer/laptop by province, 2019-2020



Source: GHS 2019-2020

Close to 8,0% households with individuals aged 5-24 years in the lower income quintile 1 own a computer compared to **79,4%** in the highest quintile 5.

Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years with paid subscription TV, owned television, radio and computer/laptop by quintiles, 2020



Source: GHS 2020

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- ❖ South Africa scrambled to make many alternatives remote learning options available to learners from television based instructions to internet-based instructions.
- ❖ However, each of these resources required access to the necessary technology or tools by households to benefit from these methods of instructions.
- ❖ The urban-rural digital divide was evident in 2020.
- ❖ The urban-rural divide in access to internet as well as strong inequality by income in access to internet was present.
- ❖ Not all schools offered remote learning options to their students.
- ❖ The effect of the lockdown had a high impact on the number of out-of-school children.



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