Education Series Volume VIII

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

Report no. 92-01-08

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Education Series Volume VIII

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

Statistics South Africa

Risenga Maluleke
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Abbreviations and acronyms

COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DSD	Department of Social Development
ECD	Early childhood development
GHS	General Household Survey
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
PED	Provincial Education Departments
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PSET	Post-school Education and Training Institutions
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
WHO	World Health Organization

WC	Western Cape
EC	Eastern Cape
NC	Northern Cape
FS	Free State
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
NW	North West
GP	Gauteng
MP	Mpumalanga
LP	Limpopo
RSA	Republic of South Africa

Foreword

President Cyril Ramaphosa declared a national state of disaster in South Africa on 15 March 2020 in order to combat the spread of COVID-19. On 23 March 2020, the President announced a nationwide lockdown effective from 26 March 2020 and school closures were imposed in all schools across the country. These school closures interrupted the learning of an estimated 17 million learners from pre-school to secondary schools, and close to 2,3 million students enrolled in post-school education and training institutions. During the national lockdown in 2020, the closure of schools meant that students were left without contact teaching. As a result, virtual learning and other forms of remote learning were swiftly developed across all education sectors using various tools and media platforms for the different subjects and grades.

Remote learning involves the participation of household members to assist children in accessing the coursework or other activities necessary to support their child's learning. It relied heavily on resources available at home and required an environment conducive for study. The type of dwelling occupied by children as well as the level of crowding and noise within the dwellings determine the availability of a convenient study place for children. Children living in informal dwellings or backyard rooms had to cope with features available in shared spaces, interruptions and distractions from family members. In South Africa, close to 14% of households that had at least one individual aged 5–24 were backyard dwellers or stayed in informal dwellings in 2020.

In South Africa, most school learners relied on the school feeding scheme to access their main daily meal. In 2020, close to 11,9 million individuals aged 5–24 attending schools relied on free meals provided by schools. The majority of these individuals (2,6 million) were residents of KwaZulu-Natal and 2 million residents of Gauteng. Overall, more than three-quarters (76,6%) of individuals aged 5–24 who attended schools consumed the food provided daily as part of the school feeding scheme. Learners in the youngest age group of 5–9 years benefited the most from the school-feeding scheme as 79,3% were daily consumers of the food. With the closure of schools in 2020, most of these learners were prevented from taking advantage of this service.

The fact that remote learning programmes were designed did not guarantee that the children participated in the instruction. An assessment of households' readiness for remote learning in 2020 revealed a disparity in access to various resources necessary to partake in remote learning. Most households did not have assets at home that would allow them to learn remotely via digital tools. In 2020, only close to seven per cent of households with individuals aged 5–24 had access to the internet at home while most households accessed the internet via smart phones (66,8%). The workplace and the use of public wi-fi facilities were also the other preferred modes of access to the internet by households with individuals aged 5–24 (15,6% and 13,1%, respectively). However, a large urban-rural divide (close to 19 percentage points) exists among these households in access to the internet using phones. Furthermore, metropolitan households have greater connectivity from home compared to their rural counterparts (12 percentage points gap). Compared to 2019, in 2020 rural South African households have made large gains in adopting internet connectivity via phones and have narrowed the access gaps (44,6% compared to 56,8% in 2020). However, rural households remain less likely than urban households to have home internet connectivity when comparing 2019 to 2020.

Among those who had access to the internet at home, close to half (50,4%) were white-headed households with individuals aged 5–24 years, while 3,6% were black African-headed households. Black African-headed households with individuals aged 5–24 years mainly relied on mobile phones to access the internet (66,5%), while close to 12% of such households also relied on either public wi-fi or internet cafés to gain access. The main reason for lack of access to the internet at home by these households was the high cost of the relevant equipment (close to 38%). Households with individuals aged 5–24 in the highest income group were more likely to have internet access at home compared to households in the poorest income group (56,7% and 8,5%, respectively).

While cellphone ownership was high overall (91,3%) among households with children aged 5–24 in 2020, their computer ownership has remained relatively low (24,7%). Furthermore, seven out of ten (70,5%) children attending Grade 7 did not own mobile phones while eight out of ten (82,1%) youth attending Grade 12 owned mobile phones. In addition, metropolitan residents were three times more likely to own computers or laptops compared to their rural counterparts (34,1% and 11,6%, respectively).

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) offered education programmes and other curriculum support materials through radio and television broadcast media. Most students have assets at home that would allow them to learn remotely via broadcast classes. The overall percentage of access to television was high (91,2%) among households with individuals aged 5–24, including in rural areas (85,8%). Furthermore, two-thirds of

households with individuals aged 5–24 indicated that they had access to pay TV (66,1%), with lower access observed in rural areas (58,1%).

The 2020 lockdown had a large effect on the number of out-of-school children in 2020 as close to one million children aged 5–18 were out of school. The largest number of out-of-school children was observed among children aged 5–13. The substantial increase in out-of-school children was attributed to COVID-19, since children stopped attending school due to school closures. The highest percentage of non-attendance of schools was observed among 5- and 6-year-olds (close to 38% and close to 12%, respectively). The percentage of out-of-school children aged 5–13 was the highest in Western Cape (13,0%), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (9,1%).

The move to virtual learning showed further inequalities in the education sector, with only those with ready access to the required resources able to continue their studies. Furthermore, not all schools offered remote learning options to their students. Overall, approximately one in ten (11,7%) individuals aged 5–24 were offered the option of remote learning by the educational institution they were attending in 2020. Nationally, close to six per cent of individuals aged 5–24 years participated in remote learning in 2020. A participation gap in remote learning exists by population group as whites were three times more likely than black Africans to participate in remote learning in 2020 (18,3% and 5,3%, respectively). Close to 91% of black Africans aged 5–24 attended schools that did not offer remote learning options compared to 63,3% among whites.

Risenga Maluleke
Statistician-General

Chapter 1: Education during the COVID-19 pandemic

1.1 Introduction

COVID-19 is a health crisis that created the largest disruption in the education system in the world. In South Africa, existing large socio-economic inequalities mean the most vulnerable students will endure the most of this educational disruption. Furthermore, these disruptions have consequences not only on current educational outcomes but also for future outcomes. Although school children did not suffer directly from the disease, being locked out of their schools affected their learning ability and social interactions. In response to the school closures, South Africa quickly designed various plans to mitigate the health risks and the loss in learning. Such plans included practical and comprehensive catch-up plans to be implemented by schools. Furthermore, remote learning policies were designed in order to continue learning during the various lockdown periods. Many countries developed alternative learning policies, which included digital and broadcast-based learning. Digital-based learning was used by 42% of countries for pre-school education, 74% of countries for primary education and 77% of countries for secondary education (UNICEF, 2020). However, the study also showed that a high percentage of students (more than 70%) who lived in rural areas or poor households could not be reached by remote learning.

President Cyril Ramaphosa declared a national state of disaster in South Africa on 15 March 2020 to combat the spread of COVID-19. At the time of the announcement, South Africa had 61 confirmed cases of people infected with the virus. Travel restrictions and other stringent measures of prevention and control on gatherings and movements were imposed to contain the spread of the pandemic. Furthermore, the closure of schools as of 18 March 2020 was also announced. These school closures interrupted the learning of almost 17 million[1] learners from pre-school to secondary schools. Post-school institutions were initially not affected by the lockdown measures, but the Department of Higher Education and Training gave instructions to suspend all campus-based academic activities in all post-school institutions in the country immediately after the announcement, affecting close to 2,3 million[2] students enrolled in post-school education and training institutions (PSET).

As the number of cases rose from 61 cases to 402 cases, on 23 March 2020 the President announced a nationwide lockdown effective from 26 March 2020. Subsequently, all stakeholders in the education sector implemented policy measures that directed practitioners, students and caregivers to work together to maximise learning outcomes as well as for learning to continue to take place in the homes. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) and schools planned to use digital, radio/TV-based teaching and take-home packages for remote learning. Adopting the theme "#SaveTheAcademicYear#SaveLives", the PSET sector responded by reorganising the 2020 academic year and extending it to 2021, not only to enable students to still fulfil specific course requirements but also for institutions to develop adequate resources and capacity to offer various forms of remote and flexible learning programmes. The early childhood development (ECD) sector is distinct because children's attendance of ECD facilities and the provision of these services are not compulsory, especially since these services are provided mostly by the private sector and hence are not freely available to families. The lockdown imposed restrictions on the operations of ECD programmes, but government put in place support packages for ECD centres (both registered and unregistered) to assist their efforts to reopen. However, COVID-19 made the youngest children most vulnerable from loss of schooling. This group of children was also considered mostly those not reached with a remote learning solution.

1.2 Effects of the pandemic on the academic calendar

The DBE amended the school calendar twice in 2020 in line with lockdown conditions associated with COVID-19. Under lockdown level 5, schools initially closed from 18 March 2020 until 13 April 2020. The estimated loss of learning time was 10 days, which were planned to be compensated by cutting the June holidays by a week. As the country moved from lockdown level 4 to level 3 from 1 June 2020, schools were allowed to reopen by means of a risk-adjusted differentiated strategy for the reopening of schools. Grades 7 and 12 were the first to

[1] Based on GHS 2019 estimates; includes children aged 0–4 who attended a daycare centre, crèche, early childhood development centre (ECD) playgroup, nursery school or pre-primary school, and learners 5 years and older attending school in 2019.
[2] Based on Statistics on Post-school Education and Training in South Africa, 2019.

reopen on 1 June 2020 while the other grades were gradually phased in during July and August 2020. Only schools that complied with the minimum health, safety and social distancing requirements on COVID-19 were allowed to re-open. These included social distancing requirements of at least 1,5 meters, and school facilities were only allowed to operate at 50% or less of their capacity at any given time. For schools to achieve this, the DBE had provided various timetable models that may be implemented. These included rotational timetables where learners go to school every alternate day or week (attendance in shifts). The 2020 academic year was supposed to have 42 weeks of teaching, which amounts to 200 days of actual teaching. Due to COVID-19, this was reduced to 37 weeks, amounting on average to 160 days of actual teaching (40 teaching days were forfeited).

During the time of school closure, the DBE and Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) offered learners education programmes and other curriculum support materials using various tools and media platforms for the different subjects and grades. However, not all learners were able to access these programmes as well as the school support materials. The DBE together with the PEDs also developed a school recovery plan to make up for the lost time by reorganisation and trimming the content of the curriculum. Teaching plans were revised in all grades and the June examinations were cancelled to allow for more teaching time. However, the curriculum for Grade 12 was left intact, but teaching plans were reorganised to allow for more efficient and effective utilisation of the time available for teaching. The school closures also had implications on the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for the 2020 academic year due to varying completion of teaching plans by schools. Hence, the decision was made for all schools to administer final controlled tests in only key subjects in Grade 4 to Grade 11, and learning gaps be remediated in the subsequent grade. Thus, the promotion requirements for the year 2020 were revised to avoid that no learner is unfairly disadvantaged.

ECD facilities and programmes remained closed even when the country entered lockdown level 3 of the COVID-19 regulations as of 1 June 2020. This affected Grade R and pre-school children. ECD facilities and programmes, including children aftercare centres, fall under the Department of Social Development (DSD) since they are regulated by the Children's Act, 2005 (Act No. 38 of 2005). The ECD facilities are mostly privately owned or are run as non-profit organisations that received a subsidy if they were registered by the DSD as an ECD and partial-care centre. Closure of these facilities led to the owners' immediate loss of income mainly derived from fees paid by parents, which in turn had a direct impact on their operations as well as staffing. ECD facilities and programmes were required to complete a self-assessment report to determine their readiness to reopen. However, following the Gauteng High Court judgement on re-opening of ECD facilities and programmes on 6 July 2020, the DSD worked closely with ECD facilities to reopen subject to meeting the appropriate and prescribed COVID-19 safety measures. Consequently only some ECD facilities that could comply with measures reopened while the majority remained closed and worked towards complying with the measures to reopen safely. Most of the ECD facilities experienced shortages of personal protective equipment (PPEs) and sanitisers.

1.3 Other policy responses to the pandemic

Government recognised that vaccination of the labour force involved in the basic education sector would be crucial in stabilising schooling. However, given the non-availability of vaccines to all frontline workers, the sector was not prioritised immediately due to the large number of personnel (close to 600 000) employed in the sector. The rollout of the single dose Johnson & Johnson vaccination programme for the Basic Education Sector commenced on 23 June 2021. The vaccination drive included teaching and administrative staff as well as food handlers, janitors, and support staff from all schools, and ECD centres associated with primary schools. A separate national vaccine rollout plan was launched for the social development sector from 19 July 2021 in all provinces. The rollout targeted the 240 000 workforce, which includes ECD practitioners and staff who work in the ECD environment, social workers and auxiliary social workers.

National relief packages provided by government to mitigate the impact of the national state of disaster did not initially include ECD facilities and programmes. The DSD was only able to pay subsidies to registered facilities during the lockdown while unregistered facilities were not able to make use of this benefit. Besides, the subsidy would not cover all costs associated with running such programmes. To overcome the crisis in the sector, government established the Presidential Employment Stimulus for ECDs, which is a temporary employment protection support scheme to close this gap. The relief fund covers both registered and unregistered facilities and programmes to support their operation and reduce their risk of permanent closure. The scheme proposes

to transfer a grant of R760 per month for a maximum of six months to 83 333 employees or practitioners of eligible ECD programmes.[3] Government also provided PPEs to subsidised ECD facilities. The DSD was also urged to embarked on a registration campaign so that more facilities and programmes meet the required ECD norms and standards to operate legally. Hence, the Vangasali campaign was used to identify all ECD programmes regardless of their registration status and to provide support, including financial support, to assist them to continue to provide education services during the pandemic.

1.4 Objective of the report

As schools closed around the country to limit the spread of COVID-19, learners were offered remote learning options that include digital, television, radio and paper-based take-home packages. However, these options were not available equitably. In the Wave 3 Survey on the impact of COVID-19 on mobility, migration and education conducted by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) between 17 June and 4 July 2020, the majority of respondents (72,9%) said that their children were participating in home schooling during the lockdown (Stats SA, 2020). The gap in internet access at home between children aged 24 years and younger in South Africa is large. Household wealth status and head of households' educational achievement have impacts on internet access. Poor households that could not afford computers and wi-fi internet access would most likely be at a disadvantage, and those from impoverished backgrounds have inevitably fallen behind. Besides, regional variation exists in internet access (rural-urban divide). Poor rural households are among the most vulnerable to learning loss. Some children suffered from large losses of teaching time due to periods of no schooling, especially for lower grades and ECD.

This report is mostly based on the annual General Household Survey (GHS) datasets that is collected by Stats SA. GHS 2020 had specific questions related to COVID-19. These questions are analysed to evaluate the impact of the epidemic on education in South Africa. The report is divided into five sections. Chapter 1 introduces difficulties encountered in the education sector during the onset of the 2020 lockdown following the COVID-19 pandemic and discusses policy initiatives, catch-up plans, and recovery strategies followed by government to mitigate the crisis. Chapter 2 discusses the impact of COVID-19 on education participation in the country. Chapter 3 presents households' readiness for remote learning in South Africa. Chapter 4 presents the effect of the pandemic on early childhood education in the country. Chapter 5 concludes by making deductions on how inequalities associated with access to digital connectivity of households affect access to quality distance learning. Furthermore, the disruptions created by the closure of schools and rotational attendance resulted in reduced levels of attendance.

[3] https://www.gov.za/documents/building-society-works-presidential-employment-stimulus-south-african-economic

Chapter 2: The impact of COVID-19 on the basic and higher education phases

2.1 Introduction

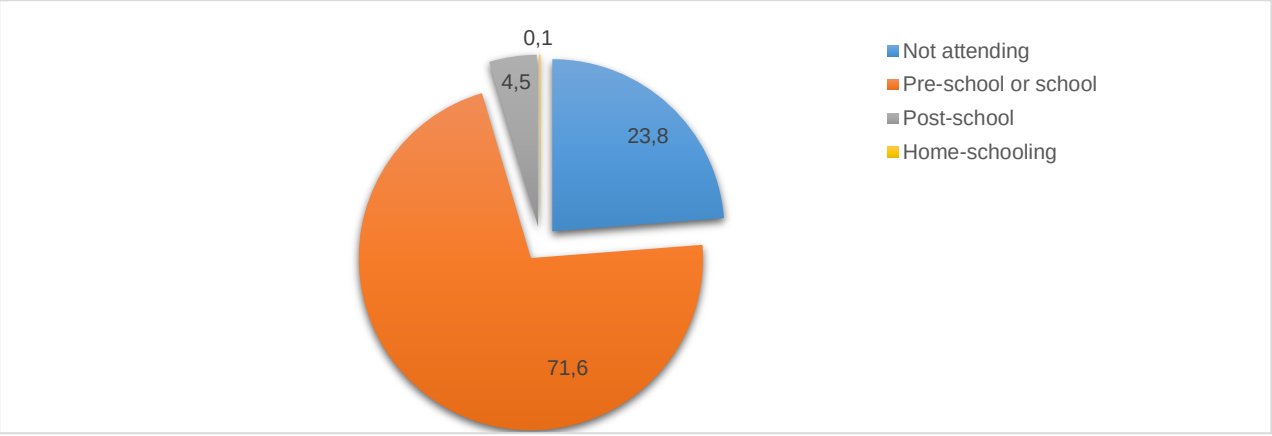
This chapter presents data and analysis to understand the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown in 2020 on educational participation in the basic and higher education sector in South Africa. The GHS 2020 data is used to analyse and compare the levels of participation in educational institutions by individuals aged 5–24.

During the period of the lockdown in 2020, most students or learners in South Africa were attending school in a 'shift system', with a large amount of learning and coursework still expected to be done at home in an effort to increase social distancing and to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, to ensure the continuity of education during the lockdown, some schools have sought to use technology and offer online classes and learning experiences as a substitute for in-class time.

2.2 Attendance of educational institutions

The year 2020 was the year that showed the lowest number of classroom attendance in the world. For countries with the technology and infrastructure, remote learning worked fairly well. In South Africa, when the first total lockdown took place, most schools had almost concluded the first term of the school year while higher education institutions were in the middle of their first semesters. Hence, remote learning was only implemented for the subsequent terms for the basic education sector, while the higher education sector had to work out policies for the entire year. Subsequently, a hybrid of digital and broadcast remote learning was implemented, but some students could not benefit from these systems.

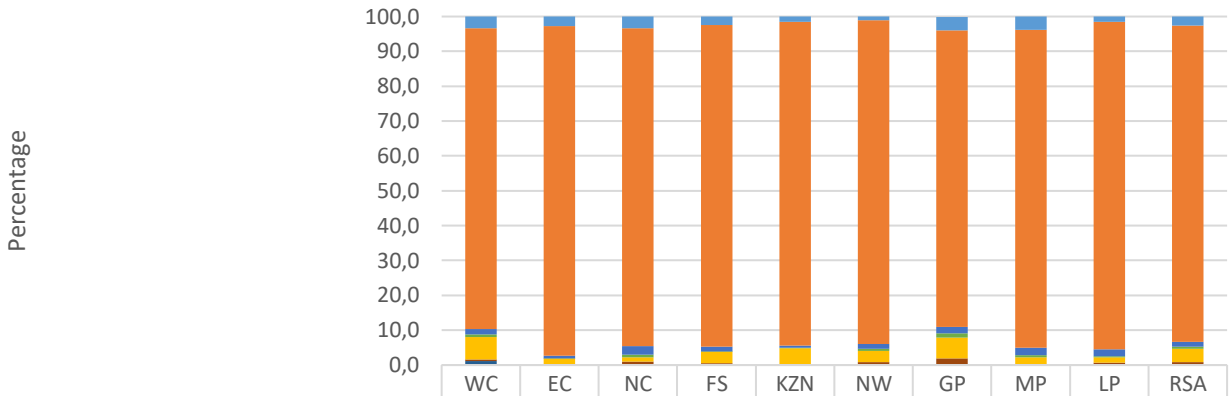
Figure 2.1: Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who attended educational institutions, 2020



Source: GHS 2020

According to the figure above, close to three-quarters (71,6%) of South African individuals aged 5–24 were attending pre-school or schools in 2020, whilst close to five per cent (4,5%) attended post-school educational institutions. However, close to one-quarter (23,8%) were not attending any educational institutions. Home-based education/home schooling (not done by school or other educational institution in response to COVID-19 lockdown) amounted to 0,1%.

Figure 2.2: Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who attended educational institutions by province, 2020

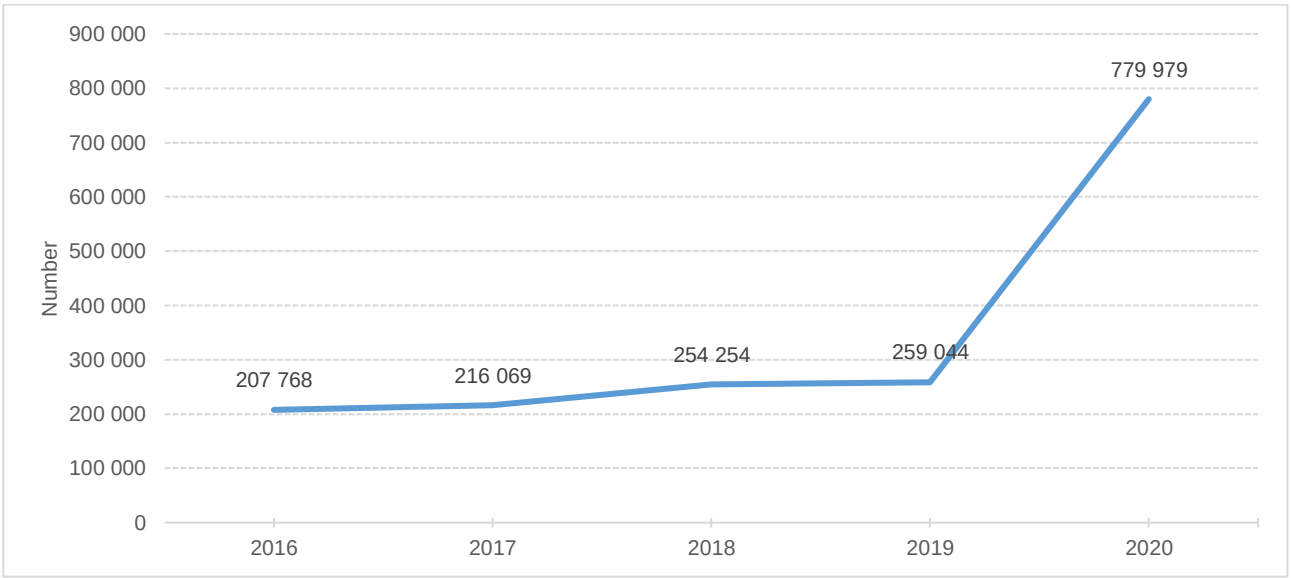


	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA
Pre-school	3,3	2,8	3,3	2,4	1,5	1,1	3,9	3,8	1,5	2,6
Grade R - 12	86,5	94,5	91,3	92,4	92,8	92,9	85,0	91,2	94,0	90,7
TVET	1,5	0,7	2,4	1,3	0,7	1,3	1,9	2,2	2,0	1,4
Other colleges	0,7	0,2	0,8	0,0	0,2	0,7	1,2	0,7	0,4	0,6
Higher education institutions	6,5	1,6	1,4	3,4	4,5	3,2	6,0	2,0	1,5	3,9
Other	0,4	0,2	0,8	0,5	0,3	0,8	1,7	0,2	0,6	0,7
Home-based education/home schooling (not done by school or other educational institution in response to COVID-19 lockdown	1,2	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,2	0,0	0,1	0,2

Source: GHS 2020

In South Africa, among 5–24-year-old individuals attending educational institutions in 2020, nine out of ten (90,7%) were attending school, while close to three per cent (2,6%) were attending pre-school; 3,9% were attending a tertiary educational institution. The highest proportion of 5–24-year-old individuals who attended school were in Eastern Cape (94,5%) and Limpopo (94,0%), while attendance of these institutions was relatively lower in Gauteng and Western Cape (85,0% and 86,5%, respectively).

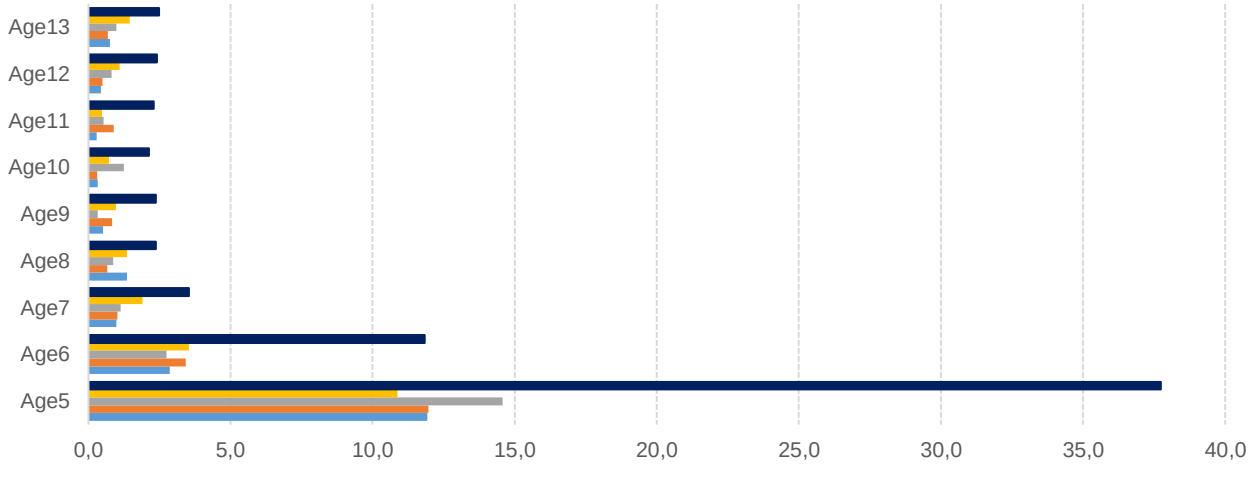
Figure 2.3: Number of out-of-school children among children aged 5–13, 2016–2020



Source: GHS 2016–2020

The figure above shows the increase in the number of children aged 5–13 who were out of school from 2016 to 2020, starting from a low base of 207 768 in 2016 to a sharp increase of 779 979 in 2020. The substantial increase in out-of-school children was attributed to COVID-19, since children stopped attending school because caregivers did not want to expose their children to the virus. The other reason contributing to the dropout was that most educational facilities where children attended closed due to COVID-19.

Figure 2.4: Out-of-school children aged 5–13 as a percentage of total children by age, 2016–2020

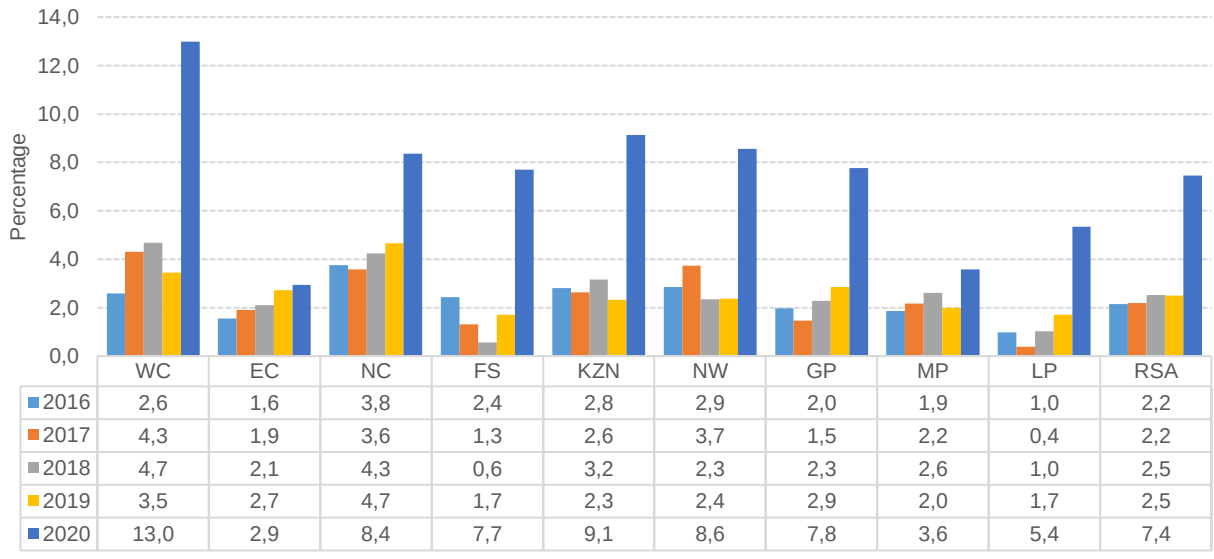


	Age5	Age6	Age7	Age8	Age9	Age10	Age11	Age12	Age13
2020	37,7	11,8	3,5	2,4	2,4	2,1	2,3	2,4	2,5
2019	10,9	3,5	1,9	1,4	1,0	0,7	0,5	1,1	1,5
2018	14,6	2,7	1,1	0,9	0,3	1,3	0,5	0,8	1,0
2017	12,0	3,4	1,0	0,7	0,8	0,3	0,9	0,5	0,7
2016	11,9	2,9	1,0	1,4	0,5	0,3	0,3	0,4	0,8

Source: GHS 2016–2020

The above graph shows that the overall trend of out-of-school children fluctuates across all age groups and over time. The overall increase of those who were out of school was notably high across all age groups in 2020 and more than doubled in most age groups compared to 2019. In 2020, the percentage of out-of-school 5-year-olds was the highest (37,7%) compared to the other age groups.

Figure 2.5: Out-of-school children aged 5–13 as a percentage of total children by province, 2016–2020

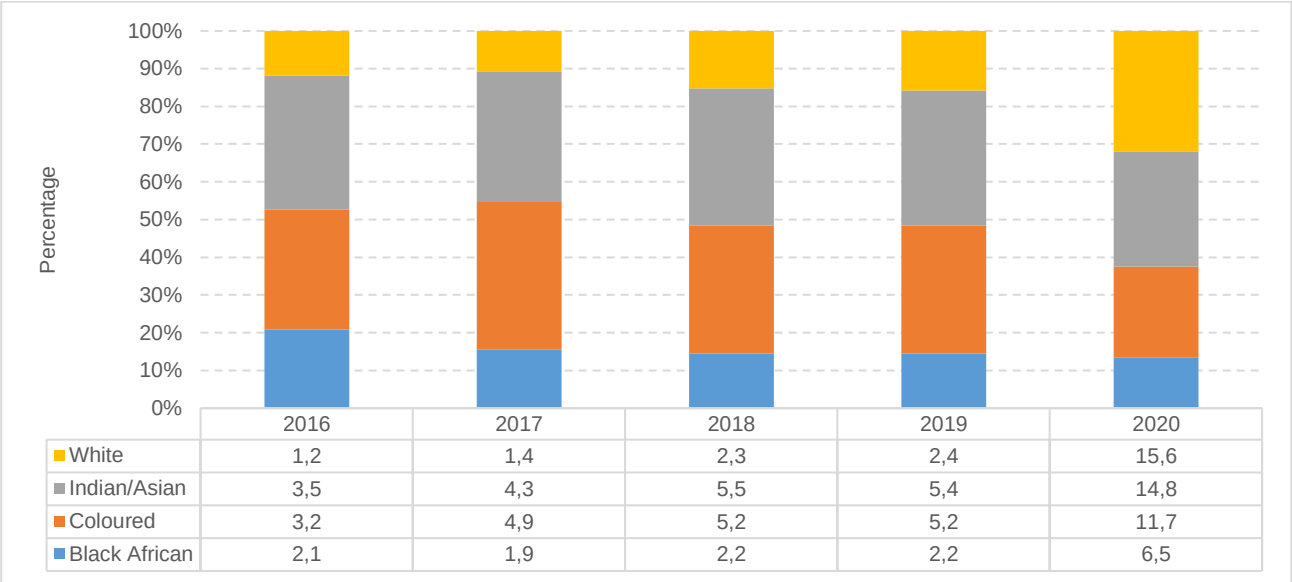


	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA
2016	2,6	1,6	3,8	2,4	2,8	2,9	2,0	1,9	1,0	2,2
2017	4,3	1,9	3,6	1,3	2,6	3,7	1,5	2,2	0,4	2,2
2018	4,7	2,1	4,3	0,6	3,2	2,3	2,3	2,6	1,0	2,5
2019	3,5	2,7	4,7	1,7	2,3	2,4	2,9	2,0	1,7	2,5
2020	13,0	2,9	8,4	7,7	9,1	8,6	7,8	3,6	5,4	7,4

Source: GHS 2016–2020

The above graph shows the provincial distribution of out-of-school children over time. Although the data shows moderate fluctuations over time, the percentage of out-of-school children was the highest in all the provinces in 2020. In 2020, the percentage of out-of-school children aged 5–13 was the highest in Western Cape (13,0%), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (9,1%).

Figure 2.6: Out-of-school children aged 5–13 as a percentage of total children by population group, 2016–2020

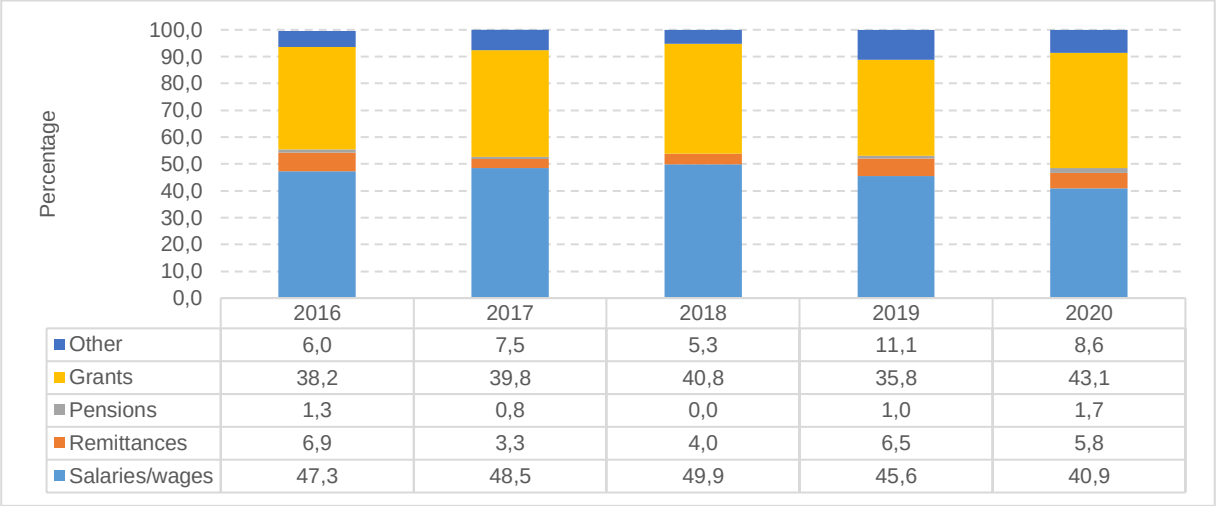


	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
White	1,2	1,4	2,3	2,4	15,6
Indian/Asian	3,5	4,3	5,5	5,4	14,8
Coloured	3,2	4,9	5,2	5,2	11,7
Black African	2,1	1,9	2,2	2,2	6,5

Source: GHS 2020

The above graph shows the distribution of out-of-school children over the years. Although the data shows moderate fluctuations from 2016 to 2019 amongst children aged 5–13, the percentage of out-of-school children skyrocketed in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic compared to the other years.

Figure 2.7: Out-of-school children aged 5–13 as a percentage of total children by main source of income, 2016–2020

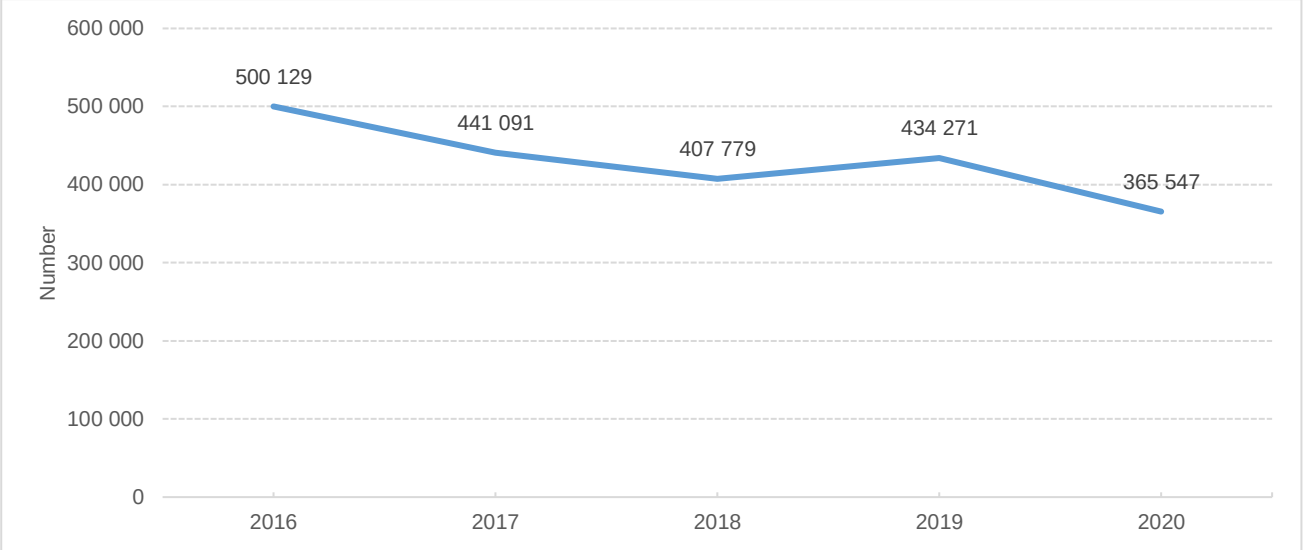


	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Other	6,0	7,5	5,3	11,1	8,6
Grants	38,2	39,8	40,8	35,8	43,1
Pensions	1,3	0,8	0,0	1,0	1,7
Remittances	6,9	3,3	4,0	6,5	5,8
Salaries/wages	47,3	48,5	49,9	45,6	40,9

Source: GHS 2020

The figure above presents the trend over time in the percentage of out-of-school children by the main source of households' income. In most of the years, the majority of households relied mainly on salaries and wages as their source of household income, while grants were the second most important source of households' income. However, this trend reversed in 2020 with a decrease in households receiving salaries, and grants being the main source of household income.

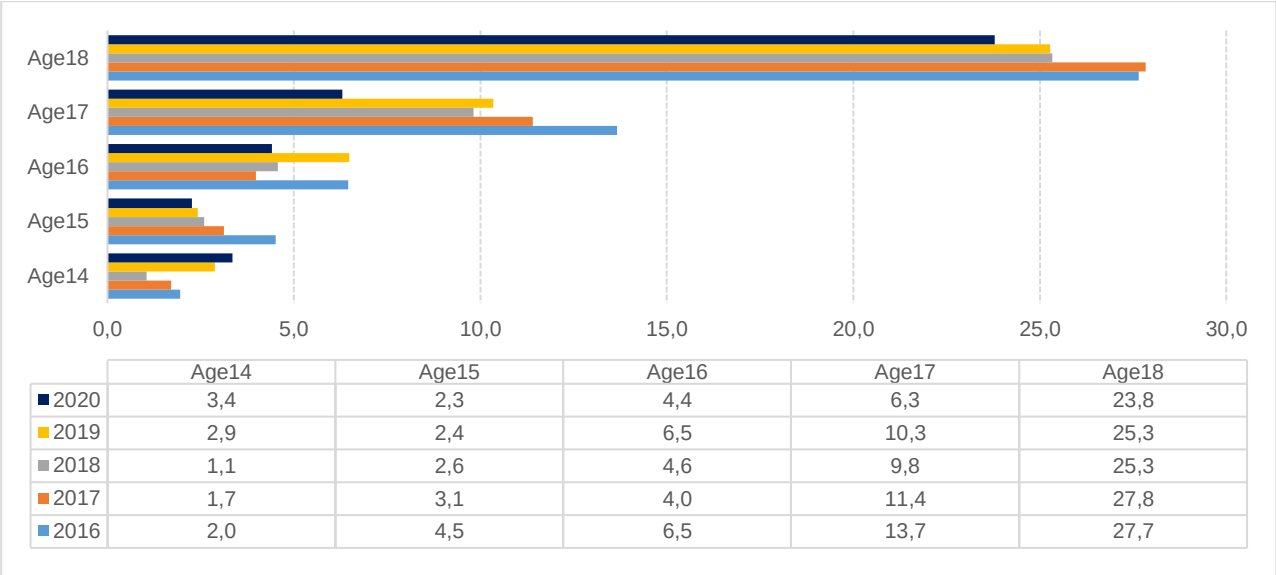
Figure 2.8: Number of out-of-school children among children aged 14–18, 2016–2020



Source: GHS 2020

Figure 2.8 presents the number of out-of-school children aged 14–18 from 2016 to 2020. The data shows a downwards trend over time in the number of out-of-school children aged 14–18. The data also shows that 2016 had the highest number of out-of-school children (500 219), which notably declined to 365 547 in 2020.

Figure 2.9: Out-of-school children aged 14–18 as a percentage of total children by age, 2016–2020

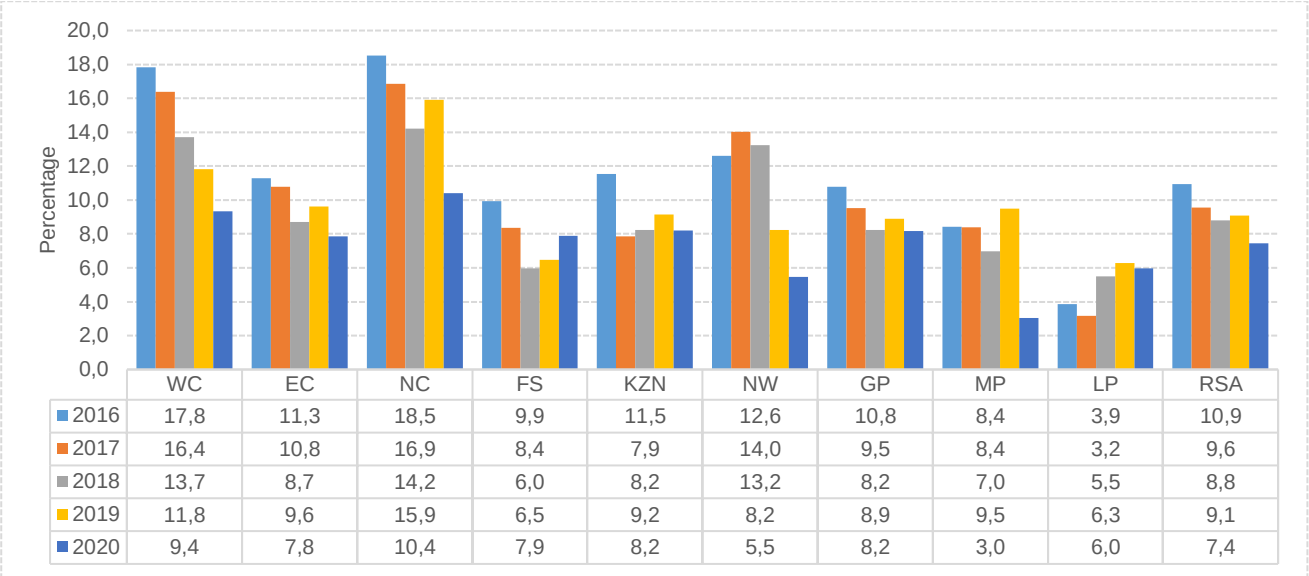


	Age14	Age15	Age16	Age17	Age18
2020	3,4	2,3	4,4	6,3	23,8
2019	2,9	2,4	6,5	10,3	25,3
2018	1,1	2,6	4,6	9,8	25,3
2017	1,7	3,1	4,0	11,4	27,8
2016	2,0	4,5	6,5	13,7	27,7

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 2.9 shows the percentage of out-of-school children aged 14–18 in 2016–2020. In 2020, the percentage of 14-year-olds who were out of school was higher than in any other years. The percentage of out-of-school children in the other age groups showed a slight decline in 2020.

Figure 2.10: Out-of-school children aged 14–18 as a percentage of total children by province, 2016–2020

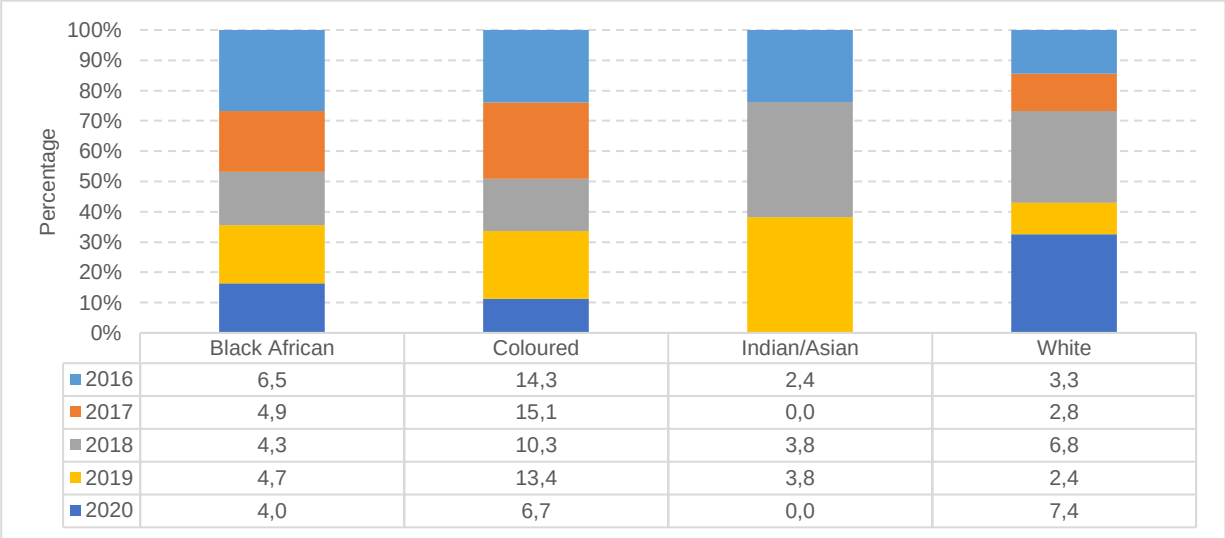


	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA
2016	17,8	11,3	18,5	9,9	11,5	12,6	10,8	8,4	3,9	10,9
2017	16,4	10,8	16,9	8,4	7,9	14,0	9,5	8,4	3,2	9,6
2018	13,7	8,7	14,2	6,0	8,2	13,2	8,2	7,0	5,5	8,8
2019	11,8	9,6	15,9	6,5	9,2	8,2	8,9	9,5	6,3	9,1
2020	9,4	7,8	10,4	7,9	8,2	5,5	8,2	3,0	6,0	7,4

Source: GHS 2020

The above graph shows the provincial distribution of out-of-school children aged 14–18 over time. Overall, 7,4% of 14–18-year-olds were out of school in 2020, which is the lowest compared to the previous year. In 2020, the percentage of out-of-school children aged 14–18 was the highest in Northern Cape (10,4%), followed by Western Cape (9,4%).

Figure 2.11: Out-of-school children aged 14–18 as a percentage of total children by population group, 2016–2020

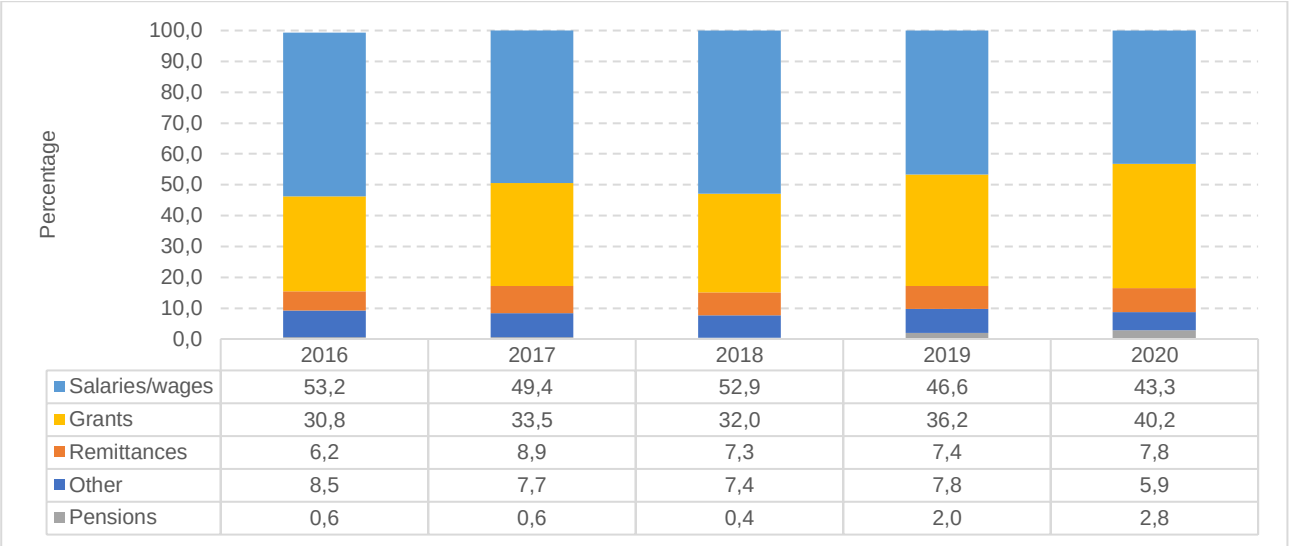


	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White
2016	6,5	14,3	2,4	3,3
2017	4,9	15,1	0,0	2,8
2018	4,3	10,3	3,8	6,8
2019	4,7	13,4	3,8	2,4
2020	4,0	6,7	0,0	7,4

Source: GHS 2020

The above graph shows the population distribution of out-of-school children over time. Although the data shows moderate fluctuations over time, the percentage of out-of-school children was the highest in the coloured population group between 2016 and 2020 amongst children aged 14–18 years. In 2020, the percentage of out-of-school children aged 14–18 was the highest in the white population group (7,4%), followed by the coloured population group (6,7%).

Figure 2.12: Out-of-school children aged 14–18 as a percentage of total children by main source of income, 2016–2020

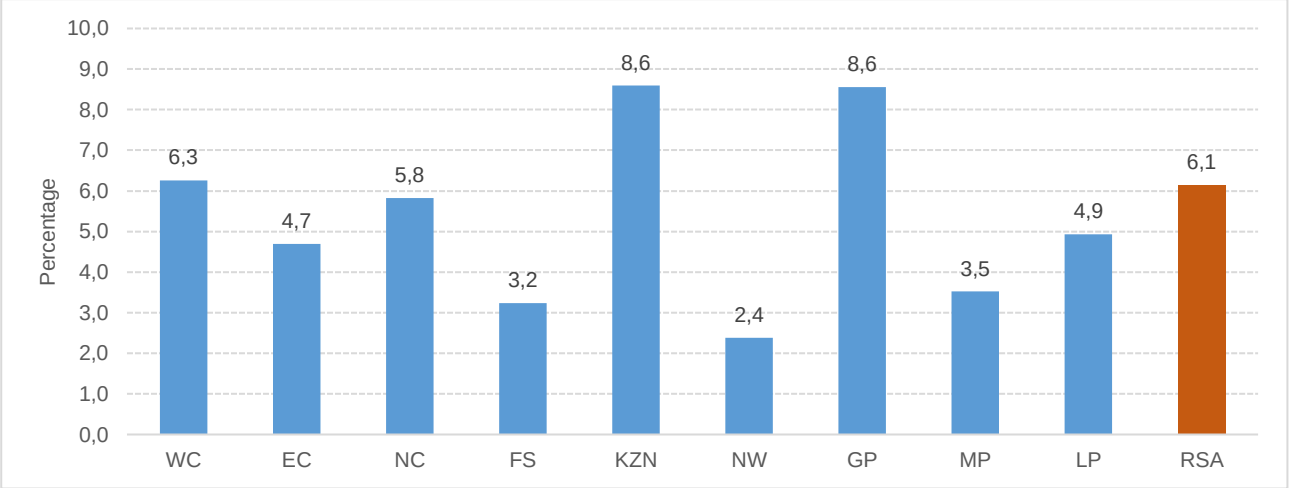


	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Salaries/wages	53,2	49,4	52,9	46,6	43,3
Grants	30,8	33,5	32,0	36,2	40,2
Remittances	6,2	8,9	7,3	7,4	7,8
Other	8,5	7,7	7,4	7,8	5,9
Pensions	0,6	0,6	0,4	2,0	2,8

Source: GHS 2020

The above graph shows the distribution over time of out-of-school children aged 14–18 as a percentage of total children by the main source of household income. While the data shows some fluctuations over time, from 2016 to 2019 salaries and wages were the main source of households income while grants were the second source of household income. However, although the trend remain the same in 2020, the percentage of grants as the main source of households income increased.

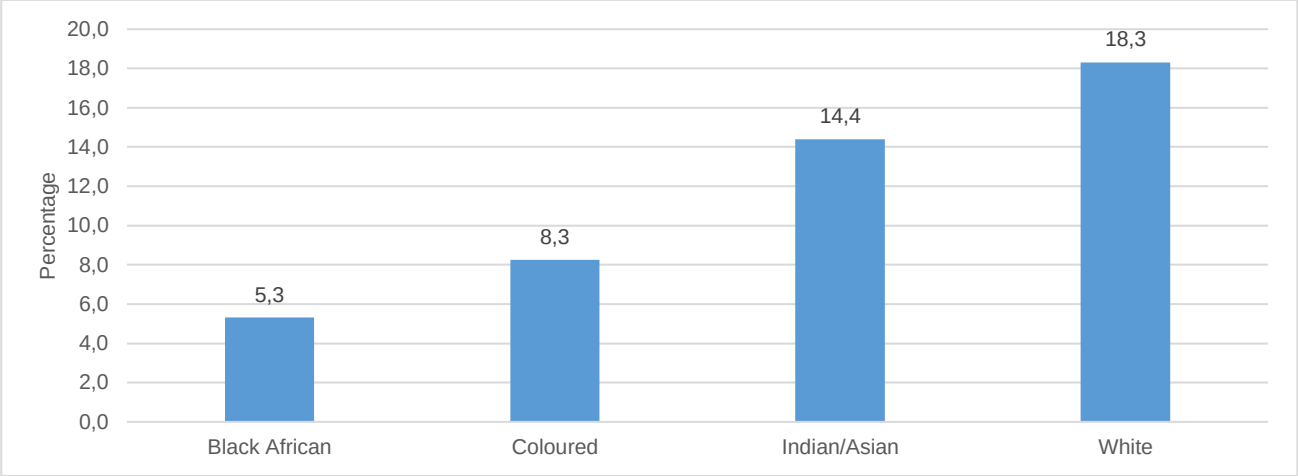
Figure 2.13: Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who participated in home schooling or remote learning by province, 2020



Source: GHS 2020

The above graph shows the percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who participated in remote learning as part of the measures taken to contain the spread of COVID-19 in 2020, by province. Nationally, close to six per cent of individuals aged 5–24 years participated in remote learning. The highest percentage of participation rates were found in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng with 8,6% each, followed by Western Cape at 6,3%. North West had proportionately lower participation rates among this young age group at 2,4%, far lower than the national average.

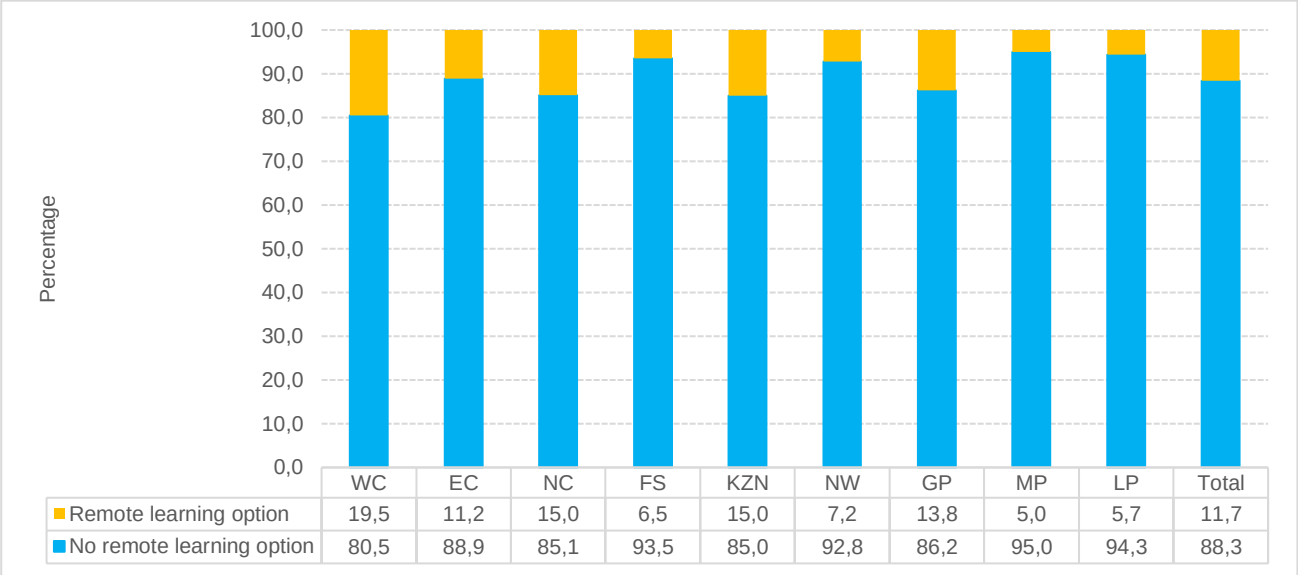
Figure 2.14: Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who participated in home schooling or remote learning by population group, 2020



Source: GHS 2020

Figure 2.14 shows population group variations in participation of children in remote learning. The percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who participated in home schooling was the lowest for black Africans (5,3%), followed by coloureds (8,3%). The participation in remote learning among individuals aged 5–24 was the highest among whites (18,3%), followed by Indians/Asians (14,4%).

Figure 2.15: Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who attended educational institution at which he/she is enrolled that offered a remote or home schooling option by province, 2020

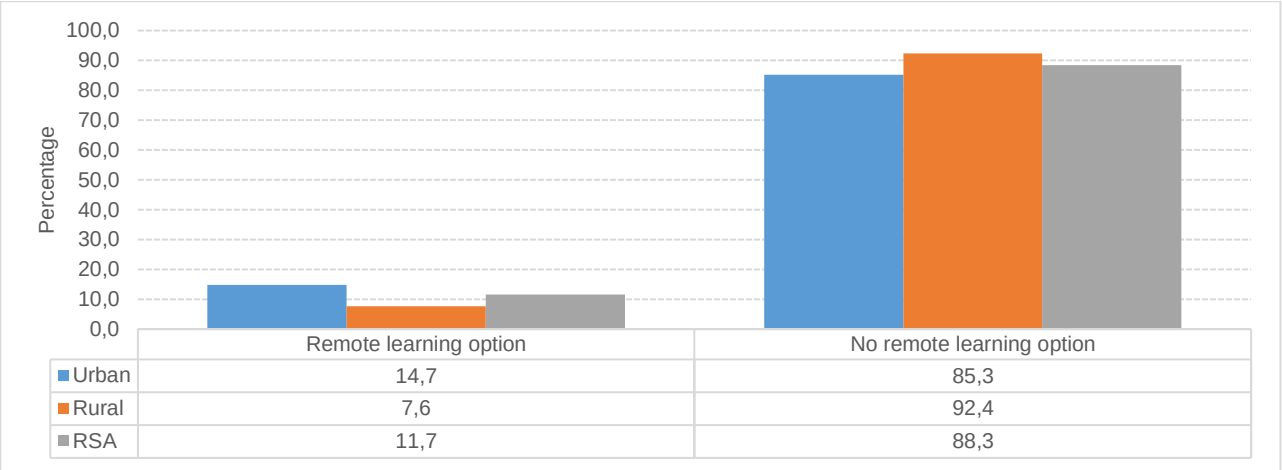


	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	Total
Remote learning option	19,5	11,2	15,0	6,5	15,0	7,2	13,8	5,0	5,7	11,7
No remote learning option	80,5	88,9	85,1	93,5	85,0	92,8	86,2	95,0	94,3	88,3

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 2.15 illustrates the distribution amongst individuals aged 5–24 years who attended educational institutions by remote learning options offered and province in 2020. Overall, approximately one in ten (11,7%) individuals aged 5–24 were offered the option of remote learning by the educational institution they were attending in 2020. Western Cape had the highest percentage of individuals who attended educational institutions that offered a remote learning option (19,5%), followed by Northern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, and Gauteng (15,0%, 15,0% and 13,8%, respectively). Mpumalanga had the lowest percentage of individuals who attended institutions that offered a remote learning option (5,0%).

Figure 2.16: Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who attended educational institution at which he/she is enrolled that offered a remote or home schooling option by geography type, 2020

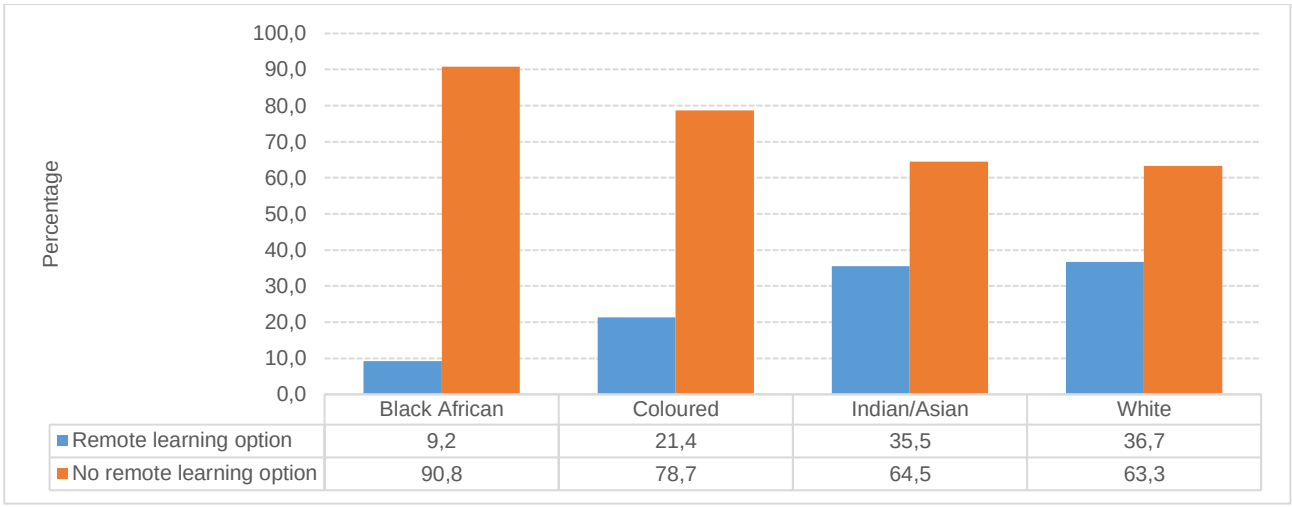


	Remote learning option	No remote learning option
Urban	14,7	85,3
Rural	7,6	92,4
RSA	11,7	88,3

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 2.16 shows that the highest proportion of individuals aged 5–24 years who attended educational institutions that did not offer remote learning options were located in rural areas (92,4%), close to four percentage points higher than the national average (88,3%).

Figure 2.17: Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who attended educational institution/school at which he/she is enrolled that offered a remote or home schooling option by population group, 2020

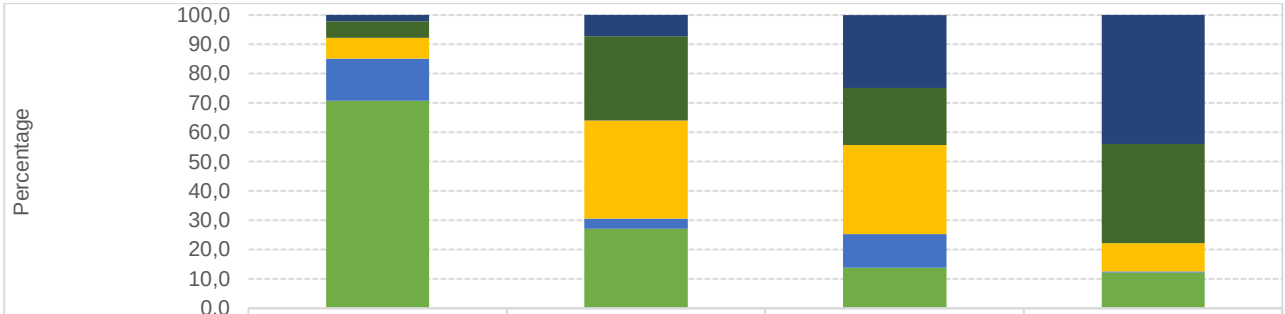


	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White
Remote learning option	9,2	21,4	35,5	36,7
No remote learning option	90,8	78,7	64,5	63,3

Source: GHS 2020

The above graph illustrates the percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who attended educational institutions by remote learning options offered and population group. The graph shows an unequitable distribution by population groups in the options offered by schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. The highest percentage of attendance where education institutions offered remote learning options was recorded amongst whites (close to 37%), followed by Indians/Asians (close to 35%). The lowest percentage of attendance of educational institutions where a remote learning option was offered was recorded among black Africans (9,2%). This shows the disproportion in access to education during the pandemic amongst the various disadvantaged communities.

Figure 2.18: Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years by total amount of tuition fees paid to attend educational institutions, 2020

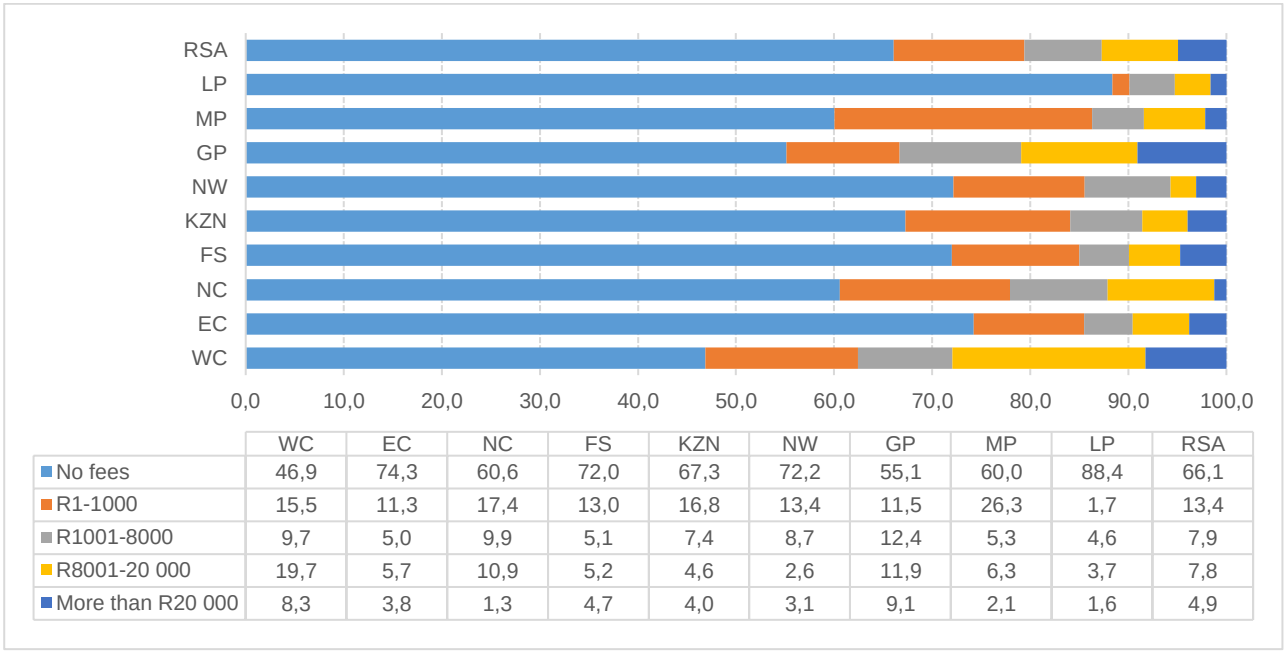


	School Including Grade R to Grade 12	Technical and Vocational Education and Training	College	University/University of Technology
More than R20 000	2,2	7,2	24,9	43,9
R8001-20 000	5,6	28,8	19,4	33,9
R1001-8000	7,0	33,4	30,3	9,7
R1-1000	14,4	3,5	11,6	0,3
No fees	70,9	27,1	13,8	12,3

Source: GHS 2020

The above graph presents the percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who attended educational institutions by the amount of school fees paid by the household in 2020. As shown in the graph, among those who attended school including Grade R to Grade 12, more than two-thirds did not pay tuition fees to attend school, while on average around 14% paid R1 000 or less annually. Furthermore, the percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years whose household paid more than R8 000 to R20 000 or more was about 7,8%. These fees do not include the cost of uniforms, books and other learning materials, accommodation fees, sport fees and transport fees. The graph also shows the change in cost as the type of educational institution differs. While the students normally covered most of the cost incurred towards attending university, the cost difference is noticeable. Three out of seven (43,9%) students attending university were paying tuition fees of more than R20 000 compared to students who attended TVET colleges who paid similar amounts (7,2%).

Figure 2.19: Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years by total amount of tuition fees paid to attend educational institutions by province, 2020

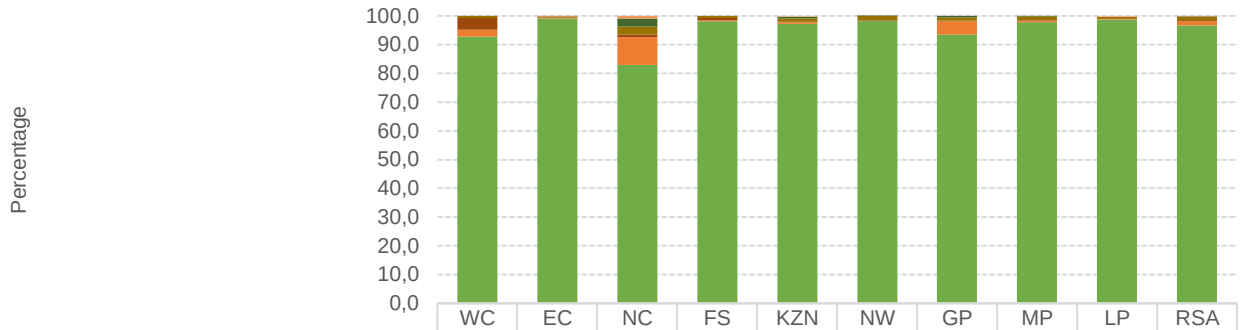


	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA
No fees	46,9	74,3	60,6	72,0	67,3	72,2	55,1	60,0	88,4	66,1
R1-1000	15,5	11,3	17,4	13,0	16,8	13,4	11,5	26,3	1,7	13,4
R1001-8000	9,7	5,0	9,9	5,1	7,4	8,7	12,4	5,3	4,6	7,9
R8001-20 000	19,7	5,7	10,9	5,2	4,6	2,6	11,9	6,3	3,7	7,8
More than R20 000	8,3	3,8	1,3	4,7	4,0	3,1	9,1	2,1	1,6	4,9

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 2.19 depicts the annual fees paid in 2020 by households for individuals aged 5–24 who attended an educational institution by province. The data shows that the majority of households who had individuals in this age group attending schools did not pay school fees across all provinces. The highest percentage of households that did not incur the cost of school fees was observed in Limpopo (88,4%), followed by Eastern Cape (74,3%) and North West (72,2%). These percentages were much higher than the national average (66,1%). The lowest percentages were observed in Western Cape (46,9%) and Gauteng (55,1%). Furthermore, while most of the households did not pay school fees in 2020, 13,4% reported paying R1–R1 000 per child, 7,9% paid R1 001–R8 000 and a minority (4,9%) paid more than R20 000.

Figure 2.20: Reasons why individuals aged 5–24 years who attended school did not pay tuition fees by province, 2020



	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA
Other	0,0	0,2	0,8	0,0	0,2	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,1
School did not offer a service	0,0	0,0	2,9	0,0	0,5	0,1	0,5	0,2	0,0	0,3
Got a bursary covering all costs	0,8	0,4	2,7	0,6	1,1	1,7	1,1	1,3	0,5	1,0
Got a fee exemption	4,1	0,1	0,9	0,8	0,2	0,1	0,3	0,2	0,1	0,5
Cannot afford to pay	2,3	0,2	9,8	0,3	0,7	0,0	4,7	0,4	0,2	1,4
No fee school /school did not ask for fees	92,8	99,1	82,9	98,2	97,1	98,2	93,5	97,9	98,8	96,7

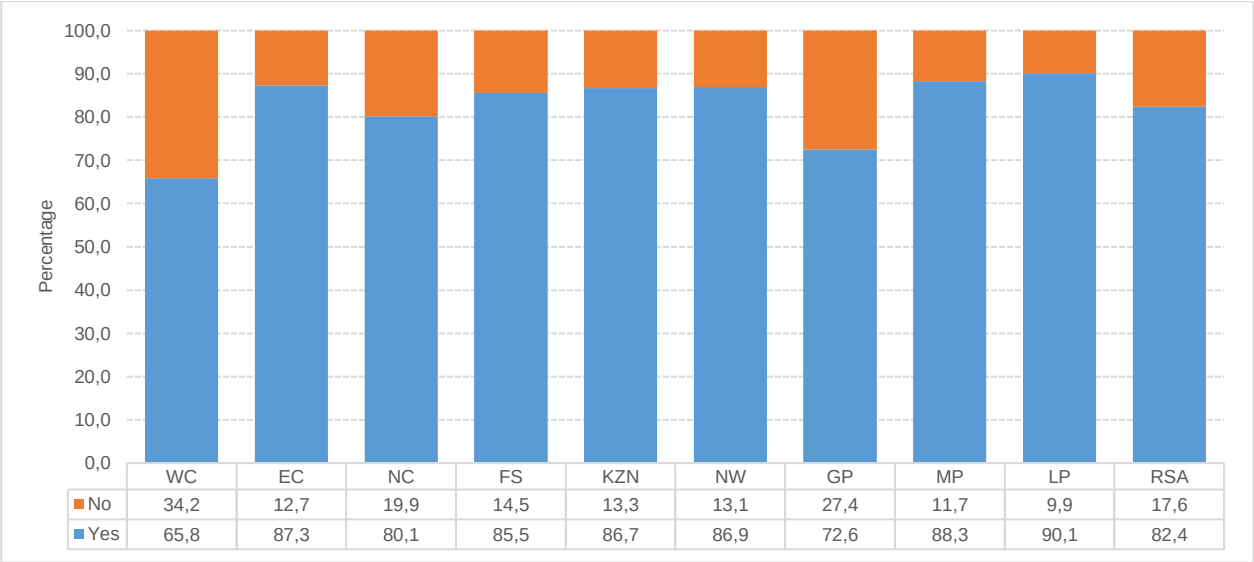
Source: GHS 2020

The main reasons provided by individuals in the age group 5–24 years for not paying school fees are depicted in Figure 2.20. The figure shows that nationally, approximately nine out of ten (96,7%) learners indicated that they attended no-fee schools or the schools did not ask for fees as the main reason for not paying school fees. Only one per cent of individuals reported that they received a bursary covering all costs. Close to ten per cent of individuals in Northern Cape, followed by Gauteng at five per cent and Western Cape at two per cent, reported not paying school fees. Western Cape also had the highest percentage of individuals who were exempted from paying school fees compared to other provinces (4,1%). Although most schools remained closed during a large part of 2020, only the Northern Cape had notably more schools (2,9%) that did not require payment because they did not offer services.

2.3 Effects of the pandemic on children's access to school nutrition programme

The national school nutrition programme was a feeding scheme that aimed to reach poor school learners in South Africa. In South Africa, close to 62% of children aged 0–17 were classified as multi-dimensionally poor in 2015 and 68,2% of children aged 0–17 were recipients of child support grants in 2018 (Stats SA, 2021). This implies that most school learners were users of the national school nutrition services and would most likely get their main daily meal at school. The programme is funded through a conditional grant that is managed through the National and Provincial Departments of Basic Education.

Figure 2.21: Individuals aged 5–24 who attend a school where food was given as part of the school feeding scheme/government nutrition programme, 2020

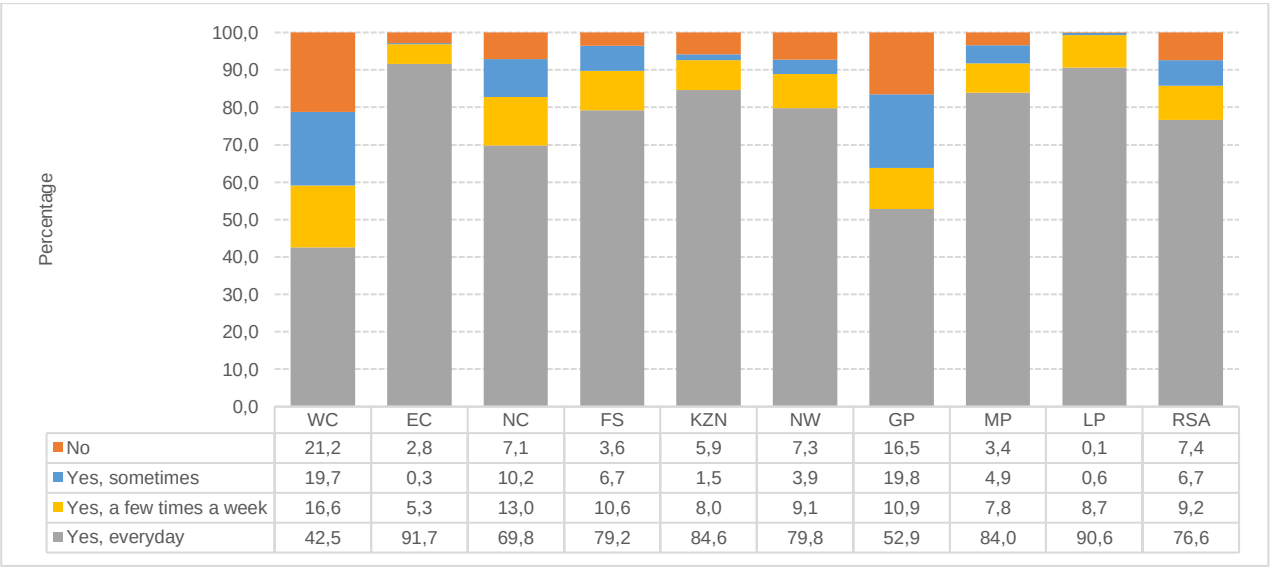


	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA
No	34,2	12,7	19,9	14,5	13,3	13,1	27,4	11,7	9,9	17,6
Yes	65,8	87,3	80,1	85,5	86,7	86,9	72,6	88,3	90,1	82,4

Source: GHS 2020

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. The top three provinces where the majority of such individuals lived were Limpopo (90,1%), Mpumalanga (88,3%) and Eastern Cape (87,3%). The lowest percentage of individuals who attended schools where food was given as part of the school feeding scheme was found in Gauteng (72,6%), followed by Western Cape (65,8%).

Figure 2.22: Individuals aged 5–24 who ate the food provided as part of the school feeding scheme or government nutrition programme by province, 2020



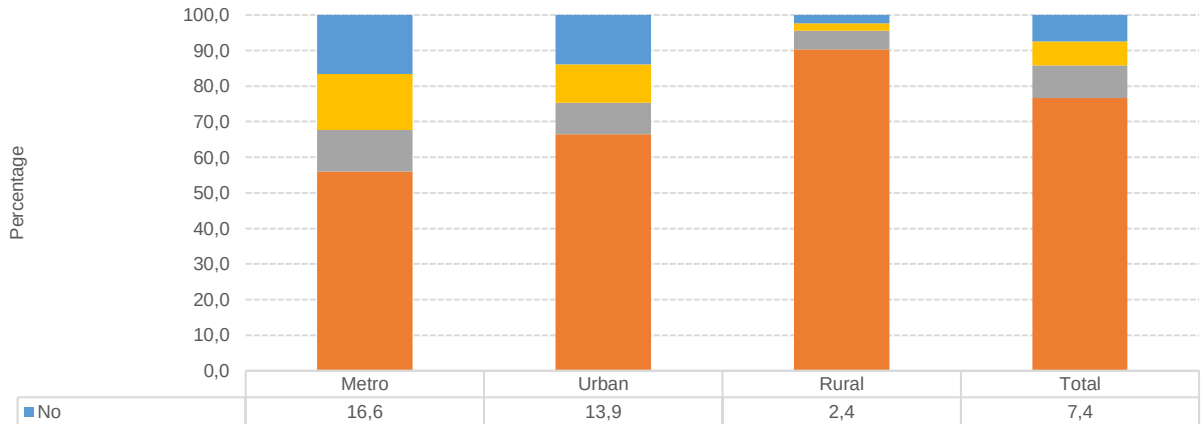
	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA
No	21,2	2,8	7,1	3,6	5,9	7,3	16,5	3,4	0,1	7,4
Yes, sometimes	19,7	0,3	10,2	6,7	1,5	3,9	19,8	4,9	0,6	6,7
Yes, a few times a week	16,6	5,3	13,0	10,6	8,0	9,1	10,9	7,8	8,7	9,2
Yes, everyday	42,5	91,7	69,8	79,2	84,6	79,8	52,9	84,0	90,6	76,6

Source: GHS 2020

In 2020, 11,9 million individuals aged 5–24 attending schools relied on free meals provided by schools, with the majority of these individuals (2,6 million) being residents of KwaZulu-Natal and 2 million residents of Gauteng. Overall, more than three-quarters (76,6%) of individuals aged 5–24 daily consumed the food provided as part of the school feeding scheme, while 9,2% consumed the food a few times a week, and 6,7% only consumed it sometimes. The highest percentage of daily consumers of the food provided as part of the school feeding scheme was found in Limpopo (90,6%), followed by Eastern Cape (91,7%). Gauteng and Western Cape had the lowest percentage of daily consumers of the school feeding scheme (52,9% and 42,5%, respectively). Furthermore, close to three million individuals aged 5–24 attending schools did not consume the food provided

as part of the school feeding scheme. This amounts to seven per cent of individuals aged 5–24 who did not consume the food provided by government as part of the school nutrition programme. The majority of individuals who were not participating in the school feeding scheme were found in Western Cape and Gauteng (21,2% and 16,5%, respectively).

Figure 2.23: Individuals aged 5–24 who ate the food provided as part of the school feeding scheme or government nutrition programme by geography type, 2020

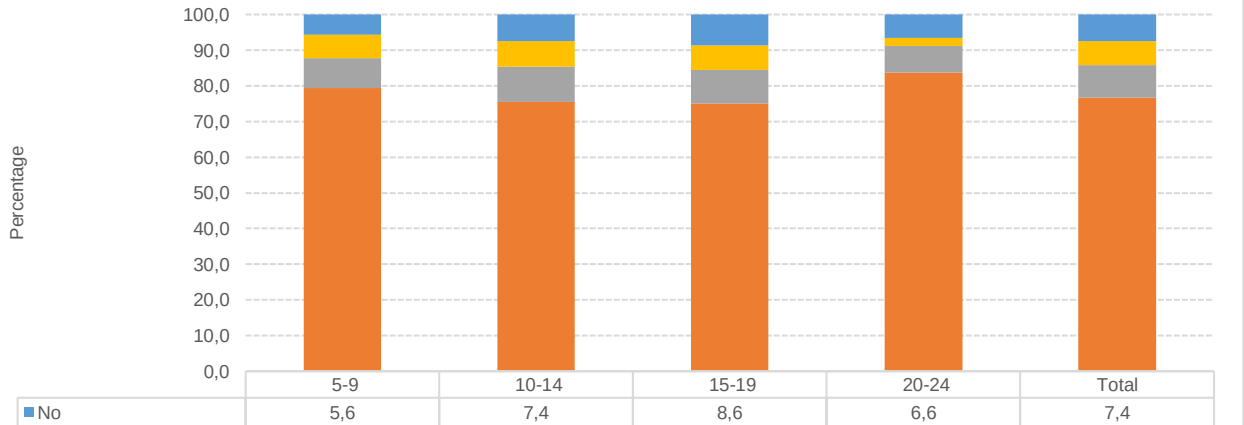


	Metro	Urban	Rural	Total
No	16,6	13,9	2,4	7,4
Yes, sometimes	15,7	10,9	2,0	6,7
Yes, a few times a week	11,7	8,8	5,3	9,2
Yes, everyday	56,0	66,4	90,3	76,6

Source: GHS 2020

Learners in rural areas are the most needy learners and are in general the highest beneficiaries of the school feeding scheme. In 2020, nine out of ten (90,3%) individuals aged 5–24 who lived in rural areas ate daily the food provided as part of the school feeding scheme. In urban areas, more than three-quarters (66,4%) of individuals aged 5–24 ate daily the food provided as part of the school feeding scheme.

Figure 2.24: Individuals aged 5–24 who ate the food provided as part of the school feeding scheme or government nutrition programme by age, 2020



	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	Total
No	5,6	7,4	8,6	6,6	7,4
Yes, sometimes	6,6	7,2	6,9	2,2	6,7
Yes, a few times a week	8,5	9,9	9,5	7,5	9,2
Yes, everyday	79,3	75,5	75,0	83,7	76,6

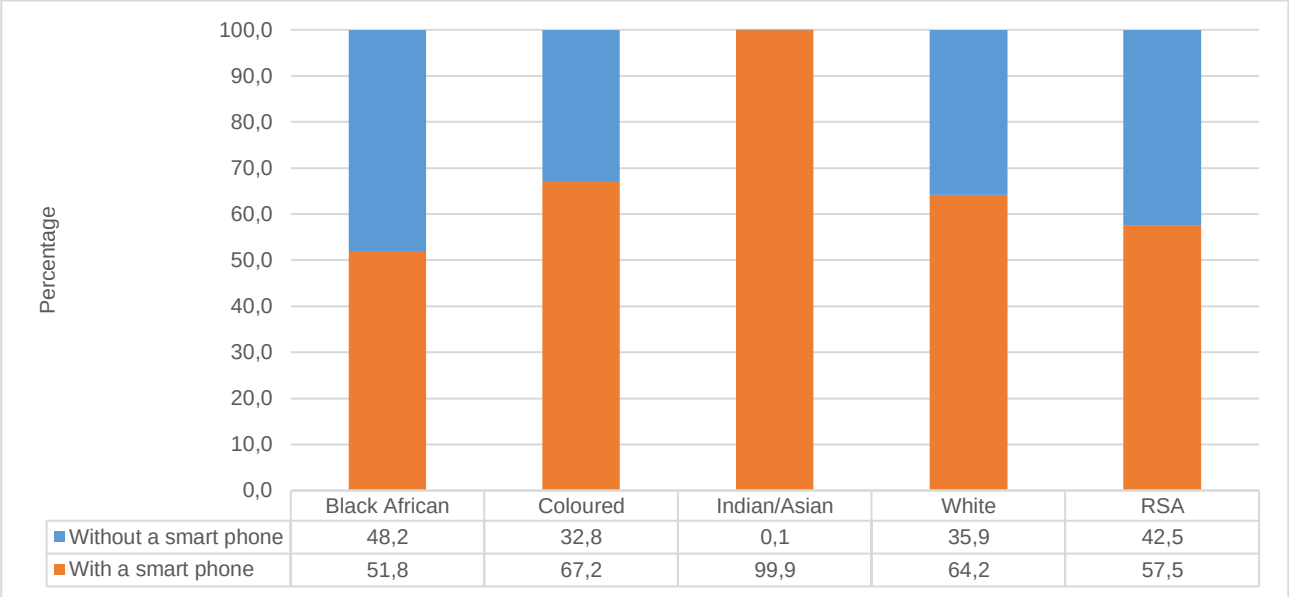
Source: GHS 2020

Learners in the youngest age group (5–9) and oldest age group (20–24) were the highest beneficiaries of the school feeding scheme as 79,3% and 83,7% were daily consumers of the food, respectively.

2.4 Access to tools used for remote learning

The lockdown brought a loss in teaching time in 2020. Alternative learning plans such as remote learning outside of the confines of the classroom had additional requirements, for which most schools and households were not prepared. Remote learning mostly based on technology allowed immediate or real-time interaction that could mimic classrooms by creating virtual classrooms. However, it is vital to use technology resources such as computers, mobile devices like smartphones and tablets, social media platforms, television programmes and the Internet.

Figure 2.25: Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who had smart phones to assist with distance learning by population group, 2020

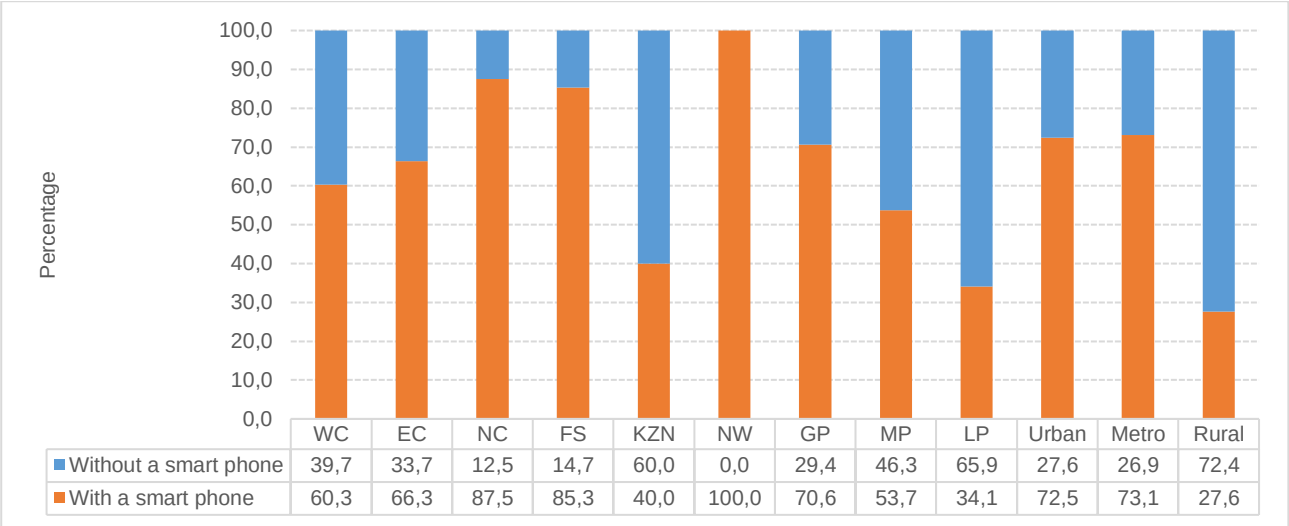


	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	RSA
Without a smart phone	48,2	32,8	0,1	35,9	42,5
With a smart phone	51,8	67,2	99,9	64,2	57,5

Source: GHS 2020

The above graph shows the percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who had smart phones that could assist them with distance learning, by population group. Overall, close to 58% of individuals aged 5–24 years had access to smart phones that could assist with distance learning. Compared to the other population groups, almost half (48,2%) of black African individuals were without a smart phone, whilst close to 36% of whites and 33% of coloureds had no smart phone to assist with distance learning.

Figure 2.26: Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who had smart phone to assist with distance learning by geography type, 2020

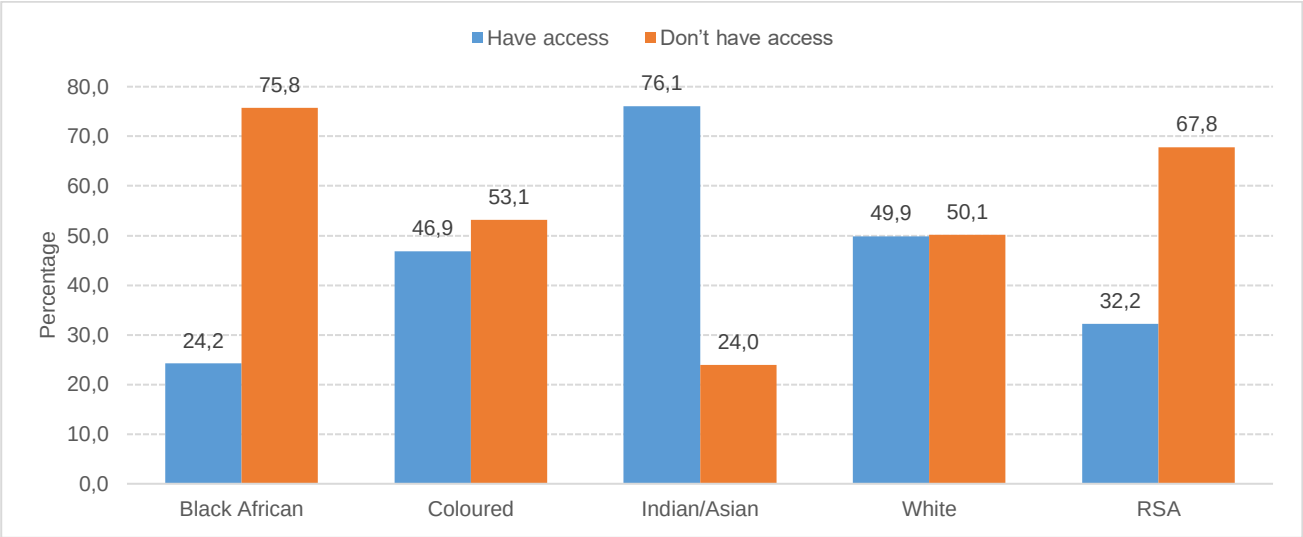


	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	Urban	Metro	Rural
Without a smart phone	39,7	33,7	12,5	14,7	60,0	0,0	29,4	46,3	65,9	27,6	26,9	72,4
With a smart phone	60,3	66,3	87,5	85,3	40,0	100,0	70,6	53,7	34,1	72,5	73,1	27,6

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 2.26 shows that approximately seven out of ten (72,5%) individuals aged 5–24 years who had smart phones to assist with distance learning lived in urban areas in 2020, while more than one-quarter (27,6%) lived in rural areas. North West, Northern Cape and Free State had the highest percentage of individuals with smart phones. Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal had the lowest percentage of individuals with smart phones.

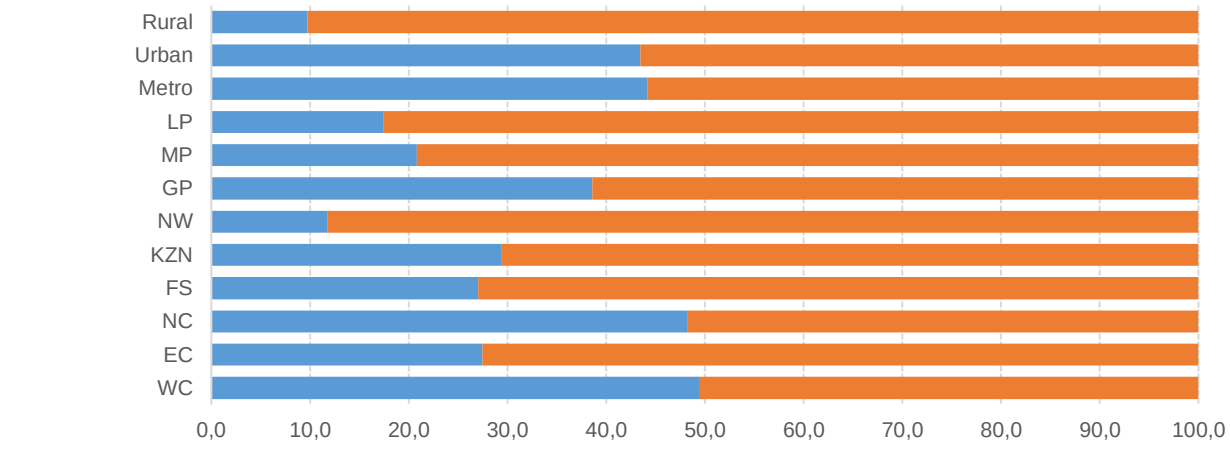
Figure 2.27: Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who had computer/desktop/laptop to assist with distance learning by population group, 2020



Source: GHS 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the vulnerability of communities regardless of their social background, but the same has not been true for its consequences, which have hit the most vulnerable groups hardest. Some community members were also excluded from educational activities due to lack of access to the tools used for these purposes. In 2020, while close to one-third of individuals aged 5–24 had access to computers in South Africa, only close to one quarter of black Africans had access to computers (32,2% and 24,2%, respectively). Approximately seven out of ten Indians/Asians (76,1%) and close to half (49,9%) of white individuals aged 5–24 years had access to computers that can be used for distance learning.

Figure 2.28: Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who had computer/desktop/laptop to assist with distance learning by province, 2020

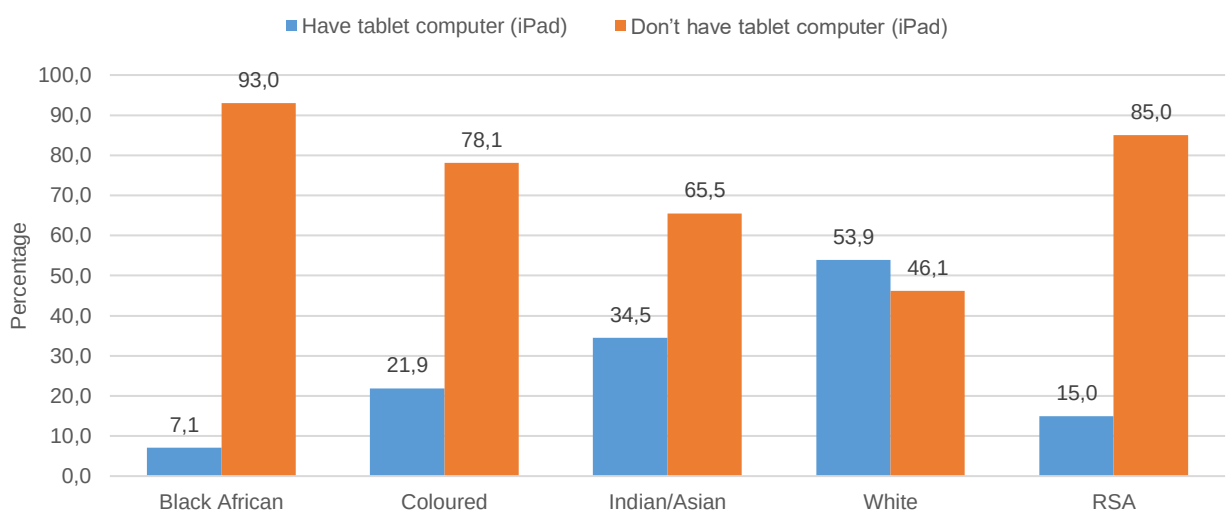


	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	Metro	Urban	Rural
Have access	49,4	27,5	48,3	27,0	29,4	11,7	38,6	20,8	17,5	44,2	43,5	9,7
Don't have access	50,6	72,6	51,7	73,0	70,6	88,3	61,4	79,2	82,5	55,8	56,5	90,3

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 2.28 shows that the highest proportion of individuals aged 5–24 years who had access to a computer, desktop or laptop to assist with distance learning during the pandemic was located in Western Cape (49,4%), followed by those in Northern Cape (48,3%), and Gauteng (38,6%). Individuals who lived in metropolitan or urban areas were also more likely to access these tools than those in rural areas (44,2%, 43,5%, and 9,7%, respectively).

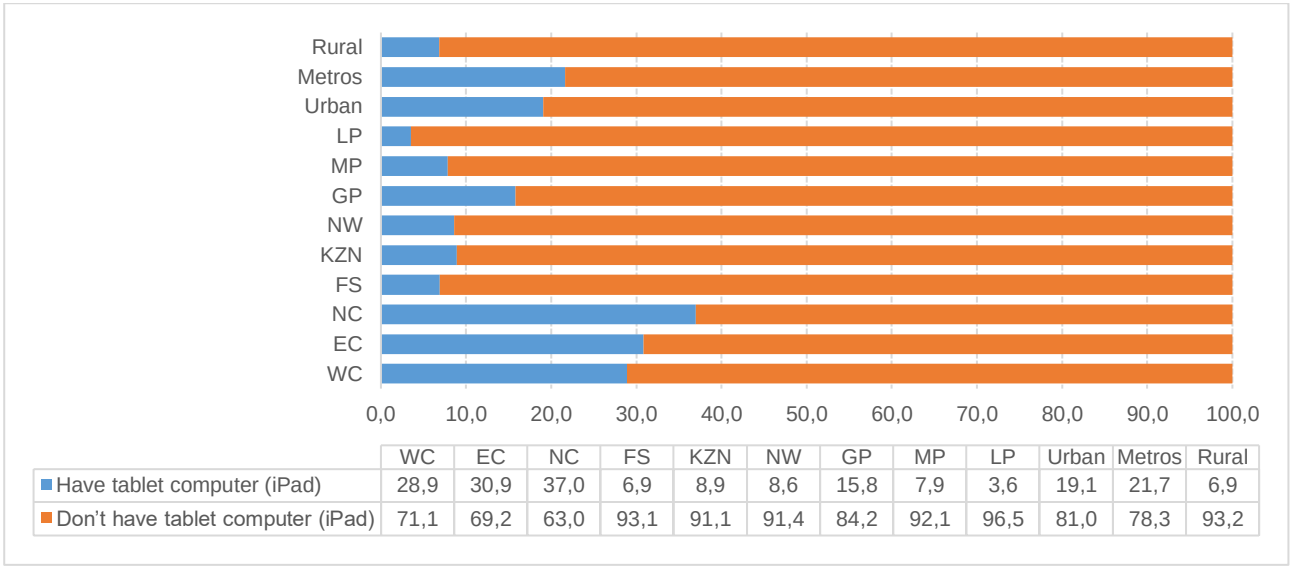
Figure 2.29: Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who had tablet computer (iPad) to assist with distance learning by population group, 2020



Source: Source: GHS 2020

The above graph shows the percentage of individuals aged 5–24 who had access to tablets that can be used for distance learning by population group. In 2020, only close to 15% of individuals had access to tablets that could assist with distance learning. The lack of access to these items was prominent in the black African population (7,1%), which is much lower than the national average. Whites had the highest percentage of individuals who had a tablet computer (iPad) to assist with distance learning, followed by Indians/Asians (53,9% and 34,5%, respectively). This gap amongst population groups continue to become too wide to bridge.

Figure 2.30: Percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who had tablet computer (iPad) to assist with distance learning by province, 2020



	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	Urban	Metros	Rural
Have tablet computer (iPad)	28,9	30,9	37,0	6,9	8,9	8,6	15,8	7,9	3,6	19,1	21,7	6,9
Don't have tablet computer (iPad)	71,1	69,2	63,0	93,1	91,1	91,4	84,2	92,1	96,5	81,0	78,3	93,2

Source: GHS 2020

The graph above shows that the percentage of individuals aged 5–24 years who had a tablet computer (iPad) to assist with distance learning had large variations by province. Northern Cape is the province with the highest proportion of individuals with access to table computers (37%), followed by Eastern Cape (30,9%), and Western Cape (28,9%). Limpopo had a substantially lower proportion of individuals who had a tablet computer (iPad) to assist with distance learning. Individuals who lived in metropolitan areas were three times more likely to have access to tablet computers (iPad) to assist with distance learning compared to those who stayed in rural areas (21,7% and 6,9%, respectively).

2.5 Conclusion

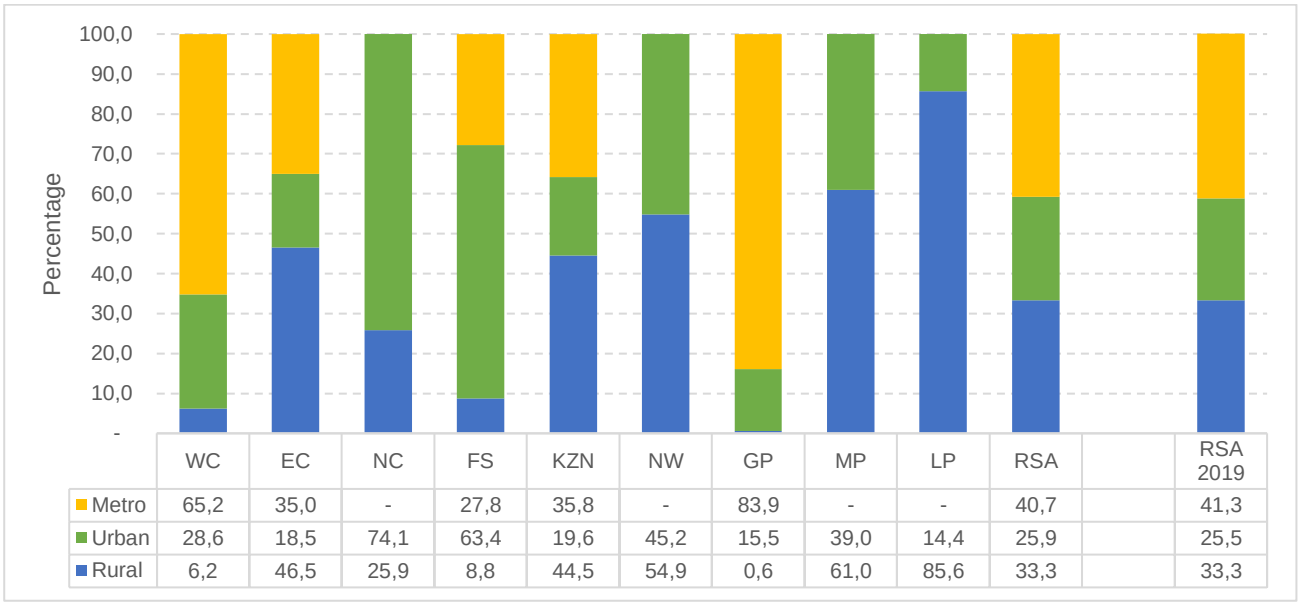
The 2020 academic year was interrupted after the end of the first term for the basic education sector while the higher education sector had just started. Close to 1,2 million individuals aged 5–18 were out of school during this period, out of which 779 979 were children aged 5–13 years old. Among individuals aged 5–24 attending school in 2020, only close to six per cent participated in remote learning as part of the measures taken to contain the spread of COVID-19. Remote learning was the new normal in efforts to maintain learning continuity during this pandemic period. However, children and students had to rely more on their own resources and use technology to continue learning remotely through their smart phone, computer or tablet computer (iPad) to assist with distance learning. Schools and educators had to adapt to new educational concepts and modes of delivery of teaching, for which they were not trained. However, the transition could not be performed due to lack of remote learning services by most of the schools. Most concerning is that the learning losses did not affect students equally, but further highlighted the social inequality in learning opportunities. Furthermore, the transition to online teaching added challenges for many learners who did not have access to resources to continue learning remotely and were at risk of falling behind. This transition also led to some schools not being able to complete the curriculum, leaving many gaps in children's education.

Chapter 3: Households' readiness for remote learning in South Africa

3.1 Introduction

During 2020, most students had to abruptly start to attend classes away from a normal school set-up, mostly from home due to the wide spread of COVID-19. Students had to attend classes away from school through the use of computers/laptops and other technological devices. Educators and households were faced with a new challenge to quickly come up with strategies to meet students' basic needs and ensure learning continues. Households swiftly became the new study environment and had to be conducive for learning. It made it necessary for the households and schools to ensure digital connectivity was possible and that learning interruptions were minimised. The new method of learning remotely included the use of digital methods, printed materials, TV and radios as well as in-person class attendance on a rotational basis. Learners had to reimagine and adapt quickly to the new realities of digital and other forms of learning, while other players in the sector had to ensure the delivery of education services.

Figure 3.1: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years by geographical area and province, 2020

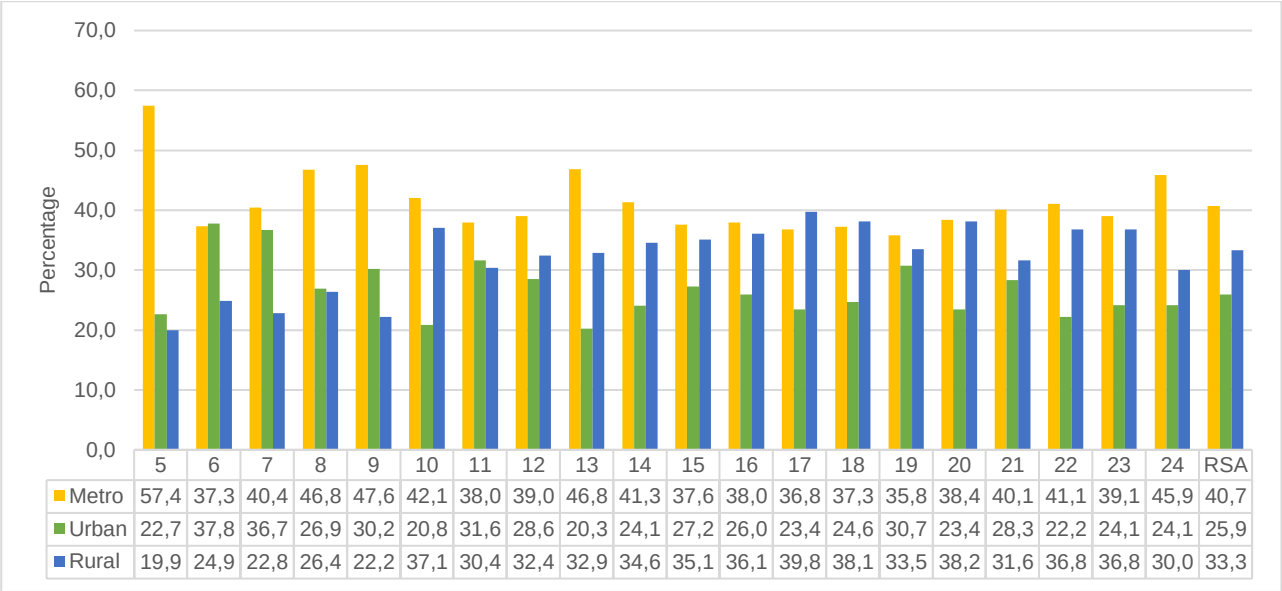


	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA		RSA 2019
Metro	65,2	35,0	-	27,8	35,8	-	83,9	-	-	40,7		41,3
Urban	28,6	18,5	74,1	63,4	19,6	45,2	15,5	39,0	14,4	25,9		25,5
Rural	6,2	46,5	25,9	8,8	44,5	54,9	0,6	61,0	85,6	33,3		33,3

Source: GHS 2019–2020

Figure 3.1 shows the percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years by geographical location. Nationally, the majority (40,7%) of households were located in metropolitan areas, roughly one-third of households (33,3%) were in rural areas and nearly a quarter (25,9%) were found in urban areas in 2020. Provincially, about two-thirds (65,2%) of households in Western Cape were located in metropolitan areas, close to 29% in urban areas and almost six per cent were found in rural areas. A substantial percentage (85,6%) of households in Limpopo were more likely to be in rural areas compared to 14,4% in urban areas. Three-fifths (61,0%) of households in Mpumalanga were located in rural areas and 39,0% in urban areas. The vast majority (83,9%) of household in Gauteng were most likely to be in metro areas.

Figure 3.2: Percentage of households with members aged 5–24 years by geographical area and age, 2020



	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	RSA
Metro	57,4	37,3	40,4	46,8	47,6	42,1	38,0	39,0	46,8	41,3	37,6	38,0	36,8	37,3	35,8	38,4	40,1	41,1	39,1	45,9	40,7
Urban	22,7	37,8	36,7	26,9	30,2	20,8	31,6	28,6	20,3	24,1	27,2	26,0	23,4	24,6	30,7	23,4	28,3	22,2	24,1	24,1	25,9
Rural	19,9	24,9	22,8	26,4	22,2	37,1	30,4	32,4	32,9	34,6	35,1	36,1	39,8	38,1	33,5	38,2	31,6	36,8	36,8	30,0	33,3

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 3.2 shows household individuals by single age and area of residence in 2020. The age distribution by geography remains stable for all age groups, except that the percentage of youth in metro areas rose by 10 percentage points between 19 to 24 years. In 2020, about half (45,9%) of individuals aged 24 years reported living in metro areas, while 30,0% lived in rural areas and close to 24% in urban areas. Three in ten individuals (33,3%) between the ages of 5 and 24 years old lived in rural parts of the country.

3.2 Access to adequate area and tools for learning

Schooling is the most important part of young people's life. It normally involves a great deal of classroom learning, with the instructor taking control of the lessons. It also provides a fairly equal opportunity for all learners to obtain instruction. COVID-19 disrupted this set-up as during the lockdown most of the learning involved a great deal of independent and self-instruction that was new to all learners in South Africa. Some learners had no difficulty to adapt to the "new normal", but many struggled. A large number of caregivers lacked the skills and time to assume the role of a teacher, and be able to support their children in home learning. According to the learners' own testimonies, the teachers were as unprepared as they were themselves for this journey. "I feel that like our teachers feel as hopeless as I do sometimes, because the content they send to the communicating media seem like some study resources scraped off the internet and dumped into the groups … There are no schedules, timelines, due dates. Things got better off once I made my own schedule though, but I just miss school.[4]" (Jansen & O'Ryan, 2020). For many learners, finding a comfortable place to study was a concern, as they stayed in overcrowded, noisy housing, and housing in poor conditions. Most learners lacked access to the right furniture and tools required for home learning. "I could work at home with all the comforts such as the couch and TV … Now I have realised the true nature of working at home. With all the distractions and comforts on offer, it was very easy to get side-tracked and lose focus of your work.[5]" (Jansen & O'Ryan, 2020). "I had so much work to do that I used to finish all my schoolwork quite late … It took much longer having to do all on a device, share devices with my brother, write out the work, take a photo and submit it online".[6] "Studying from home meant I should have wi-fi connection and at least a smartphone, if not a laptop. In my case things were different; I only had a radio and my textbooks.[7]" (Jansen & O'Ryan, 2020).

[4] Bukhosi Nomaqumba (16), learner at Cape Academy of Mathematics, Science and Technology (Western Cape).
[5] Morgan Pieterse (16), learner at Maritzburg College (KwaZulu-Natal).
[6] Ella Rabe (9), learner at an undisclosed school (Western Cape).
[7] Thobeka Mkonza (17), Tshanibezwe High School (KwaZulu-Natal).

The type of dwelling occupied by children as well as the level of crowdedness and noise within the dwellings determine the availability of a convenient study place for children. Children living in informal dwellings or backyard rooms had to cope with features available in shared spaces, interruptions and distractions from family members. The most basic tools such as a desk or a table surface and a chair needed for study purposes might not even be available to them.

Table 3.1: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 by the type of dwelling occupied, 2020

Type of dwelling	No individuals aged 5–24	One or more individuals aged 5–24	RSA 2020	RSA 2019
Dwelling on a separate stand or yard or on farm	60,0	76,1	69,5	66,5
Traditional dwelling	3,1	5,1	4,2	5,1
Flat	6,4	2,7	4,2	4,4
Dwelling/house in complex or semi-detached house	4,6	2,5	3,4	4,0
Dwelling/room/flatlet in backyard or on property	10,8	4,6	7,1	8,1
Informal dwelling	14,3	8,9	11,1	11,6
Other	0,8	0,2	0,4	0,3
Total	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**

Source: GHS 2019–2020

In 2020, seven in ten (69,5%) households in South Africa stayed in dwellings built on a separate yard or farm with the majority (76,1%) of households with at least one individual aged 5–24 staying in such households. Overall, approximately one in five households (18,2%) were backyard dwellings/rooms or were informal dwellings. Close to 14% of households had at least one individual aged 5–24 who were backyard dwellers or who stayed in informal dwellings. Informal dwellings expose children to poor housing conditions as they would be less likely to have access to water and sanitation and adequate study space.

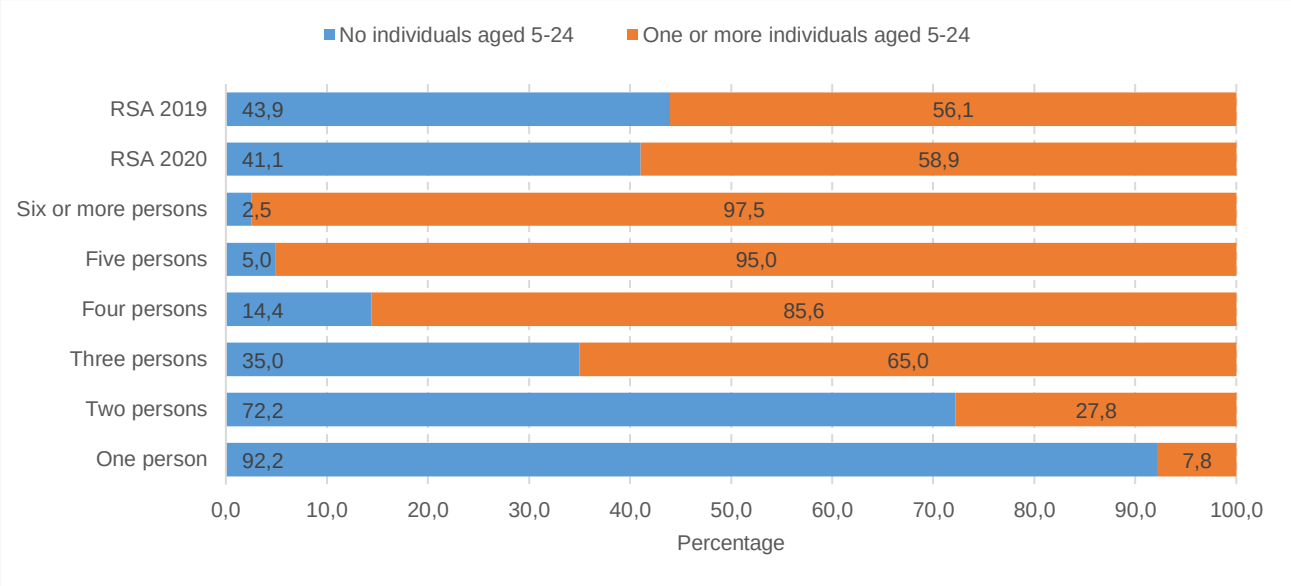
Table 3.2: Percentage of households by the number of individuals aged 5–24 and type of dwelling occupied, 2020

	Individuals aged 5–24 in the household				
Type of dwelling	One	Two	Three	Four	Five or more
Dwelling on a separate stand or yard or on farm	72,7	77,2	80,4	79,0	81,5
Traditional dwelling	3,3	4,9	6,4	10,4	10,4
Flat	4,3	2,6	0,4	0,4	0,0
Dwelling/house in complex or semi-detached house	2,4	2,6	2,3	2,6	2,3
Dwelling/room/flatlet in backyard or on property	6,8	3,5	2,8	0,5	2,7
Informal dwelling	10,3	8,8	7,7	7,0	3,1
Other	0,2	0,3	0,0	0,0	0,0
Total	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**

Source: GHS 2020

In 2020, the majority of households with at least five individuals (81,5%) stayed in dwellings built on a separate stand, on a farm or traditional dwellings while five per cent of households with at least five individuals aged 5–24 stayed in informal dwellings. Among households with four individuals aged 5–24 in the households, close to seven per cent lived in informal dwellings. Similarly, among households with two individuals aged 5–24 in the households, close to nine per cent lived in informal dwellings.

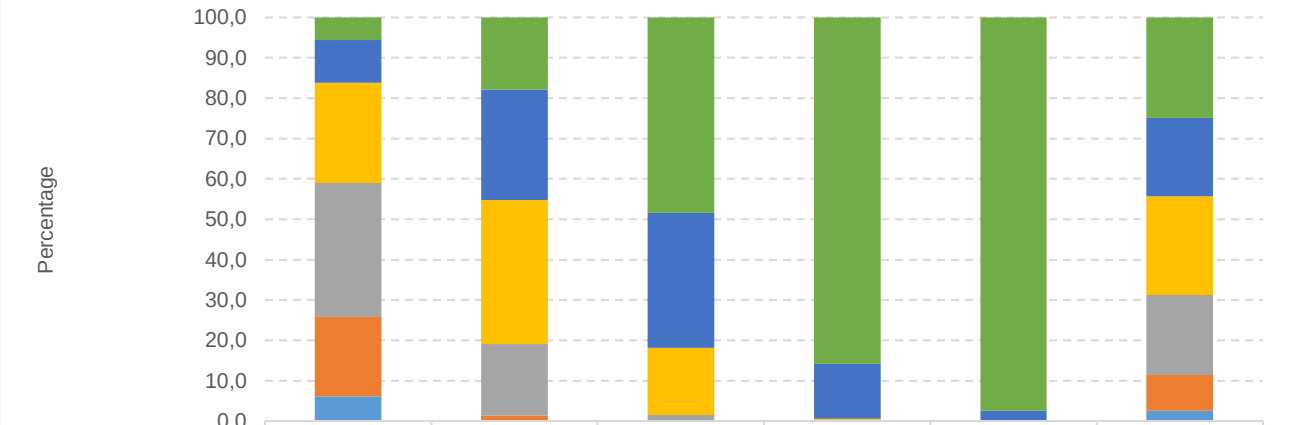
Figure 3.3: Household size by the number of individuals aged 5–24 in the household, 2020



Source: GHS 2019–2020

Overall, the majority (58,9%) of households in 2020 had at least one individual aged 5–24 years. Households with small sizes (fewer than three persons) have a relatively smaller number of children as shown in the above graph. The majority of households with three persons or more include at least one individual aged 5–24 years. Close to three-quarters (72,2%) of two-person households had no young people aged 5–24. More than one-third (35,0%) of three-person households had at least one individual aged 5–24 years.

Figure 3.4: Percentage of households with children aged 5–24 by household size, 2020

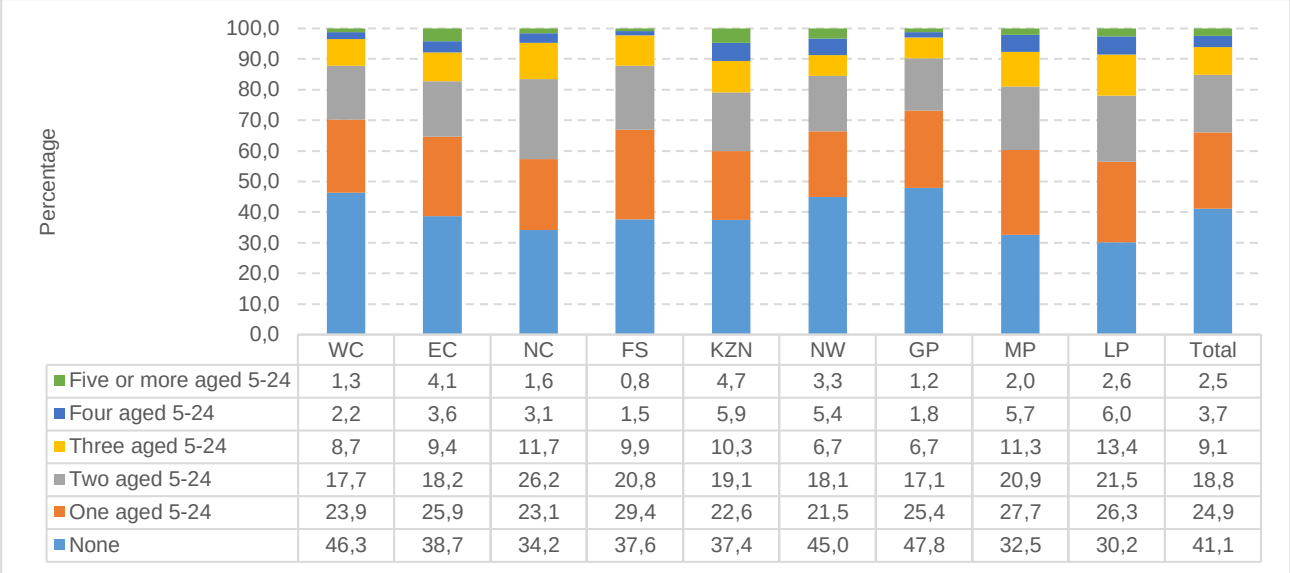


	One aged 5-24	Two aged 5-24	Three aged 5-24	Four aged 5-24	Five or more aged 5-24	Total
Six or more persons	5,6	17,9	48,5	85,8	97,5	25,0
Five persons	10,6	27,4	33,4	13,6	2,5	19,3
Four persons	24,8	35,7	16,6	0,6	0,0	24,5
Three persons	33,2	17,8	1,5	0,0	0,0	19,9
Two persons	19,7	1,3	0,0	0,0	0,0	8,8
One person	6,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	2,6

Source: GHS 2020

As depicted in the graph above, households' sizes are driven by the number of children present in the household and have significantly fewer adult members, and more children. Overall, close to 20% of two-person households and close to 33% of three-person households had only one individual aged 5–24 years. More than one-third (35,7%) of four-person households and more than a quarter (27,4%) of five person-households had two individuals aged 5–24 years.

Figure 3.5: Percentage of households by individuals aged 5–24 and province, 2020

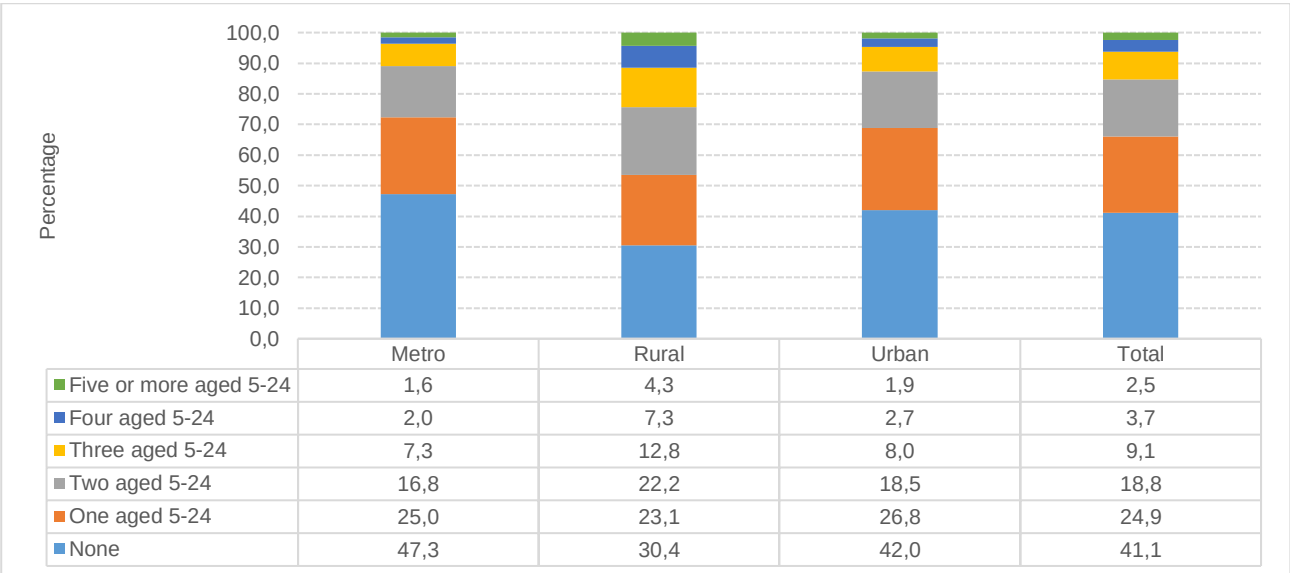


	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	Total
Five or more aged 5-24	1,3	4,1	1,6	0,8	4,7	3,3	1,2	2,0	2,6	2,5
Four aged 5-24	2,2	3,6	3,1	1,5	5,9	5,4	1,8	5,7	6,0	3,7
Three aged 5-24	8,7	9,4	11,7	9,9	10,3	6,7	6,7	11,3	13,4	9,1
Two aged 5-24	17,7	18,2	26,2	20,8	19,1	18,1	17,1	20,9	21,5	18,8
One aged 5-24	23,9	25,9	23,1	29,4	22,6	21,5	25,4	27,7	26,3	24,9
None	46,3	38,7	34,2	37,6	37,4	45,0	47,8	32,5	30,2	41,1

Source: GHS 2020

The above figure presents the distribution of households by individuals aged 5–24 and province. In 2020 overall, less than half of households in South Africa (41,1%) had no individuals aged 5–24, while close to a quarter of households (24,9%) had only one individual aged 5–24, followed by close to 19% which had two individuals, and close to 15% had at least three individuals in that age group. The largest percentage of no child or youth-households was found in Gauteng (47,8%) and Western Cape (46,3%), while the lowest percentage of such households were found in Limpopo (30,2%). In Limpopo, close to 22% of households had at least three children while almost 11% of households in KwaZulu-Natal had at least four children.

Figure 3.6: Percentage of households by individuals aged 5–24 by geography type, 2020

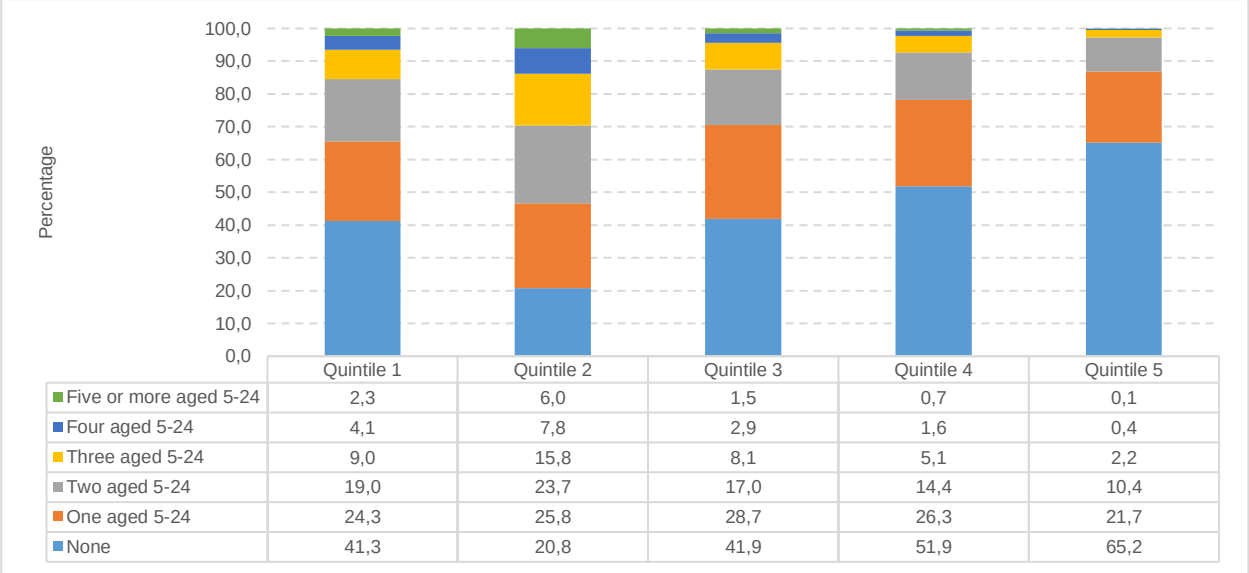


	Metro	Rural	Urban	Total
Five or more aged 5-24	1,6	4,3	1,9	2,5
Four aged 5-24	2,0	7,3	2,7	3,7
Three aged 5-24	7,3	12,8	8,0	9,1
Two aged 5-24	16,8	22,2	18,5	18,8
One aged 5-24	25,0	23,1	26,8	24,9
None	47,3	30,4	42,0	41,1

Source: GHS 2020

As depicted in Figure 3.6, the distribution of children and populations across the different geographic spaces (metropolitan, urban and rural) in South Africa is different. In 2020, close to 42% of households that did not have children were found in urban areas, while close to 47% were found in metropolitan areas. Rural areas had the largest concentration of households with at least three individuals aged 5–24. Nearly a quarter (25,0%) of households with one individual aged 5–24 were found in metropolitan areas while 26,8% of households in urban areas and 23,1% of households in rural areas had a similar number of individuals aged 5–24. Close to two per cent (1,9%) of households with at least five individuals aged 5–24 were found in urban areas.

Figure 3.7: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 by household income quintiles, 2020

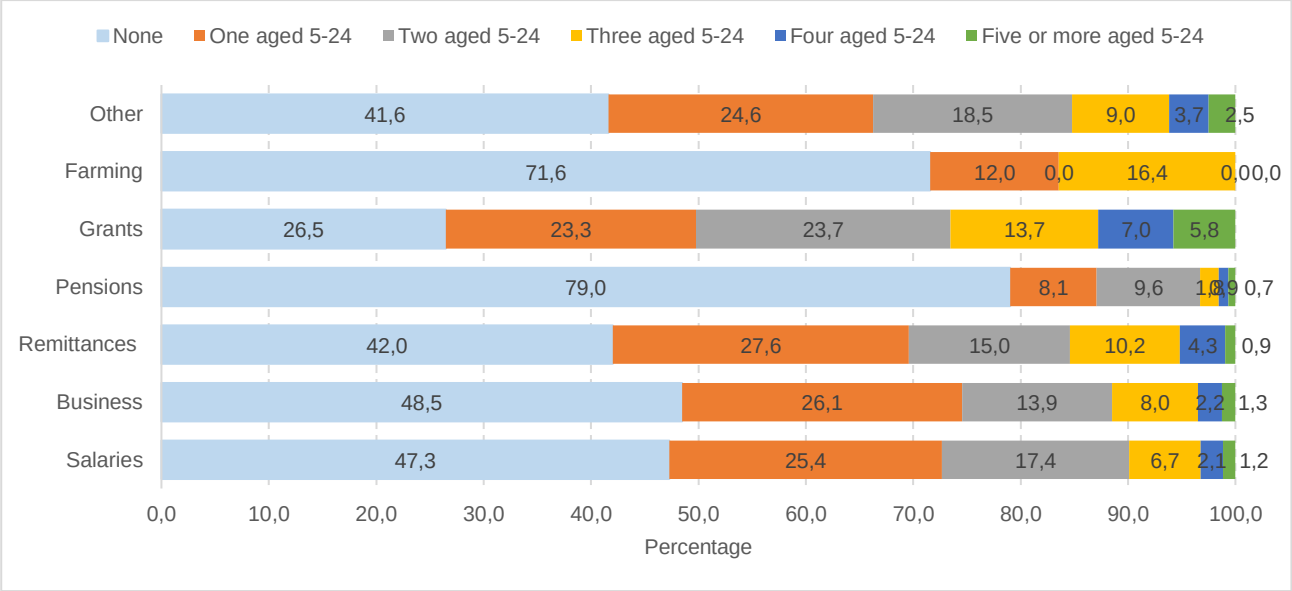


	Quintile 1	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5
Five or more aged 5-24	2,3	6,0	1,5	0,7	0,1
Four aged 5-24	4,1	7,8	2,9	1,6	0,4
Three aged 5-24	9,0	15,8	8,1	5,1	2,2
Two aged 5-24	19,0	23,7	17,0	14,4	10,4
One aged 5-24	24,3	25,8	28,7	26,3	21,7
None	41,3	20,8	41,9	51,9	65,2

Source: GHS 2020

According to GHS 2020, nearly 5,1 million households with individuals aged 5–24 were classified in low-income quintiles (Quintiles 1 and 2). Households with at least three individuals aged 5–24 were disproportionately living in low-income households. They make up close to 27% of households in Quintile 1 and close to 25% of households in Quintile 2. High-income households were most likely not to have children (48,5% in Quintile 4 and 63,5% in Quintile 5).

Figure 3.8: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 by main source of income, 2020



Source: GHS 2020

According to the above figure, most households with individuals aged 5–24 in South Africa relied on grants as their main source of household income, while remittances were the second largest source of household income.

3.3 Households with individuals aged 5–24 years by internet connectivity

Internet connectivity is important in daily communication as it connects people, households, and the world for sharing information for work or schooling purposes and access to news. Individuals access the internet to acquire knowledge such as life skills, specific knowledge and expertise; students rely mostly on the use of materials from the internet as they can access them at any time and use them to complete their research or assignments. Teachers use the internet to access free educational resources. The internet also plays a significant role in business and leisure (online shopping, ordering meal, etc.) However, there is a vast digital divide amongst the rich and the poor, urban and rural dwellers, and the educated and uneducated.

Even among households with some internet access, the digital divide can be evident in the form of lower-priced internet use connections such as free access (public wi-fi has a daily cap), or limited access (at schools or workplace) with lower-performance computers, lower-speed wireless connections or limited access to subscription-based content. In South Africa, the GHS 2019 shows that 63,0% of South African households had at least one member who had access to, or used the internet either at home or elsewhere. The highest percentage of such access was found in Gauteng and Western Cape (close to 74% each).

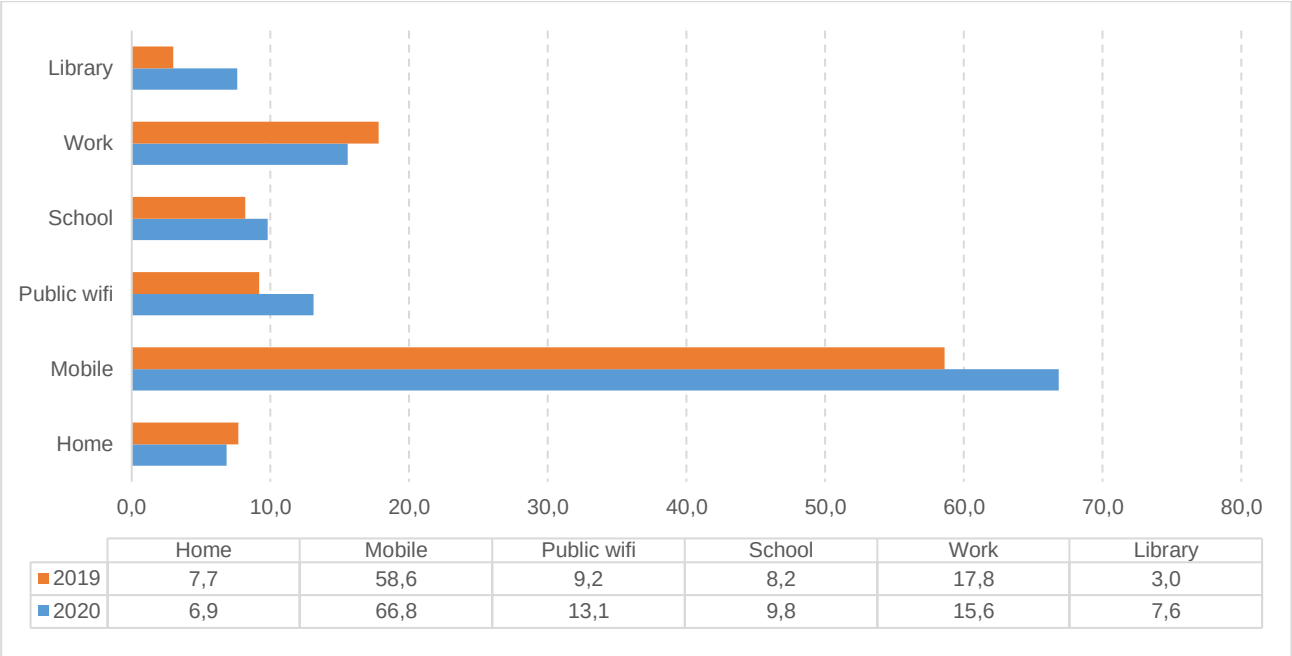
Table 3.3: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years by internet access and province, 2020

A place where internet is accessed		Province									
		WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA
Home	Yes	**17,6**	**4,2**	**6,1**	**3,9**	**2,8**	**1,5**	**12,6**	**1,2**	**1,5**	**6,9**
	No	82,4	95,8	93,9	96,1	97,3	98,5	87,4	98,8	98,5	**93,2**
Mobile	Yes	**68,4**	**57,5**	**66,5**	**63,1**	**60,1**	**64,6**	**76,7**	**72,4**	**60,0**	**66,8**
	No	31,6	42,5	33,5	36,9	39,9	35,4	23,3	27,6	40,0	**33,2**
Public wi-fi	Yes	**16,0**	**6,4**	**16,0**	**6,3**	**13,4**	**6,1**	**23,0**	**8,1**	**3,5**	**13,1**
	No	84,0	93,6	84,0	93,8	86,6	93,9	77,0	91,9	96,5	**86,9**
School	Yes	**9,7**	**7,6**	**4,6**	**10,4**	**10,9**	**3,0**	**17,1**	**4,1**	**2,2**	**9,8**
	No	90,3	92,4	95,4	89,6	89,1	97,0	82,9	95,9	97,8	**90,2**
Work	Yes	**17,8**	**11,2**	**16,2**	**12,4**	**17,5**	**9,0**	**24,6**	**6,5**	**5,2**	**15,6**
	No	82,2	88,9	83,8	87,6	82,5	91,0	75,4	93,5	94,8	**84,5**
Library	Yes	**5,7**	**1,2**	**3,7**	**2,7**	**20,3**	**1,8**	**9,4**	**2,3**	**1,3**	**7,6**
	No	94,3	98,9	96,4	97,3	79,7	98,2	90,6	97,7	98,7	**92,4**
Internet café	Yes	**9,9**	**4,9**	**2,2**	**3,5**	**16,2**	**2,2**	**21,8**	**10,9**	**1,9**	**11,9**
	No	90,1	95,1	97,8	96,5	83,8	97,8	78,2	89,1	98,1	**88,2**

Source: GHS 2020

Table 3.3 shows that in South Africa, 6,9% of households with individuals aged 5–24 years had internet connection at home. More than two-thirds (66,8%) of households were likely to access the internet through their mobile phone, close to 16% at work and roughly 13% using public wi-fi. Almost one out of ten (11,9%) households indicated that they were accessing the internet at an internet cafe and around ten per cent at school. Furthermore, one-fifth (17,6%) of the household in Western Cape had internet access at home and about 12,6% in Gauteng. Limpopo, Mpumalanga and North West were the least connected to the internet at home. Approximately 23,0% of households in Gauteng used public wi-fi for internet connection while nearly 3,5% used similar connectivity in Limpopo.

Figure 3.9: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years by internet access in South Africa, 2019–2020

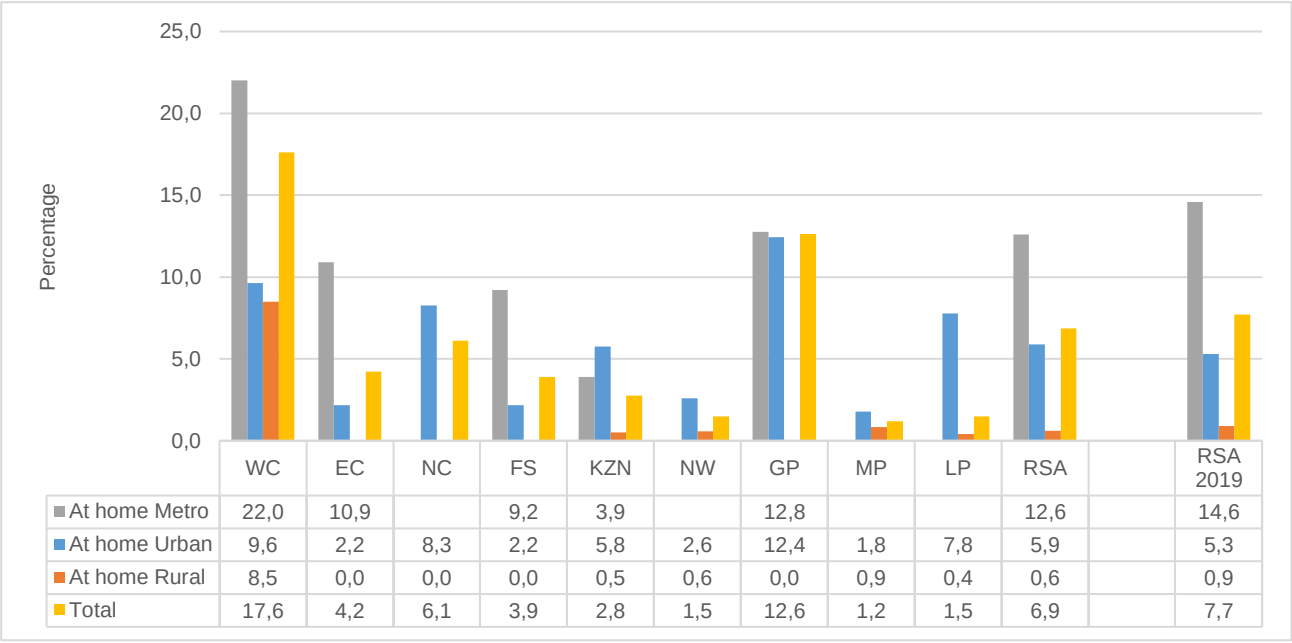


	Home	Mobile	Public wifi	School	Work	Library
2019	7,7	58,6	9,2	8,2	17,8	3,0
2020	6,9	66,8	13,1	9,8	15,6	7,6

Source: GHS 2019–2020

Figure 3.9 shows household internet connectivity in 2019 and 2020. Most households accessed the internet via mobile phones in both years, with an eight percentage points increase from 2019 to 2020. In both years, the second largest type of internet connectivity by households was at work. Internet connection from home remained low. The use of public wi-fi increased from 9,2% in 2019 to 13,1% in 2020.

Figure 3.10: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years by home internet connectivity, geographical area and province, 2020

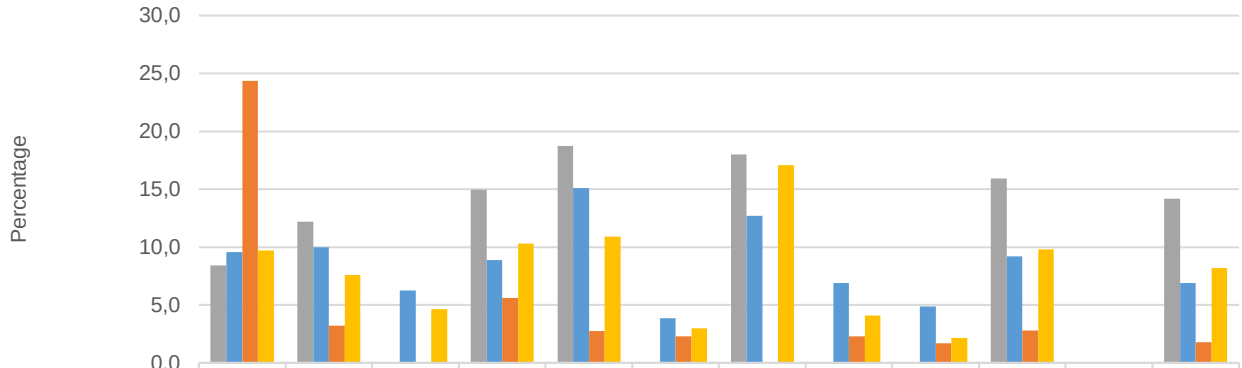


	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA		RSA 2019
At home Metro	22,0	10,9		9,2	3,9		12,8			12,6		14,6
At home Urban	9,6	2,2	8,3	2,2	5,8	2,6	12,4	1,8	7,8	5,9		5,3
At home Rural	8,5	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,5	0,6	0,0	0,9	0,4	0,6		0,9
Total	17,6	4,2	6,1	3,9	2,8	1,5	12,6	1,2	1,5	6,9		7,7

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 10 presents households with individuals aged 5–24 years with home internet access by geographical area. Nationally in 2020, roughly seven per cent of households had internet access at home. Close to 18% of households in Western Cape were likely to have internet at home, while nearly 13% in Gauteng and about six per cent in Northern Cape had access. Households with children aged 5–24 in Mpumalanga, Limpopo and North West had the lowest percentage of households with access to internet at home. In South Africa, approximately 13,0% of households with children aged 5–24 situated in metropolitan areas had internet access at home, while 5,9% in urban areas and less than one per cent in rural areas had internet access at home. In Western Cape, more than one-fifth (22,0%) of households in metropolitan areas had internet access at home, compared to 12,8% of households in Gauteng metropolitan areas and 3,9% of households in KwaZulu-Natal metropolitan areas. The least connected households in metropolitan areas were found in KwaZulu-Natal and Free State (3,9% and 9,2%, respectively).

Figure 3.11: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years with access to internet at school/university/college by geographical area and province, 2019



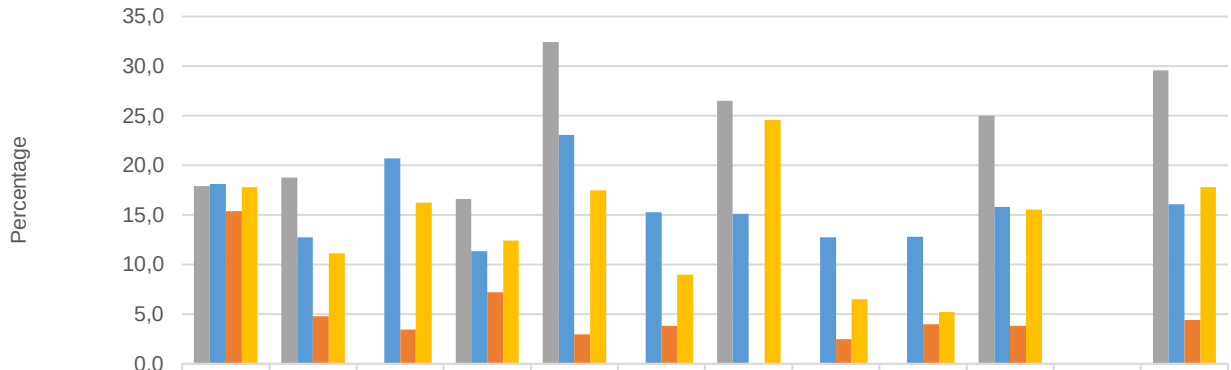
	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA		RSA 2019
At school Metro	8,4	12,2		15,0	18,7		18,0			15,9		14,2
At school Urban	9,6	10,0	6,3	8,9	15,1	3,8	12,7	6,9	4,9	9,2		6,9
At school Rural	24,4	3,2	0,0	5,6	2,7	2,3	0,0	2,3	1,7	2,8		1,8
Total	9,7	7,6	4,6	10,3	10,9	3,0	17,1	4,1	2,2	9,8		8,2

Source: GHS 2019

Digital divides exist in South Africa between rural, urban and metropolitan areas. Rural individuals aged 5–24 were less likely than urban and metropolitan individuals to access internet at an educational institution. Just about 15,9% of households located in metropolitan areas were accessing the internet at an educational institution compared to nine per cent in urban areas and three per cent in rural areas.

Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal had the highest percentage (17,1% and 10,9%, respectively) of households accessing the internet at an educational institution, while Limpopo and North West had the lowest internet access at an educational institution (2,2% and 3,0%, respectively). About a quarter (24,4%) of household in Western Cape rural areas were likely to connect to the internet at an educational institution, followed by about 5,6% in Free State rural areas and 2,3% for both North West and Mpumalanga.

Figure 3.12: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years with access to internet at work by geographical area and province, 2020



	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA		RSA 2019
At work Metro	17,9	18,8		16,6	32,4		26,5			25,0		29,6
At work Urban	18,1	12,8	20,7	11,4	23,1	15,3	15,1	12,8	12,8	15,8		16,1
At work Rural	15,4	4,8	3,5	7,2	3,0	3,8	0,0	2,5	4,0	3,8		4,4
Total	17,8	11,2	16,2	12,4	17,5	9,0	24,6	6,5	5,2	15,6		17,8

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 3.12 presents access to internet by household at the workplace. Roughly about 16% of households with individuals aged 5–24 years where accessing the internet at their workplace. In South Africa, one-quarter (25,0%) of households in metropolitan areas accessed the internet at the workplace, compared to close to 16% in urban and 3,8% in rural areas. In KwaZulu-Natal, almost one-third (32,4%) of households in metropolitan areas were more likely to access the internet at the workplace, followed by about 26,5% in Gauteng and 18,8% in Eastern Cape. In Northern Cape, one-fifth (20,7%) of households in urban areas were accessing the internet at the workplace whereas in Free State, 11,4% had similar access in urban areas.

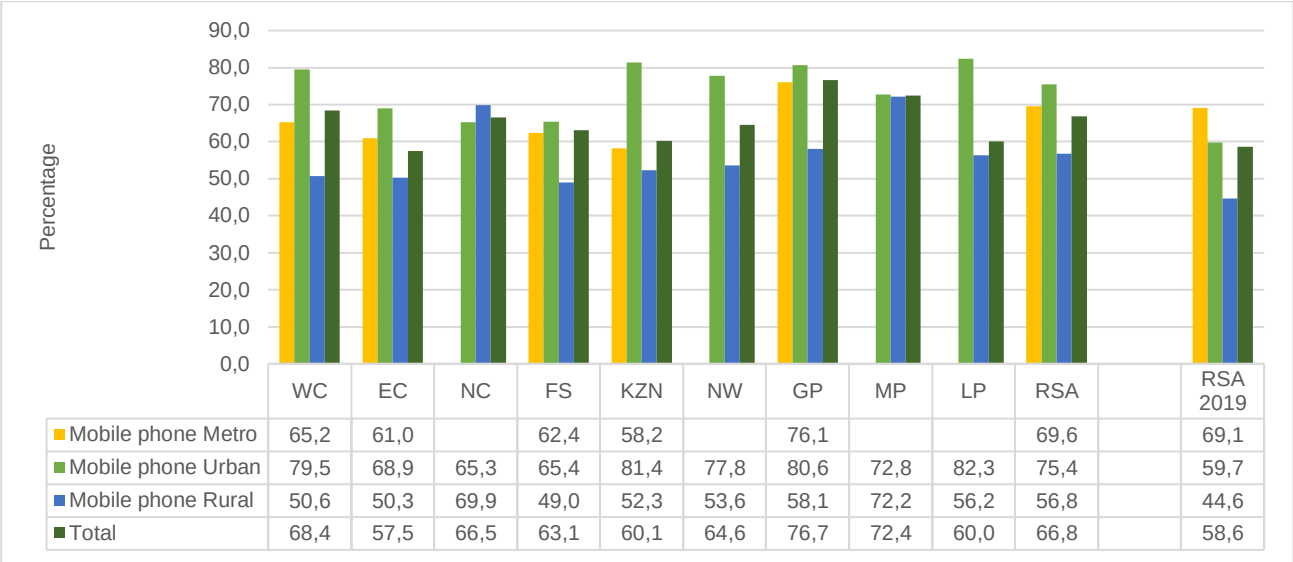
Table 3.4: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years who access internet at an internet café, 2020

A place where internet is accessed	Province									RSA
	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	
At internet café metro	14,1	10,8		7,5	43,4		22,5			**22,9**
At internet café urban	2,6	4,1	2,7	0,9	2,0	3,8	18,9	13,4	1,2	**6,5**
At internet café rural	0,0	0,9	0,6	9,6	0,7	0,9	0,0	9,3	2,0	**2,6**
Total	9,9	4,9	2,2	3,5	16,2	2,2	21,8	10,9	1,9	**11,9**

Source: GHS 2020

Table 3.4 shows households with individuals aged 5–24 who accessed the internet at an internet café. Nearly 11,9% of households accessed the internet at an internet café. One out of ten households in rural Free State areas and rural Mpumalanga areas used the internet at an internet café (9,6% and 9,3%, respectively).

Figure 3.13: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years with access to internet at any place via a mobile cellular phone by geographical area and province, 2019



	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA		RSA 2019
Mobile phone Metro	65,2	61,0		62,4	58,2		76,1			69,6		69,1
Mobile phone Urban	79,5	68,9	65,3	65,4	81,4	77,8	80,6	72,8	82,3	75,4		59,7
Mobile phone Rural	50,6	50,3	69,9	49,0	52,3	53,6	58,1	72,2	56,2	56,8		44,6
Total	68,4	57,5	66,5	63,1	60,1	64,6	76,7	72,4	60,0	66,8		58,6

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 3.13 presents internet connectivity rate by households with individuals aged 5–24 years through mobile phones in different residential areas. Nationally, two-thirds (66,8%) of households accessed the internet through mobile phones in 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, while rural residents were still less likely than those living in metropolitan areas to access the internet through mobile phones (56,8%). However, compared to 2019 there was a 12,2 percentage points increase in internet connectivity via mobile phones in rural areas in 2020. Similarly, from 2019 to 2020 there was close to 16 percentage points increase in internet connectivity via mobile phones in urban areas.

When looking at differences by province in access to internet by mobile phones, the urban-rural access divide ranged from 49% in Gauteng to close to five per cent in Northern Cape. Notably, 60% or more households were most likely to connect to the internet using a mobile phone across provinces except in Eastern Cape, where only close to 58% of households had such access. Gauteng had the highest access of internet by mobile phones (76,7%), followed by Mpumalanga (72,4%).

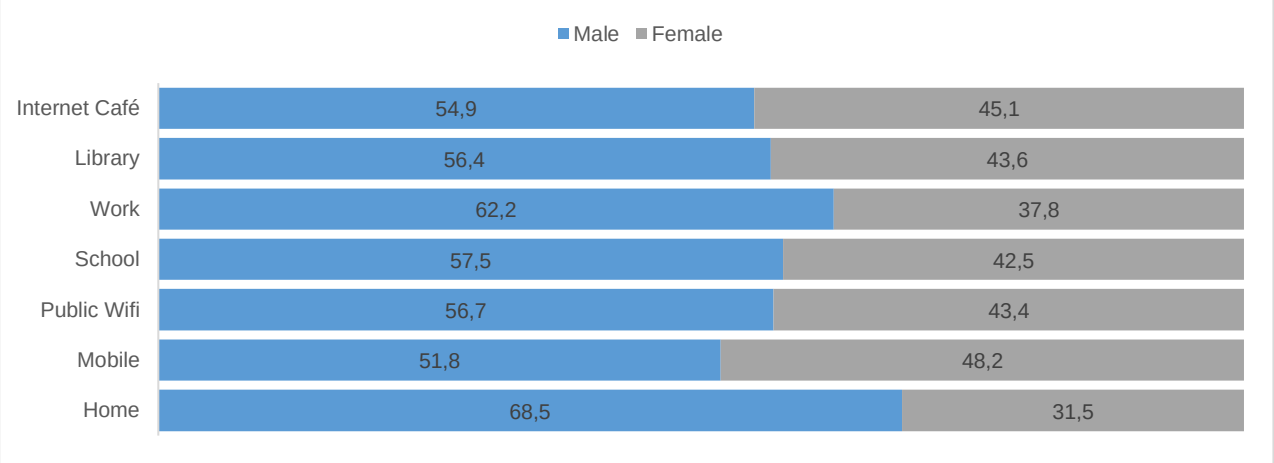
Table 3.5: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years with access to internet at any place via other mobile access services and public wi-fi, 2020

A place where internet is accessed	Province									RSA		RSA 2019
	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP			
Public wi-fi metro	10,8	13,2		7,5	26,3		23,0			20,1		16,6
Public wi-fi urban	28,5	6,7	18,5	5,8	9,8	8,2	23,5	12,9	8,6	14,0		8,2
Public wi-fi rural	12,8	1,2	9,0	5,5	4,7	4,3	0,0	5,0	2,7	3,9		0,9
Total	16,0	6,4	16,0	6,3	13,4	6,1	23,0	8,1	3,5	13,1		9,2

Source: GHS 2019–2020

Table 3.5 shows access to the internet at any place using public wi-fi by households with individuals aged 5–24. In 2020, the use of public wi-fi at any places to connect to the internet was most common in Western Cape urban areas (28,5%), followed by Gauteng (23,5%), and Northern Cape (18,5%). Approximately four per cent of households in Limpopo accessed the internet using public wi-fi, while 8,6% in urban and nearly 2,7% in rural areas had similar access. Furthermore, 26,3% of households in KwaZulu-Natal metropolitan areas were connected to the internet via public wi-fi, while nearly 13% in Eastern Cape metropolitan areas and fewer than ten per cent of households in Free State metropolitan areas got connected using public wi-fi. In 2019 overall, less than one per cent of households in rural areas used the internet via public wi-fi (0,9%) while this percentage almost quadrupled in 2020 (3,9%).

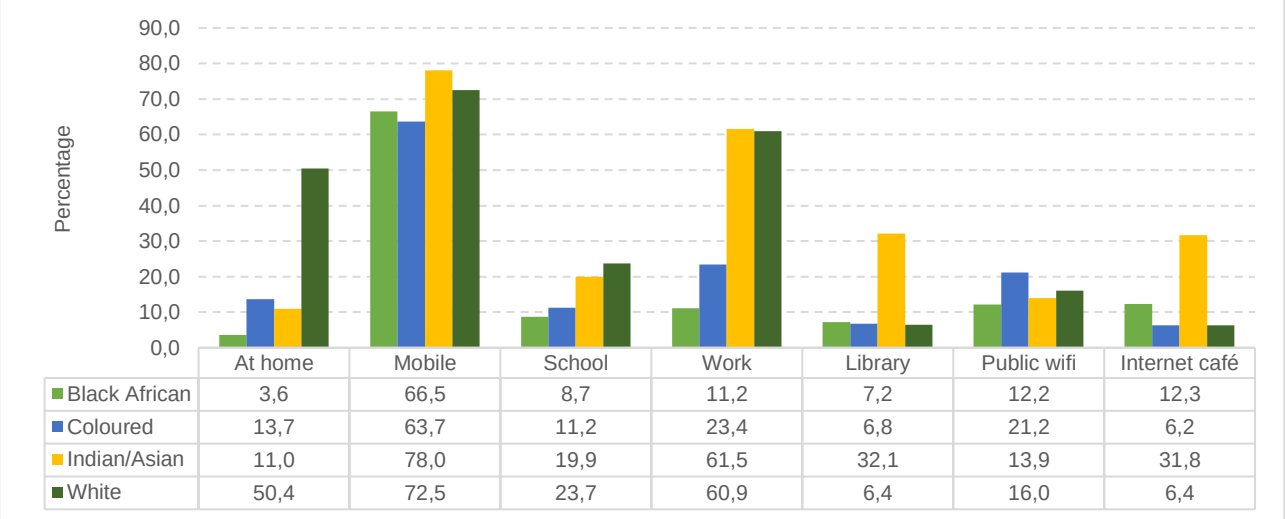
Figure 3.14: Gender of head of households with individuals aged 5–24 years by internet connectivity, 2020



Source: GHS 2020

Figure 3.14 shows the internet connectivity of households with individuals aged 5–24 by the gender of the head of the households. More than two-thirds (68,5%) of male-headed households have internet access at home, compared to 31,5% of female-headed households. Overall, it is most likely that male-headed households would be connected to the internet than female-headed households.

Figure 3.15: Population group of head of households with individuals aged 5–24 years by internet connectivity, 2020

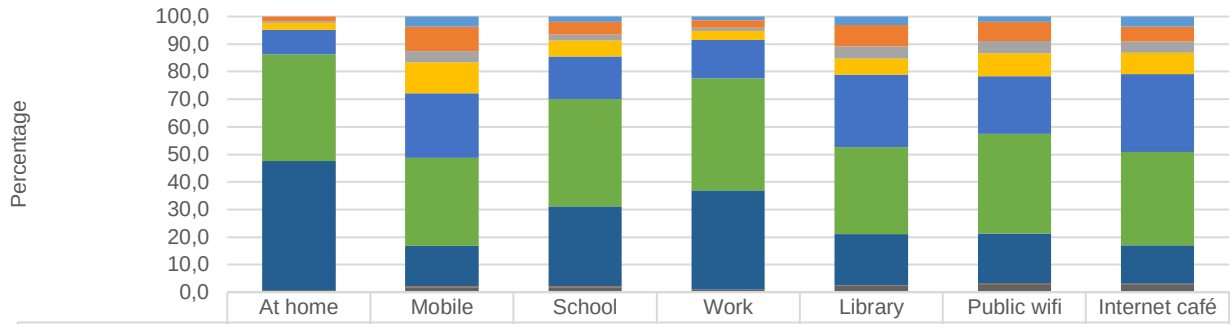


	At home	Mobile	School	Work	Library	Public wifi	Internet café
Black African	3,6	66,5	8,7	11,2	7,2	12,2	12,3
Coloured	13,7	63,7	11,2	23,4	6,8	21,2	6,2
Indian/Asian	11,0	78,0	19,9	61,5	32,1	13,9	31,8
White	50,4	72,5	23,7	60,9	6,4	16,0	6,4

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 3.15 shows the population group of head of households with individuals aged 5–24 years by internet connection. Almost half (50,4%) of households headed by white individuals had internet connection at home, followed by coloured-headed households (13,7%) and Indian/Asian-headed households (11,0%). Black African-headed households with individuals aged 5–24 were less likely to be connected to the internet at home compared to other population groups (3,6%). Seven in ten white-headed households with individuals aged 5–24 reported having access to the internet using cellular phones, compared to 78% of Indian/Asian-headed households, close to two-thirds (66,5%) of black African, and 63,7% of coloured-headed households. Internet access at work was mostly confined to white- and Indian/Asian-headed households with similar shares of access (60,9% and 61,5%, respectively).

Figure 3.16: Level of education of head of households with individuals aged 5–24 years by internet connectivity, 2020



	At home	Mobile	School	Work	Library	Public wifi	Internet café
None	0,0	3,7	1,9	1,3	3,2	2,0	3,7
Some primary	1,7	8,9	4,6	2,8	7,7	6,9	5,3
Completed primary	0,5	4,1	2,3	1,1	4,3	4,5	4,1
Lower secondary	2,5	11,2	5,8	3,3	6,0	8,3	7,8
Upper secondary	9,1	23,3	15,4	14,1	26,2	20,9	28,2
NSC/Grade 12	38,7	32,0	39,0	40,6	31,7	36,2	34,0
Post school	46,8	14,7	29,0	36,0	18,5	18,1	13,8
Other	0,0	0,4	0,4	0,0	0,2	0,3	0,3
Do not know	0,7	1,8	1,7	0,9	2,4	2,7	2,8

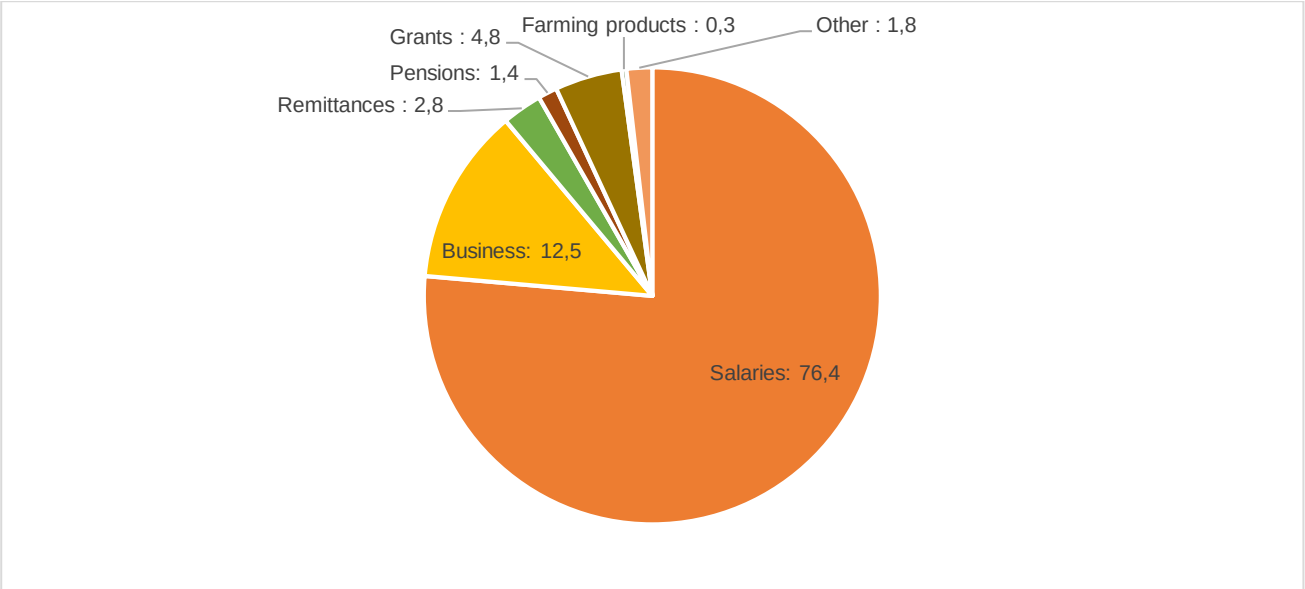
Source: GHS 2020

Figure 3.16 shows internet connectivity of households with individuals aged 5–24 by the head of households' level of education. Internet connectivity at home by households with individuals aged 5–24 was mostly found among households' heads who had at least completed secondary education (close to 86%). Nearly 47% of households connected to the internet at home were headed by individuals with post-school education, close to 39% by individuals who completed Grade 12 and 9,1% by individuals with upper secondary education. Furthermore, households with internet connectivity at work had household heads that had at least secondary education (90,1%).

Three out of ten (29,0%) households connecting to the internet at school/university/college were most likely headed by individuals with post-school education, more than one-third (39,0%) were headed by individuals with Grade 12 education, and roughly 15% were headed by individuals with upper secondary education.

Three in ten (32%) households connected to the internet through mobile phones were headed by individuals with Grade 12 education, nearly 23% by individuals with upper secondary education, and 14,7% by individuals with post-school education. Among households with individuals aged 5–24 who accessed the internet through mobile phones, more than half (51,2%) had heads of households who did not complete secondary education.

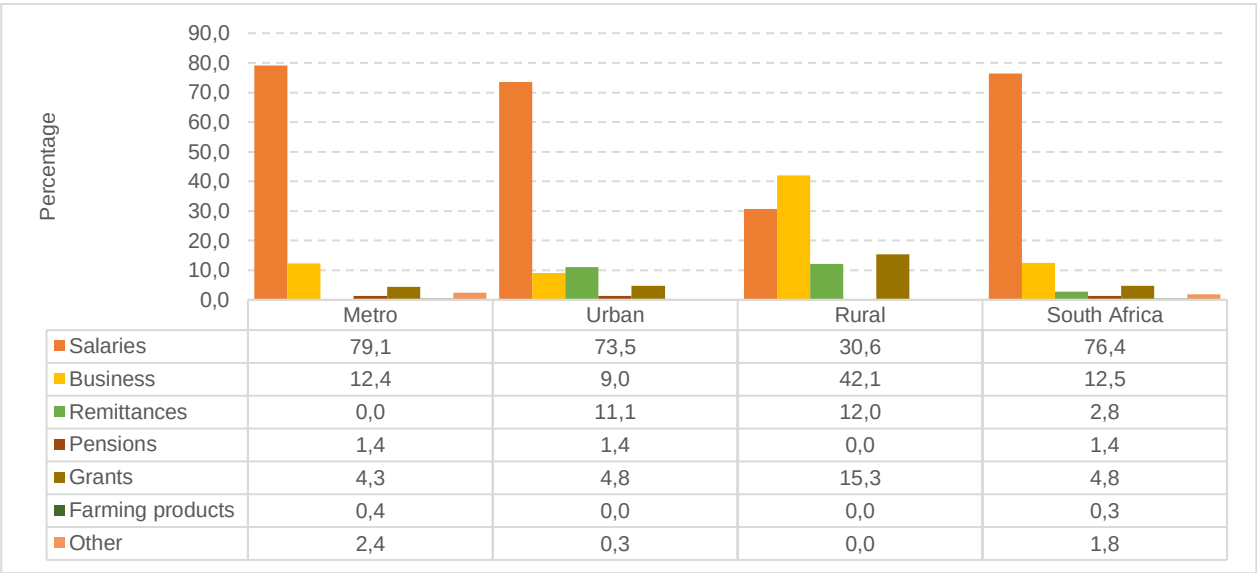
Figure 3.17: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years connected to the internet at home by main source of income, 2020



Source: GHS 2020

Figure 3.17 displays the distribution of the main source of households' income by individuals aged 5–24 and internet connectivity at home. Three quarters (76,4%) of households connected to the internet at home stated salaries as their main source of income, whereas nearly 13% indicated income from their business, and close to four per cent indicated grants as their main source of income.

Figure 3.18: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years connected to the internet at home by main source of income and geography, 2020

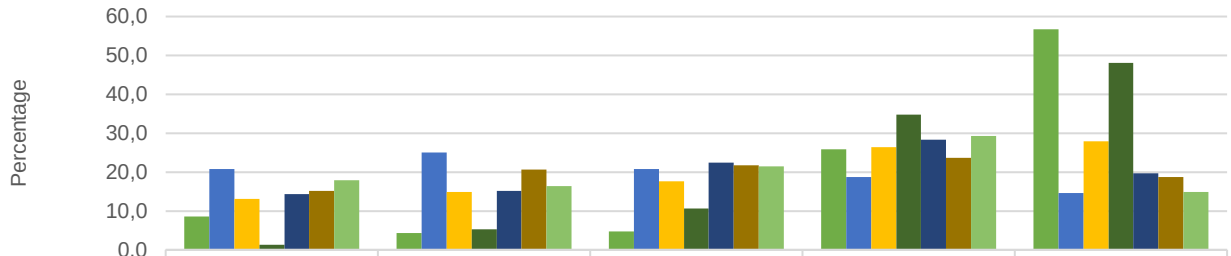


	Metro	Urban	Rural	South Africa
Salaries	79,1	73,5	30,6	76,4
Business	12,4	9,0	42,1	12,5
Remittances	0,0	11,1	12,0	2,8
Pensions	1,4	1,4	0,0	1,4
Grants	4,3	4,8	15,3	4,8
Farming products	0,4	0,0	0,0	0,3
Other	2,4	0,3	0,0	1,8

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 3.18 shows the distribution of household income of individuals aged 5–24 years by internet connectivity at home and geography type. The majority of households in metropolitan and urban areas cited salaries as their main source of income (79,1% and 73,5%, respectively). Two-fifths (42,1%) of households in rural areas that had internet connection at home indicated their business as their main source of income while for close to 31% of households, salaries were their main source of income. Furthermore, close to 15% of households in rural areas with internet connection at home were likely to report grants as their main source of income, compared to 12% of households which reported remittances as their main source of income.

Figure 3.19: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years connected to the internet by household income quintiles, 2020

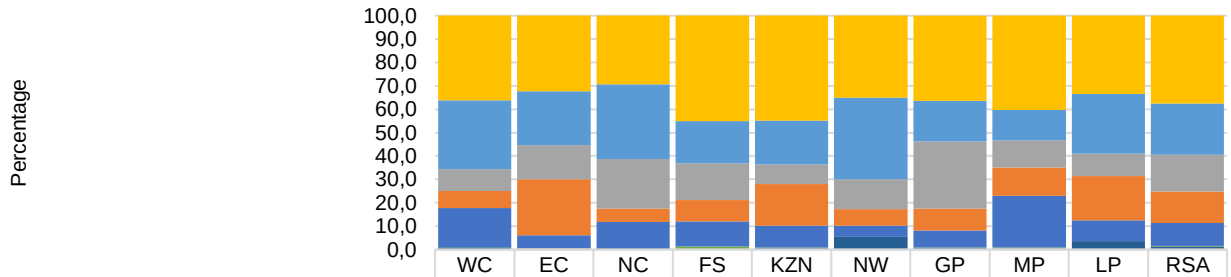


	Quintile1	Quintile2	Quintile3	Quintile4	Quintile5
At home	8,5	4,3	4,7	25,8	56,7
Mobile	20,8	25,0	20,8	18,7	14,7
School	13,1	14,9	17,6	26,5	27,9
Work	1,4	5,2	10,7	34,7	48,0
Library	14,4	15,2	22,4	28,3	19,7
Public wifi	15,2	20,7	21,7	23,7	18,7
Internet café	17,9	16,5	21,5	29,3	14,9

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 3.19 shows the internet connectivity of households with individuals aged 5–24 by households' income quintiles. The majority (56,7%) of households with individuals aged 5–24 who had internet connection at home were more likely to be from the highest income quintile (Quintile 5), followed by 25,8% from Quintile 4. However, the lower-income groups had the lowest percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 that were connected to the internet at home. Households in the lowest income quintile would most likely connect to the internet using mobile phones (close to 21% in Quintile 1 and close to 25% in Quintile 2, respectively). Internet connectivity at work by households was also the highest among the highest income groups (48% in Quintile 5 and 34,7% in Quintile 4) whereas households in the lowest income categories had the lowest such connectivity (1,4% in Quintile 1 and 5,2% in Quintile 2).

Figure 3.20: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years by main reasons for not having internet access at home by province, 2018



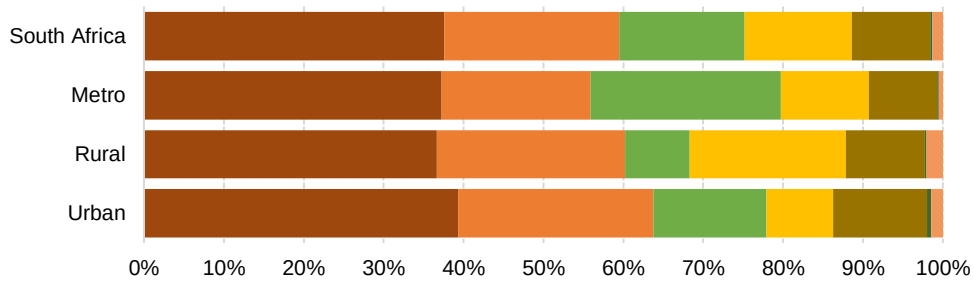
	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA
Cost of equipment too high	36,2	32,3	29,3	45,1	44,9	35,0	36,3	40,3	33,5	37,6
Lack of interest/no need	29,5	23,0	32,0	17,9	18,6	34,8	17,3	12,9	25,4	21,9
Have access to internet elsewhere	9,2	14,5	21,2	15,9	8,6	12,9	28,9	11,7	9,6	15,7
Lack of knowledge /skills/confidence	7,4	24,0	5,7	9,1	17,8	7,0	9,3	12,1	19,1	13,4
Cost of subscription too high	16,7	5,5	11,1	10,7	9,4	4,9	7,2	21,9	8,9	9,8
Concern about exposure to inappropriate or harmful contents	0,2	0,2	0,2	1,2	0,1	0,0	0,4	0,7	0,0	0,3
Other	0,8	0,5	0,6	0,1	0,7	5,4	0,6	0,3	3,6	1,3

Source: GHS 2018

Figure 3.20 shows the reasons for households with individuals aged 5–24 not having internet at home by province in 2018. More than one-third (37,6%) of households with individuals aged 5–24 years in South Africa cited the high cost of equipment as the main reason for not connecting to the internet at home, while close to ten per cent indicated that the cost of subscription was too high. Furthermore, nearly 22% reported the lack of interest or the lack of need to connect to the internet while 13,4% indicated their lack of knowledge, skills, and confidence prevented them from being connected to the internet at home. Almost 16% of households did not connect to the internet from home because they had access to internet elsewhere. However, less than one per cent of households with individuals aged 5–24 which did not have internet connection at home were concerned about exposure to inappropriate or harmful contents.

In 2018, KwaZulu-Natal and Free State had the highest percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 where the high cost of equipment prevented households from not having internet access at home. Households with individuals aged 5–24 years in Mpumalanga and Western Cape indicated the high cost of subscription as their main reason for not connecting to the internet at home (21,9% and 16,7%, respectively). The Northern Cape was the province where the lack of interest or the lack of need had the highest share of households who cited this as the main reason for not having internet access at home (32,0%). A substantial percentage of households in Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga gave reasons that their lack of knowledge, skills and confidence prevented them from having access to the internet at home.

Figure 3.21: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years by the main reason for not having internet access at home and geographical area, 2018

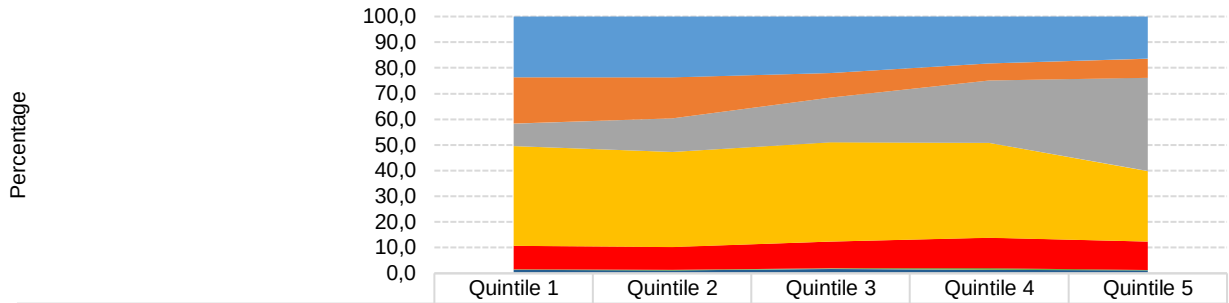


	Urban	Rural	Metro	South Africa
Cost of equipment too high	39,4	36,7	37,2	37,6
Lack of interest/no need	24,4	23,6	18,6	21,9
Have access to internet elsewhere	14,2	8,0	23,8	15,7
Lack of knowledge /skills/confidence	8,4	19,6	11,0	13,4
Cost of subscription too high	11,7	9,8	8,6	9,8
Concern about exposure to inappropriate or harmful contents	0,5	0,2	0,2	0,3
Other	1,5	2,1	0,5	1,3

Source: GHS 2018

Figure 3.21 displays the main reason for households with individuals aged 5–24 years for not having internet access at home by geographical area in 2018. Most households (39,4%) in urban areas cited the high cost of equipment as their main reason for not having internet at home, while nearly a quarter (24,4%) of households reported lack of interest or lack of need for internet access at home, and 14,2% of the households were accessing internet elsewhere. Furthermore, close to a quarter (23,8%) of households in metropolitan areas indicated access to internet outside their home was the reason for them not having internet connection at home; by comparison, three times less households in rural areas (eight per cent) gave this reason for not having internet at home. However, one in five (19,6%) rural households indicated their lack of knowledge, or skills or confidence as their reasons for not having internet connection at home.

Figure 3.22: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years by main reason for not having internet access at home and by quintiles, 2018



	Quintile 1	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Quintile 5
Lack of interest/no need	23,6	23,7	22,0	18,2	16,4
Lack of knowledge /skills/confidence	18,1	16,0	9,5	6,6	7,3
Have access to internet elsewhere	8,8	13,1	17,5	24,3	36,3
Cost of equipment too high	38,8	37,0	38,7	37,0	27,5
Cost of subscription too high	9,1	8,9	10,4	11,8	11,0
Concern about exposure to inappropriate or harmful contents	0,2	0,2	0,3	0,6	0,2
Other	1,4	1,1	1,7	1,5	1,1

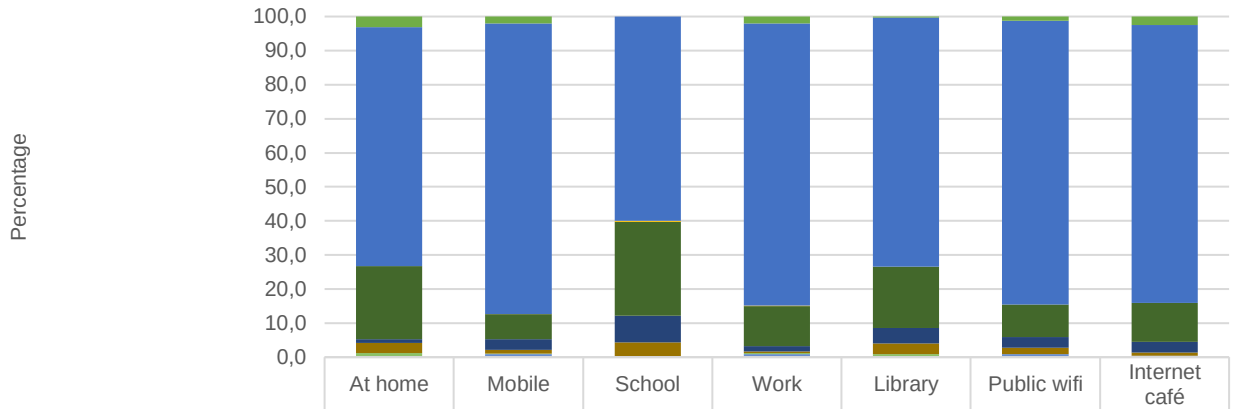
Source: GHS 2018

Figure 3.22 presents the main reasons by households with individuals aged 5–24 years for not having internet at home by households' income quintiles in 2018. Except for households in the highest income quintile (Quintile 5), all households in the rest of the income quintiles cited the high cost of equipment as the main reason for lack of access to internet at home. Close to 36% of households in the highest household income group (Quintile 5) reported their access to the internet elsewhere as the main reason for not having internet access at home. This reason was relatively less important for households in other income groups. Households' lack of knowledge, skills and confidence were more important for lower-income households (Quintiles 1 and 2) for not having internet connection at home. The lack of interest or need by households for having internet connection at home was also relatively higher among lower-income households (Quintiles 1, 2 and 3).

3.4 School attendance by individuals aged 5–24 years by internet connectivity status

This section focuses on households with individuals aged 5–24 years attending school and the means they used to access the internet. Internet connectivity plays a vast role to support school children in their school work, attend online classes, remote schooling and research. Its stability, speed and means is of paramount importance for the successful academic achievement of students – gaps in technological access and resources for children attending school fall harder on their academic achievement and outcomes.

Figure 3.23: Households with individuals aged 5–24 years attending educational institutions by internet connectivity, 2020

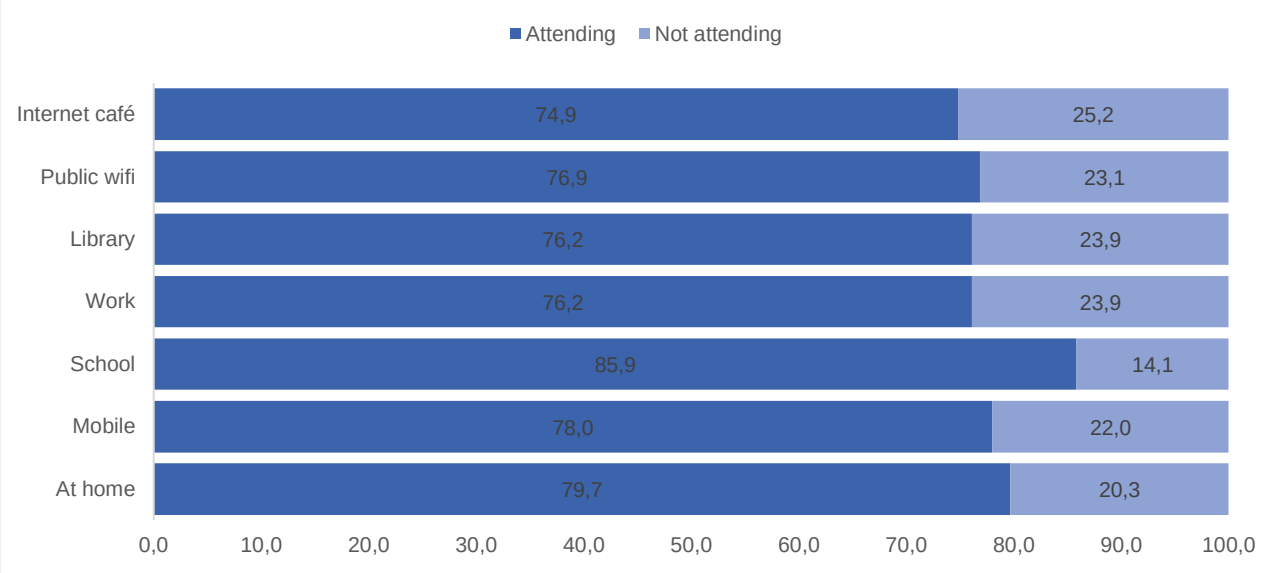


	At home	Mobile	School	Work	Library	Public wifi	Internet café
Pre-school	3,1	2,0	0,0	2,1	0,4	1,2	2,5
School	70,2	85,4	60,0	82,8	73,2	83,4	81,5
AET Centres	0,0	0,0	0,2	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0
Higher Educational Institution	21,4	7,3	27,6	11,8	17,9	9,6	11,5
TVET	1,2	3,2	7,8	1,6	4,6	3,1	3,1
Other College	2,9	1,1	4,2	0,5	3,1	1,8	0,9
Home schooling	0,9	0,2	0,0	0,2	0,7	0,0	0,0
Other	0,3	0,8	0,2	0,9	0,2	1,0	0,5

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 3.23 presents access to internet by households with individuals aged 5–24 years attending educational institutions. The majority (70,2%) of households that had internet access at home were most likely to have individuals attending school, while 21,4% of these households had individuals attending higher education institutions and around 1,2% of these households had individuals attending TVET colleges. Four-fifths (85,4%) of households connected to the internet through cellphones had children attending school and nearly 7,0% of households had individuals attending higher education institutions. Six out of ten (60,0%) households that had members accessing the internet at school were likely to have children attending school, while 27,6% had individuals attending higher education institutions and 7,8% attending TVET institutions. The majority (73,2%) of the households that accessed the internet at a library had children attending school and 17,9% of households had individuals attending higher education institutions.

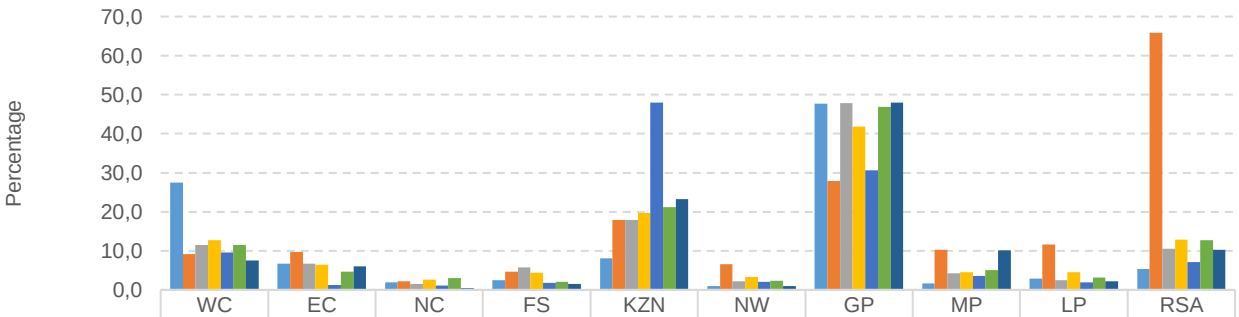
Figure 3.24: Households with individuals aged 5–24 years attending educational institutions by internet connectivity, 2020



Source: GHS 2020

Figure 3.24 illustrates the type of internet access used by households with individuals aged 5–24 years by attendance status of educational institutions. The majority (85,9%) of households who had members aged 5–24 years who attended educational institutions in 2020 had internet access at school, university or college. However, close to 14% of households with individuals aged 5–24 had similar types of access to the internet even though the members did not attend educational institutions. Among households that accessed internet at home, close to 80% had individuals aged 5–24 attending educational institutions. Among households that accessed internet at work, close to 76% had individuals aged 5–24 attending educational institutions. Libraries were also a common choice to access the internet for households with individuals aged 5–24 attending educational institutions (close to 76%). A similar percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 who attended educational institutions also practised the use of cellphones or mobile services to access the internet (close to 78%). The use of public wi-fi was greater than internet cafés to access the internet by households with children aged 5–24 attending educational institutions.

Figure 3.25: Households with individuals aged 5–24 years attending educational institutions by internet connectivity and province, 2020

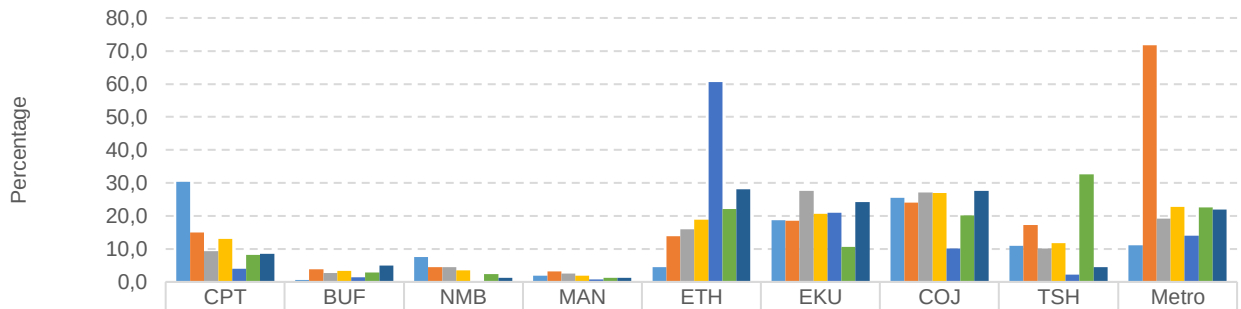


	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA
At home	27,5	6,7	2,0	2,4	8,1	1,0	47,7	1,7	2,9	5,4
Mobile	9,1	9,8	2,2	4,7	17,9	6,6	27,9	10,2	11,6	65,8
School	11,5	6,7	1,5	5,7	17,9	2,2	47,8	4,2	2,4	10,5
Work	12,8	6,4	2,6	4,4	19,7	3,3	41,8	4,5	4,6	12,9
Library	9,6	1,3	1,2	1,7	48,0	2,1	30,6	3,5	1,9	7,1
Public wifi	11,5	4,7	3,1	2,1	21,2	2,4	46,8	5,1	3,1	12,7
Internet café	7,6	6,1	0,4	1,5	23,3	1,0	47,9	10,1	2,2	10,3

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 3.25 shows households with individuals aged 5–24 years attending educational institutions by internet connectivity and province. In 2020 overall, Gauteng had the highest percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 attending educational institutions that were connected to the internet using various forms of access, while the Northern Cape showed the lowest level of connectivity. Overall, only close to five per cent of households with individuals attending educational institutions had internet connection at home. Furthermore, in Gauteng, close to half (47,7%) of households with individuals aged 5–24 years attending educational institutions had internet connectivity at home, while almost a quarter (27,5%) of similar households in Western Cape and about eight per cent in KwaZulu-Natal had access to internet at home. Across provinces, households with individuals aged 5–24 attending educational institutions that were the least connected to the internet at home were in North West and Mpumalanga (1,0% and 1,7%, respectively). Connectivity to the internet via cellphones was overall the most chosen method of connectivity by households (65,8%); Gauteng had only close to 28% of households using this type of connectivity, followed by KwaZulu-Natal (17,9%). Access to the internet through public wi-fi was the highest in Gauteng as it was used by 46,8% of households with individuals aged 5–24 attending schools. The use of public wi-fi was the lowest in Free State and North West (2,1% and 2,4%, respectively).

Figure 3.26: Households with individuals aged 5–24 years attending educational institutions by internet connectivity in metropolitan area, 2020

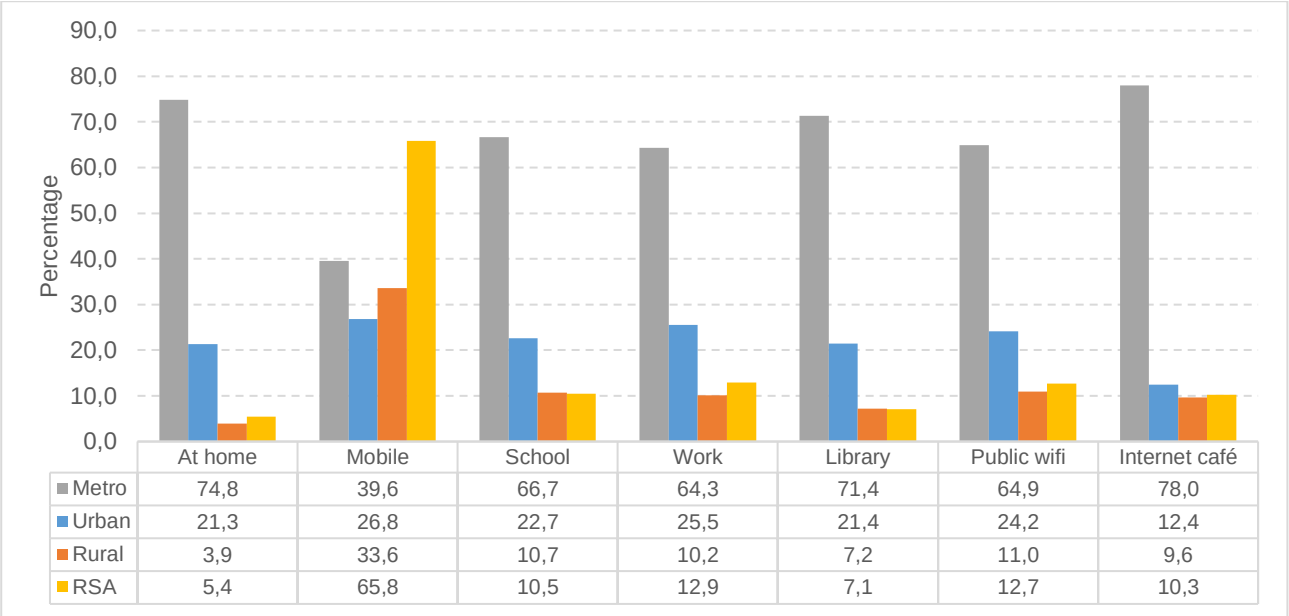


	CPT	BUF	NMB	MAN	ETH	EKU	COJ	TSH	Metro
At home	30,3	0,6	7,6	1,9	4,5	18,6	25,5	10,9	11,1
Mobile	14,9	3,8	4,5	3,2	13,8	18,6	24,1	17,3	71,7
School	9,3	2,8	4,5	2,6	16,0	27,6	27,1	10,2	19,2
Work	13,0	3,3	3,5	1,9	18,8	20,7	27,0	11,8	22,8
Library	4,0	1,5	0,0	0,7	60,5	20,9	10,1	2,3	14,0
Public wifi	8,2	2,8	2,3	1,3	22,1	10,6	20,1	32,6	22,7
Internet café	8,5	5,0	1,2	1,2	28,1	24,1	27,6	4,4	22,0

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 3.26 displays households with individuals aged 5–24 years attending educational institutions by modes of internet connectivity in metropolitan areas. Overall, seven in ten households (71,7%) access the internet by cellphones in metropolitan areas, while roughly 23% access the internet at work, and about a quarter (22,3%) use public wi-fi to access the internet. Approximately 26% of households accessing the internet at home resided in the City of Johannesburg, close to 30% in Cape Town and nearly 11% in Tshwane. The households the least connected to the internet at home are in eThekwini (4,5%), followed by Mangaung (1,9%) and Buffalo City (0,6%). Across all metropolitan areas, close to 37% of households with children aged 5–24 attending educational institutions accessed the internet through public wi-fi or at libraries; most of these households were located in eThekwini.

Figure 3.27: Households with individuals aged 5–24 years attending educational institutions by internet connectivity and geographical location, 2020

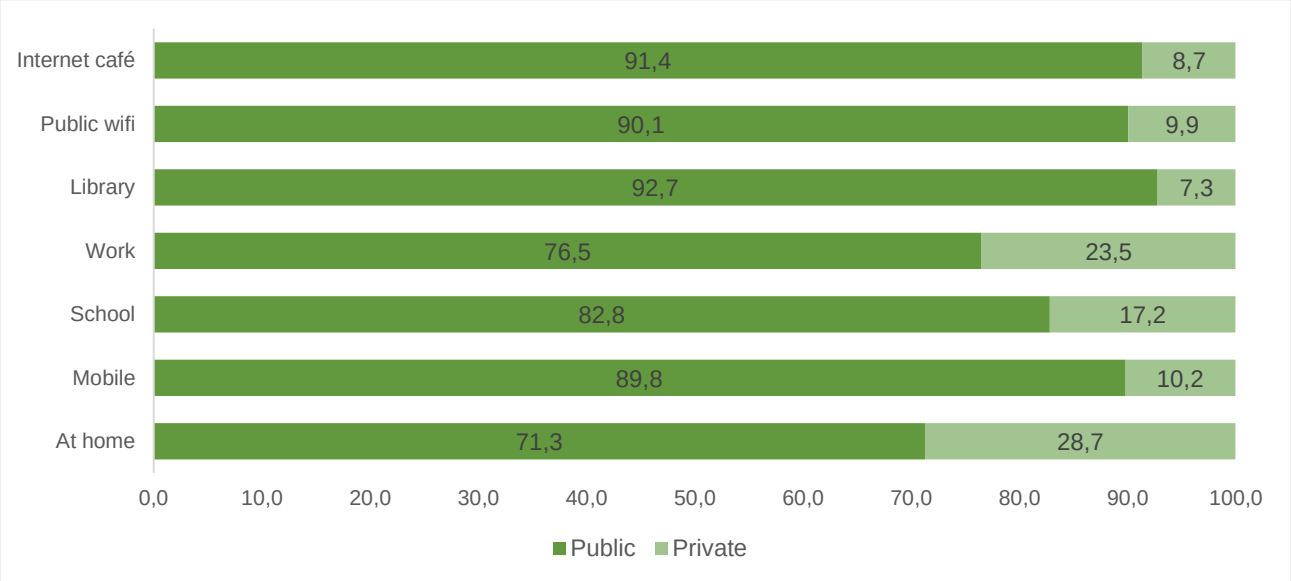


	At home	Mobile	School	Work	Library	Public wifi	Internet café
Metro	74,8	39,6	66,7	64,3	71,4	64,9	78,0
Urban	21,3	26,8	22,7	25,5	21,4	24,2	12,4
Rural	3,9	33,6	10,7	10,2	7,2	11,0	9,6
RSA	5,4	65,8	10,5	12,9	7,1	12,7	10,3

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 3.27 displays households with individuals aged 5–24 years attending educational institutions by geographical area and modes of internet connectivity. Overall, households in the metropolitan areas were more likely to be connected to the internet whereas those in rural areas were less likely to be connected. Close to 78% of households in metropolitan areas had access to the internet at home, while 21,3% in urban and 3,9% in rural areas had similar access. More than a quarter (close to 26,8%) of households indicated the use of mobile phones to access the internet in urban areas, compared to close to a quarter (33,6%) of households in rural areas. Households in metropolitan areas had close to six times more connectivity to public wi-fi compared to those in rural areas.

Figure 3.28: Households with individuals aged 5–24 years attending public or private educational institutions by internet connectivity, 2020



Source: GHS 2020

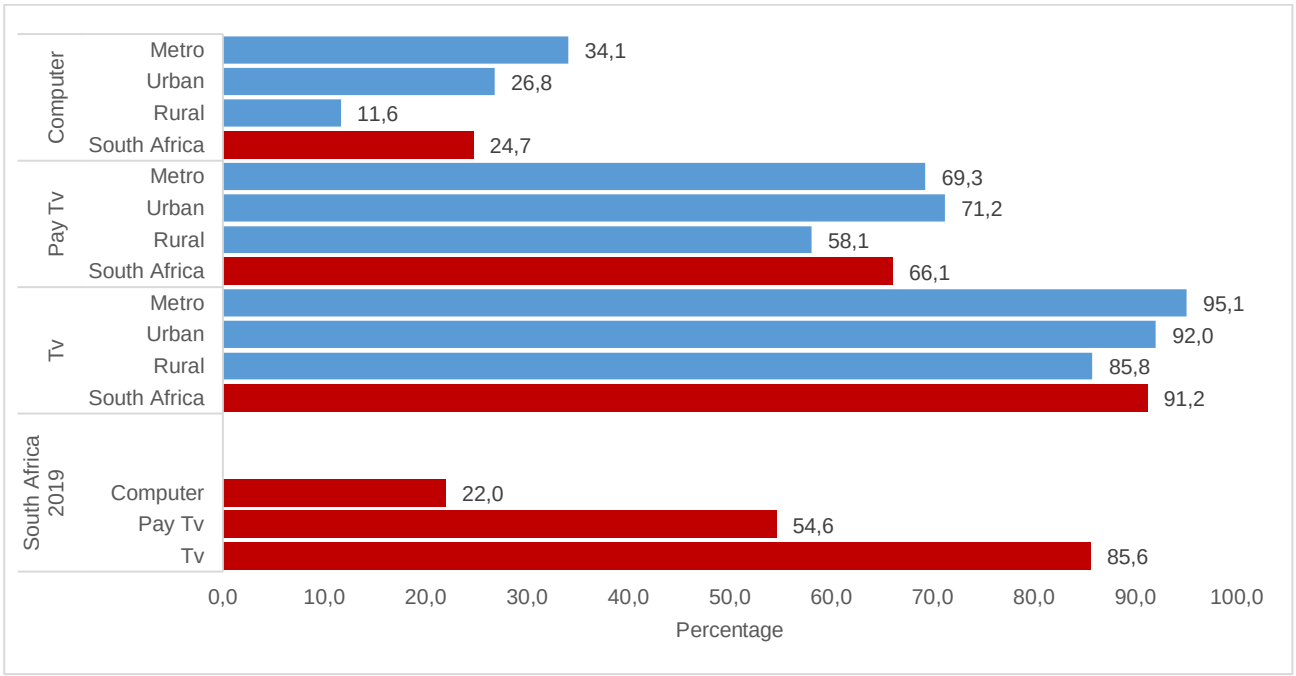
Figure 3.28 presents households with individuals aged 5–24 years attending public or private educational institutions by modes of internet connectivity. Around 90% of households with individuals aged 5–24 attending public educational institutions were accessing the internet via mobile phones. Amongst those who had internet at home, 71,3% of the households had individuals attending public educational institutions and more than one-quarter (28,7%) attended private educational institutions. Use of a library, public wi-fi and internet café to access the internet was highly popular among households with individuals attending public schools (92,7%, 90,1% and 91,4%, respectively).

3.5 Household access to other tools for remote learning

Ownership of digital tools enhances effective and efficient distance learning and assists students and educators to communicate effectively, deliver lessons, facilitate discussions and assess learning. It is imperative for parents to ensure that they make available tools for the success of their children in education. The use of digital and other tools for remote learning purposes can ensure that learning interruptions are mitigated by creating virtual classrooms that can deliver effective distance learning outcomes and learning experiences that keep students interested and active. Teachers and students have now a wide variety of technological tools to keep them engaged and connected in virtual classes through various platforms, such as video calls, audio calls, text messaging platforms, messaging and content-sharing mobile applications (e.g. WhatsApp), platforms for video and audio conferencing, collaboration, chat and webinars (e.g. Zoom, MS Teams, Skype, Seesaw). Other multimedia learning and communication tools that were available to be used as educational resources in South Africa were the use of the D6 school communicator that could be used to share free educational applications and repository of educational videos and learning channels (e-learning platforms and websites, YouTube). The South African government also made available a collection of radio and audio instruction resources and TV broadcasting facilities to learners and instructors.

Remote learning might continue to contribute to the South African education system post-COVID; it is most likely going to expand by providing engaging and high-quality broadcasting content of high importance. Multiple connectivity options exist for broadcasting around the country that can educate and inform viewers. Options may vary according to needs and access, whether broadcasting live or live streaming at home or anywhere around the country.

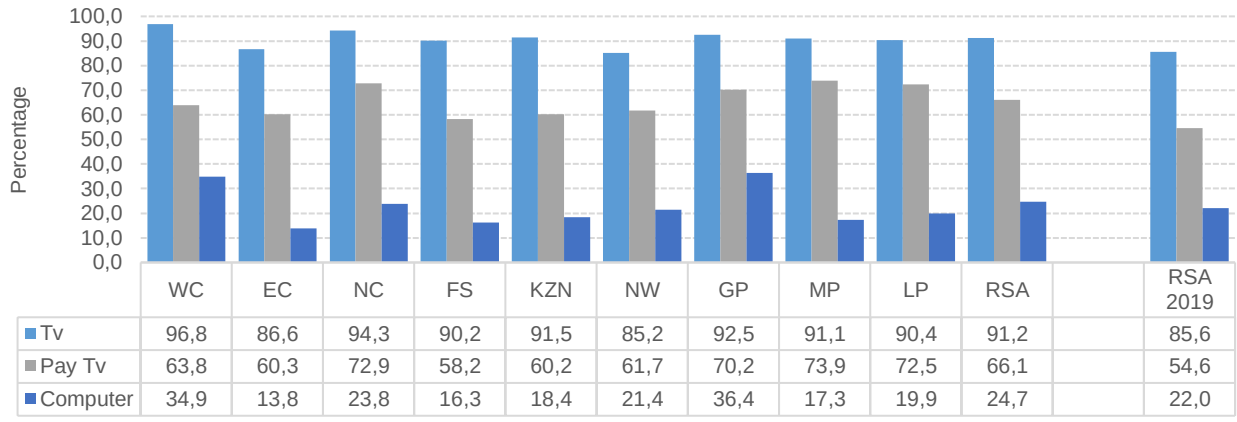
Figure 3.29: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years with paid TV subscription (DSTV/MNET), TV, radio and computer/laptop, 2020



Source: GHS 2019–2020

Figure 3.29 shows that in 2020, nine out of ten (95,1%) households with individuals aged 5–24 years residing in metropolitan areas owned a television set in working condition, compared to 92% in urban and 85,8% in rural areas. Nationally, two-thirds (66,1%) of households in South Africa subscribed to paid TV, the majority of which are located in urban areas (71,2%). However, more than half (58,1%) of households with individuals aged 5–24 years residing in rural areas subscribed to paid TV. In 2020, close to a quarter (24,7%) of households in South Africa owned computers or laptops; the majority were found in metropolitan areas (34,1%). Compared to 2019, there was an increase in TV ownership in 2020. There was an 11,5 percentage increase in paid TV subscription from 54,6% in 2019 to 66,1% in 2020. However, there was not much change in households' ownership of laptops or computers during 2020 compared to 2019.

Figure 3.30: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years with paid TV subscription, TV, radio and computer/laptop by province, 2020

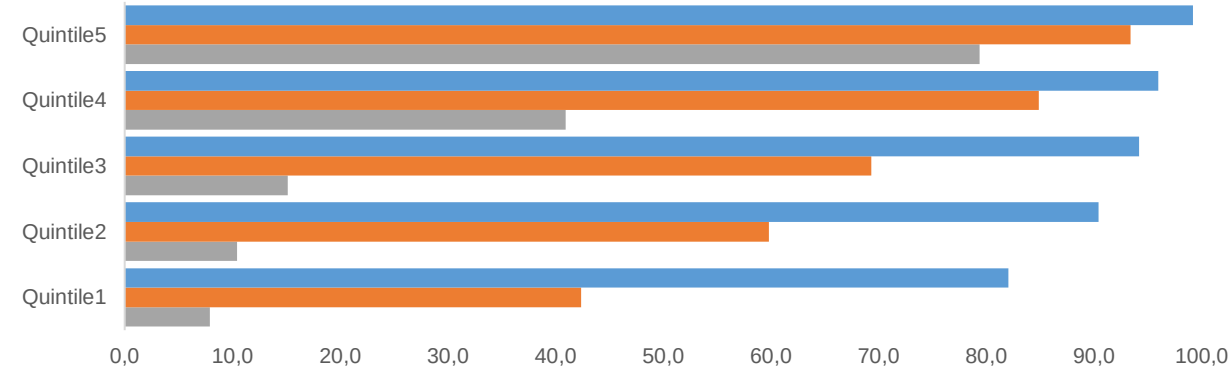


	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA		RSA 2019
Tv	96,8	86,6	94,3	90,2	91,5	85,2	92,5	91,1	90,4	91,2		85,6
Pay Tv	63,8	60,3	72,9	58,2	60,2	61,7	70,2	73,9	72,5	66,1		54,6
Computer	34,9	13,8	23,8	16,3	18,4	21,4	36,4	17,3	19,9	24,7		22,0

Source: GHS 2019–2020

Figure 3.30 shows households with individuals aged 5–24 years which owned television, pay TV, radio and computers by province. In 2020, the majority (96,8%) of households in Western Cape owned a television, compared to 92,5% in Gauteng. The lowest percentage of households with televisions was found in North West (85,2%). More than one-third (34,9%) of the households in Western Cape owned computers or laptops, compared to 36,4% in Gauteng and about one-fifth (19,9%) in Limpopo. The lowest percentage of households that owned computers or laptops was found in Eastern Cape (13,8%).

Figure 3.31: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years with paid subscription TV, owned television, radio and computer/laptop by quintiles, 2020



	Quintile1	Quintile2	Quintile3	Quintile4	Quintile5
Tv	82,1	90,5	94,2	96,0	99,2
Pay Tv	42,4	59,9	69,4	84,9	93,4
Computer	7,9	10,4	15,1	41,0	79,4

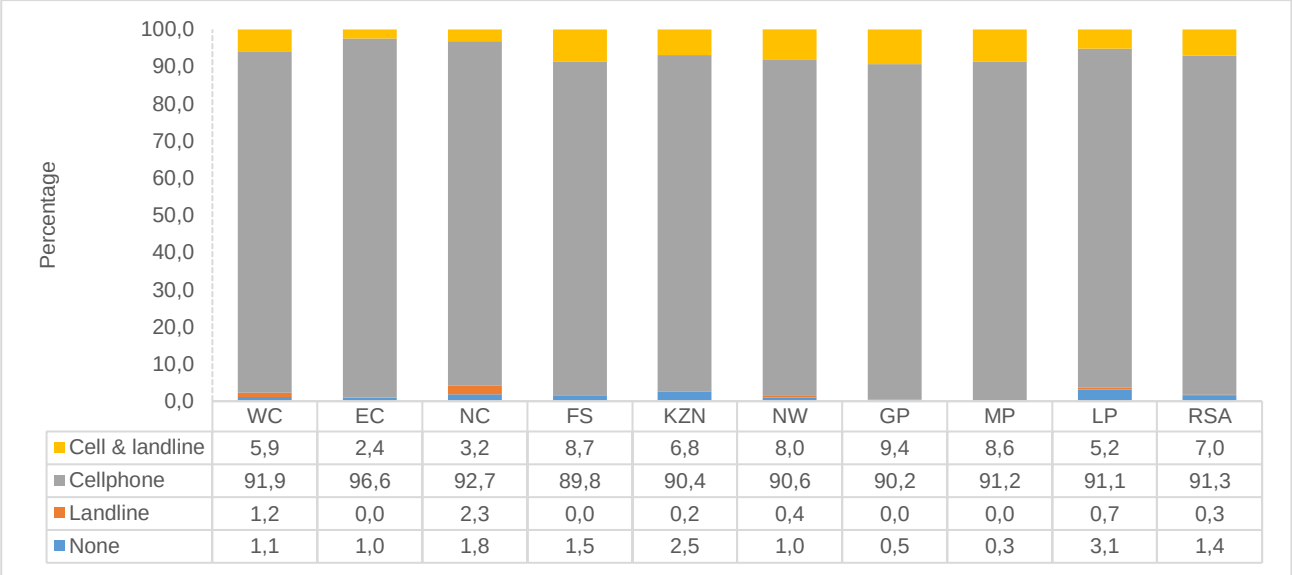
Source: GHS 2020

Figure 3.31 summarises the percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years according to households' income quintiles and type of broadcast and communication assets available in the households. As depicted in the graph, almost every household with children aged 5–24 in South Africa owned televisions, with eight out of ten such households in the poorest household income group (Quintile 1) owning televisions. However, close to 99% of households in the highest income group (Quintile 5) owned televisions. Pay TV subscriptions were the highest among the highest household income group (close to 93% in Quintile 5) and declined with household's income. Moreover, close to 79% of households in the highest income group (Quintile 5) had reported higher ownership of computers and laptops compared to households from middle- to lower-income households (close to 41% in Quintile 4 and 8% in Quintile 1).

3.6 Household access to digital devices or tools

The use of mobile technology has surpassed the use of landline telephone systems in households. Mobile technologies are the modern innovations that make communication easy among all diverse disciplines. South Africa is experiencing a rapid growth in the use of mobile phones, particularly among younger individuals.

Figure 3.32: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years with functional/working landline and cellphone by province, 2020

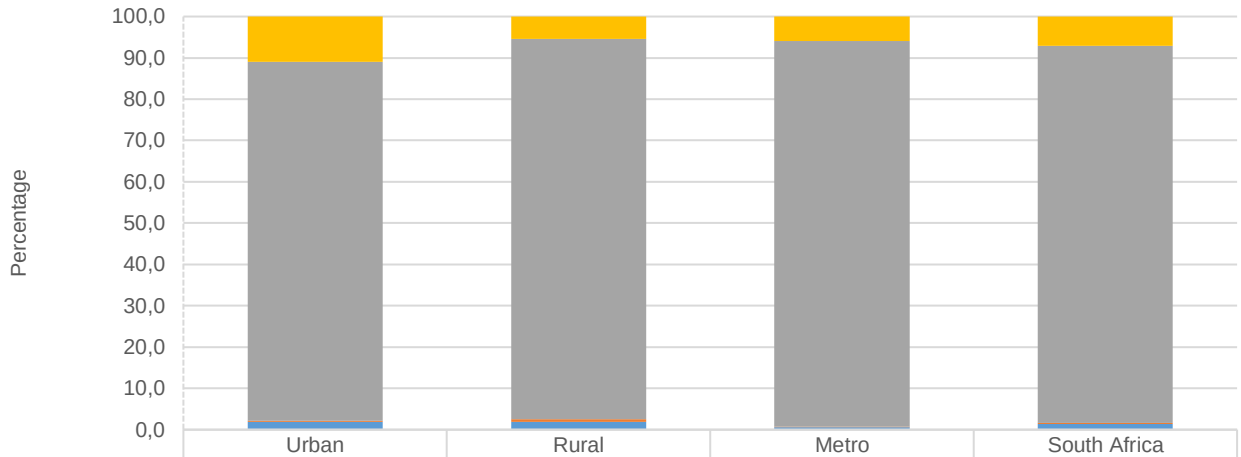


	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA
Cell & landline	5,9	2,4	3,2	8,7	6,8	8,0	9,4	8,6	5,2	7,0
Cellphone	91,9	96,6	92,7	89,8	90,4	90,6	90,2	91,2	91,1	91,3
Landline	1,2	0,0	2,3	0,0	0,2	0,4	0,0	0,0	0,7	0,3
None	1,1	1,0	1,8	1,5	2,5	1,0	0,5	0,3	3,1	1,4

Source: GHS 2020

Nationally, only 1,4% of households did not have access to either landlines or cellular phones. Households without access to neither of these communication media were most commonly found in KwaZulu-Natal (2,5%) and Limpopo (3,1%). In South Africa, the majority of households (91,3%) used cellphones exclusively, and close to seven per cent used both cellphones and landlines. The use of cellphones only was the highest among households in Eastern Cape (96,6%) and lowest in Free State (89,8%) compared to the other provinces. Approximately nine per cent of households in Gauteng used both cellphones and landlines while about six per cent of households in Western Cape had access to both.

Figure 3.33: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years with functional/working landline and cellphone by geographical area, 2020

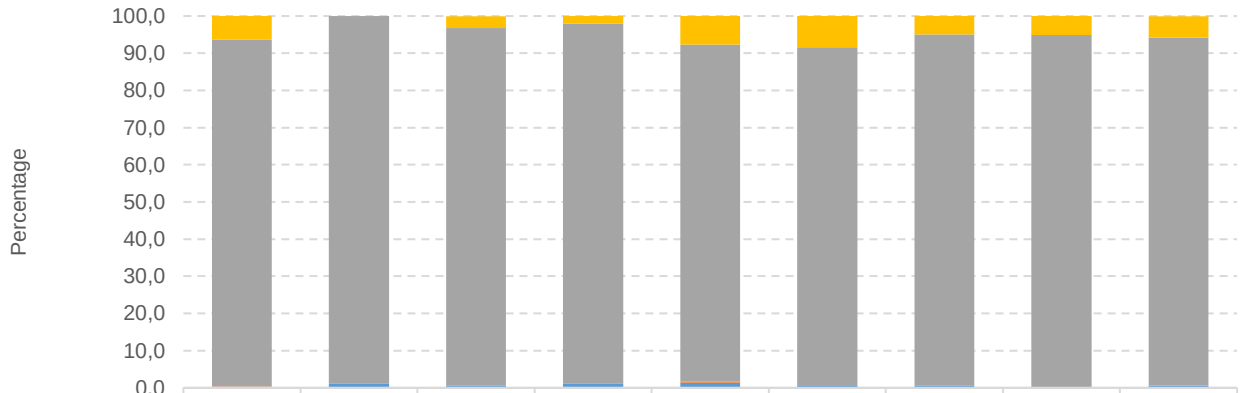


	Urban	Rural	Metro	South Africa
Cell & landline	11,0	5,4	5,9	7,0
Cellphone	86,8	92,1	93,4	91,3
Landline	0,3	0,5	0,1	0,3
None	1,9	2,0	0,6	1,4

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 3.33 shows that some households without access to landlines or cellular phones were found in urban areas (1,9%) and rural (2,0%), while close to one per cent of households in metropolitan areas had none. Roughly nine in ten households in both rural and metropolitan areas had access to functioning cellphones only (92,1% and 93,4%, respectively). One in ten (11%) households in urban areas used both cellphones and landlines, compared to 5,4% in rural and 5,9% in metropolitan areas.

Figure 3.34: Percentage of households with individuals aged 5–24 years with functional or working landlines and cellphones by metropolitan area, 2019



	CPT	BUF	NMB	MAN	ETH	EKU	COJ	TSH	Metro
Cell & landline	6,3	0,0	3,2	2,1	7,7	8,5	5,0	5,2	5,9
Cellphone	93,3	98,9	96,2	96,8	90,6	91,0	94,4	94,9	93,4
Landline	0,4	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,3	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,1
None	0,0	1,1	0,7	1,1	1,4	0,5	0,6	0,0	0,6

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 3.34 shows that the vast majority (98,9%) of households in Buffalo City Municipality used mobile phones exclusively, compared to 90,6% of households in eThekwini Municipality. Moreover, approximately nine per cent of households in Ekurhuleni used both cellphones and landlines. eThekwini Municipality had the highest percentage of households with no access to either cellphones or landlines.

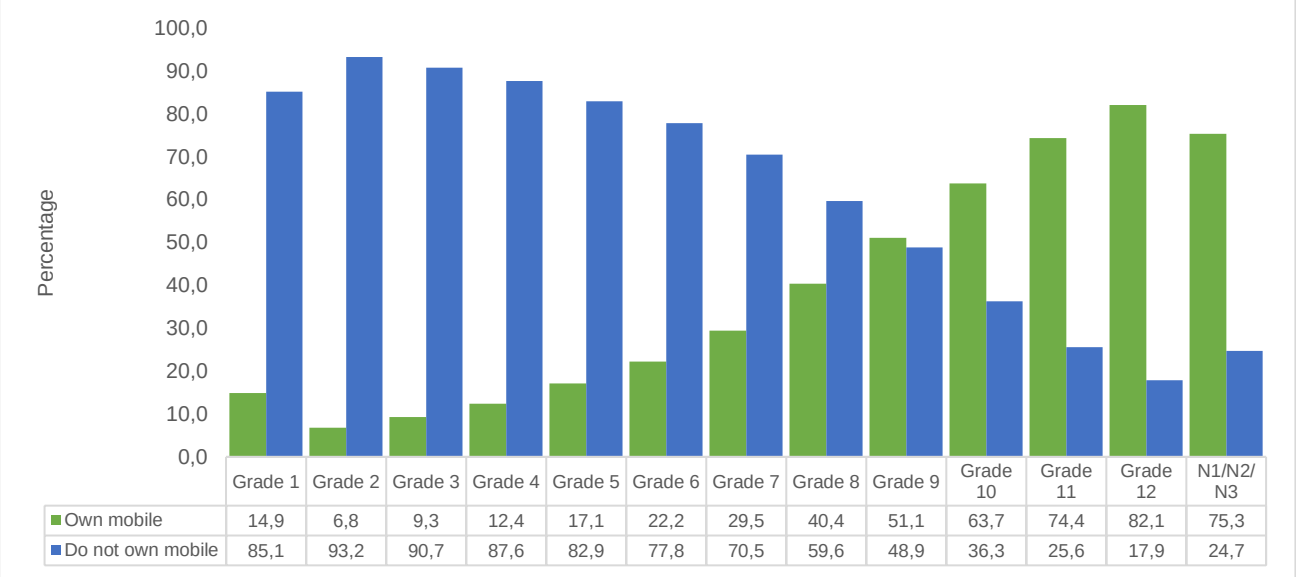
Table 3.6: Percentage of individuals aged 10–24 years who attended school and owned a functional cellphone by population group, 2019

Ownership of mobile phone	Statistics	Population group				Total
		Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White	
Own mobile phone	Number	4 094 713	363 395	119 786	462 823	**5 040 717**
	%	45,4	48,1	63,9	81,8	**47,8**
Do not own mobile phone	Number	4 931 075	391 963	67 559	103 112	**5 493 710**
	%	54,6	51,9	36,1	18,2	**52,2**
Total	**Number**	**9 025 788**	**755 357**	**187 345**	**565 936**	**10 534 427**
	%	**85,7**	**7,2**	**1,8**	**5,4**	**100,0**

Source: GHS 2019

Table 3.6 presents ownership of cellphones by individual aged 10–24 years attending school by population group. In South Africa, about half (47,8%) of individuals aged 10–24 years old attending school owned functioning mobile telephones in 2019. More than half (54,6%) of black African children and youth attending school did not own cellphones, and close to 45% own cellphones. Eight in ten (81,8%) white individuals aged 10–24 attending school and nearly 64,0% of Indians/Asians owned cellphones.

Figure 3.35: Percentage of individuals aged 10–24 years who attended school and owned a functional mobile cellphone by grade, 2019

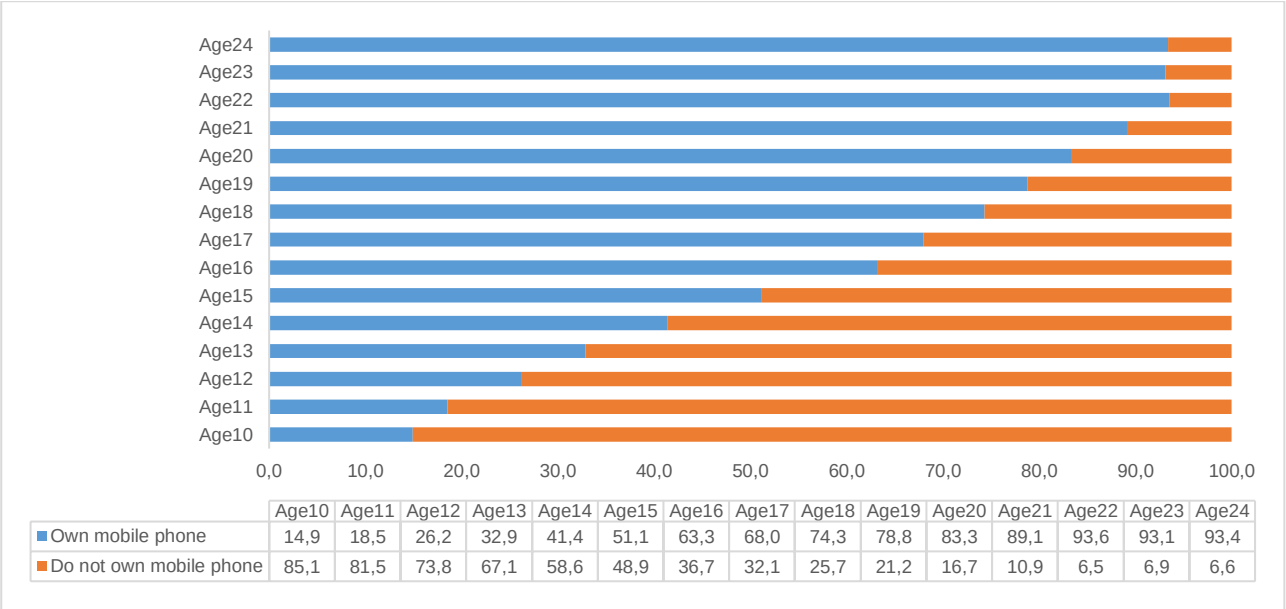


	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	N1/N2/ N3
Own mobile	14,9	6,8	9,3	12,4	17,1	22,2	29,5	40,4	51,1	63,7	74,4	82,1	75,3
Do not own mobile	85,1	93,2	90,7	87,6	82,9	77,8	70,5	59,6	48,9	36,3	25,6	17,9	24,7

Source: GHS 2019

Figure 3.35 shows individuals aged 10–24 years attending school who owned cellphones in 2019. The percentage of cellphone ownership increased steadily by grade and reached almost six times more by secondary school. Three in ten individuals (29,5%) in Grade 7 owned cellphones. Four-fifths (82,1%) of individuals in Grade 12 owned cellphones and close to 18% did not own cellphones. Individuals in higher grades were more likely to own a functional cellphone.

Figure 3.36: Percentage of individuals aged 10–24 years who attended school and owned functional cellphone by single age, 2019

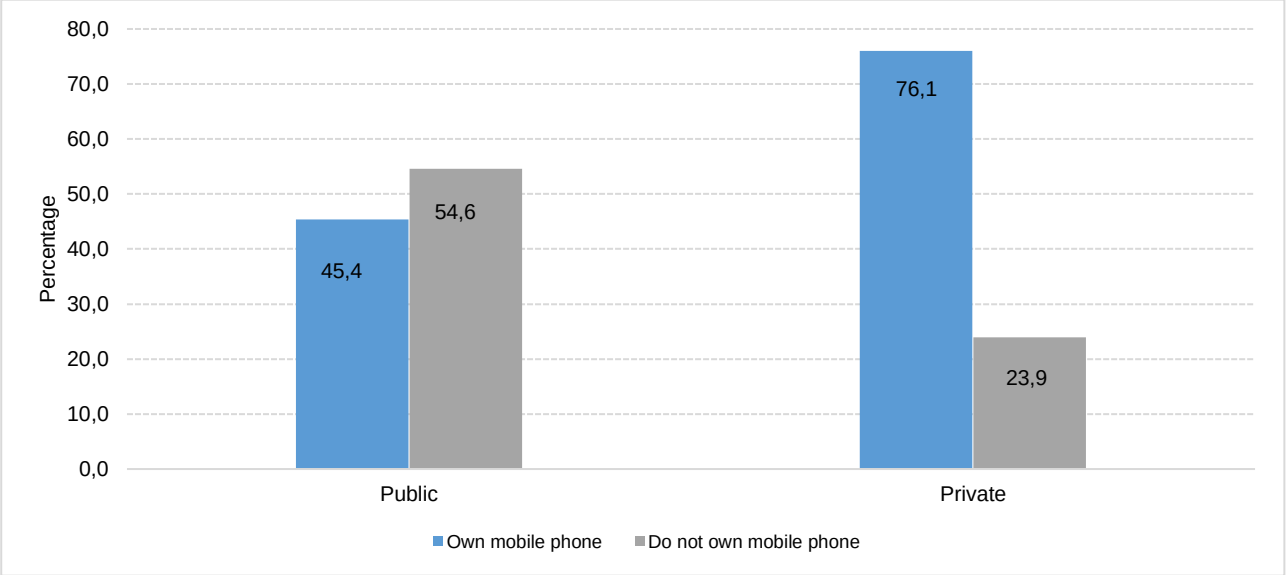


	Age10	Age11	Age12	Age13	Age14	Age15	Age16	Age17	Age18	Age19	Age20	Age21	Age22	Age23	Age24
Own mobile phone	14,9	18,5	26,2	32,9	41,4	51,1	63,3	68,0	74,3	78,8	83,3	89,1	93,6	93,1	93,4
Do not own mobile phone	85,1	81,5	73,8	67,1	58,6	48,9	36,7	32,1	25,7	21,2	16,7	10,9	6,5	6,9	6,6

Source: GHS 2019

Figure 3.36 shows ownership of cellphones according to age in 2019. Cellphone ownership increased with age, with older individuals more likely to own these devices. Close to 15% of individuals aged 10 owned cellphones; this percentage doubled (32,9%) among 13-year-olds and reached half among 15-years-olds (51,1%). Among 17-year-olds, more than two-thirds (68,0%) owned cellphones and increased by nearly six percentage points by age 18 (74,3%). However, ownership of cellphones reached almost universal coverage by age 24 since nine out of ten (93,4%) individuals aged 24 years owned cellphones.

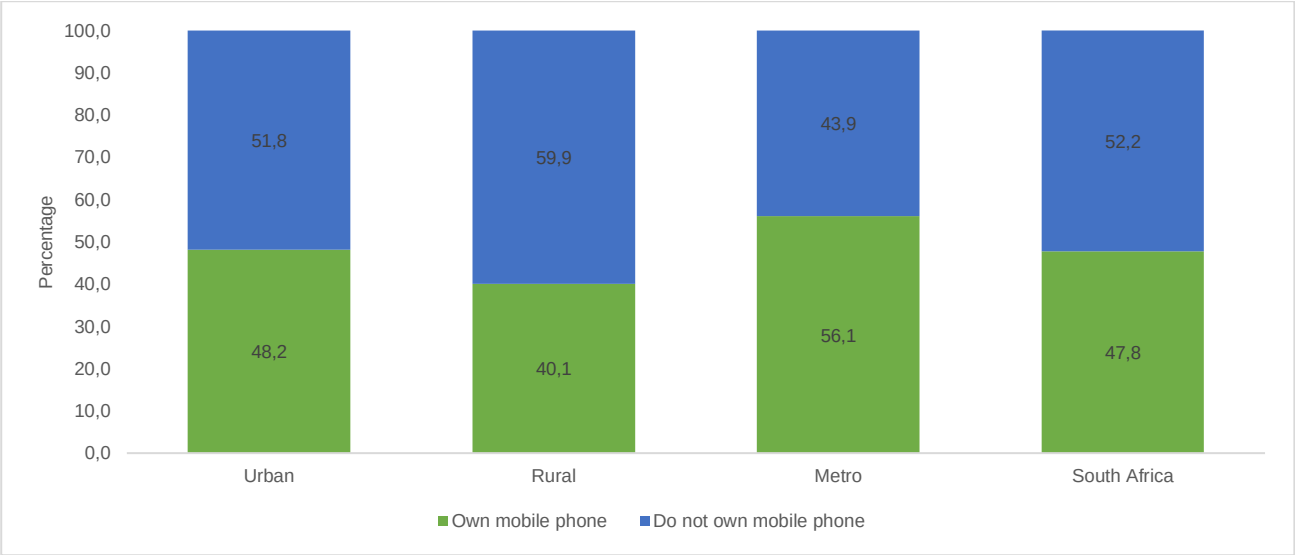
Figure 3.37: Percentage of individuals aged 10–24 years who owned functional cellphone by attendance of private or public school, 2019



Source: GHS 2019

Figure 3.37 depicts ownership of cellphones by individuals aged 10–24 attending private or public schools. Among individuals aged 10–24 years attending public schools, the majority (54,6%) did not own cellphones while close to 45% were more likely to own cellphones. A substantial majority (76,1%) of individuals aged 10–24 attending private schools owned cellphones whereas 23,9% did not own cellphones.

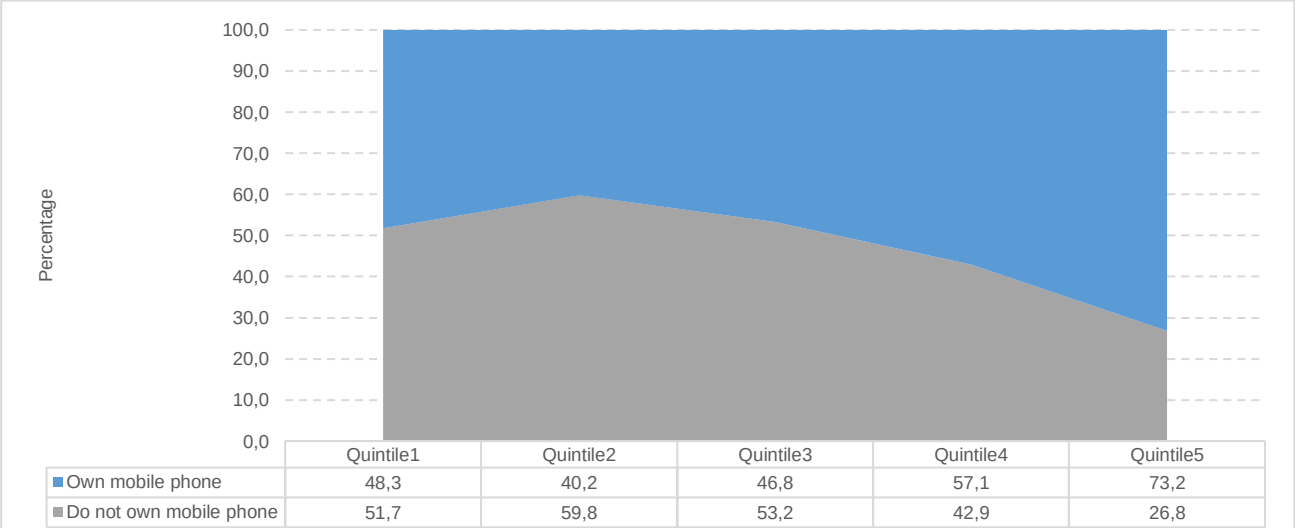
Figure 3.38: Percentage of individuals aged 10–24 years who attended school and owned functional cellphone by geographical location, 2019



Source: GHS 2019

Figure 3.38 shows that more than half (52,2%) of individuals aged 10–24 years old attending school did not own cellphones in South Africa. Furthermore, a substantial majority of individuals were cellphone owners across a wide range of geographical areas. More than half (56,1%) of individuals attending school owned cellphones in metropolitan areas, while the same was true for 40,1% in rural areas. Almost half (48,2%) of school-attending individuals were likely to own a cellphone in urban areas.

Figure 3.39: Percentage of individuals aged 10–24 years attending schools who owned functional cellphone by household income quintile, 2019



	Quintile1	Quintile2	Quintile3	Quintile4	Quintile5
Own mobile phone	48,3	40,2	46,8	57,1	73,2
Do not own mobile phone	51,7	59,8	53,2	42,9	26,8

Source: GHS 2019

Figure 3.39 shows ownership of cellphones by individuals aged 10–24 years attending school and by household income level. Around 73,2% of individuals in the highest household income quintile were more likely than 48,3% of individuals in the lowest household income quintile to own cellphones, which is a gap of 25 percentage points.

3.7 Conclusion

In 2020, the majority of households with individuals aged 5–24 years were residing in metropolitan areas (40,7%). One-third (33,3%) of households with individuals aged 5–24 years were located in rural areas compared to a quarter (25,9%) that were found in urban areas. In Gauteng, 83,9% of households with individuals aged 5–24 years were located in metropolitan areas whereas in Limpopo, nearly the same proportion (85,6%) of households were situated in rural areas. The majority of households with individuals aged 5–24 years stayed in dwellings built on a separate stand, yard or farm. Furthermore, close to nine per cent of households with individuals aged 5–24 years stayed in informal dwellings and close to five per cent were backyard dwellers.

In South Africa, approximately seven per cent of households with individuals aged 5–24 years had internet access at home in 2020 (6,9%). While internet connection at home was the most common among households in Western Cape (17,6%) and Gauteng (12,6%), households that were the least connected to the internet at home were in Limpopo, North West and Mpumalanga (1,5%, 1,5% and 1,2%, respectively). Furthermore, about 13% of households in metropolitan areas were connecting to the internet at home; around six per cent of households in urban areas and close to one per cent of households in rural areas had similar connectivity to the internet.

Overall in 2020, internet connectivity via cellular phones was the most prominent form of connectivity among households with individuals aged 5–24 (66,8%). Furthermore, compared to 2019 there was a 12,2 percentage points increase in internet connectivity via cellular phones in rural areas in 2020. Similarly, from 2019 to 2020 there was close to 16 percentage points increase in internet connectivity via cellular phones in urban areas.

The urban-rural access divide in internet connection via cellular phones was close to 19 percentage points. The urban-rural access divide in internet connection at home was five percentage points.

Home connectivity to the internet was most likely to occurr among the richest households. The majority (56,7%) of households with individuals aged 5–24 who had internet connection at home were more likely to be from the highest income quintile (Quintile 5), followed by 25,8% from Quintile 4. Most households in the poorest household income quintile (Quintile 1) were likely to access the internet via cellular phones, libraries, internet café or public wi-fi.

Generally, male-headed households with individuals aged 5–24 years were more likely to be connected to the internet compared to their female-headed counterparts. The gender gap in connectivity via cellular phone is close to four percentage points, while connectivity at home was close to 37 percentage points.

Close to half (50,2%) of white-headed households had internet connection at home. Black African headed-households were less likely to be connected to the internet at home compared to other population groups (3,6%). Black African-headed households were also less likely to access the internet from work (11,2%) compared to the other population groups.

Nationally, nearly one-third (34,1%) of households with individuals aged 5–24 located in metropolitan areas owned computers or laptops compared to close to 27% of households in urban, and close to 12% of households in rural areas. The gap between the rich and poor in ownership of computers was quite high, ranging from 79,4% among the rich to 7,9% among the poor.

Nearly half (47,8%) of individuals aged 10–24 years attending school in South Africa owned functioning mobile phones in 2020. Among individuals aged 10–24 years attending school, more than half (50,6%) attending Grade 9 owned mobile phones. Approximately 56% of individuals aged 10–24 years attending school and who were residents of metropolitan areas owned cellphones, while the same was true for 40,1% in rural areas. Close to half (48,3%) of these individuals in the poorest income group (Quintile 1) owned a cellphone compared to 73,2% in the highest income group.

Chapter 4: The impact of COVID-19 on the Early Childhood Development education phase

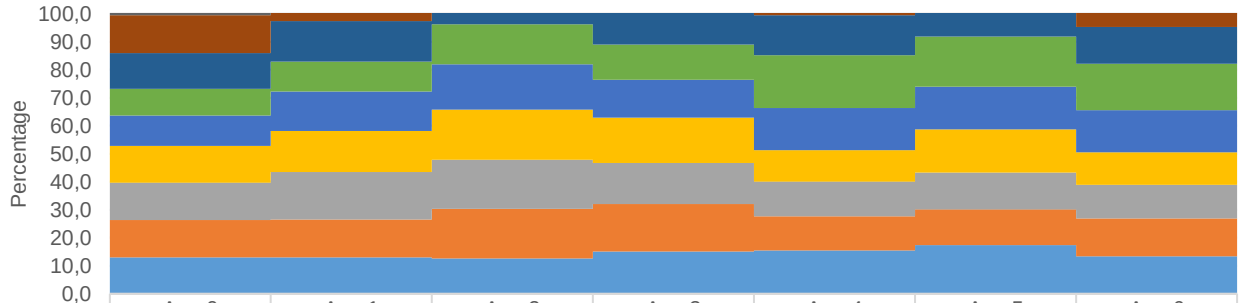
4.1 Introduction

This section covers how the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown dealt a harsh blow to children under the age of six years who were expected to attend Early Childhood Development (ECD) facilities. These disruptions to everyday life meant that many young children were at home and unable to receive early childhood education and care, and were therefore entirely dependent on their family members or community members for nurturing care and to meet all of their developmental needs (physical, emotional, social and cognitive). The lockdown had also reduced their opportunities for social interaction with their extended family members, and made them less engaged in stimulus and social activities outside their home. The GHS 2020 data had some COVID-19-related information that will be used in this section.

4.2 Population distribution of children aged 0–6 in 2020

Younger children in South Africa constitute the largest single age cohorts compared to the older ones. This section is aimed at describing the age distribution of children aged 0–6, their population group and geographical location across South Africa during the time of the pandemic.

Figure 4.1: Distribution of children aged 0–6 years as a percentage of the total population by age and province, 2020

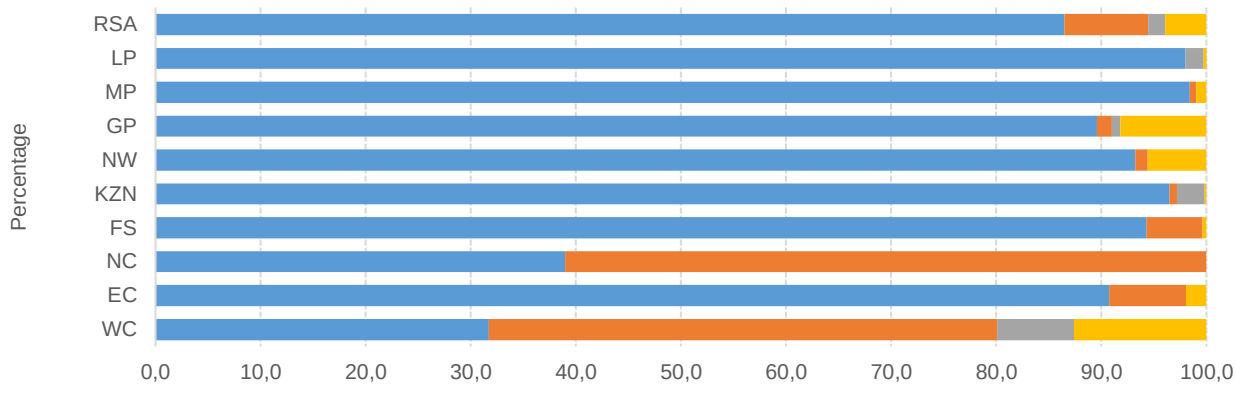


	Age 0	Age 1	Age 2	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6
RSA	12,7	14,0	15,3	15,4	14,3	14,3	14,0
LP	15,2	13,8	14,3	15,9	13,7	13,4	13,6
MP	13,5	16,2	14,5	17,1	14,4	9,2	15,0
GP	12,9	14,6	14,7	16,3	14,2	14,1	13,2
NW	9,4	10,5	14,3	12,5	18,9	17,8	16,5
KZN	10,9	14,1	16,2	13,5	14,9	15,3	15,1
FS	13,1	14,6	17,8	16,2	11,3	15,4	11,6
NC	13,4	17,0	17,5	14,7	12,4	13,1	11,9
EC	13,4	13,4	17,8	16,8	12,2	12,7	13,7
WC	12,9	13,1	12,6	15,2	15,4	17,4	13,3

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 4.1 shows the population distribution of children aged 0–6 by age and province. According to the GHS 2020 data, close to 8,2 million children aged 0–6 live in South Africa, of which half resided in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo. The data showed that there was a balanced distribution of children aged 0–6 years as a percentage of the total population by age and province in 2020. North West and Western Cape had a higher percentage of children aged 4–6 years compared to the other provinces.

Figure 4.2: Distribution of children aged 0–6 years as a percentage of the total population by province and population group, 2020

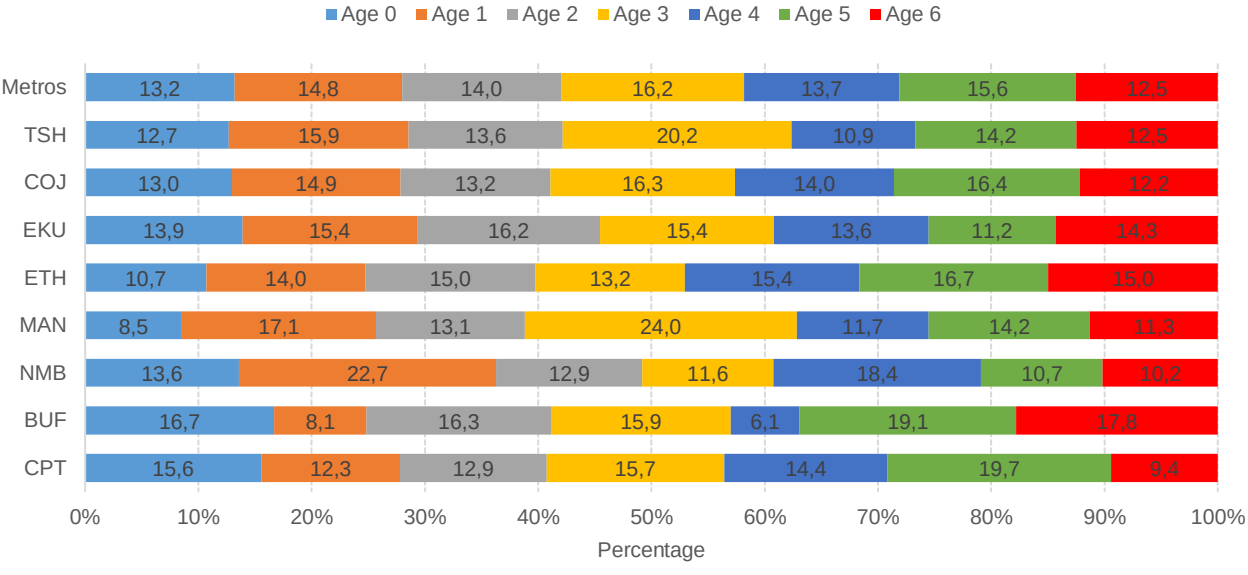


	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA
Black African	31,7	90,8	39,0	94,3	96,5	93,2	89,6	98,4	98,0	86,5
Coloured	48,4	7,3	61,0	5,3	0,7	1,2	1,4	0,6	0,0	7,9
Indian/Asian	7,3	0,0	0,0	0,0	2,6	0,0	0,8	0,0	1,7	1,7
White	12,6	2,0	0,0	0,4	0,2	5,6	8,2	1,0	0,3	3,9

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 4.2 shows the percentage of population group distribution of children aged 0–6 by province. Except for the Western Cape and Northern Cape provinces, black African children represent the largest percentage of young children aged 0–6. Children aged 0–6 in Northern Cape and Western Cape were predominantly coloured (61% and 48%, respectively), whereas almost one in ten children in the Western Cape were white (12,6%).

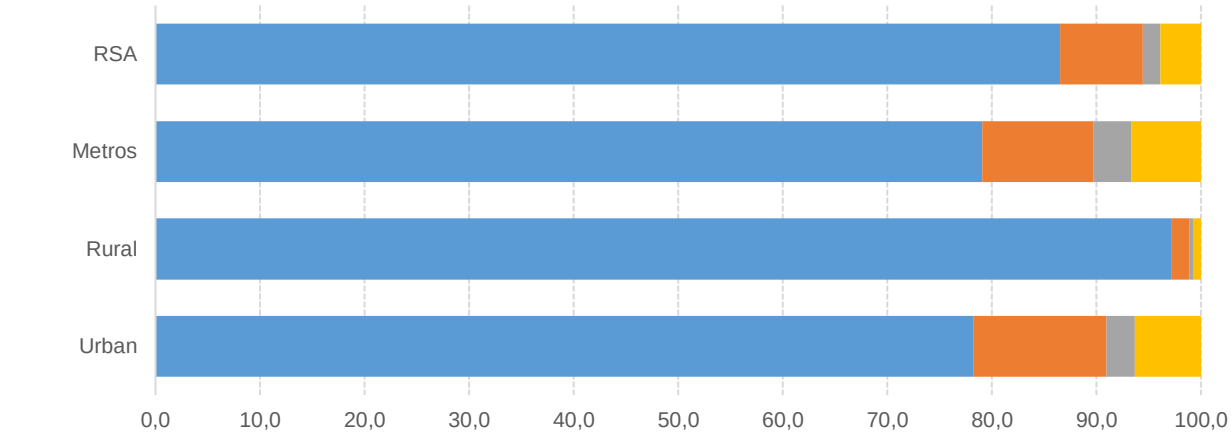
Figure 4.3: Distribution of children aged 0–6 years as a percentage of the total population by age and metropolitan area, 2020



Source: GHS 2020

Reflecting on the total distribution of the population in the metropolitan areas, Buffalo City and the City of Cape Town were home to the majority of children aged 5 and 6 years in 2020, followed by eThekwini and City of Johannesburg relative to other metropolitan areas.

Figure 4.4: Distribution of children aged 0–6 years as a percentage of the total population by rural/urban and metropolitan area, 2020



	Urban	Rural	Metros	RSA
Black African	78,2	97,1	79,1	86,5
Coloured	12,7	1,7	10,6	7,9
Indian/Asian	2,7	0,4	3,7	1,7
White	6,3	0,8	6,7	3,9

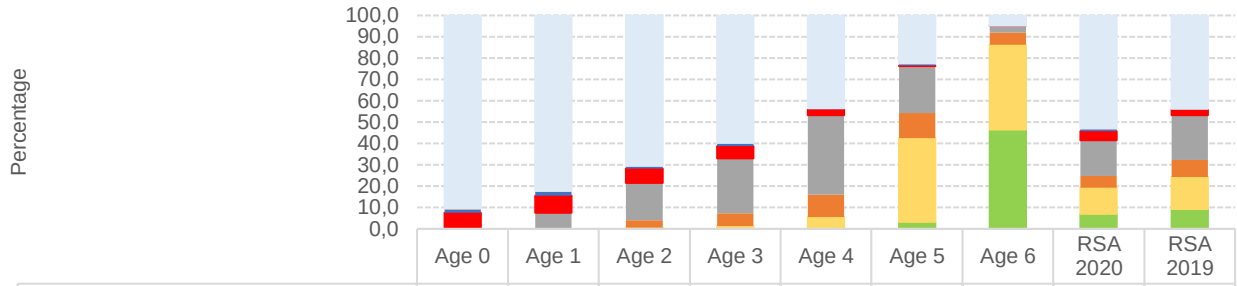
Source: GHS 2020

Figure 4.4 shows minimal variation amongst black African children aged 0–6 residing in urban (78,2%) and metropolitan areas (79,1%) in 2020. Howerer, there was a notable high percentage of black African children aged 0–6 residing in rural areas (97,1%), which is also higher than the national average (86,5%). Furthermore, there were very low percentages of coloured, white and Indian/Asian children residing in rural areas compared to the other geography types.

4.3 Attendance of ECD and school by children aged 0–6 and impact of COVID-19, 2020

The South African government had invested significantly in its policy of universal access for all children to ECD services from conception until the year they enter formal school, or until children turn seven. One of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicators envisaged that by 2030 all girls and boys aged 0–6 years will have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education. In South Africa, various types of educational child development care centres exist that include community-based early learning, playgroups or community-based early learning centres for children aged 0–2, standard nursery and pre-school facilities that follow formal curricula that cater mostly for children aged three or older. Crèches and educare centres are facilities that cater mostly for young children from infants to six years old. In some cases, these facilities may also offer Grade R classes. These schools normally have Grades 00, 000 and 0 (or Grade R), and are part of the junior school environment. Such establishments create better environments for children to transition between ECD and schools.

Figure 4.5: Attendance of ECD and school by children aged 0–6 years by age, 2020

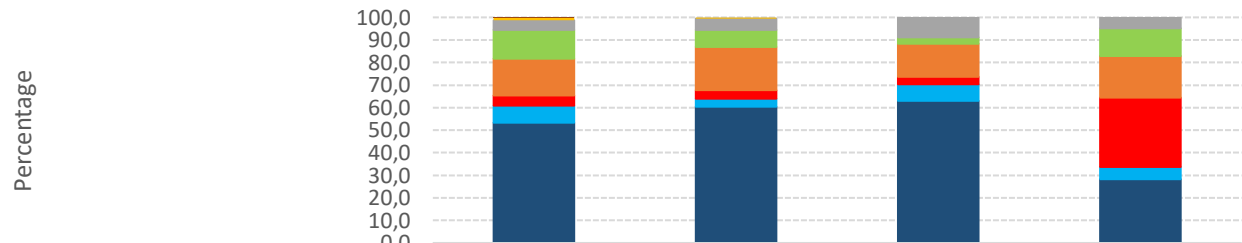


	Age 0	Age 1	Age 2	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5	Age 6	RSA 2020	RSA 2019
None	90,5	82,2	70,5	59,8	43,4	22,5	4,7	53,0	43,8
Other	0,4	0,3	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,1	0,1
Home based play group	1,5	1,9	1,2	1,3	0,6	1,1	0,0	1,1	0,1
Day mother/Gogo	6,8	8,0	6,7	5,7	2,7	0,3	0,0	4,3	2,9
Creche/educare centre	0,6	7,3	17,5	25,9	37,4	21,8	3,3	16,7	20,9
Pre-school/Nursery school/Grade 00 or 000	0,0	0,4	3,5	6,0	10,4	11,8	5,7	5,5	8,0
Grade R	0,0	0,0	0,4	1,1	5,0	39,2	39,8	12,1	15,0
School (Grade 1 or 2)	0,1	0,0	0,1	0,1	0,6	3,4	46,4	7,1	9,3

Source: GHS 2019–2020

The above figure shows the type of educational institutions attended by children aged 0–6 years in 2020, as well as the type of childcare arrangement used among those who did not attend ECD facilities. The graph also compares 2020 values to 2019 values. The type of childcare arrangement used among those who did not attend ECD facilities depends on the age of the child. In 2020, most young children aged up to three spend the day with their parents, foster parents or guardians, whilst those aged four and five attended pre-schools, crèche or educare centre or Grade R. The graph also shows that in 2020, nearly half (46,4%) of children aged 6 years attended school, close to 40% were attending Grade R and 4,7% were out of school or not attending any educational institution. Children aged 3–4 years old are expected to attend ECD learning centres whereas those aged 5–6 are expected to be enrolled in primary school. The table also shows there was a 9,2 percentage points increase in the percentage of children aged 0–6 who did not attend any educational facilities between 2019 and 2020. The highest decrease was observed among children attending crèche or educare centres (4,2 percentage points), followed by Grade R attendance (2,9 percentage points) and school attendance (2,2 percentage points).

Figure 4.6: Attendance of ECD and school by children aged 0–6 years by population group, 2020



	Black African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White
Other	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0
Home-based playgroup	1,2	0,6	0,0	0,0
Day mother/gogo	4,2	4,9	8,8	4,8
Grade R	12,7	7,5	2,8	12,3
Creche/educare centre	16,4	19,2	14,8	18,6
Pre school/Nursery school/Grade 00 or 000	4,5	3,9	3,3	30,7
School	7,5	3,5	7,3	5,4
None	53,3	60,4	63,1	28,3

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 4.6 illustrates the demographic breakdown of children attending the various types of ECD facilities. Among white children aged 0–6, three in ten (30,7%) would most likely attend pre-school or nursery schools while close to 19% would be at crèche or educare centres. This amounts to altogether (49,3%) half of white children attending out-of-home early learning programmes. In comparison, only 23,1% among coloureds were attending out-of-home early learning programmes. Indians/Asians also had high percentages of children who did not attend any educational facility (63%). Among black African children aged 0–6, close to five per cent would most likely attend pre-school or nursery schools while close to 16% would be at crèche or educare centres. This amounts to altogether 21% of black African children attending out-of-home early learning programmes.

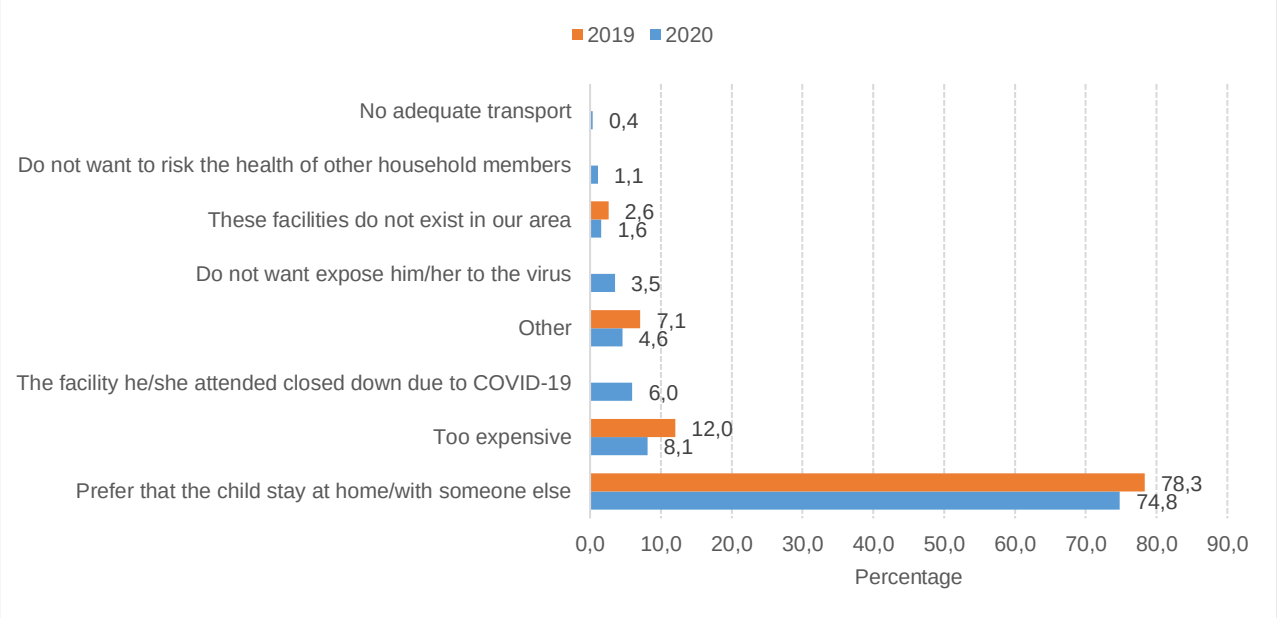
Table 4.1: Attendance of ECD and school by children aged 0–6 years by the type of dwelling occupied, 2020

Type of dwelling	Grade R	Pre-school	Crèche/ educare centre	Day mother/ gogo	Home-based playgroup	School (Grade 1 or 2)	None	Other
Dwelling on a separate stand or yard or on farm	76,6	84,0	76,5	76,2	95,9	79,7	72,6	58,6
Traditional dwelling	7,5	3,2	4,5	4,6	0,0	12,4	9,4	0,0
Flat or apartment in a block of flats	3,1	4,2	2,4	3,0	4,1	0,0	1,7	0,0
Dwelling/house in complex or semi-detached house	2,8	0,0	1,9	1,3	0,0	1,3	3,7	0,0
Dwelling/room/flatlet in backyard or on property	3,7	2,5	5,1	4,6	0,0	2,1	3,7	41,4
Informal dwelling	6,0	6,1	9,5	10,3	0,0	4,5	8,6	0,0
Other	0,4	0,0	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,3	0,0
Total	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**	**100,0**

Source: GHS 2020

Table 4.1 shows that in 2020, the majority of households with children aged 0–6 years who attended ECD facilities or schools stayed in dwellings built on a separate stand, yard or farm. Close to ten per cent of households with children attending at day mothers/gogo stayed in informal dwellings. Similarly, close to ten per cent of households with children attending crèches or educare centres stayed in informal dwellings.

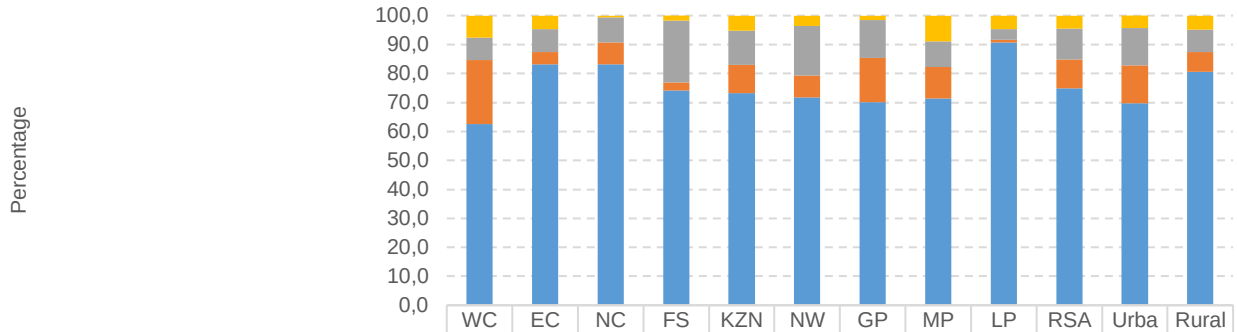
Figure 4.7: Main reasons for individuals aged 0–6 years currently not attending an educational institution, 2020



Source: GHS 2019–2020

Figure 4.7 highlights the main reasons provided by households with children aged 0–6 years who did not attend any educational programmes/facilities. The graph also compares 2020 values to 2019 values for some of the options given. Overall in 2020, close to 75% of children aged 0–6 years were spending most of their time at home with their parents or guardians, which is lower by close to four percentage points compared to 2019. In 2020, close to eight per cent of households cited the affordability of these institutions as the main reason for children not attending an educational institution compared to 12% of households who gave similar reasons in 2019. Furthermore in 2020, six per cent of households reported that the facility that the children attended was closed due to COVID-19 as their main reason for lack of attendance. Approximately four per cent of households reported not wanting to expose their children to COVID-19. Only a small percentage (0,4%) of households reported that the distance to school or no adequate transport for children to educational institutions were their primary concerns for non-attendance of the children.

Figure 4.8: Main reasons for individuals aged 0–6 years currently not attending an educational institution by province, 2020

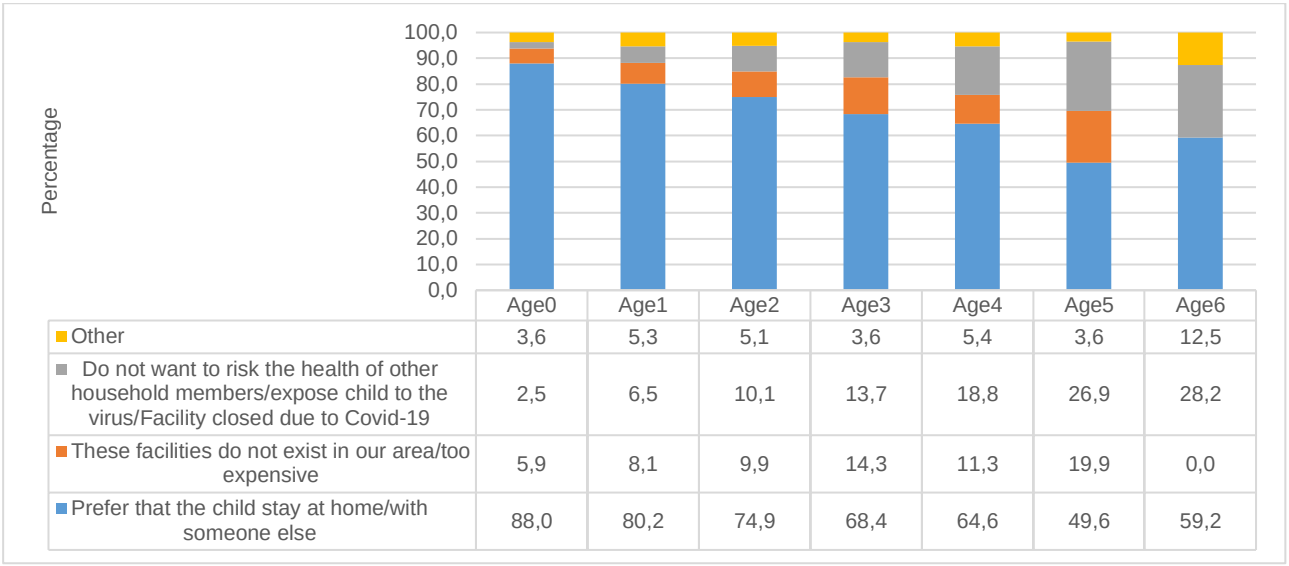


	WC	EC	NC	FS	KZN	NW	GP	MP	LP	RSA	Urba	Rural
Other	7,6	4,7	0,6	1,7	5,3	3,6	1,5	8,9	4,7	4,6	4,3	4,9
Do not want to risk the health of other household members/expose child to the virus/Facility closed due to Covid-19	7,7	7,9	8,6	21,4	11,7	17,0	13,2	8,8	3,6	10,5	13,0	7,8
These facilities do not exist in our area/too expensive	22,1	4,2	7,7	2,9	9,8	7,6	15,3	10,9	1,0	10,1	13,0	6,7
Prefer that the child stay at home/with someone else	62,6	83,2	83,1	74,1	73,3	71,8	70,1	71,4	90,7	74,8	69,7	80,7

Source: GHS 2020

The above graph presents the reasons why children aged 0–6 did not attend any educational programmes or facilities by province. Two of the main reasons that were given relate to the COVID-19 pandemic in the community, where facility closures prevented children from attending school. Free State and North West were the provinces mostly linked to COVID-19-related reasons for non-attendance of children (21,4% and 17,0%, respectively). This reason was twice as prominent in urban areas compared to rural areas (13,0% and 7,8%, respectively). Interestingly, the non-existence or cost of educational programmes for non-participation of the children aged 0–6 was the highest in Western Cape (22,1%) relative to Gauteng at 15,3%. This reason was also more common in urban than in rural areas (13% and 6,7%, respectively). In rural areas, close to 81% of parents preferred that their children stayed at home with a parent or guardian or under the care of someone else.

Figure 4.9: Main reasons for individuals aged 0–6 years currently not attending an educational institution by age, 2020

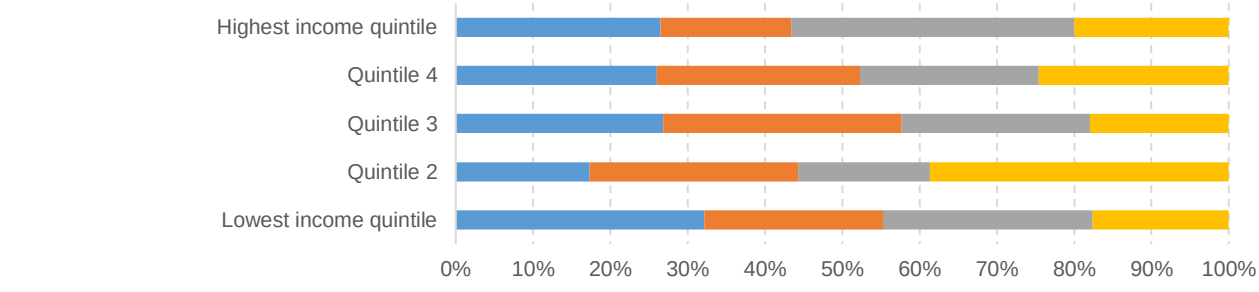


	Age0	Age1	Age2	Age3	Age4	Age5	Age6
Other	3,6	5,3	5,1	3,6	5,4	3,6	12,5
Do not want to risk the health of other household members/expose child to the virus/Facility closed due to Covid-19	2,5	6,5	10,1	13,7	18,8	26,9	28,2
These facilities do not exist in our area/too expensive	5,9	8,1	9,9	14,3	11,3	19,9	0,0
Prefer that the child stay at home/with someone else	88,0	80,2	74,9	68,4	64,6	49,6	59,2

Source: GHS 2020

Overall, almost eight out of ten children aged 0–1 years were not attending any educational institutions, mainly because the parents prefer that their child to stay at home with parents or guardians or under the care of someone else (88% of children younger than one and 80,2% of one-year-olds). Among 5–6-years-olds who did not attend an educational institution in 2020, more than half had parents who preferred their children to stay at home under the care of parents or guardians (49,6% and 59,2%, respectively). Among six-year-olds, close to 28% could not attend due to COVID-19-related issues while the same was true for close to 27% among 5-year-olds and close to 19% among four-year-olds.

Figure 4.10: Main reasons for individuals aged 0–6 years currently not attending an educational institution by household income quintiles, 2020



	Lowest income quintile	Quintile 2	Quintile 3	Quintile 4	Highest income quintile
Prefer that the child stay at home/with someone else	21,6	18,2	19,9	20,3	20,1
These facilities do not exist in our area/too expensive	15,5	28,2	22,9	20,5	12,9
Do not want to risk the health of other household members/expose child to the virus/Facility closed due to Covid-19	18,2	17,9	18,1	18,0	27,8
Other	11,8	40,5	13,3	19,2	15,2

Source: GHS 2020

Figure 4.10 presents the main reasons for individuals aged 0–6 years not attending an educational institution by household income quintiles in 2020. COVID-19-related reasons for non-attendance was strongly observed among richest households compared to the other income groups (27,8% and close to 18%, respectively).

4.4 Conclusion

Policy makers in South Africa have accepted that fair access to quality early childhood education and care can strengthen the foundations of lifelong learning for all children. Government also acknowledges the need for substantial public investment in early childhood education and the necessary infrastructure to support the broad educational and social needs of young children. However, a large percentage of children in South Africa were exposed to home environments that did not provide for cognitive development or play to stimulate learning, neither did they participate in formal learning activities. The situation was exacerbated in 2020 as many young children were kept home due to COVID-19 lockdown requirements, as most of the ECD facilities closed down in response to the lockdown to contain this virus. Though some managed to re-opened, some remained permanently shut down. However, research data from the health system showed risks to children from COVID-19 were much lower than the risks to adults, yet caregivers did not want to expose their children to the virus. Therefore, they preferred to keep the children at home with someone else. Nationally in 2020, among children aged 0–6 more than half (52,9%) did not attend any educational facilities, while 27,8% attended formal ECD learning activities and 19,3% attended Grade R and school. Similarly, among four-year-olds, 12% did not attend an ECD facility whereas close to seven per cent of children aged five or six did not attend any educational facility. Even though close to one-third of the six-year-olds attended Grade R, one in two children (12%) in this age group were still in pre-school and close to four per cent were attending crèche.

Chapter 5: Summary and conclusion

In 2020, schools closed for the first time on 18 March 2020 as part of the national lockdown in South Africa. The 2020 academic year was planned to have 42 weeks of teaching that amounts on average to 200 actual teaching days. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this was reduced to 37 weeks, amounting on average to 160 actual teaching days (40 teaching days were forfeited).

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted education across all education sectors in South Africa, and while some schools managed to carry on using online resources and rotation systems, some students have been unable to return to school as a result of this disruption. To ensure all students have the opportunity to benefit from daily attendance and traditional timetabling in a context of reduced class sizes, the DBE introduced make-shift classes to alternate students throughout the day when they cannot accommodate them all on site. Some of the schools offered remote learning for educational continuity. However, the lockdown involved a great deal of independent and self-instruction for which many learners were not prepared. Caregivers also lacked the skills and time to assist their children in home learning. Remote learning required an adequate home environment in order to be effective. Many children did not have convenient study spaces and had to cope with shared spaces, interruptions and distractions from other family members. In 2020, nearly nine per cent of households with individuals aged 5–24 stayed in informal settlements while close to five per cent stayed in dwellings, rooms or flatlets in the backyard of another property.

In South Africa, the reliance on the school feeding scheme was common for most learners to access their main daily meal. In 2020, close to 11,9 million individuals aged 5–24 attending schools relied on free meals provided by schools with the majority of these individuals (2,6 million) being residents of KwaZulu-Natal and 2 million residents of Gauteng. Overall, more than three-quarters (76,6%) of individuals aged 5–24 daily consumed the food provided as part of the school feeding scheme, while nine per cent consumed the food a few times a week, and seven per cent only consumed it sometimes. With the closure of schools in 2020, most of these learners were prevented from taking advantage of this service.

South Africa scrambled to make many alternative remote learning options available to learners, from radio- or television-based instruction to internet-based instruction. However, each of these resources required access to the necessary technology or tools by households to benefit from these methods of instruction. In 2020, approximately seven per cent of households with individuals aged 5–24 years had internet access at home. Close to two-thirds (66,8%) of households were accessing the internet through their mobile phones, while close to 16% had access at work and 13,1% used public wi-fi services. The urban-rural digital divide in access to internet by households with children aged 5–24 was evident in 2020, as close to 13% of households with children aged 5–24 who stayed in metropolitan areas had access to the internet at home compared to less than one per cent of households in rural areas. Strong inequality by income in access to internet was observed as close to 57% of households with children aged 5–24 from the highest household income quintile were more likely to access the internet at home compared to 8,5% of households in the lowest household income quintile. Broadcast remote learning had a higher potential reach to households in South Africa as close to 91% of households in South Africa had access to television sets, and close to two-thirds (66,1%) had access to pay TV in 2020.

However, not all schools offered remote learning options to their students. Nationally, close to six per cent of individuals aged 5–24 years participated in remote learning in 2020. A participation gap in remote learning exists by population group as whites were three times more likely than black Africans to participate in remote learning in 2020 (18,3% and 5,3%, respectively). Close to 91% of black Africans aged 5–24 attended schools that did not offer remote learning options compared to 63,3% among whites.

The 2020 lockdown had different effects on children depending on their age. From 2019 to 2020, there was a 9,2 percentage points increase in the percentage of children aged 0–6 who did not attend any educational facilities. The highest decrease was observed among children attending crèche or educare centres (4,2 percentage points), followed by Grade R attendance (2,9 percentage points) and school attendance (2,2 percentage points). Close to six per cent of the children in this age group did not attend school because the facilities were closed due to COVID-19, while 3,5% were not sent to the facilities due to fear of exposing them to the virus. Non-attendance of school was the highest among children aged 5–13 as 779 979 children were out of school in 2020. This amounts to close to 38% of out-of-school children among 5-year-olds and 12% among 6-year-olds.

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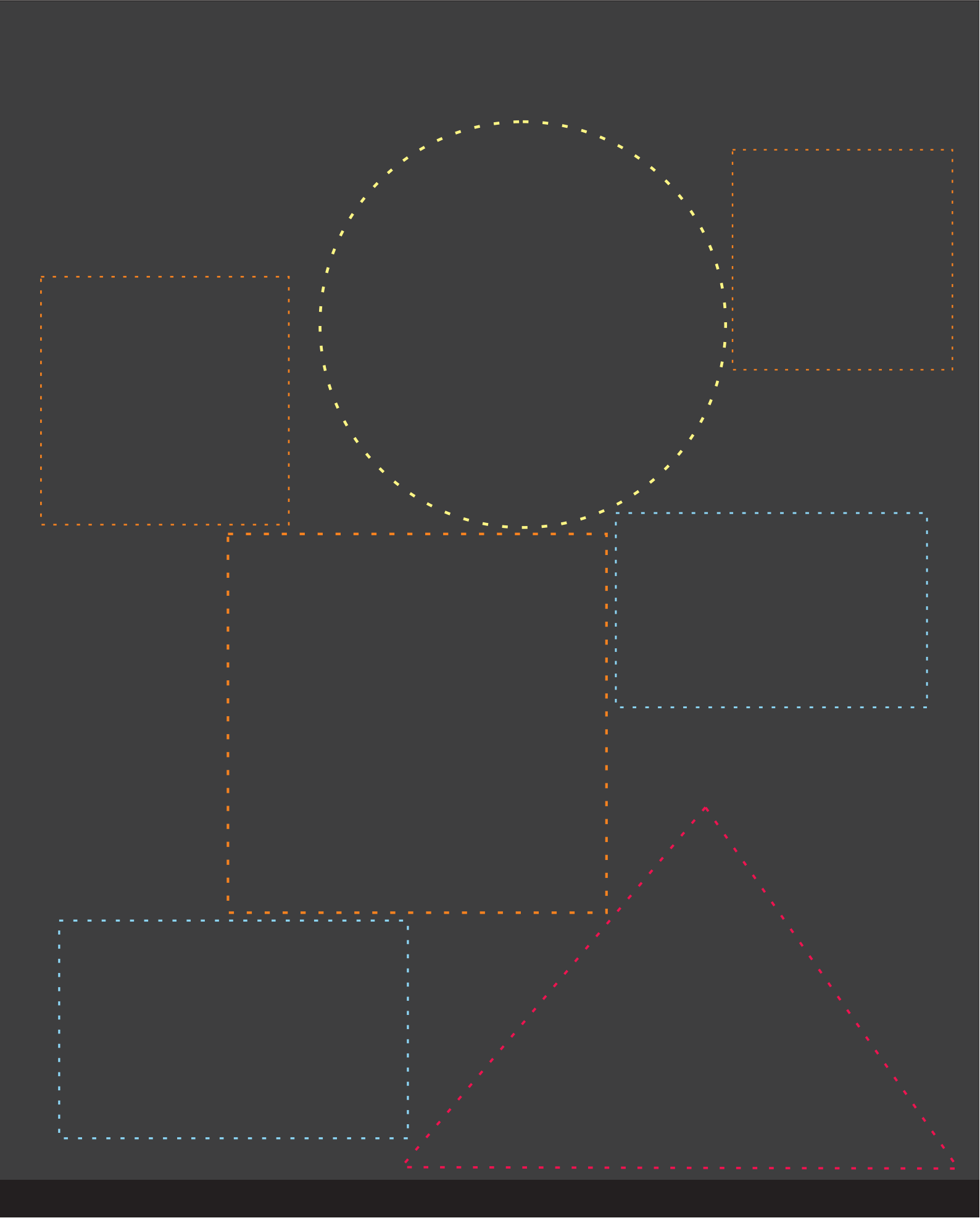

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