

# DIGITAL ACTIVISM

Transformative potential of online platforms in amplifying girls and women's voices, advocating for environmental sustainability and catalyzing meaningful action

**Florence BLONDEL**

**@Floramujaasi @PopnMatters**



POPULATION CONNECTION January 23 2024

# Outline of the presentation

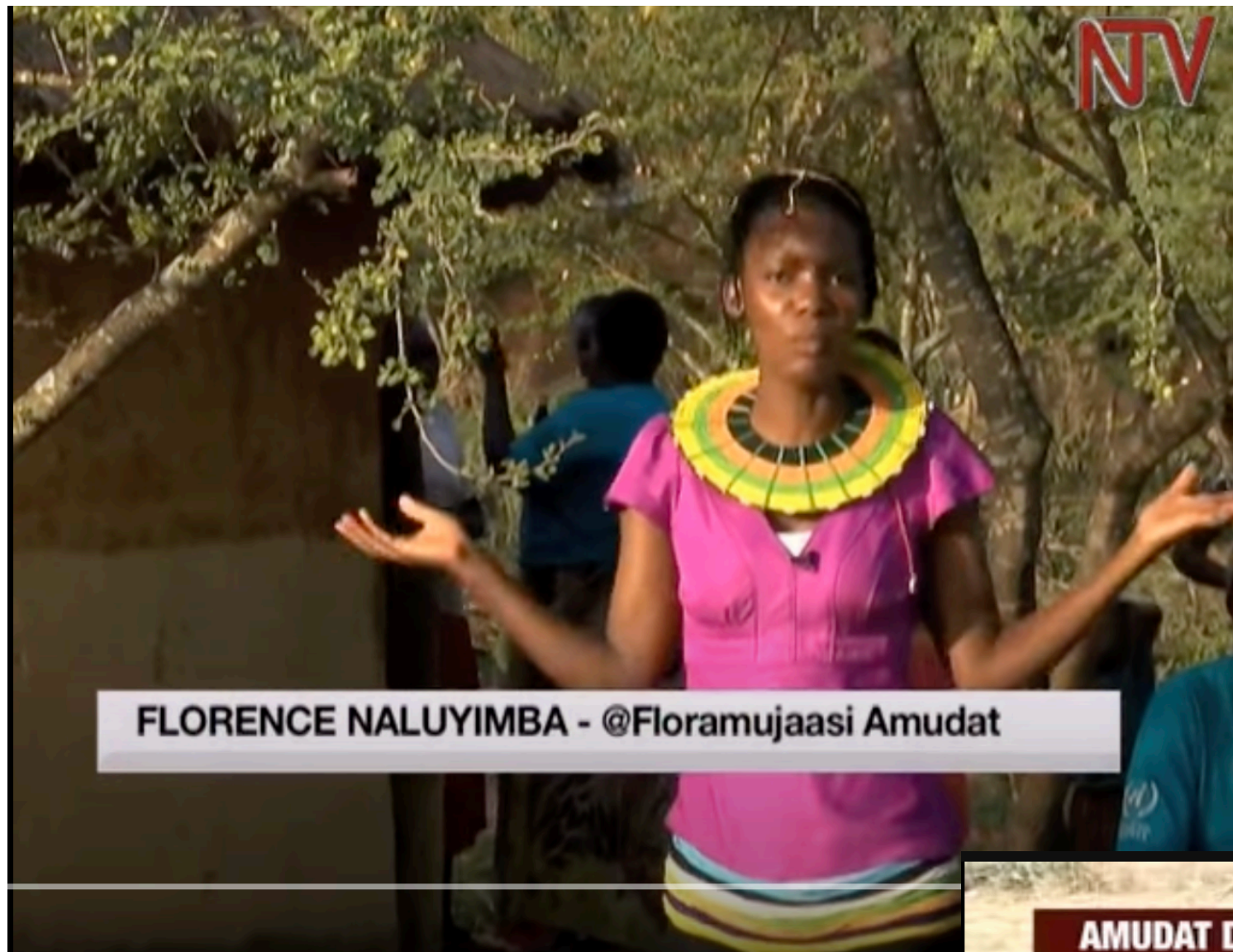
- My Background
- Demographic trends in my country
- Why is TFR still high or stagnant in SSA (Uganda)/implications
- Environment
- Solutions (education and family planning)
- Digital Activism
- Q & A



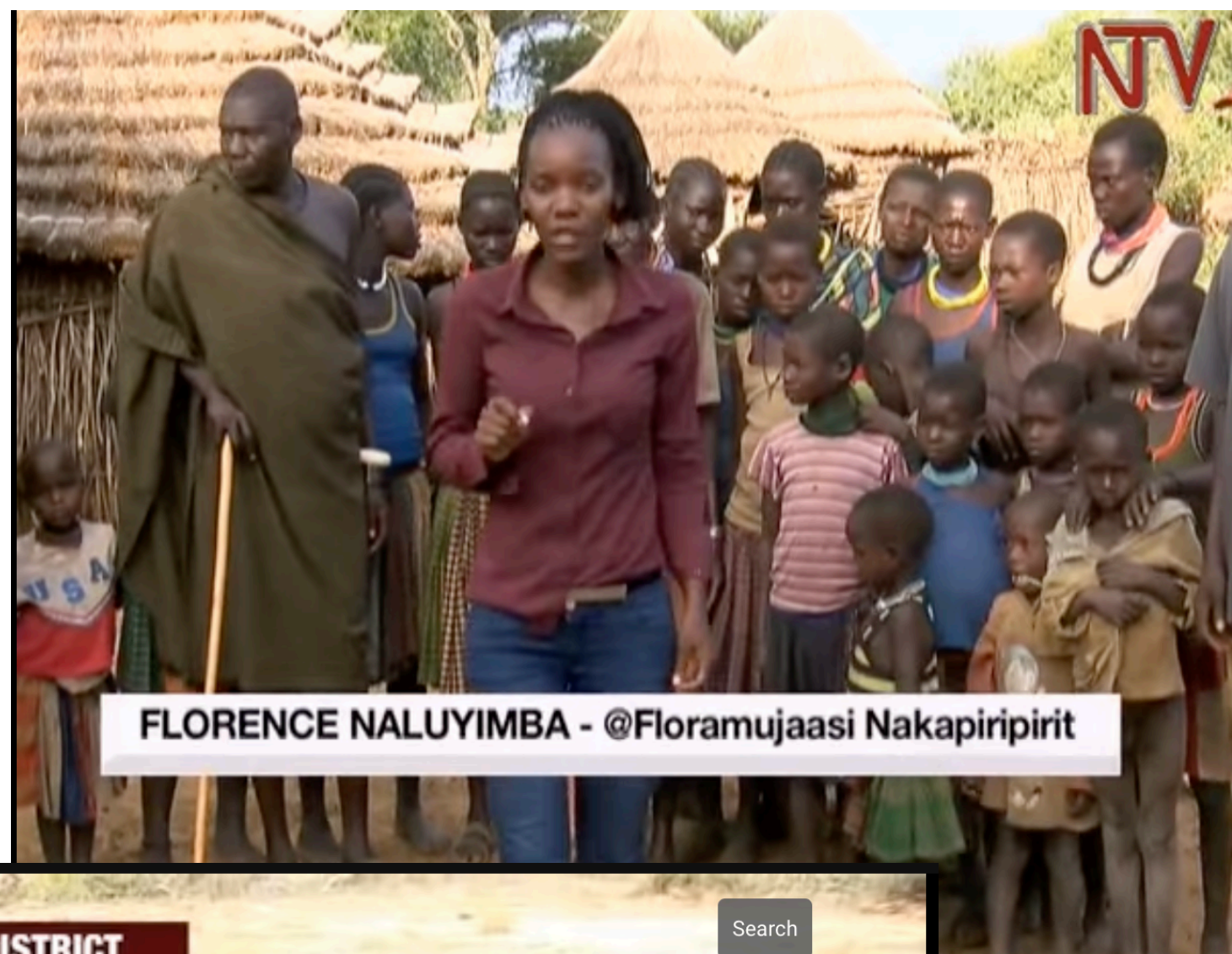
# BACKGROUND

- Born and raised in Uganda, only left 'permanently' in 2015
- From a large/polygamous family
- Education, highest attainment, masters in science, population and development (LSE, UK)
- Career: Advocating for young girls and women plus experiencing hunger and poverty pushed me into journalism and activism





FLORENCE NALUYIMBA - @Floramujaasi Amudat



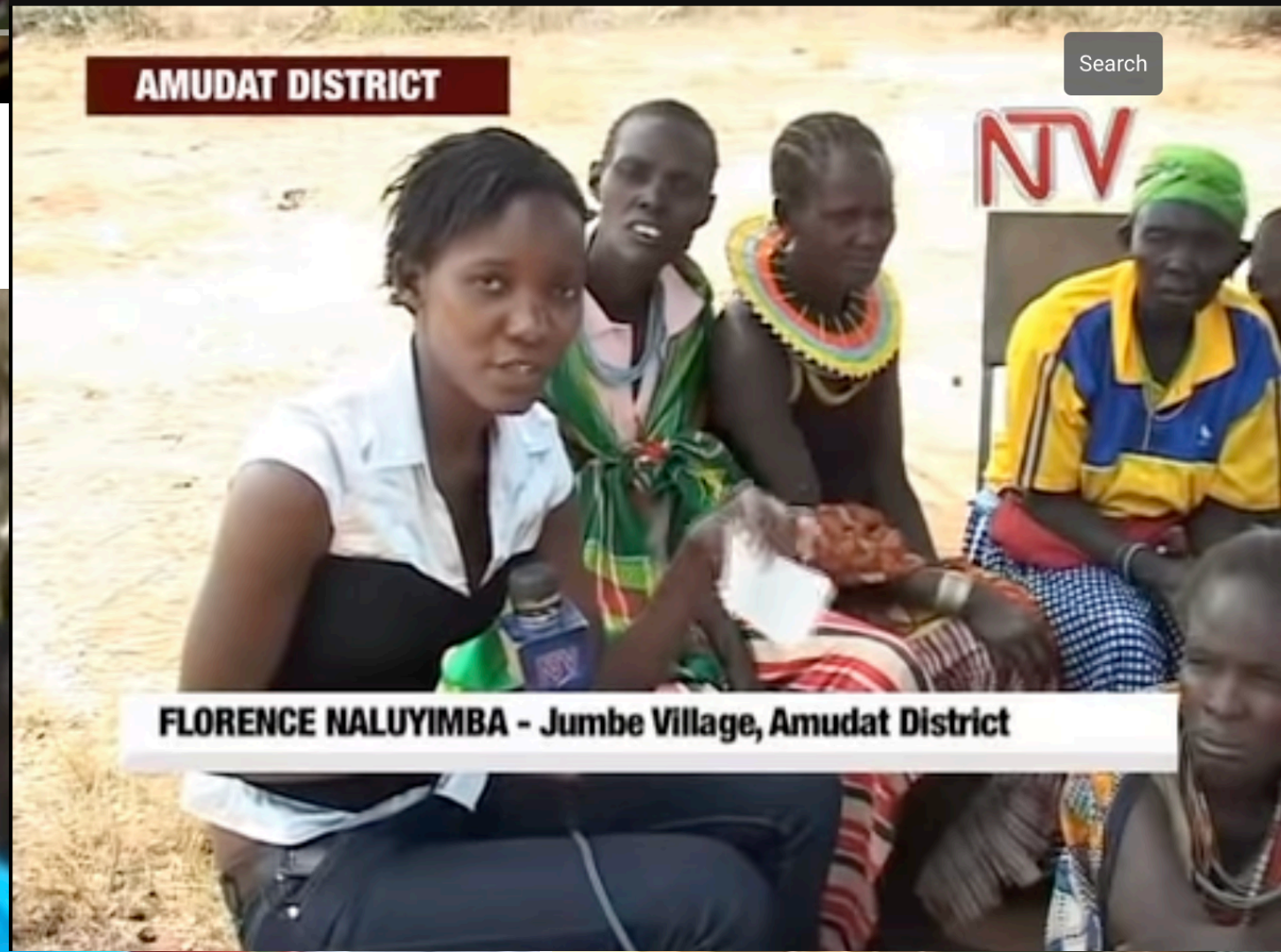
FLORENCE NALUYIMBA - @Floramujaasi Nakapiripirit



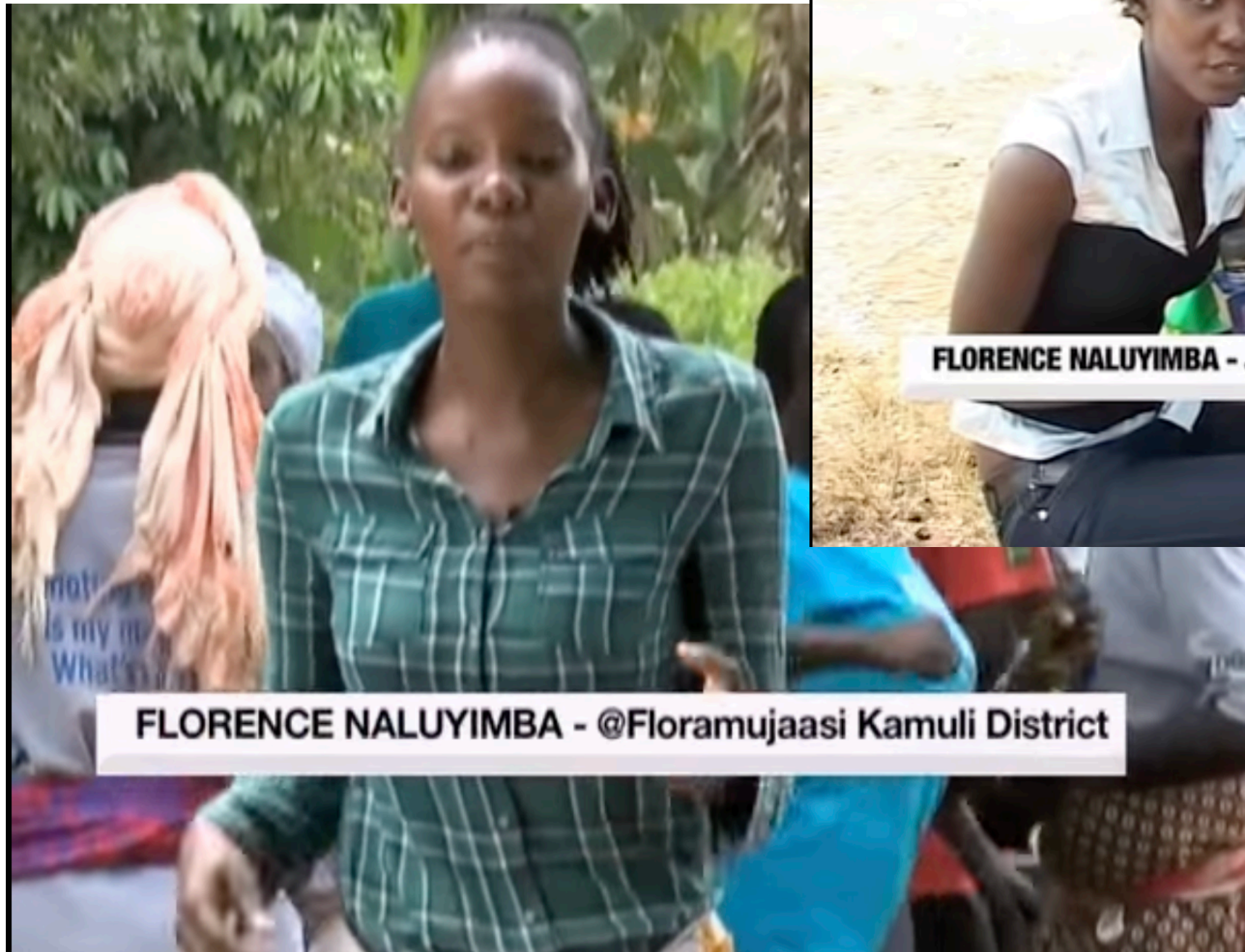
FLORENCE NALUYIMBA - Yumbe District Hospital, West Nile



FLORENCE NALUYIMBA - Nakaseke District



FLORENCE NALUYIMBA - Jumbe Village, Amudat District



FLORENCE NALUYIMBA - @Floramujaasi Kamuli District



FLORENCE NALUYIMBA - Nwoya District



FLORENCE NALUYIMBA - Kawempe @Floramujaasi

CHILD HEALTH  
UGANDA FALLS SHORT ON MDG GOAL  
FIGHTING FOR WEST BROM FUTURE

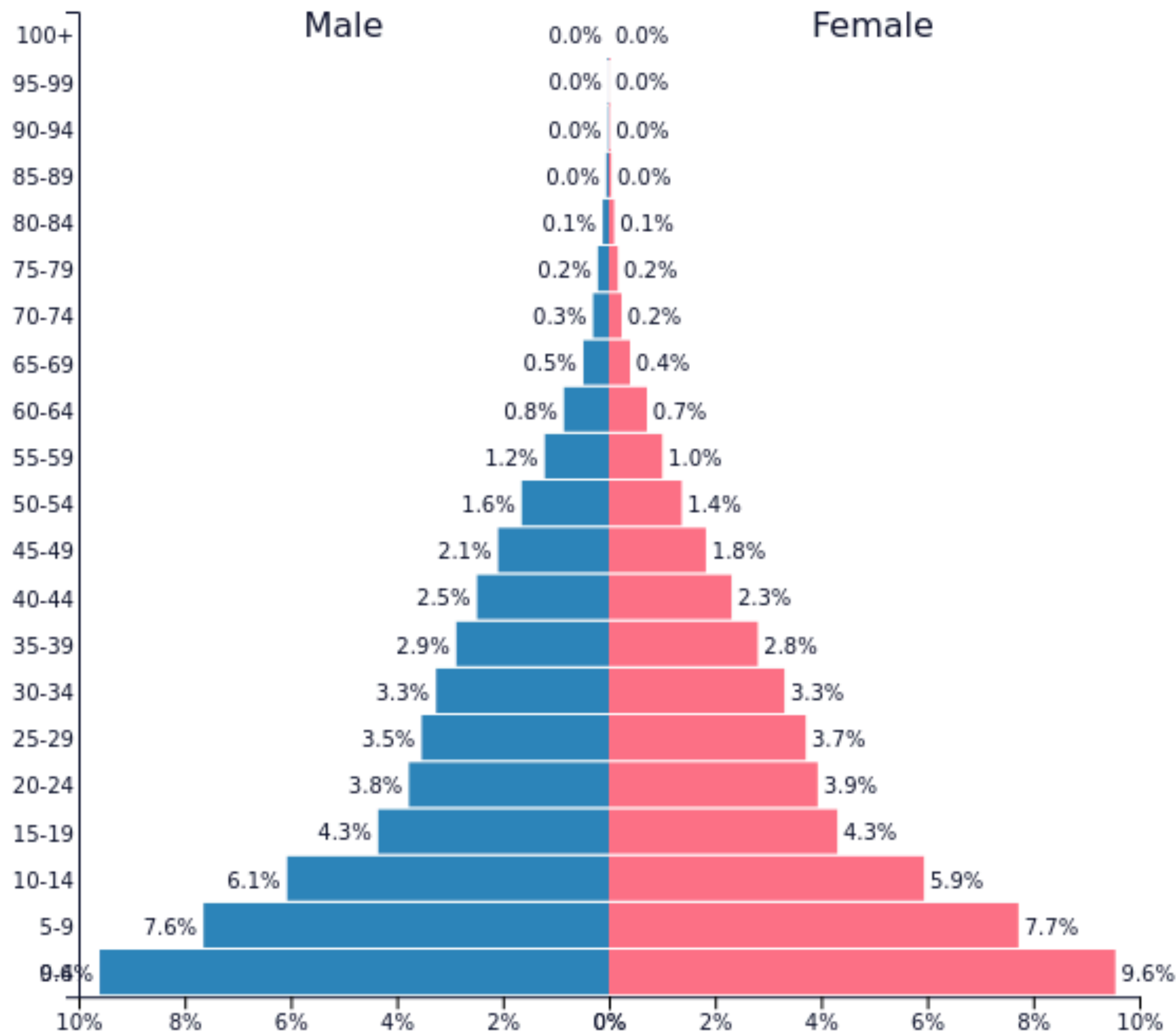


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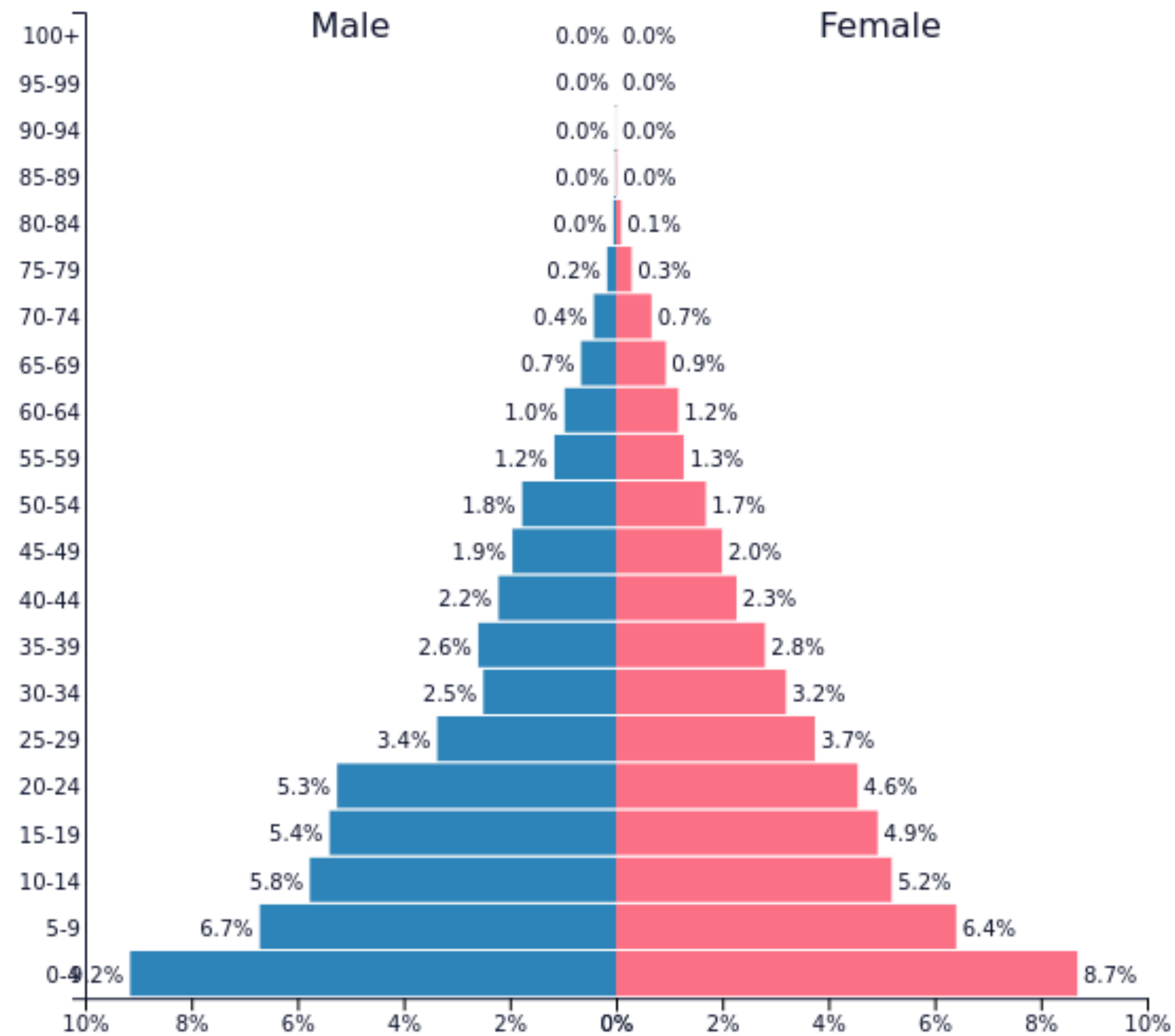
# DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

- 47 million people. The population growth rate is above 3% per year.
- TFR is 5.4
- Mortality, 64 deaths/1000 live births under 5, maternal 336 /100k live births (target is under 70)
- A young population, big youth bulge, 50% of population is under 15 years! This is characteristic of high fertility and low life expectancy. Despite child mortality falling, we still have a high fertility rate
- GDP per capita \$964 (fy21/22) / US \$76K \$46K
- Per capita health expenditure about \$16 UBOS WB \$33 | US \$12K UK \$6K
- Gender Inequality 0.53 | only 38% of pupils finish primary school
- CPR 39% (35% modern)



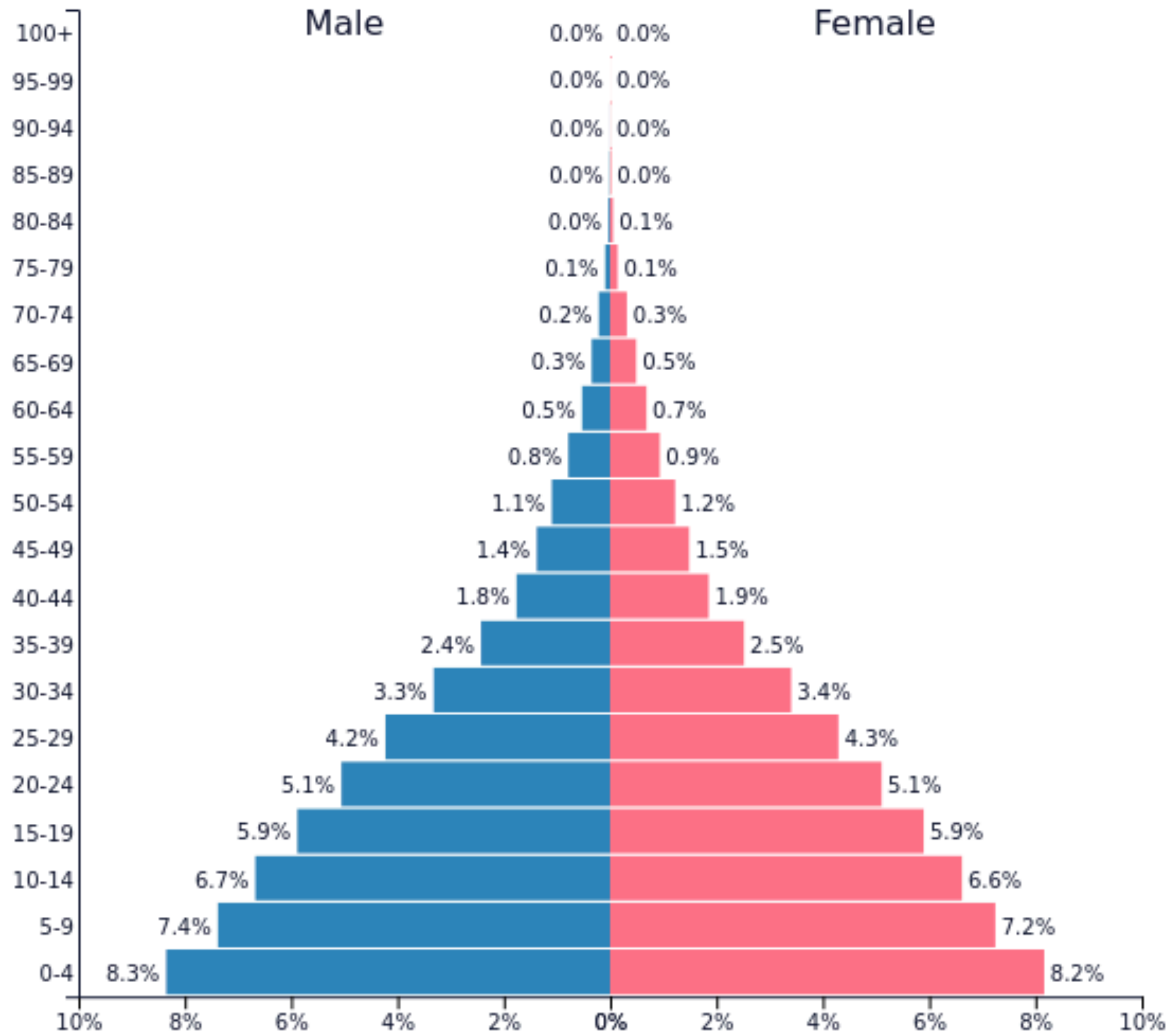
PopulationPyramid.net

**Uganda - 1960**  
Population: **7,617,745**

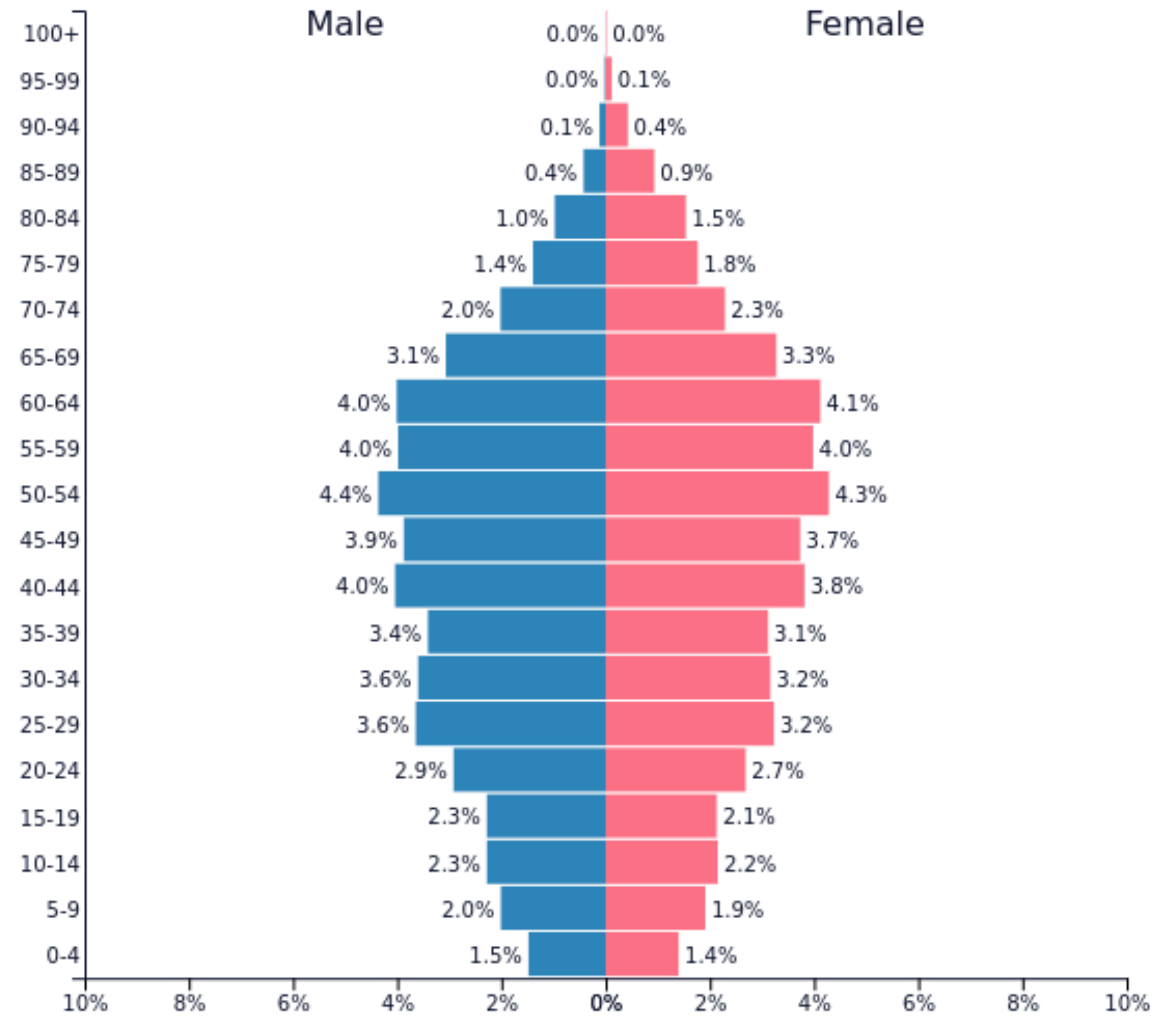


PopulationPyramid.net

**Republic of Korea - 1960**  
Population: **25,817,528**



**Uganda - 2023**  
Population: **48,582,334**



**Republic of Korea - 2023**  
Population: **51,784,058**

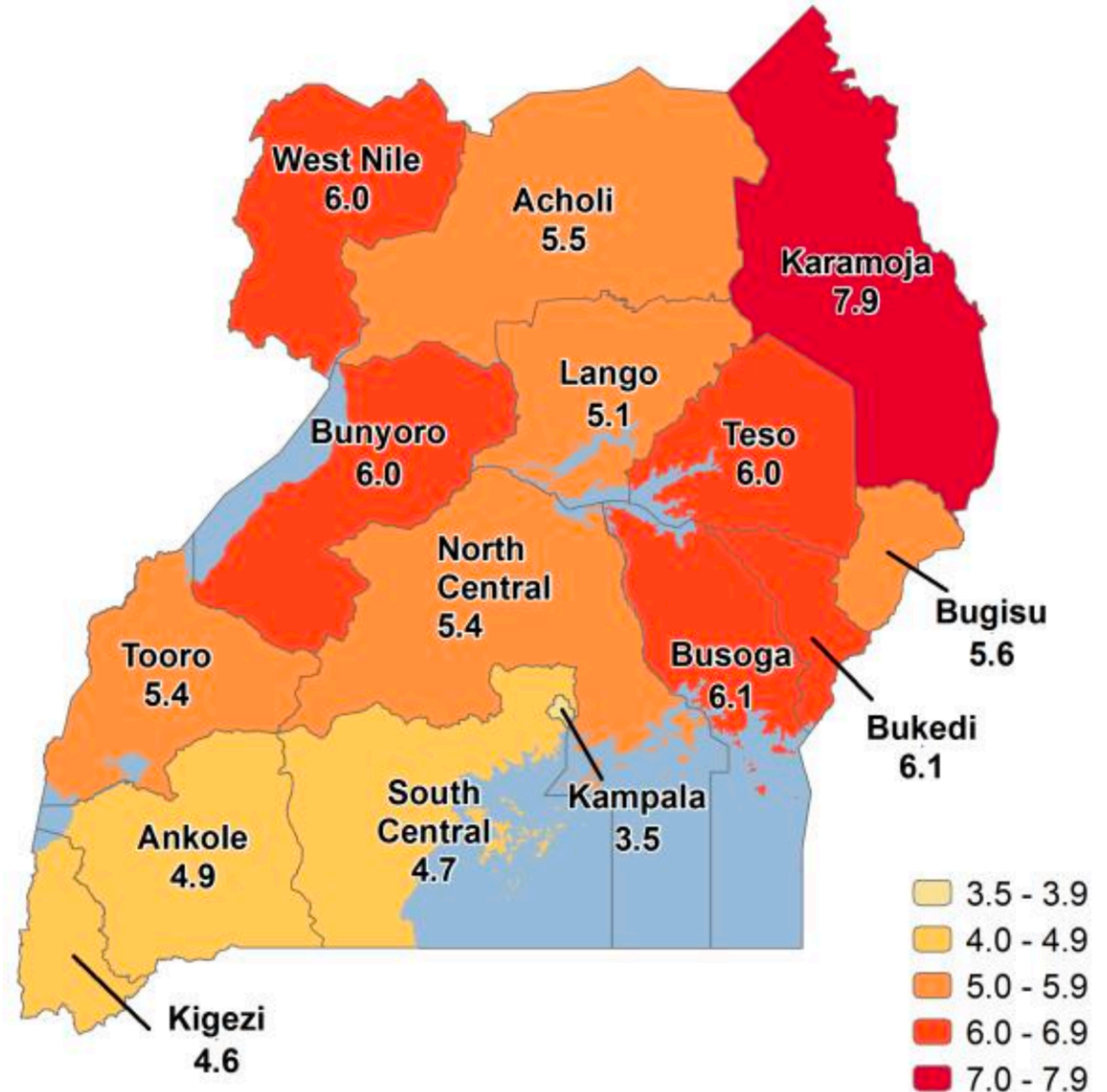


# FERTILITY RATE

- 5.4 national
- AGE SPECIFIC/1000
- **10 to 14 years, 2**
- **15-19 years 132**
- 20-24 years 260
- 40-45 years 14
- Women in rural areas have 2 more children

**Figure 5.3 Fertility by region**

*Total fertility rate for the 3 years before the survey*



# WHY IS TFR HIGH

- High unmet need for family planning
- Low modern contraceptive use and discontinuation, mainly due to side effects, Partner opposition
- Large desired family size of 5.4 children for men and 4.8 for women
- High teenage pregnancy
- Son preference by couples/society
- Low median age at marriage & childbearing

# CONTRACEPTIVE PREVALENCE

- Knowledge is universal- 99% via radio mostly
- Married: 39% all methods, 35% modern contraception
- Unmarried: 51% all methods, 47% modern
- Unmet need 28% (they want to limit and space)
- **If met, contraceptive prevalence would be 67%**
- Demand for contraception has increased now at almost 70%, that's great but it needs to be met. Only about 50% is being met by modern methods.
- About 6 in 10 women want to use a method in the future, will they get it?

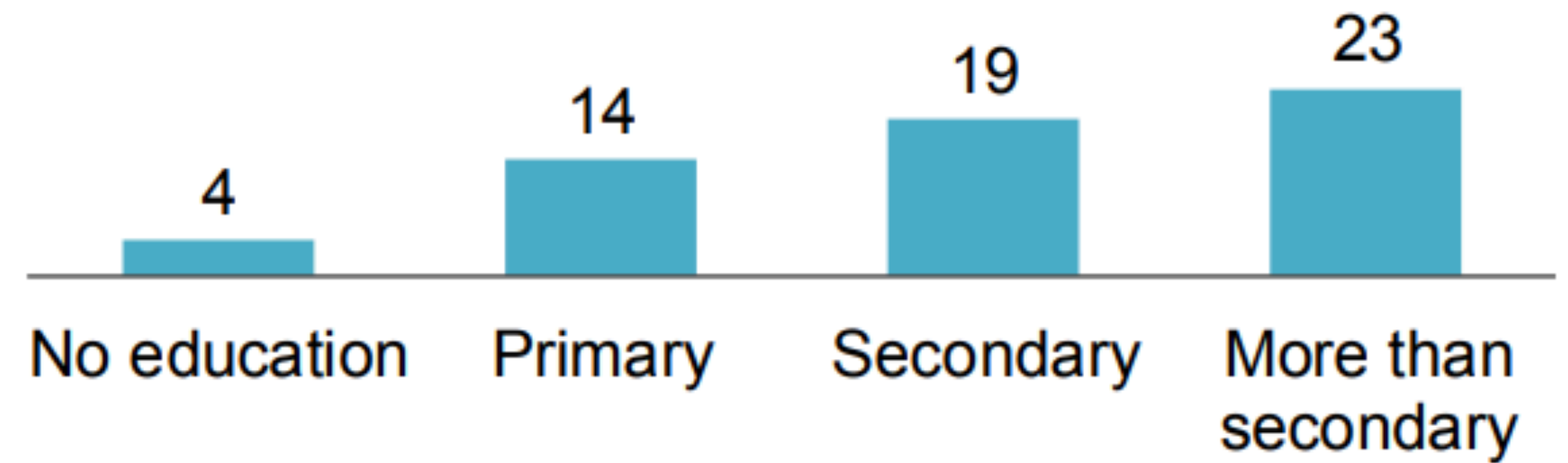
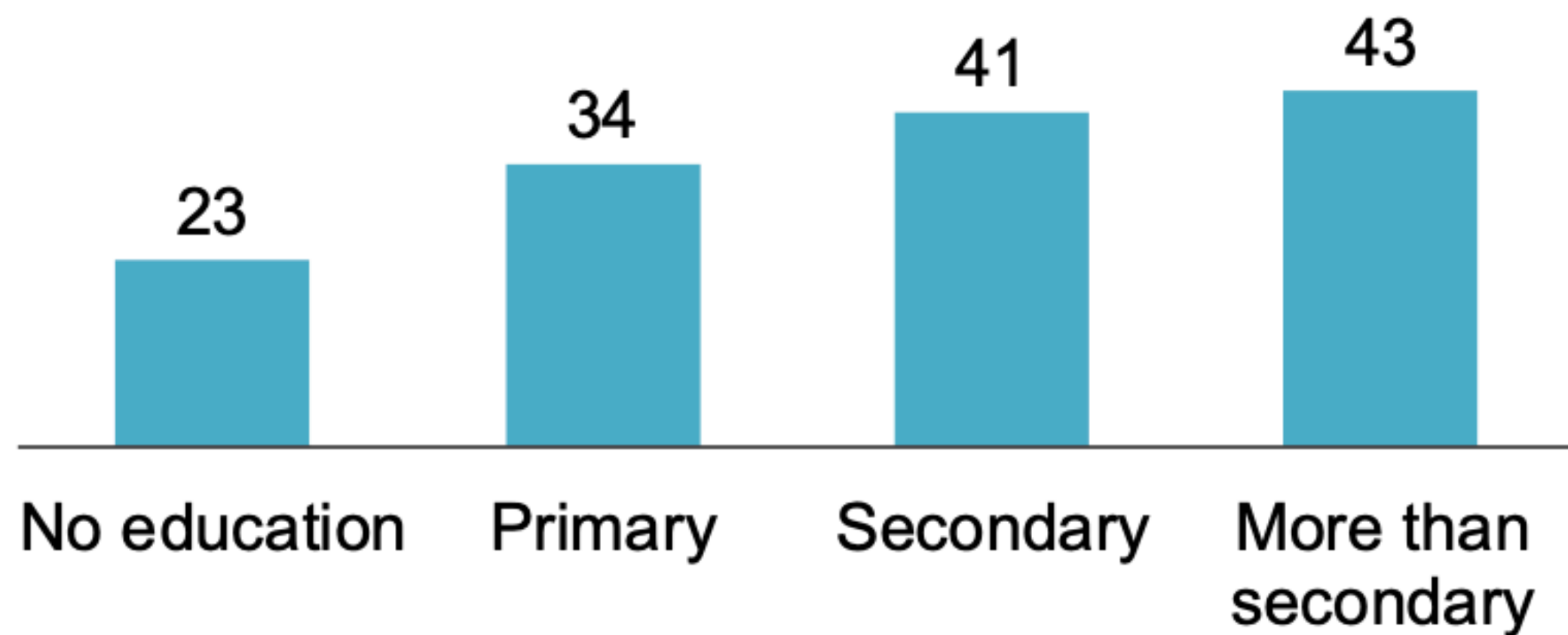


# EDUCATION MATTERS

Use of modern contraceptive methods by education  
Percentage of currently married women age 15-4

- Uganda

Nigeria

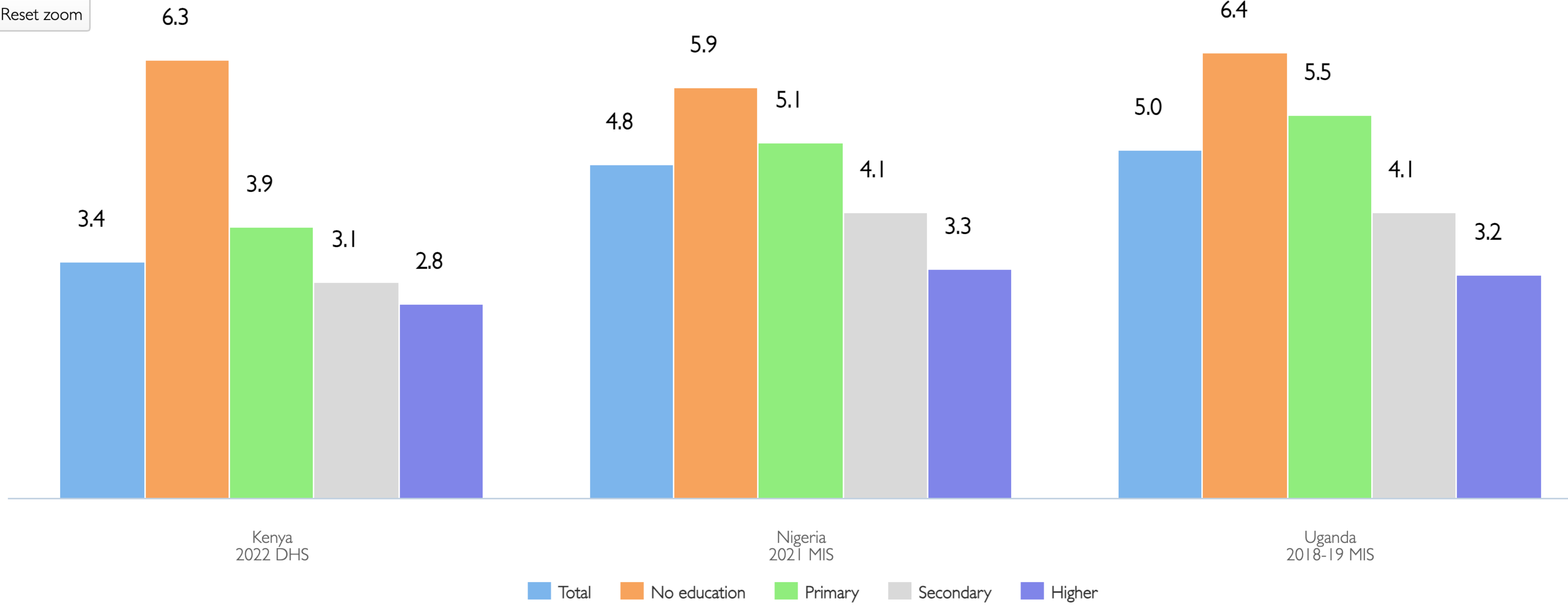


# EDUCATION and TFR

## Total fertility rate 15-49

Total fertility rate for the three years preceding the survey for age group 15-49 expressed per woman

Reset zoom





# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- The expansion of the area under cultivation (Increasingly, natural forests, grasslands and wetlands are being replaced with subsistence agriculture and/or degradation into inferior natural land cover)
- Deforestation central forest reserves has reduced from 2.1% to 1.0%/year compared to the deforestation on private land at 4.4%/year.
- Biodiversity lost at an accelerating rate
- Stress on water resources
- Fossil fuel demand (climate change)
- Urbanisation



# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS



*“All our environmental problems become easier to solve with fewer people, and harder - and ultimately impossible - to solve with ever more people.”*

– Sir David Attenborough, Naturalist | Population Matters Patron



# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

*“Poor people will cut the last tree to cook the last meal. The more you degrade the environment, the more you dig deeper into poverty.”*

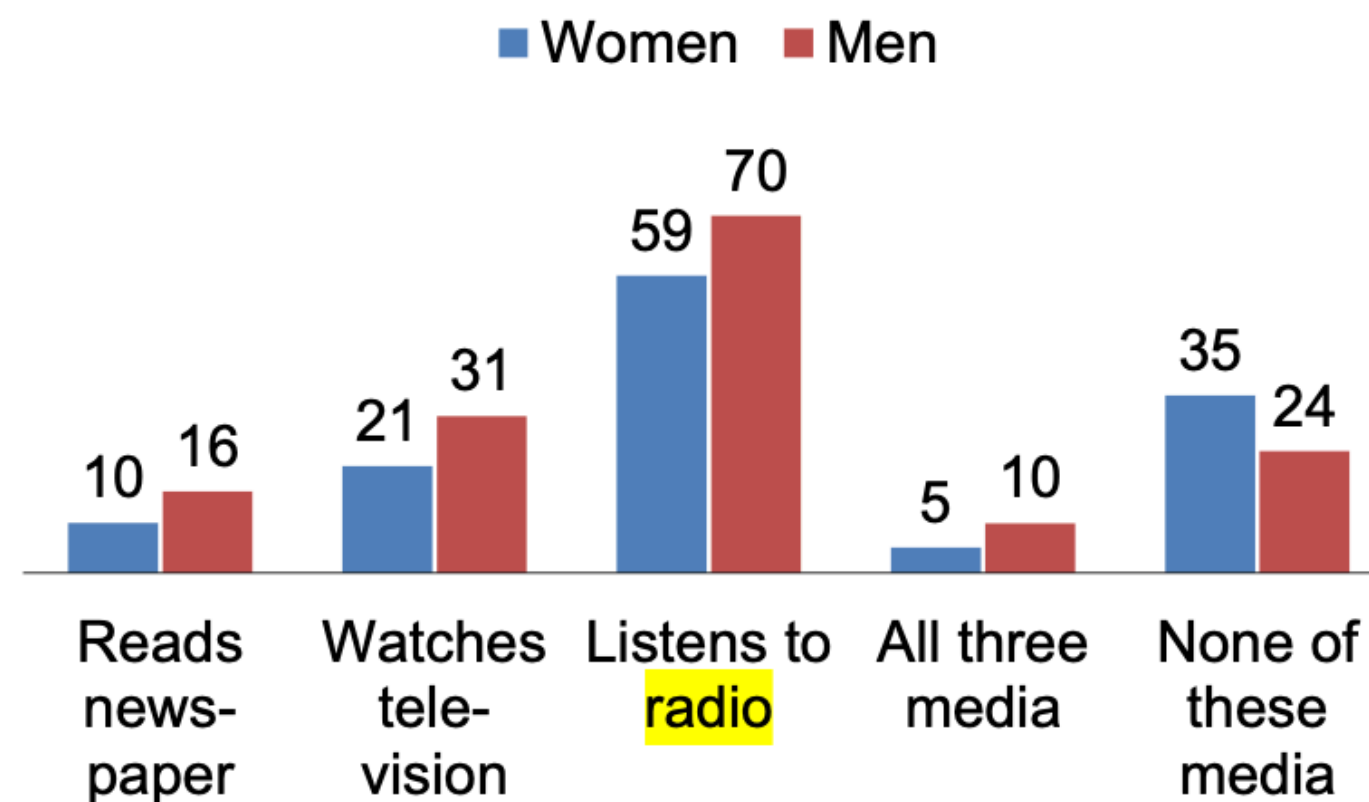
– Wangari Mathai - Kenyan Environmentalist

# MASS MEDIA EXPOSURE AND INTERNET USAGE

## Uganda

**Figure 3.4 Exposure to mass media**

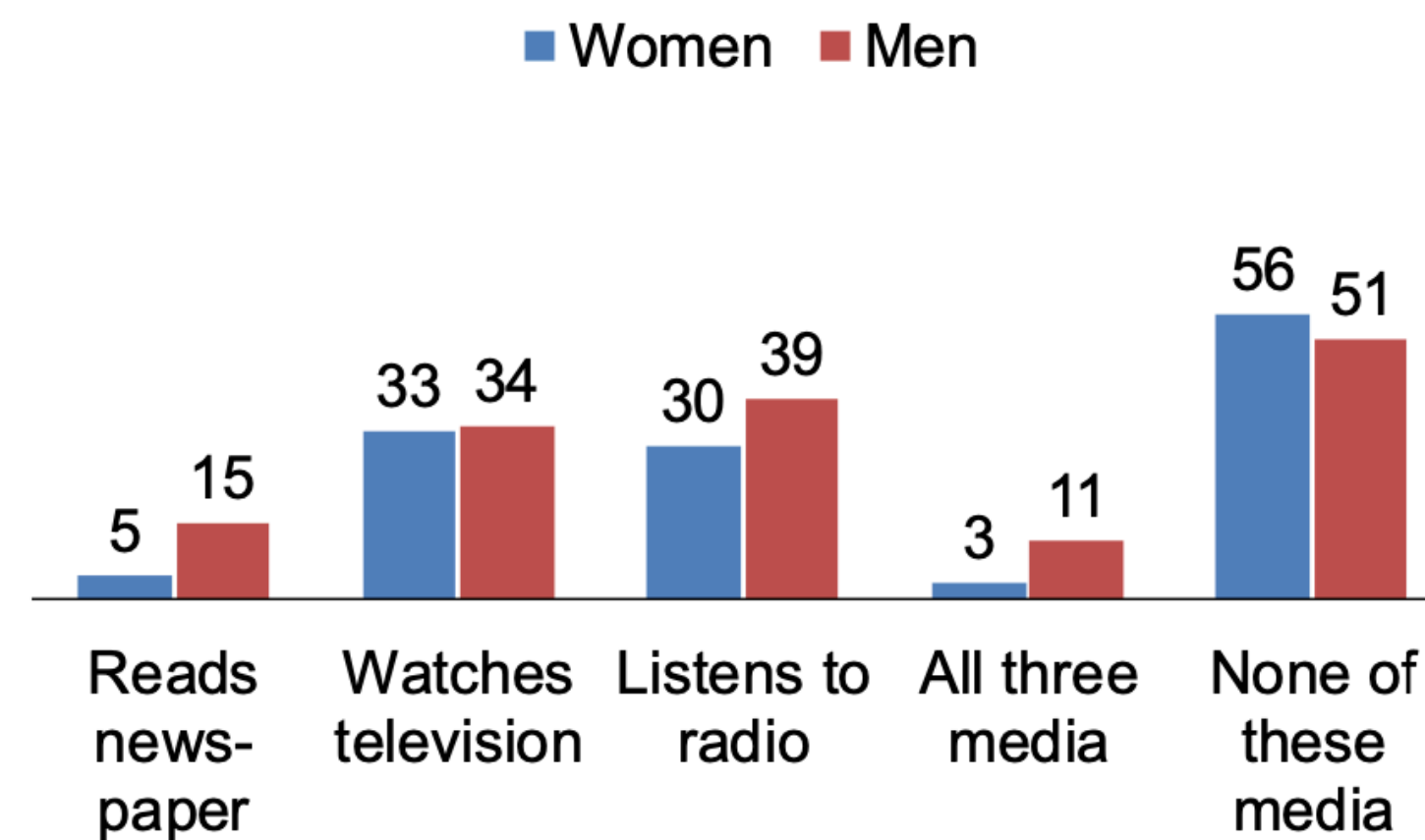
Percentage of women and men age 15-49 who are exposed to media on a weekly basis



## Nigeria

**Figure 3.4 Exposure to mass media**

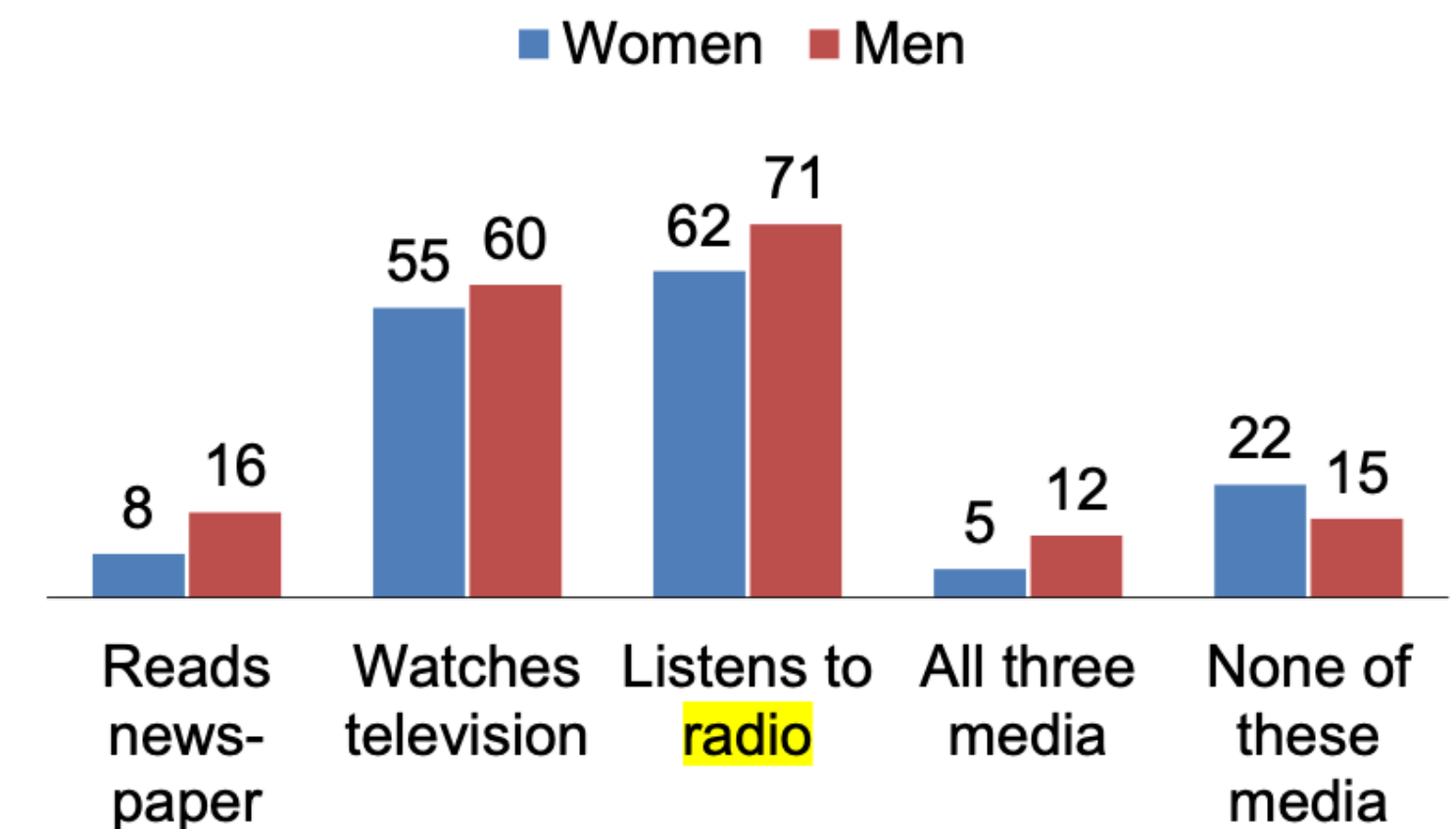
Percentage of women and men age 15-49 who are exposed to media on a weekly basis



## Kenya

**Figure 3.3 Exposure to mass media**

Percentage of women and men age 15-49 who are exposed to media on a weekly basis



# DIGITAL ACTIVISM

## Digital media advocacy is rising in importance

- **Digital Activism Strategies:**
- **Social Media Amplification:**
  - Utilize social media platforms to amplify your work and advocate for issues you are passionate about.
  - Share informative content, updates, and calls to action to engage a wider audience.
- **Respectful Virtual Debates:**
  - Foster respectful and constructive debates in virtual spaces to encourage dialogue on important issues.
  - Create a platform for open discussions that promote understanding and diverse perspectives.
- **Creative Engagement:**
  - Develop creative and entertaining ways for followers to engage with your content.
  - Consider organizing video challenges or interactive activities to make the advocacy more enjoyable and participatory.



# DIGITAL ACTIVISM

## Digital media advocacy is rising in importance

- Digital tools, technologies, and platforms promote causes you care about e.g. women's empowerment and environmental sustainability. Easy to share info like fact sheets
- Social Media Campaigns to get people to care about our issues. Choose platforms (all have a global reach).
- Online communication that's supportive, no pressure, shares info that people can act on to make informed decisions. Of course, talk about the implication of population growth, including on the environment and young girls and women's rights is not an easy sell. Not an easy conversation but it's softened on social media through pre-designed assets
- Our followers are part of the advocacy, they sometimes engage while we 'watch' from the sides. We use online communications mostly and our website and social media channels are vital. And from analytics we can see what people most engage with like our Facts pages and our infographics - which is normally our most successful social media content.

# DIGITAL ACTIVISM

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- Our followers are part of the advocacy, they sometimes engage while we 'watch' from the sides
- public support is critical to most policymakers, so changing public perceptions and norms directly can lead to more enlightened policies and online is good for this

# WEIGHT OF ALL VERTEBRATE LAND ANIMALS ON EARTH

**10,000 YEARS AGO**



 **1% humans**

**TODAY**

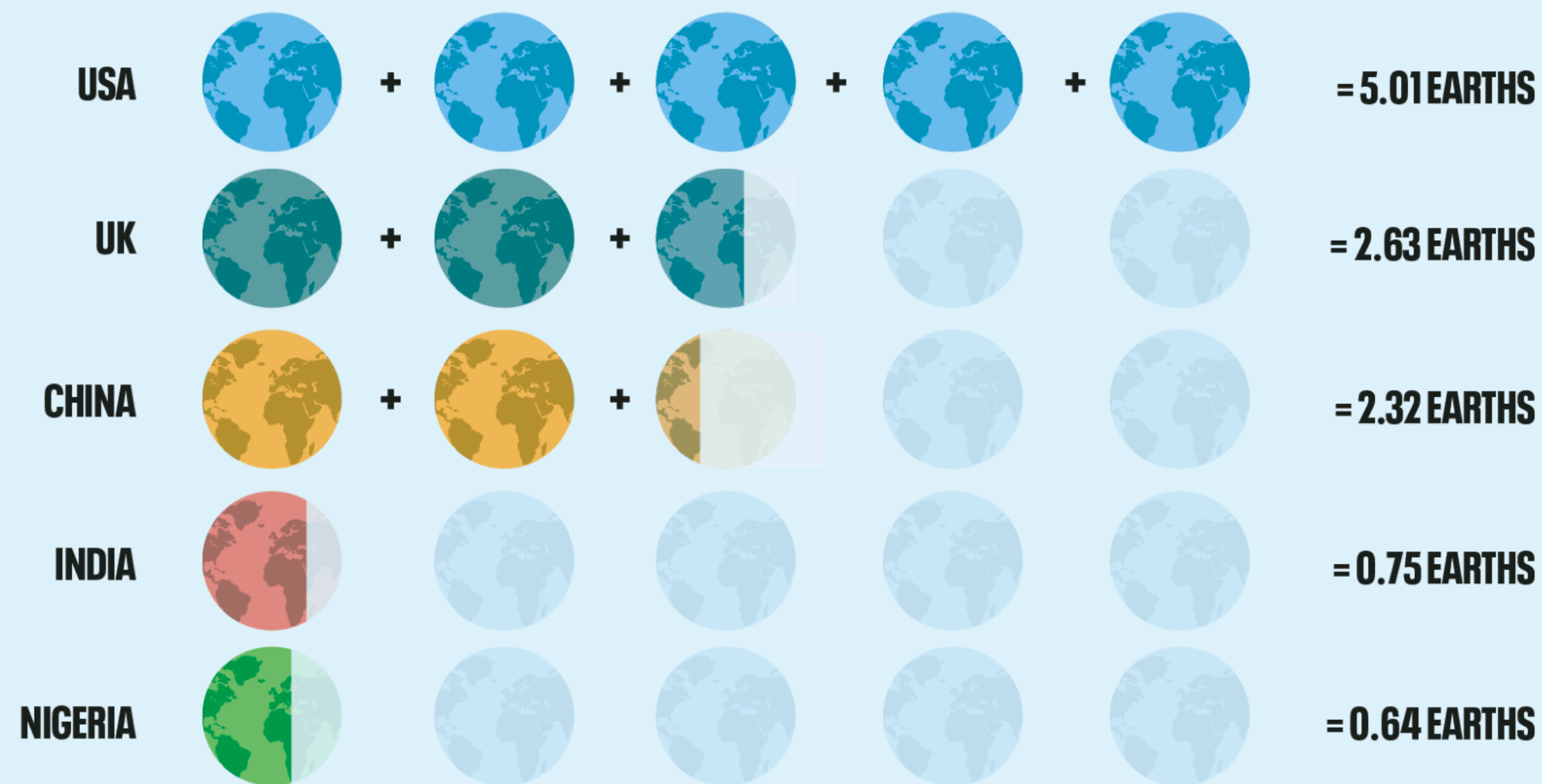
 **1% wild animals**

 **67%  
livestock**

 **32% humans**

# Climate Change: What about Consumption?

## CONSUMPTION OF EARTH'S RESOURCES, 2017



Number of Earths needed if everyone used renewable resources at the same rate as these individual countries.

Source: Global Footprint Network, 2020

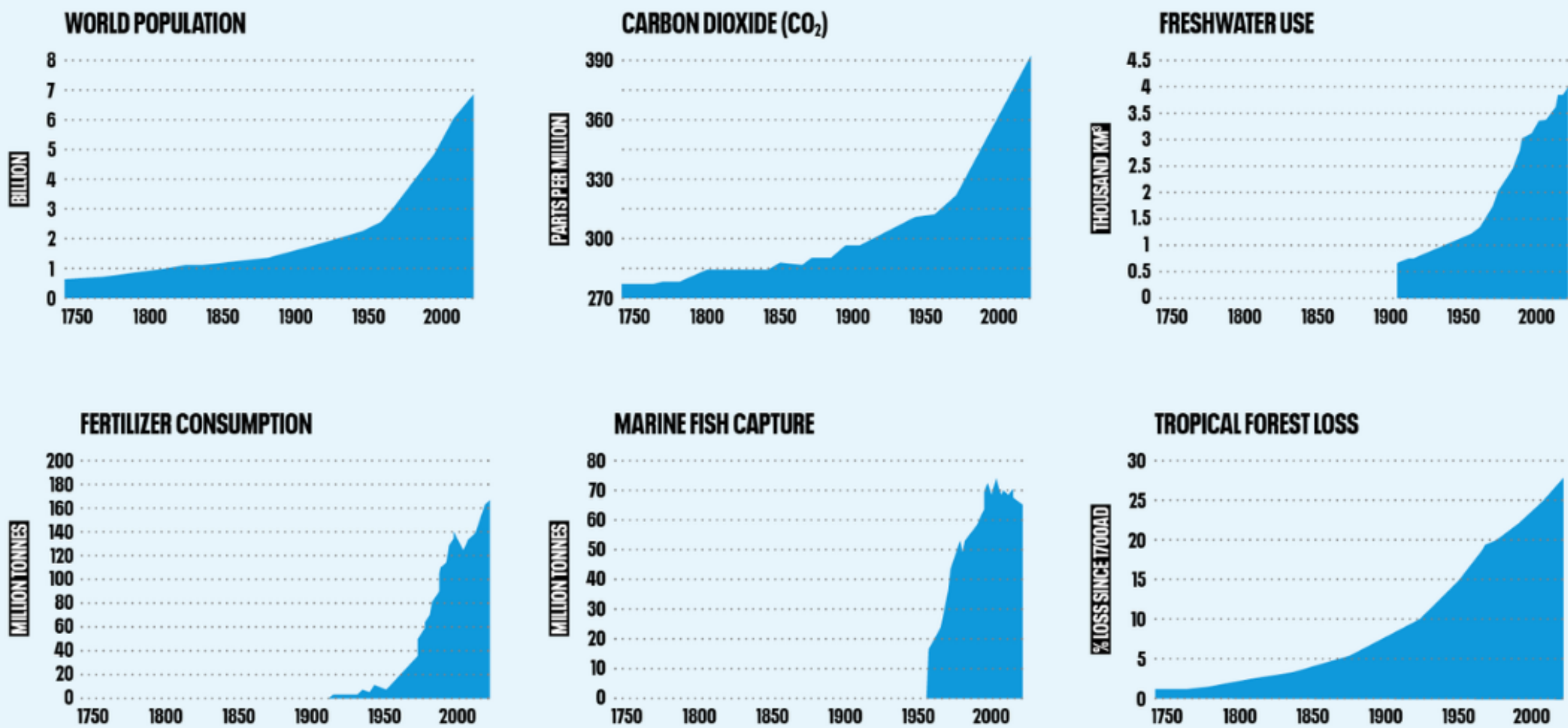
- Primarily driven by the wealthiest through their consumption patterns but the gap between the emissions of the high-income and the low-income countries is narrowing.
  - The IPCC has identified potential future high population growth as a “key impediment” to hitting the critical target of limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.
  - The essential requirements for decent human living, including food, energy, housing, and infrastructure, are all needs that cannot be supplied without producing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Human population growth acts as a driver and multiplier of these requirements and the resulting emissions.



**Myth:** "Focusing on population is a distraction from bigger issues such as climate change."

**Fact:** Addressing overpopulation is key to solving our biggest environmental problems.

More humans means more emissions, deforestation, resource depletion, pollution and biodiversity loss



Source: WWF

*"While addressing population growth will not solve the climate crisis by itself, a significant effort to promote small family size and use of family planning can yield about 25% of what is necessary to avoid catastrophic climate change."*

Study by Professor Brian O'Neill,  
The University of Colorado Boulder.



# FOOD

## FOOD: THE FACTS



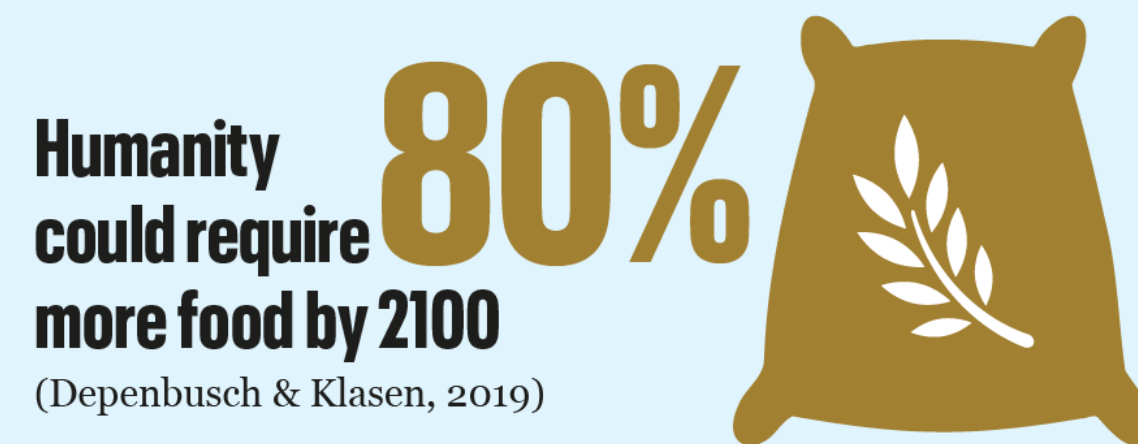
**50%** of the Earth's habitable land is already used for agriculture  
(UN FAO, 2019)



Agriculture is the primary driver of deforestation, habitat loss and biodiversity loss  
(IPBES, 2019)



The global food system is the single biggest contributor to climate change, responsible for around a third of all greenhouse gas emissions  
(IPCC, 2019)



Humanity could require **80%** more food by 2100  
(Deppenbusch & Klasen, 2019)



The number of people suffering from hunger and malnutrition has been increasing in step with the global population since 2014  
(UN, 2020)

- Agriculture already uses **50%** of the Earth's habitable land area (UN FAO, 2019)
- Agriculture is the **primary driver** of deforestation, habitat loss and biodiversity loss (IPBES, 2019)
- The modern global food system (from land use change to production to consumption) **is the single biggest contributor to climate change**, for around a third of all greenhouse gas emissions (IPCC, 2019)
- Humanity will require **80% more** food by 2100 under continued population growth and increasing body size (Deppenbusch & Klasen, 2019)
- The number of people affected by hunger globally has been increasing since 2014 (UN FAO, 2020)

# 8 BILLION

populationmatters.org/news/2022/11/do-we-really-have-eight-billion-opportunities/



THE ISSUE

TAKE ACTION

ABOUT US

JOIN DONATE

## DO WE REALLY HAVE EIGHT BILLION OPPORTUNITIES?

8 NOVEMBER 2022

8 billion strong, 8 billion possibilities, 8 billion innovators. That's the messaging coming from the UN in recent weeks as we edge towards 8 billion people on the planet. But the reality beneath the positivity is one of limited opportunities and wasted potential for hundreds of millions. In this personal post, Population Matters consultant Florence Blondel draws on the data and her experience as an award-winning journalist in her home country of Uganda to paint a more sobering picture.

“We’ve just welcomed the 8 billionth member of the human race on this planet. That’s a wonderful birth of a baby, of course. But **we need to understand that the more people there are, the more we put the Earth under heavy pressure.**”

Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme

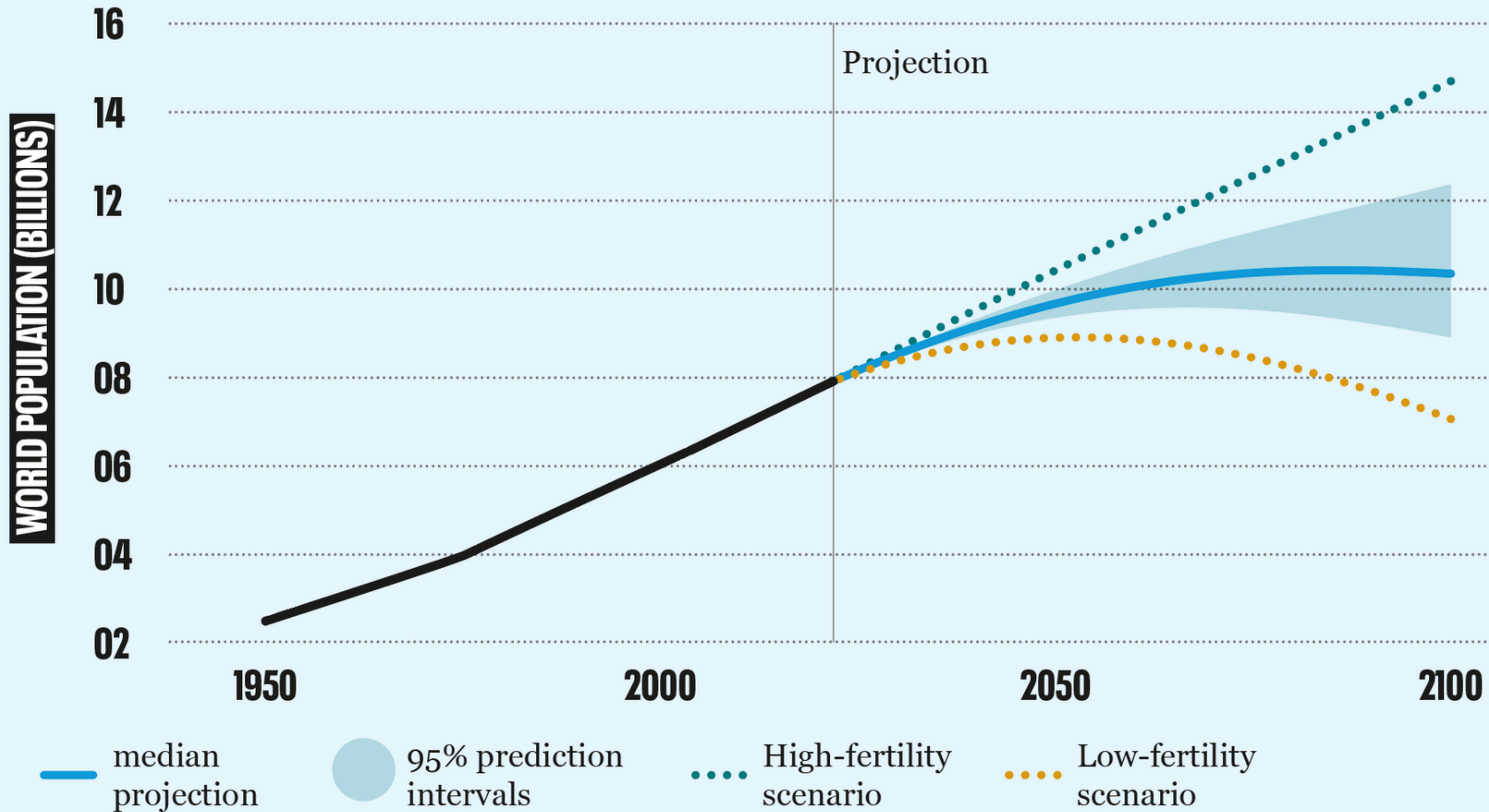


# WE CAN GET THERE

## EMPOWERING CHOICE BASED SOLUTIONS

- Support small families. In wealthy nations where individuals' impact on the planet is disproportionately large, having one fewer child can make a massive difference to a family's environmental footprint.
- Advance the rights of women and girls
- Remove barriers to contraception
- Quality education for all
- End poverty
- Improve child and maternal health
- **FACT:** If progress towards reducing fertility rates is faster than predicted, our future population could be much lower (and more sustainable) after 2050. This benefits young girls and women.

# UNITED NATIONS POPULATION TO 2100: 95% CERTAINTY RANGE



Source: UN, 2022



# Top 5 solutions to climate change

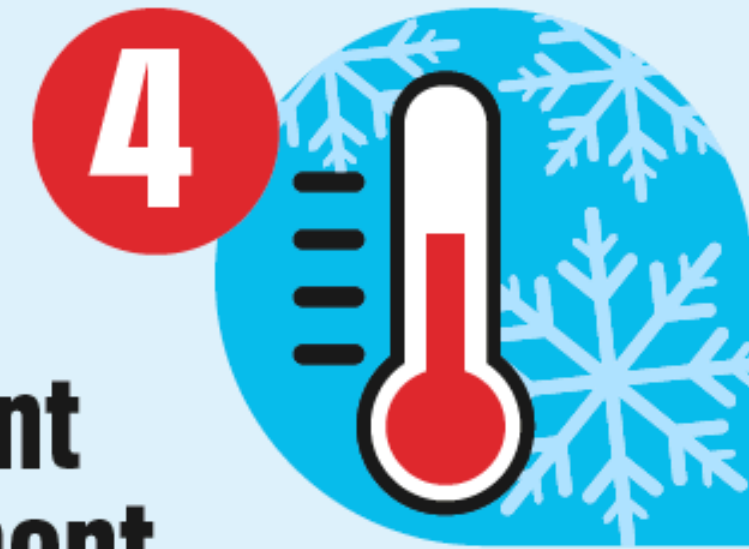
78.33

Plant-rich diets



57.15

Refrigerant management



1



88.50\*

Reduced food waste

3



68.90

Lower population growth  
(family planning & education)

5



54.45

Tropical forest restoration

\*Gigatonnes CO<sub>2</sub> Equivalent Reduced/Sequestered (2020–2050), in line with 2°C temperature rise by 2100

Source: Project Drawdown, 2022

**POPULATION MATTERS**

TM

# ALSO....

- We need to create a more environmentally aware society
- More people to make connections between population growth, environmental crisis, and girls and women's rights
- Not so easy to change consumption, so...
- Women who are empowered have a more significant say in decisions regarding marriage and family size. They always choose smaller families
- Less fear of immigration, especially in ageing societies
- Work with grassroots partners (Empower to Plan)



**THANK YOU**



# GENDER INEQUALITY

22% men have multiple wives vs 2% women with other partners

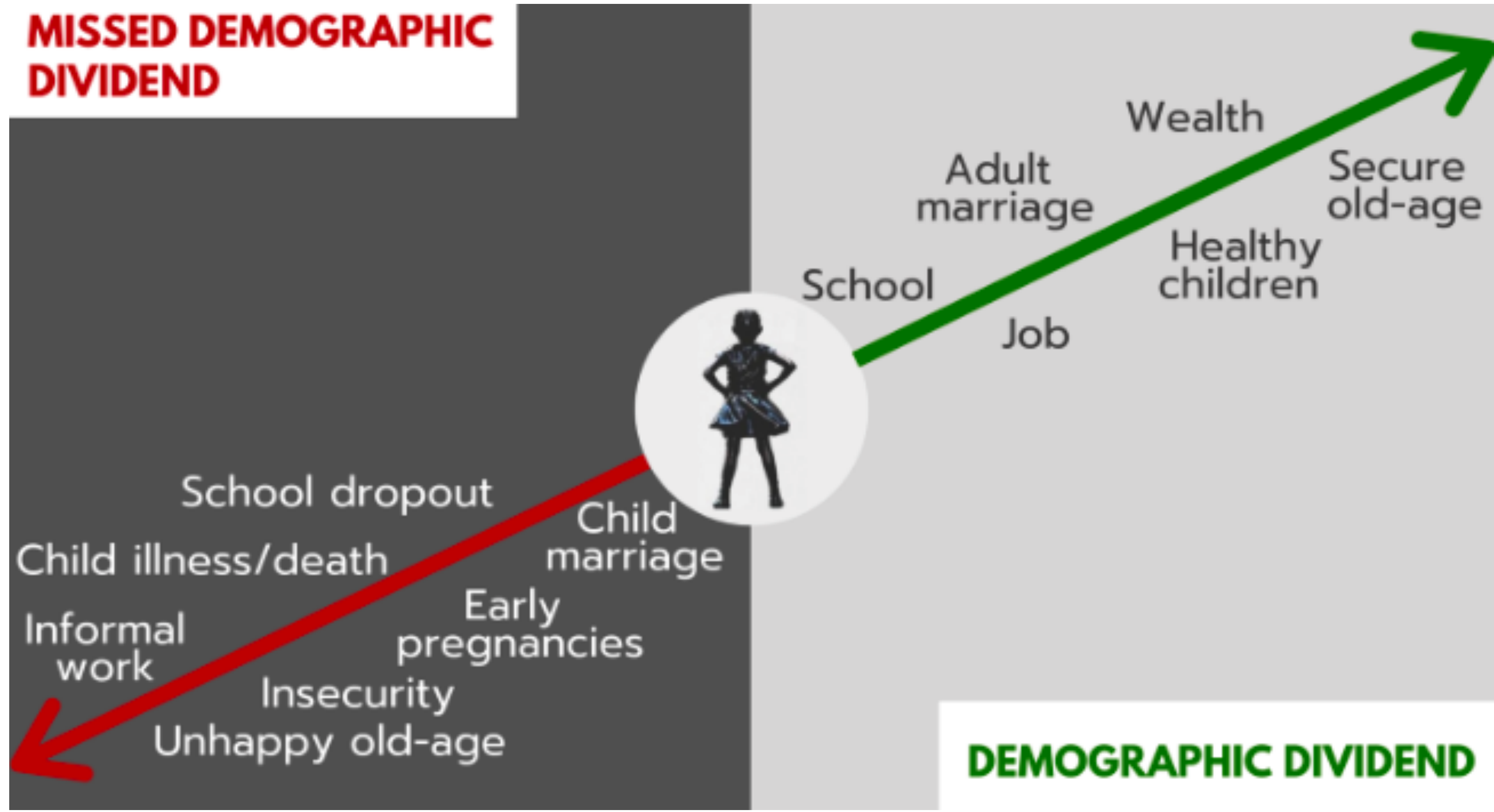


Priest couldn't give birth and husband decided to get another woman and she gets punished. Misoavv!



# Demographic Dividend

## Still missing



Countries with the greatest demographic opportunity for development are those entering a period in which the working-age population has good health, quality education, decent employment and a lower proportion of young dependents.

**Smaller numbers of children per household generally lead to larger investments per child,** more freedom for women to enter the formal workforce and more household savings for old age.

When this happens, the national economic payoff can be substantial. This is a "demographic dividend."

Source: UNFPA