

WORLD GIVING REPORT

# GIVING IN SOUTH AFRICA

2025



**SAPF**

SOUTHERN AFRICA  
PHILANTHROPY  
FOUNDATION

**CAF**  
Charities Aid Foundation

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An aerial photograph of a large crowd of people participating in a marathon or triathlon. The participants are spread across a wide asphalt road and a grassy area. Many are wearing colorful athletic gear. A red banner with white text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

# 01 INTRODUCTION

# Welcome

This report reveals public attitudes and behaviours in South Africa towards giving and civic generosity. It forms part of our partnership with the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) under the World Giving Report 2025 (WGR) — a global collaboration involving research with over 55,000 people across 101 countries. Together, we aim to deepen our understanding of how generosity shows up in different contexts, and how it is shaped by culture, community, and trust.

The 2025 findings affirm that, despite economic pressure and reduced funding — particularly from traditional international sources — South Africans continue to give with remarkable consistency. Much of this generosity is personal and direct, rooted in faith, family, and community ties.

The task now is to connect this generosity to more sustainable and visible systems of change. We must invest in local giving ecosystems, build trust through transparency, and amplify community-led efforts.

This is not a time for pessimism. It is a time to reframe. South Africa is not short on generosity; it is full of it. Our challenge is to match that spirit with the structures it deserves.

At the Southern Africa Philanthropy Foundation, we see this as a moment to honour everyday giving, invest in community-driven approaches, and build a more accountable, collaborative civil society. This report is both a reflection and a call to strengthen the systems that support South Africa’s enduring spirit of generosity.



**Gill Bates**

CEO, South African  
Philanthropy Foundation  
(SAPF)

**“The wide donor-base in South Africa shows that even higher levels of generosity are very achievable with the right stimulus.”**

# About us

## Southern Africa Philanthropy Foundation (SAPF)

The Southern Africa Philanthropy Foundation (SAPF) is a public benefit organisation that strengthens the philanthropy ecosystem by supporting and connecting non-profit organisations, donors, and corporate partners across the Southern African region. SAPF exists to advance civil society's ability to respond effectively to complex social and economic challenges.

Rooted in African values of generosity, reciprocity, and shared responsibility, SAPF works to build sustainable, inclusive systems of giving that honour both the giver and the recipient. Our mission is to shape a living philanthropy — one that is grounded in local context, informed by lived experience, and capable of delivering lasting social impact.

SAPF delivers strategic programmes that promote non-profit capacity development, cross-sector collaboration, and community-led innovation. Through initiatives such as the Nonprofit Guild, the “Give As You Earn” payroll giving platform, and place-based interventions like “Breaking Bread in the City,” we seek to reimagine philanthropy as a civic practice that is visible, accountable, and regenerative.

We work alongside key stakeholders to elevate trust, stewardship, and social investment as critical tools in building resilient and thriving communities across Southern Africa.

## CAF

The Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) exists to accelerate progress in society towards a fair and sustainable future for all. Over the last 100 years, we have led the way in developing innovative approaches to giving. Annually, we distribute over £1 billion to social purpose organisations around the globe.

As a leading charity operating in the UK, US and Canada, CAF works at the centre of the giving world. We partner with corporate and individual donors to enable them to give more effectively, strategically and impactfully. This includes connecting them to charities globally and providing access to our in-depth sector knowledge, governance expertise and innovative giving solutions.

We help social purpose organisations to strengthen their resilience and do more of their life changing work, through strategic advisory services from our Impact Accelerator, tools to support charities' fundraising activities, and charity financial services from CAF Bank Limited and CAF Financial Solutions Limited. Using our research, policy and campaigns work, we understand and influence the wider environment for charities and donors.

**Together, we give more.**

## The World Giving Report (WGR) is a survey that captures the public's attitudes and behaviours around giving in 101 countries around the world.

- Access our global insights hub at: [www.worldgivingreport.org](http://www.worldgivingreport.org)
- This report is one of over 20 country-specific giving reports that uses the WGR data and is produced by CAF in partnership with leading social purpose organisations around the world.

## Later this year, we are also publishing:

- Insights on the world charity landscape from partner-led surveys of social purpose organisations in over 20 countries (September).
- Country-specific charity insights reports (winter).

# Our Methodology

The results described in this report were collected as part of the World Giving Report survey in January 2025.

All fieldwork was conducted online by our partners, Focaldata. The data was weighted, post-hoc to be representative of the population. All sample sizes are specified throughout the report, where relevant.

## A note on 'Charity'

Across the report, we use the words 'charity' and 'charities' to represent any organisation that works to try and improve issues that are affecting individuals, communities, animals or the natural environment, and society as a whole.

In doing so, we recognise that these terms and their definitions differ around the world, with this type of organisation also described as: non-governmental organisations (NGOs), non-profit organisations (NPOs), community organisations, social purpose organisations, associations and other names.

You can find further details about our methodology at [www.worldgivingreport.org](http://www.worldgivingreport.org)



An aerial photograph of a crowded beach. The sand is a light tan color, and the water is a murky greenish-brown. Numerous people are scattered across the beach, many holding colorful surfboards. The surfboards are in various colors, including blue, yellow, red, and white. The people are mostly standing or wading in the shallow water. A red banner with white text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

## 02 THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

# Giving money and giving time: Worldwide and within the continent.

**South Africa broadly aligns with continental giving trends, while being slightly more generous than global averages.**

Although the country does not lead in any single category, it reflects a balanced generosity profile when compared continentally.

79% of South Africans give money, well above the global average of 64%.

The average amount of income donated (1.33%) is generous in global terms, but slightly below the generosity of African neighbours (1.54% on average).

This emphasises the need to create easier pathways for people to give, especially in ways that feel local, impactful, and dignified.

% of people who donated money in 2024

Lowest score:

Japan  
16%

Average % of income donated

Lowest score:

Japan  
0.16%

% of people who volunteered in 2024

Lowest score:

South Korea  
10%

Average hours volunteered, per person, in 2024

Lowest score:

Azerbaijan  
2.8

Global average

64%



72%



79%

Highest score

Nigeria  
89%

1.04%



1.33%



1.54%

Highest score

Nigeria  
2.83%

26%



36%



39%

Highest score

Sudan  
57%

8.9



13.1



14.6

Highest score

Qatar  
27.5

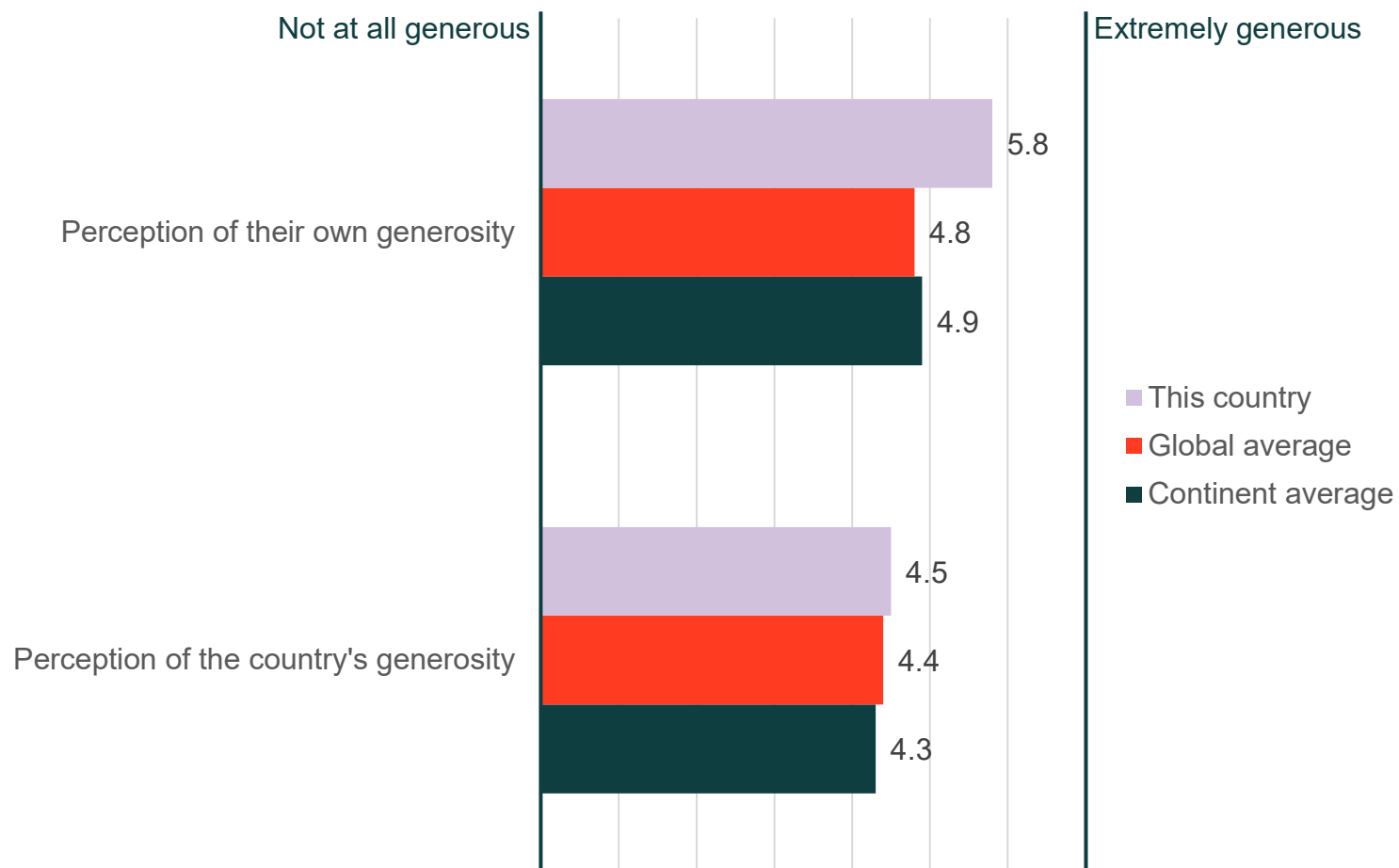
## Perceptions of our own generosity.

**While South Africans are relatively active in giving, and see themselves as generous, the country overall only ranks 56<sup>th</sup> globally in perceived generosity.**

However, it holds the 28<sup>th</sup> position for the actual proportion of income donated.

This mismatch indicates a possible undervaluing of informal and direct giving forms such as helping family or contributing to religious institutions.

It highlights the need to affirm and recognise giving as part of the country's overall generosity narrative.



**South Africa ranks 56<sup>th</sup> out of 101 countries for how generous we think we are.**

**We are 28<sup>th</sup> in terms of the proportion of income we donate.**

An aerial photograph of a community event on a concrete basketball court. A large group of people, mostly wearing blue shirts, are arranged in a circular formation in the center of the court. To the left and right of the circle are two white pop-up tents. The left tent has a basketball hoop and backboard attached to its side. The right tent also has a basketball hoop and backboard. Various items like chairs, bags, and boxes are scattered around the court. The court has yellow and red painted areas. A red banner with white text is overlaid across the middle of the image.

## 03 ASPECTS OF GENEROSITY

## The proportion of people who give money in different ways.

**Giving in South Africa is driven primarily through personal channels.**

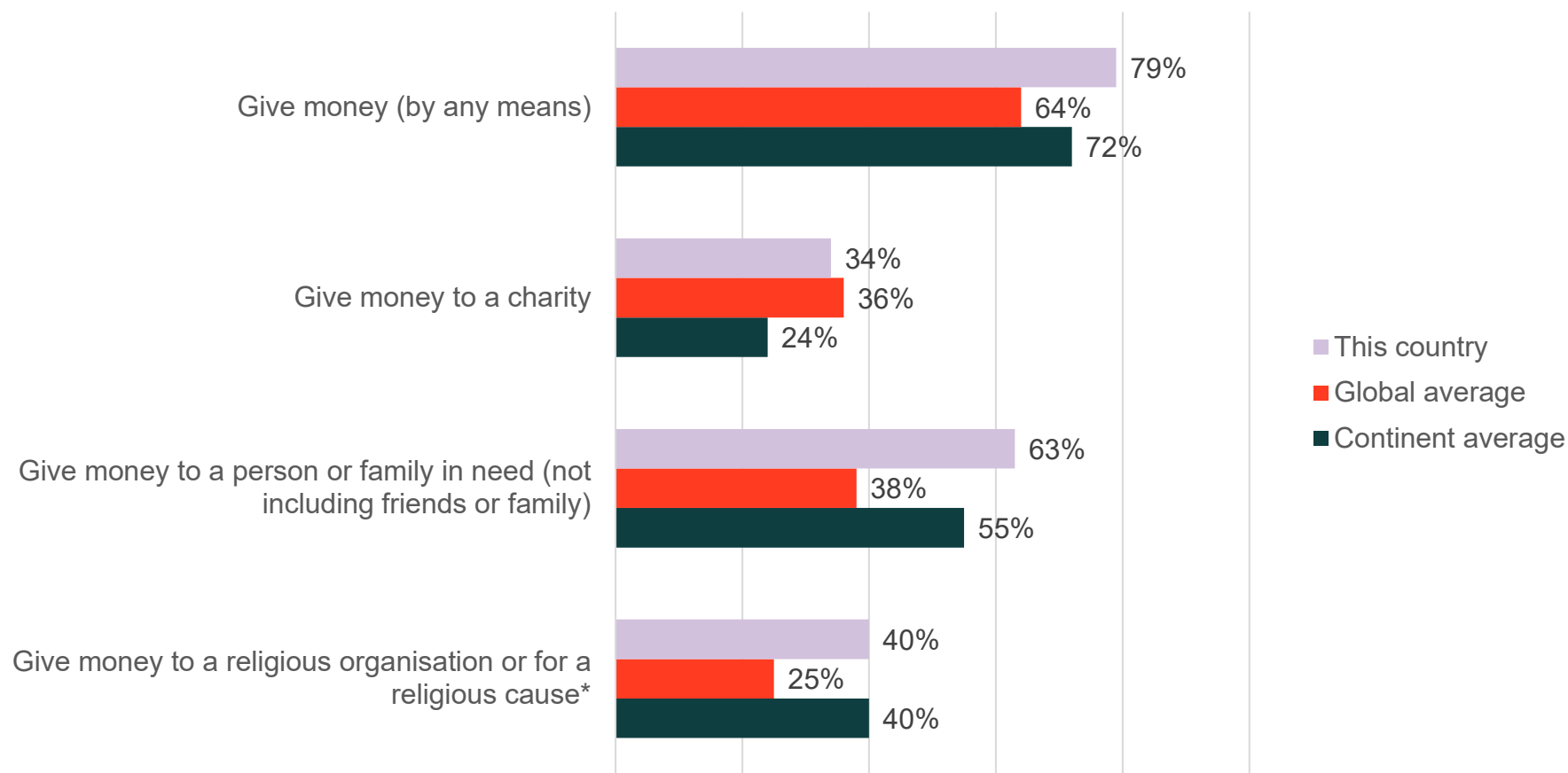
Most donors give money directly to individuals or to religious organisations.

Traditional charities and non-profits receive comparatively fewer donations.

This behaviour reflects a trust dynamic: people prefer giving where the impact is visible or relational.

For civil society, this signals the importance of transparency, local presence, and storytelling to build confidence and shift giving towards institutions.

Q: During 2024, did you do any of the following? (All, n = 1,057)



\*The full answer code was worded, 'Give money to a religious organisation or for a religious cause' (for example: at church, through zakat, tithing, ma'aser or daana, etc.). This includes any money you give voluntarily, even if it is collected by your government'.

## How frequently people gave.

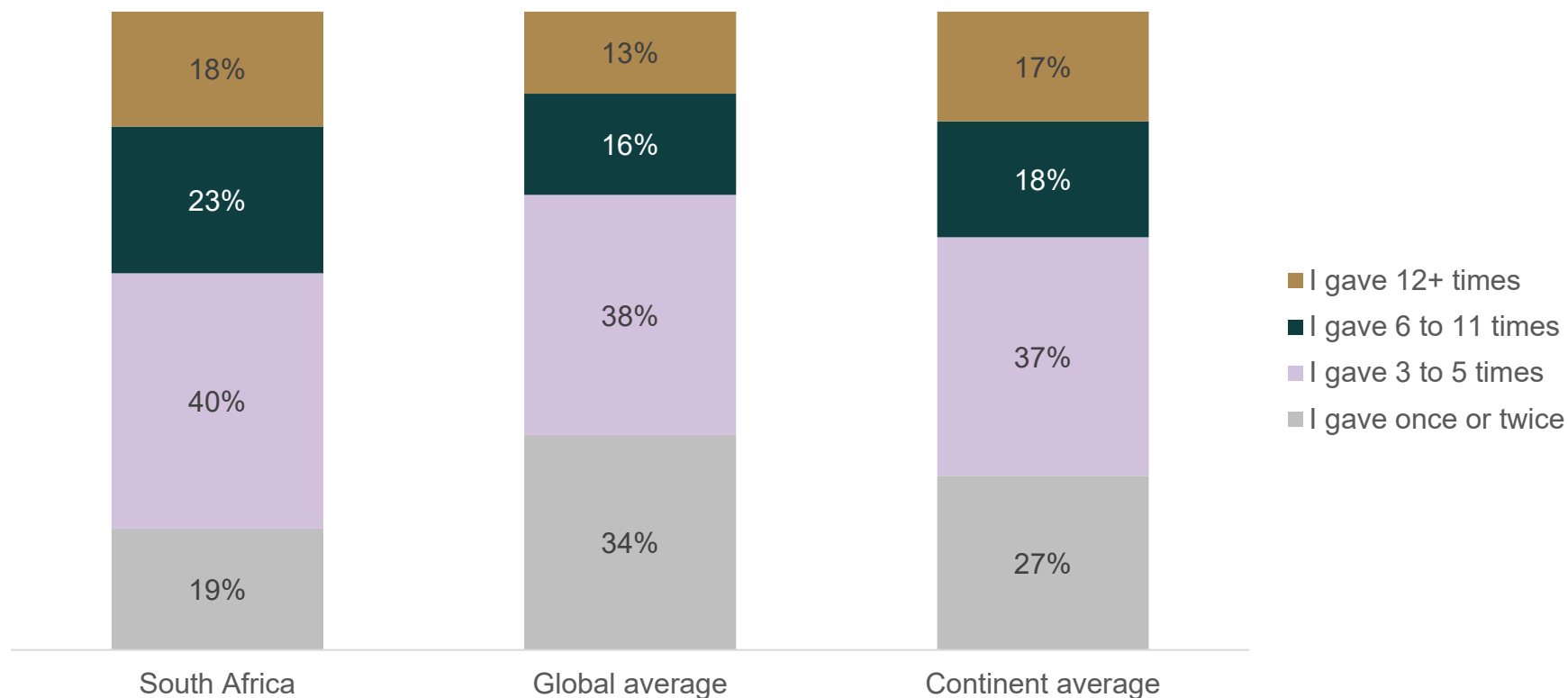
**Donation frequency is on a par with continental and global averages with, if anything, a slight lean towards being more regular.**

We have seen that there are a high number of donors and a high frequency of participation, as well as a slightly lower than the continental average score for proportion of income donated.

This could point to a high proportion of regular donations that have not been reassessed in light of slightly increased incomes.

Is there an opportunity here for charities to ask donors to think about whether regular contributions should be updated?

**Q: How often did you give money away in 2024, either to charity, a person or family in need, or to a religious organisation? (People who had given money, n = 839)**

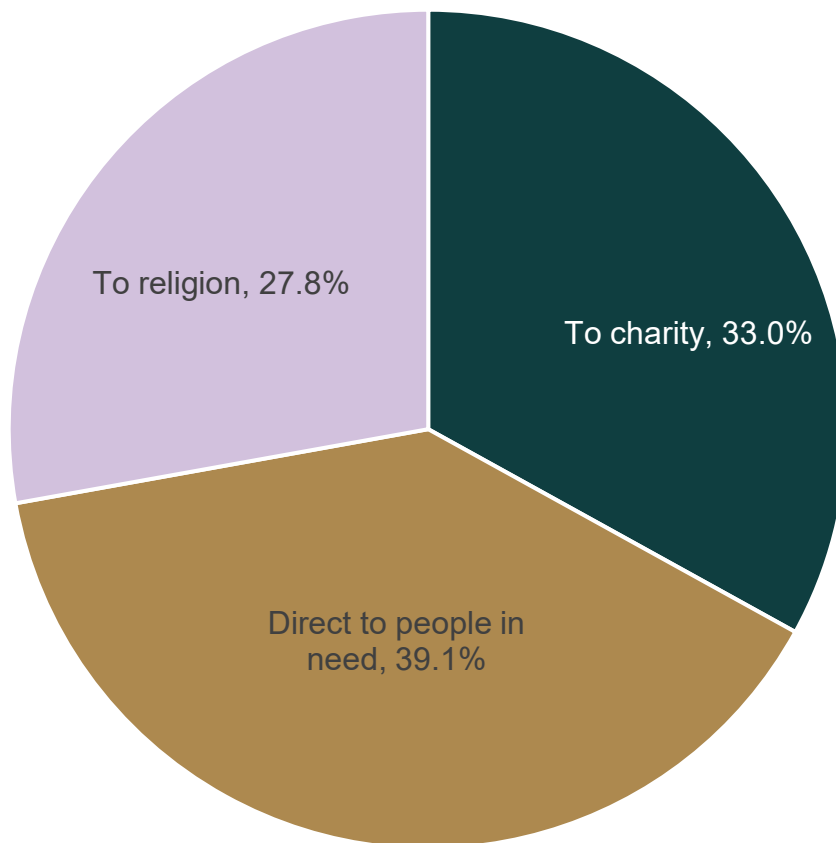


## Share of donations.

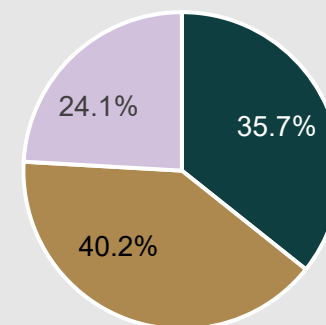
**The share of the value of donations shows that money going to charities is on par with the global average, but higher than the continental average.**

Overall, the balance of donations is fairly even between the three main routes.

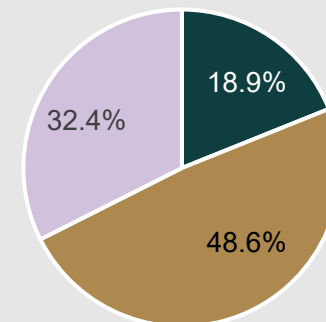
**The share of the value of all donations made in 2024, across the three different routes. (People who had given money,  $n = 839$ )**



**Global average**



**Continent average**

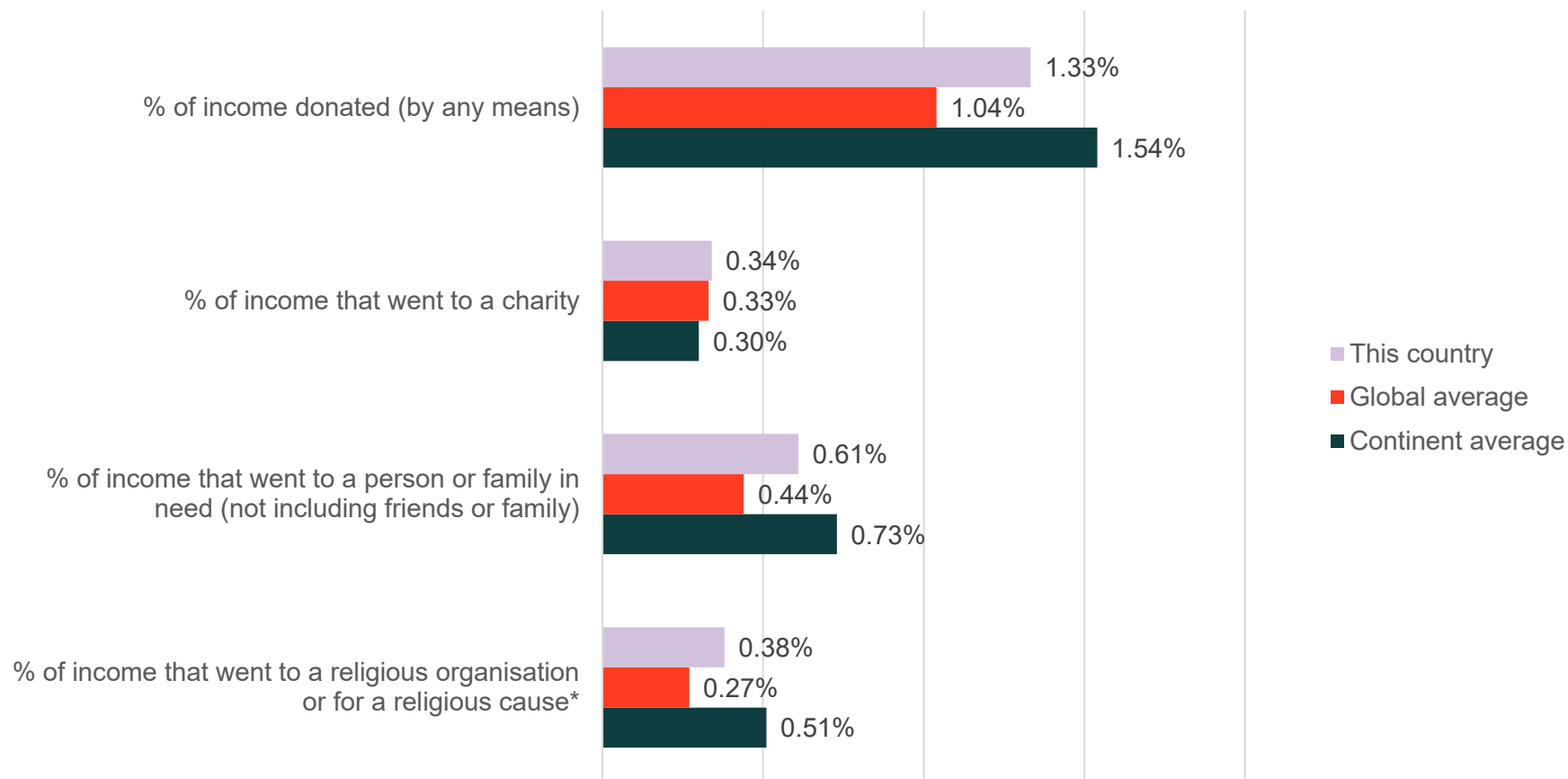


## Donations as a proportion of income.

**South Africans gave 1.33% of income, above the global average, but below the continental one.**

Given the wide donor base, with 79% of South Africans giving, even higher levels of generosity are very achievable with the right stimulus.

The average proportion of income people gave to each of the three donation routes, and overall. (All, including those donating zero,  $n = 1,057$ ).

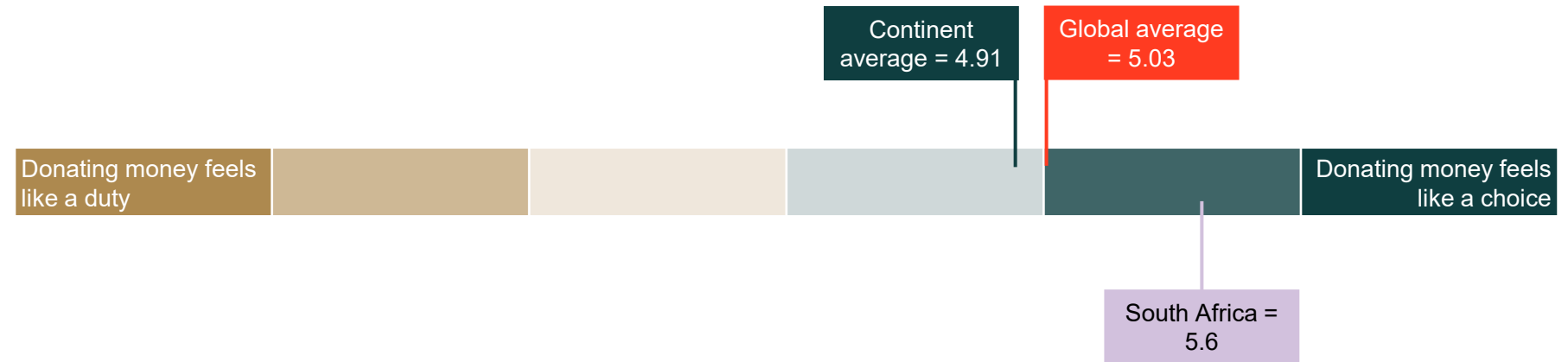


\*The full answer code was worded, 'Give money to a religious organisation or for a religious cause, (for example, at church, through zakat, tithing, ma'aser or daana, etc.). This includes any money you give voluntarily, even if it is collected by your government'.

## How people feel about giving money.

**In South Africa, giving feels far more like a choice than a duty – much more so than either the rest of Africa and the wider world.**

**The average score when people were asked how donating money feels.**  
(People who had given money,  $n = 839$ ).

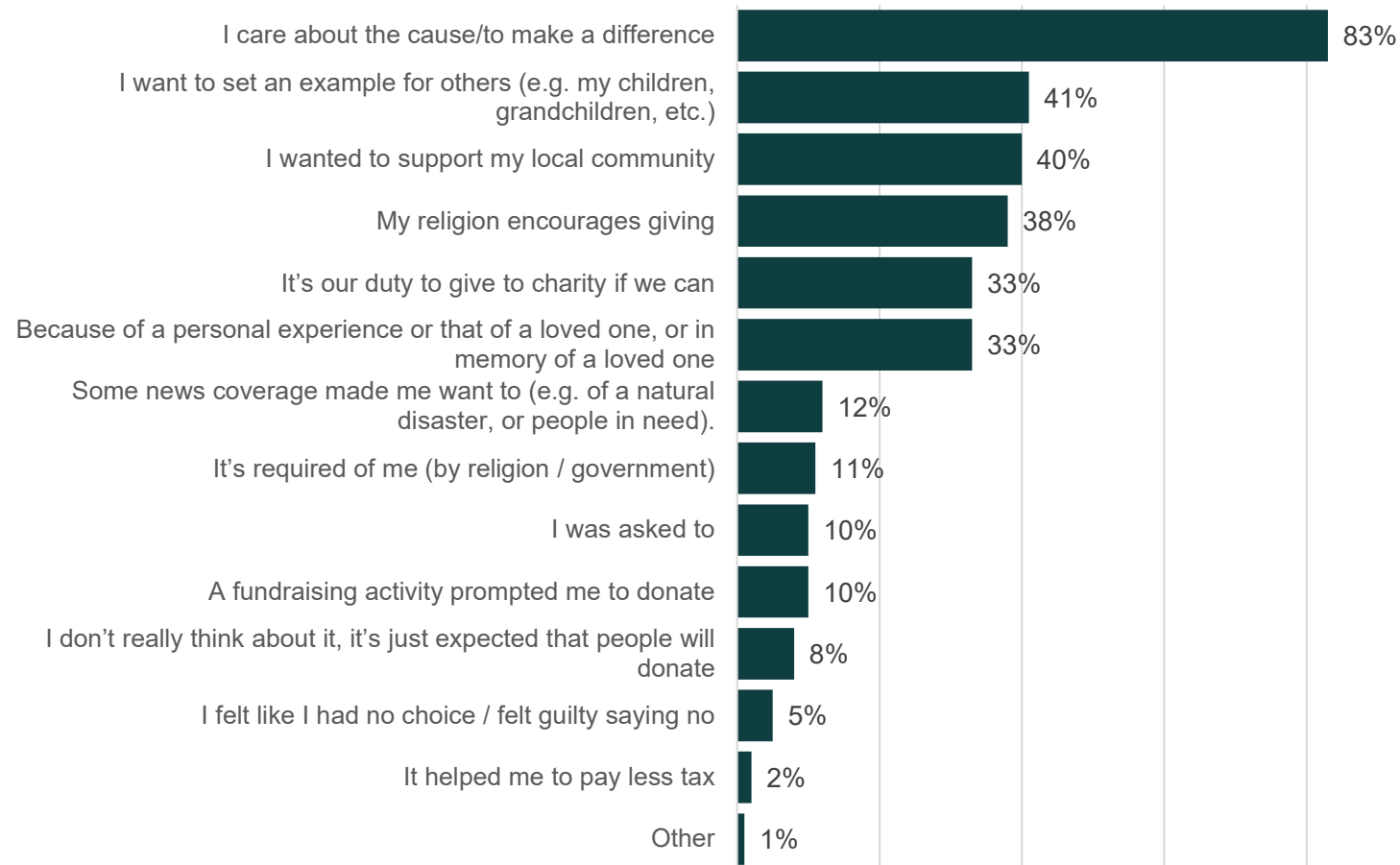


## Reasons for giving money.

**As per the rest of the world, care for a cause was the top reason for giving money.**

Beyond this, the next four most popular reasons all speak to the perpetuation of social norms — something shown to link strongly to generosity in the main WGR report.

**Which of the following, if any, are reasons that you gave away money in 2024?**  
(People who had given money, n = 839).



### Global top 3

1. I care about the cause/to make a difference (65%)
2. It's our duty to give to charity if we can (31%)
3. My religion encourages it (29%)

### Continental top 3

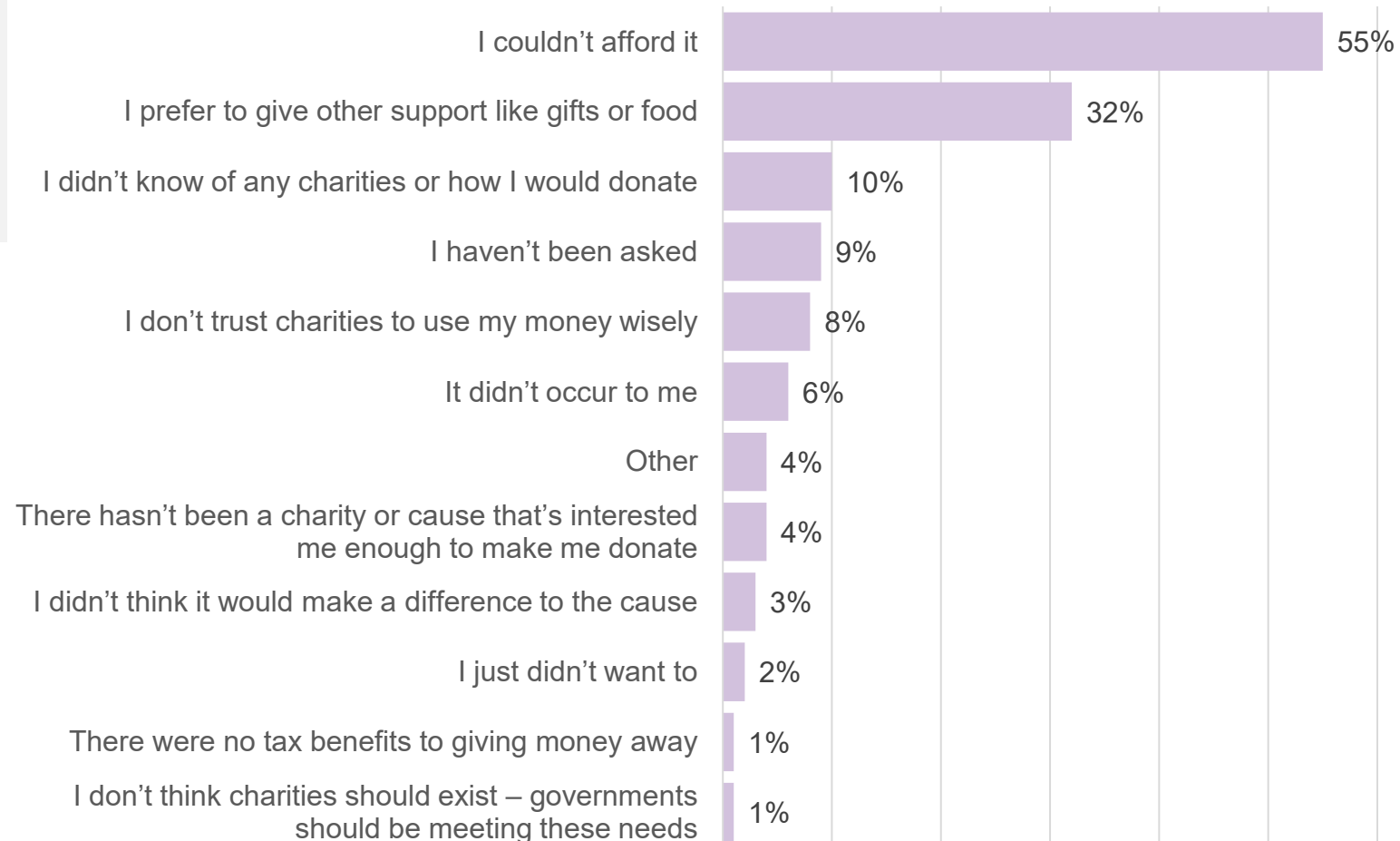
1. I care about the cause/to make a difference (69%)
2. My religion encourages giving (52%)
3. It's our duty to give if we can (38%)

## Reasons for not giving money.

**For those who didn't give, the top reason was affordability (55%), followed by a preference for in-kind giving.**

This calls attention to two key issues: economic insecurity and alternative ways of showing care and solidarity.

**What would you say are the main reasons that you did not give money away in 2024? (People who had not given money, n = 218).**



### Global top 3

1. I couldn't afford it (40%)
2. I prefer to give other support like gifts or food (20%)
3. I don't trust charities to use my money wisely (14%)

### Continental top 3

1. I couldn't afford it (47%)
2. I prefer to give other support like gifts or food (18%)
3. Other (13%)

## What would increase donations?

The top factors that would encourage more giving include knowing the charity's impact (53%), understanding how it is run (42%), and knowing the sector is well regulated (42%).

This points to a clear call for better communication, transparency, and trust-building.

Donors are not disengaged; they are discerning. Civil society must meet this need through greater openness and strategic storytelling.

The top three reasons that would make the respondent likely to give more money, goods or time to charities in 2025. (All, n = 1,057)

53%

Knowing more about the results and impact that a charity has

42%

Knowing more about how a charity is run

42%

Knowing the charity sector is well regulated

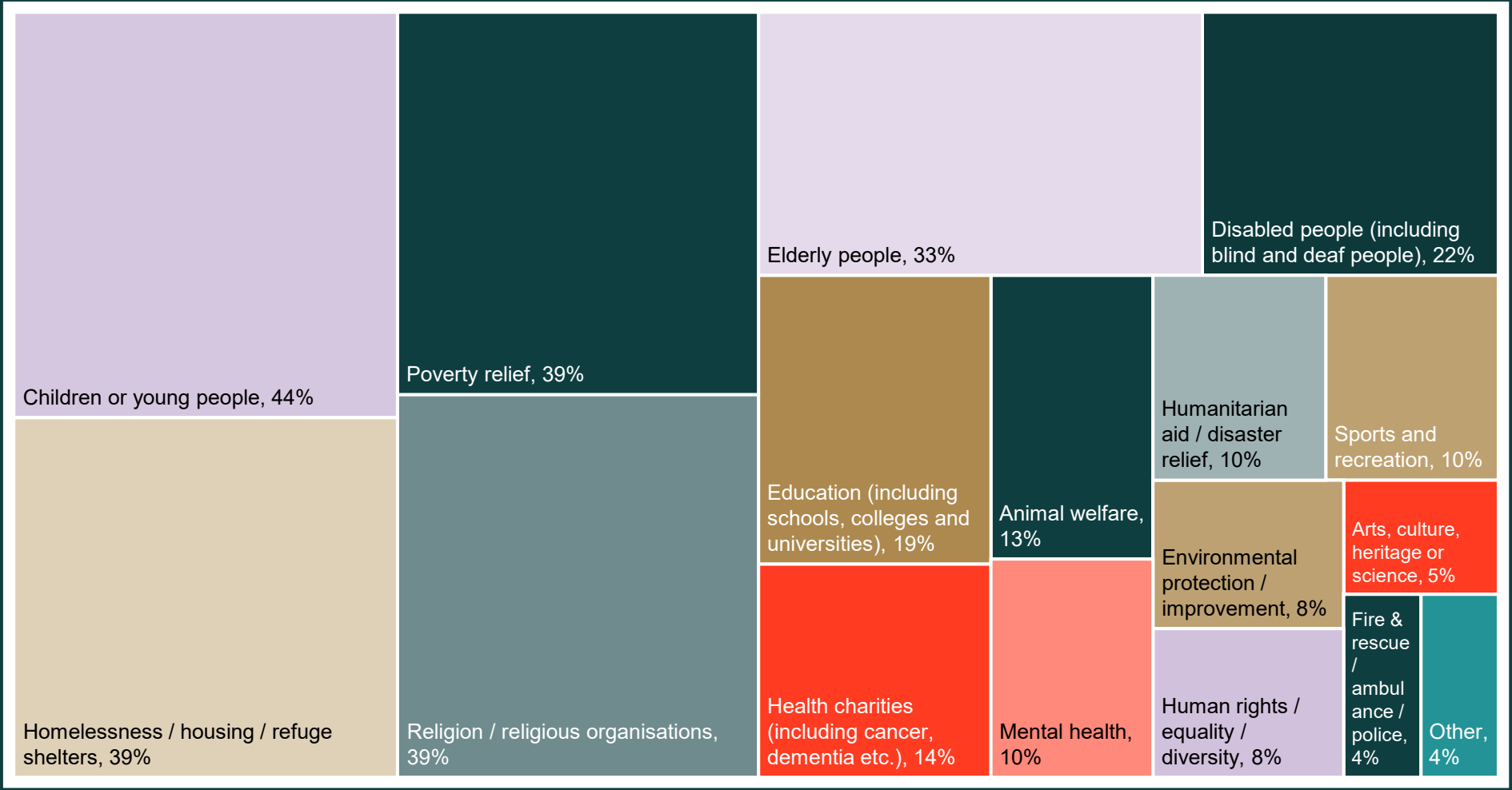
# The causes people support through donating.

People give to what matters most to them. Top causes include helping the poor, supporting children, and homelessness.

10% of donors gave to humanitarian aid although, notably, 90% of this giving was domestic rather than to international appeals.

This reflects a generosity that is both urgent and local. Civil society should anchor appeals in real-time community relevance.

Which cause(s) did you give money to in 2024? (People who had given money, n = 839)



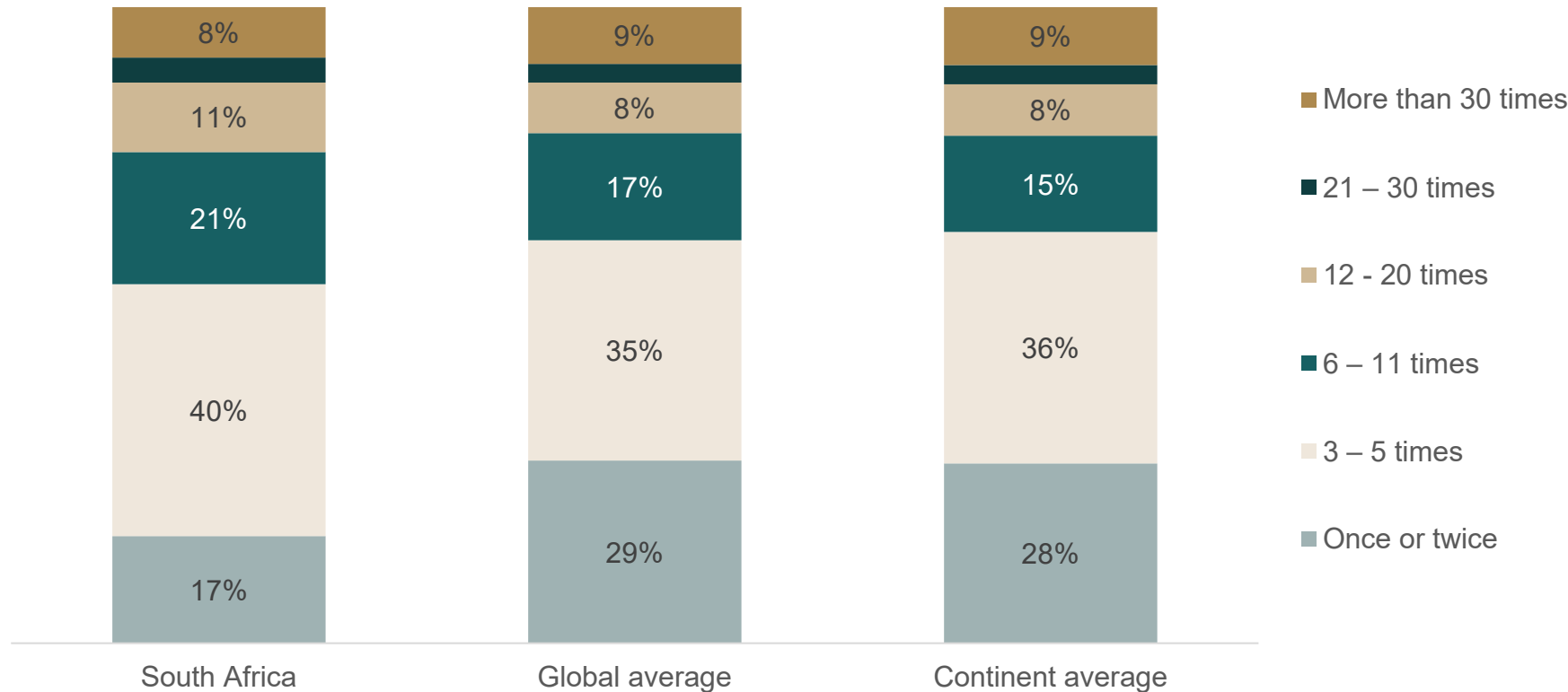
# Frequency of volunteering, per person.

**Over a third of South Africans have volunteered in 2024 (36%).**

Volunteering frequency is on a par with continental and global averages with, if anything, a slight lean towards being more regular.

Volunteering opportunities should be structured to accommodate busy lives while maintaining meaningful engagement. Recognition of volunteer contributions will also help encourage continuity.

How often did you do unpaid, voluntary work in 2024 that benefitted people other than your family or friends? *(Those who volunteered, n = 380)*



## Average time spent volunteering, per person.

**The average time volunteered per person is significant and underlines the value of civic participation.**

Overall the average South African has worked 4 hours more per year than the global average.

This reveals a need to elevate the visibility of volunteerism in South Africa and ensure its contributions are counted and celebrated.

**13** hours

**On average, people in South Africa spent this time volunteering in 2024**

*(All, n = 1,057) [nb – this is overall, so includes all those who did nothing within the average]*

**9** hours

Global average

**14** hours **30** minutes

Continent average

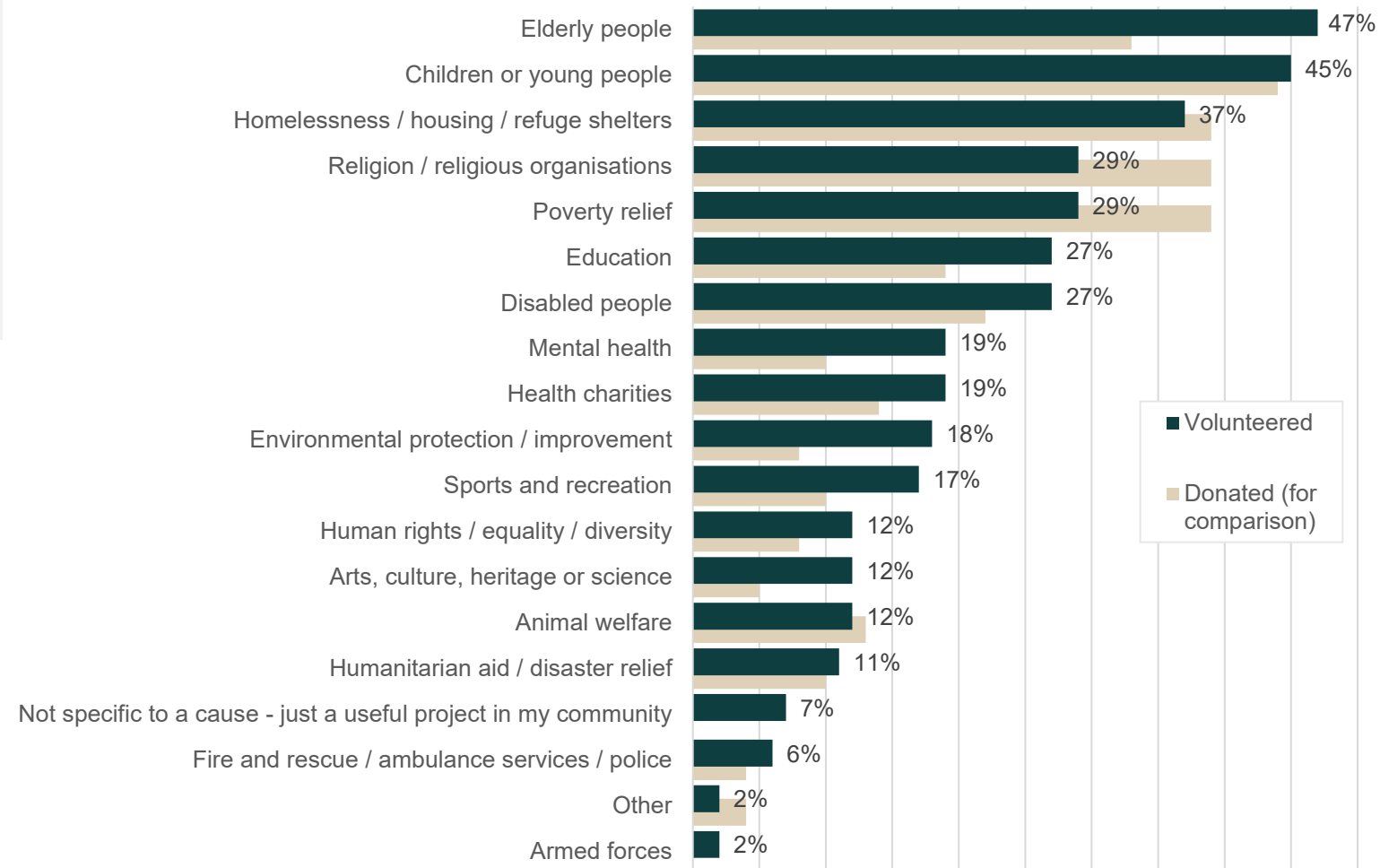
## The causes people supported through volunteering.

**The causes that volunteers support broadly mirrors those most donated to.**

Notably, 'elderly people' attracts a higher proportion of volunteering support than it does in terms of donations.

The same is true of both environmental causes, mental health and sport.

**Which cause(s) did you do unpaid voluntary work for in 2024? (People who had volunteered, n = 380)**



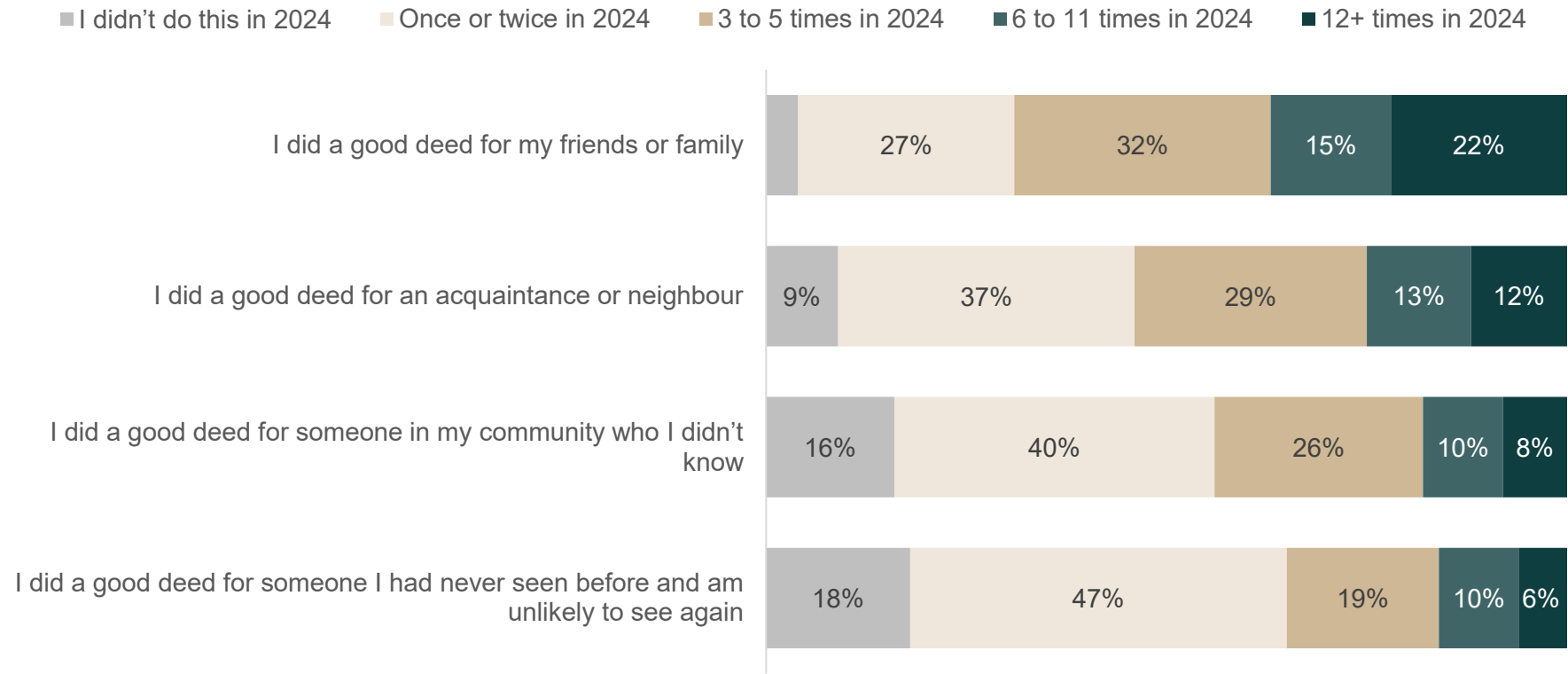
# How helpful people are to others.

**Beyond formal volunteering, many South Africans engage in everyday acts of kindness.**

Such micro-acts are foundational to a resilient, connected society.

Acknowledging and amplifying these stories through community media and campaigns can help build a culture of everyday generosity.

**Beyond easy acts of kindness or simple good manners that do not require much effort, for example, holding open a door or picking up a dropped item, did you do a good deed in 2024?**  
(All, n = 1,057)





# 04 PERCEPTIONS OF CIVIL SOCIETY

## How much the public trusts charities.

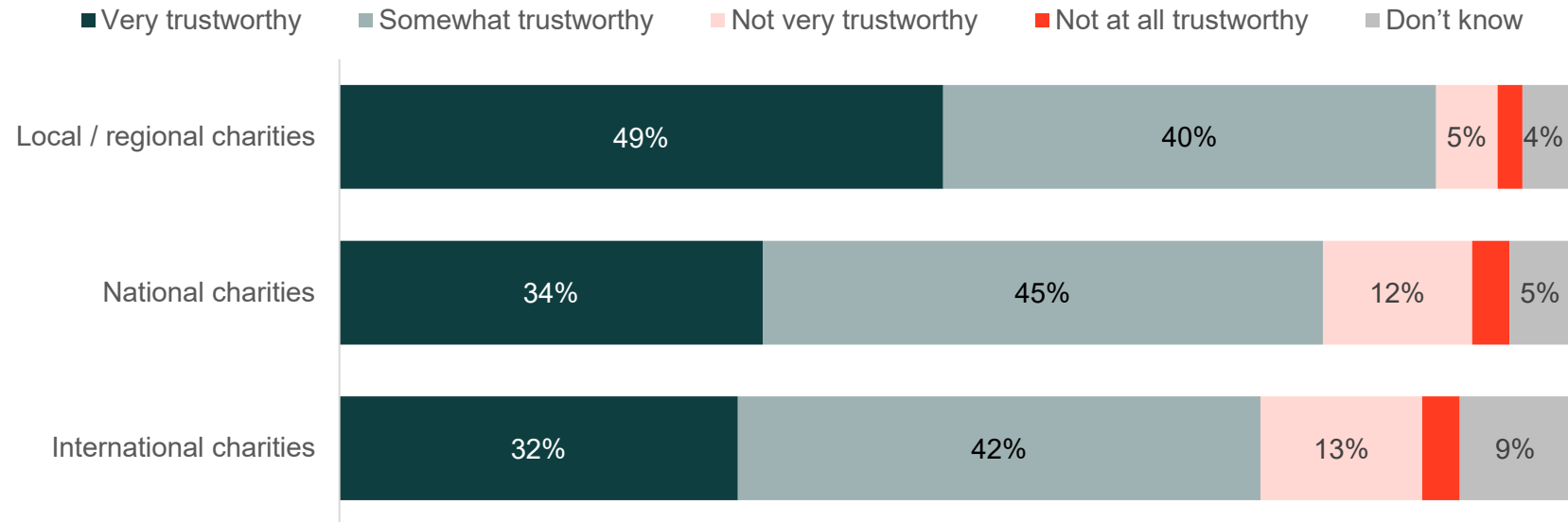
**Public trust in charities scored 10.1 out of 15, slightly below the continental average but above the global one.**

Local charities are the most trusted, with more scepticism about national and international ones.

Trust is essential but not guaranteed. People trust organisations with local presence, clarity of mission, and visible impact.

Increasing transparency, sharing success stories, and embracing accountability are key to strengthening this trust.

How trustworthy do you tend to find each of these types of charities? (All, n = 1,057)



Overall, the public in South Africa gave a score of 10.1/15 for how much they trust charities. This compares to a continental average of 10.36 and a global average of 9.22.

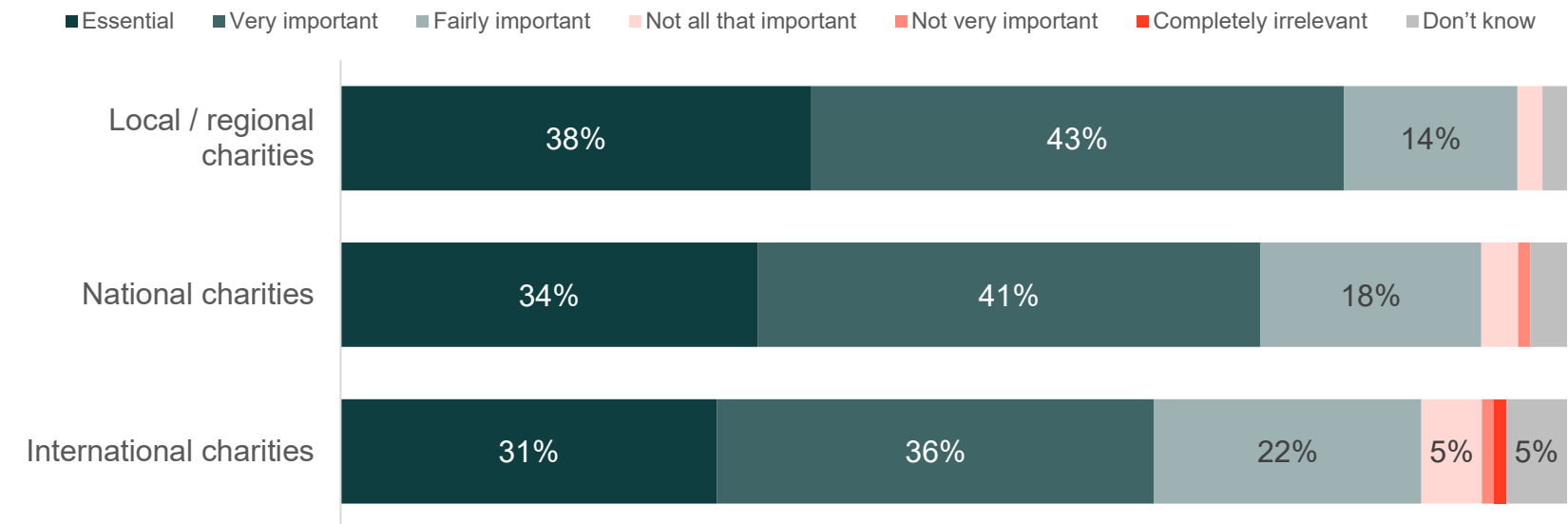
## The perceived importance of charities to society.

**South Africans gave a strong score of 12/15 for the perceived societal value of charities.**

This suggests that while trust may vary, there is broad recognition of the role civil society plays.

To convert recognition into support, charities must bridge this credibility gap with storytelling, reporting, and lived relevance.

How important, in general, do you believe these different types of charities are to your country's society? (All, n = 1,057)



Overall, the public in South Africa gave a score of 12/15 for how much they value charities. This compares to a continental average of 12.20 and a global average of 10.98.

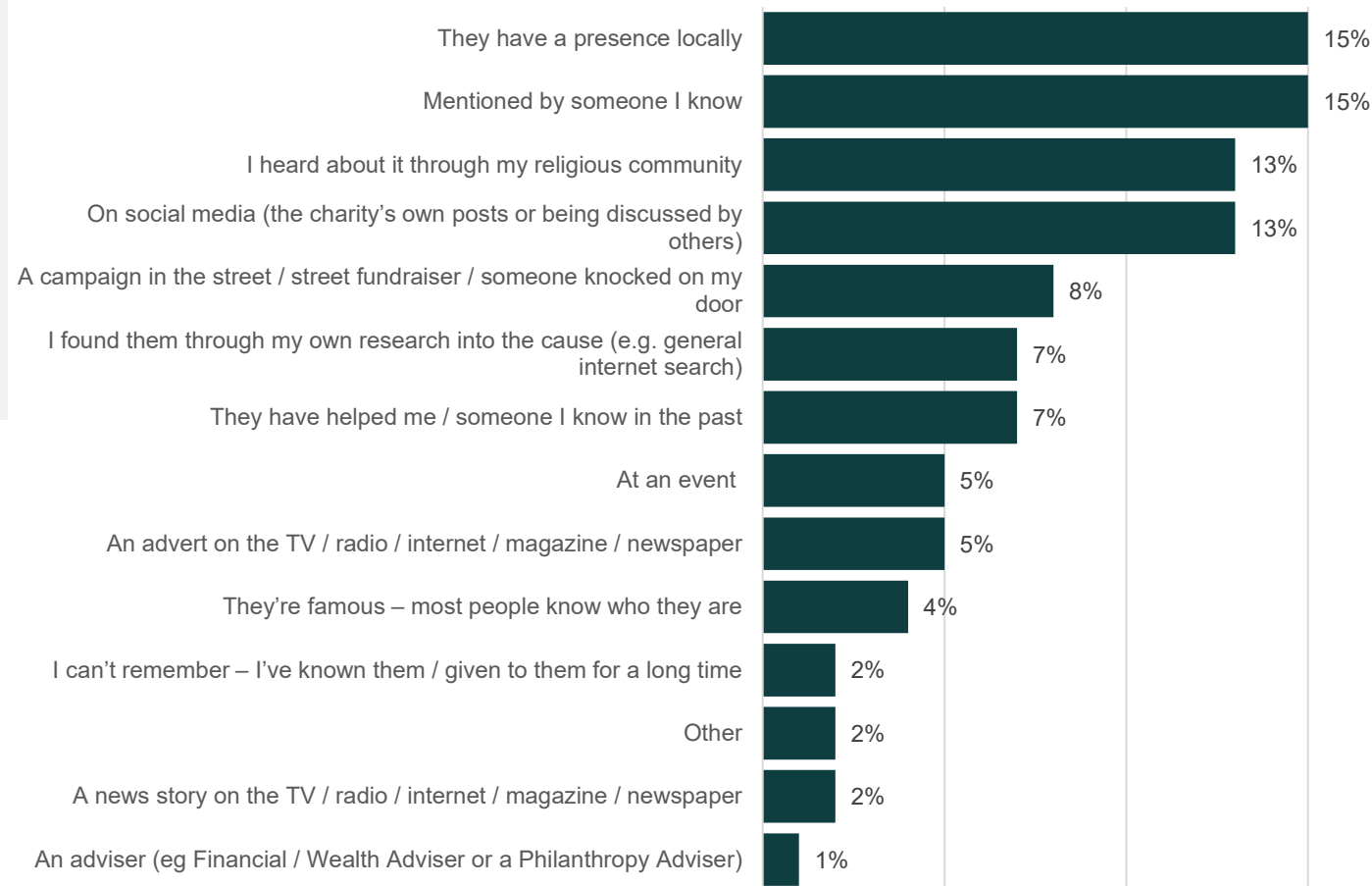
## How people discover charities.

### Discovery is driven by proximity and relationships.

People learn about charities through local presence (15%), someone they know (15%) and their religious communities (13%).

Social media (13%), is also important and shows that that digital strategies should complement not replace on-the-ground engagement.

### For the last charity that you gave money to, how did you first find out about them? (People who had given money to charities, n = 839)



### Global top 3

1. On social media (14%)
2. They have a presence locally (11%)
3. They were mentioned by someone I know (10%)

### Continental top 3

1. I heard about it through my religious community (16%)
2. On social media (13%)
3. They have a presence locally (12%)

## Overall influence of government on charities.

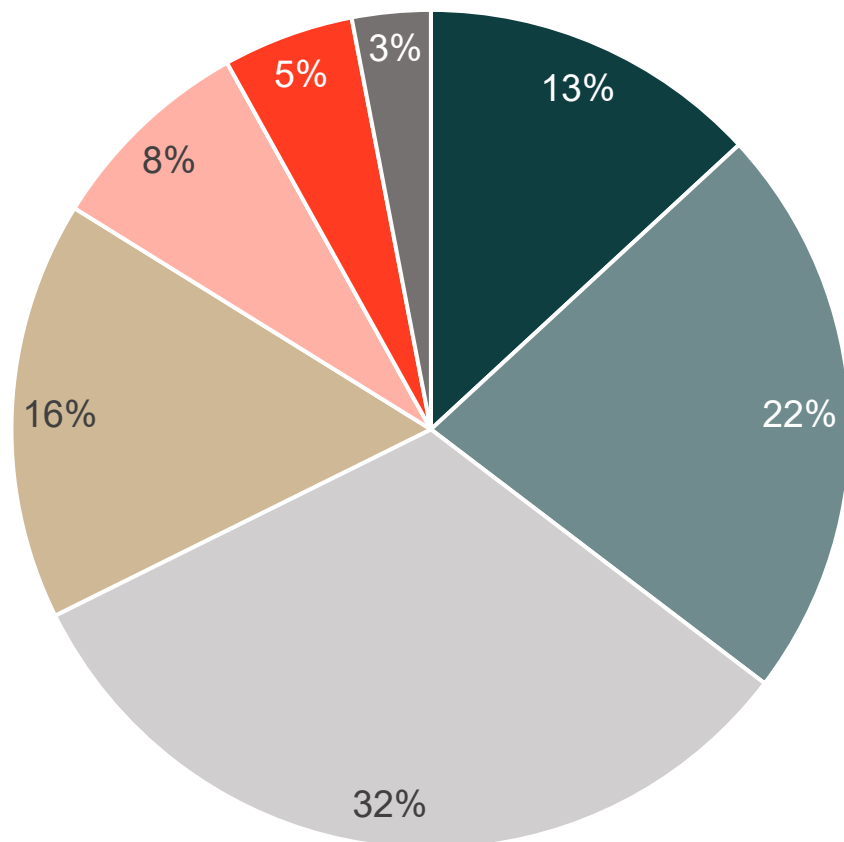
**Public opinion is divided on the Government's role, and broadly in line with the global averages.**

While some view it as supportive, others are sceptical or disengaged.

Civil society needs to advocate for enabling environments while maintaining independence.

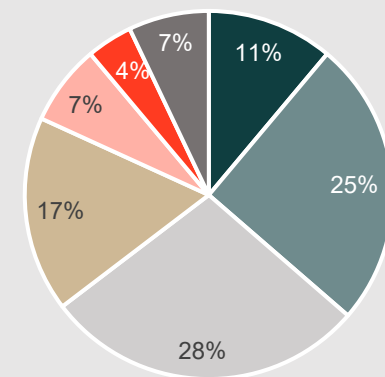
Strong regulation, fair treatment, and collaboration can enhance the public perception of this relationship.

Overall, do you think the Government is a positive or negative influence on the charity sector? (All, n = 1,057)

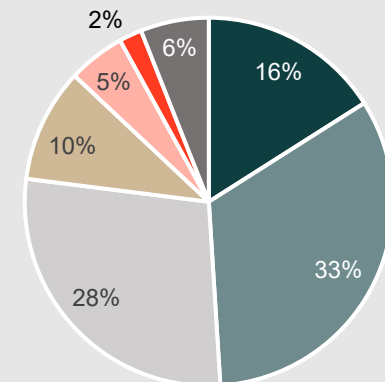


- Very positive
- Positive
- Neutral – they do some good things and some bad things
- Neutral – they don't do anything either way
- Negative
- Very negative
- Don't know

**Global average**



**Continent average**



## Specific opinions on the role of government.

**Overall, opinion are mixed on specific aspects of the Government's role in civil society.**

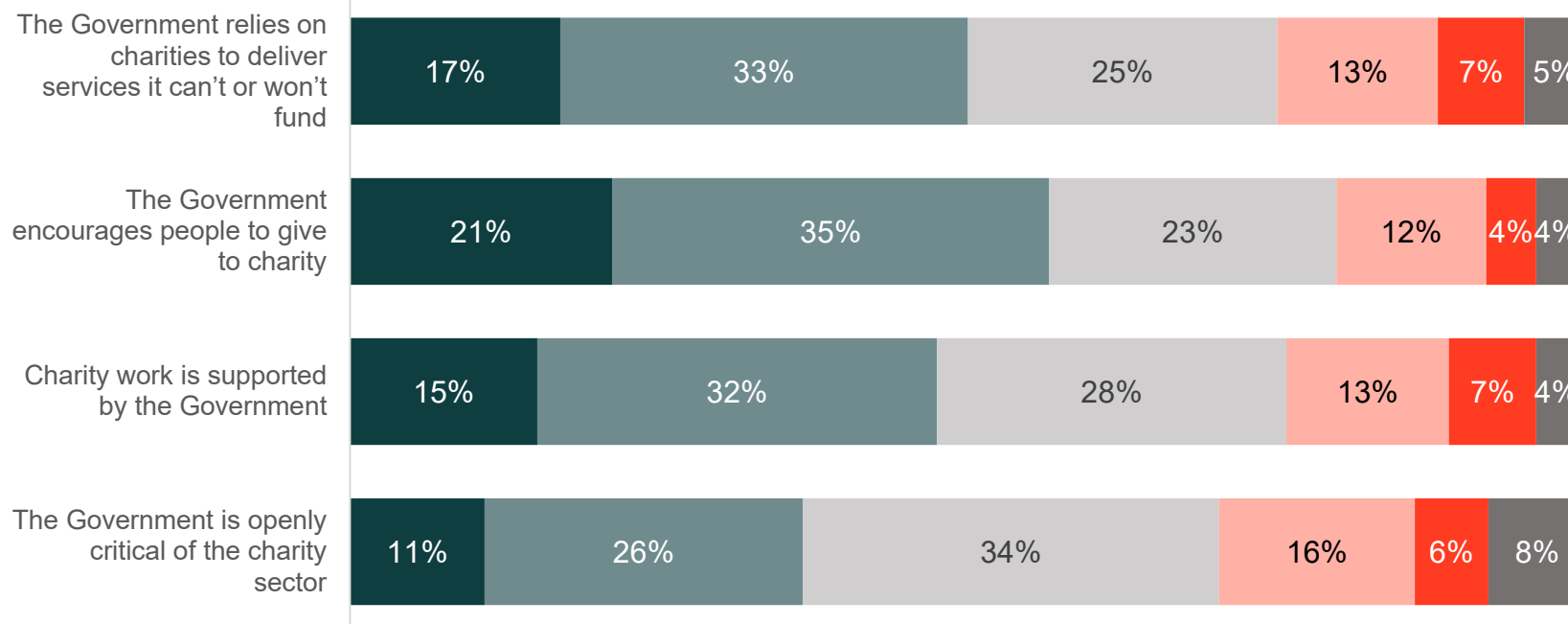
Dialogue between the Government and civil sector is crucial to improving these opinions in future.

There is agreement that the Government can play a constructive role — if it ensures fair oversight that supports rather than controls.

Many respondents want clearer boundaries and better collaboration. A healthy civil society needs a state that protects its freedom while investing in its success.

**Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Government's involvement in the charity sector? (All, n = 1,057)**

■ Strongly agree
■ Agree
■ Neither agree nor disagree
■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree
■ Don't know



# THANK YOU

[www.worldgivingreport.org](http://www.worldgivingreport.org)

Charities Aid Foundation registered charity number 268369

