

Children Series Volume IV

Children living with grandparents in South Africa, 2023

Education and Child Statistics Directorate

20 February 2025



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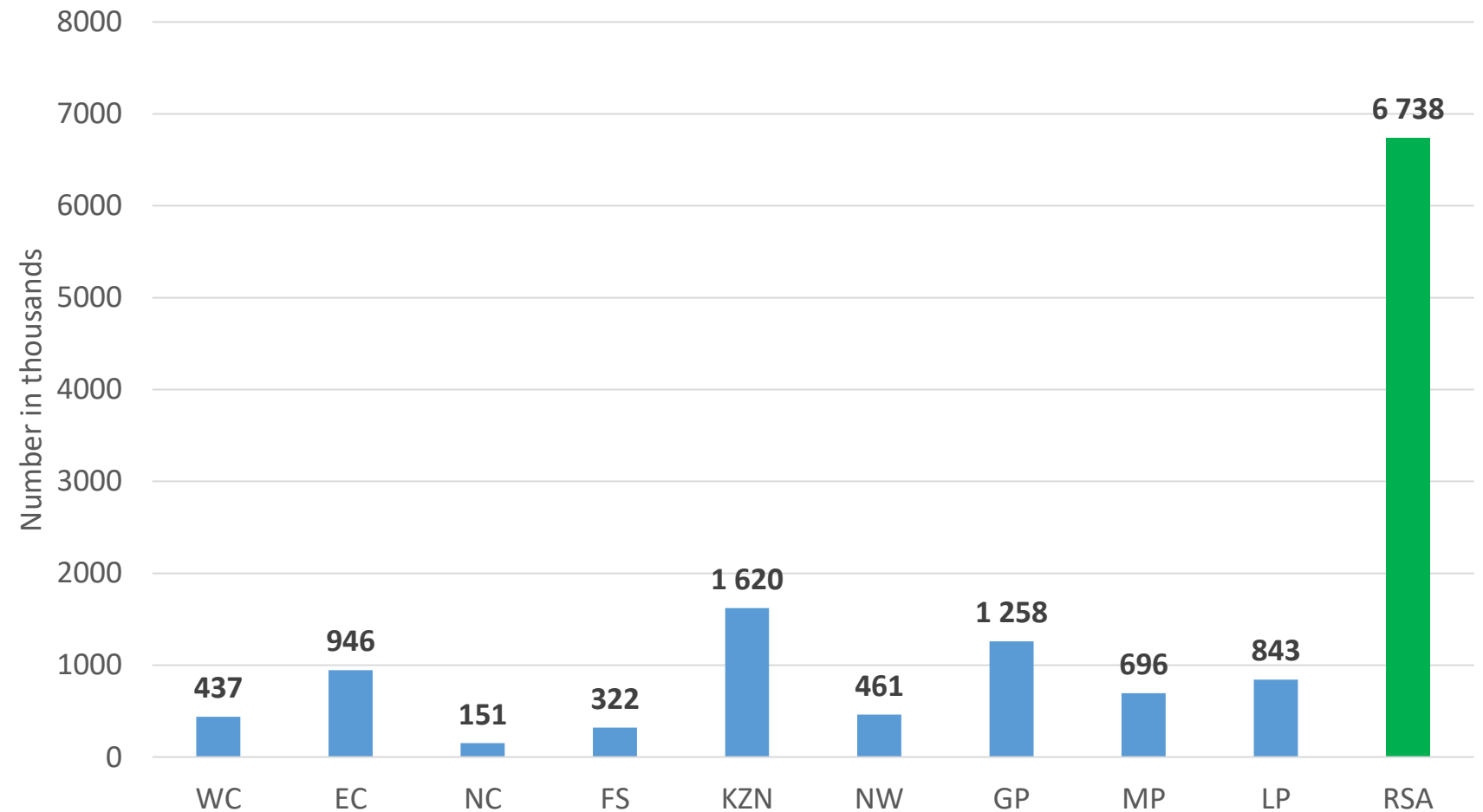


“Love is the greatest gift that one generation can leave to another.” — **Richard Garnett**



Number and percentage distribution of grandparents who stayed with children aged 0–17 by province, 2023

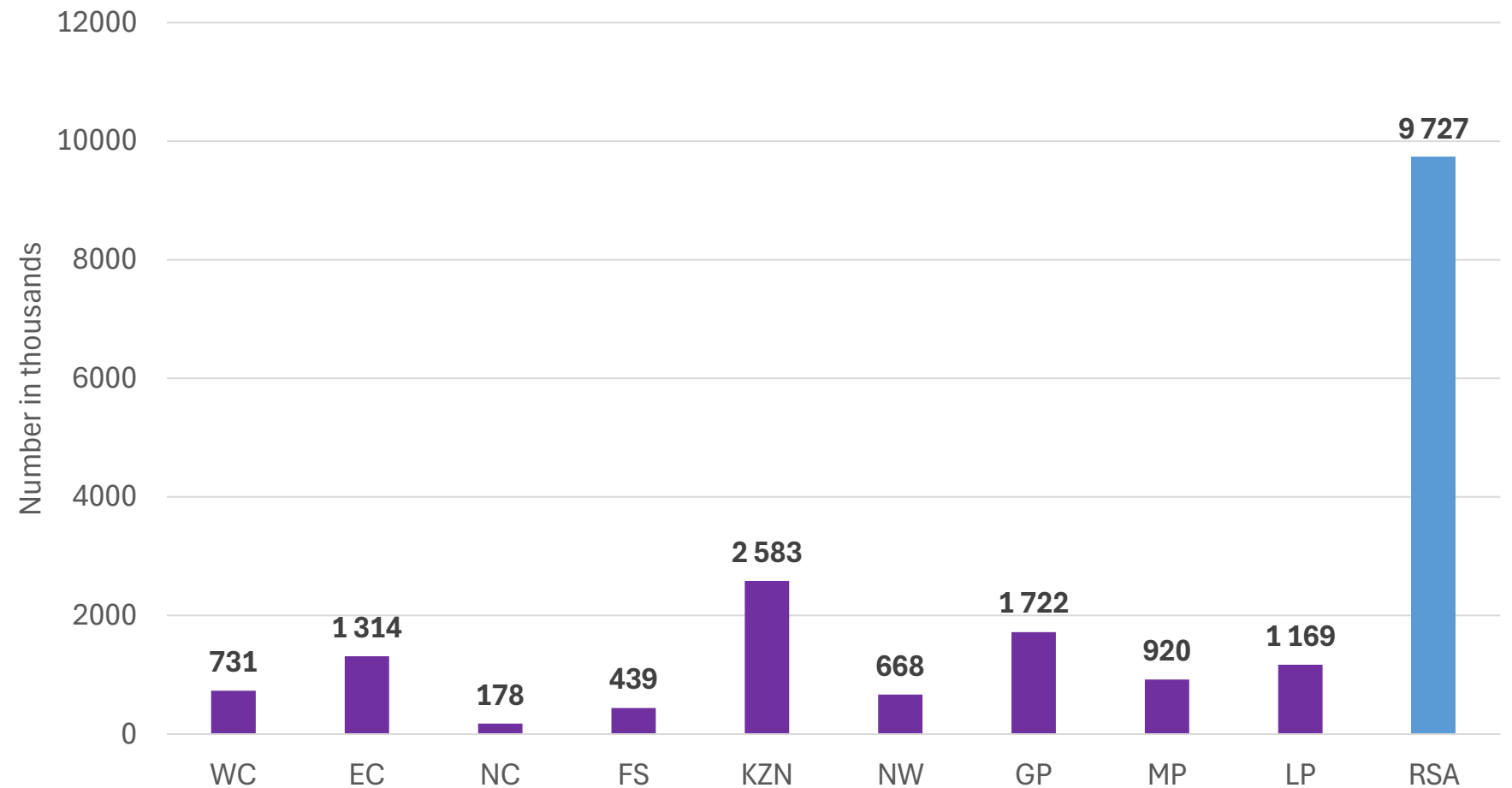
- Close to **6,7 million** grandparents in South Africa resided with their grandchildren, regardless of whether they were household heads.
- Proportion of grandparents living with their grandchildren
 1. KZN: **24,1%**
 2. GP: **18,7%**
 3. EC: **14,0%**
 4. LP: **12,5%**



Source: GHS 2023

Number and percentage distribution of children who stayed with their grandparents by province, 2023

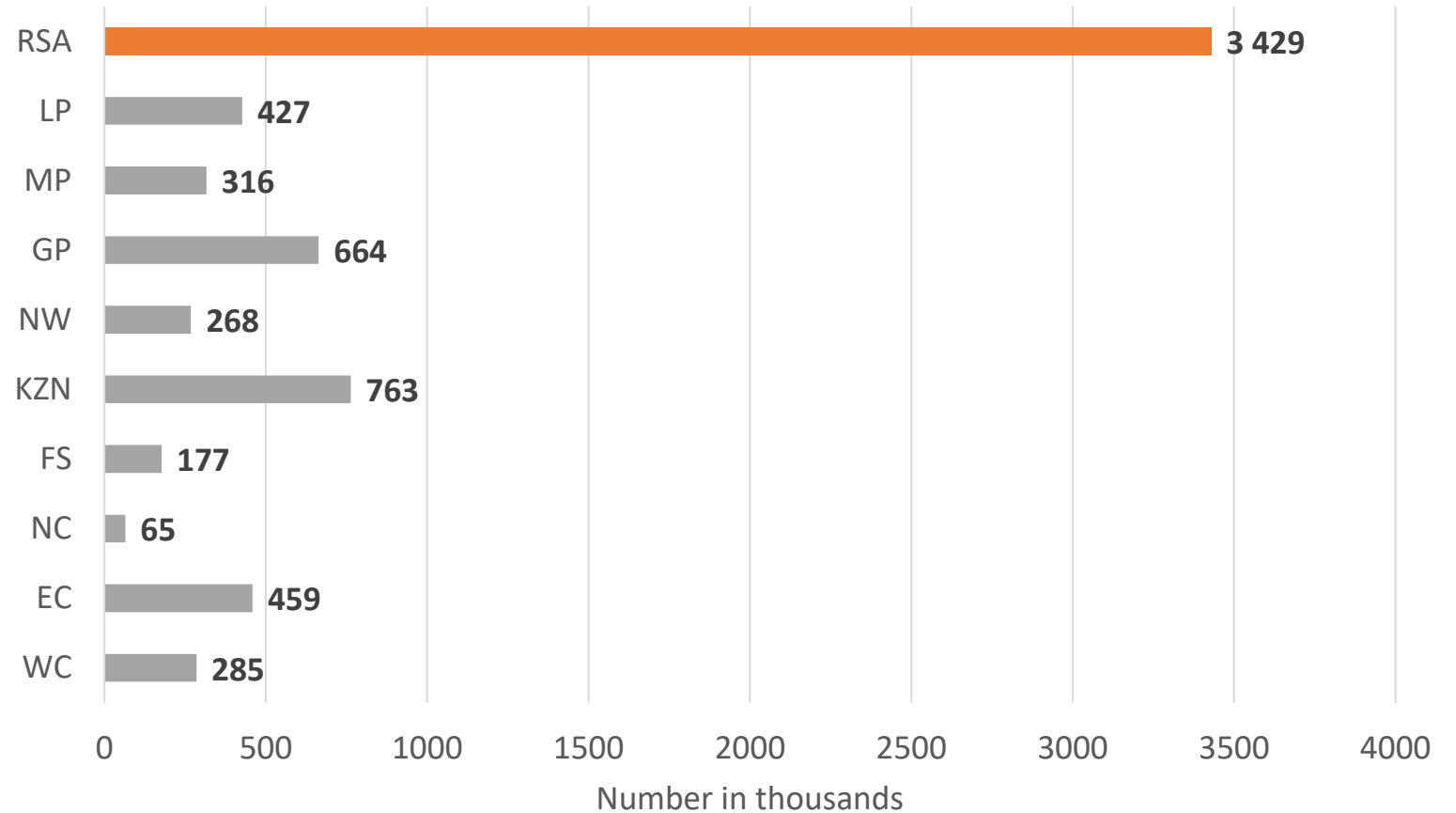
- Close to **9,7 million** children were living in with their grandparents in South Africa .
- Proportion of children living with their grandparents
 1. KZN: **26,6%**
 2. GP: **17,7%**
 3. EC: **13,5%**
 4. LP: **12,0%**



Source: GHS 2023

Number and percentage distribution of head of household grandparents staying with their grandchildren aged 0–17 years by sex and province, 2023

- Close to **3,4 million** head of households grandparents were found in South Africa.
- Most of these were grandmothers (**64,5%**), while grandfathers made up (**35,4%**)
- Proportion of head of households grandparents living with their grandchildren
 1. KZN: **22,3%**
 2. GP: **19,4%**
 3. EC: **13,4%**
 4. LP: **12,5%**

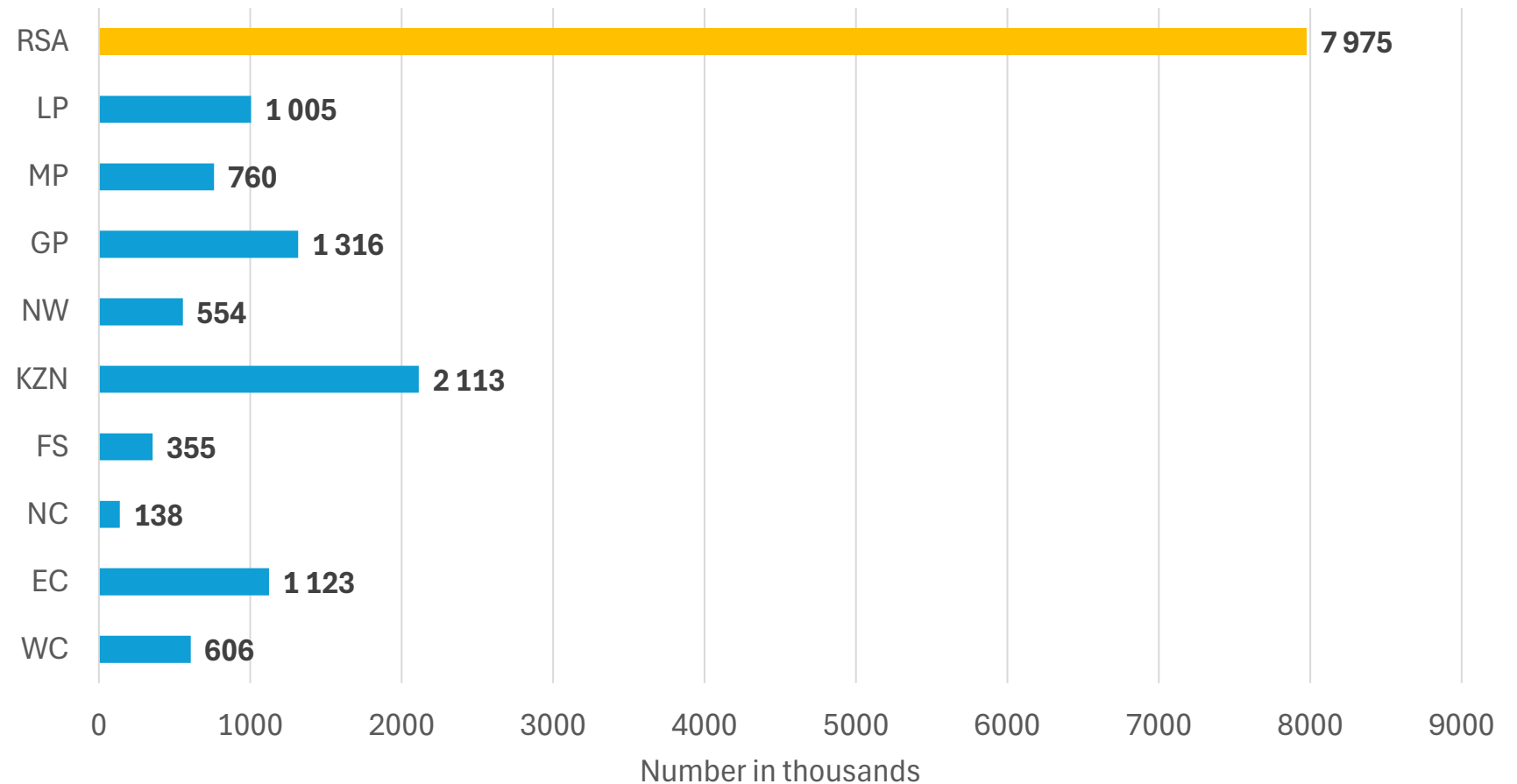


Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Number of children aged 0–17 years staying in grandparents-headed households by province, 2023

- Close to **8 million** children aged 0–17 were living in households headed by their grandparents
- Proportion of children living in grandparents-headed households
 1. KZN: **26,5%**
 2. GP: **16,5%**
 3. EC: **14,1%**
 4. LP: **12,6%**

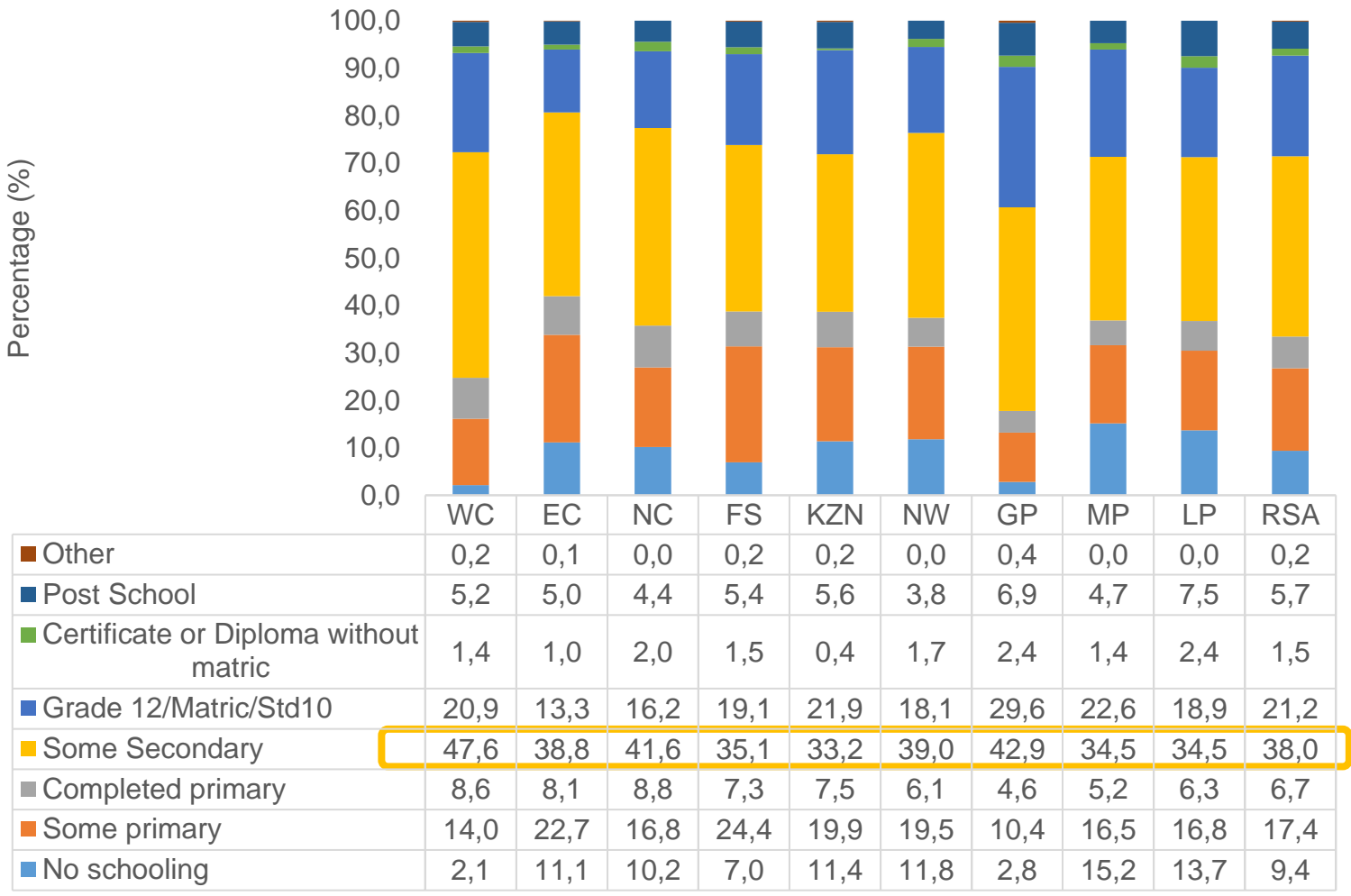


Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of grandparents who stayed with children aged 0–17 years by highest level of education and province, 2023

- Some secondary education: **38,0%**
- Completed grade 12: **21,2%**
- No schooling: **9,4%**



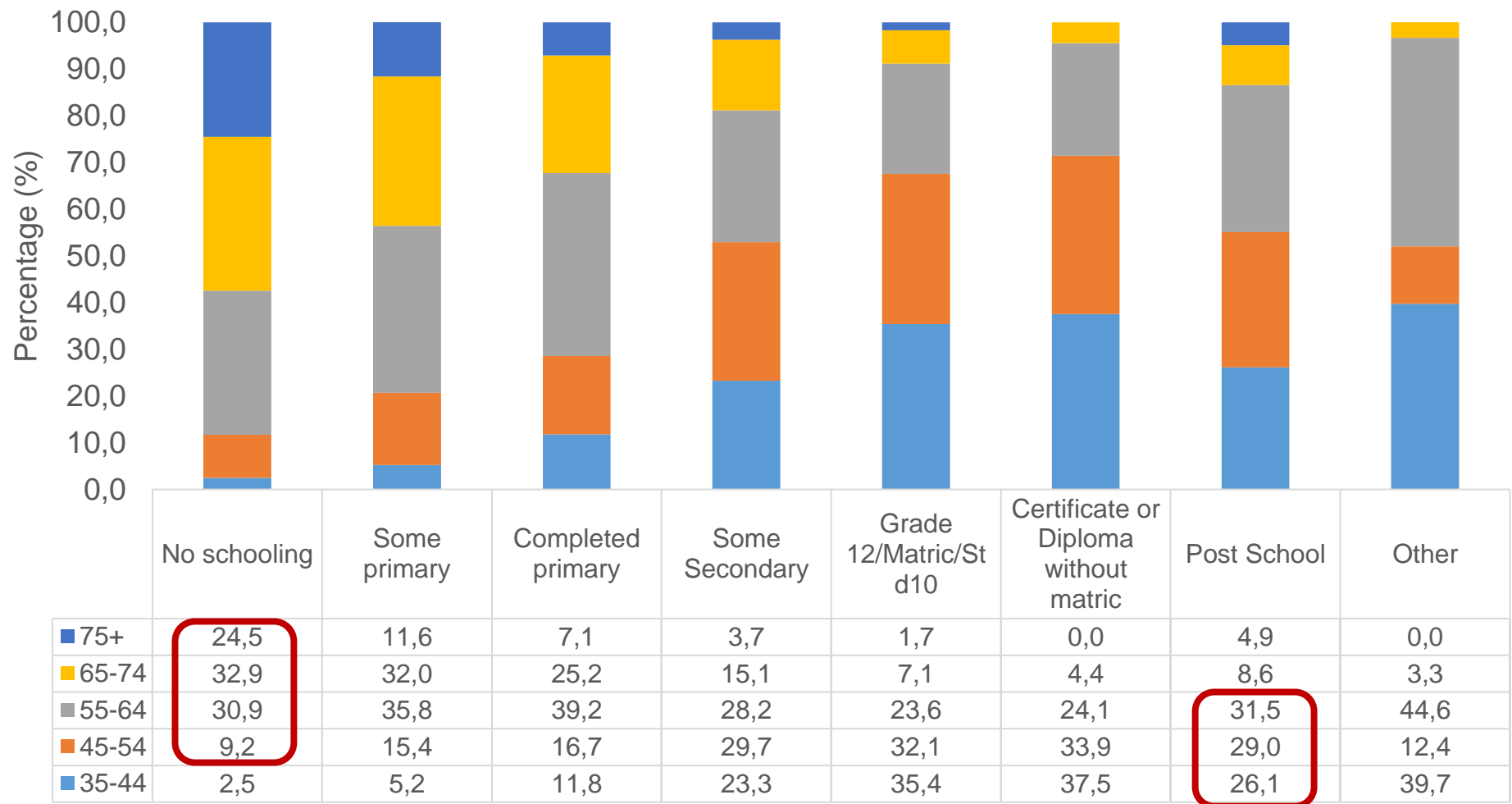
Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of grandparents who stayed with children aged 0–17 years by highest level of education and age, 2023

- No schooling: **97,5%** aged 45+

- Post school education: **86,6%** aged 35-64



Source: GHS 2023

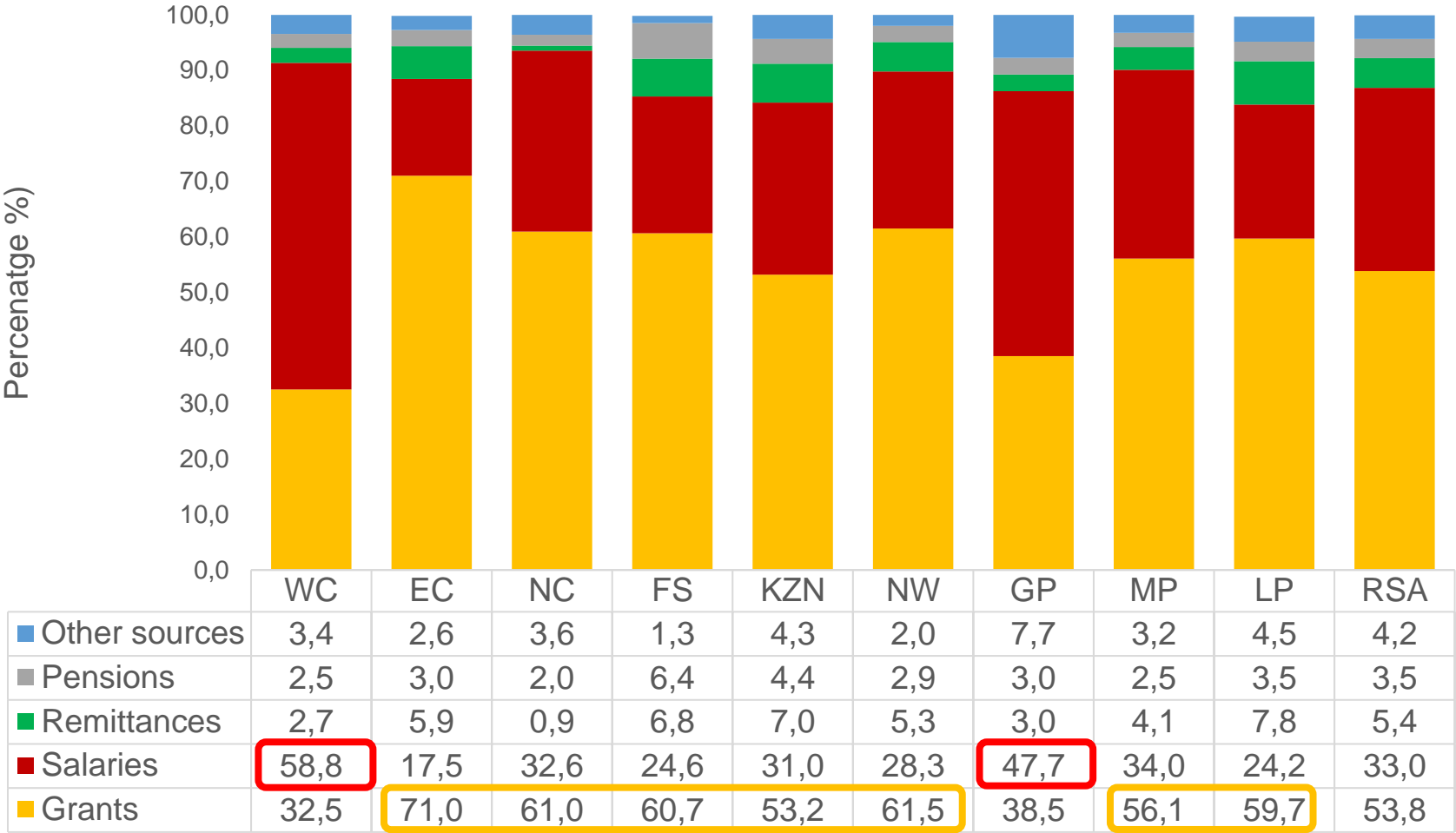
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Percentage distribution of grandparents staying with children aged 0–17 years by source of household income and province, 2023

Main source of household income:

- Grants
EC, NC, FS, KZN, NW, MP, LP

- Salaries
WC, GP

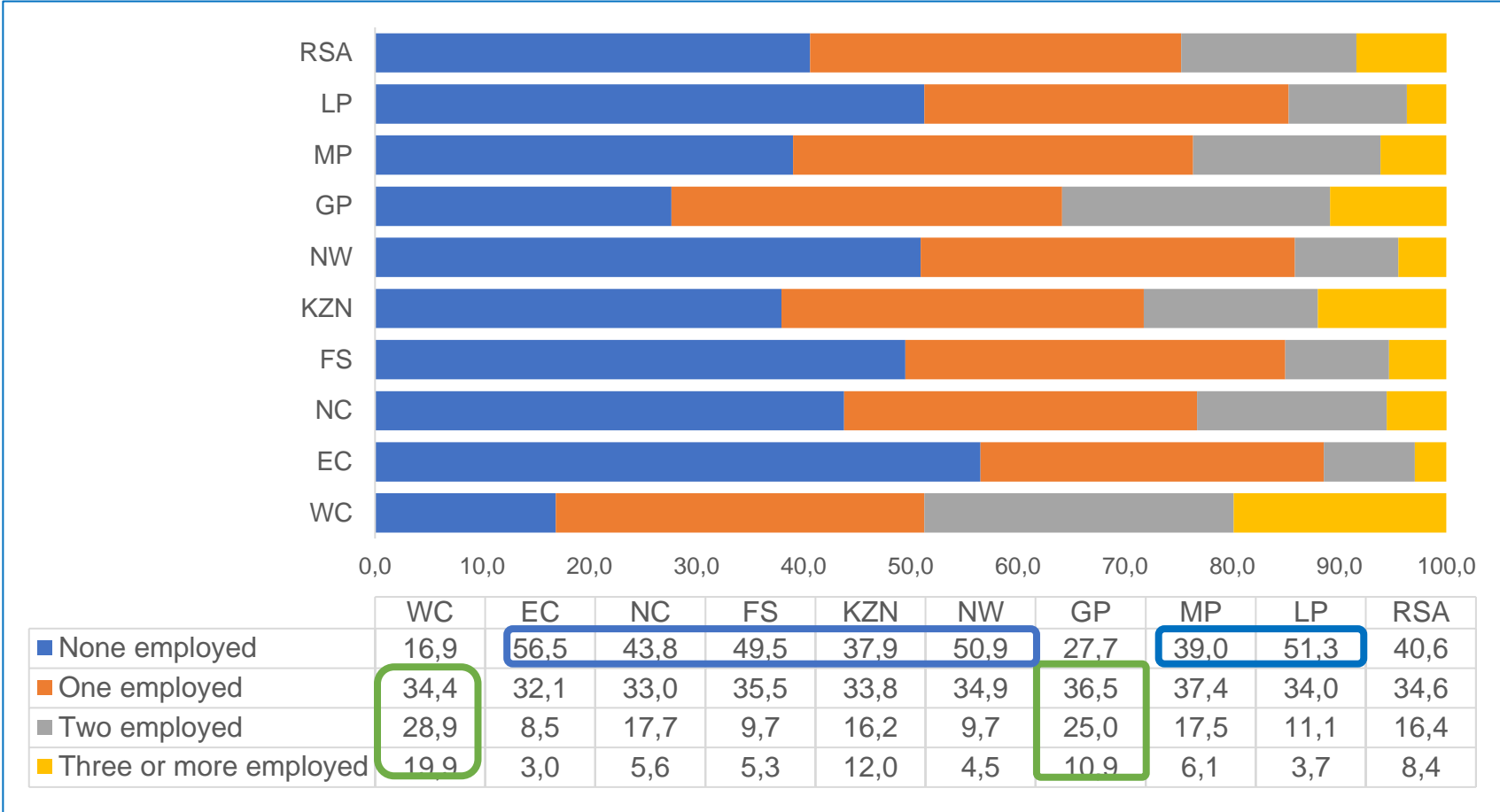


Source: GHS 2023

Percentage distribution of grandparents who stayed with children aged 0–17 years by number of employed members of the households and province, 2023

Employed household members:

- No employed members: **40,6%**
- One employed member: **34,6%**
- Two employed members: **16,4%**, and
- Three or more employed members: **8,4%**



Source: GHS 2023



Access to basic services and assets



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Percentage distribution of grandparents staying with children aged 0–17 by dwelling type and province, 2023

- Most common type of dwelling used by grandparents' households was a dwelling on a separate stand, yard, or farm (82,9%), with the highest prevalence in Limpopo at 96,1%.

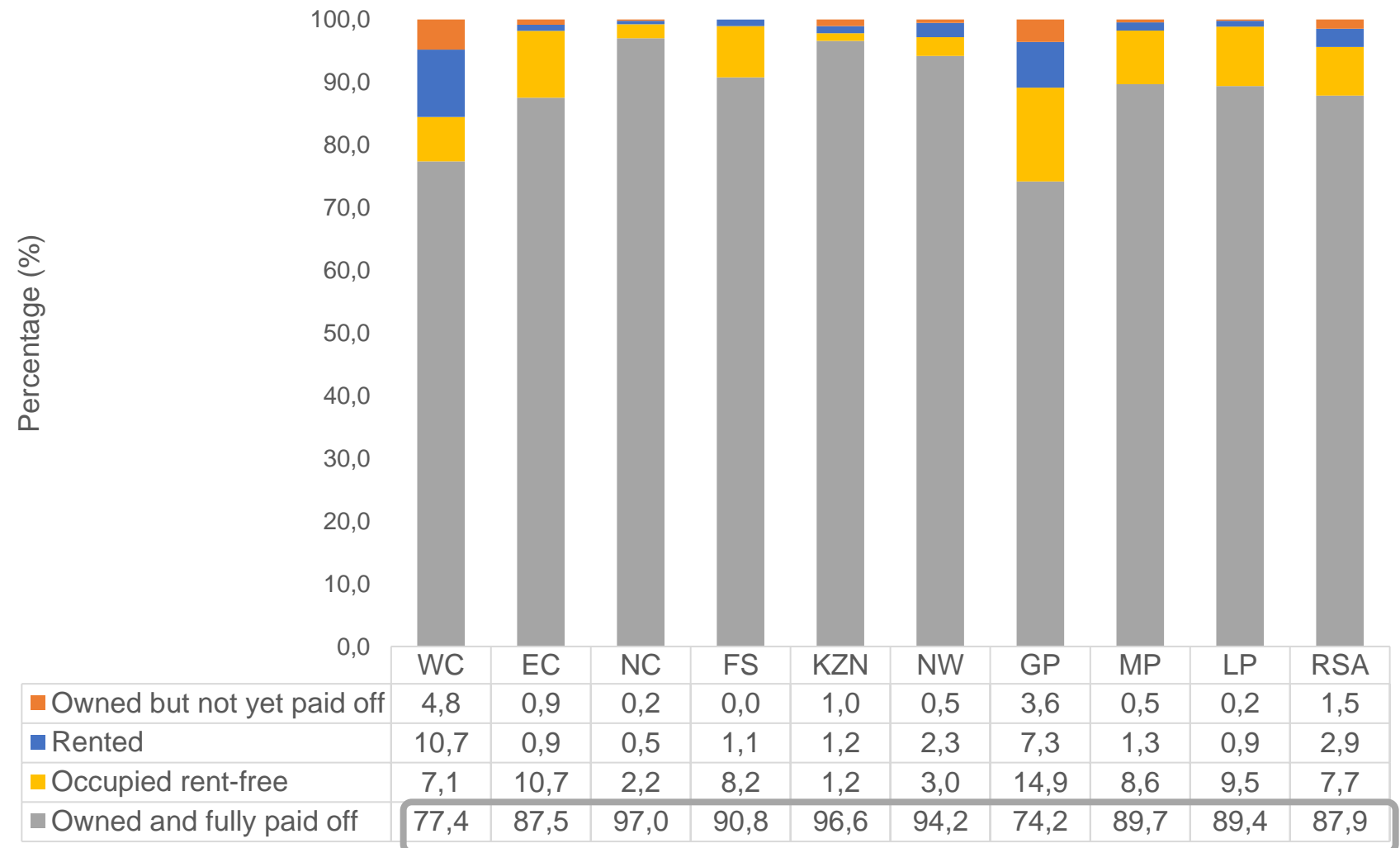


Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of grandparents staying with children aged 0–17 by dwelling tenure status and province, 2023

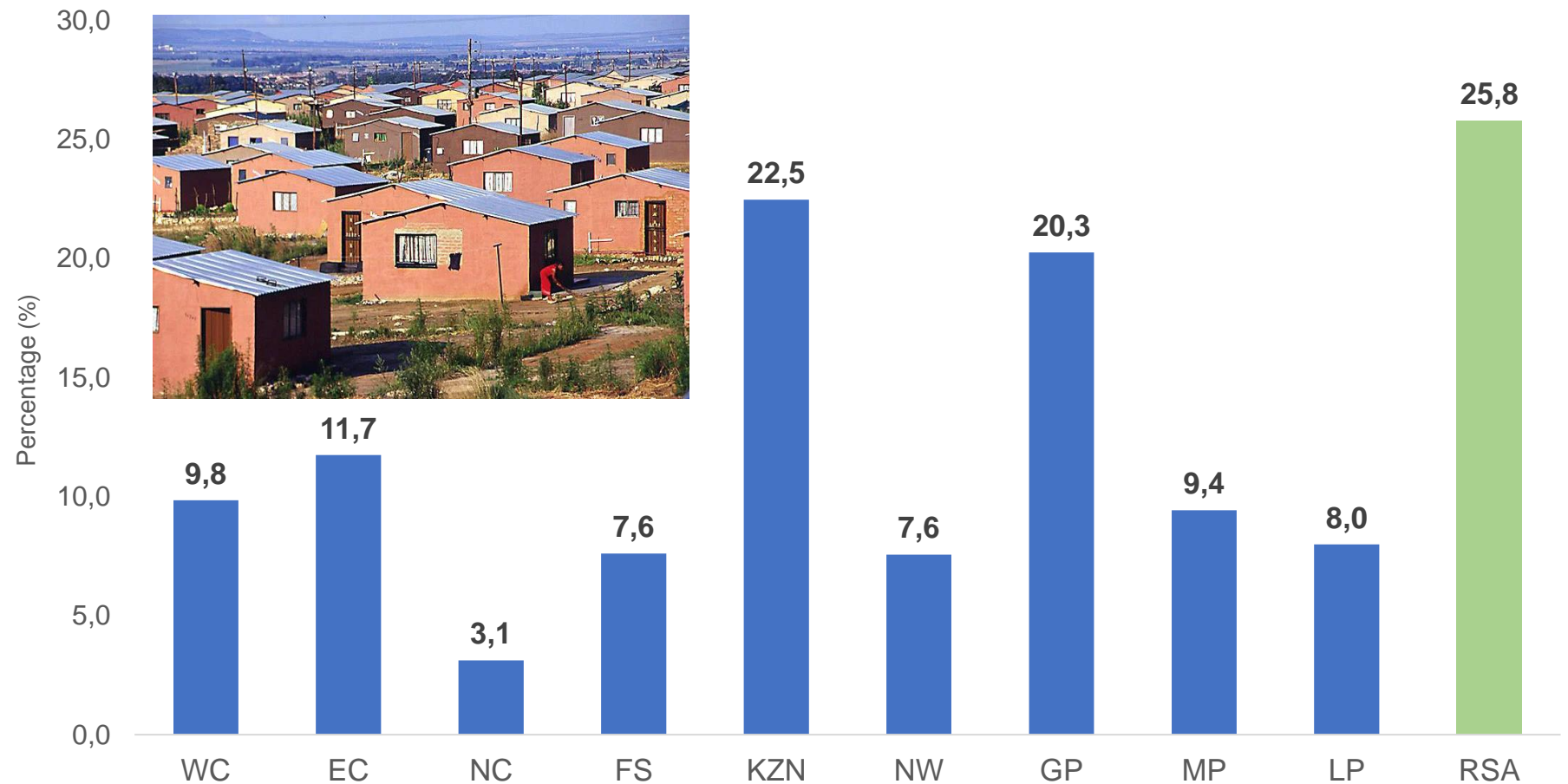
- Nearly **88,0%** of grandparents' households stayed in dwellings that they owned and were fully paid off.
- Close to **8,0%** occupied their dwellings rent free



Source: GHS 2023

Percentage distribution of grandparents living with children aged 0–17 years in households benefiting from RDP or state-subsidized dwellings by province, 2023

- A quarter **(25,8%)** of grandparents' households lived in RDP or state-subsidised dwellings.
- Most of these households were in KwaZulu-Natal **(22,5%)** followed by Gauteng **(20,3%)** and Eastern Cape **(11,7%)**



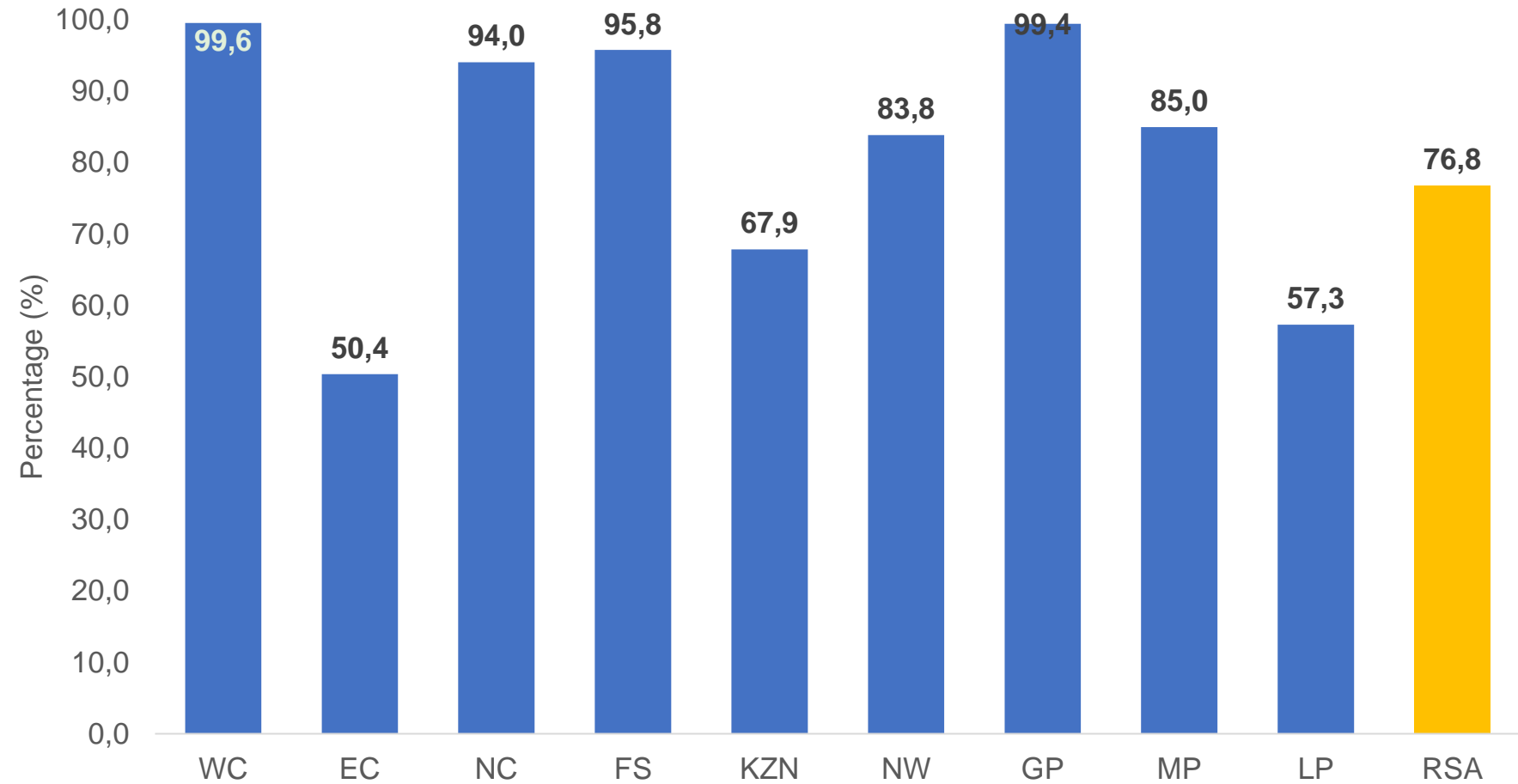
Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of grandparents staying with children aged 0–17 years with households' access to piped or tap water by province, 2023

- In most provinces, grandparents' households had access to piped or tap water in their dwelling, off-site or on-site

- WC: **99,6%**
- GP: **99,4%**
- FS: **95,8%**
- NC: **94,0%**

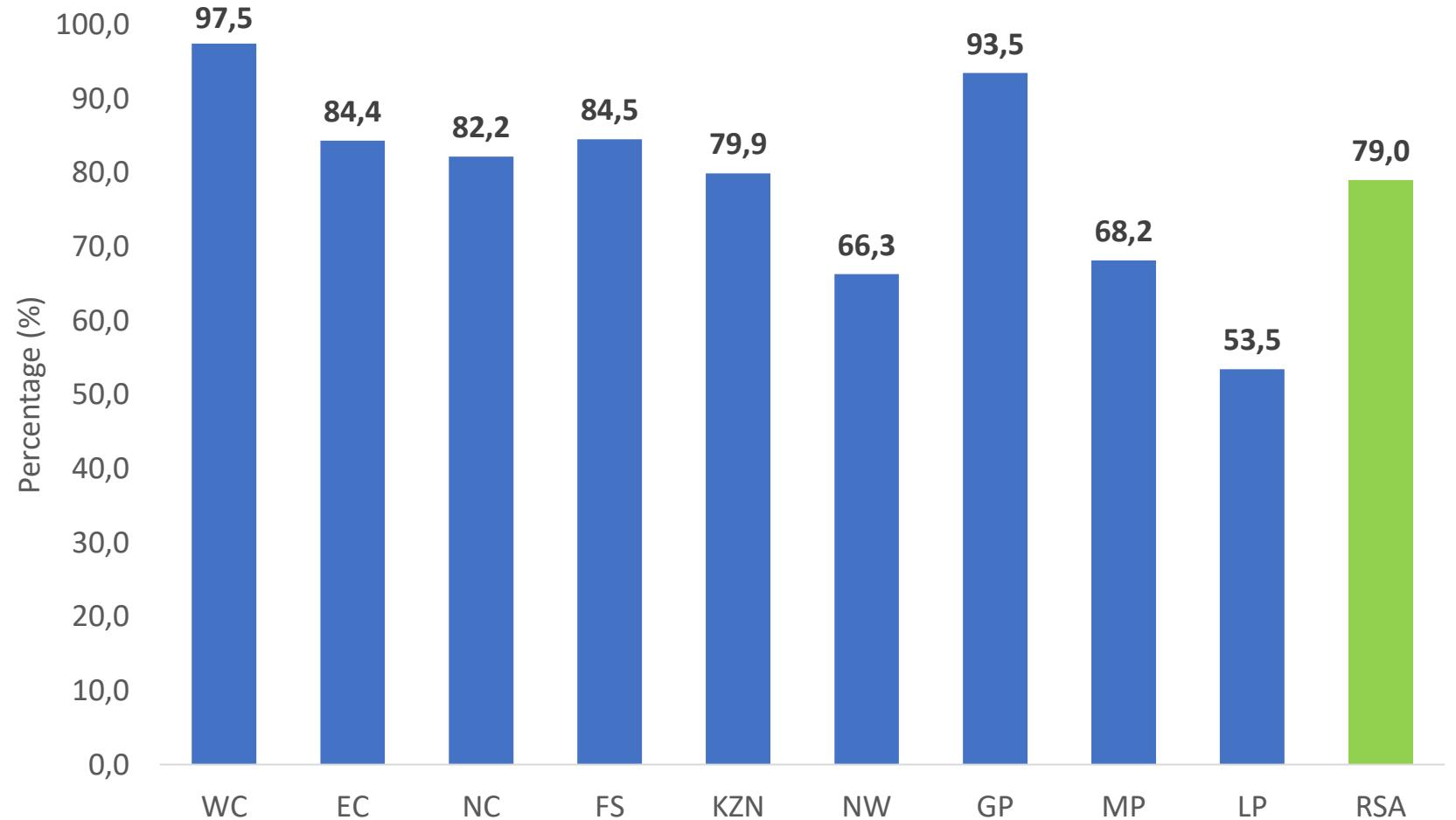


Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of grandparents staying with children aged 0–17 years by dwellings with access to improved sanitation by province, 2023

- **79,0%** of grandparents' households with children aged 0–17 years had access to improved sanitation facilities.
- Lowest access to improved sanitations:
 - LP: **53,5%**
 - NW: **66,3%**

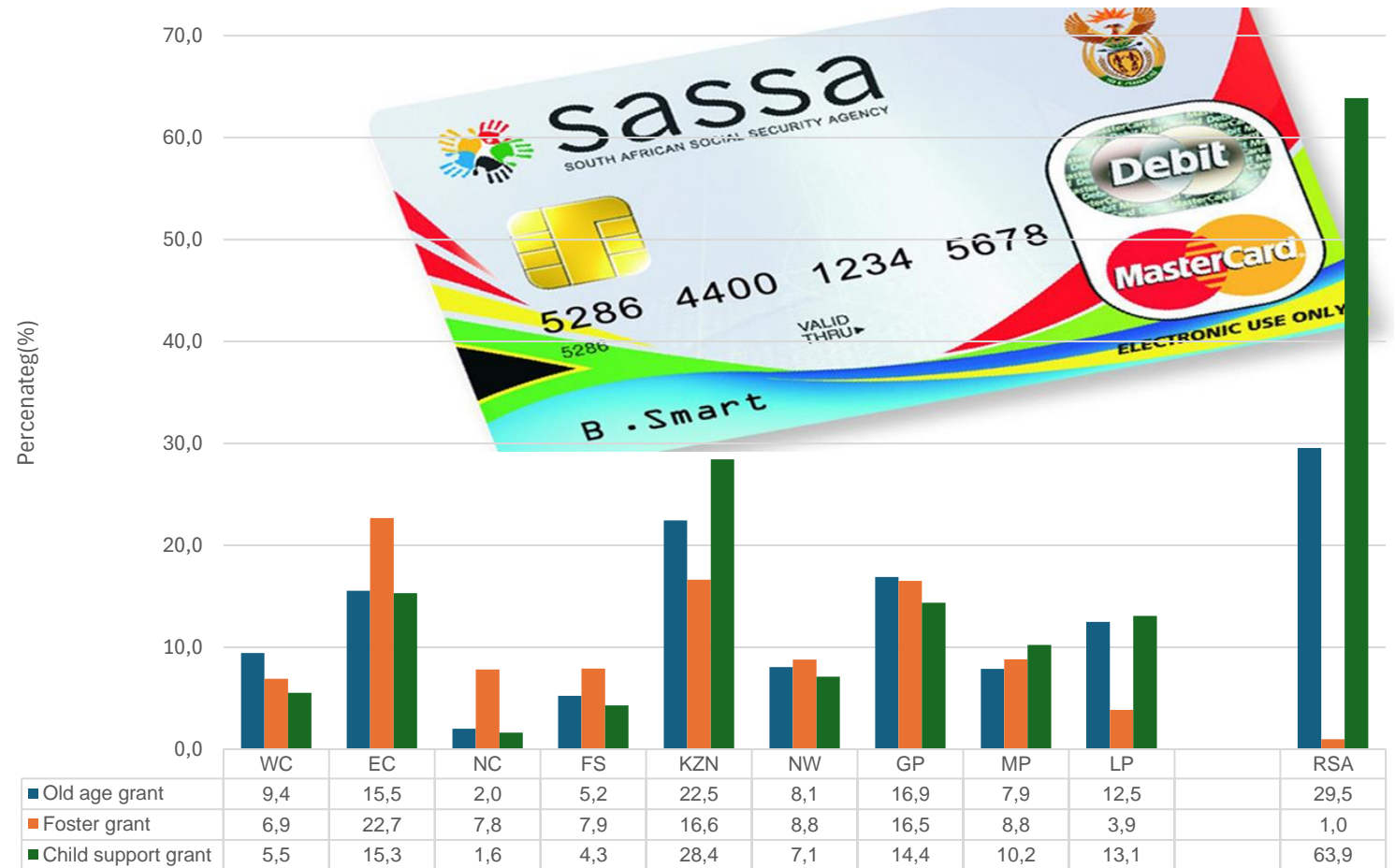


Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of households of grandparents staying with children aged 0–17 years benefitting from various grants by province, 2023

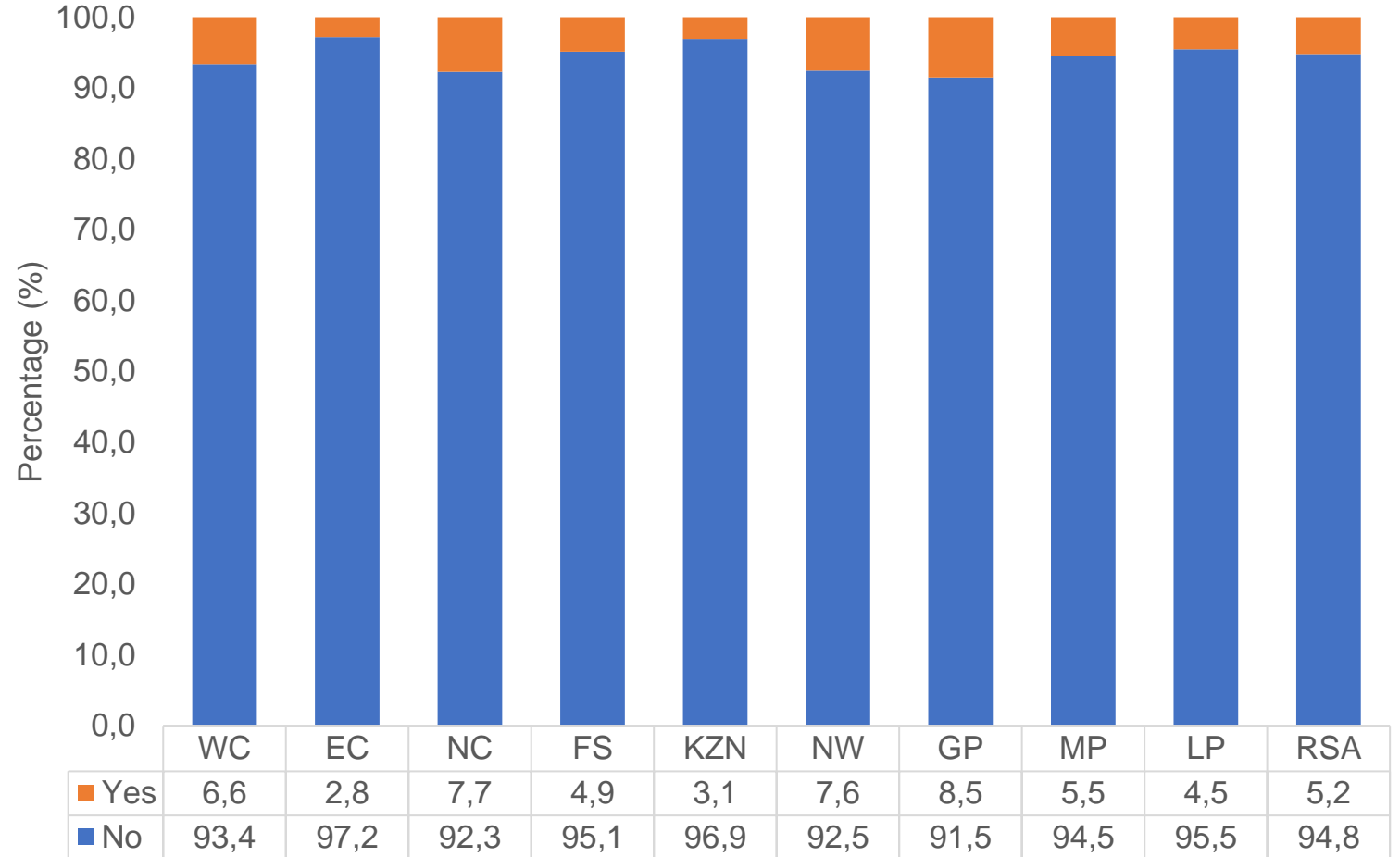
- Nearly **63,9%** of children aged 0–17 in grandparents’ households with children in South Africa received child support grant
- Close to **29,5%** of grandparents in these households received old age grant
- Highest access to **child support grant**
 - KZN: **22,5%**
 - GP: **16,9%**
 - EC: **15,5%**
- Highest access to **Old age grant**
 - KZN **22,5%**
 - GP **16,9%**
 - EC **15,5%**



Source: GHS 2023

Percentage distribution of grandparents staying with children 0–17 years by households with medical aid coverage by province, 2023

- Medical aid coverage: **5,2%**
- Highest access
 - GP: **8,5%**
 - NC: **7,7%**
 - NW: **7,6%**



Source: GHS 2023

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Demographic characteristics of head of household grandparents living with children aged 0–17 years



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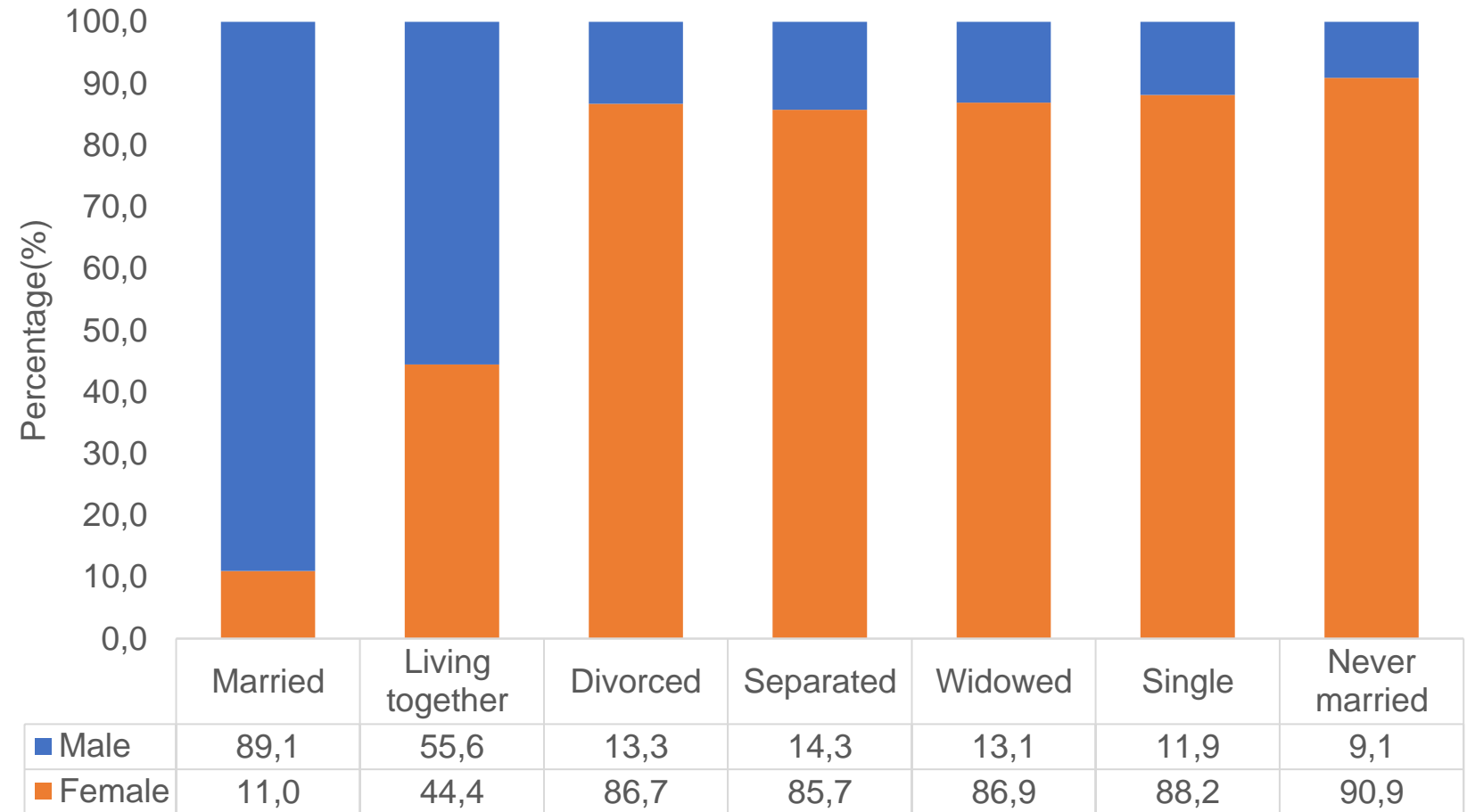
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Percentage distribution of head of household grandparents staying with their grandchildren aged 0–17 years by marital status and sex, 2023

- Grandfathers were mainly
 - Married: **89,1%**
 - Cohabiting **55,6%**

- Grandmothers were mainly
 - Never married: **90,9%**
 - Single: **88,2%**

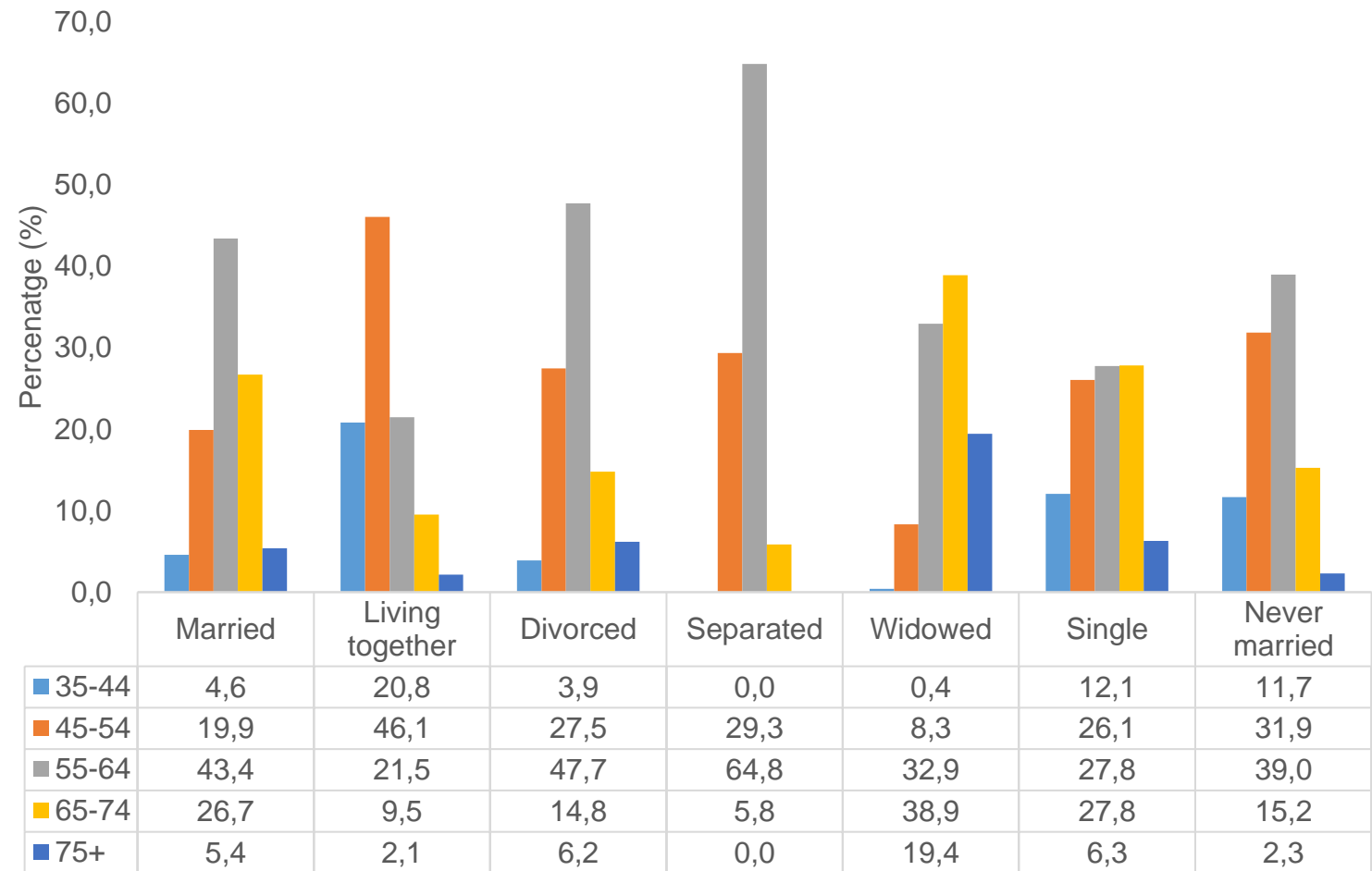


Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of head of household grandparents staying with their grandchildren aged 0–17 years by marital status and age, 2023

- Married were aged 45+ **(95,4%)**
- Living together were aged 35-64 **(88,4%)**
- Divorced were aged 45-64 **(75,2%)**
- Separated were aged 45-64 **(94,1%)**
- Widowed were aged 55+ **(91,2%)**
- Single were aged 45-74 **(81,7%)**
- Never married were aged 45-74 **(86,1%)**



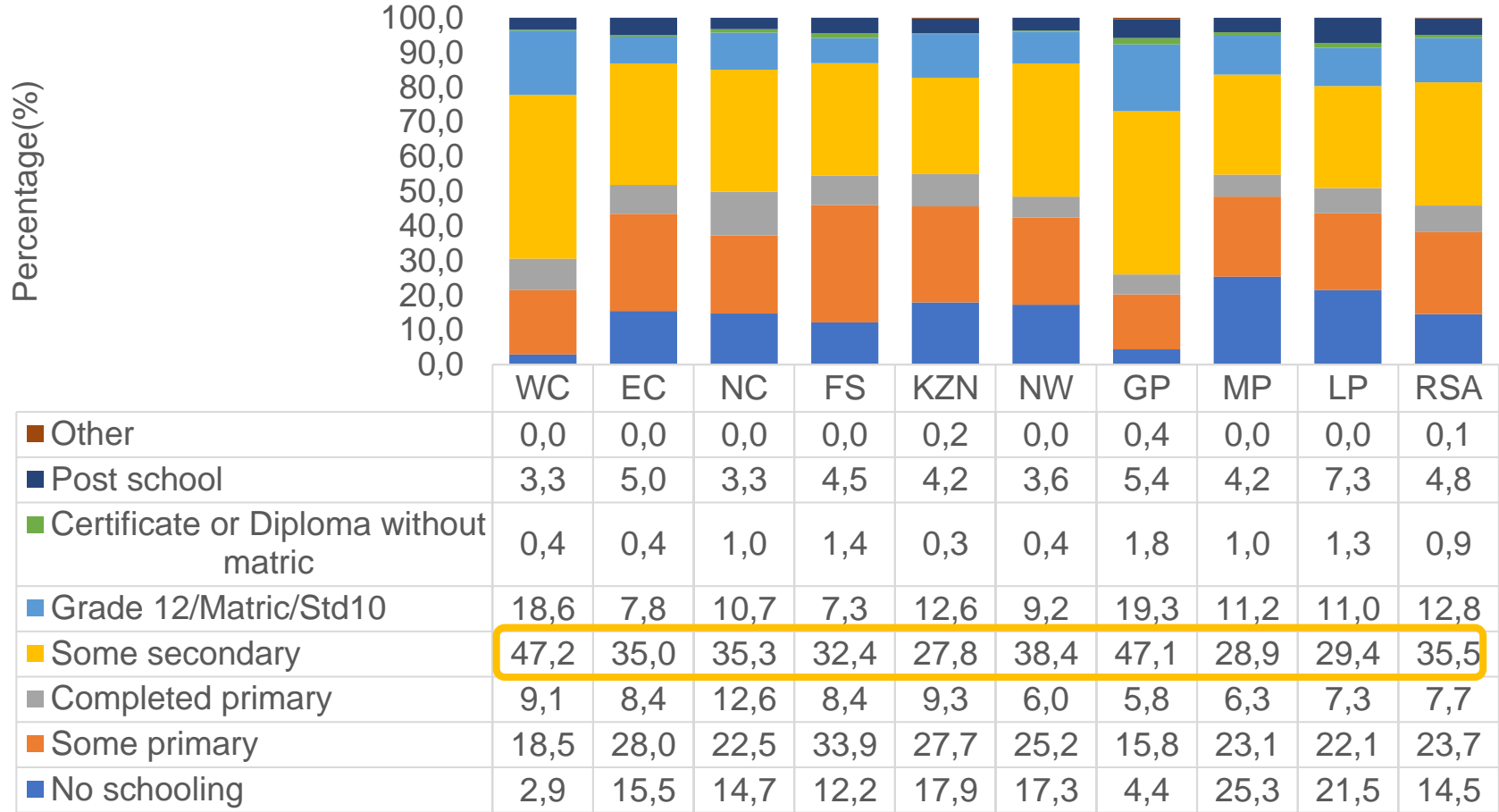
Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of head of household grandparents staying with their grandchildren aged 0–17 years by highest level of education and province, 2023

- Some secondary education: **35,5%**
- Completed grade 12: **12,8%**
- No schooling: **14,5%**

- Less educated compared to total grandparents living in households with children aged 0-17 years



Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of head of household grandparents staying with their grandchildren aged 0–17 years by highest level of education and age, 2023

- No schooling: **68,7%** aged 55+
- Post school: **24,3%** aged 35-64



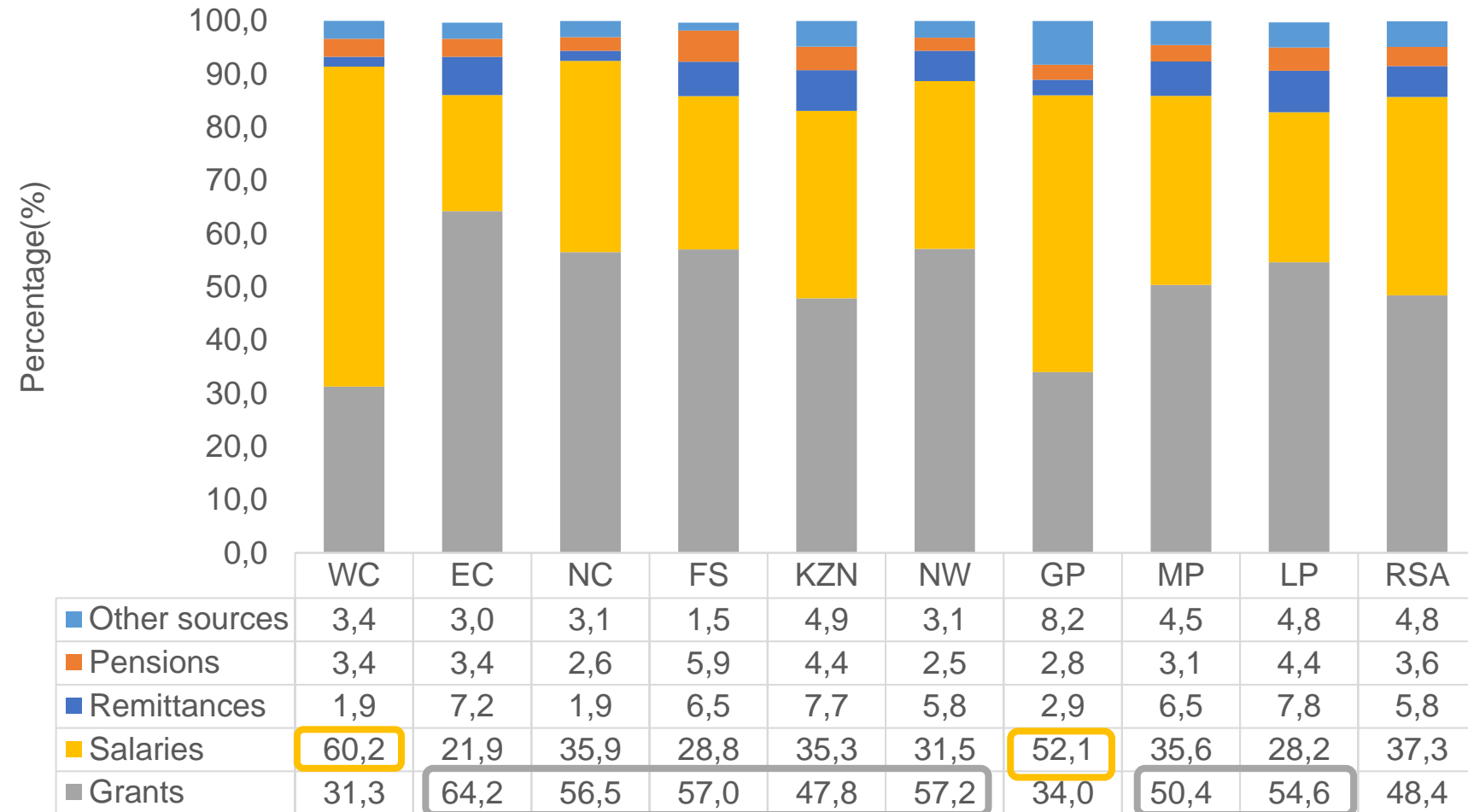
Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of head of household grandparents staying with their grandchildren aged 0–17 years by household source of income, 2023

Main source of household income:

- Grants
 - EC, NC, FS, KZN, NW, MP, LP
- Salaries
 - WC, GP

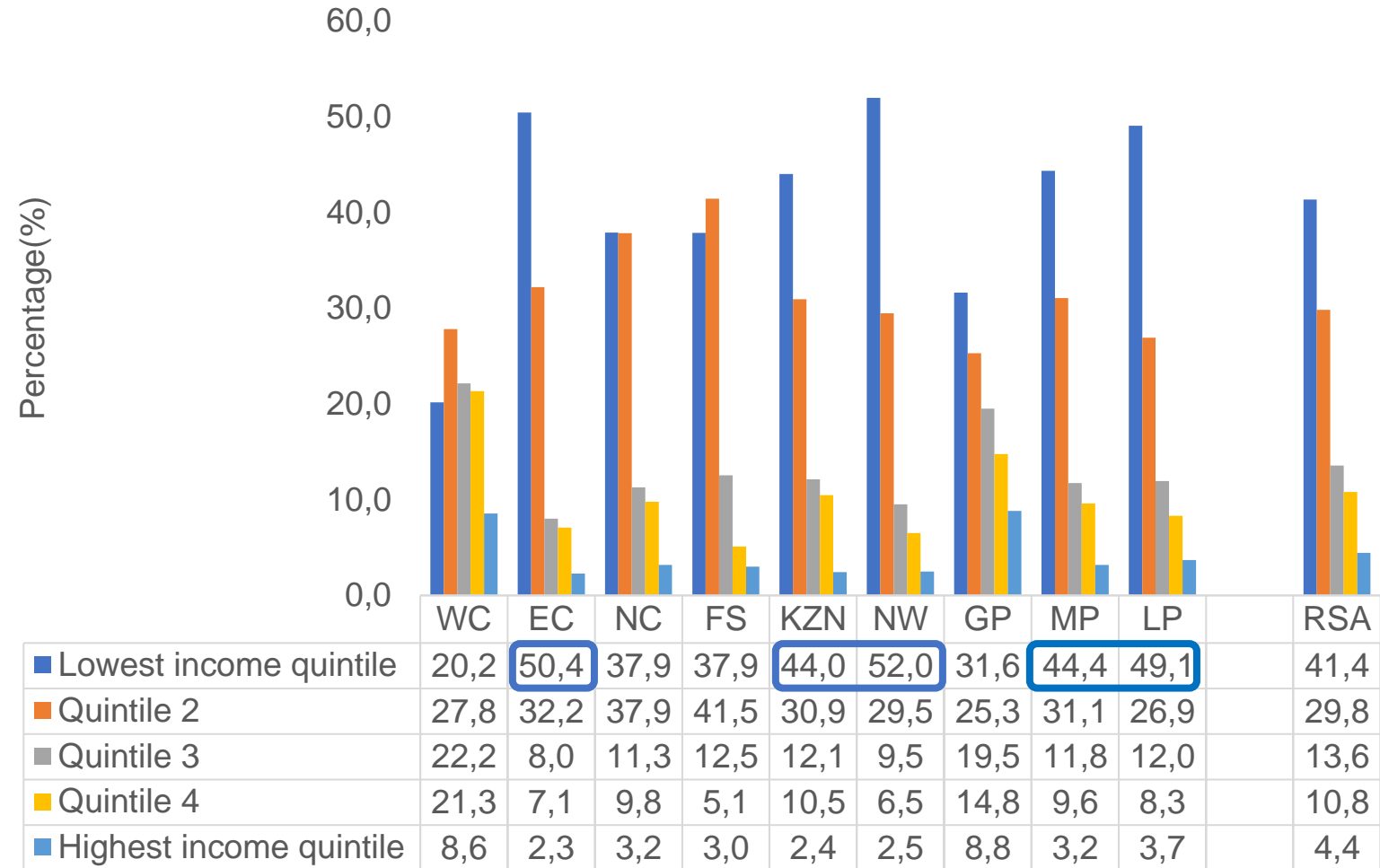


Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of head of household grandparents staying with their grandchildren aged 0–17 years by monthly household income quintiles and province, 2023

- Lowest income quintiles: **41,4%**
 - EC, KZN, NW, MP, LP
- About **15,2%** of these households were found in the higher income quintiles (quintiles 4 and 5).
- With the exception of WC and GP, over **75,0%** of grandparents-headed households in other provinces were in the lower income quintiles (quintiles 1 and 2),
- The most impoverished grandparents headed households were in EC (**82,6%**) and NW (**81,5%**):

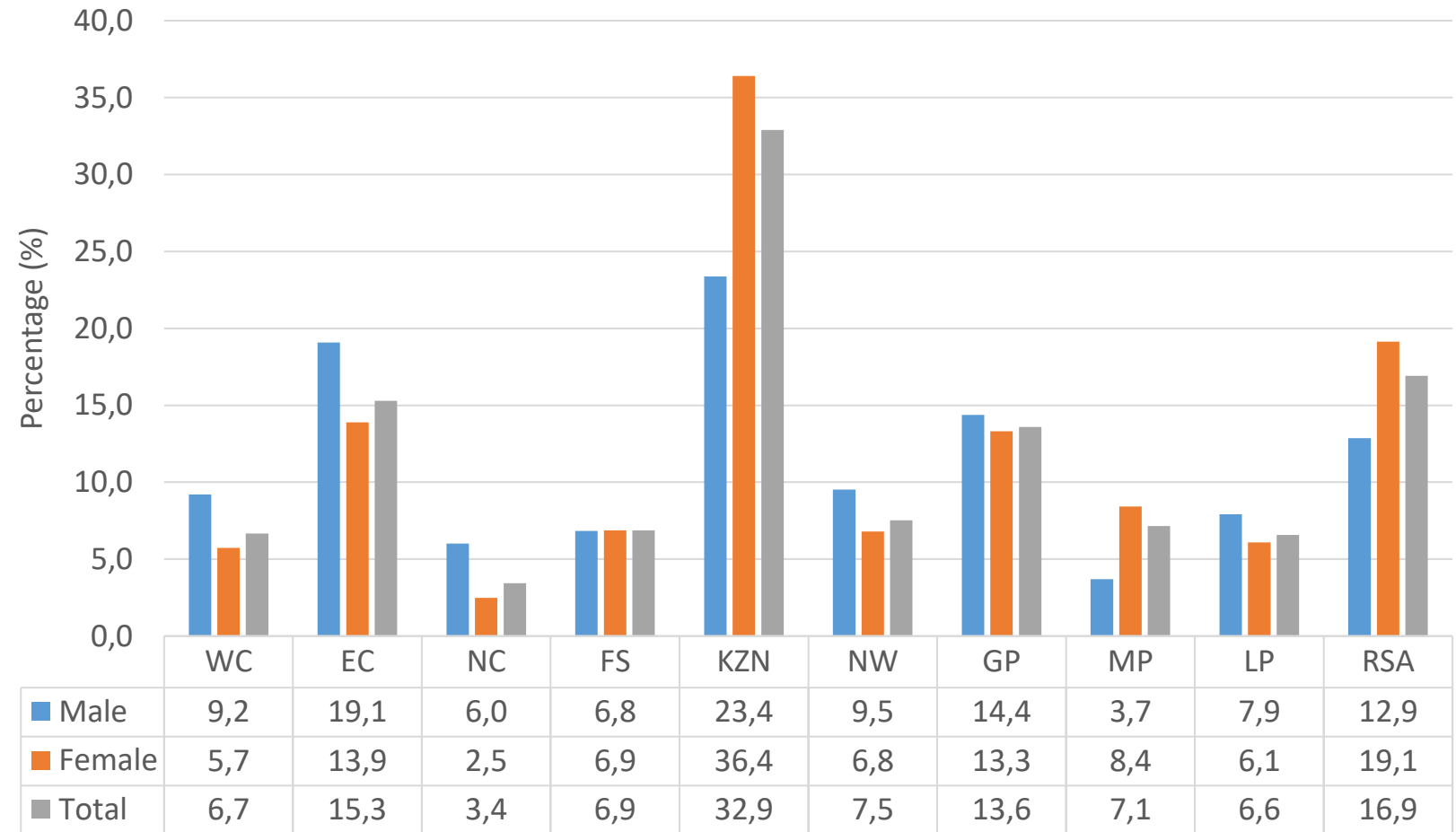


Source: GHS 2023

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Percentage distribution of head of household grandparents staying with their grandchildren aged 0–17 years by disability status, 2023

- Out of the **3,4 million** such grandparents **580 000** were living with disabilities.
- Grandparents living with disabilities: Highest KZN: **32,9%**
- Grandmothers living with disabilities: **19,1%**
- Grandfathers living with disabilities: **12,9%**



Source: GHS 2023

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Children staying in the households headed by their grandparents



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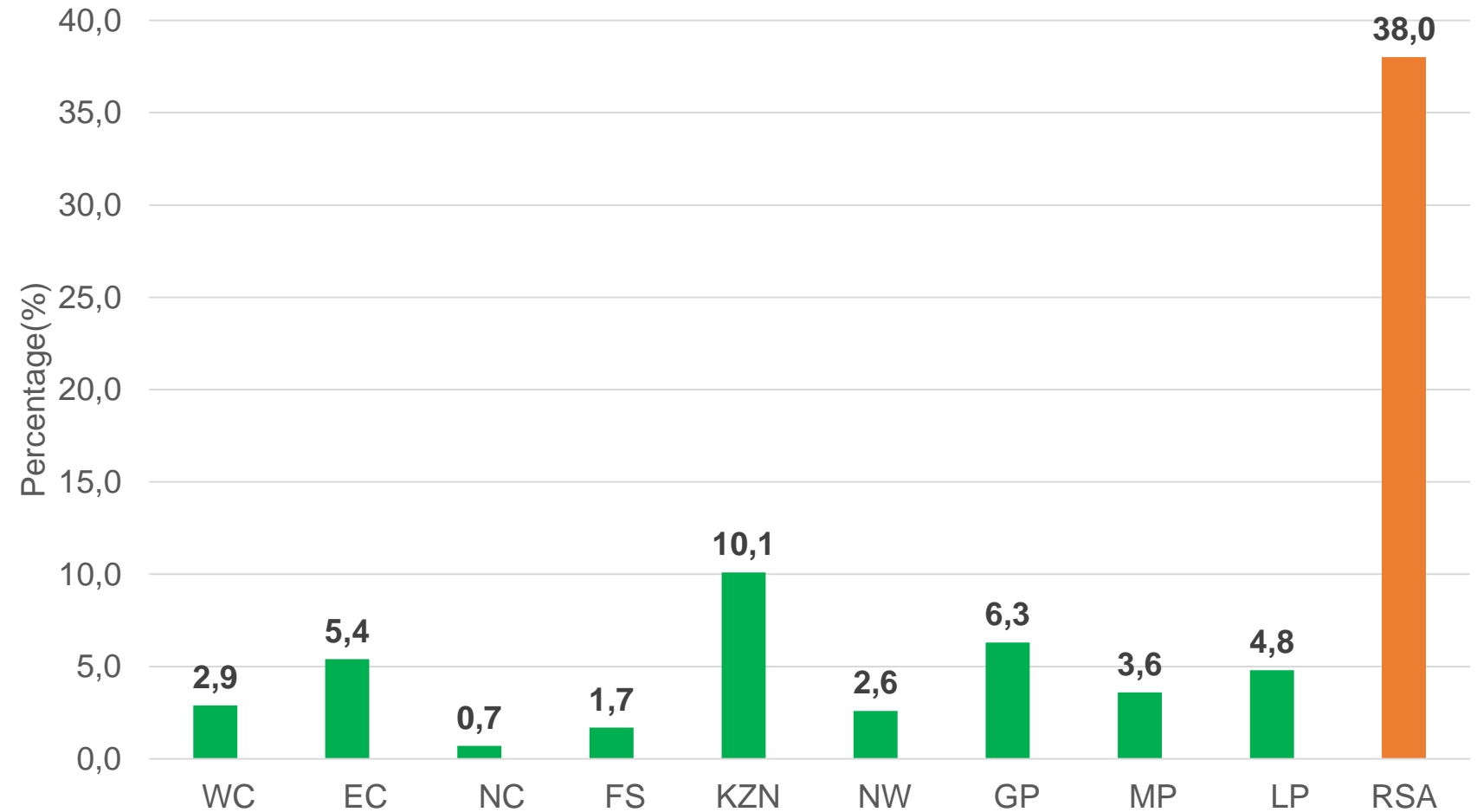
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Percentage of children aged 0–17 years staying in grandparents-headed households as a percentage of total children population by province, 2023

Proportion of children living in grandparents-headed households

1. KZN: **10,1%**
2. GP: **6,3%**
3. EC: **5,4%**
4. LP: **4,8%**

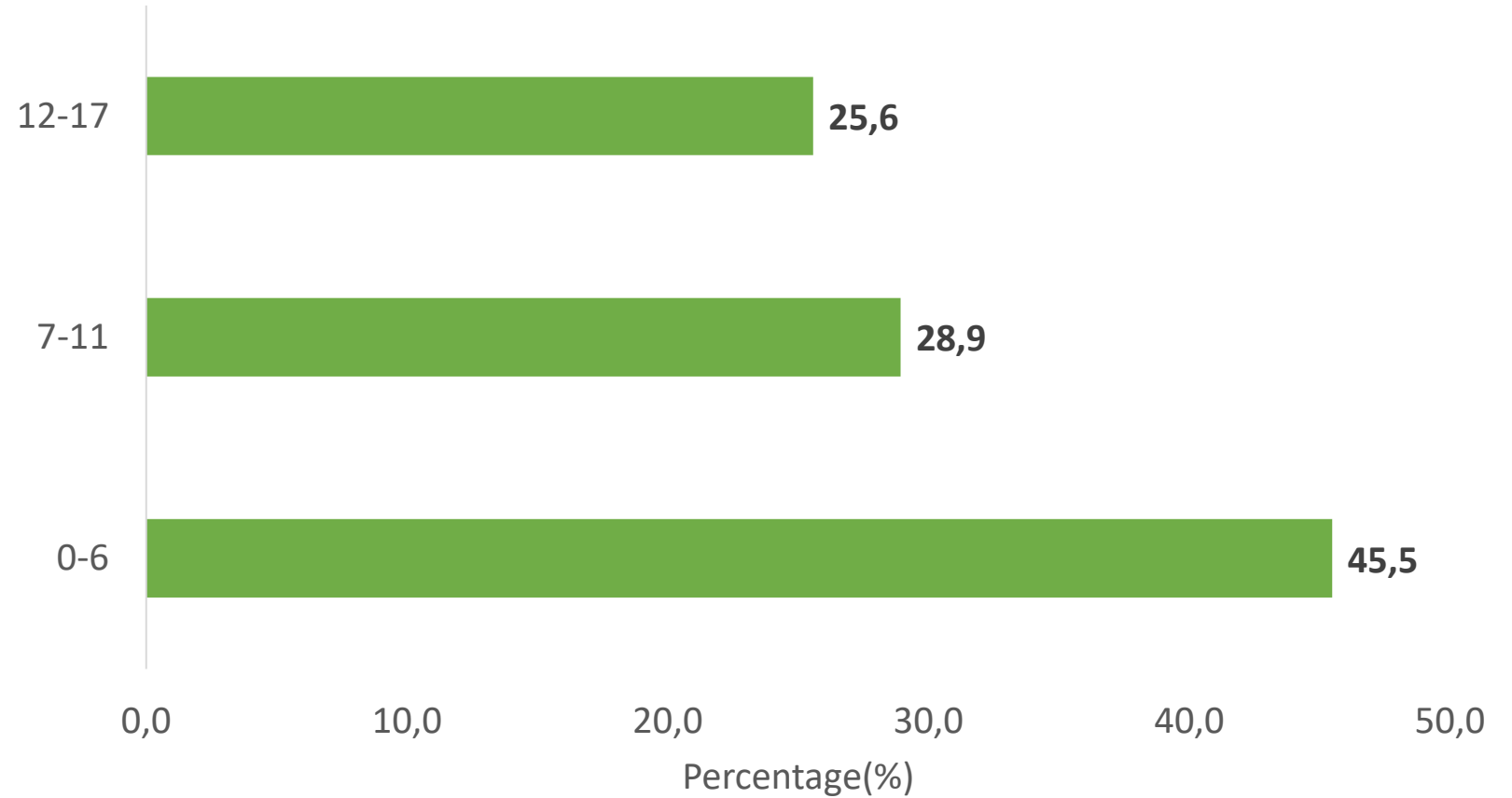


Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of children aged 0–17 years who stayed in grandparents-headed households by age group, 2023

- Younger children were more likely to stay in grandparent-headed households compared to adolescents and teenagers

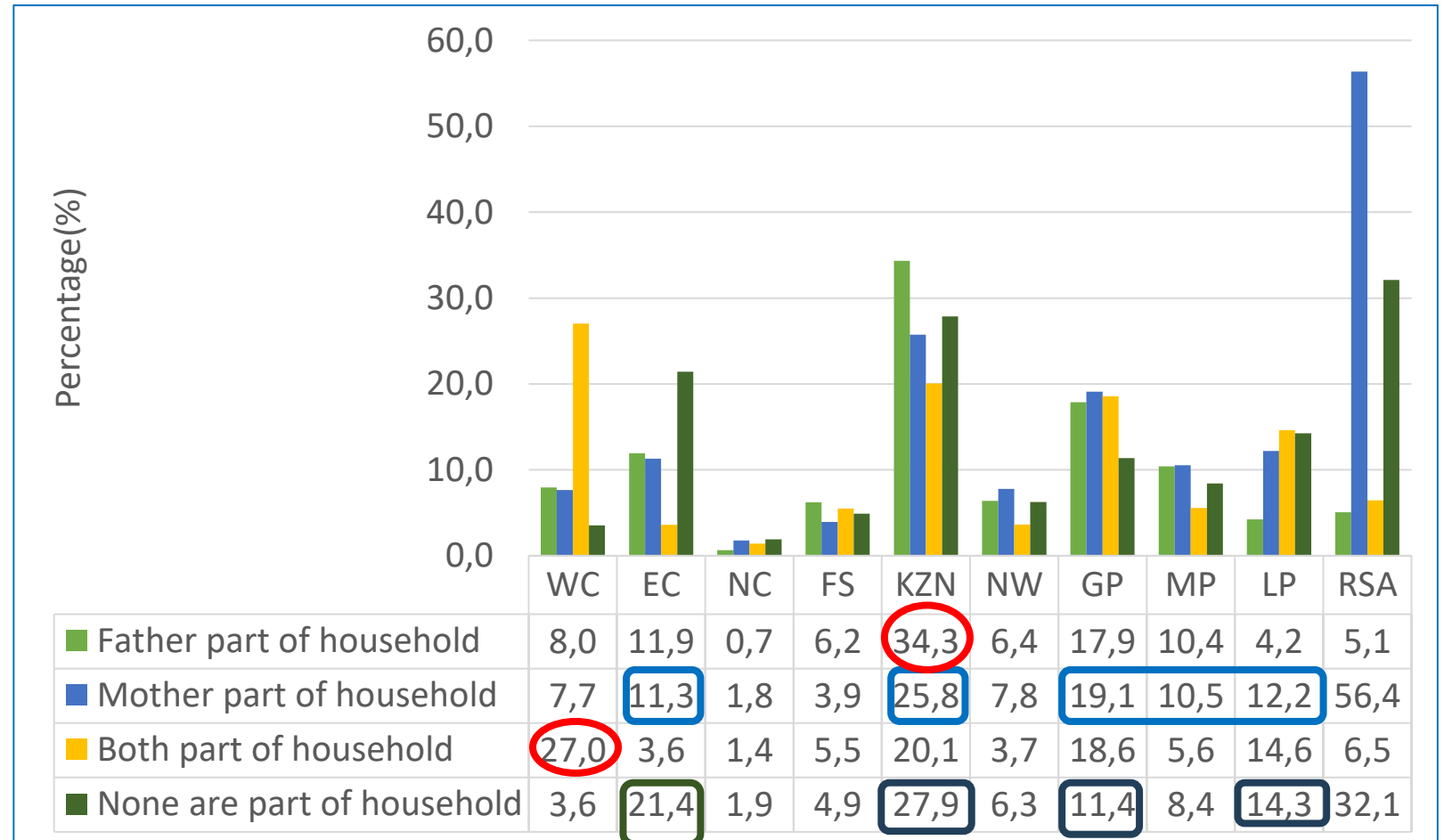


Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of living arrangements for children aged 0–17 years who stayed in grandparents-headed households by province, 2023

- **Mothers were part of the household: 56,4%**
EC, KZN, GP, MP, LP
- **None of their parents were part the household: 32,1%**
EC, KZN, GP, LP
- **Both part of household:**
WC
- **Fathers part of the household:**
KZN



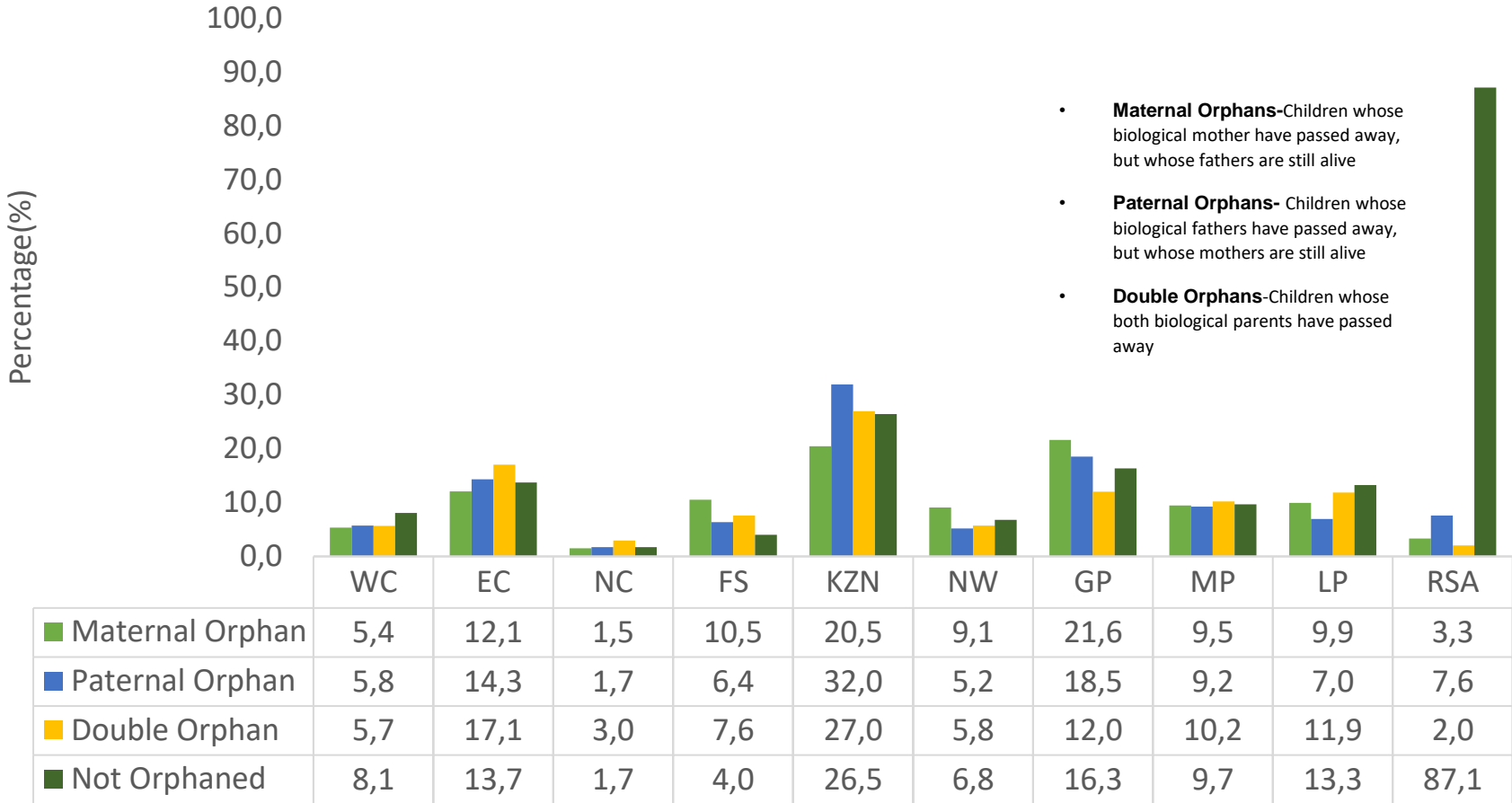
Source: GHS 2023

Percentage distribution of orphanhood status for children aged 0–17 years who stayed in grandparents-headed households by province, 2023

- **Maternal Orphans**
EC, FS, KZN, GP

- **Paternal Orphans**
EC, KZN, GP

- **Double Orphans**
EC, KZN, GP, MP



- **Maternal Orphans**-Children whose biological mother have passed away, but whose fathers are still alive
- **Paternal Orphans**- Children whose biological fathers have passed away, but whose mothers are still alive
- **Double Orphans**-Children whose both biological parents have passed away

Source: GHS 2023

Early childhood development

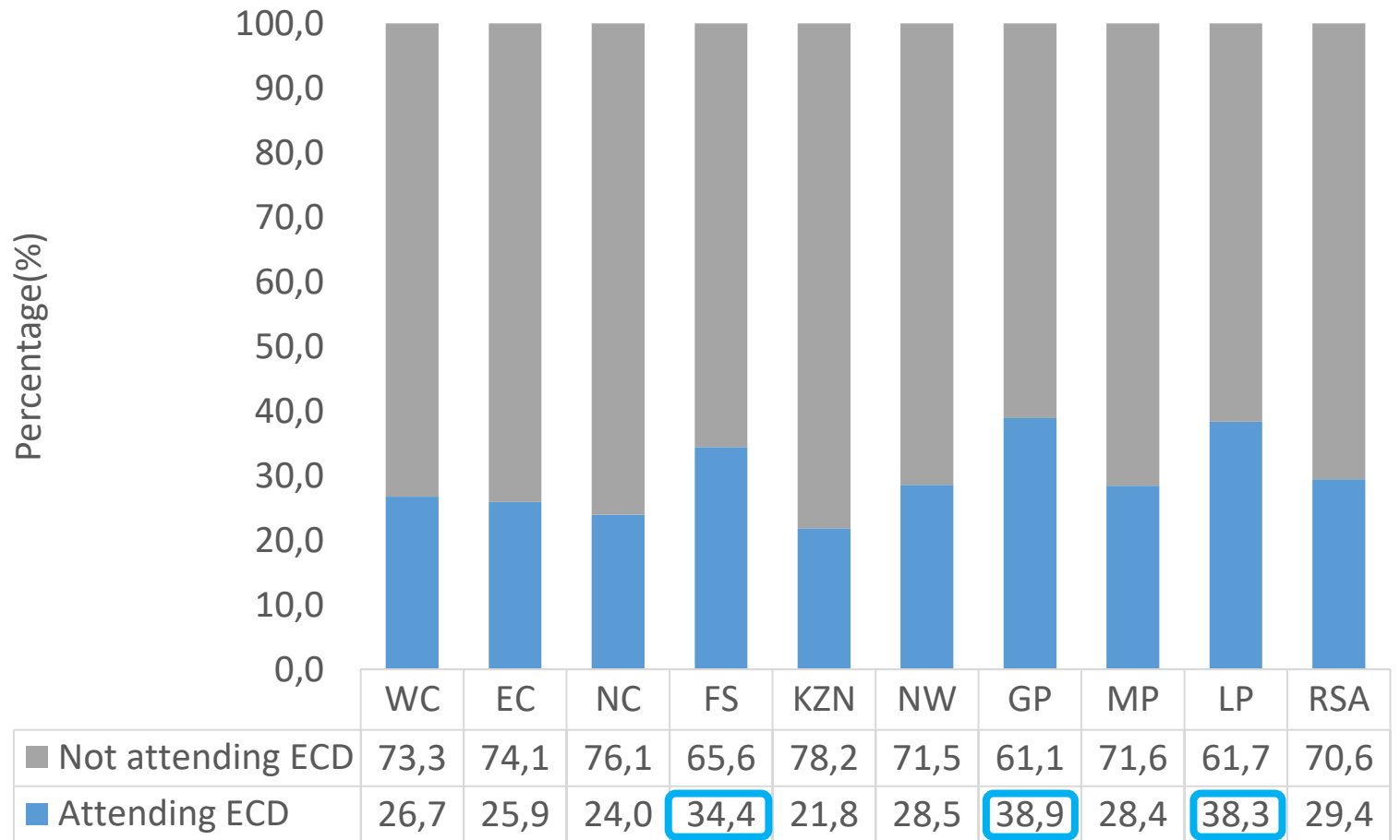


Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of children aged 0–4 years who stayed in grandparents-headed households by attendance of ECD programs and province, 2023

- Attending: **29,4%**
Highest in FS, GP, LP



Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of children aged 0–4 years who stayed in grandparents-headed households by attendance of ECD programs and population group, 2023

- Attending**

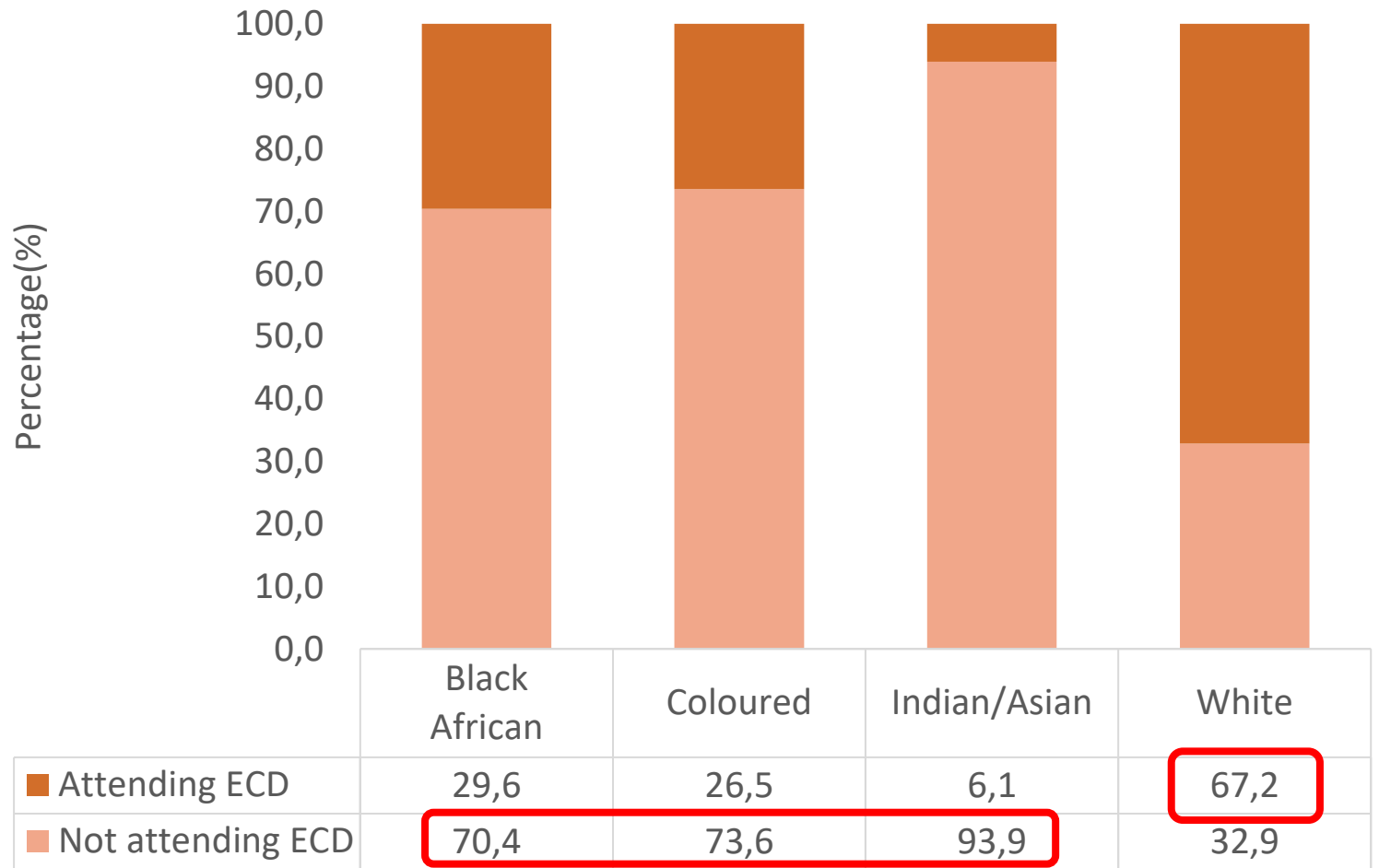
White: **67,2%**

- Not Attending**

Black African: **70,4%**

Coloured: **73,6%**

Indian/Asian: **93,9%**

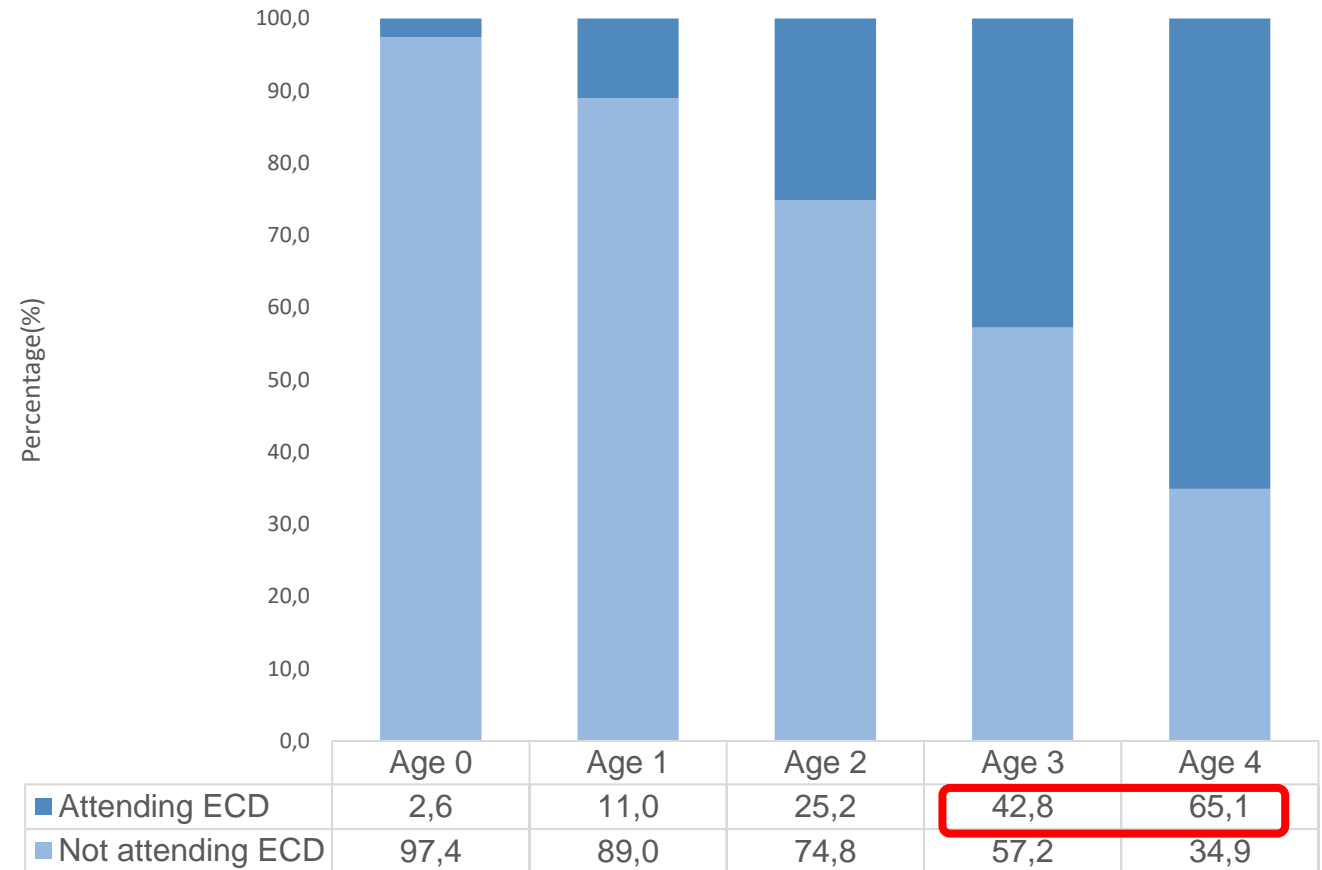


Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of children aged 0–4 years who stayed in grandparents-headed households by attendance of ECD programs and age, 2023

- Only **2,6%** of children **under one year** were attending ECD programmes in 2023
- However, this pattern shifts as children grow older, with **65,1%** of **4-year-olds** attending ECD programs

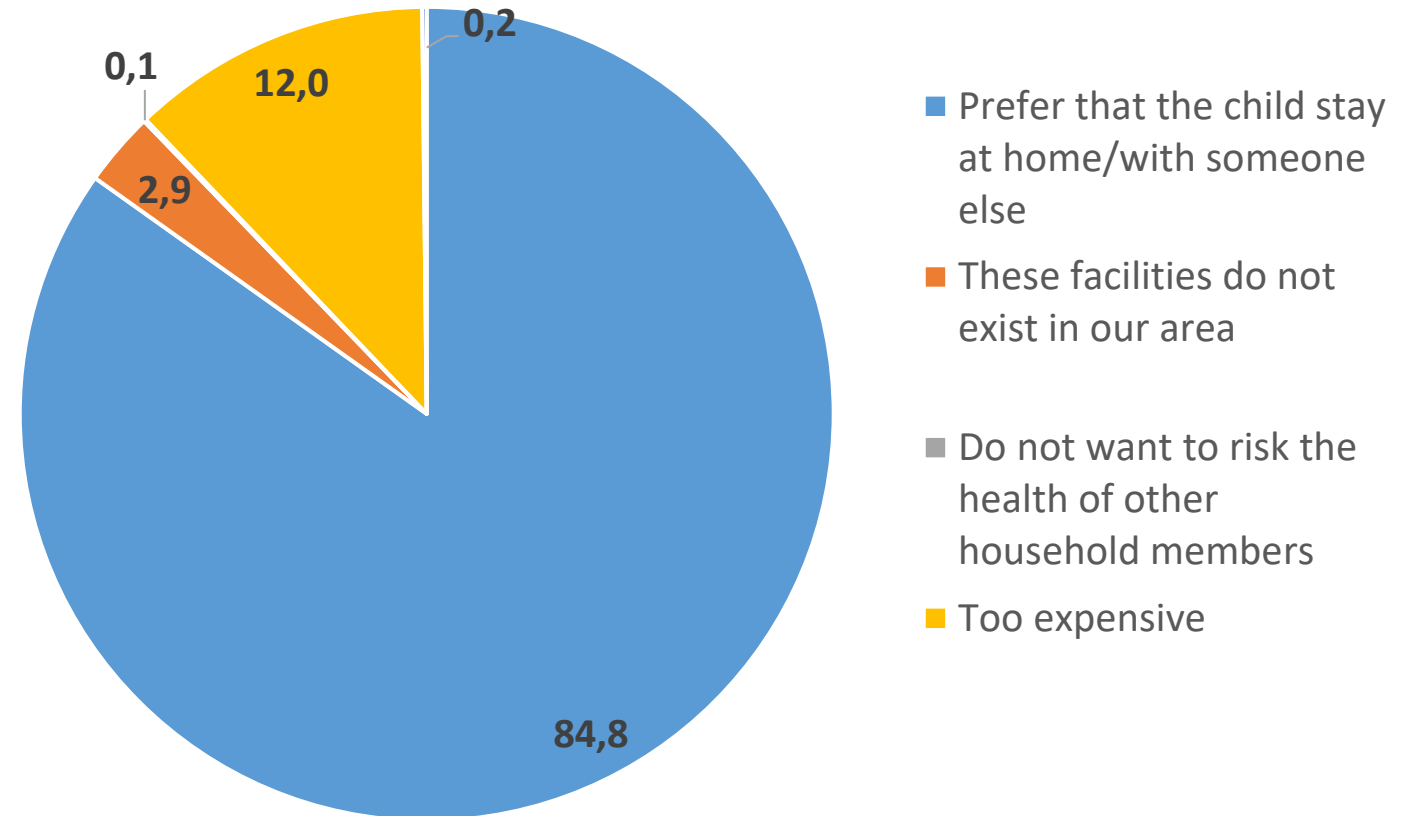


Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of children aged 0–4 years who stayed in grandparents-headed households by reasons for not attending ECD programs, 2023

- The majority of grandparents-headed households **(84,8%)** prefer the children to stay home/ with someone else



Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of children aged 0–4 years who stayed in grandparents-headed households by reasons for not attending ECD programs and geographical area, 2023

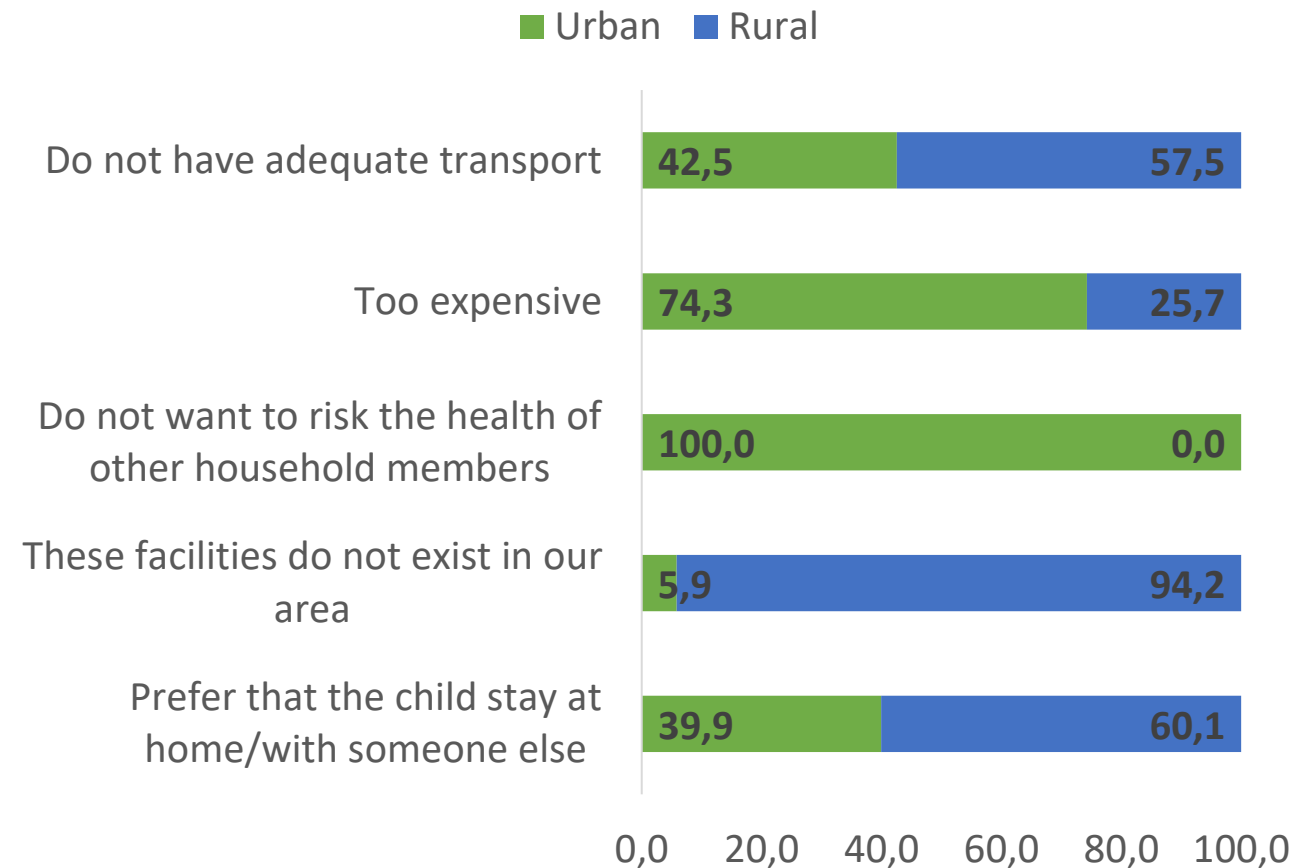
Top 2 reasons for children not to attend ECD programs:

Rural areas

- Facilities not available **(94,2%)**
- Prefer child to stay at home/with someone else **(60,1%)**

Urban areas

- Do not want to risk the health of other household members **(100,0%)**
- Too expensive **(74,3%)**



Source: GHS 2023

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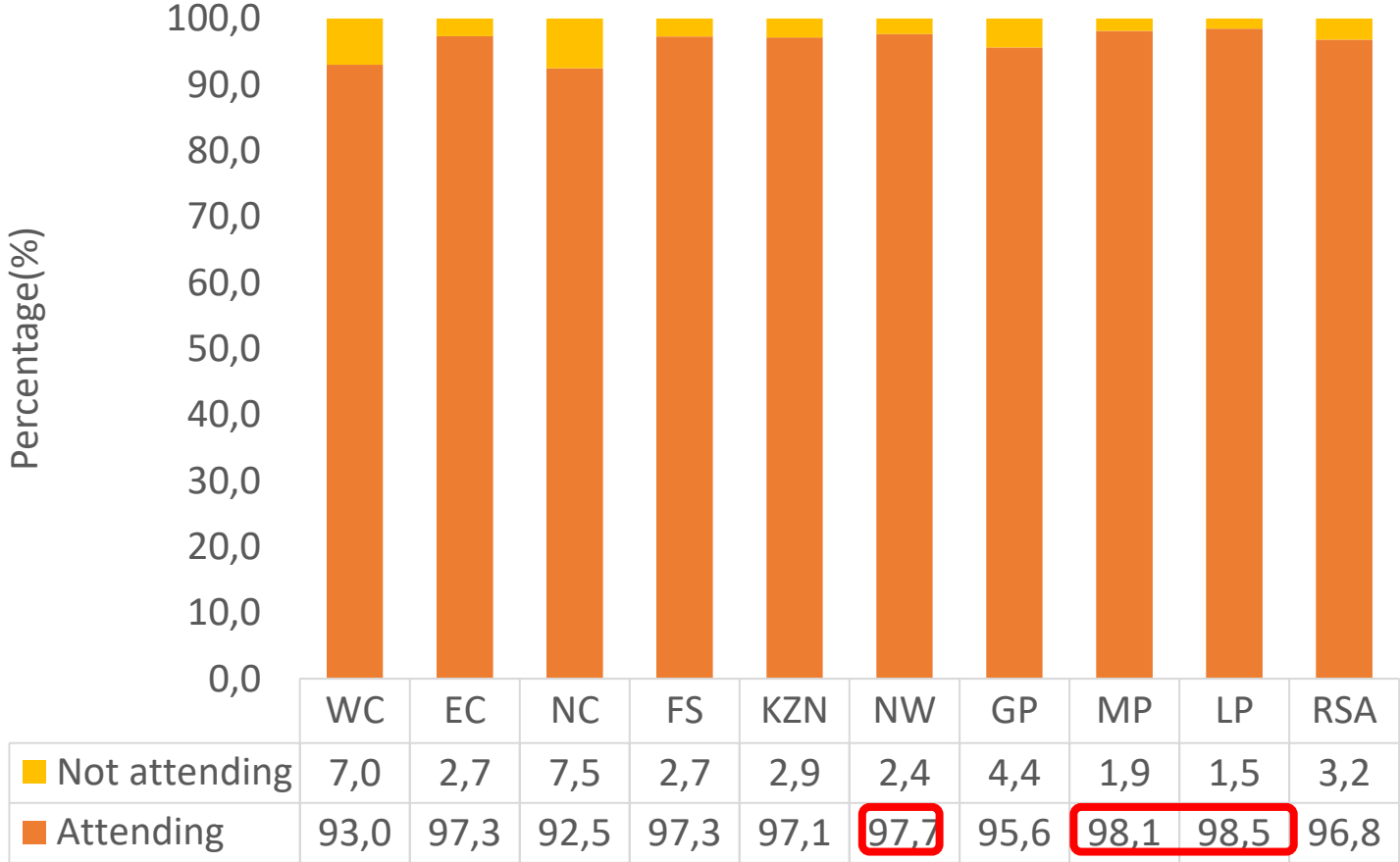
Attendance of educational institutions

Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of children aged 5–17 years who stayed in grandparents-headed households by attendance of educational institutions and province, 2023

- Overall, nearly **96,8%** children aged 5-17 who stayed in grandparents-headed households attended educational institutions, with only **3,2%** not attending
- Highest attendance:
NW, MP, LP

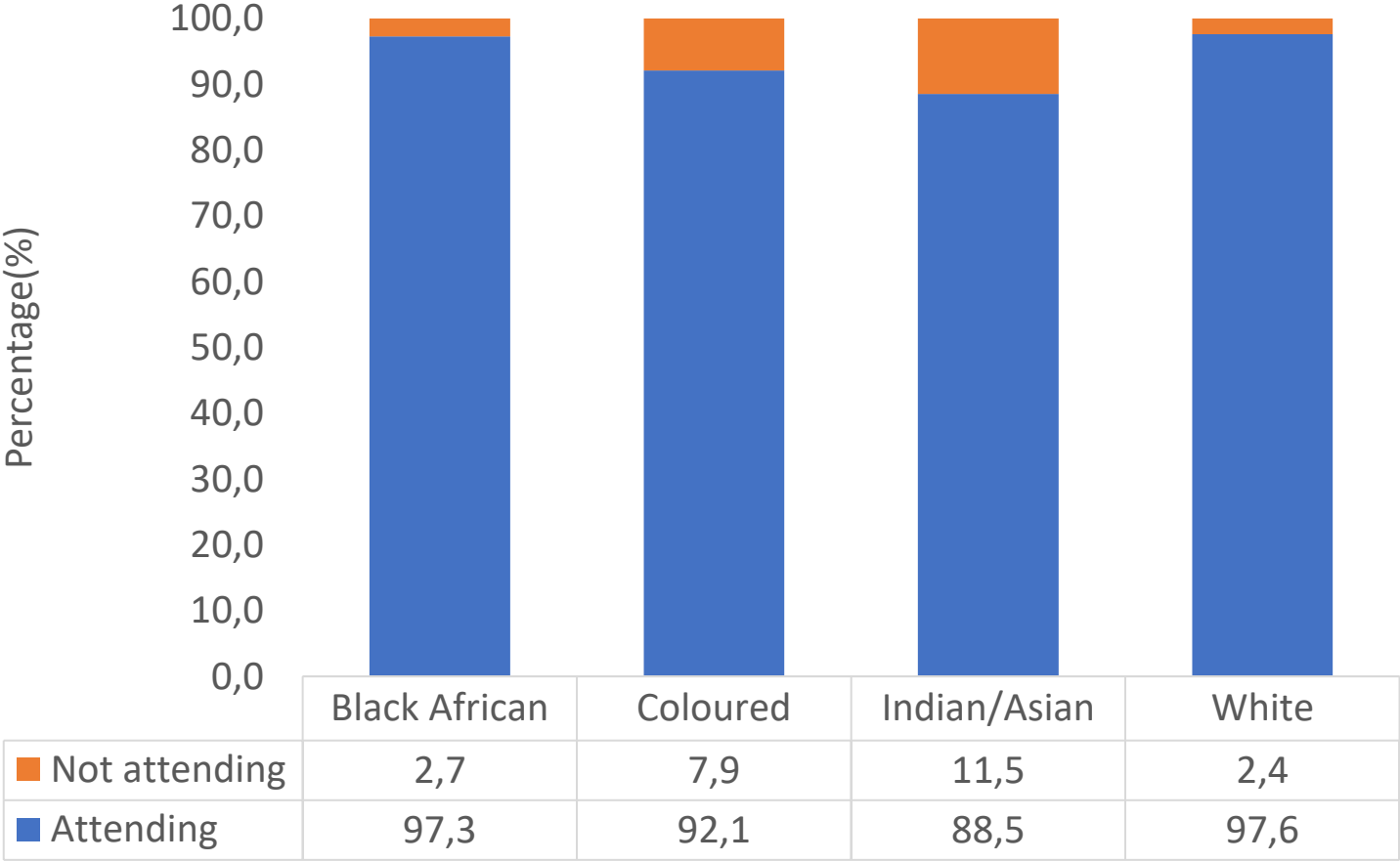


Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of children aged 5–17 years who stayed in grandparents-headed households by attendance of educational institutions and population group, 2023

- **White** children had the highest attendance at **97,6%**, closely followed by **black African** children at **97,3%**
- **Indian/Asian** children had the lowest attendance (**88,5%**)



Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

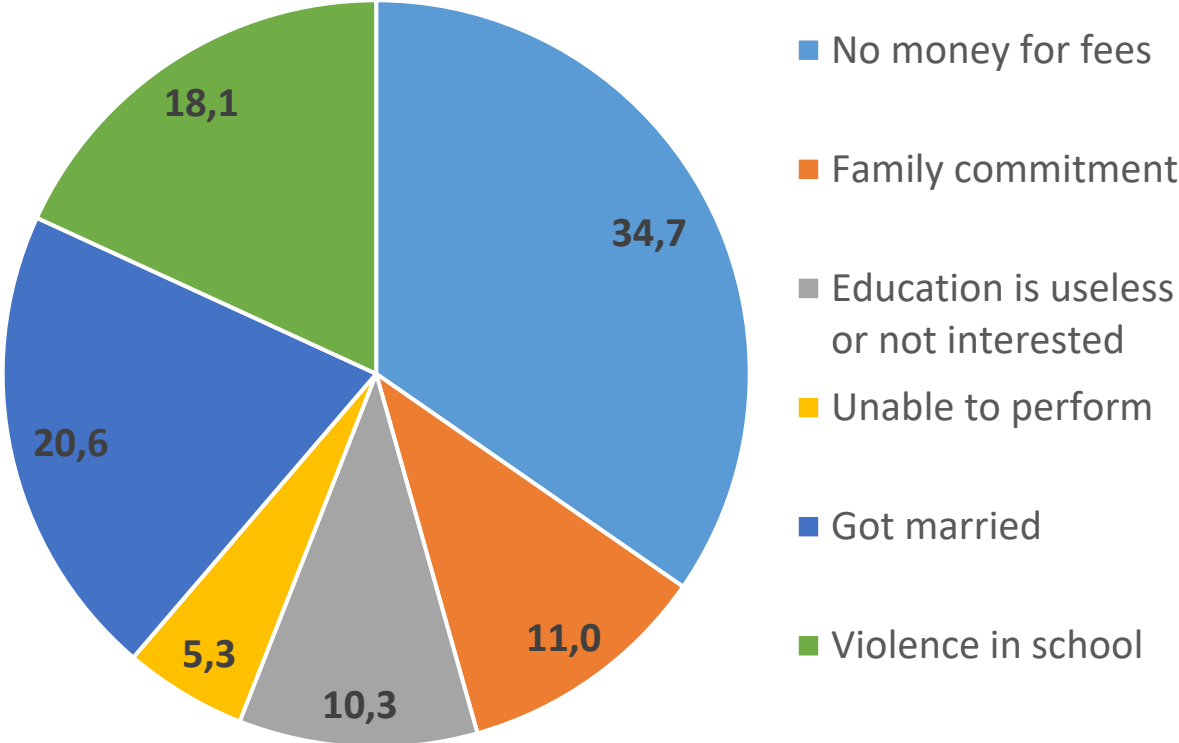
Percentage distribution of children aged 5–17 years who stayed in grandparents-headed households by reasons for not attending educational institutions, 2023

- **Top 3 reasons:**

Lack of money for fees: 34,7%

Got married: 20,6%

Violence in school: 18,1%



Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of children aged 5–17 years who stayed in grandparents-headed households by reasons for not attending educational institutions, 2023

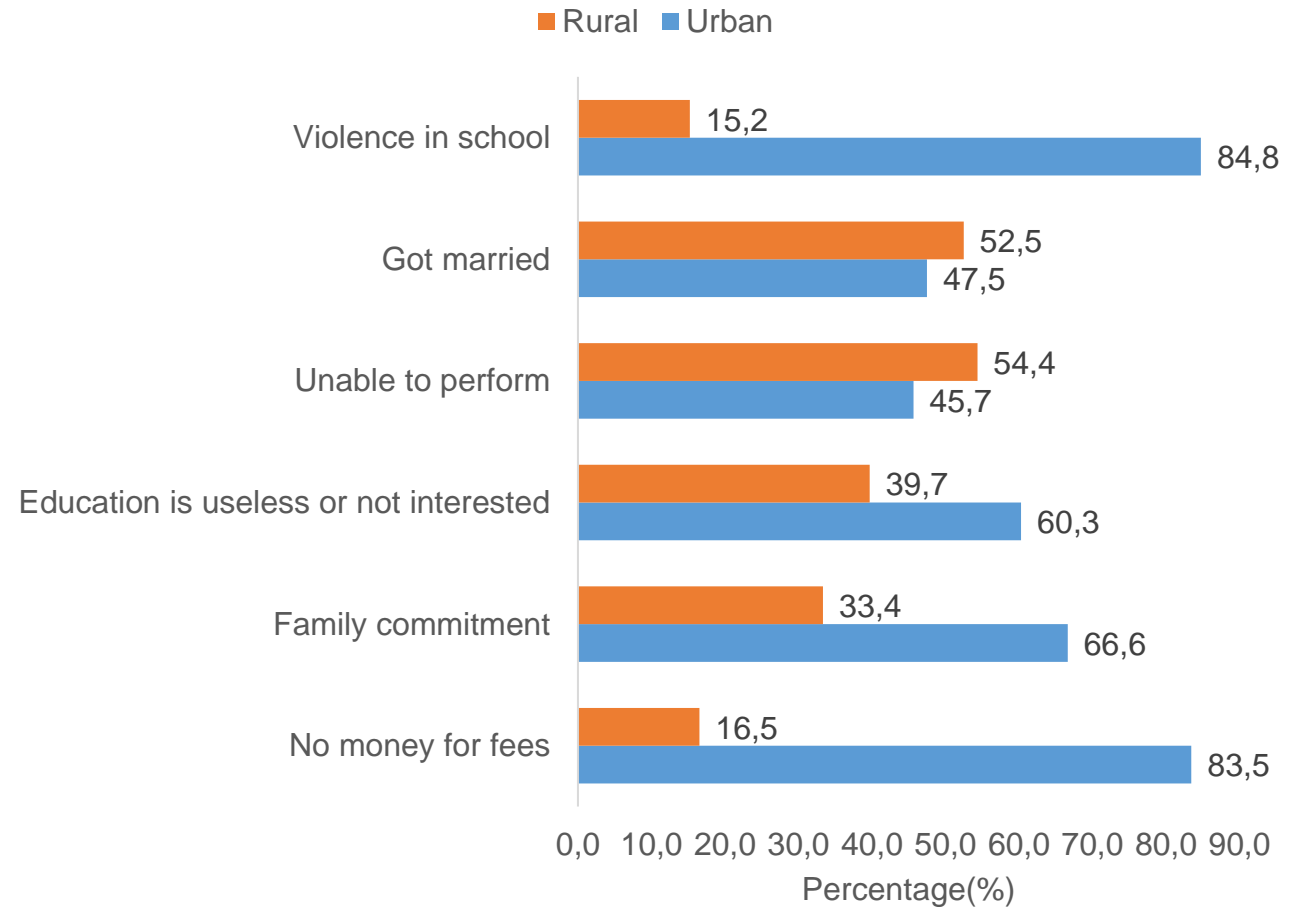
Top 2 reasons for children not to attend educational institutions:

Rural areas

- Unable to perform (54,4%)
- Got married (52,5%)

Urban areas

- Violence in school (84,8%)
- No money for fees (83,5%)



Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of children aged 5–17 years who stayed in grandparents-headed households by attendance of public schools which benefitted from school nutrition programme and province, 2023

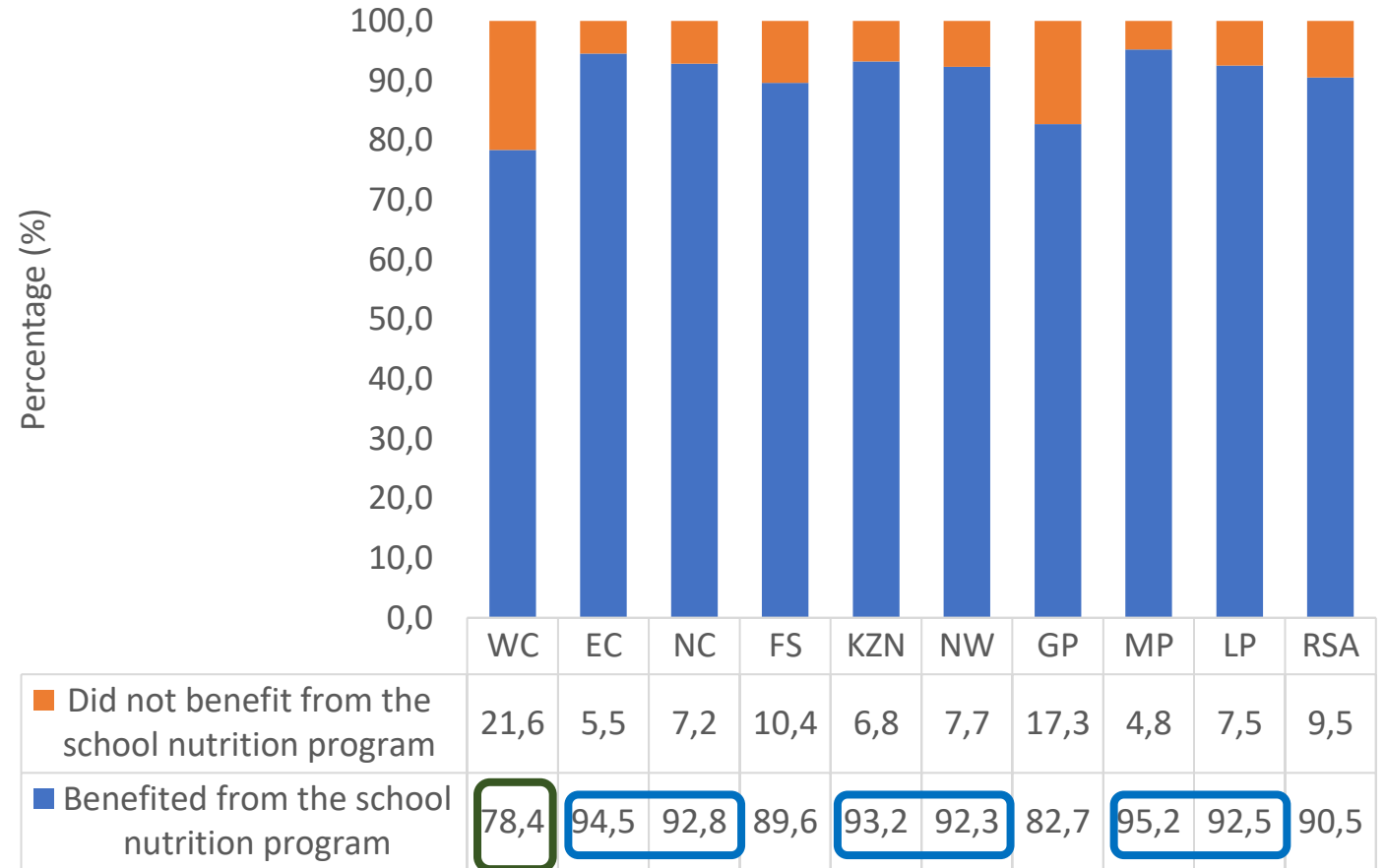
- Nearly **91,0%** of children aged 5–17 years were beneficiary of the program

- Highest percentages of beneficiaries:

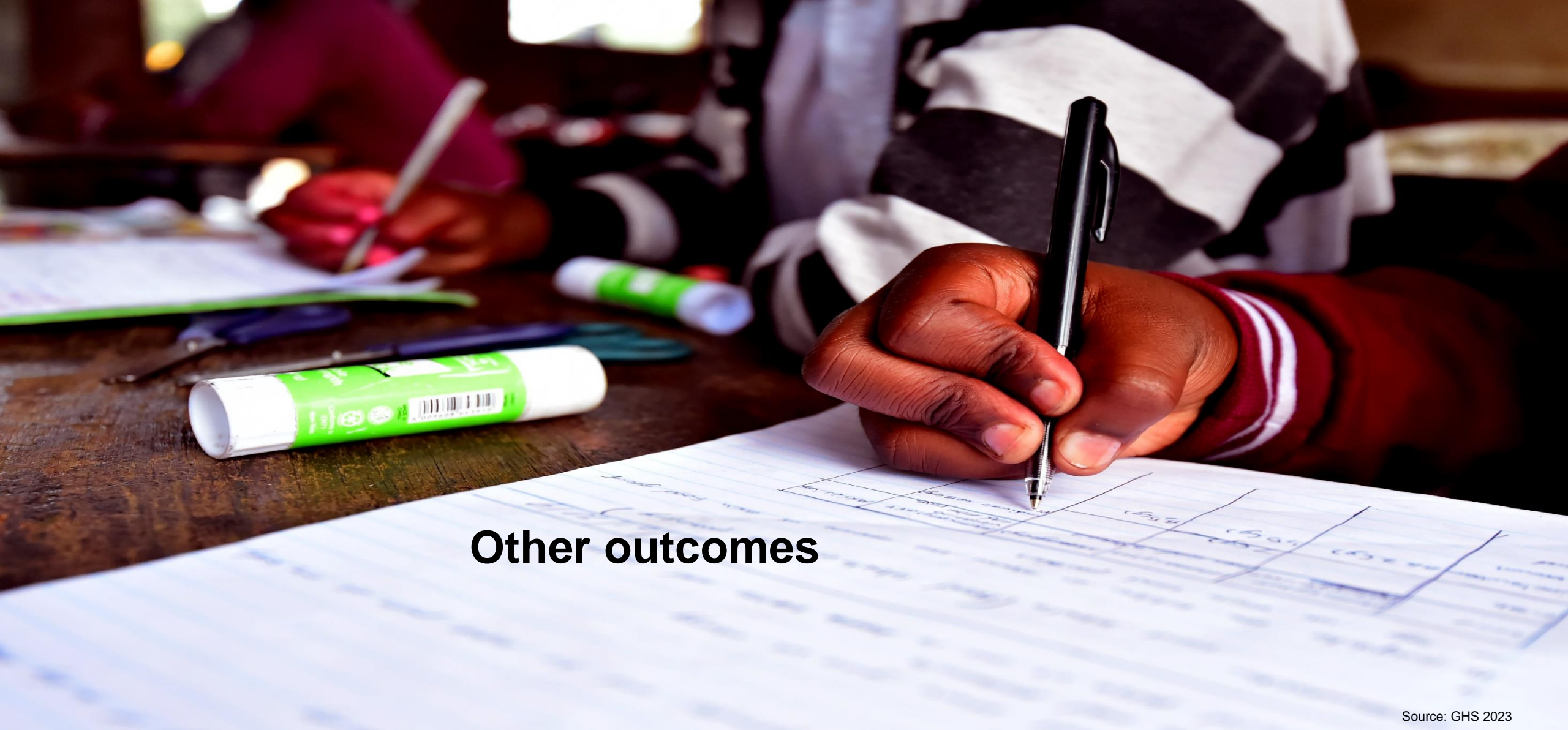
EC, NC, KZN,NW,MP,LP

- Lowest percentages of beneficiaries:

WC



Source: GHS 2023



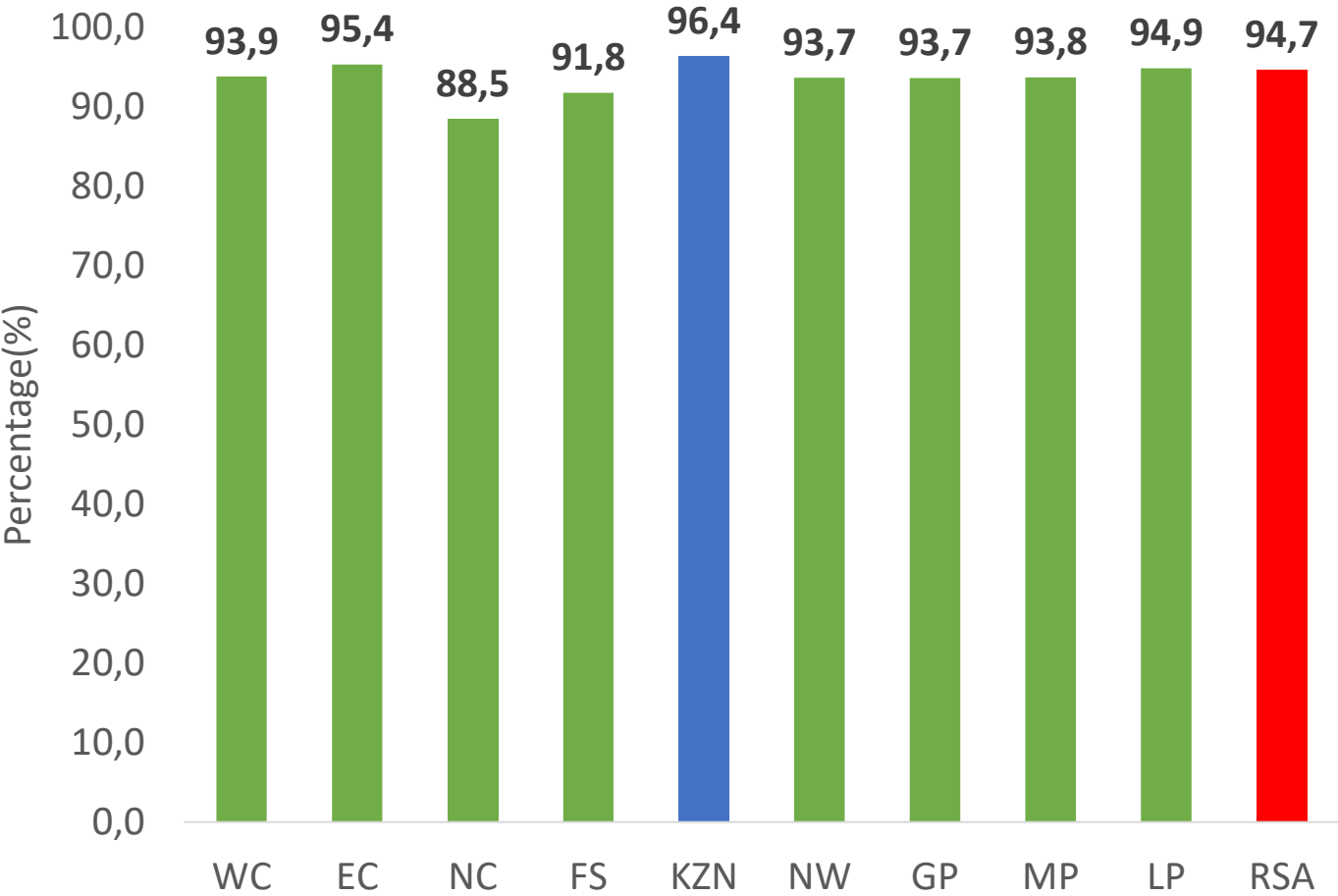
Other outcomes

Source: GHS 2023

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH DATA ECOSYSTEMS

Percentage distribution of children aged 0–17 years who stayed in grandparents-headed households and received child support grants by province, 2023

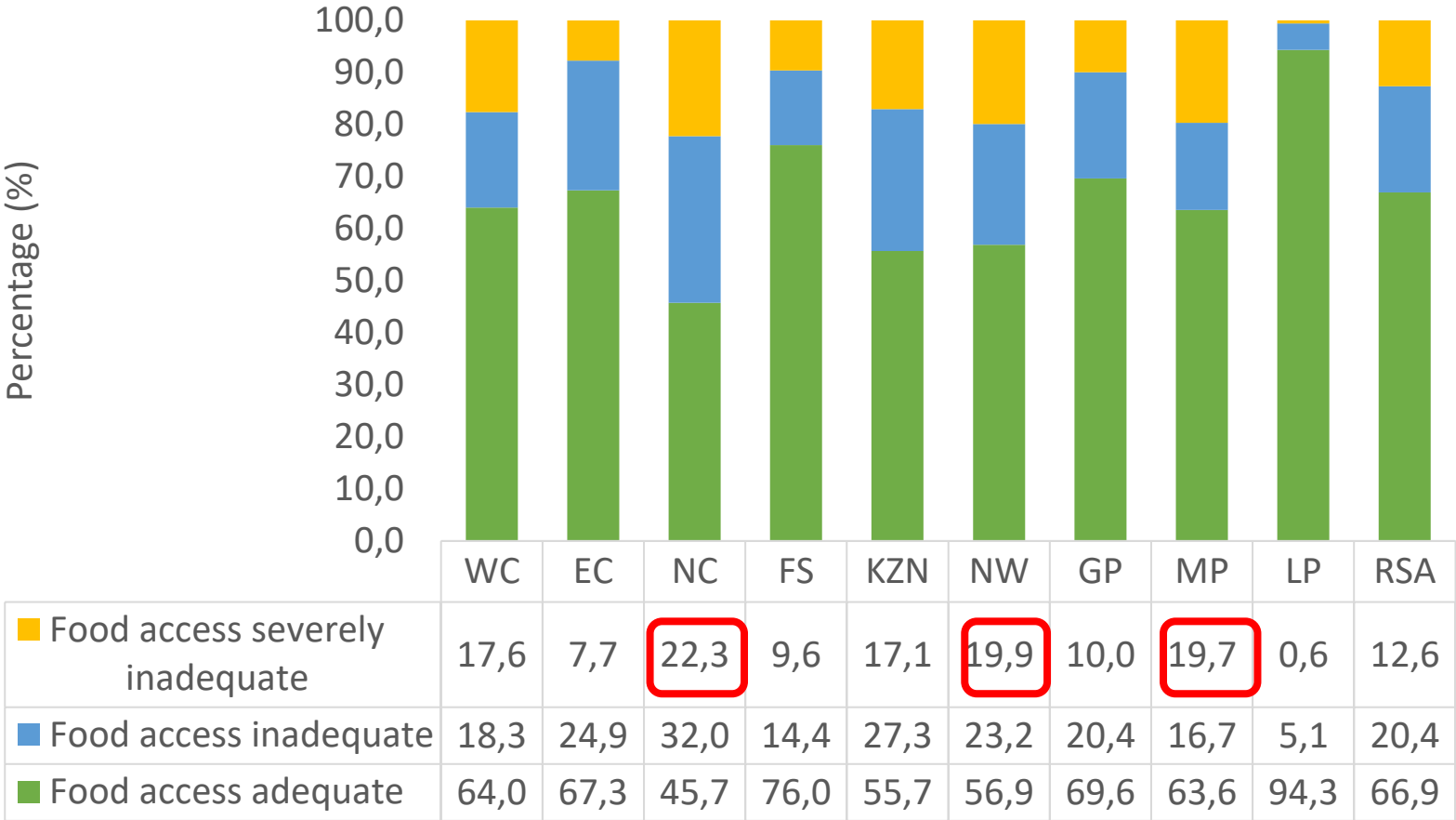
- Nearly **95,0%** of children aged 0–17 years living in grandparent-headed households received child support grant
- Highest:
KZN, EC



Source: GHS 2023

Percentage distribution of children aged 0–17 years who stayed in grandparents-headed households by experience of food adequacy and province, 2023

- Two-third of children in households headed by grandparents in South Africa had adequate food access **(66,9%)**
- While **20,4%** experienced inadequate access, and **12,6%** had severely inadequate access to food
- Severely inadequate access:
NC, NW, MP



Source: GHS 2023

Summary

- Of the nearly 8 million children living in grandparent-headed households, approximately 45,5% were six years old or younger.
- More than half (56,4%) had their mothers present in the household, close to one-third (32,1%) had neither parent living with them.
- Nearly 85,0% of children aged 0–4 years living in grandparent-headed households miss out on ECD programs because their grandparents prefer them to stay at home or with someone else.
- Close to one-third (34,7%) of children aged 5–17 years in these households were unable to attend educational institutions due to a lack of money for fees
- Over 75,0% of grandparents-headed households in all provinces with the exception of WC and GP, were in the lower income quintiles (quintiles 1 and 2).
- EC (82,6%) and NW (81,5%) were provinces where the most impoverished grandparents-headed households were found.

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Volume IV

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