

Thematic Analysis on Youth in the Maldives

based on 2014 Population and Housing Census data







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Andreas Demmke

Demographer (M.A), UNFPA Consultant

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Cover graphic shows the total population of Maldives where each circle represents 10 people and the youth population (ages 18-34) are colored as below:

- Maldivian Females ● Foreign Females
- Maldivian Males ● Foreign Males
- Below 18 ● Above 34

In the Maldives, youth is defined as young men and women aged 18-34.

This report presents information on the age groups most relevant to understanding the situation of young people.



Preface

The Maldives has almost completed its demographic transition. The country's total fertility rate has declined substantially and the population's age structure outnumbers young dependents. The country has entered a unique window of opportunity.

However, as the economic gains associated with a demographic dividend are not automatic, we need to pay more attention to our youth and invest in them. Youth need to be properly trained with skills that are marketable and remain in good health so they can contribute to the country's social and economic development.

According to the 2014 Population and Housing Census, young people aged 18 to 34 account for 35 per cent of the population and those aged 15 to 24 account for 20 per cent.

The Government fully recognizes the critical need to expand youth participation and opportunities to better address their aspirations. A prerequisite for this is a vibrant and healthy economy. It is with this goal in mind that His Excellency President Abdulla Yameen has embarked on an economic transformation of the Maldives by expanding and diversifying the economy. This is the key towards securing a brighter future for Maldivian youth. Youth are at the forefront of many government initiatives, policies and programmes focused on achieving youth development.

These initiatives include providing better higher education and training opportunities for youth to equip them with the job market skills, and expanding employment opportunities available in the market. The Government is also conducting programmes to foster youth entrepreneurship and economic empowerment through business startup loans and incubator programmes. Similarly, it is investing in sports and recreational facilities for youth to ensure their physical and mental health and wellbeing. Through effective implementation of these policies the Government aims to ensure that today's young people become the workers and economic entrepreneurs of tomorrow, equipped to contribute to the progress of our nation.

This youth report provides in-depth analysis of the characteristics of young people in the Maldives, as captured in the 2014 Population and Housing Census. It examines the situation of young people compared to the total population, focused on their education, health, wellbeing, employment, marriage and fertility. It provides data and analysis of the situation of youth in order to support informed discussion and highlight issues that require greater attention, with the ultimate

aim of accelerating economic growth and equitable development.

The 2014 census and its analysis provide a timely update on the Maldivian youth population that would aid in further refining and enhancing the youth development policies that has been embarked by President Yameen. I hope that it will also serve as a valuable reference for youth advocates, government, academicians, development partners, civil society and all stakeholders in developing and implementing youth policies and programmes.

I extend my appreciation to Mr. Andreas Demmke for his invaluable time and effort in undertaking this analysis. I am especially grateful to UNFPA for taking this initiative and providing the financial backing. Finally, I offer my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the staff of the National Bureau of Statistics for their dedication and successful completion of this report, which is surely a significant milestone in our efforts to enhance our knowledge of the situation of Maldivian youth.



Ahmed Munawar
Minister of Finance and Treasury





Foreword

Youth are the driving force in any country and empowering youth to reach their full potential must be the cornerstone of any development strategy. With nearly half of Maldivians under age 25, policymakers have the power today to make the transformational decisions that will allow the country and its youth to reap the demographic dividend – a historic opportunity not to be missed.

Drawing largely on the 2014 National Census on Population and Housing Census, the Thematic Analysis on Youth offers a sweeping portrait of youth in the Maldives. It sheds light on their demographic characteristics, health, wellbeing, education, skills and employment prospects.

The research and analysis offered here point to areas where, with the right investments, the Government and partners will be able to nurture and bring to maturity the nation's human capital – that of Maldivian youth – for the 21st century. Improving human capital demands sound policies and investments in socioeconomic and good governance programmes. So while the Maldives has continued with high social spending (including for youth, health and education), it is now time to reassess the quality of current investments in order to address gaps and transform the country's development landscape for the next generations.

At UNFPA, we are committed and stand ready to assist the Government of the Maldives, all our stakeholders and, most of all, Maldivian youth as we endeavour to link data to national planning and development. This report allows us to see how data is a driving force in bringing the emerging issues young people face to the forefront of the nation's development agenda. We hope that the evidence-based policy recommendations outlined here will serve as a natural reference for policymakers and planners for many years to come.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Government of the Maldives, the National Bureau of Statistics, the Ministry of Finance and Treasury and Mr. Andreas Demmke for their invaluable collaboration and vital contributions, without which this report would have been impossible.



Ritsu Nacken
UNFPA Country Director,
Maldives

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1. Introduction

Definition of ‘youth’

In the Maldives, youth is defined as young men and women aged 18 to 34, whereas international definitions concentrate on ages 15 to 24. This report presents information on the age groups most relevant to understanding the situation of young people. In most cases, this information begins from the time they reach adolescence, around age 15, through to their early 30s, after which they tend to have established their independence.

The results of the 2014 Maldives Population and Housing Census provide a new basis through which to review population and other macro-policies in the Maldives. As part of UNFPA's work with the National Bureau of Statistics in the nation's capital, Malé, the Thematic Analysis on Youth in the Maldives builds on data and analysis from the 2014 census as well as other sources. The report will help to inform national policy discussions and provide policymakers with the tools they need to make evidence-based decisions.

The report makes extensive use of the concept ‘youth transition’. The concept refers to the transitional stage in life when young people generally undergo a series of changes, moving from childhood through adolescents to adulthood. These stages may, for example, include leaving school and the parental home, finding a place to live and work, and managing new health risks.

It is important to recognize, however, that not all young people are the same. A person's character and background affect the changes she/he undergoes and how well she/he overcomes related obstacles. Whether a young person is male or female, from a well-off or poor household, or living in rural or urban areas are determinant factors in how she/he reacts to the transitional stages.

Other sources of prior advantage/disadvantage include whether a young person is literate or not and whether she or he is physically or mentally disabled. These differences in personal characteristics and social situations narrow or expand the range of opportunities a young person has available to her or him.

A young person's success or failure in her/his youth-to-adult transition has a strong impact on later life outcomes. In general, however, the poorer and less educated a young person is, the greater the barriers she or he faces and the more difficult the transition to adulthood is.

From a youth transition perspective, it is the role of governments, communities, families and international agencies to help build the resilience of young people so that they can overcome the obstacles they face and have a socially productive, balanced life.



2. Summary of key findings

The study and analysis of the 2014 census point to a number of findings in the broad areas of youth in transition, health, wellbeing, education and employment. The report explores these findings in detail. Here, we focus on the key aspects that give the reader a bird's eye view of the challenges and opportunities young people in the Maldives face.

Like their peers across the globe, young Maldivians are eager to pursue studies and find work as they move into adult life. They begin by migrating to places where opportunities actually exist. Some Maldivians go abroad while the majority stay at home. Most natives of the capital Malé seek opportunities there. Many young Maldivians from the other islands (the atolls), however, often decide to migrate to Malé in search of opportunities.

Only about one third of Malé's young residents are actually from Malé. In contrast, most resident young people in the atolls are born there. Youth

15 to 19 generally migrate to Malé for education, especially women, although, beginning at age 20, men also move to Malé for work. From age 25, women moving to Malé increasingly cite marriage or childcare as the main reason. Teenage pregnancy is very low in the Maldives, with less than 0.7 per cent of women ages 19 and younger giving birth. The teenage fertility rate is seven births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19 – by far the lowest of all South Asian countries.

The transition to adulthood implies living independently. The proportion of men and women living independently – meaning they are heads of households or spouses of heads of household – steadily increases with age. By age 25, 12 and 19 per cent of men and women live independently; at age 34, the numbers rise to 42 and 56 per cent of men and women. Interestingly,

the proportion of youth living independently is higher for women, and it is higher for women living in Malé than for women living in the atolls. From age 20, men head some 60 per cent of households in Malé, while in the atolls women head the majority of households.

Maldivians generally marry in their early to mid-twenties (men at age 25.4 and women at age 22.2). The average age difference at marriage between them is about three years.

Marriage before age 18 is not common (only about 1 per cent). This trend changes at ages 18 to 19 when, on average, 12 per cent of women and 2 per cent of men marry. By ages 20 to 24, 59 per cent of women and almost one quarter of men are married.

The Maldives can boast that almost all its young people have completed primary school or more. Literacy rates among them are high. The majority of

Maldivian youth, in fact, remain in school until ages 17 or 18.

Literacy rates in both mother tongue (Dhivehi) and English are high for youth ages 15 to 24, with close to 100 per cent literacy in Dhivehi and over 90 per cent in English. It is a point of national pride.

School attendance rates are close to 100 per cent for both boys and girls up to age 15, but decline rapidly afterwards. The rate of school attendance declines with age more quickly for boys than girls, especially in Malé, and girls have higher rates of attendance in secondary school.

To become well-rounded individuals, young people must be able to study or work. They must have the opportunities to be productive and to develop skills and confidence. The proportion of men and women 15 to 34 not in education, employment or training (NEET)

is expressed in the NEET rate. In the Maldives, the NEET rate shows a steady, steep rise from ages 15 to 19 when about 27 per cent of men and women are not in education, employment or training. Then, beginning at age 19, the NEET rate continuously falls for men, stabilizing at 6 per cent for ages 30 and older. While the NEET rate is similar for men and women 15 to 20, it is higher for women 20 and older: 20 per cent of women at age 23, and 13 per cent of women 30 and older. The NEET rate is significantly higher for women than men in the atolls.

A significantly higher proportion of men in all age groups do not have an academic or vocational certificate or diploma. The difference is smaller at ages 25 to 34 when the proportion drops to 29 per cent for men and 24 per cent for women. At the same time, higher proportions of women ages 19 and older have

an academic or vocational certificate or diploma than men of the same age. The correlation between employment status and educational level shows that a much higher proportion of women with a diploma or degree are employed than those without. Men with a diploma or degree are also less likely to be unemployed. Overall, the proportion of men and women not in the labour force is much higher for those without an academic diploma, degree or certificate.

Young people make up a significant proportion of the labour force. More than half (54 per cent) of the labour force is aged 18 to 34 while 23 per cent is 15 to 24. Most young people join the labour force by the time they are in their early twenties. The average labour force participation rate for ages 15 and older is 78 per cent for men and 47 per cent for women. That plateaus at ages 25 to 49

for men (more than 90 per cent in the labour force) and at ages 20 to 49 for women (more than 50 per cent). Ninety per cent of foreign residents, both male and female, aged 18 to 34 are wage employees, many of them in the tourism sector.

Resident Maldivian youth ages 15 to 34 work in a few traditional industries. Men tend to work in accommodation, public administration/defence, fishing and aquaculture, and women in education, retail trade (except motor vehicles and motorcycles) and public administration/defence.

Occupationally, men tend to be fishery workers, hunters, trappers, protective service workers, domestic hotel and office helpers, while women are teachers, salespersons and general office clerks.

The 2014 census shows that 8,000 people are unemployed. Almost 6,000 (75 per cent) are

ages 18 to 34, of which 3,550 are men and 2,440 are women. Unemployment of young people ages 18 to 19 is much higher than for other groups, where 22 per cent of men and 18 per cent of women (who have previously entered the labour force) are unemployed. In total, there are 87,000 people 15 years and older who are not in the labour force (or 36 per cent of the total population). Of those, 34,000 are aged 18 to 34: 7,000 men and 27,000 women.

The main reason for unemployment among 15 to 19 year olds is their student status. For women, ages 20 to 34, the main reason is household and childcare. Men of the same age group point to other reasons, such as, being unable to find suitable work that matches their level of education, lack of employment opportunities in their island of residence, and ill health and/or disability.

Surprisingly, a large number of people (17,000) are not in the labour force because of ill health or disability. Although most are ages 65 and older, 2,550 are 18 to 34. Eighteen per cent of men ages 25 to 29 and 21 per cent of men ages 30 to 34 have reported some level of ill health or disability that has prevented them from working. This trend shows that there is a significant proportion of young men with debilitating health issues, an issue the Maldives will explore going forward.

The study draws attention to these broad trends and in doing so provides a basis for more detailed exploration and analysis. It sets a benchmark against which programmes can be monitored and progress measured. And it gives policymakers and development practitioners the knowledge and tools they need to design policies and programmes that will make a difference in the lives of Maldivian youth.



3. Census background information

The preliminary results of the Population and Housing Census 2014 were released on 5 November 2014. The 2014 census made a substantial change in the population it covered, moving closer to international recommendations for census-taking. According to those recommendations, censuses should include only populations actually residing in a country. In past censuses, foreigners residing in the Maldives were not included in the census but Maldivians residing abroad were. Maldivians residing abroad were also included in the 2014 census to allow for comparisons with previous censuses.

Census 2014 data introduces the concept ‘resident population’ consisting of resident Maldivians and resident foreigners, the two groups that future censuses will cover. Owing to numerous difficulties and challenges in enumerating the foreign population, their numbers are underrepresented when compared with administrative records.

In order to allow comparisons with previous censuses, however, the concept ‘Maldivian population’ is also used. This includes both Maldivians residing in the Maldives and those residing abroad. It is the intention of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) to exclude non-resident Maldivians from future censuses.

The total population of the Maldives, according to the 2014 census, was 407,660 at the time of census. Of this total, the resident population is 402,071, which consists of 338,434 resident Maldivians and 63,637 resident foreigners. The 2014 census captured 5,589 Maldivians as living abroad; following the example of previous censuses, the ‘total Maldivian population’ enumerated in the 2014 census was 344,023.

As part of the resident population, 162,022 persons were aged 18 to 34, consisting of 118,735 Maldivian residents and 43,287 foreign residents.

Terms and definitions of population groups, 2014

TERM	DEFINITION	TOTAL
Total enumerated population	The total population enumerated in the census. It includes the usual resident population and non-resident Maldivian population.	407,660
Total resident population	The population that has lived or intends to reside in the Maldives for one year or more, which includes the resident Maldivian population and the resident foreign population.	402,071
Resident Maldivian population	Maldivians who have lived or intend to reside in the <u>Maldives</u> for one year or more.	338,434
Resident Foreign population	Foreigners who have lived or intend to reside in the <u>Maldives</u> for one year or more.	63,637
Total Maldivian population	The total of resident Maldivians and non-resident Maldivians.	344,023
Youth population (international definition)	Resident population aged 15 to 24	79,246
	Maldivian residents	67,228
	Foreign residents	12,018
Youth population (Maldives definition)	Resident population aged 18 to 34	162,022
	Maldivian residents	118,735
	Foreign residents	43,287



4. National circumstances

4.1. Introduction

With a small population, the Maldives recognizes that investing in youth is key to creating a sustainable future, which includes:

- **Education:** gaining a secondary school qualification provides a stronger case for employment and the basis for going on to further study.
- **Skills training:** readying young people for adult life with the skills they need. This includes providing technical and vocational training in areas where the local labour market has increasing demands, such as tourism and related services.
- **Work experience:** it can be difficult for young people to get employment when they have no or little work experience. Apprenticeships and programmes that provide a combination of work and training can be the start that young people need to establish a career.

This report provides valuable data from the 2014 census to inform and monitor the work being done to support these target groups.

4.2. Youth in context – a literature review¹

A review of literature provides a framework for the thematic analysis of youth in the Maldives. Whereas census data measures housing, migration, education, employment, marital status and fertility, other studies include additional themes and suggest policies and strategies. The literature explores the main themes affecting youth, identifies progress, issues and constraints, and suggests policies. The period covered by the studies is from 2000 to 2015. The definition of youth varies from study to study, which is important to note when conducting a review. However, the Government defines the official age group of youth as people aged 18 to 34 (Ministry of Human Resources, Youth and Sports, 2015).

Since 2001 progress in the islands has been measured in a number of areas. Economic development indicators show that the Maldives graduated from least developed to middle-income status and its gross national product (GNP) rose. The country has met five out of eight of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets in youth, gender, health, housing and education. Life expectancy has increased and there has been significant progress in reducing neonatal, child and maternal mortality. In education, enrolment numbers of both girls and boys have grown, with girls representing the majority of graduates; in fact, at the secondary and tertiary levels, girls are high achievers (Ministry of Finance and Treasury and UNDP, 2014).

The Maldives has made progress despite its geographic and socioeconomic vulnerabilities. Its challenges include the environment, human rights, community empowerment, disparity and vulnerability of islands, youth issues, gender equity, poverty, unemployment, limited access to health services, and lack of choice and opportunity (World Bank, 2014). Each of these challenges impacts youth.

1. Note that the views expressed in the literature are not necessarily those of the author or UNFPA. Please also note that many figures mentioned in the literature are outdated and should be replaced with data from the 2014 census, as presented in this report, or on the Maldives National Bureau of Statistics website (<http://statisticsmaldives.gov.mv/census-2014/>).

Youth issues

Regardless of where they live, young people share common issues. At the same time, there are issues unique to the young people of the Maldives. According to the World Bank 2014 study on the Maldives, geography, law, religion and culture restrict progress. Restrictions common to atolls, including their small size, distance for sea transport, limited resources and the high cost of living, make them vulnerable. Cultural constraints can inhibit a young woman's access to education, employment and divorce. Laws, customs and religion may determine what women can and cannot do. Young men and women do not have easy access to sexual health services. Addressing these and other issues identified by the literature below will require consideration of constraints.

Migration

Key findings:

- Youth, as a large proportion of the population, has specific demands for services.
- Internal migration is significant and mainly directed from the atolls to Malé.
- Migration is composed mainly of young people in search of educational opportunities.
- Malé is congested and suffers from overcrowded housing.

Young people move from the outer islands to Malé in search of improved standards of living with better health, education and employment opportunities. Census data shows that lifetime migration continues to increase with successive censuses. This means that daily life in Malé has increasing disadvantages linked to social problems, such as, overcrowded housing, the rise of slums, high divorce rates, child abuse, sexual abuse, violent crime, threats to security, human trafficking, gang warfare and drug use.

In the outer islands, inequality is more striking. The

geographic and socioeconomic limits of outer islands make them vulnerable. Income is lower, prices are higher, opportunities are limited, and youth frustrations are magnified (ICPD, 2012; Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2008; Thalagala, 2008; and World Bank, 2014;)

Although the MDG outcomes show improvements for youth in enrolment and graduation, there are lower levels of access among outer island girls at the tertiary level and increased drop-out rates among boys at the secondary level (World Bank, 2014; UNICEF, 2013; ICPD, 2012).

Health

Key findings:

- According to the 2014 census, about 60 per cent of women are of reproductive age.
- Fertility is low but the contraceptive prevalence rate is also low (35 per cent of currently married women (Demographic Health Survey, 2009).
- Health is curative rather than preventive.
- There is limited access to condoms and other contraceptives.
- Sexually transmitted infections and HIV are present in the Maldives.

In the area of sexual health, the literature states that premarital sexual intercourse is common among youth.

However, it also shows that while young men view sexual experience as desirable, young women do not. In society, the birth of a child shows that a girl has become a woman. At the same time, unmarried women are stigmatized for being sexually active, especially in small communities (outer islands) where a girl's and a family's reputation is highly valued. In closed communities, an unwanted pregnancy outside of marriage is unwelcome. Any discussion of sexual and reproductive health among youth, particularly those who are unmarried, is taboo and sensitive (Ibid, Thalagala, 2008).

Labour

Key findings:

- There are high levels of youth unemployment and underemployment.
- Most youth, especially outside Malé, lack job skills.

Youth unemployment and underemployment are high and the term 'youth voluntary unemployment' has been coined². Although the Maldives is a tourism economy, women have less access to labour opportunities. Men are able to leave home to work in Malé but the domestic responsibilities of women keep them close to home and family. High rates of divorce and outmigration of male labour contribute to exceptionally high rates of female-headed households (World Bank, 2014).

Gender equality

Key findings:

- Gender inequality persists in health, education and the labour market.
- The Maldives has one of the lowest rates of women's representation in governance in the world³.

According to MDG indicators, the Maldives lags behind in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. Culture and social norms determine what a woman can and cannot do. Restrictions on women's mobility, autonomy, forms of employment, voice and ability to make independent decisions are increasing.

The Maldives has one of the lowest rates of women's representation in governance in the world with, for example, only 5.8% of women parliamentarians. Women are underrepresented in formal decision-making positions of power, but are active as civil servants, voters and members of political parties. This inequality has been attributed to traditional attitudes and rigid perceptions of gender roles and responsibilities (Ibid, 2014).

Family welfare

Key findings:

- The divorce rate is high.
- Violence against women is high.
- Family stress and breakdown are two negative outcomes of development.
- The crime rate, gang violence, drug use, and child and sexual abuse are on the rise.

Domestic violence and other forms of gender inequality are explained within the context of rigid, gender roles. Violence against women is high, with one in three women aged 15 to 49 having experienced physical or sexual violence at least once in her lifetime (Ibid, 2014; ICPD, 2012; UNICEF, 2013).

In addition to constraints of living on an atoll, young people experience the outside world through the internet, social media and the increasing numbers of tourists and foreigners who visit the country yearly. A desire for freedom, expensive lifestyles and higher social status conflict with cultural norms and perceptions, leaving young people disappointed and disengaged (World Bank, 2014).

2. Voluntary unemployment is defined as a situation in which the unemployed choose not to accept a job at the going wage rate.

3. Maldives national gender policy. Final draft, dated 27 September 15.



5. The youth population

5.1. Trends in youth population, 2000 to 2014

The Maldivian resident population has increased in the last fourteen years, with a growth rate of about 1.6 per cent per annum. Between 2000 and 2014 the population rose by about 4,700 people on average every year.

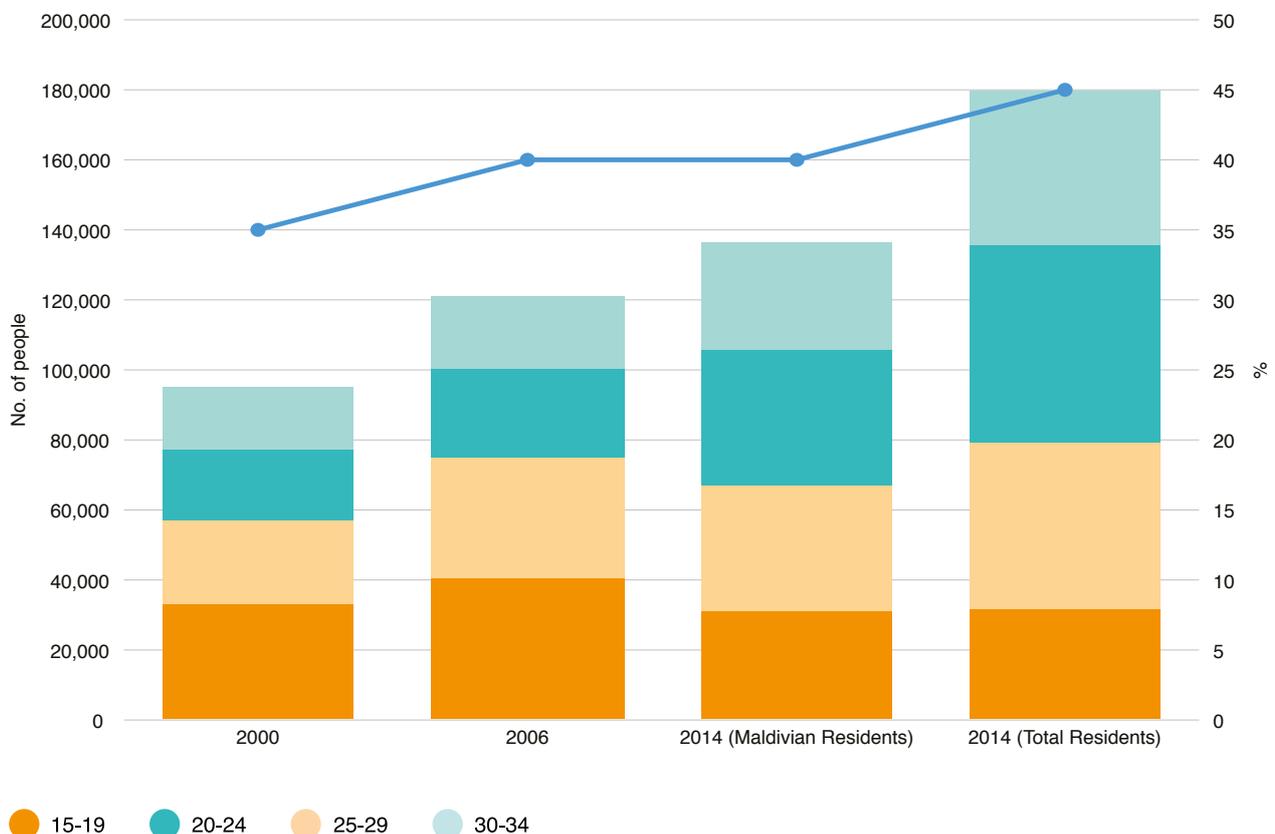
This population increase is reflected in a higher number of young people residing in the Maldives. The number of individuals aged 15 to 34 had increased from 121,000 in 2000 to 136,000 in 2014, representing around 40 per cent of the Maldivian resident population (about an equal number of 68,000 young men and young women). When adding the foreign resident population aged between

15 and 34, the total number of young people rises to about 180,000 (107,000 males and 72,000 females), which represents 45 per cent of the total resident population (figure 1).

The large increase in the total resident population between 2006 and 2014 is mainly a result of a change in census methodology, since the 2014 census includes the resident foreign population – foreigners who have lived or intend to reside in Maldives for one year or more. This group was not included in previous censuses. However, even when excluding the resident foreign population from the 2014 count, the Maldivian resident population aged 15 to 34 had increased to 136,000 in 2014.

When examining the different age groups, there are some notable differences in population trends. For example, the 15 to 19 age group has declined in population size since 2006, regardless of whether one includes the resident foreign population or not, while the 25 to 29 and the 30 to 34 age groups increased significantly in size even when only considering the Maldivian resident population (figure 1).

Figure 1. Youth population by five-year age group, Maldives: 2000, 2006 and 2014



Source: 2000, 2006 and 2014 Population and Housing Censuses

According to the 2014 census, a relatively large proportion of the total resident youth population consists of individuals of foreign origin who have lived or intend to reside in Maldives for one year or more. About one third of residents aged 25 to 34 are of foreign decent; this is almost half of the male youth population of this age group and 10 per cent of all females aged 25 to 34 (figures 2a to 2c).

Figure 2. Proportion of Maldivian and foreign youth population as part of the total resident population by age and sex, Maldives: 2014

Figure 2a. Both sexes

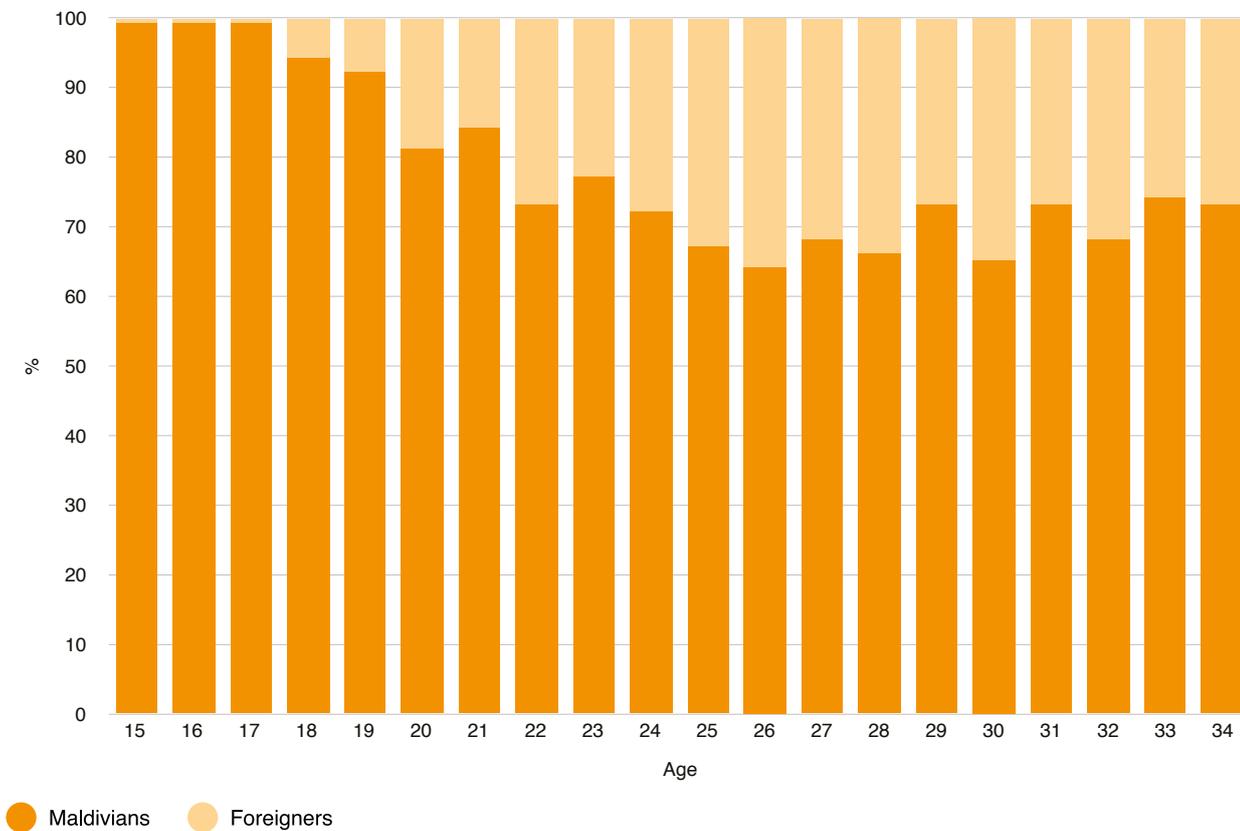


Figure 2b. Males

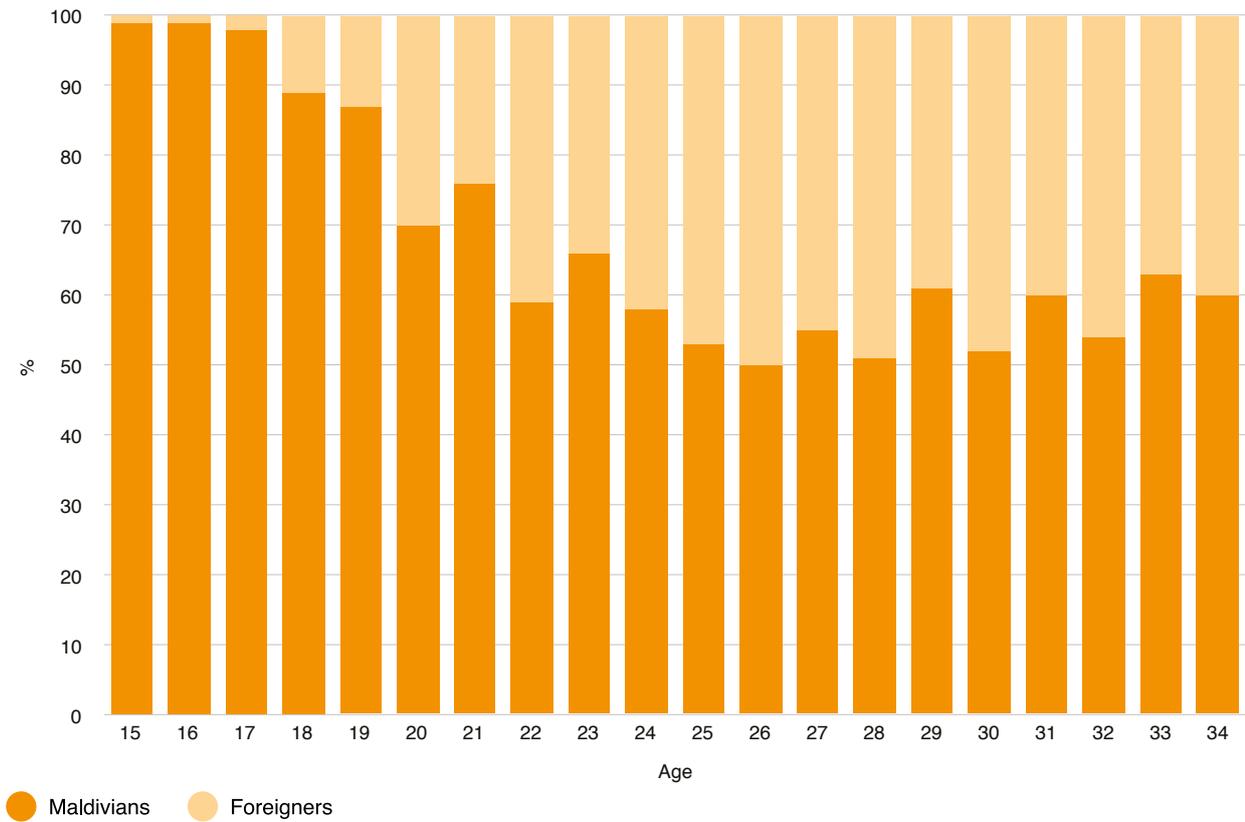
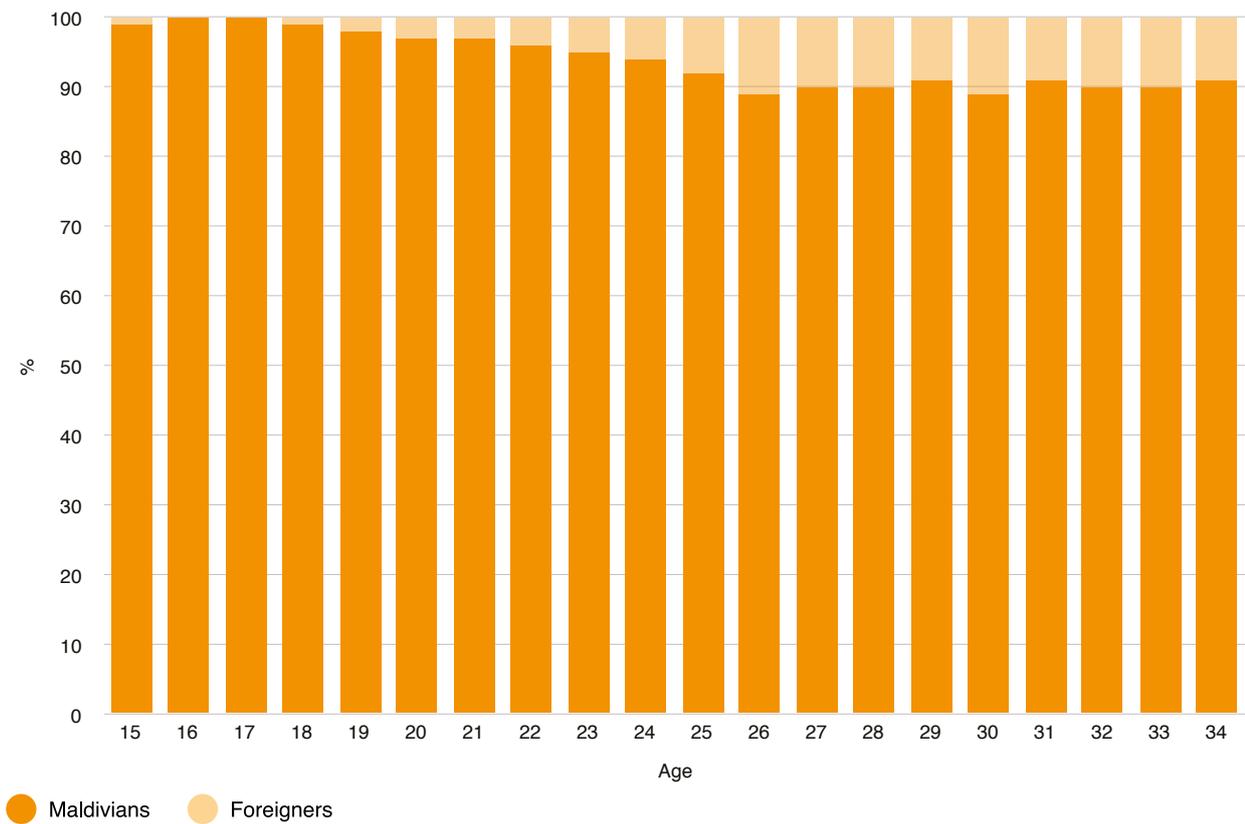


Figure 2c. Females



5.2. Age and sex structure of youth population, 2014

The age-sex structure of the population reveals important findings for the development of youth policies and programmes. The number of children below 15 in each age group is increasing and is a sign of increasing fertility rates in recent years. To illustrate this trend, the average number of children born to Maldivian women was 2.5 in 2014 compared to 2.2 in 2006.

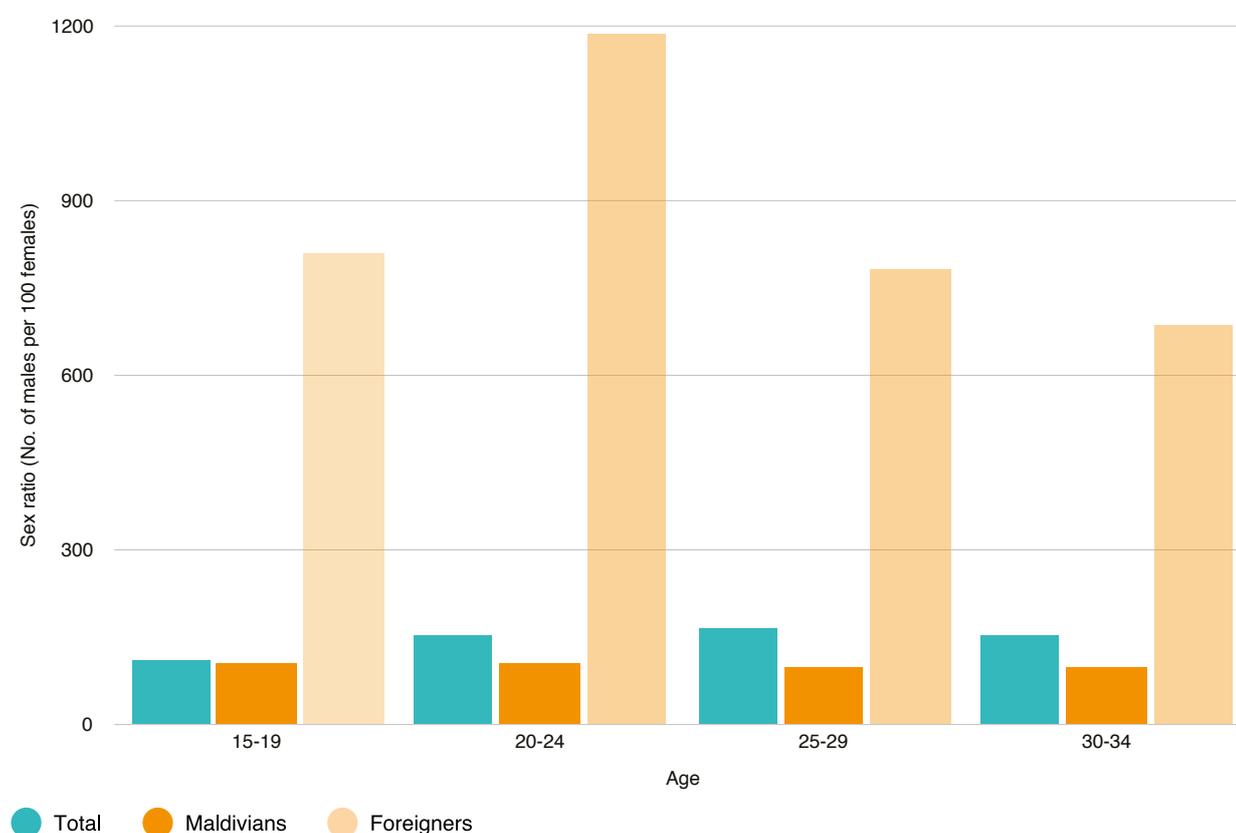
Overall, there are about 50 per cent more resident males than females aged 15 to 34, as expressed in a sex ratio of 148 – there are 148 males per 100 females. This skewed sex ratio is caused by an enormous surplus of foreign young males in relation to their female counterparts, expressed in a sex ratio of the foreign resident youth population of 820 – there are eight times more males than females among foreign residents aged 15 to 34, and the sex ratio of 20 to 24 year olds was almost 1,200 in 2014 (figure 3 and figure 4c).

The distribution of young males and females in the Maldivian resident population is relatively even, with 101 males per 100 females in the population aged 15 to 34. While there are slightly more males than females aged 15 to 24, there are slightly more females than males aged 25 to 34, as expressed in a sex ratio of 98 – there are only 98 males per 100 females.

The age-sex structure of young resident males and females in Malé and the atolls is very similar. There are more young people aged 20 to 29 than aged 15 to 19 or 30 to 34, there is a relatively equal number of young males and females among Maldivian residents, and there are significantly more young males than females among foreign residents (figures 4a to 4i).

Among all Maldivians, there are more young people aged 20 to 29 than aged 15 to 19 or 30 to 34. However, the age distribution of the foreign resident population is strikingly different from that of the Maldivian resident population, which is composed predominantly of male contract workers aged 20 to 34 (figures 4c, 4f and 4i).

Figure 3. Sex ratios of the youth resident population by age group, Maldives: 2014



Source: 2014 Population and Housing Census

Figure 4. Age-sex structure of the resident population by locality and nationality (youth population aged 18 to 34 highlighted), Maldives: 2014

Figure 4a. Total residents, Republic⁴

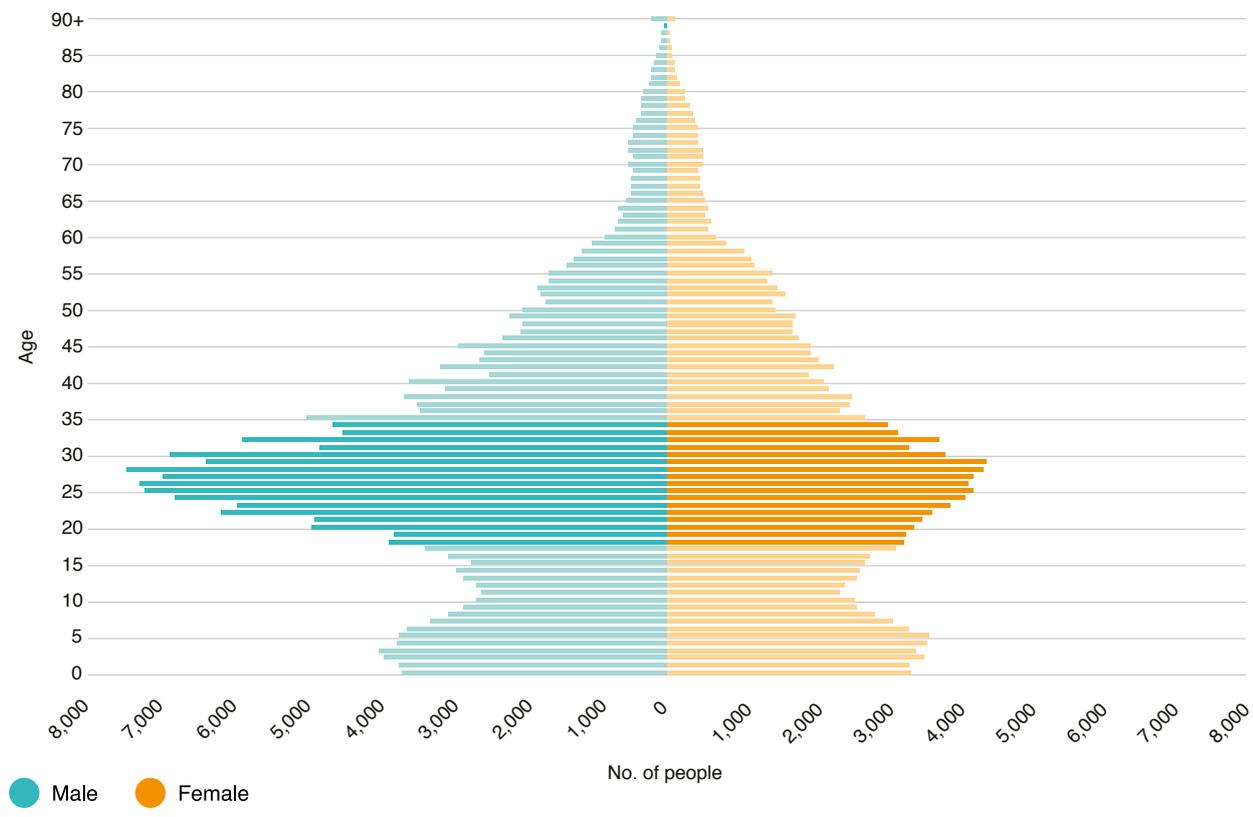
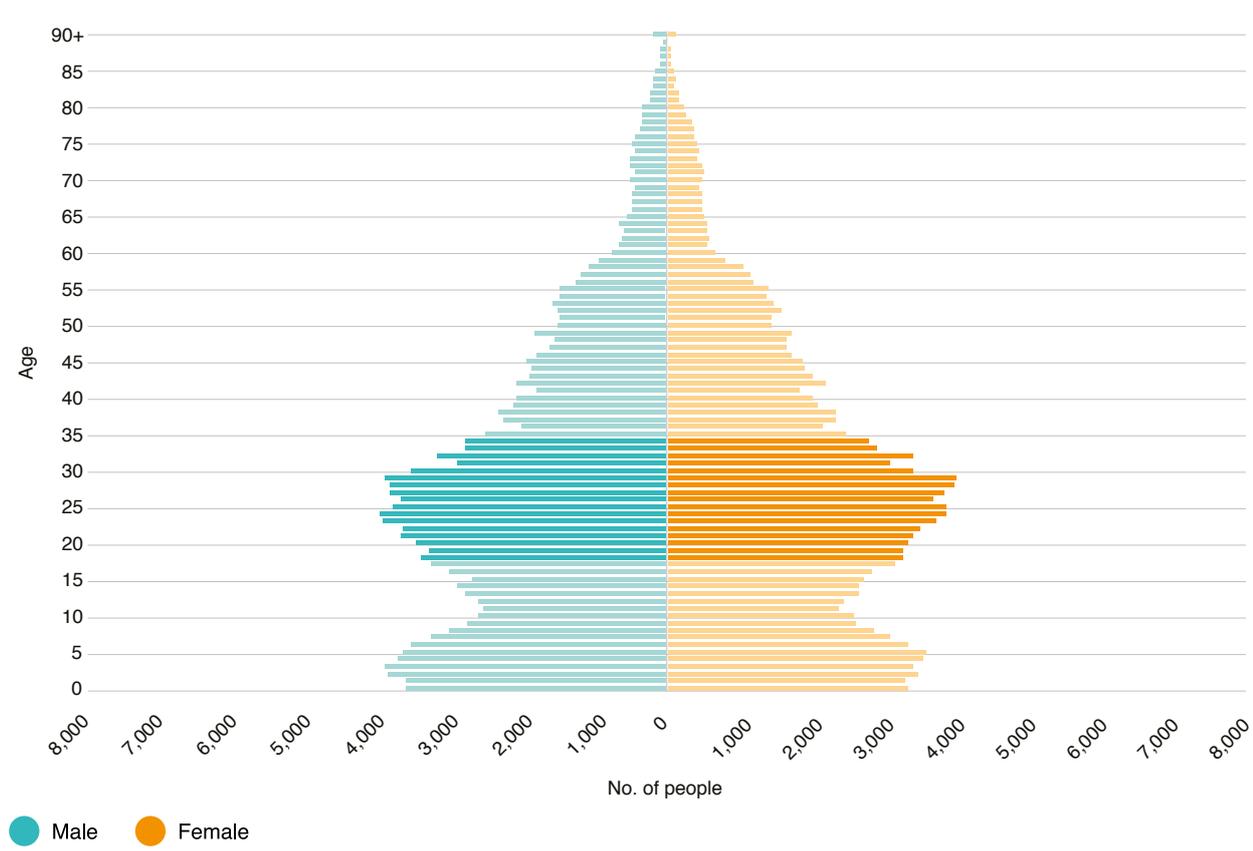


Figure 4b. Maldivian residents, Republic



4. Republic denotes the entire country, both the capital Malé and the atolls.

Figure 4c. Foreign residents, Republic

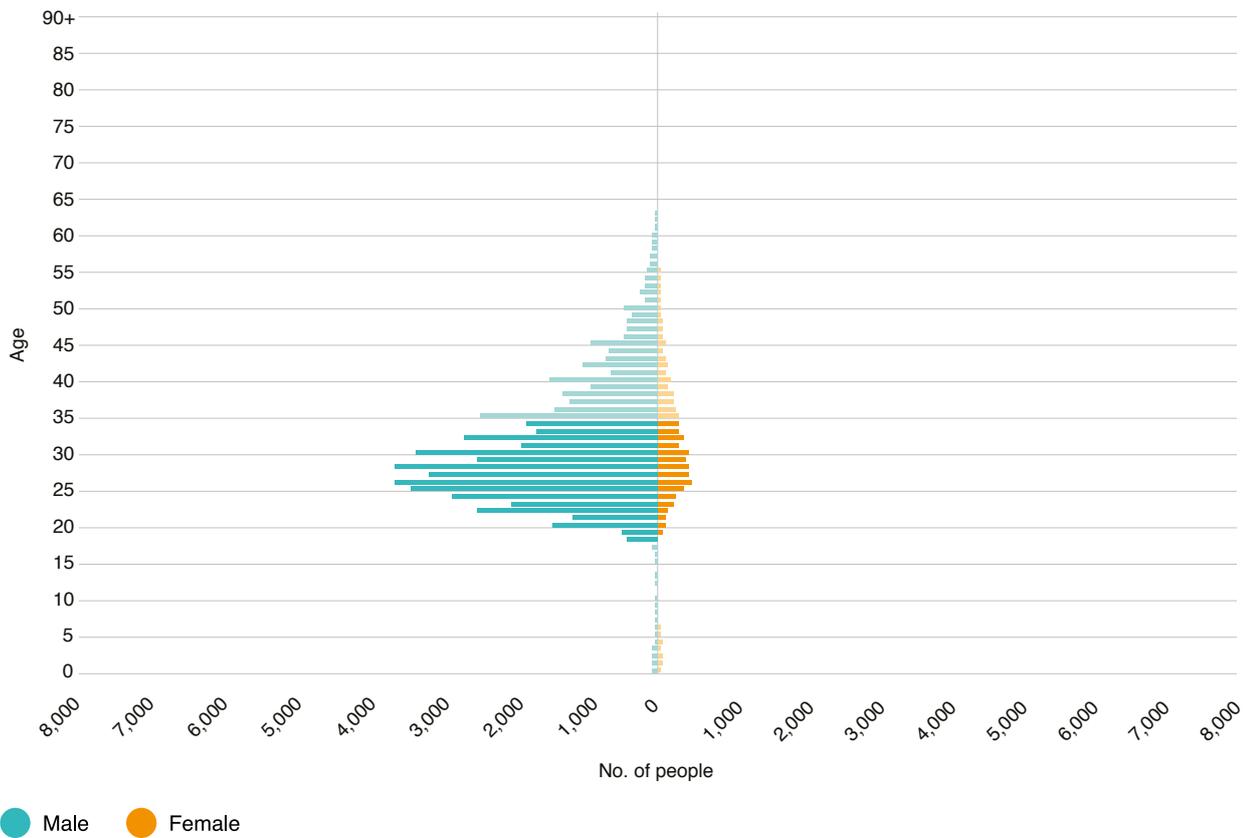


Figure 4d. Total residents, Malé

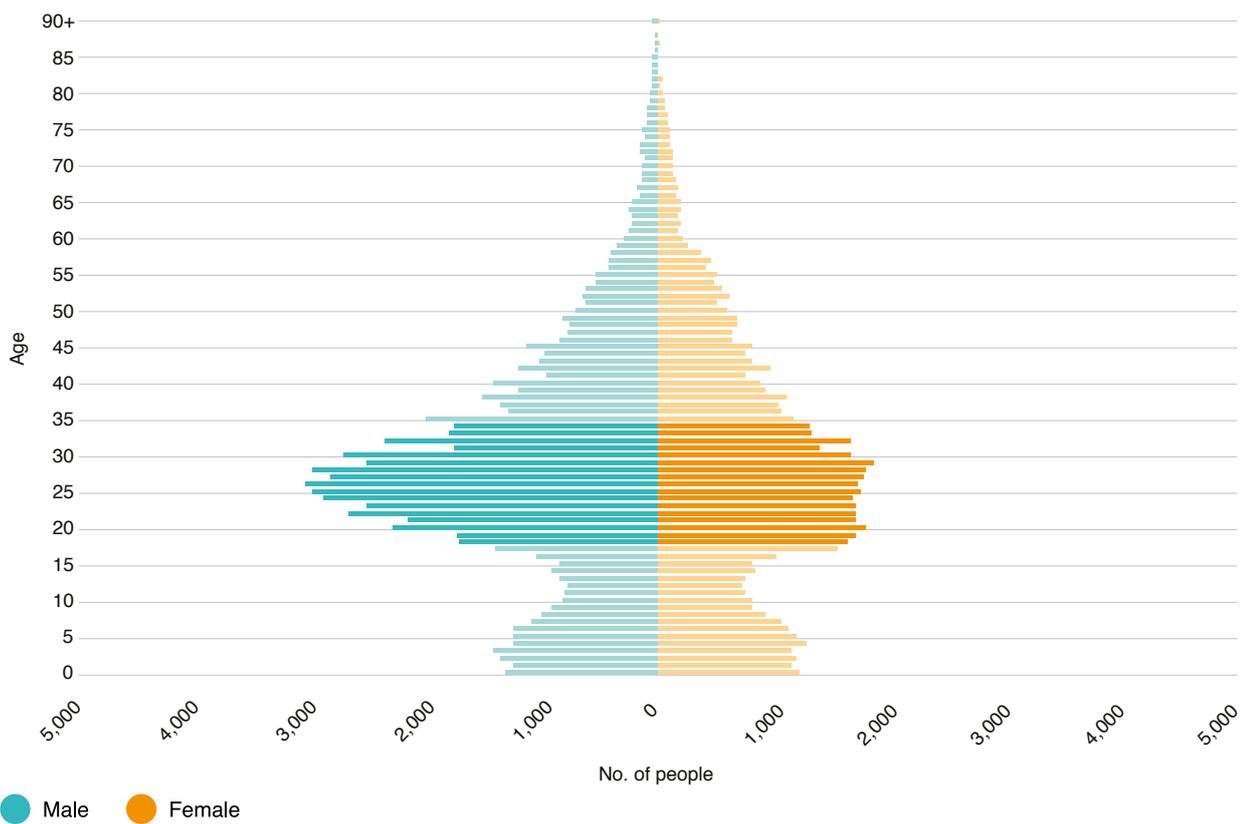


Figure 4e. Maldivian residents, Malé

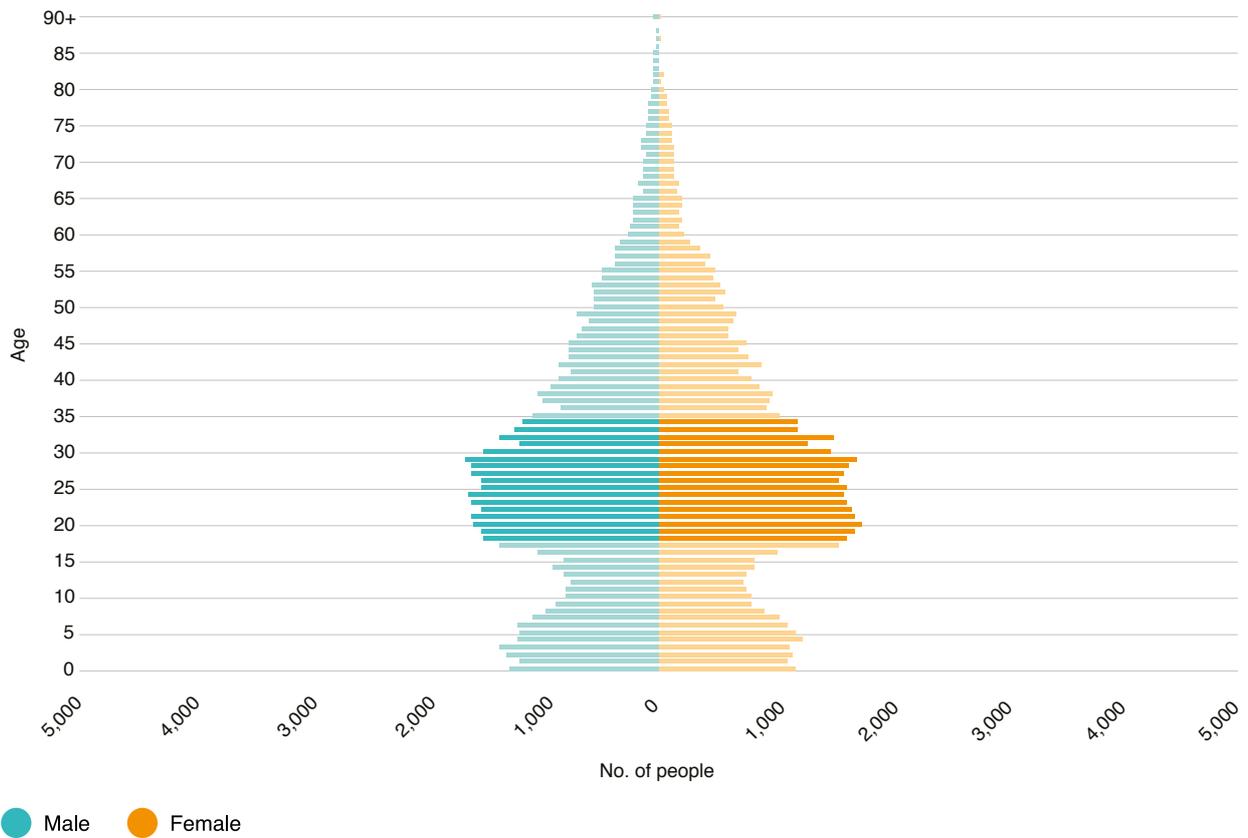


Figure 4f. Foreign residents, Malé

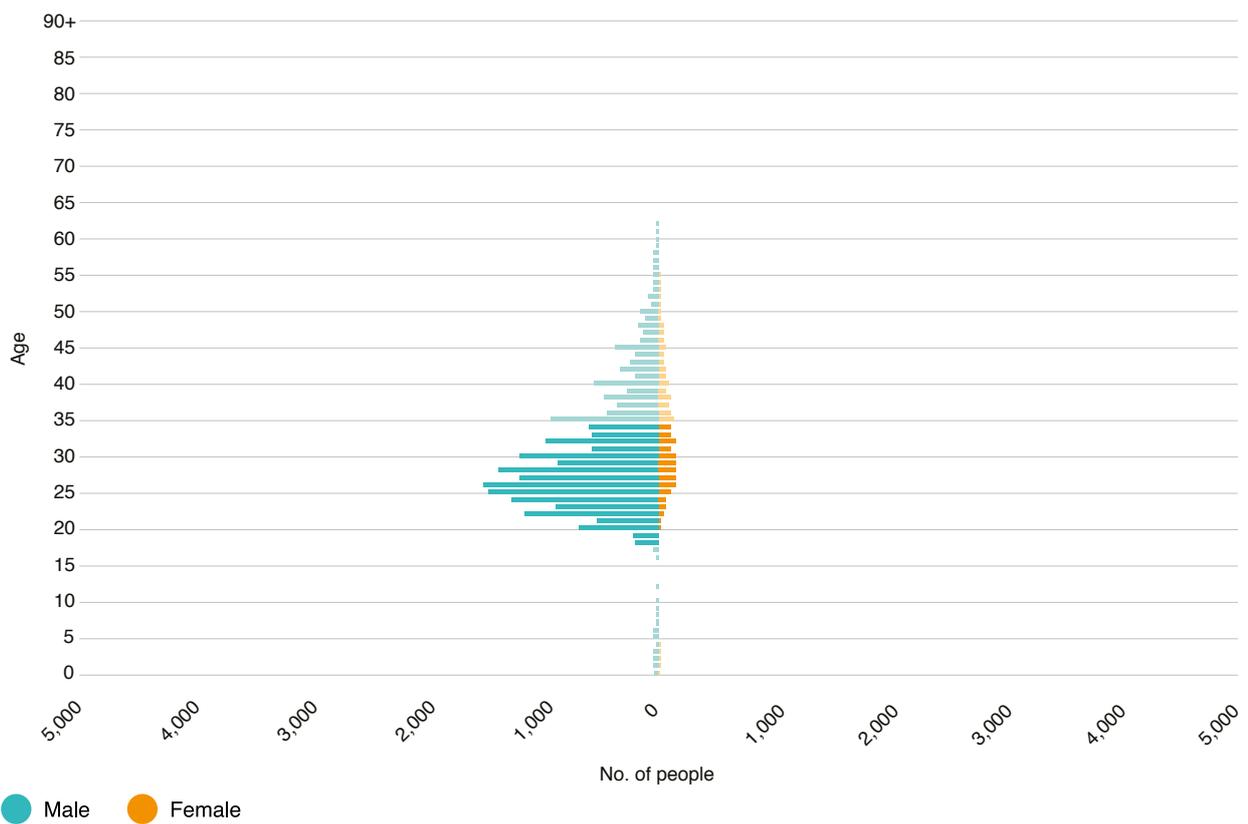


Figure 4g. Total residents, atolls

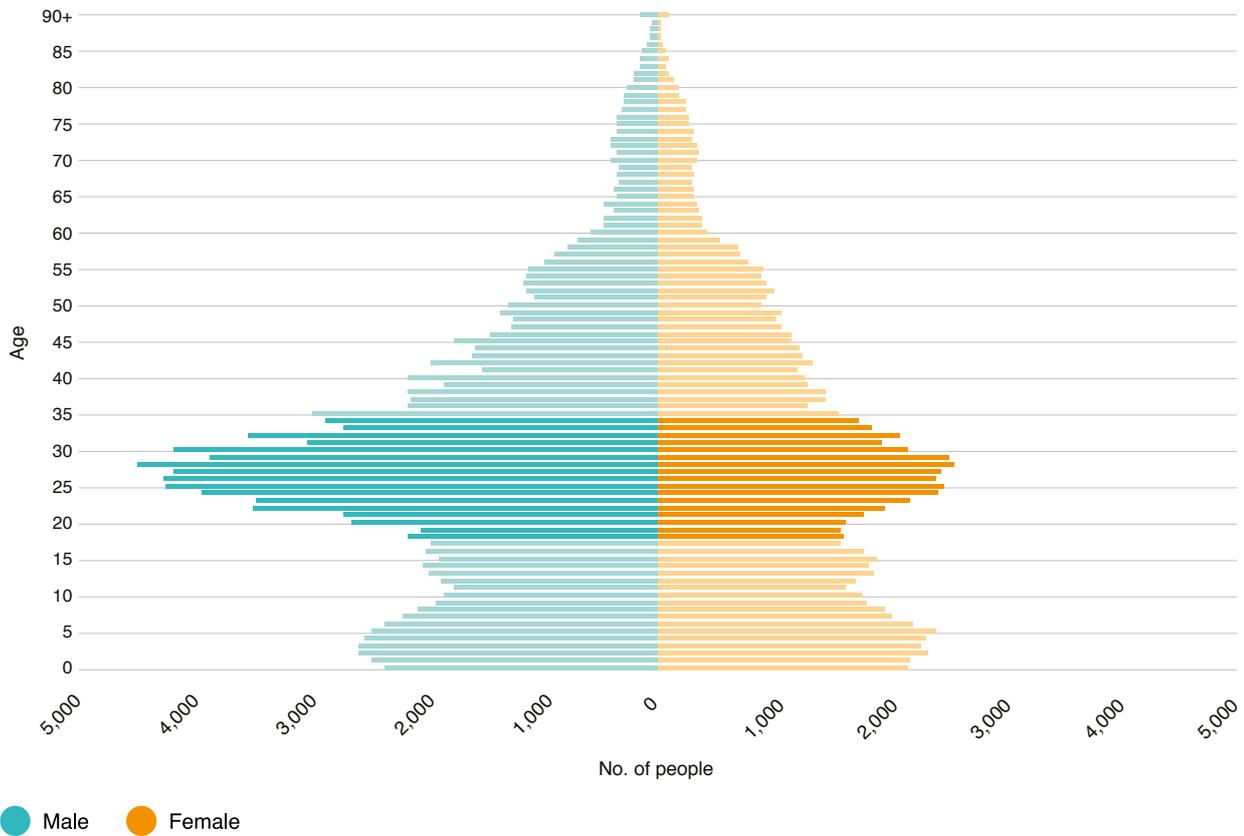


Figure 4h. Maldivian residents, atolls

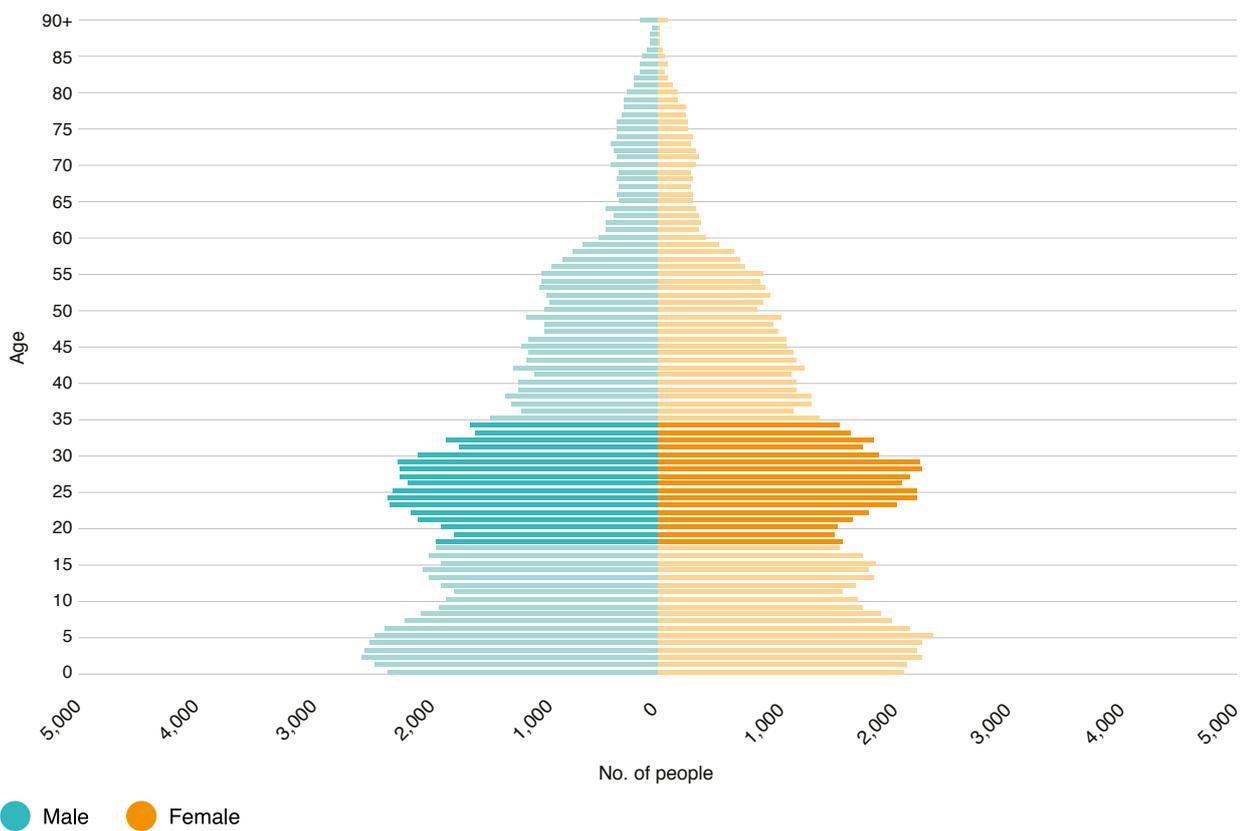
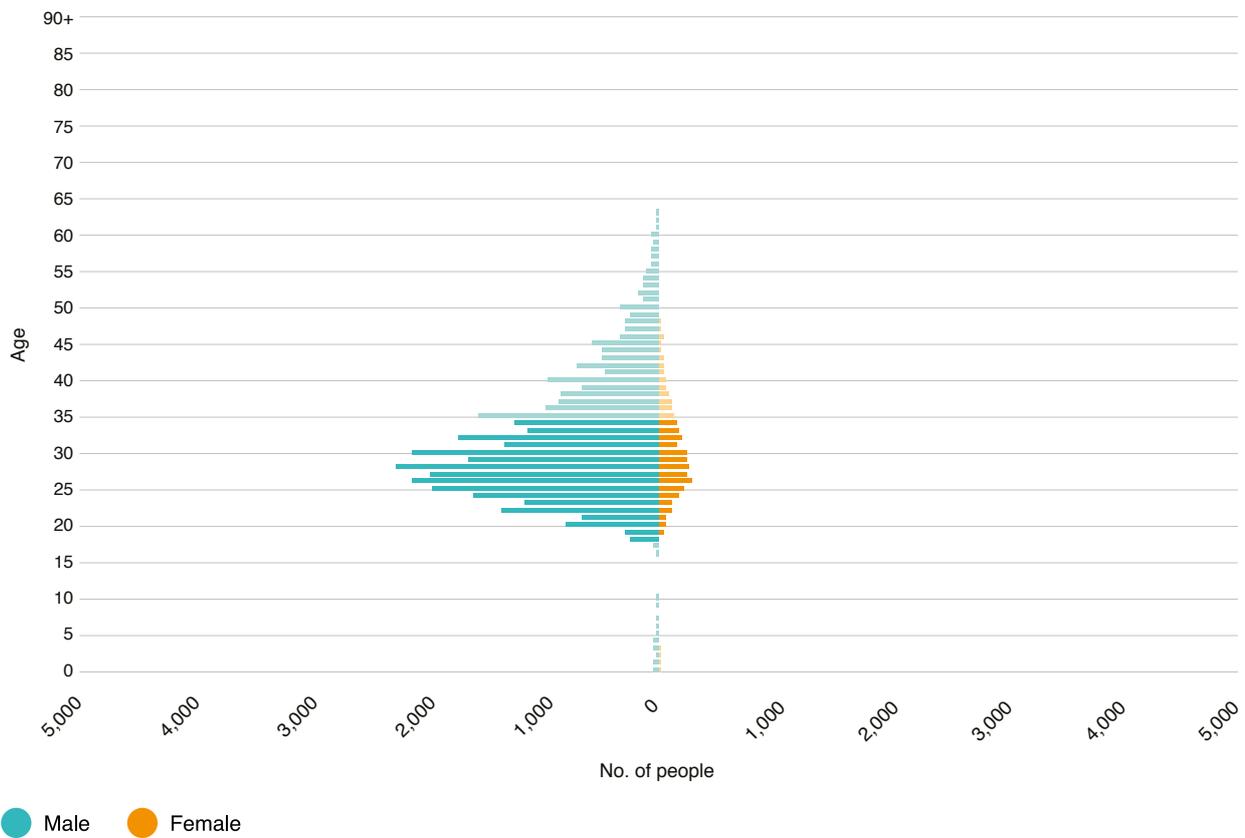


Figure 4i. Foreign residents, atolls





6. Youth in transition

There are important transitions that young people go through as they become independent adults. Some of these events begin to occur between ages 18 to 34, such as leaving school and entering the work force. Other significant transition points are moving out from the family home to live independently⁵, getting married and starting a family of their own. This chapter looks at how young people fit in to the overall population structure of the Maldives and at what points they are likely to leave school, move from the family home to live independently, get married and start their own families.

Key findings

- Almost all young people in the Maldives have been to school and literacy rates are very high.
- The majority of young people remain in school until age 17 or 18.
- Maldivians get married in their early to mid-twenties, on average, and the average age difference at marriage between males and females is about three years; males marry at the median age of 25.8 and females at 22.5.
- While 12 per cent of women are married at age 18 and 19, only 2 per cent of men are, and more than half (59 per cent) of females and only about one quarter of males are married at the ages 20 to 24.
- Only about one third of young residents of Malé were born in Malé, while most young people living in the atolls were born there.
- The motives to migrate to Malé for people aged 15 to 19 is predominantly for education, especially for females, although from age 20, males also look for employment opportunities in Malé. From age 25, the reason females move to Malé is increasingly a result of marriage and to care for children as parents or guardians.
- Childbearing affects a woman's likelihood to study as well as her employment status. The proportion of women who never give birth and study is

5. For the definition and further explanation of the term 'living independently', please refer to section 6.6.

significantly higher than women who give birth. This is especially so for younger women aged 15 to 19. A similar pattern is observed with respect to the employment status of women. The proportion of employed women is much higher for those who never give birth than for those who have a child/children.

- From age 25, the proportion of males and females living independently, meaning that they are the head of a household or are the spouse of a head of household, steadily increases from 12 and 19 per cent of males and females, respectively, to 42 and 56 per cent of males and females at age 34. The proportion of youth living independently is higher for females than for males and

higher for those living in Malé than for those living in the atolls.

- While from age 20 about 60 per cent of households in Malé are male-headed, it is the opposite in the atolls, where the majority of households are female-headed.

6.1. Youth and migration

The average annual growth rates of the Maldivian resident population during the intercensal period 2006–2014 was 1.9 per cent for the entire country, 3.7 per cent for Malé and 0.9 per cent for the atolls (table 1 and the 2014 census release table PP2). The fact that the growth rate of Malé was significantly higher than that of the atolls confirms significant internal migration from the atolls to Malé.

In order to produce a population growth rate of 3.7 per cent for Malé and 0.9 per cent for the atolls, with given levels of fertility (births) and mortality (deaths), it is estimated that approximately 2,200 net migrants must be moving from the atolls to Malé annually.

Migration levels have been calculated as the difference between natural growth and population growth. Therefore, Malé gained 2,200 net migrants annually, while the atolls lost 2,200 net migrants annually, on average, during the period 2006–2014.

This is reflected in the projections for Malé and the atolls and summarized in tables 2 and 3, which show the components of populations growth for the initial projection period 2014–2015.

The tables show that the overall growth rates, as calculated for the intercensal period for Malé and the atolls, have been approximately reproduced by including +2,200/–2,200 migrants, respectively. Again, the values have been calculated based on reported levels of fertility (total fertility rate of 2.0 and 2.8 for Malé and the atolls, respectively, figure 24) and mortality⁶ (life expectancy at birth of 75.4 and 77.4 years for males and females, respectively), and overall population growth rates.

Place of birth

Overall, only about 1 per cent of all young Maldivian residents are born overseas, about 18 per cent are born in Malé, and more than 80 per cent are born in the atolls. While only about one third of young residents of Malé are born in Malé (figure 5), most young people living in the atolls are also born there (figure 6). This illustrates the large rural-to-urban drift of young people within the country.

Table 1. Average annual intercensal growth rates of the Maldives resident population

Population	2006	2014	Annual avg. growth rate (2006–2014)
REPUBLIC			
Resident	287,101	402,071	4.0
Maldivian			1.9
Foreigners	287,080	338,434	N/A
MALÉ			
Resident	94,138	153,904	5.8
Maldivian	94,128	129,381	3.7
Foreigners	10	24,523	N/A
ATOLLS			
Resident	192,963	248,167	3.0
Maldivian	192,952	209,053	0.9
Foreigners	11	39,114	N/A

Note: The time span between the 2006 and 2014 censuses is 8.5 years, from March 2006 to September 2014

6. In the absence of up-to-date information from the 2014 census, the mortality estimates as provided by the United Nations Population Division have been used for these projections.

Table 2. Estimated components of population growth for the Maldivian resident population, Malé: 1 July 2014 to 1 July 2015

	Absolute numbers			Annual vital rates		
	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
BIRTHS	1,438	1,331	2,769	0.022	0.020	0.021
DEATHS	216	182	399	0.003	0.003	0.003
MIGRANTS	1,100	1,100	2,200	0.017	0.017	0.017
GROWTH	2,322	2,249	4,570	0.036	0.034	0.035

Table 3. Estimated components of population growth for the Maldivian resident population, atolls: 1 July 2014 to 1 July 2015

	Absolute numbers			Annual vital rates		
	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL
BIRTHS	2,687	2,488	5,175	0.025	0.024	0.025
DEATHS	588	403	991	0.005	0.005	0.005
MIGRANTS	-1,100	-1,100	-2,200	-0.010	-0.011	-0.011
GROWTH	999	985	1,984	0.009	0.010	0.009

Reasons for migration

The reasons for migrating differ markedly by age, between males and females, and between those who migrate to Malé and those who migrate to the atolls (figures 7a to 7d). The motives to migrate to Malé for people aged 15 to 19 is predominantly for education, especially for females, although from age 20, males also look for employment opportunities in Malé. From age 25, the reason for females to move to Malé is increasingly a result of marriage and to care for children as a parent or guardian.

The reasons males migrate to the atolls is predominantly for employment, although returning to live in their (home) island is also a frequent reason, which similarly is the main reason females move to the atolls. However, from age 20, marriage is a major reason for about one fifth of all females aged 20 to 34 to migrate to the atolls.

Length of stay

With regard to the number of years young migrants live in the place of destination (question M15 of census questionnaire, and 2014 census release table MG13), migrants overall live in Malé seven years, which on average is slightly longer than migrants in the atolls, who stay for only five years. Not surprisingly, migrants' length of stay in their place of destination increases with age: 20 to 25 per cent of people who migrate to Malé aged 19 years and younger stay there for less than one year, meaning that they had arrived in Malé less than one year before the date of the census (figure 8a to 8d), which supports the earlier finding that the main reason young migrants come to Malé is for education.

Figure 5. Maldivian resident youth population residing in Malé by age, sex and place of birth, Maldives: 2014

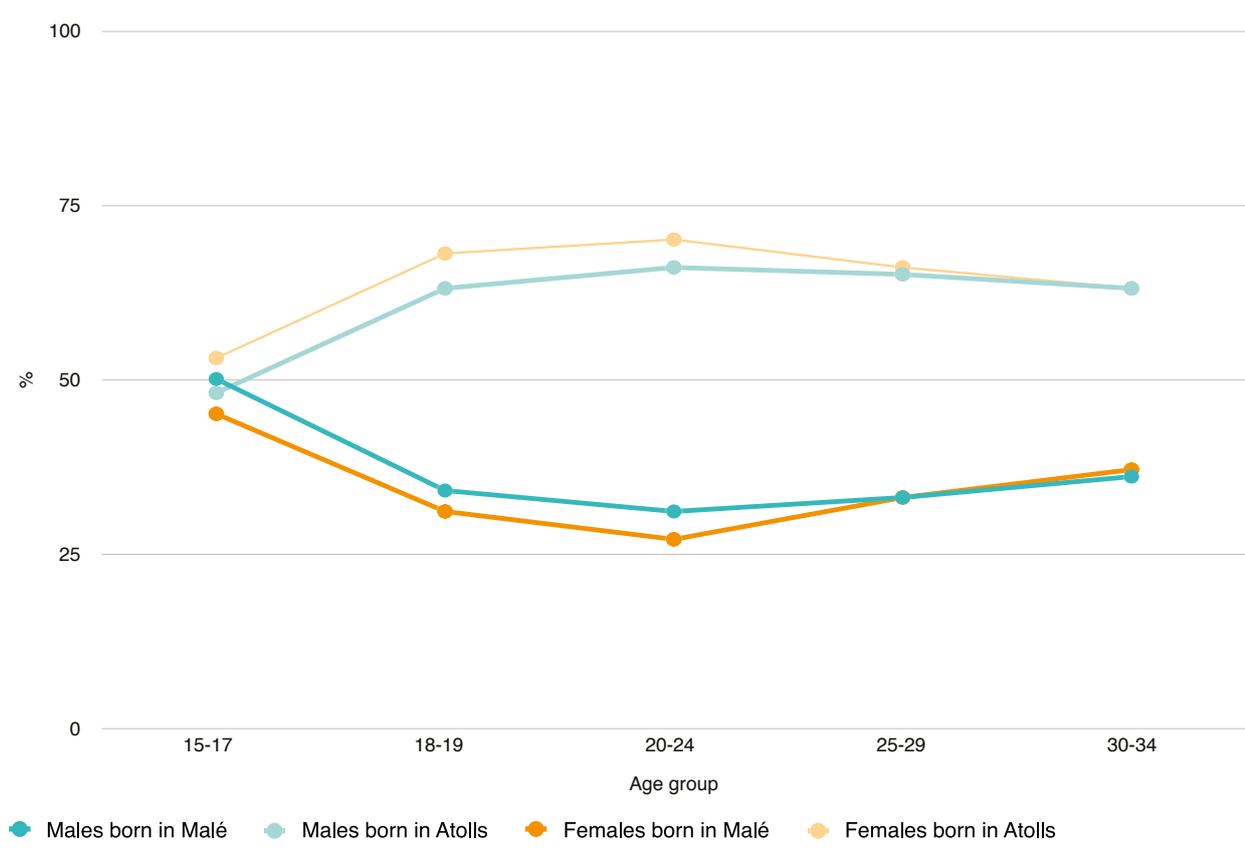


Figure 6. Maldivian resident youth population residing in the atolls by age, sex and place of birth, Maldives: 2014

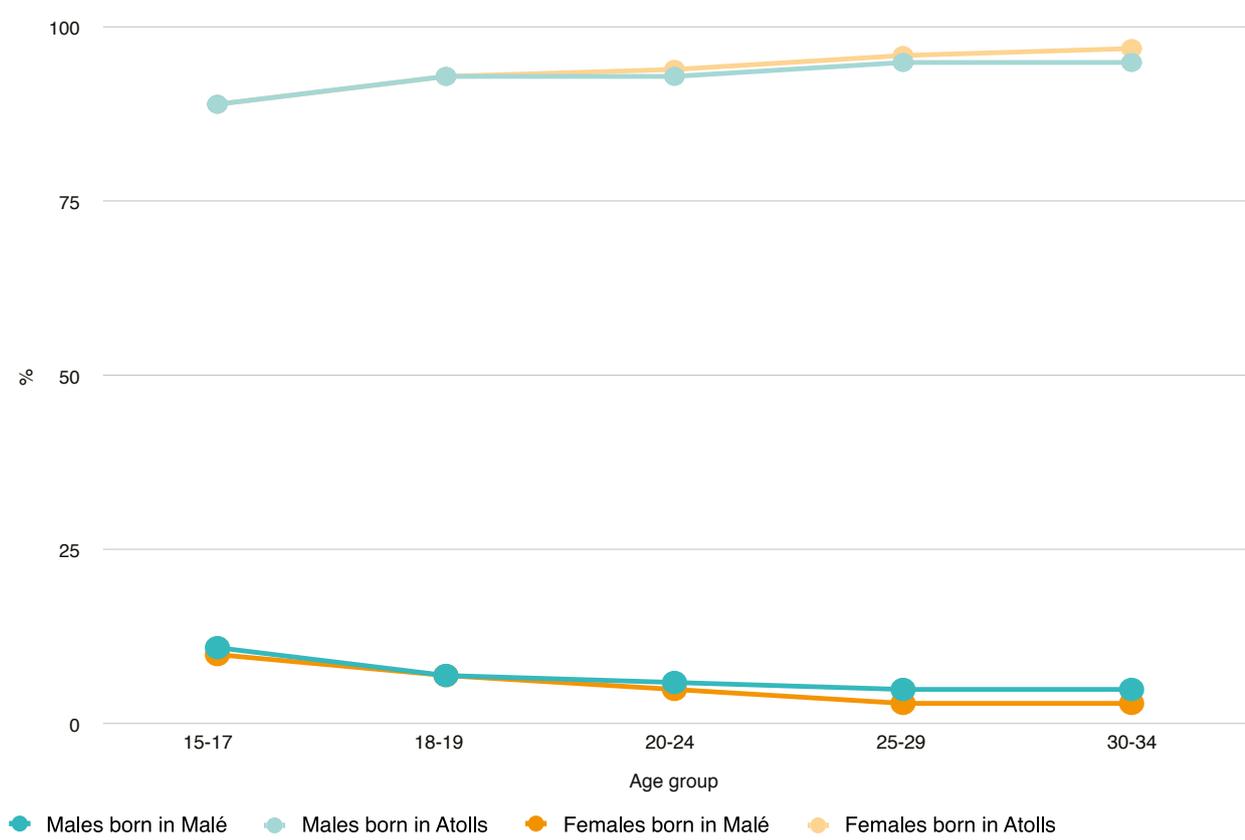


Figure 7. Maldivian resident youth population by age, sex and reason for migrating by locality, Maldives: 2014

Figure 7a. Malé, Males

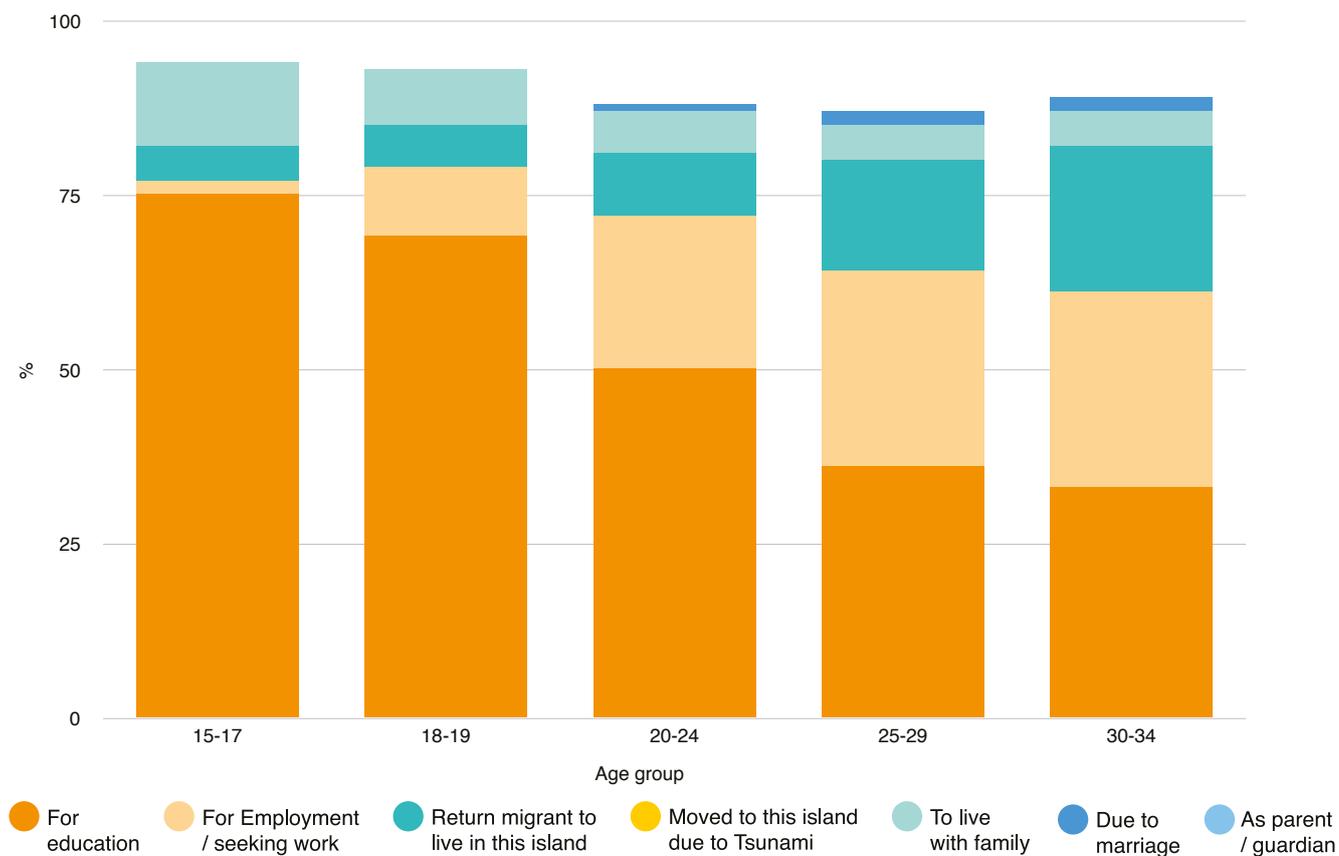


Figure 7b. Malé, Females

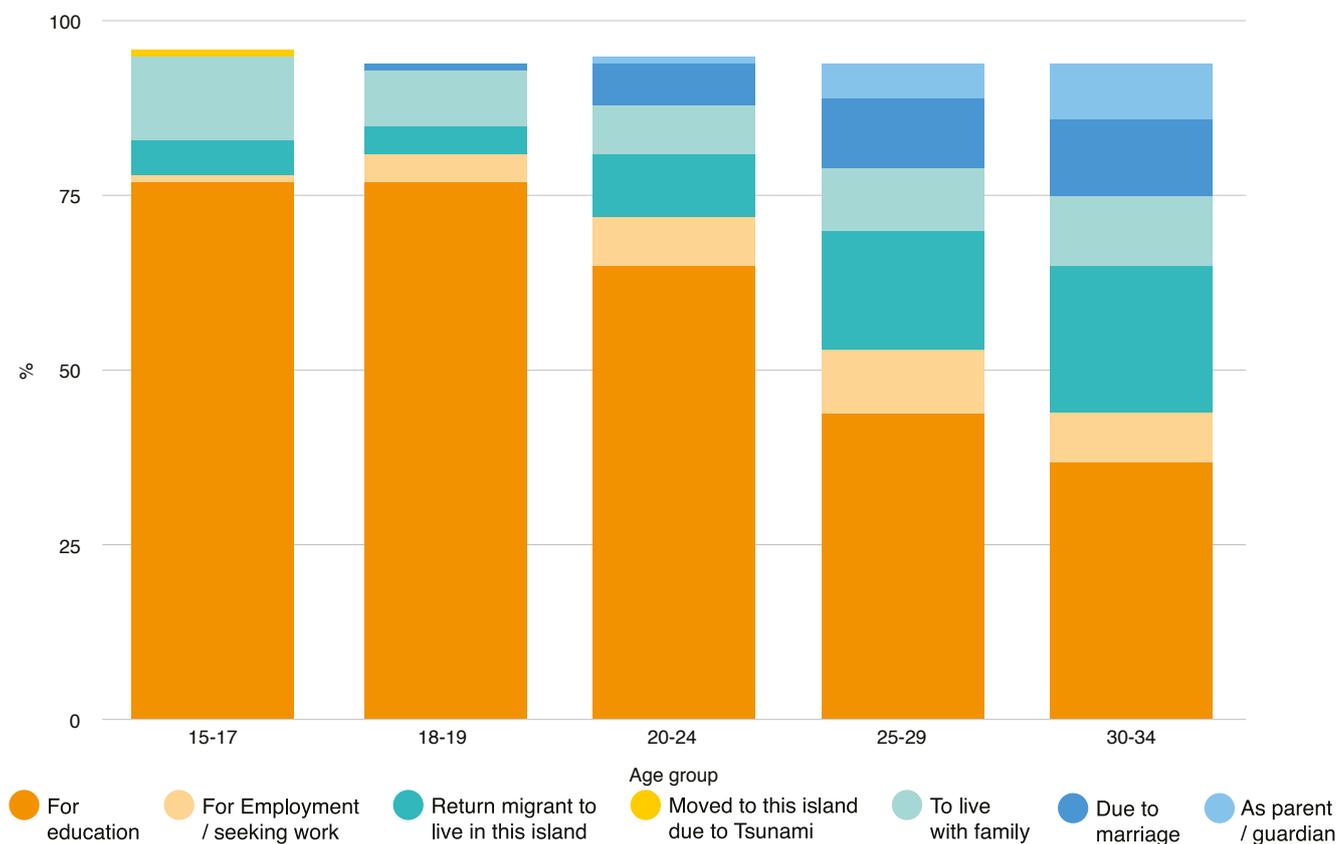


Figure 7c. Atolls, Males

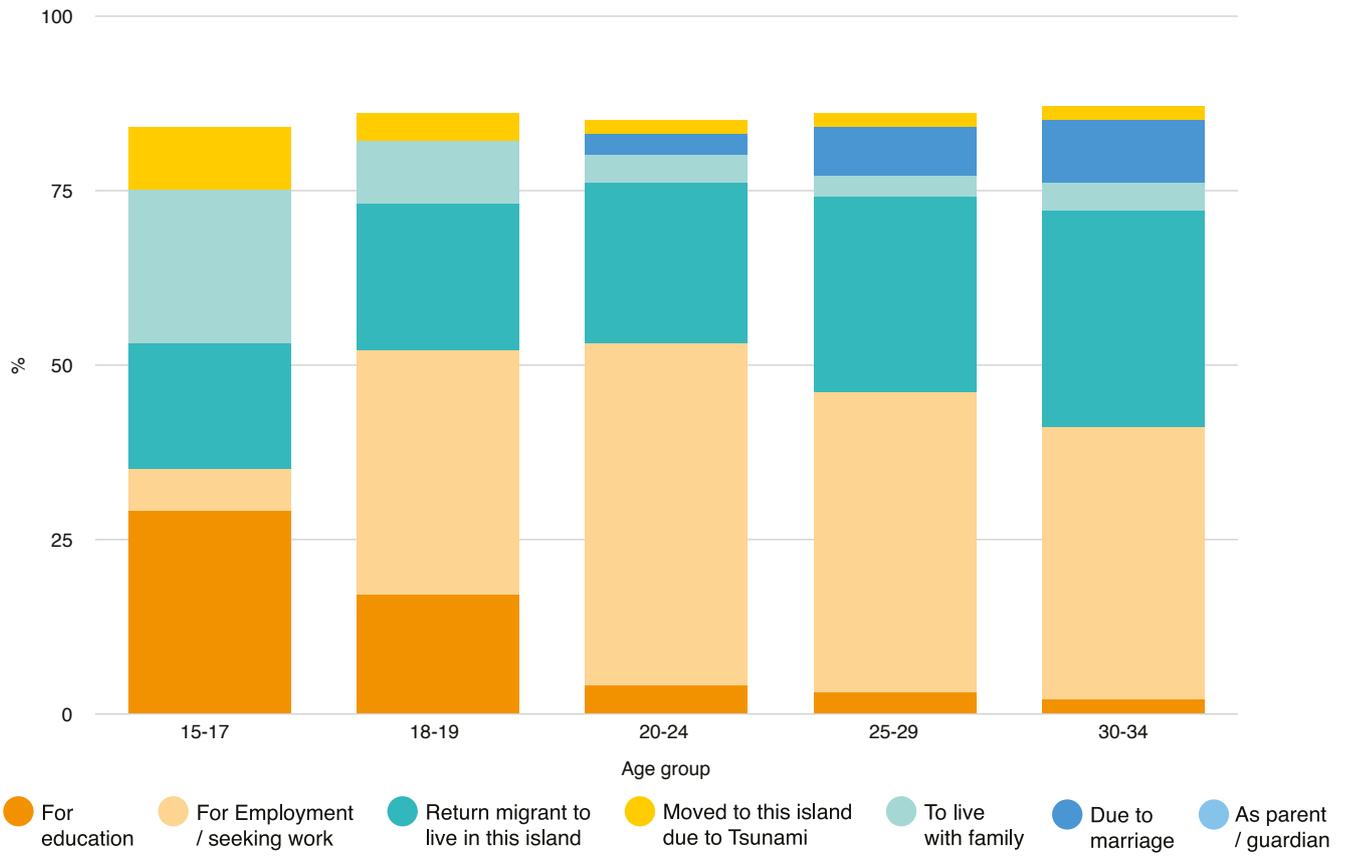


Figure 7d. Atoll, Females

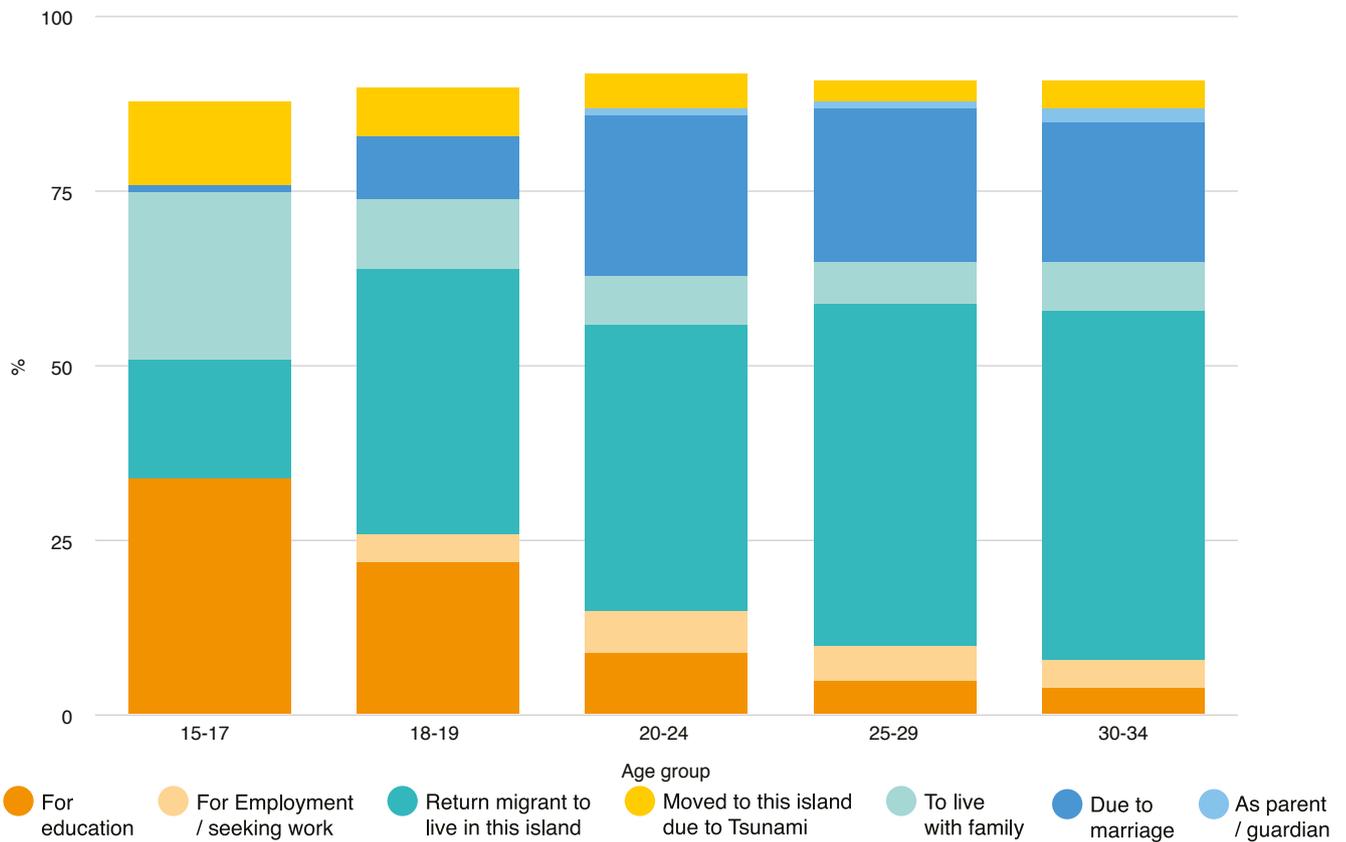


Figure 8. Maldivian resident youth population by age, sex and number of years living at place of migration, Maldives: 2014

Figure 8a. Malé, Males

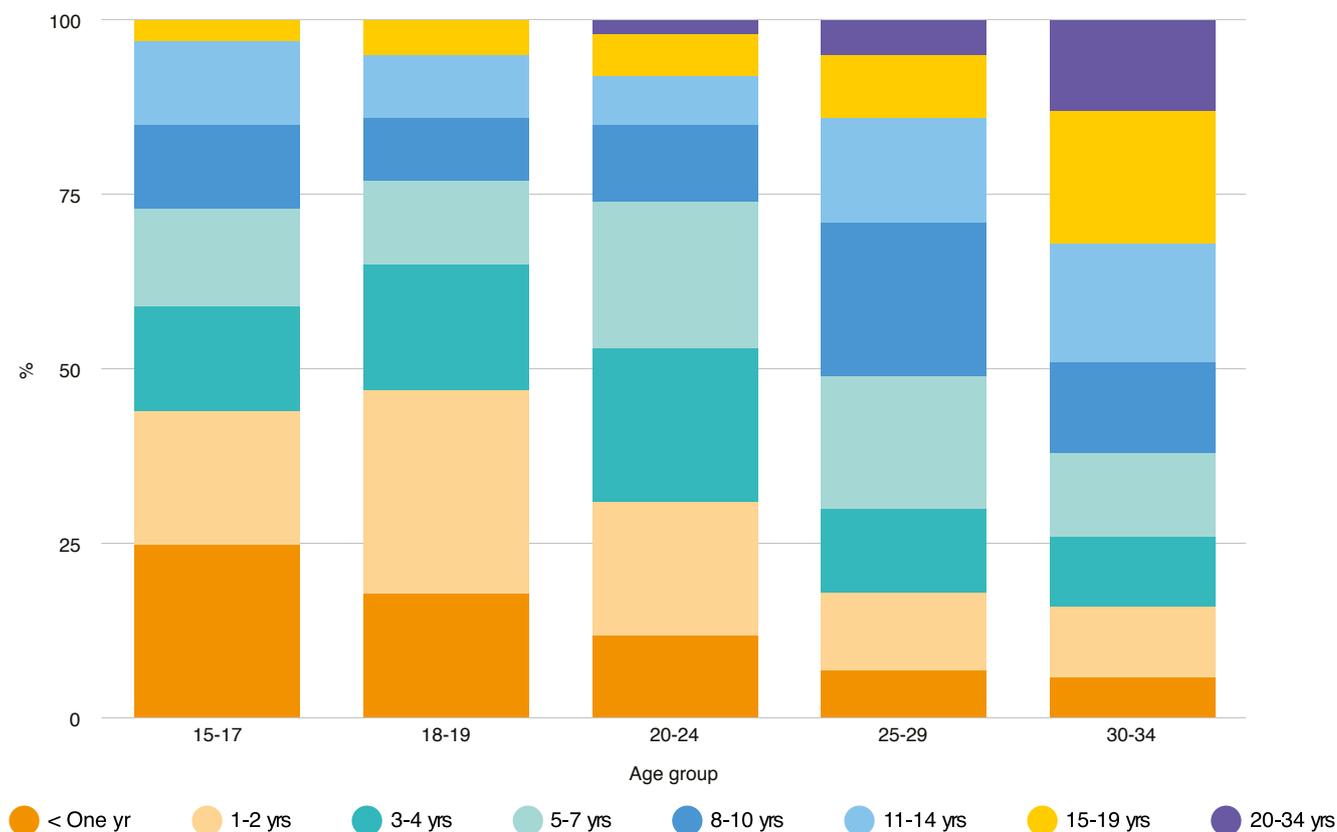


Figure 8b. Malé, Females

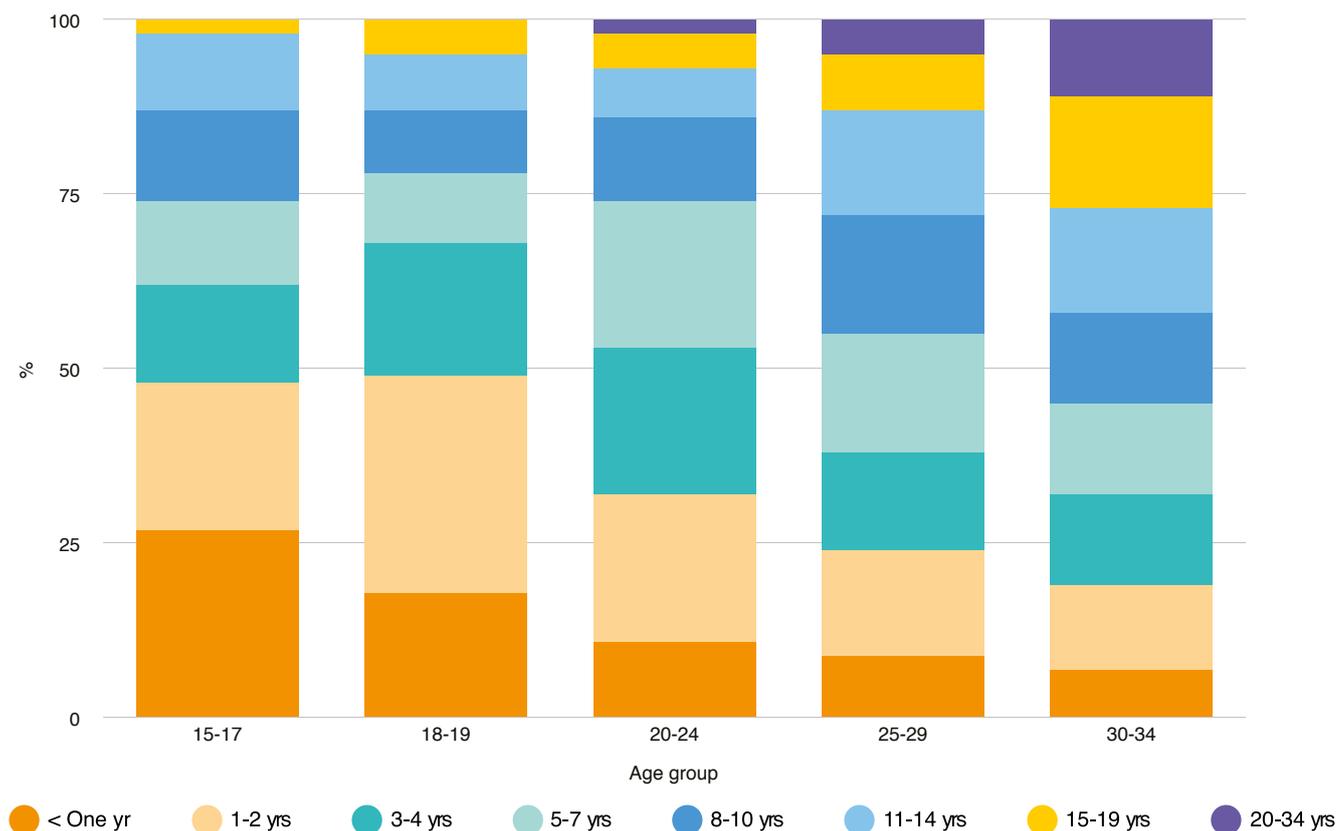


Figure 8c. Atolls, Males

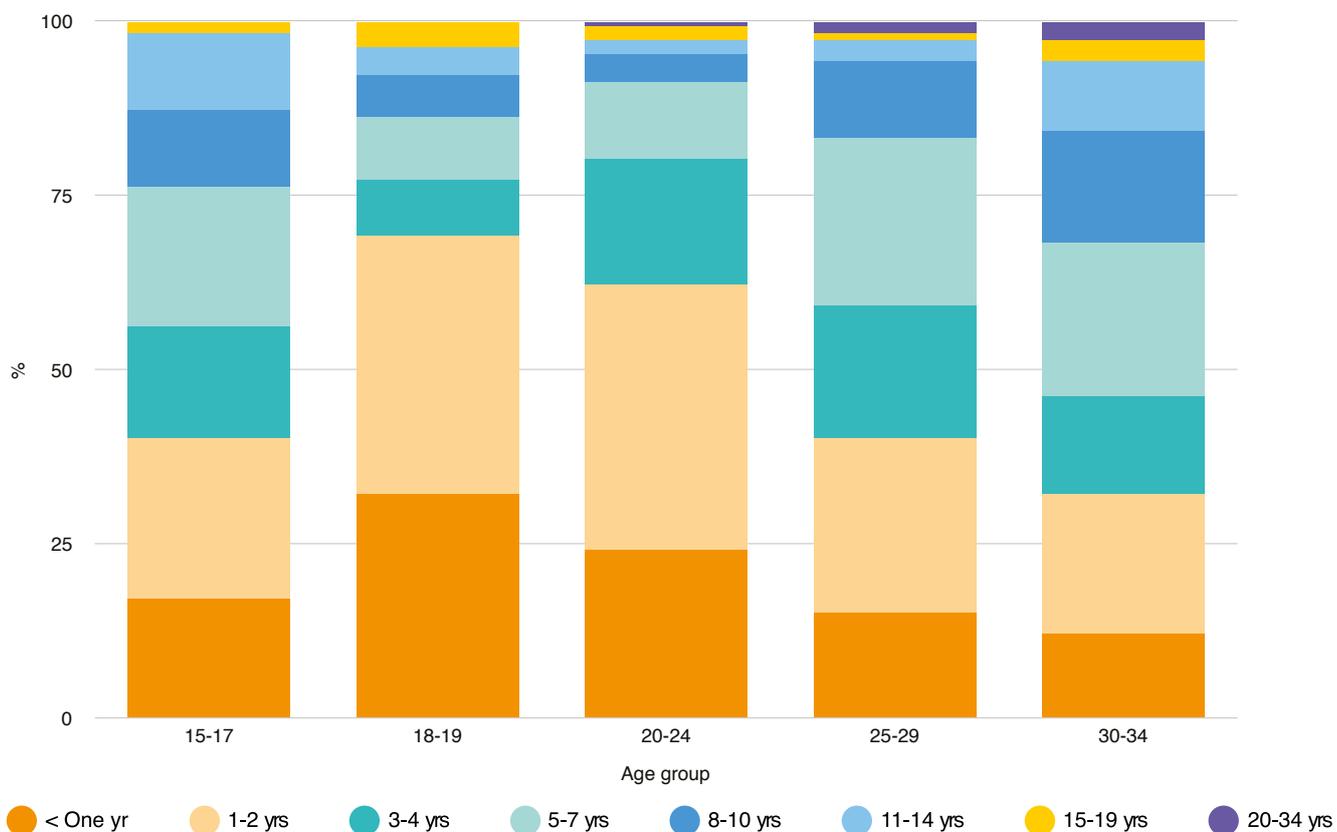
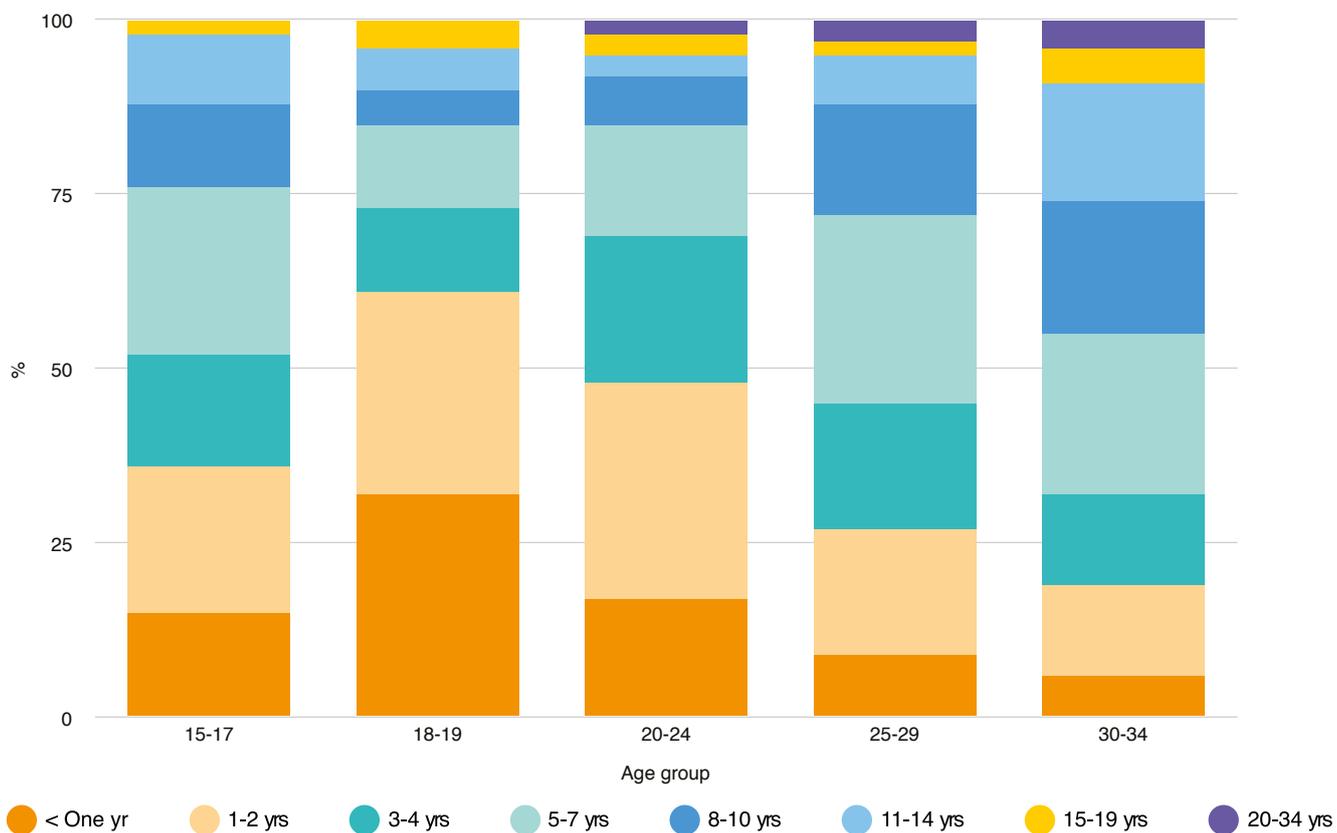


Figure 8d. Atoll, Females



6.2. Leaving school

Most young people in the Maldives go to school. The proportion of five to 14 year olds attending school is close to 100 per cent for boys and girls. As figures 9a to 9c show, young people start leaving school in significant numbers after age 16, and by age 19 most have left school (67 per cent of girls and 75 per cent of boys).

The data shows that much higher proportions of young Maldivians in the atolls (figure 9c) leave school after age 16 compared to those residing in Malé (figure 9b). Furthermore, the difference in school attendance between males and females in the atolls is significantly less than in Malé, where the proportion of males leaving school after age 18 is much higher than that of females.

Figure 9. Proportion of young people who have left school by age, sex and locality, Maldives: 2014

Figure 9a. Republic

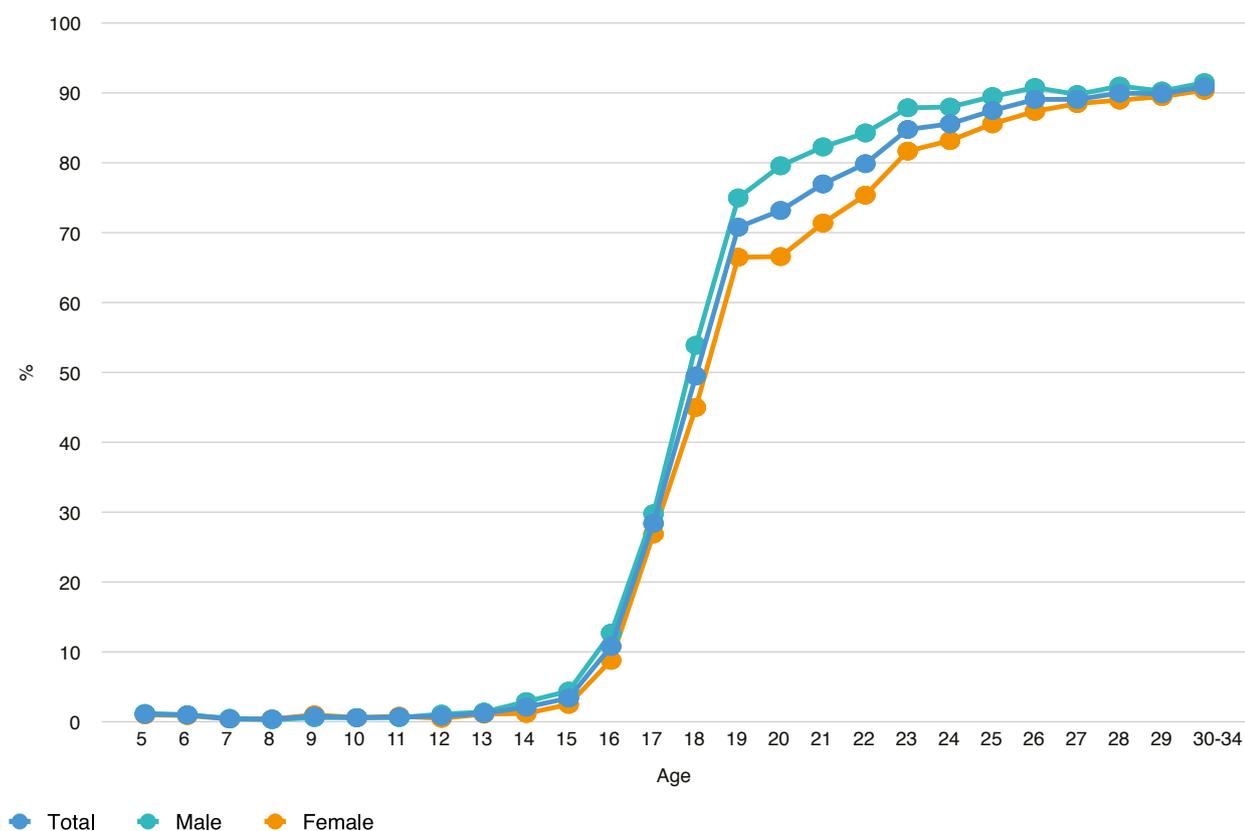


Figure 9b. Malé

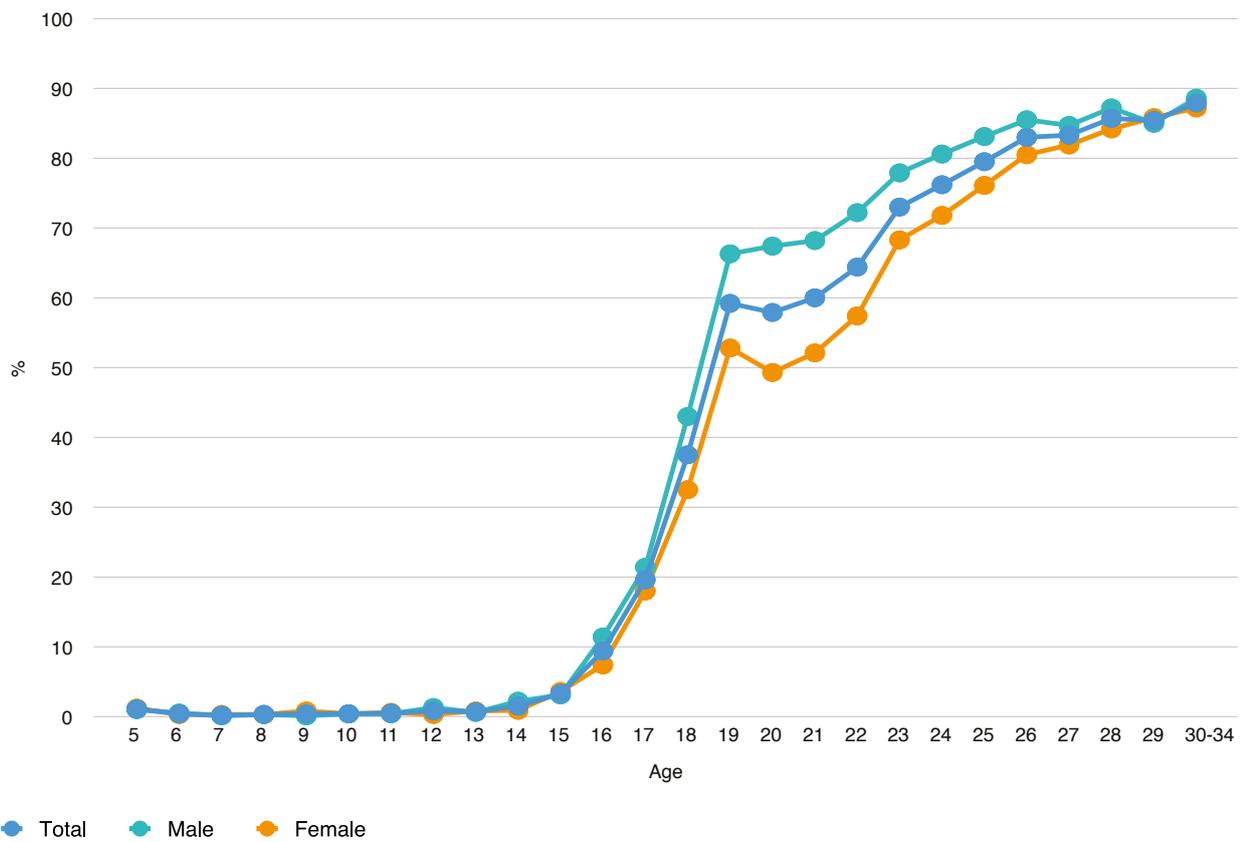
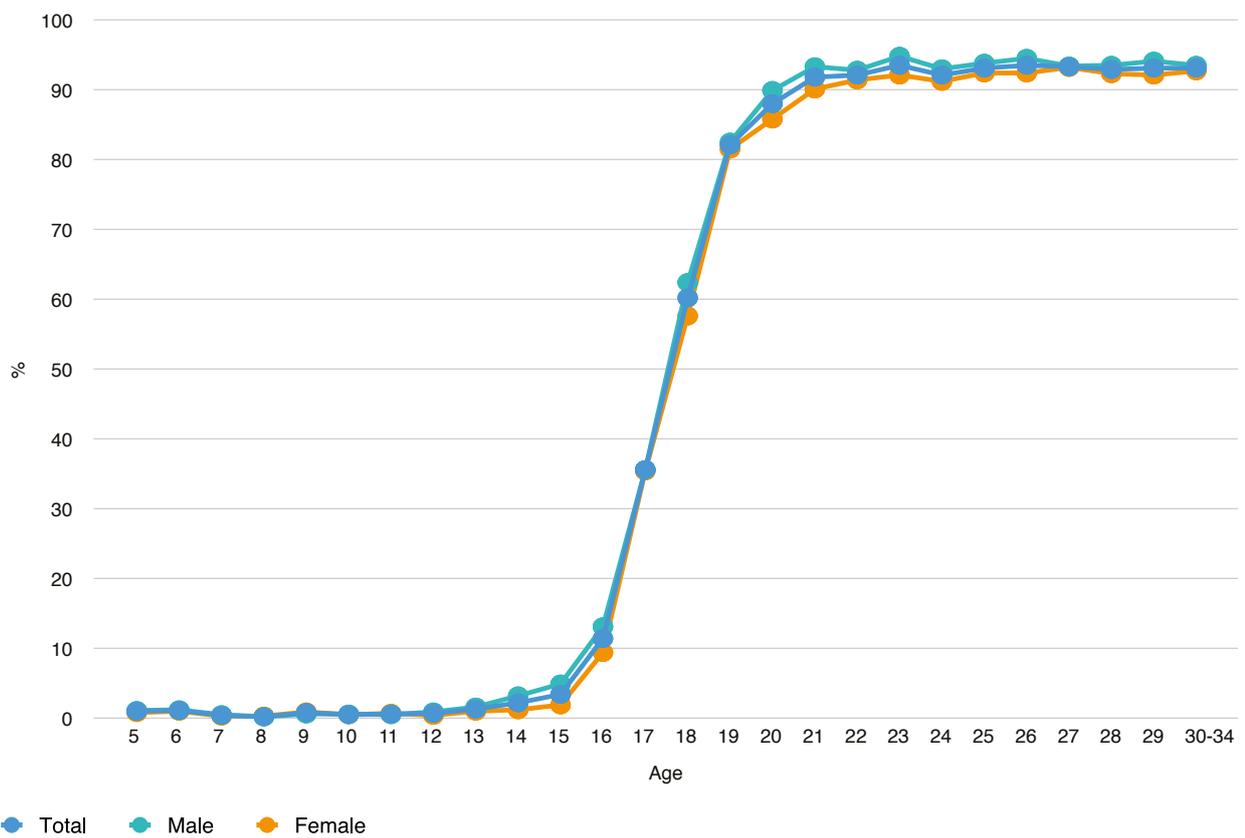


Figure 9c. Atolls



6.3. Marriage

Marriage is a significant event in life, leading to the creation of a new family nucleus, which the birth of children often follows. The earlier people are married, the more likely they are to begin childbearing at a young age and have a larger number of children – both of which pose risks to maternal and child health.

Women tend to get married at an earlier age than men. According to 2014 census data, the average age of first marriage (SMAM⁷) is 25.8 years for men and 22.5 for women. In 2006, those averages were 26.3 years for men and 22.5 for women. The average age at marriage for residents of foreign origin was older at 28 years for males and 25.7 years for females (figures 10a and 10b).

As shown in figures 11a and 11b and 12a to 12f, marriage before age 18 is not common for both men and women, with only about 1 per cent married. However, 12 per cent of women and 2 per cent of men are married at ages 18 and 19, and 59 per cent of females and almost one quarter of males are married at ages 20 to 24.

The proportion of females married at age 18 and older is noticeably higher in the atolls than in Malé (figures 12c and 12e).

Figures 13a to 13c show that older generations married at a younger age when compared to more recent generations. Women whose current age is 55 and older married on average at age 18, a trend that has now shifted to 22 years for women whose current age is between 25 and 34.

Men currently aged 55 and older married on average at age 23, while men currently aged 30 to 44 married on average when they were 25 and older.

The age of first marriage is older for people living in Malé than for those living in the atolls.

Figures 14a and 14b depict the proportion of male and female Maldivians ever married by age, and the number of times they were married⁸. Data show that at age 15 to 24, about 10 per cent of these young people are already married for the second time or more often. At age 25 to 29, 14 per cent of males and 20 per cent of females are already married multiple times, while for males and females aged 30 to 34 the averages are 22 and 27 per cent, respectively. At ages 30 to 34, 5 and 7 per cent of

males and females, respectively, are already married more than twice.

7. The Singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM) is defined as the average number of years of single life among those who marry before age 50 (Hajnal, 1953).

8. Ever married women or men are persons who have been married at least once in their lives, although their current marital status may not be 'married'.

Figure 10. Singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM) of Maldivian resident population by sex, locality and nationality, Maldives: 2014

Figure 10a. Maldivian residents

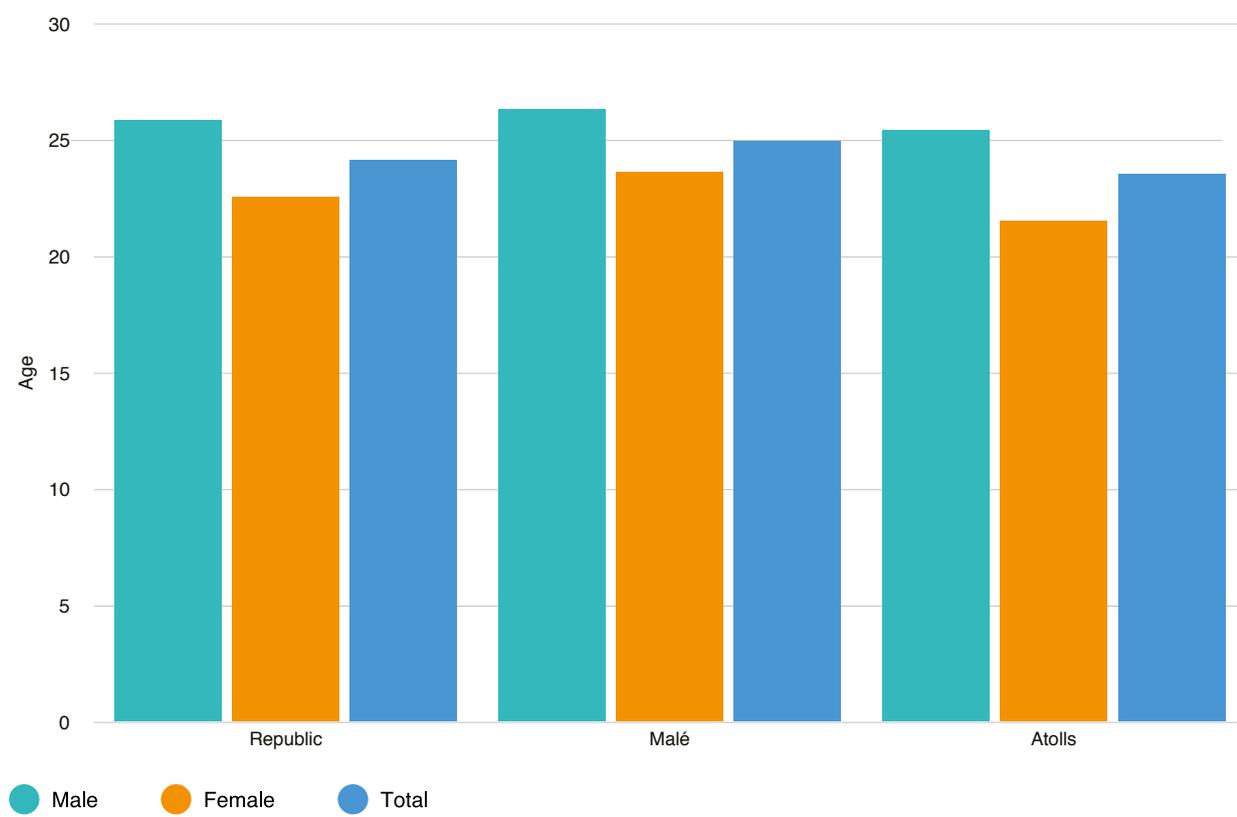


Figure 10b. Foreign residents

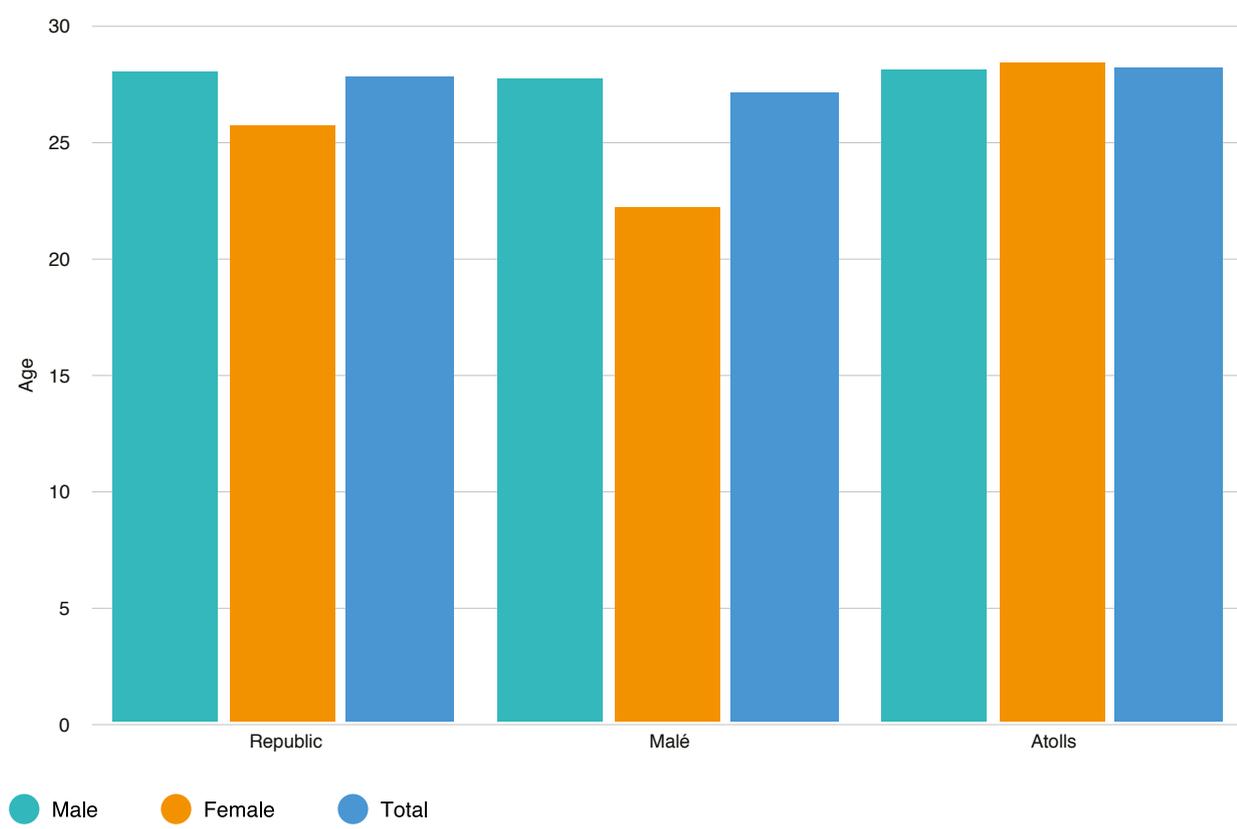


Figure 11. Proportion of resident population by marital status, age, sex and nationality, Maldives: 2014

Figure 11a. Maldivian residents

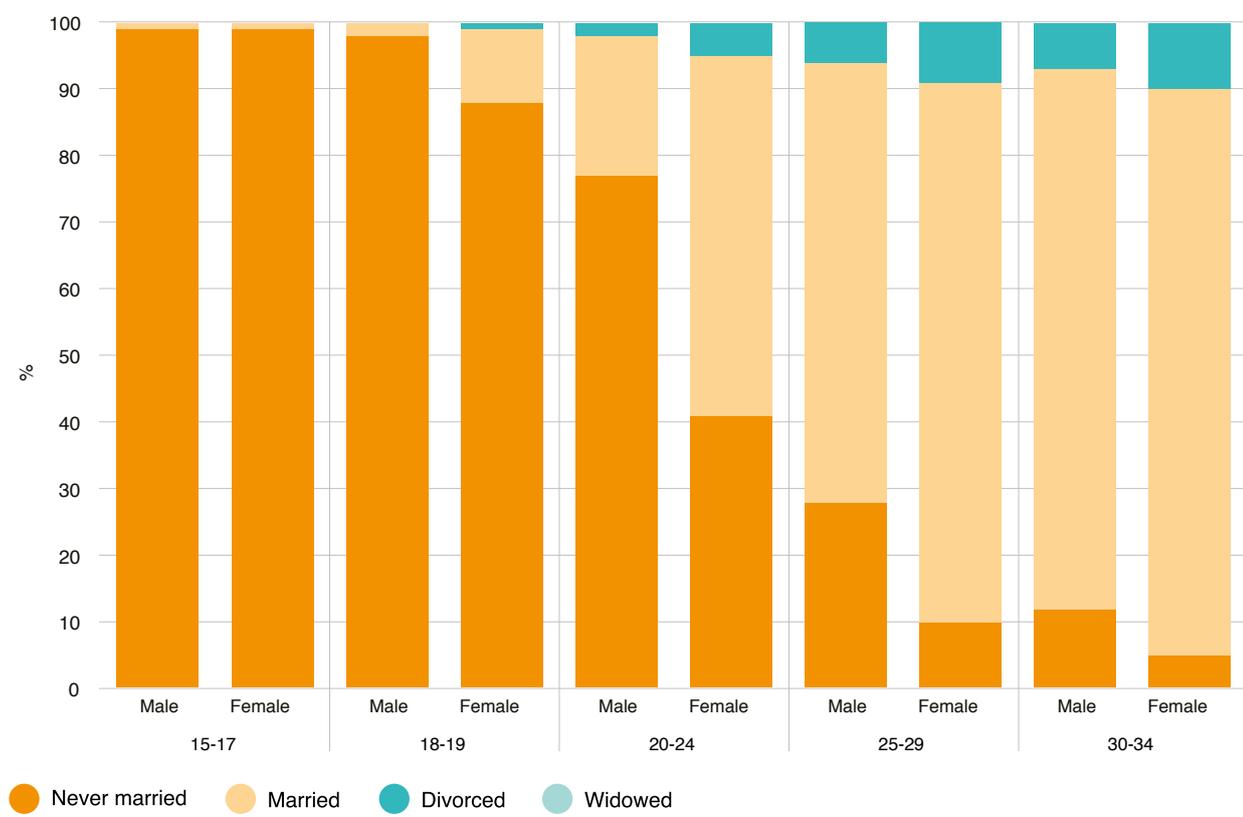


Figure 11b. Foreign residents

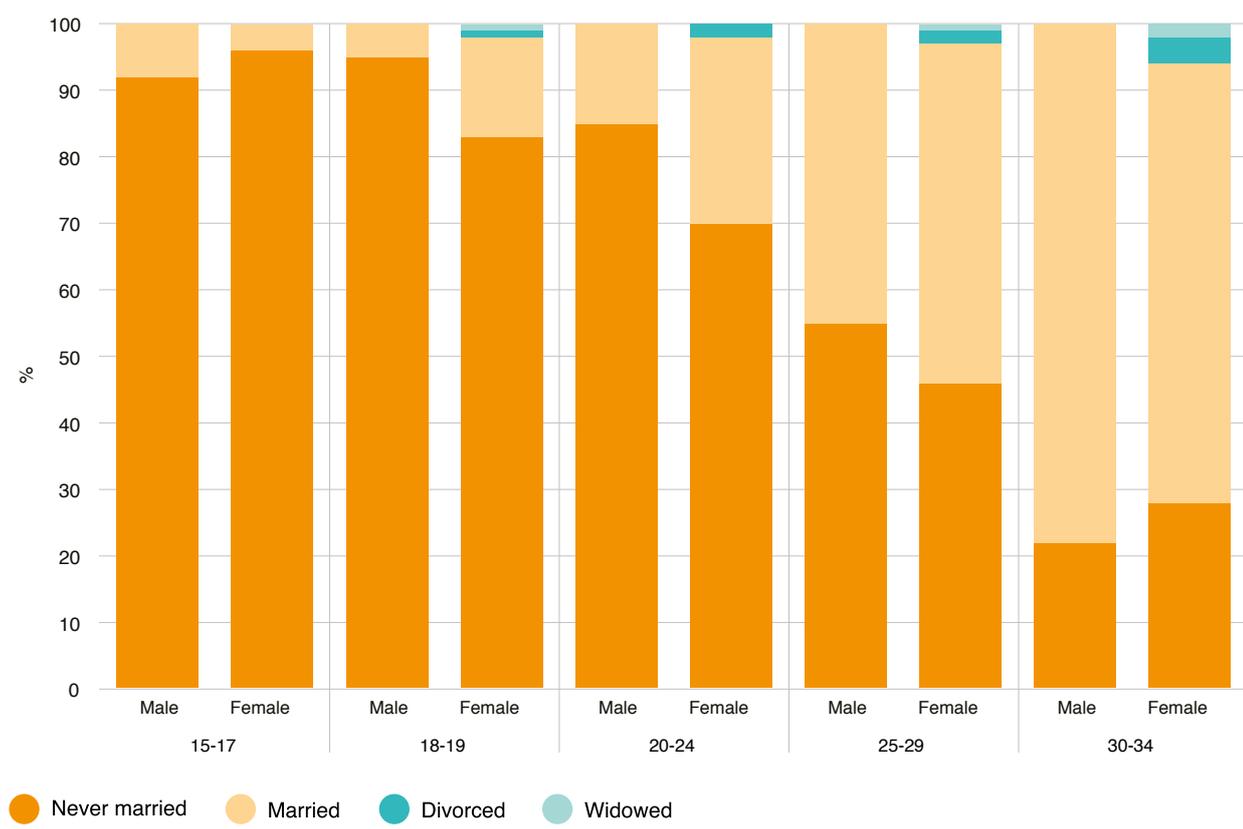


Figure 12. Proportion of young resident population ever married by age and sex, locality and nationality, Maldives: 2014

Figure 12a. Maldivian, Republic

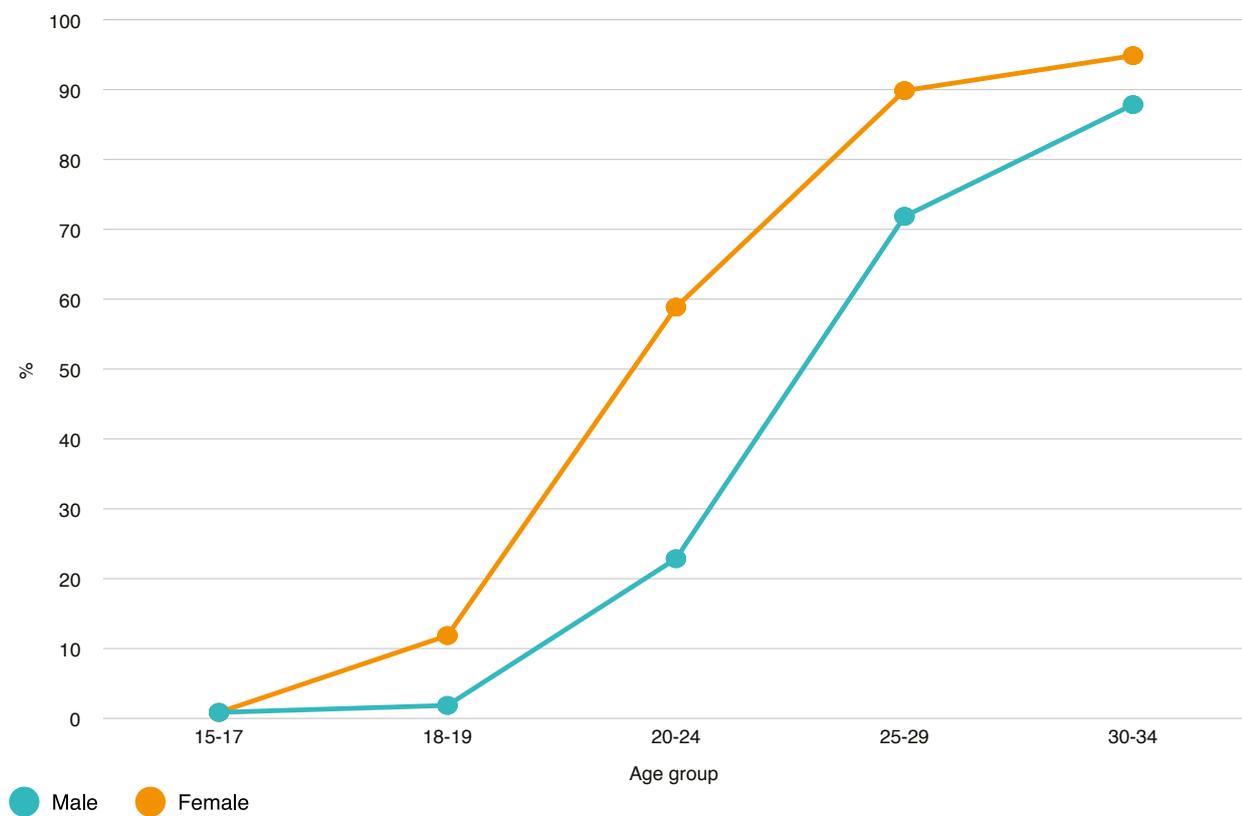


Figure 12b. Foreign, Republic

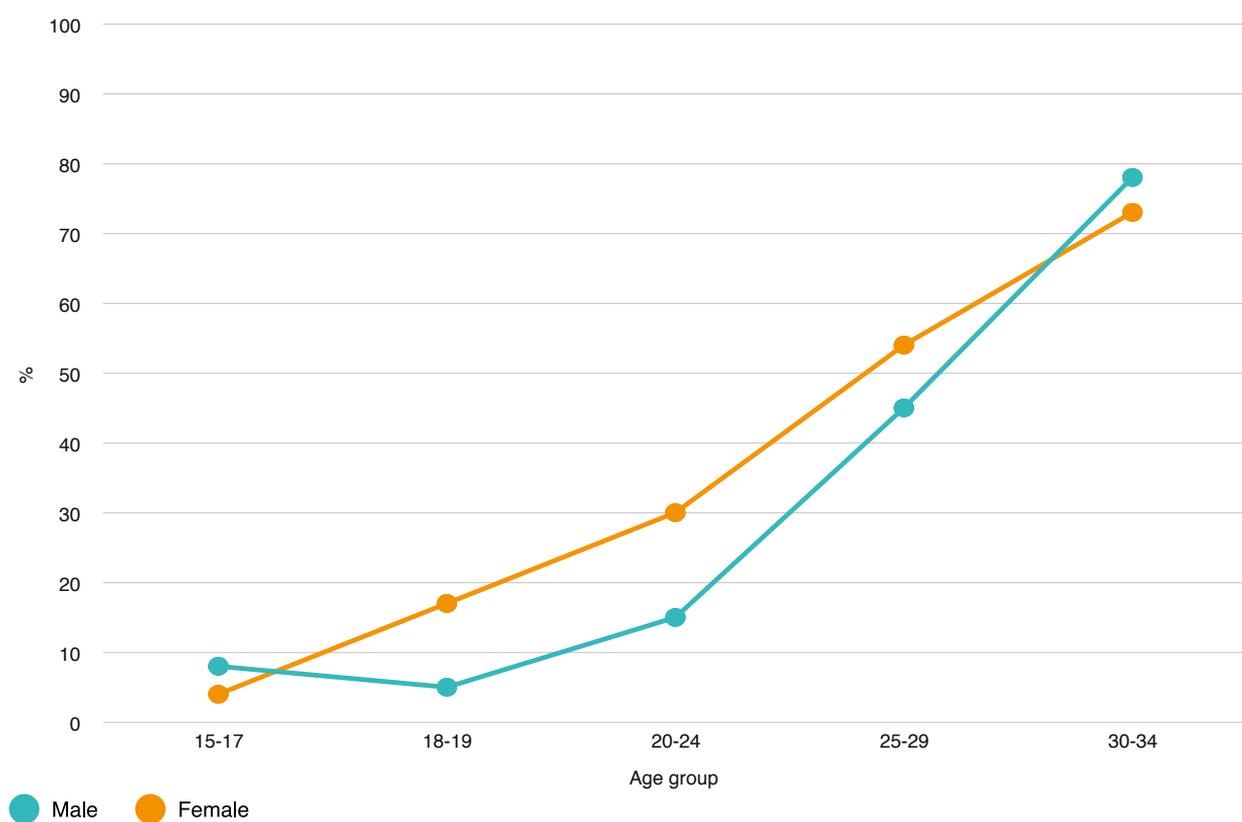


Figure 12c. Maldivian, Malé

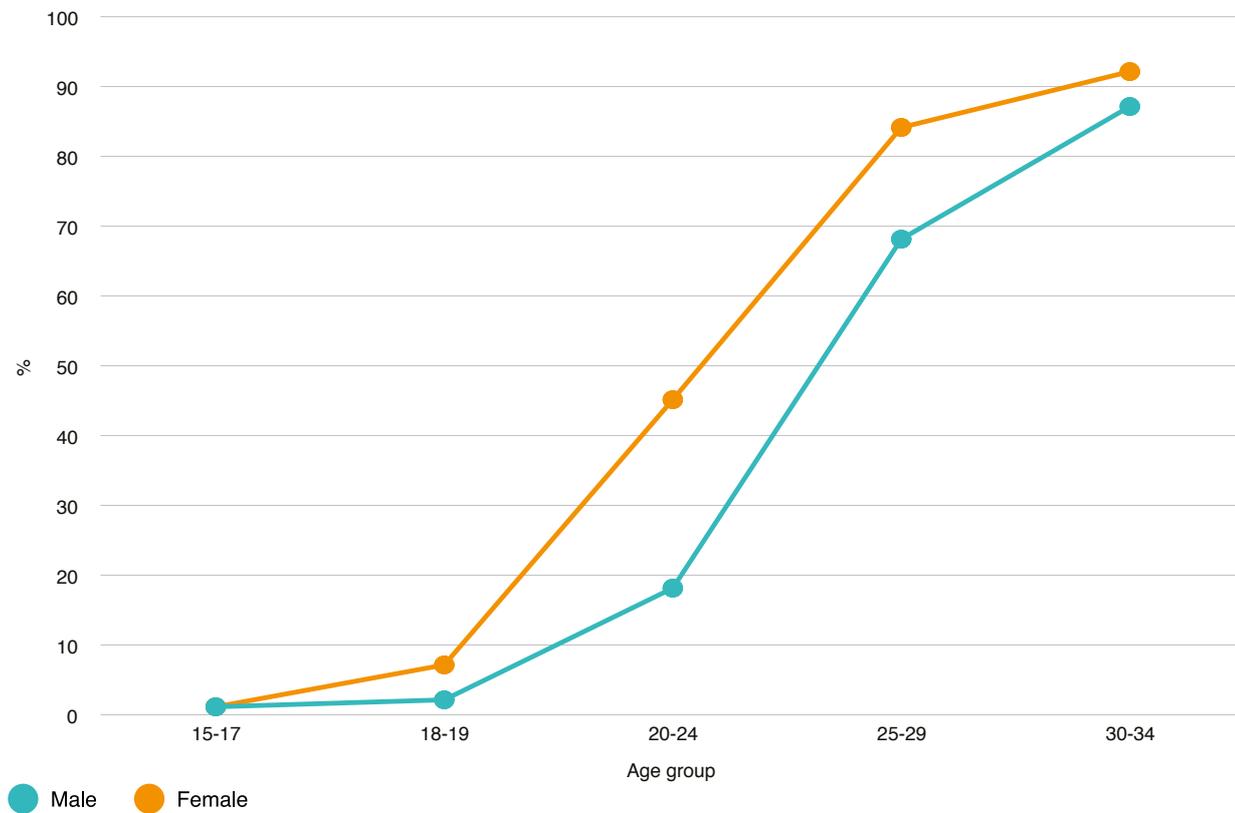


Figure 12d. Foreign, Malé

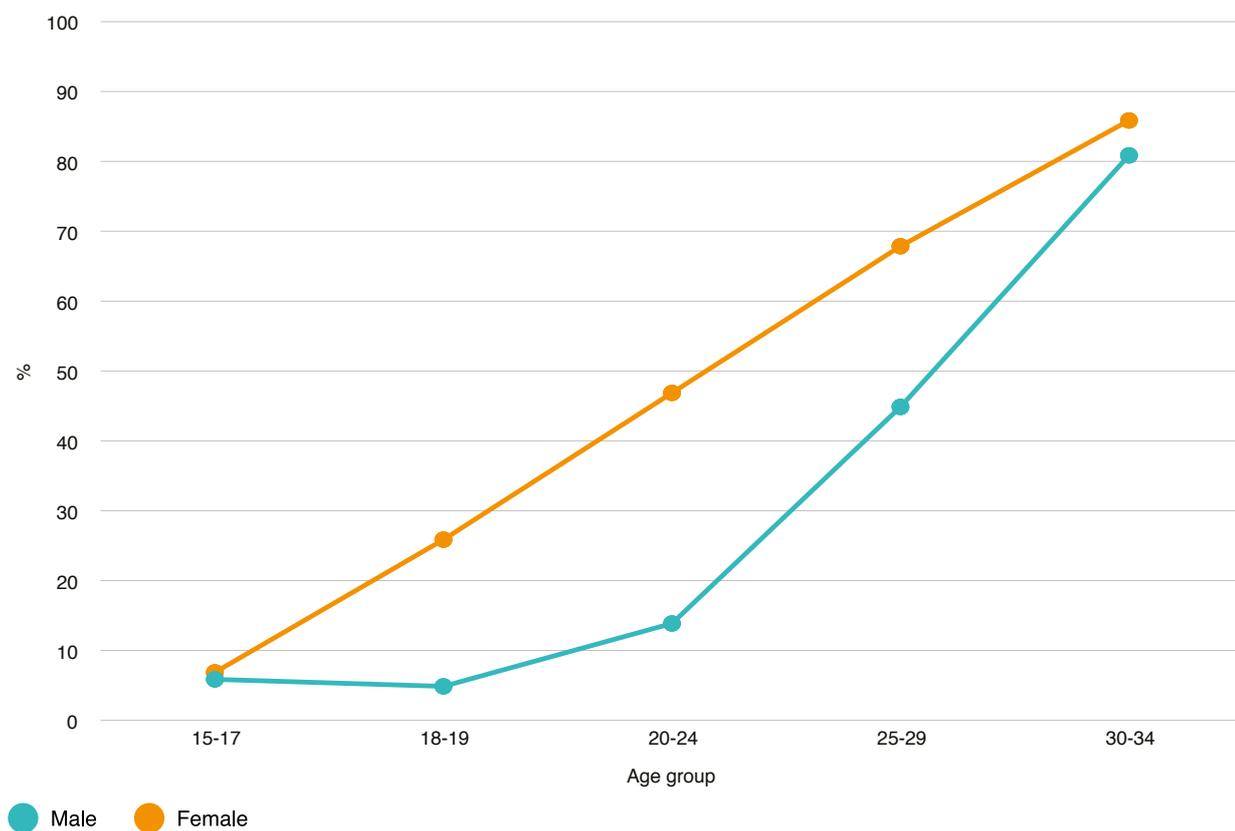


Figure 12e. Maldivian, Atolls

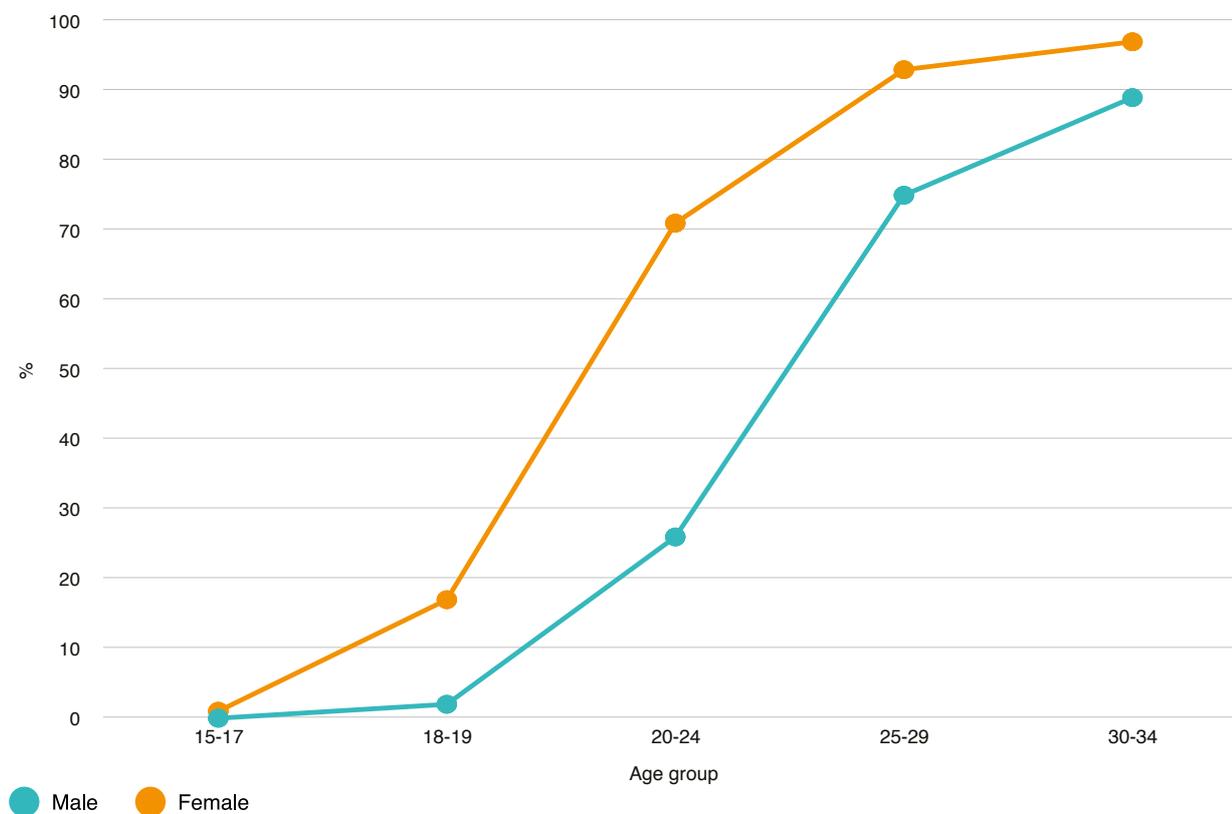


Figure 12f. Foreign, Atolls

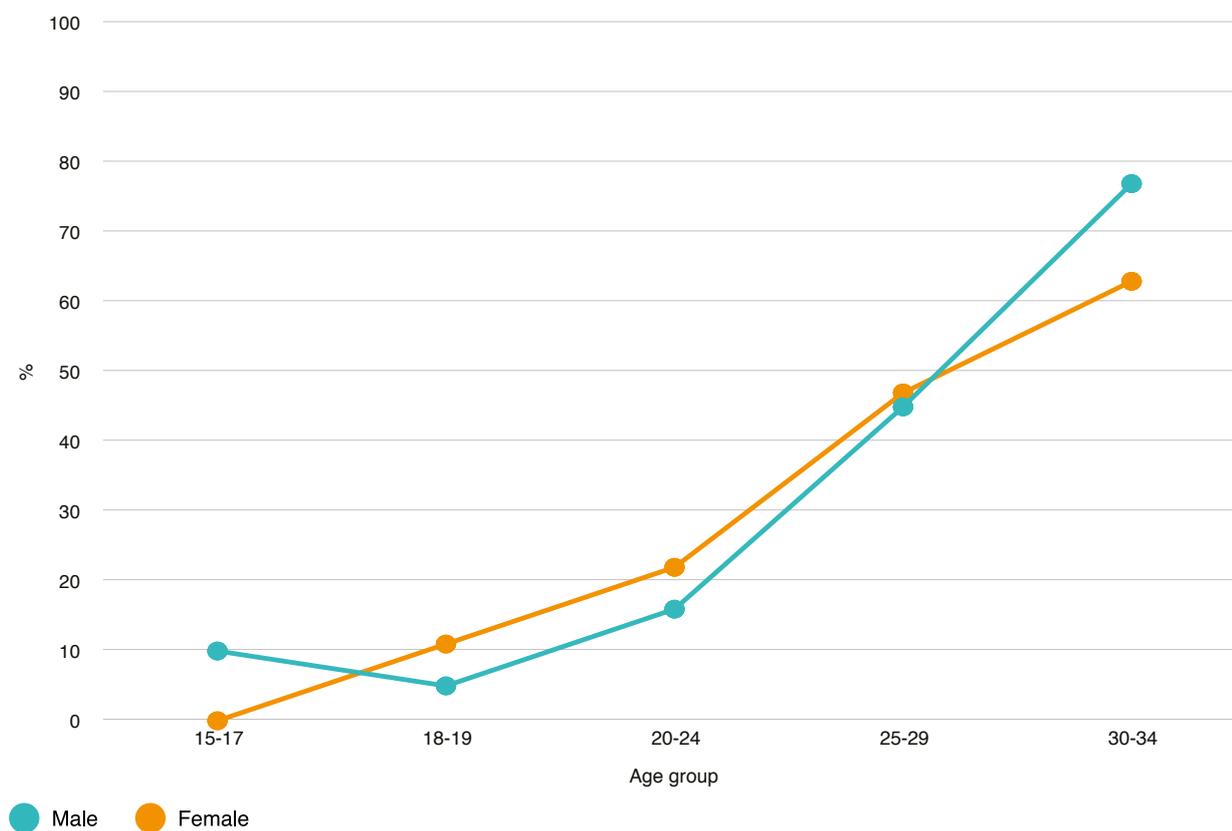


Figure 13. First marriage of ever married Maldivian resident population by age and sex, Maldives: 2014

Figure 13a. Republic

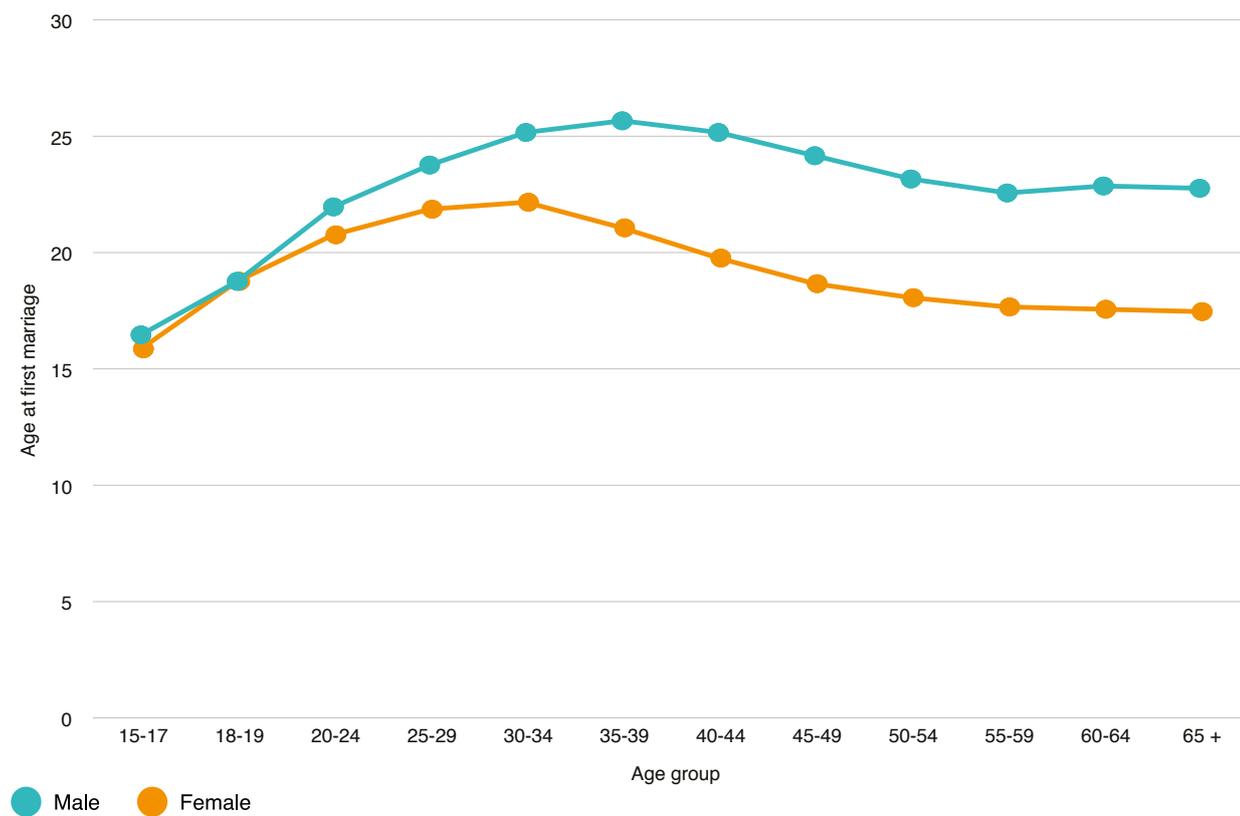


Figure 13b. Malé

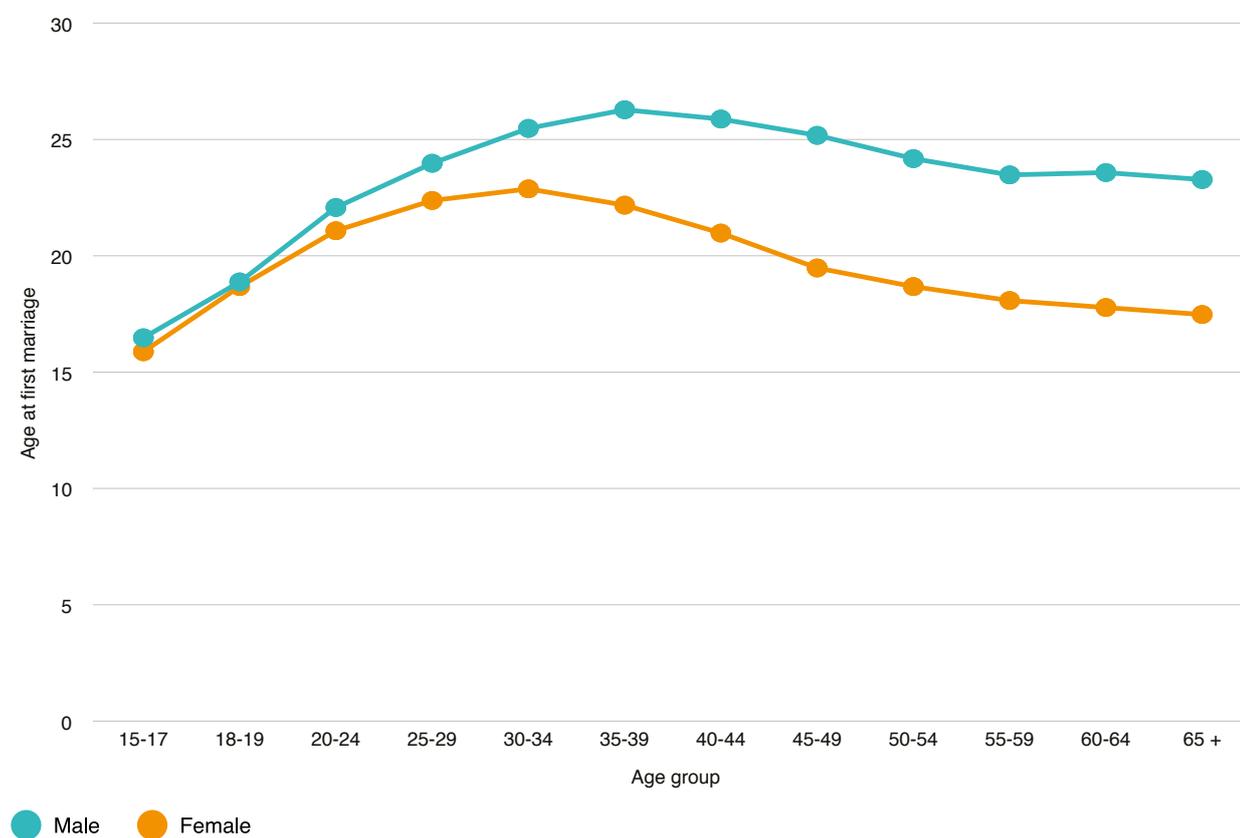


Figure 13c. Atolls

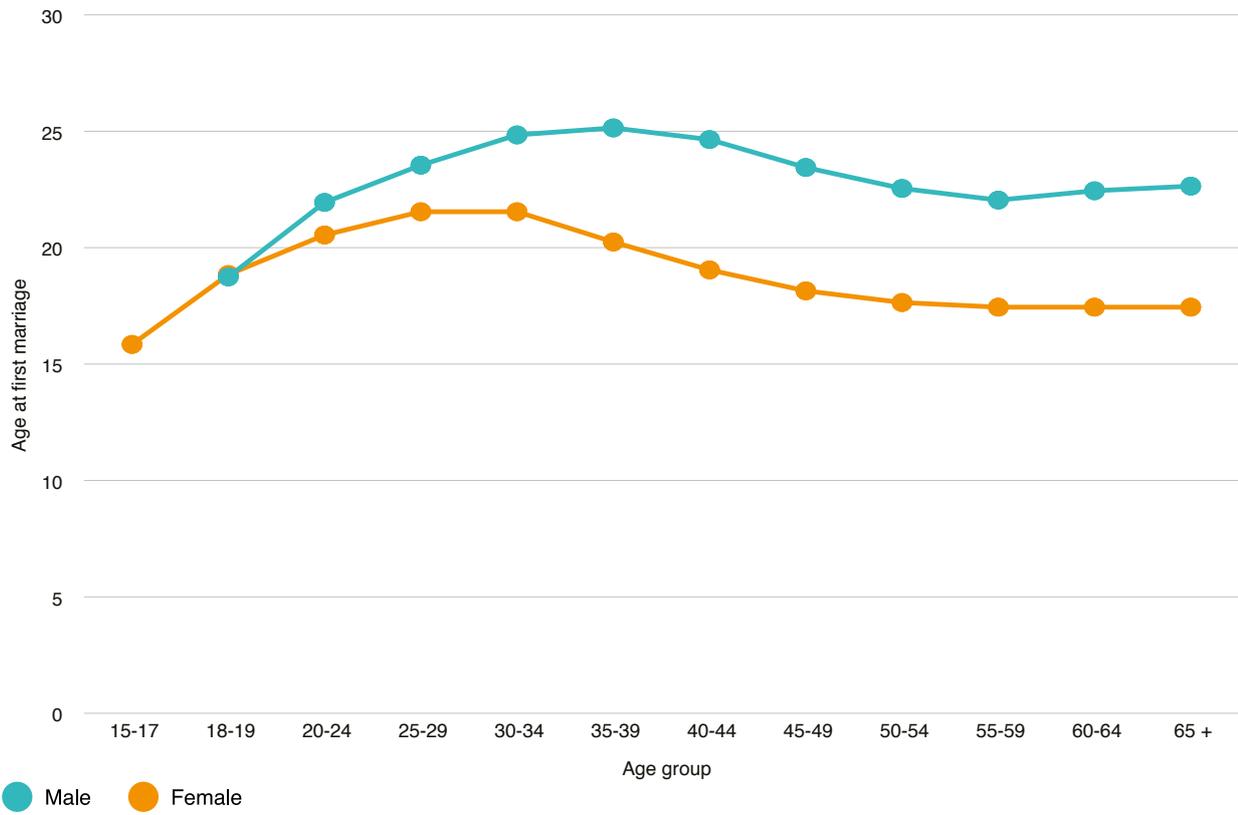


Figure 14. Proportion of ever married Maldivian resident population by age, sex and number of times married, Maldives: 2014

Figure 14a. Males by number of times married

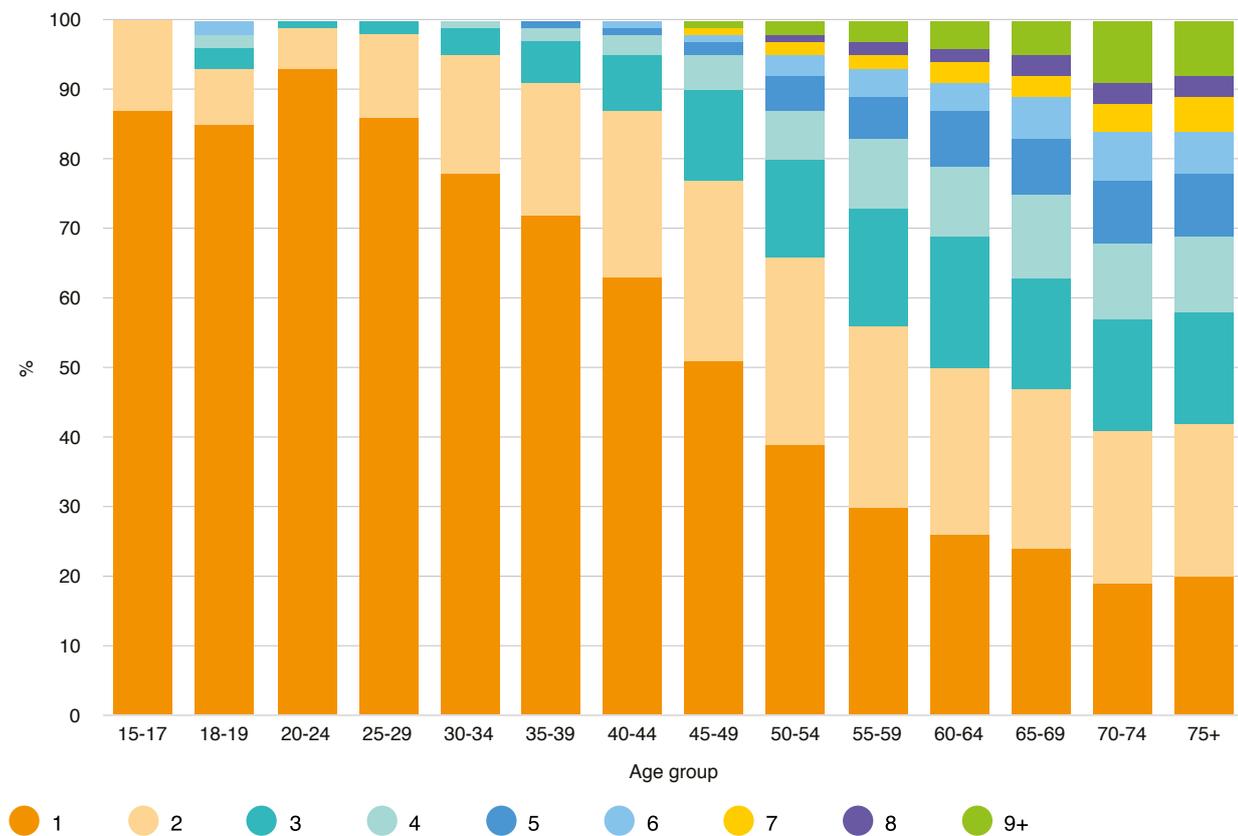
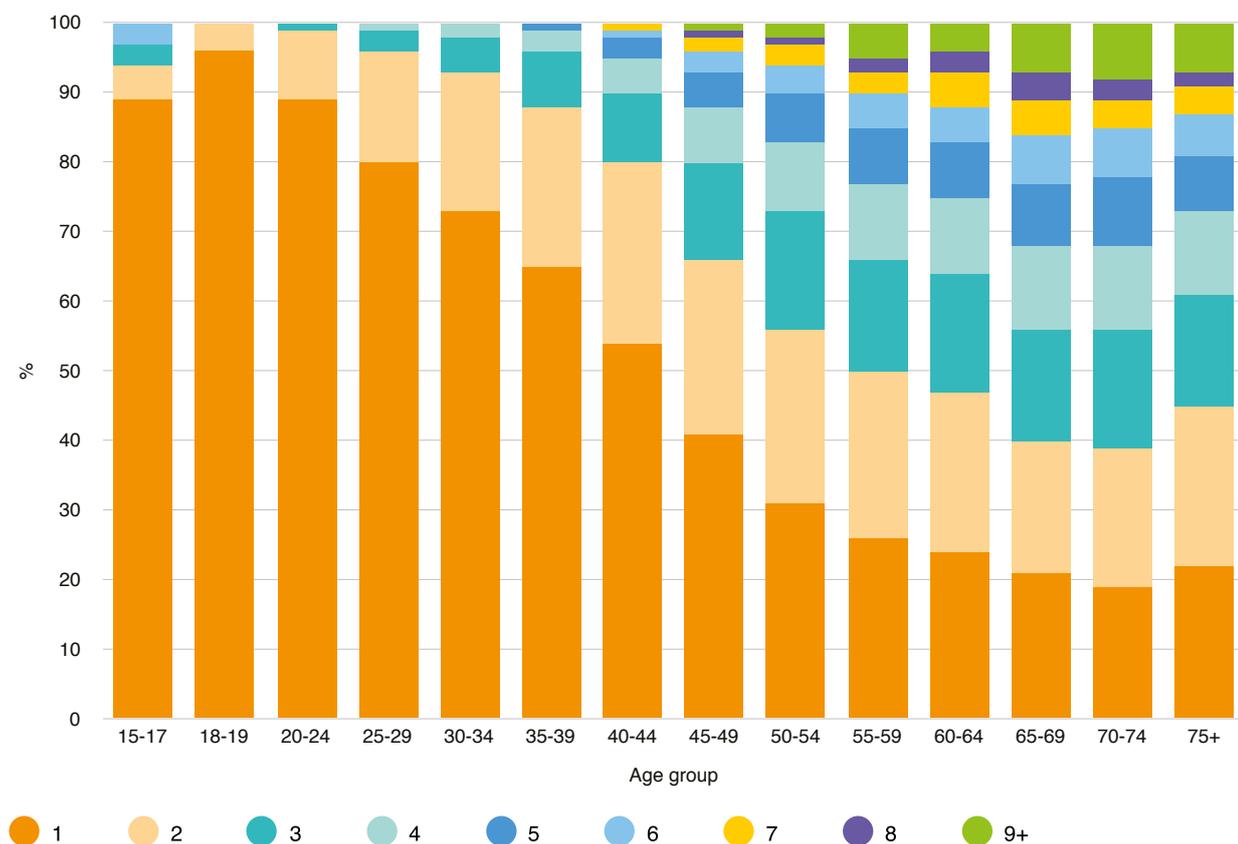


Figure 14b. Females by number of times married



6.4. Birth of first child

The arrival of the first child is a major event in the lives of young people. The census asks every woman aged 15 and above if she has ever given birth. The situation for women is therefore documented, although not for men. According to the 2014 census data, having children at a young age is rare, with less than 1 per cent of Maldivian women younger than 18 giving birth and less than 3 per cent of women aged 18 to 19 giving birth (figure 15).

About one third of women aged 20 to 24 have given birth, and by age 30 to 34, 86 per cent of women give birth at least once.

The proportion of women aged 20 to 34 who give birth is significantly higher in the atolls than in Malé.

About 4 to 5 per cent of all women remain childless throughout their lifetime. That statistic is derived from census question M44 on whether a woman has ever given birth to a live child. Some women remain childless voluntarily, because they do not wish to have a child, and some women remain childless involuntarily because she or her partner is infecund.

At age 25, 34 per cent of women in Malé have had one child and another 7 per cent have had two children. In the atolls, 50 per cent of women have had one child and 19 per cent have had two children (figures 16a to 16c).

At age 34, 13 per cent of women of Malé remain childless, 26 per cent have had once child, 39 per cent have had two children, 16 per cent have had three children, and 5 per cent have had four children. For women of the same age, these percentages in the atolls are as follows: only 7 per cent remain childless, 16 per cent have one child, 32 per cent two children, 29 per cent three children, 10 per cent four children, and 6 per cent five or more children.

The marital status of women who have given birth is very different to that of women who remain childless (figures 17 and 18). Apart from women aged 16 to 18, the vast majority of women who have given birth are married. This is in stark contrast to most childless women who remain single (never married) until age 22; even after that age, about one third of childless women 22 years and older remain single. However, the number of women younger than 19 who have given birth is very small (<100).

Childbearing affects a woman's likelihood to study as well as her employment status (figures 19 and 20).

The proportion of women who have never given birth and are studying is significantly higher than women who have given birth. This is especially so for younger women aged 15-19 years (figure 19). A similar pattern can be observed with respect to the employment status of women (figure 20). The proportion of women employed

is much higher for those who have never given birth than for those who have a child/children. This outcome, however, is not surprising because women who care for children usually stay home, while their husbands/partners work.

Figure 15. Proportion of Maldivian resident women who gave birth by age, Maldives: 2014

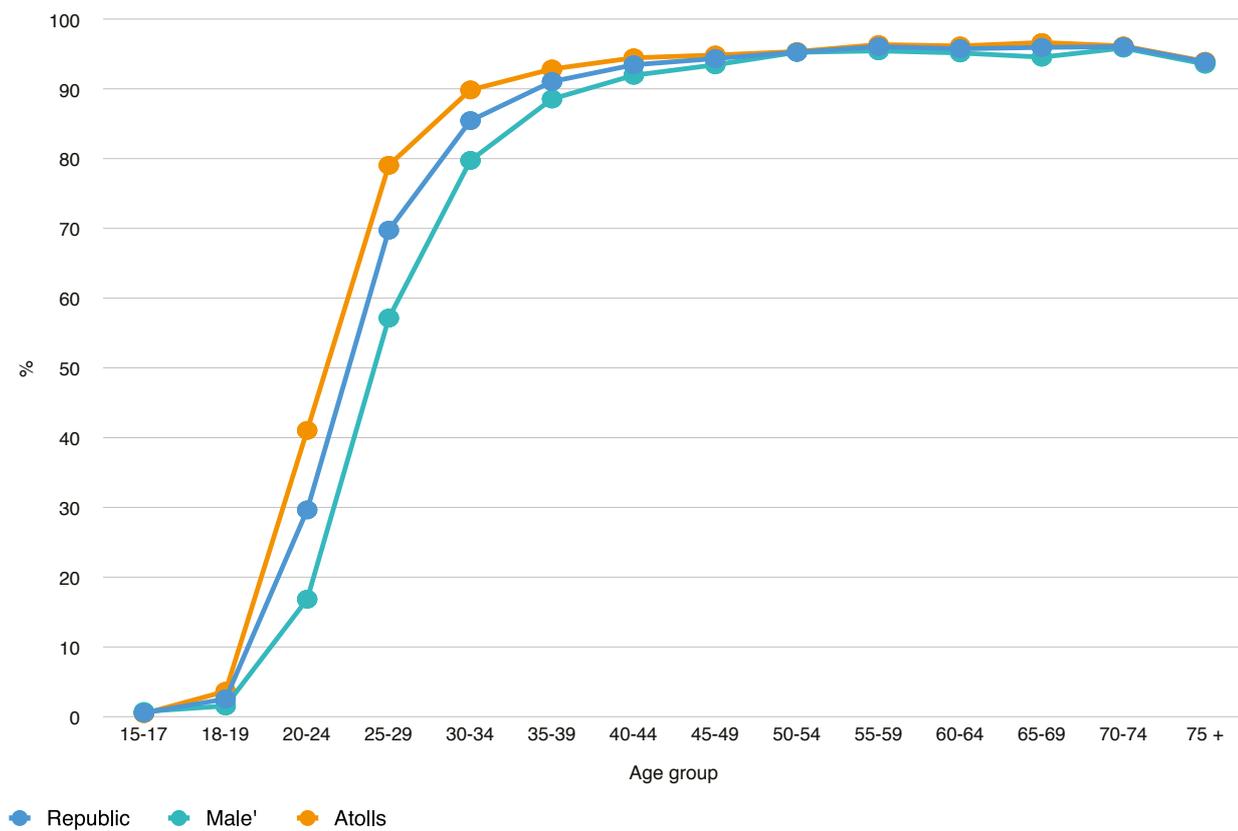


Figure 16. Women by age and number of children born by locality, Maldives: 2014

Figure 16a. Republic

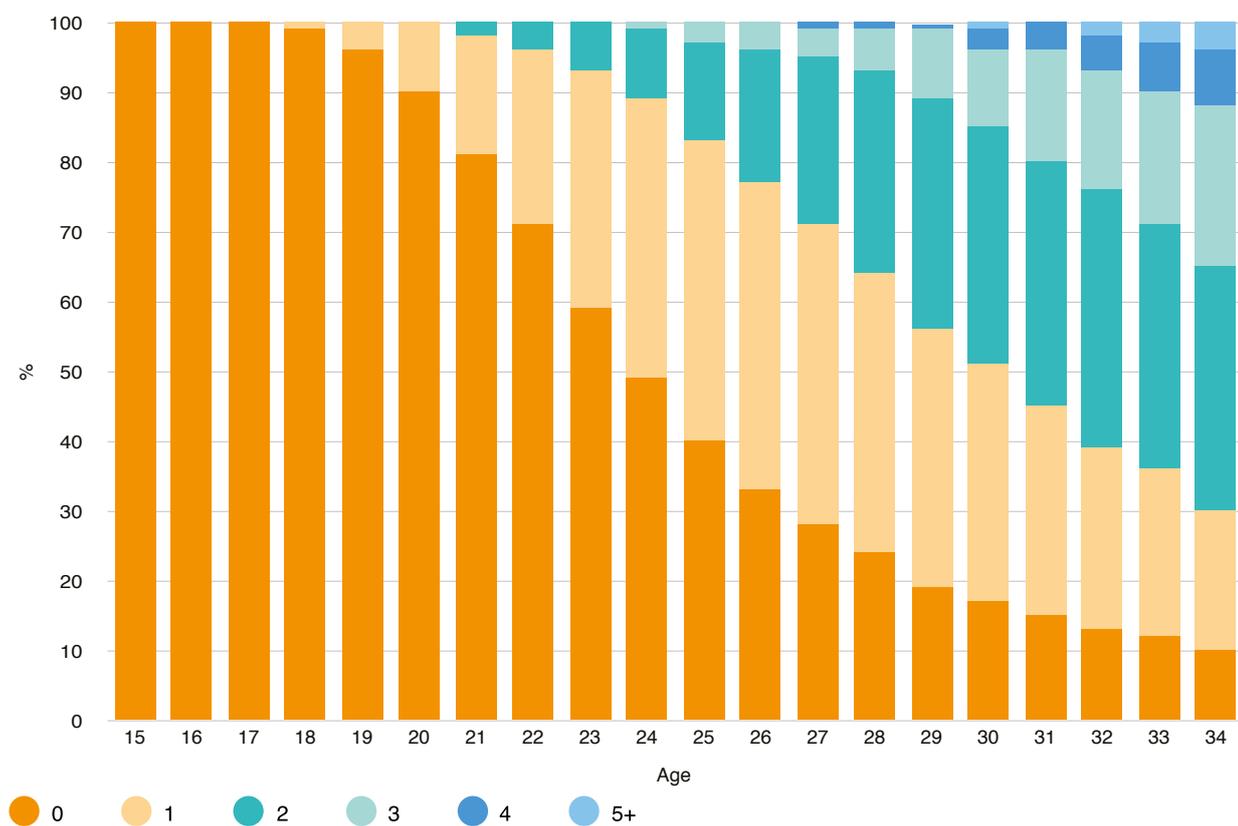


Figure 16b. Malé

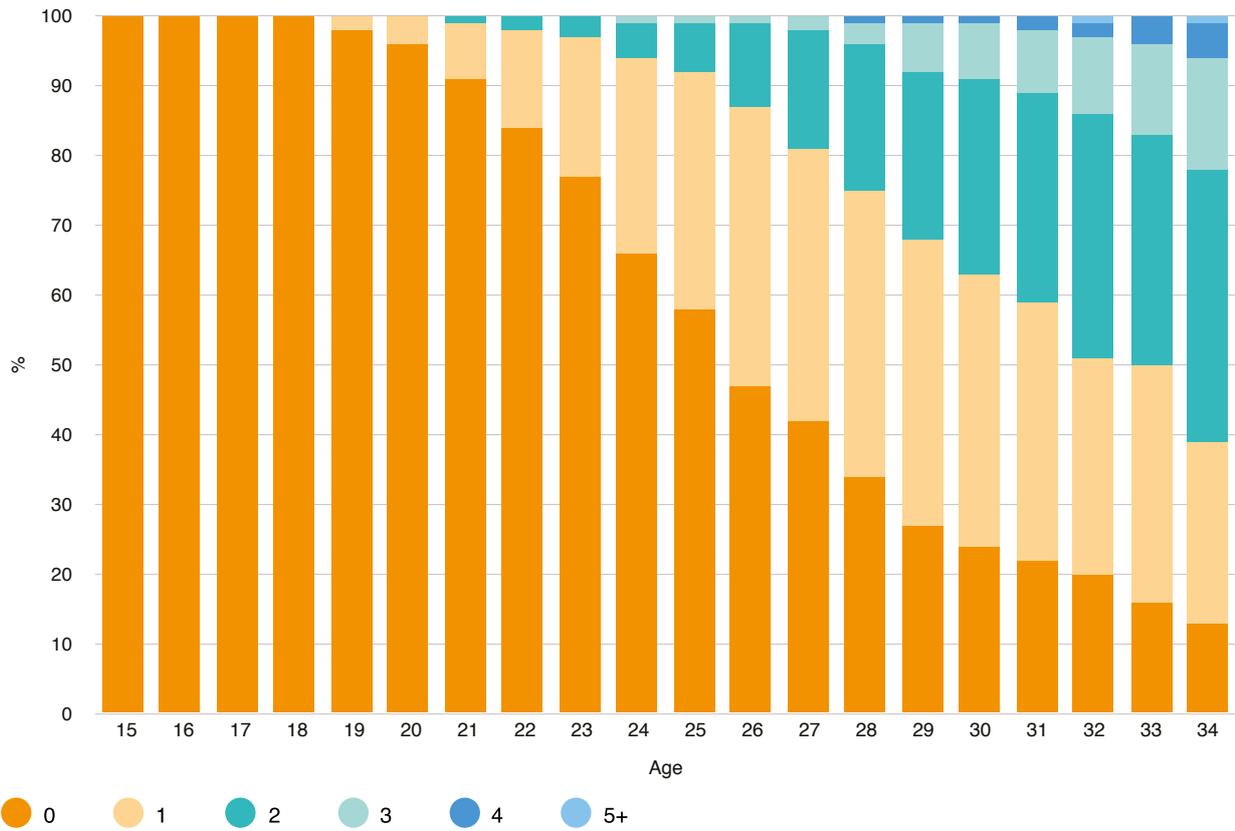


Figure 16c. Atolls

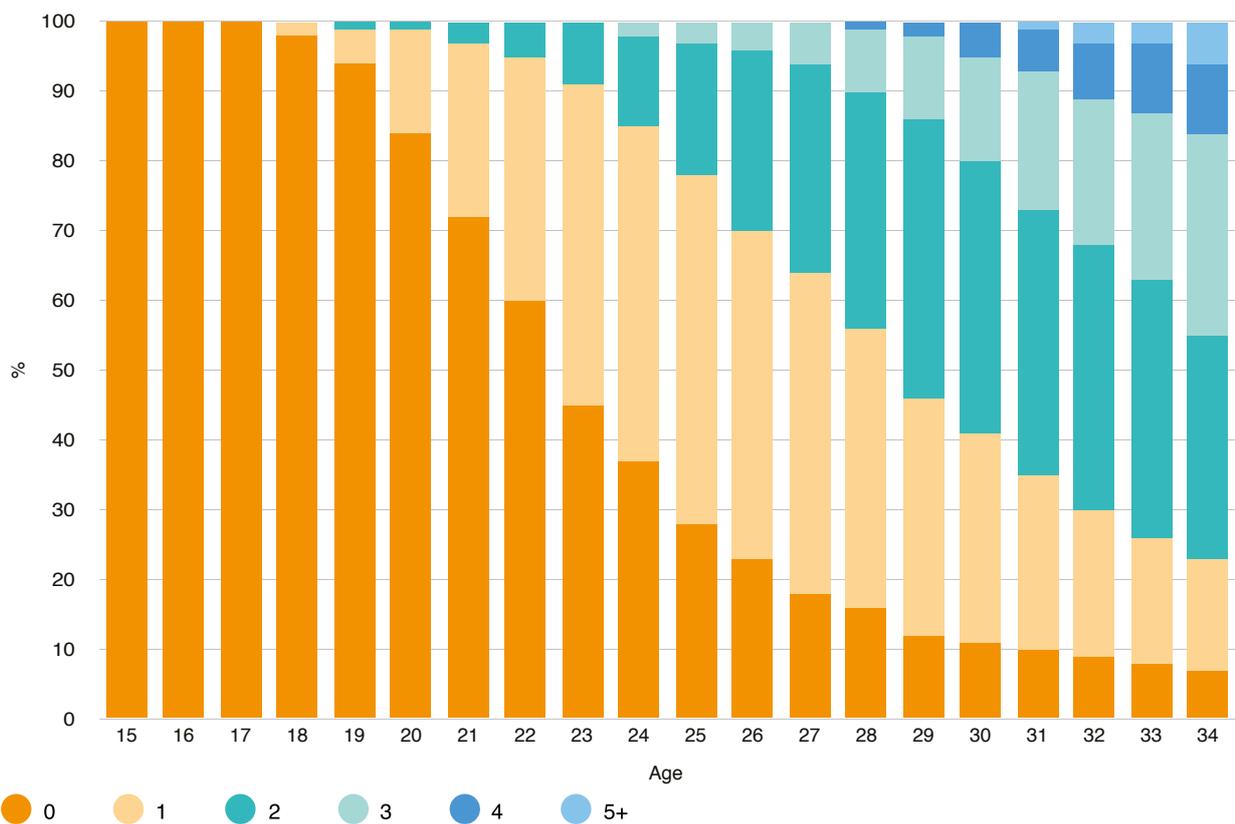


Figure 17. Women who have ever given birth by age and marital status, Maldives: 2014

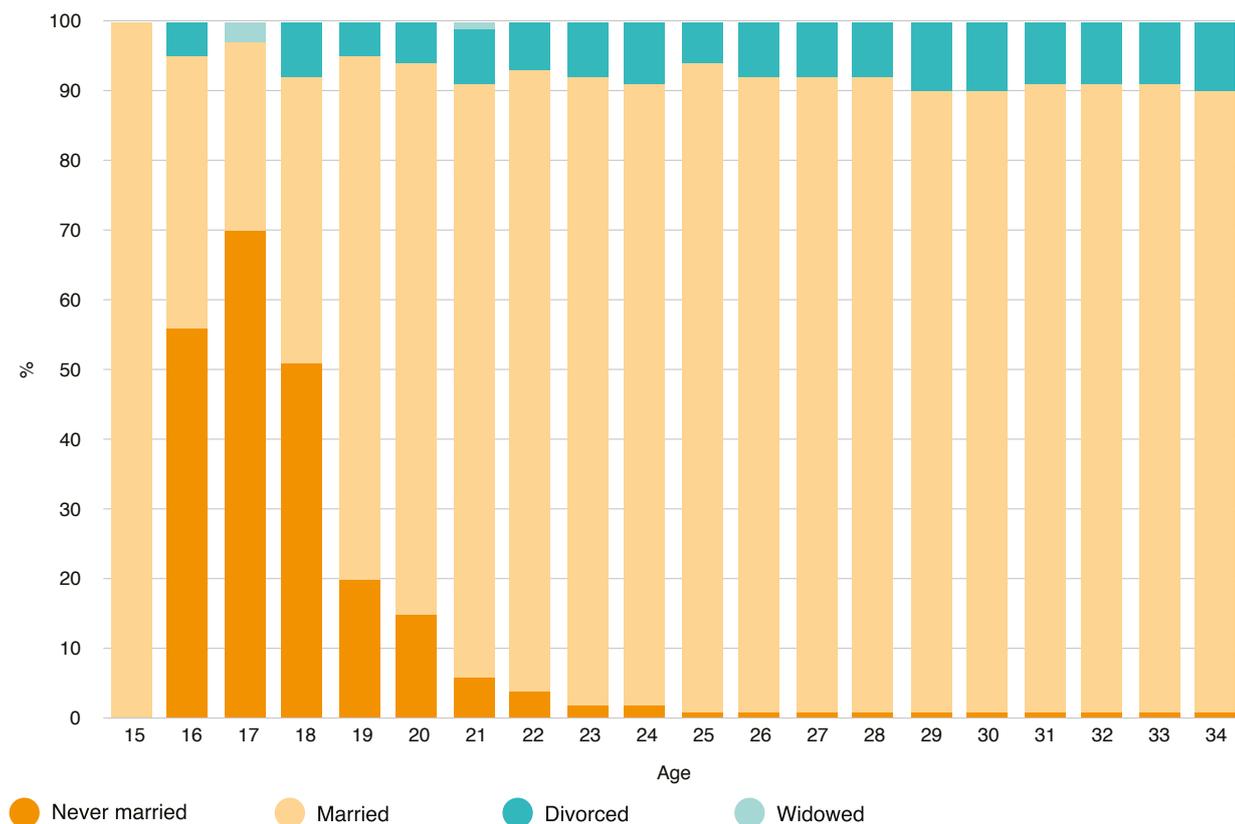


Figure 18. Women who have never given birth by age and marital status, Maldives: 2014

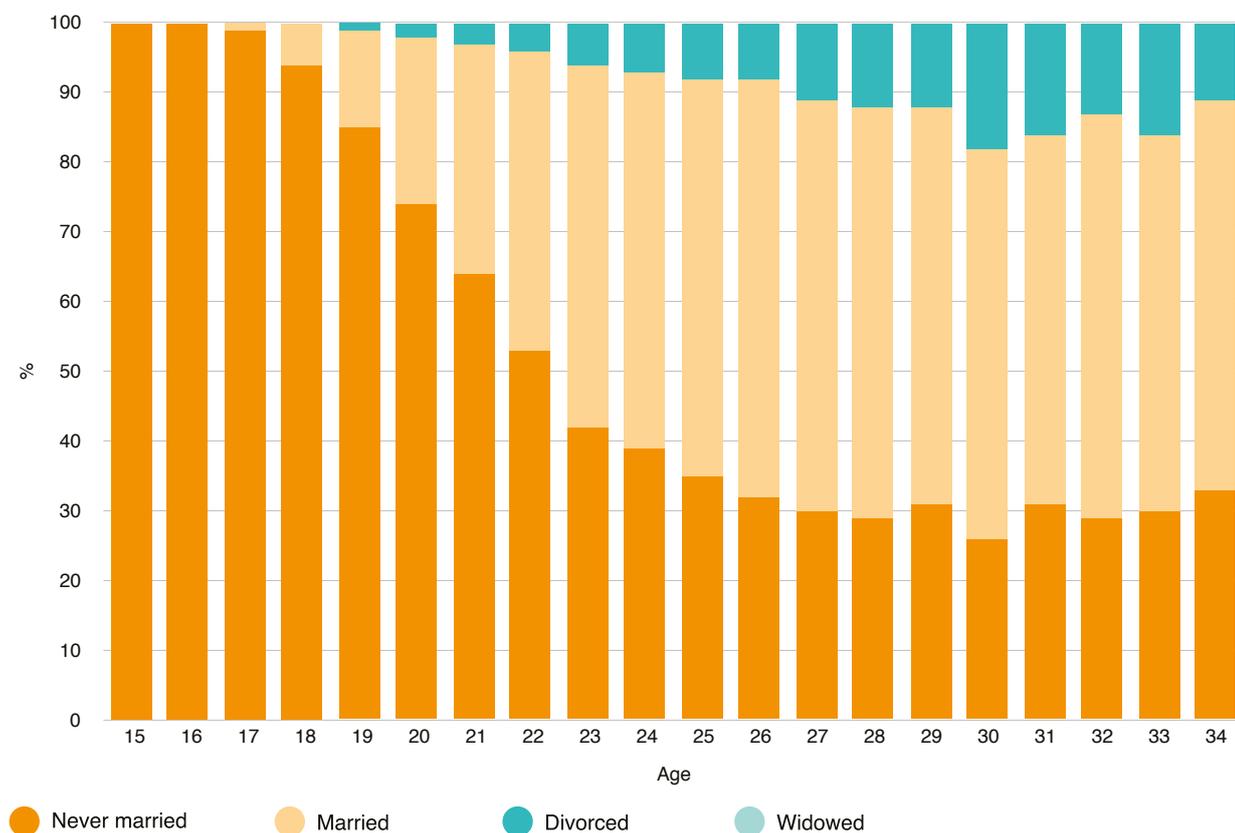


Figure 19. Proportion of women studying by age and whether they have ever given birth, Maldives: 2014

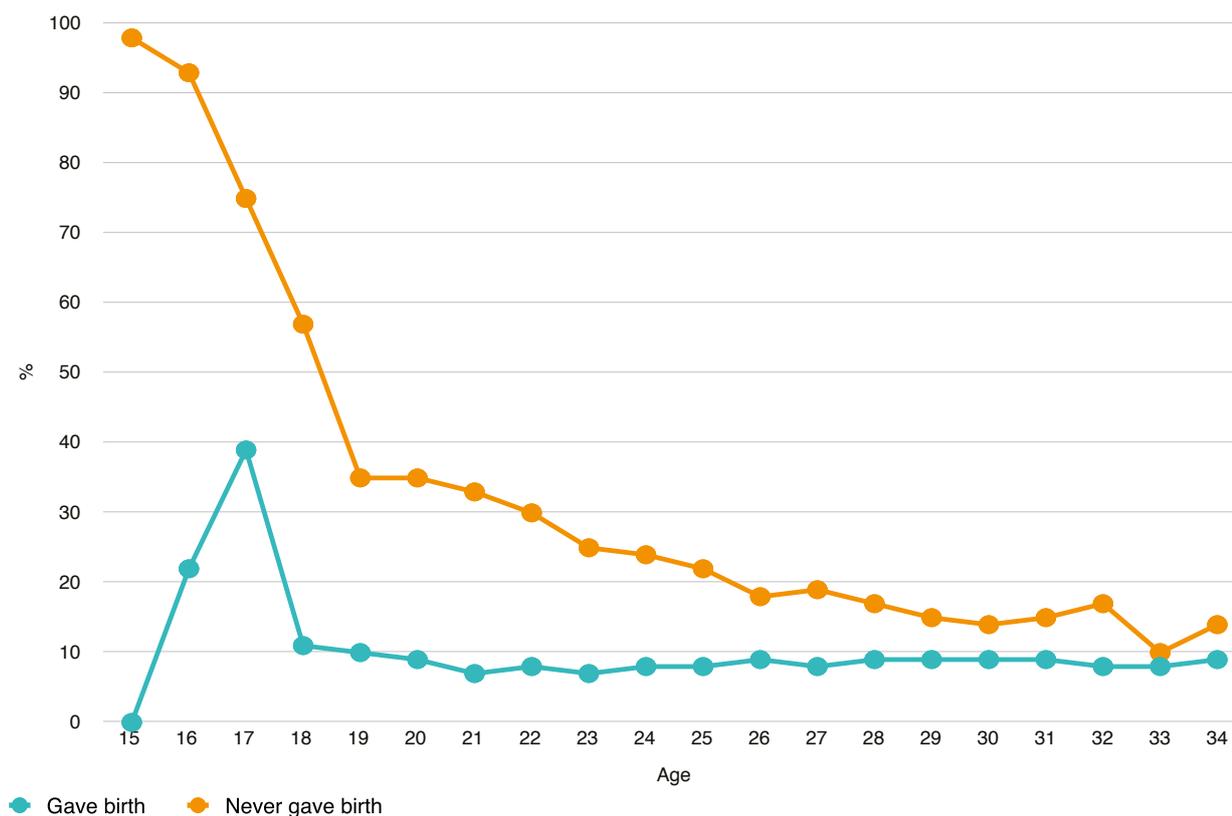
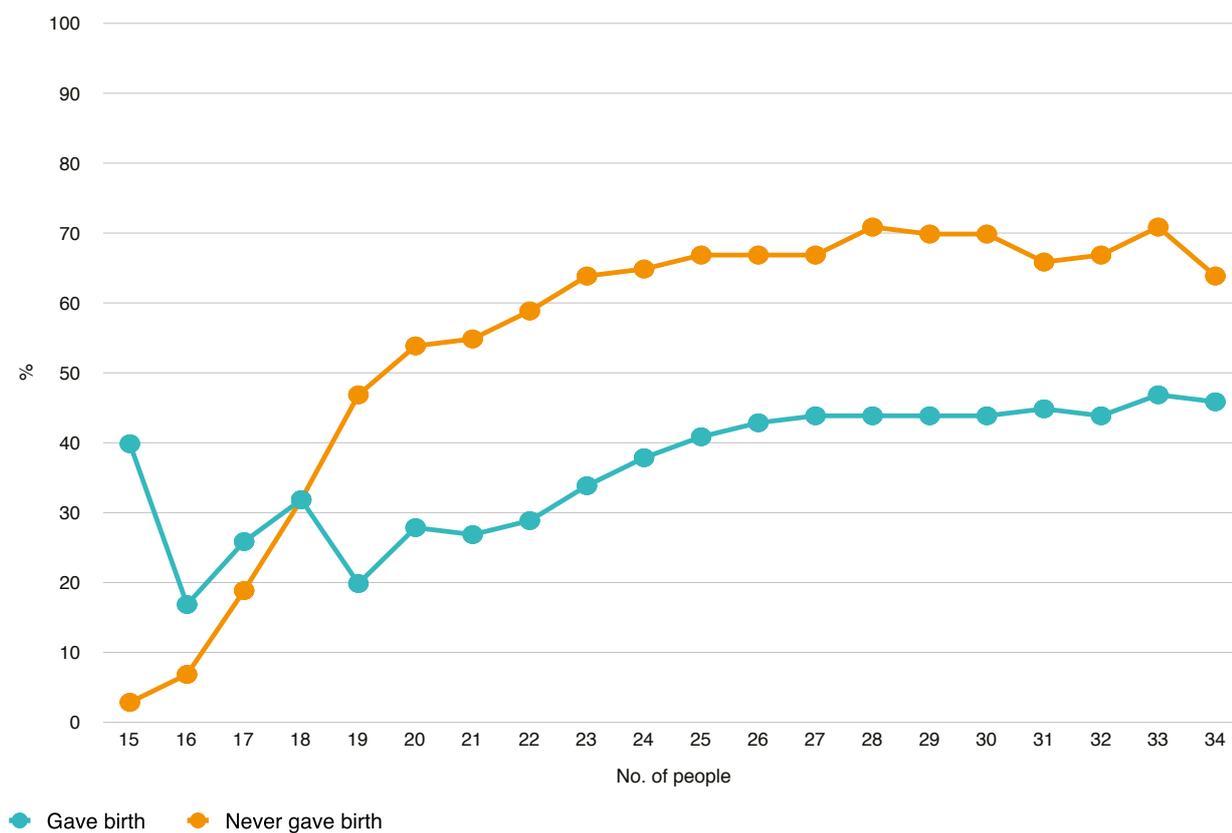


Figure 20. Proportion of women employed by age and whether they have ever given birth, Maldives: 2014



6.5. Adolescent fertility

Starting childbearing at a young age can have a number of negative consequences. Research shows that there are higher chances of mortality and morbidity for teenage mothers and their children. Teenage pregnancy and childbirth often result in young women having to end their education early, owing to social stigma and/or so they can take care of the child. Early childbirth also extends the period of time over which women have children, possibly increasing the fertility rate.

Adolescent or teenage fertility refers to the number of births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19. It is very low in the Maldives overall, at seven births per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19, while the figure is at 10 births per 1,000 women in the atolls and four births per 1,000 women in Malé (figure 21). However, it is worth noting that hospital records indicating the number of births by the mother's age suggest that the actual number of births by adolescent women is about double the figure recorded in the 2014 census (Maldives Health Statistics 2013, Ministry of Health, Malé, Republic of Maldives, table 12). This should be taken into account when preparing the fertility analysis of the census data.

Teenage fertility has been declining since the 1980s, from 200 births per 1,000 women to the 2014 figure of seven births per 1,000 women (figure 22) – now by far the lowest of all South Asian countries (figure 23).

While the fertility levels of teenagers are very low in the Maldives, the other young women contribute significantly to the overall fertility level of the total fertility rate (TFR) of 2.5 in 2014. Out of 1,000 women aged 20 to 24, 104 had a child during the one-year period before the census, and 144 children were born per 1,000 women aged 25 to 29 – the most fertile age group of women in the Maldives. Overall, young women aged 15 to 34 contribute more than 75 per cent of the overall fertility level. Figure 21 clearly demonstrates that fertility levels of women aged 20 to 34 are significantly higher in the atolls than in Malé.

Although the overall fertility levels in the Maldives decreased rapidly from 1990 (6.4) to 2006 (2.2), the level has since increased to 2.5, contributing to an accelerated population growth (figure 24).

The total fertility rate of 2.8 in the atolls is significantly higher than in Malé, where it is only 2.0, which conforms to the general worldwide pattern of higher fertility levels in rural as opposed to urban areas.

Figure 21. Age-specific fertility rate (ASFR) by locality, Maldives: 2014

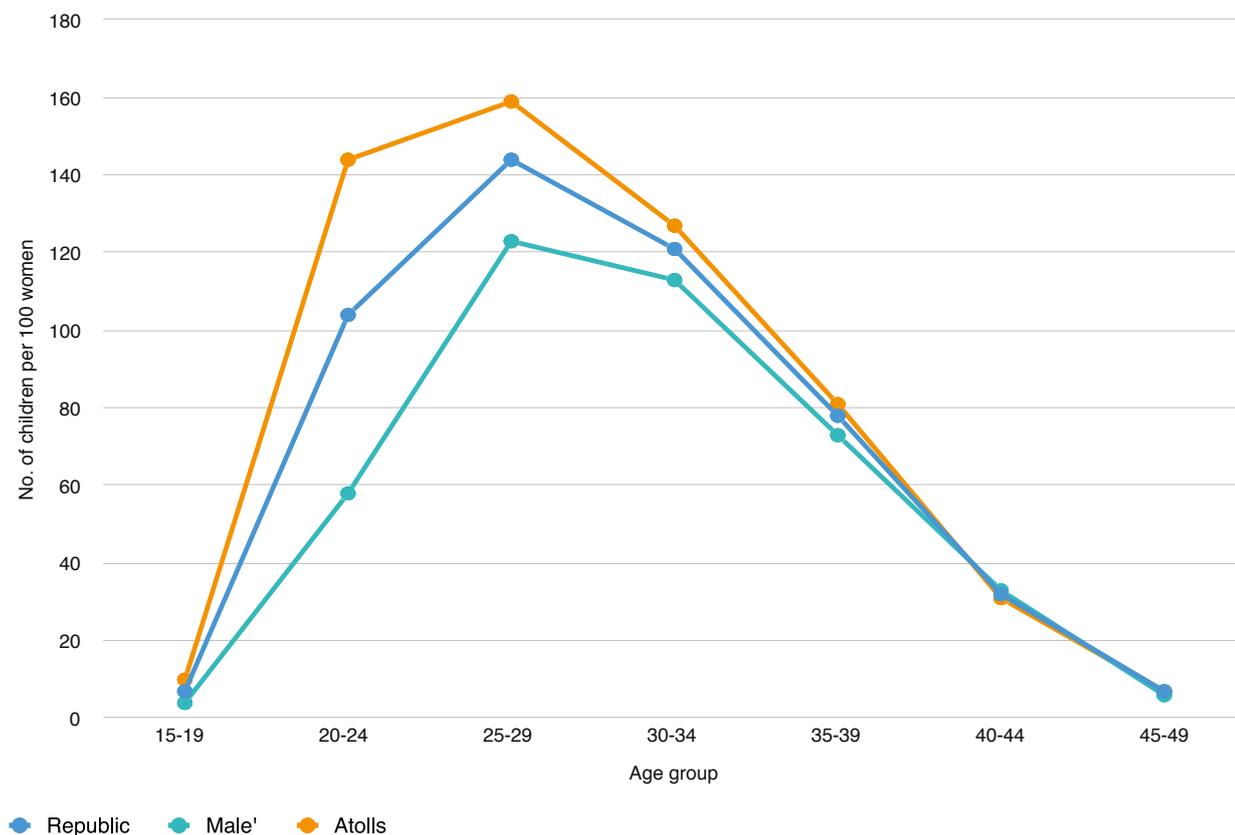


Figure 22. Adolescent/teenage fertility rate (ASFR), Maldives: 1950-2014

Source: UN Population Division, WPP2015

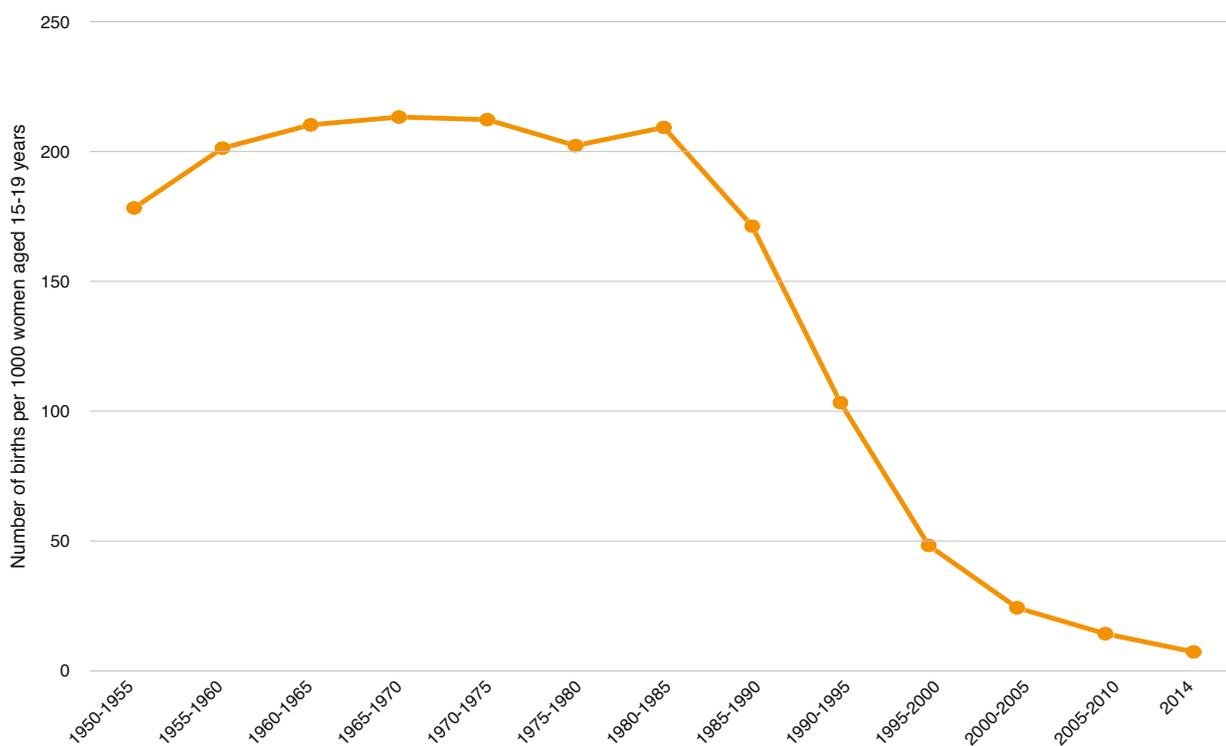
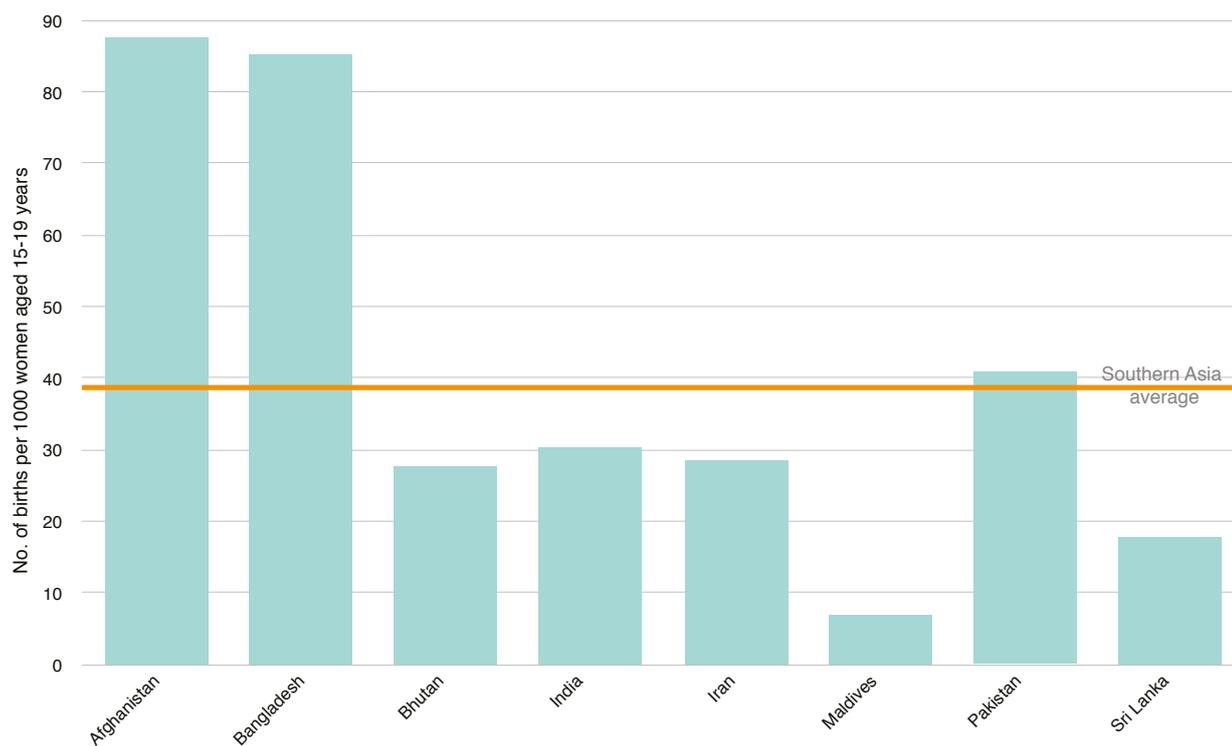
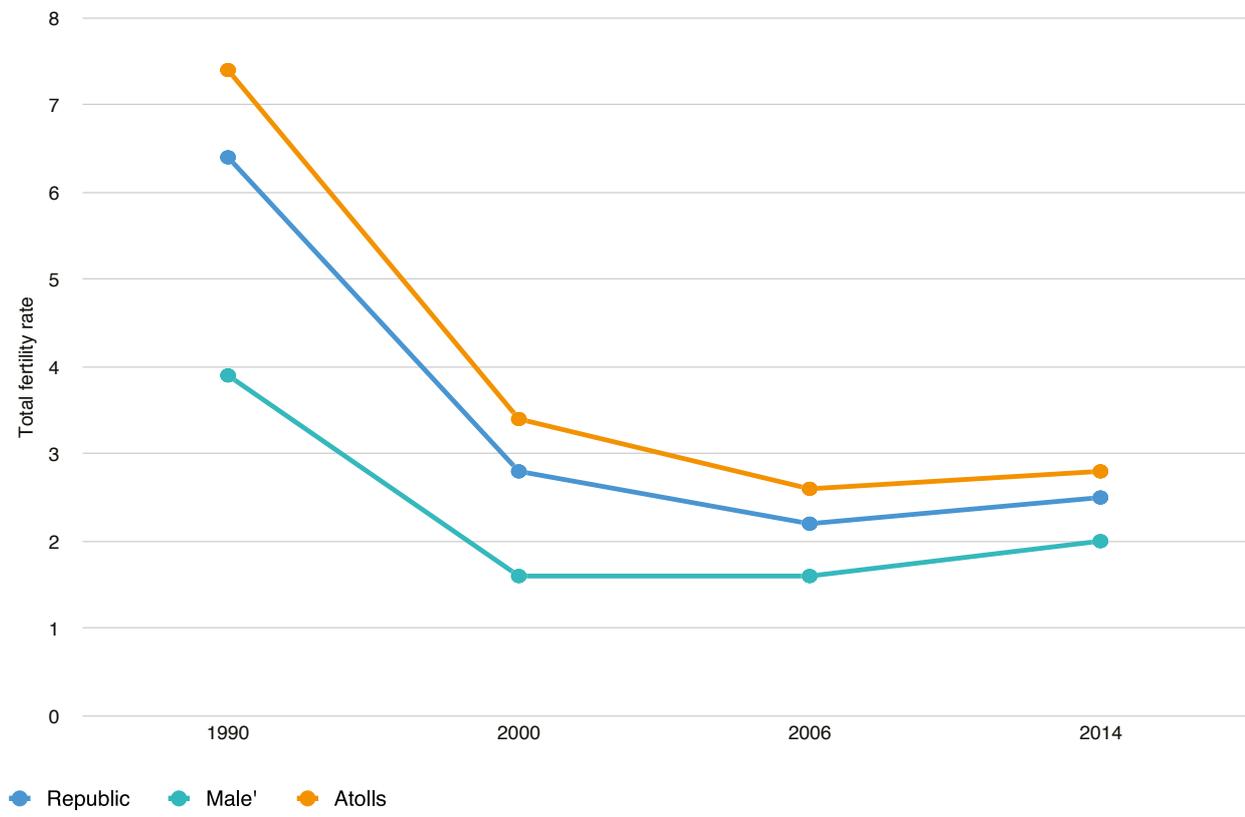


Figure 23. Adolescent/teenage fertility rate, South Asian countries



Source: Estimates for all countries is taken from the United Nations Population Division, World Population Prospectus 2015, while the Maldives estimates are from the 2014 census.

Figure 24. Total fertility rate (TFR) by locality, Maldives: 1990-2014



6.6. Living independently⁹

The vast majority of boys and girls between 15 and 24 live with their parents or with other relatives. Not surprisingly, as figures 25a to 25f show, the proportions change significantly for older age groups, with smaller proportions continuing to live with their parents or other relatives.

From age 25, the proportion of males and females living independently, meaning that they are the head of a household or are the spouse of a head of household, steadily increases from 12 and 19 per cent of males and females, respectively, to 42 and 56 per cent of males and

9. Living independently is defined as being the head of a household or the spouse of a head of household. These estimates must, therefore, be regarded as a minimum, since other people/couples, who have left their parental or guardian home and who might be living with the head of household, are not included as 'living independently'.

females at age 34. The proportion of independently living youths is higher for females, and it is higher for those living in Malé than for those living in the atolls.

Figures 26a to 26c, depicting the proportion of the Maldivian resident household population by heads of household, show that the proportion of heads of households increases with age. While at age 15 to 19, being the head of a household is rare, at age 30 to 34 more than 10 per cent of males and females are heads of their own household. While there are more males (15 per cent) than females (10 per cent) at age 30 to 34 heading households in Malé, this pattern is reversed in the atolls where only 8 per cent of males aged 30 to 34 head a household, compared to 13 per cent of females.

The above proportions of male and female-headed households result in a per cent distribution of young male-female heads of households as shown in figures 27a to 27c. While from age 20 about 60 per cent of heads of households in Malé are male, it is the opposite in the atolls where the majority of heads of households are women.

Figure 25. Living arrangements of people aged 15 to 34, by sex and locality, Maldives: 2014

Figure 25a. Republic, Males

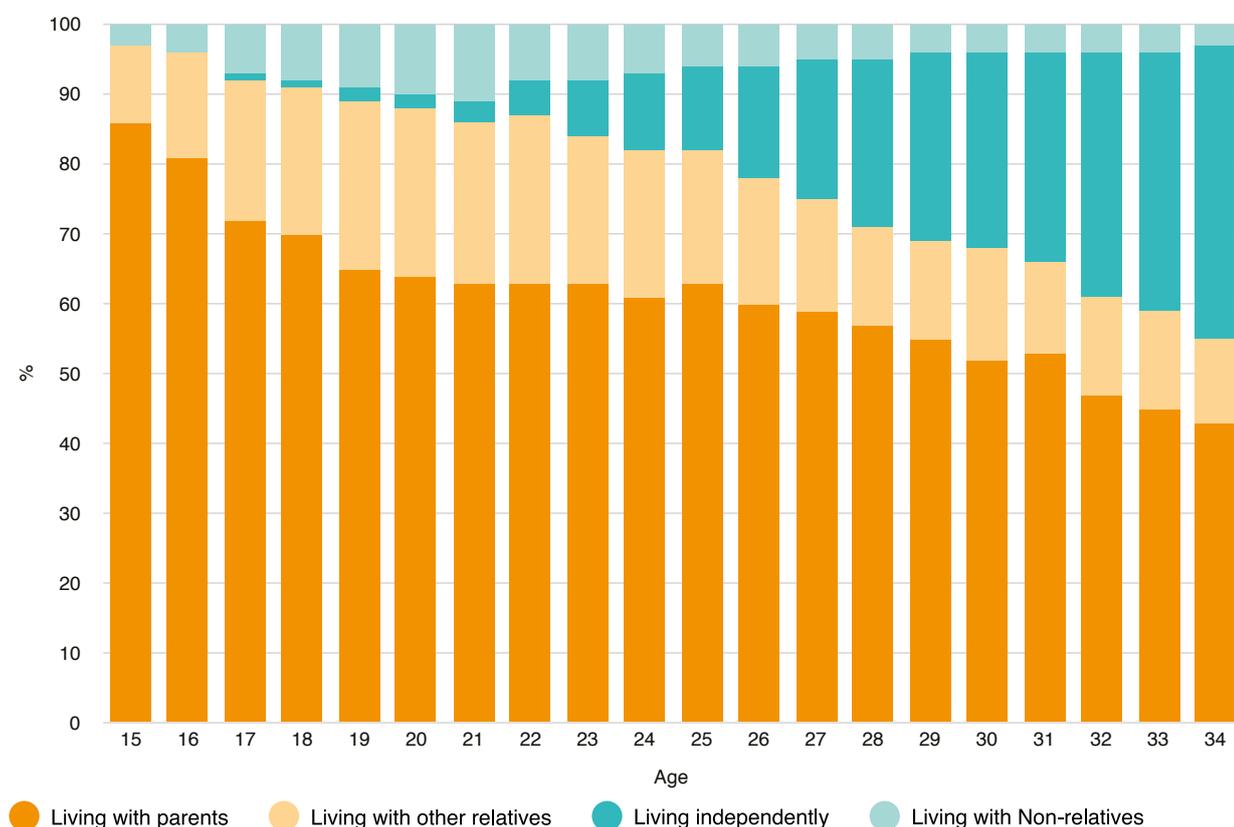


Figure 25b. Republic, Females

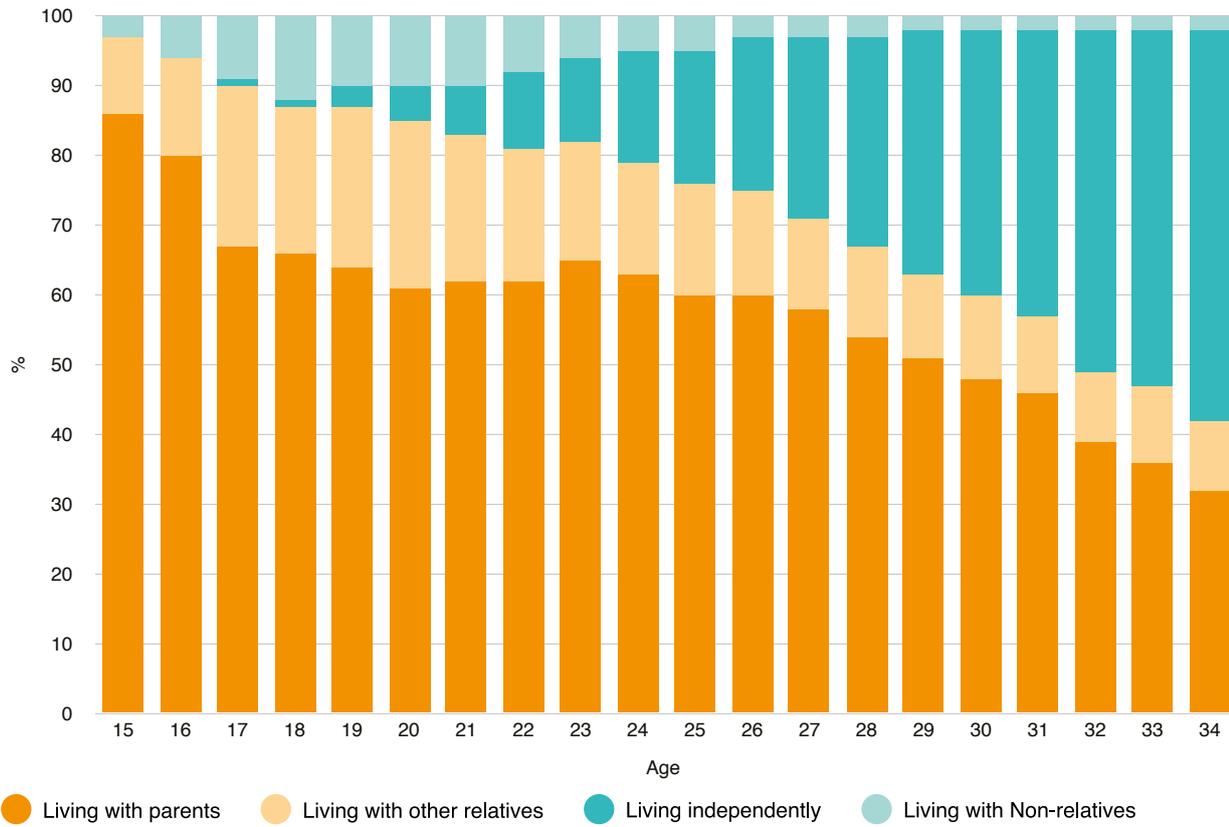


Figure 25c. Malé, Males

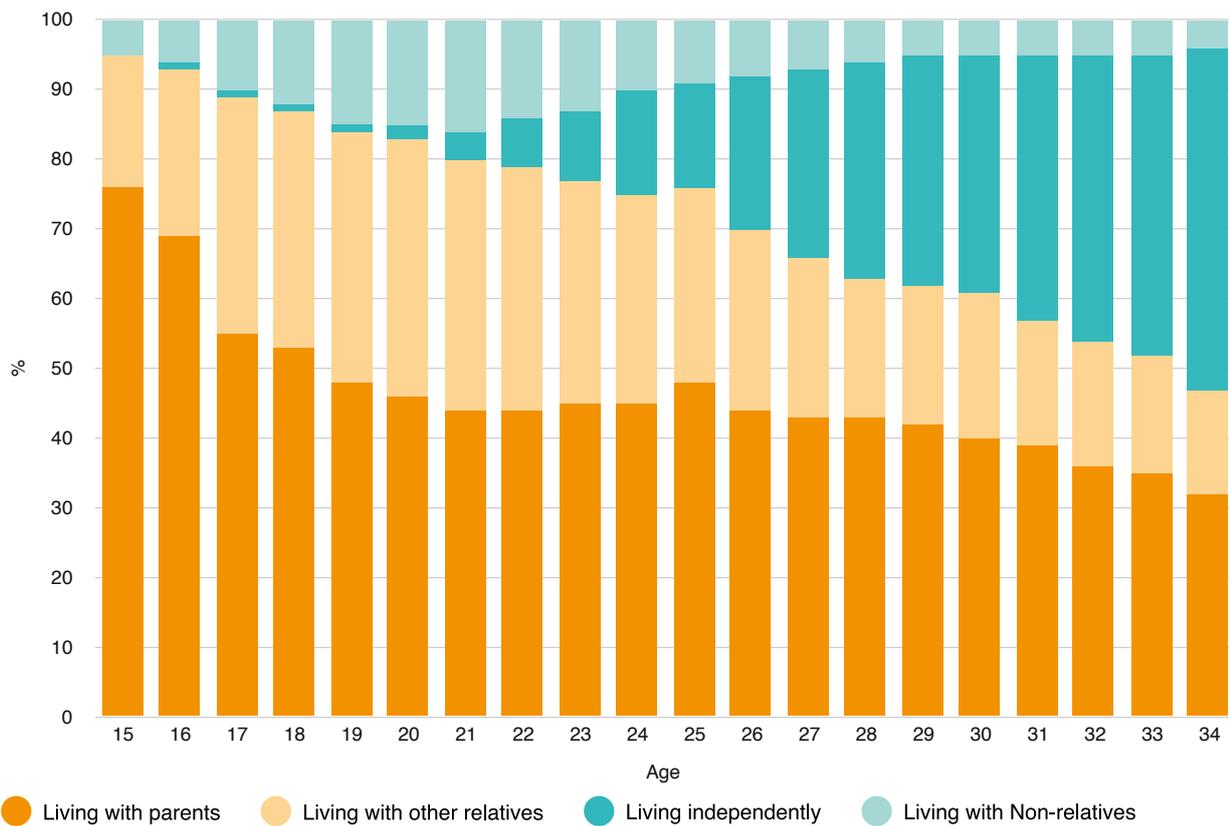


Figure 25d. Malé, Females

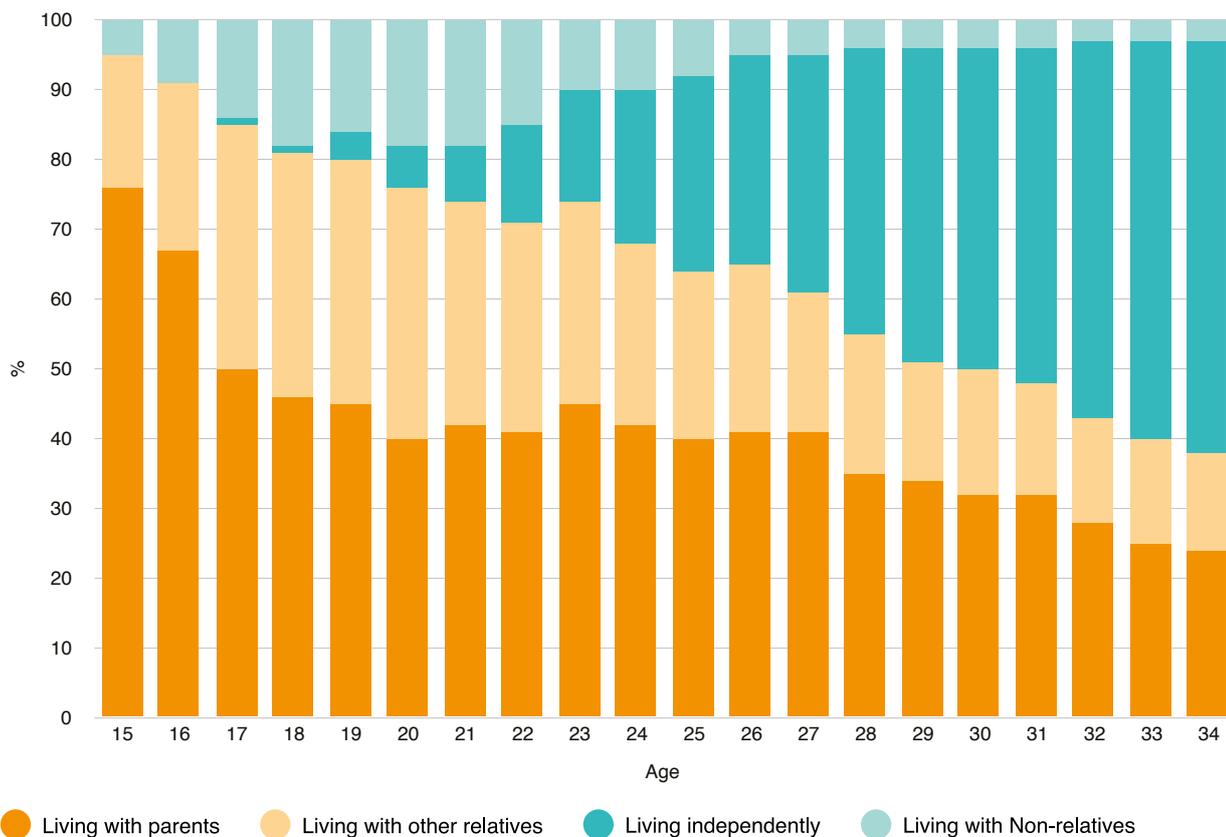


Figure 25e. Atolls, Males

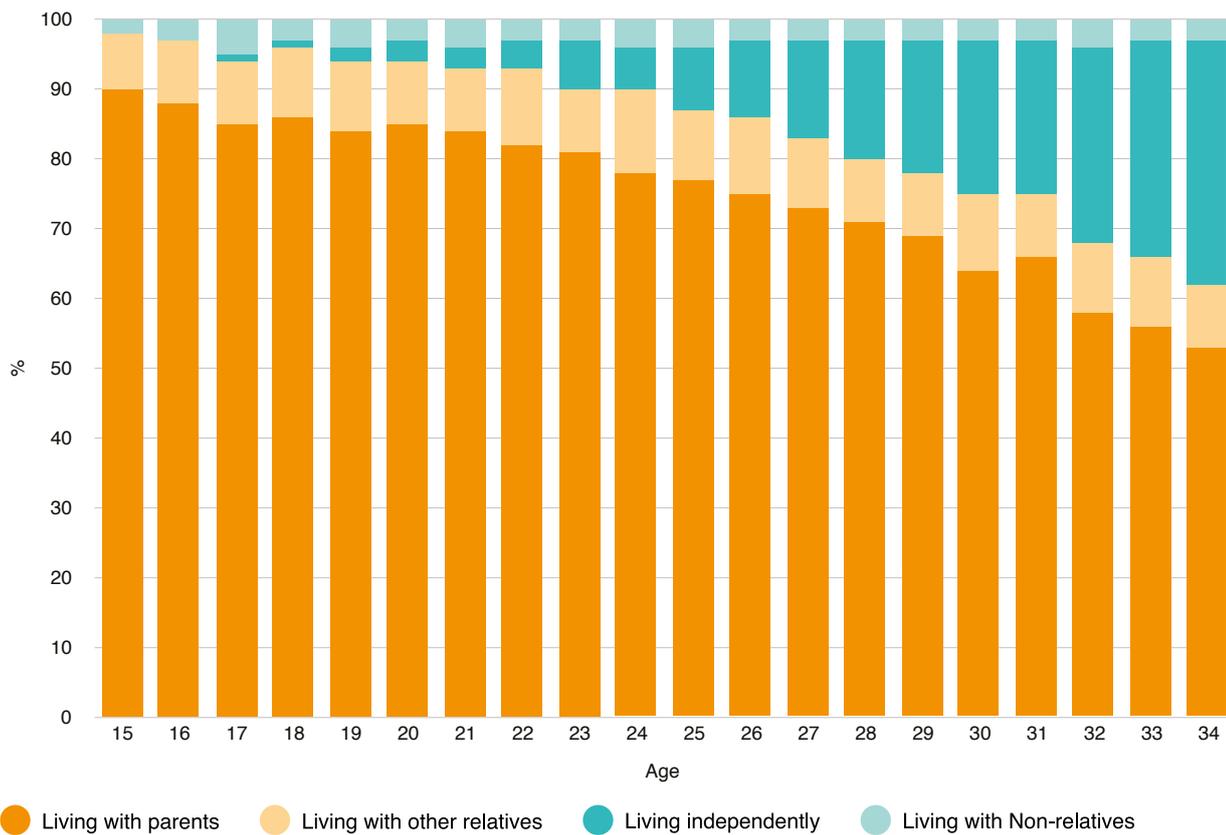


Figure 25f. Atolls, Females

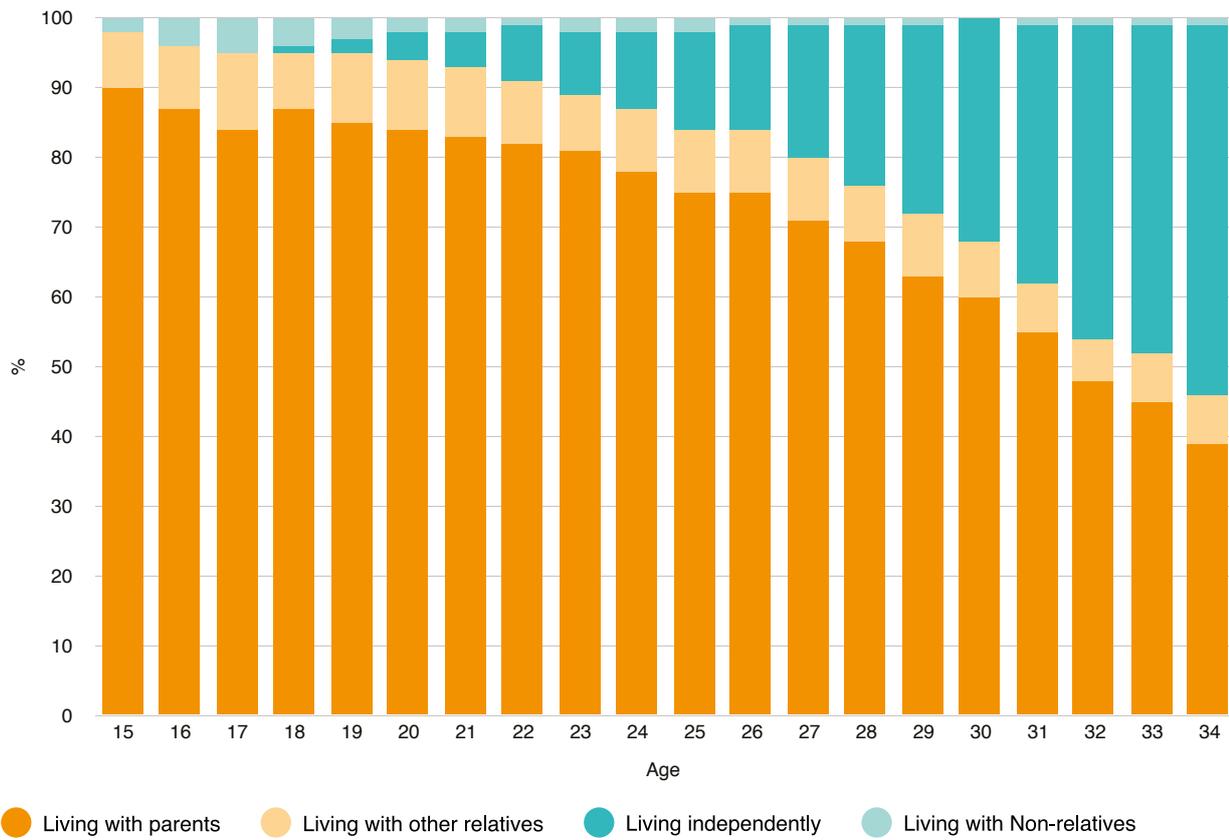


Figure 26. Proportion of household population by head of household, age group, sex and locality, Maldives: 2014

Figure 26a. Republic

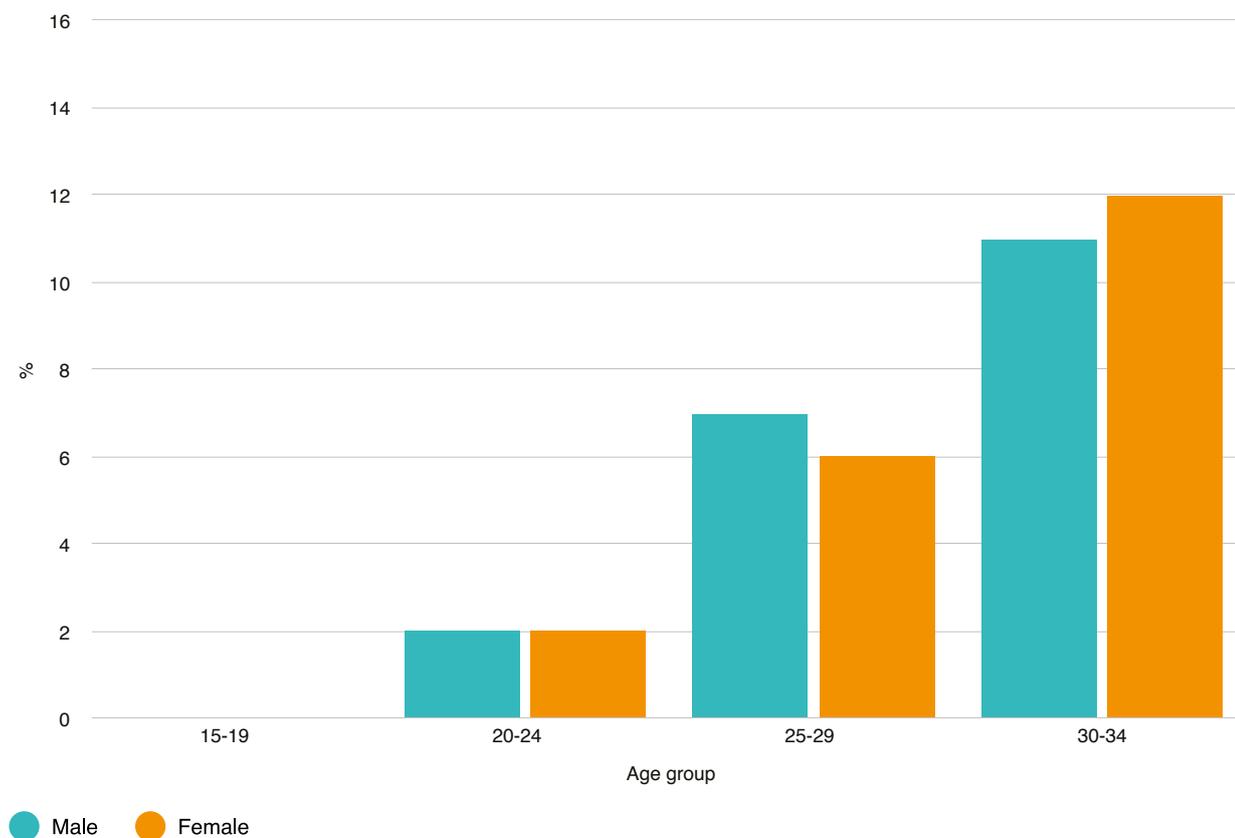


Figure 26b. Malé

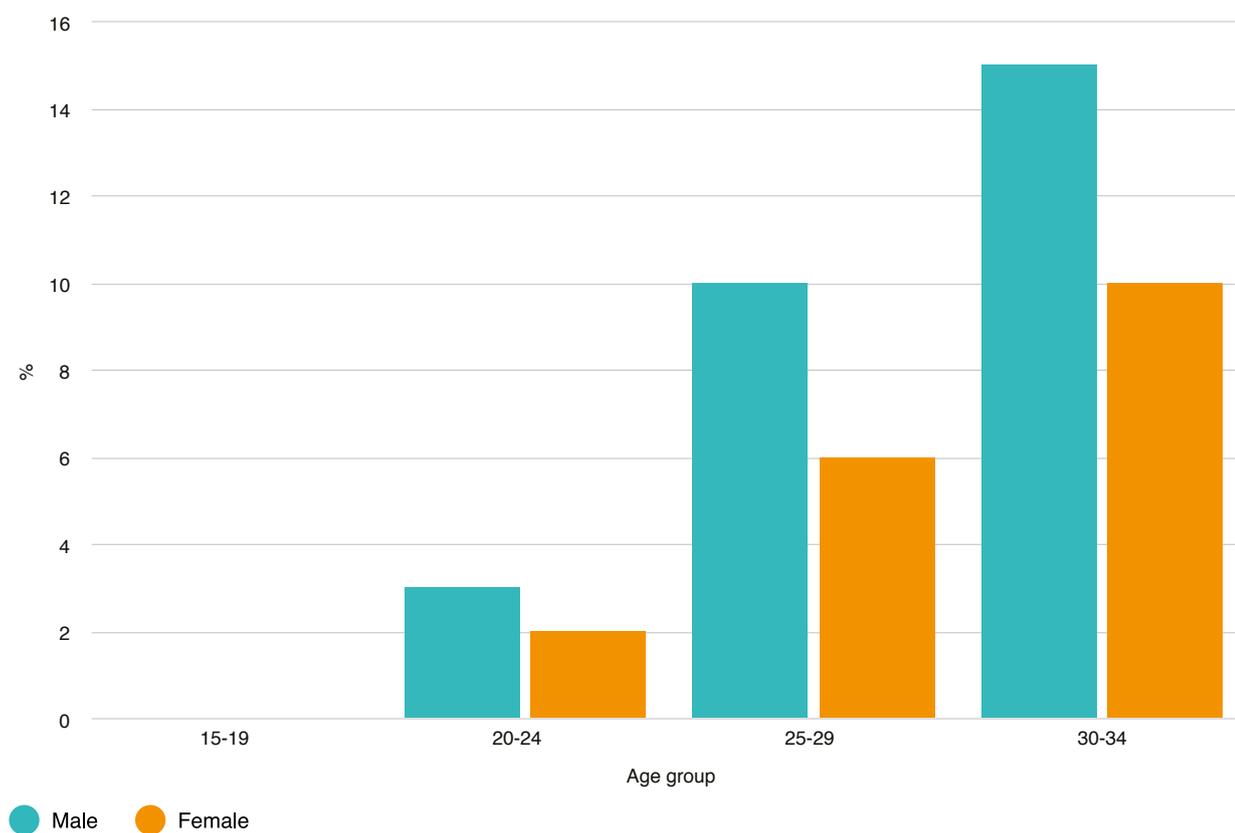


Figure 26c. Atolls

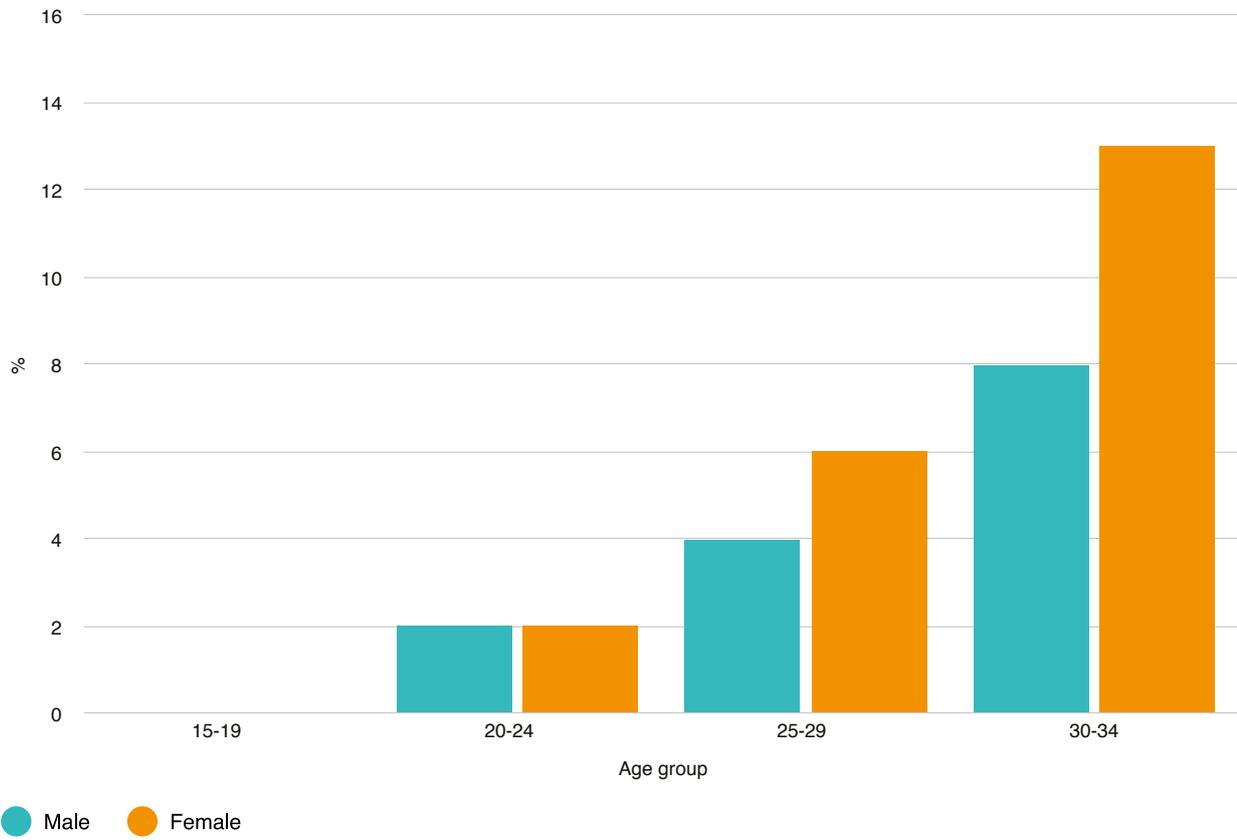


Figure 27. Proportion of heads of households by sex, age group and locality, Maldives: 2014

Figure 27a. Republic

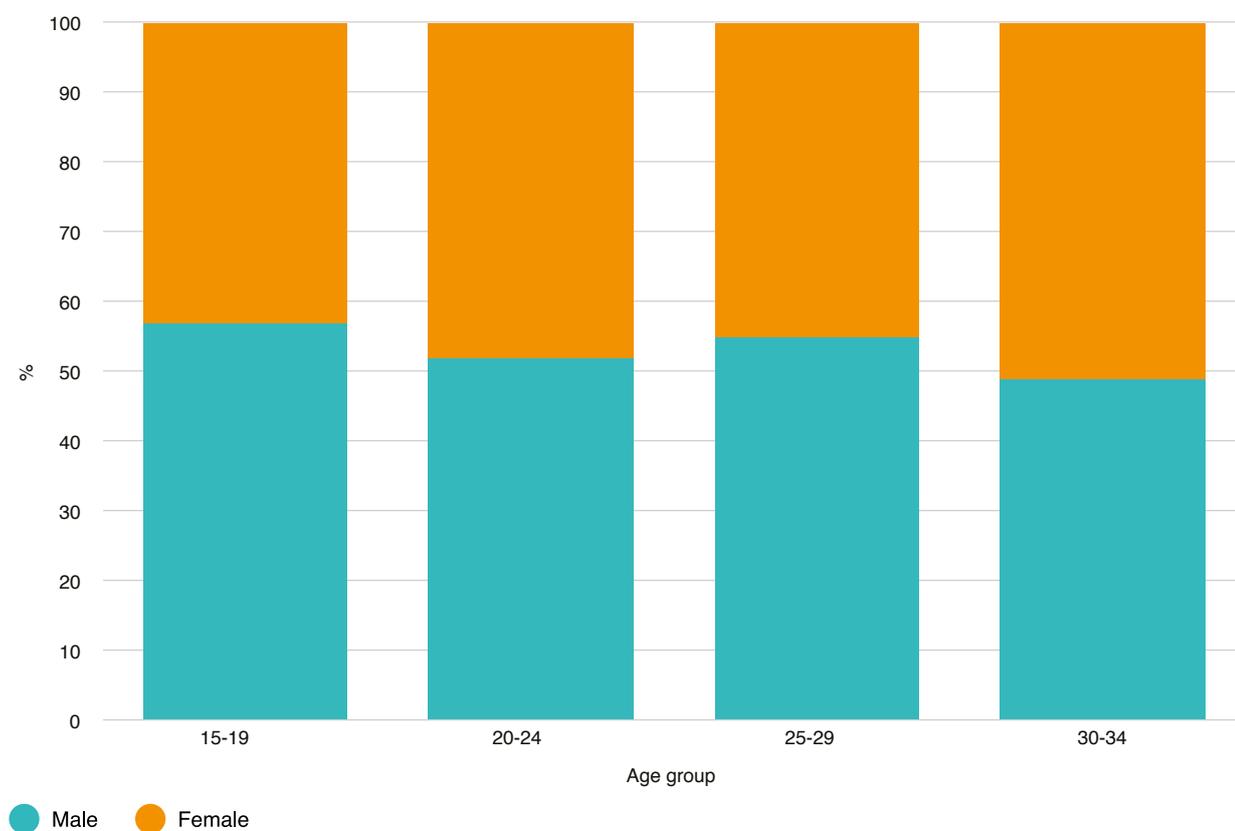


Figure 27b. Malé

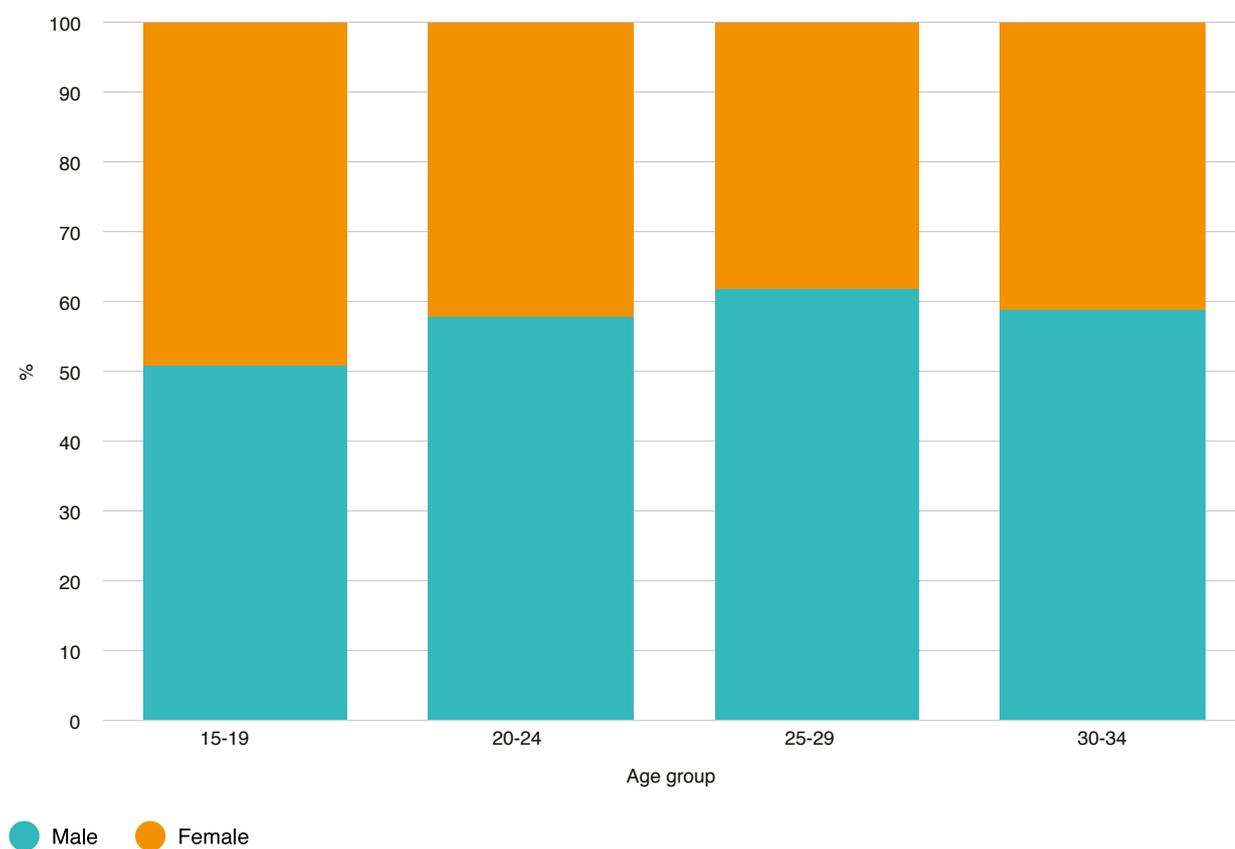
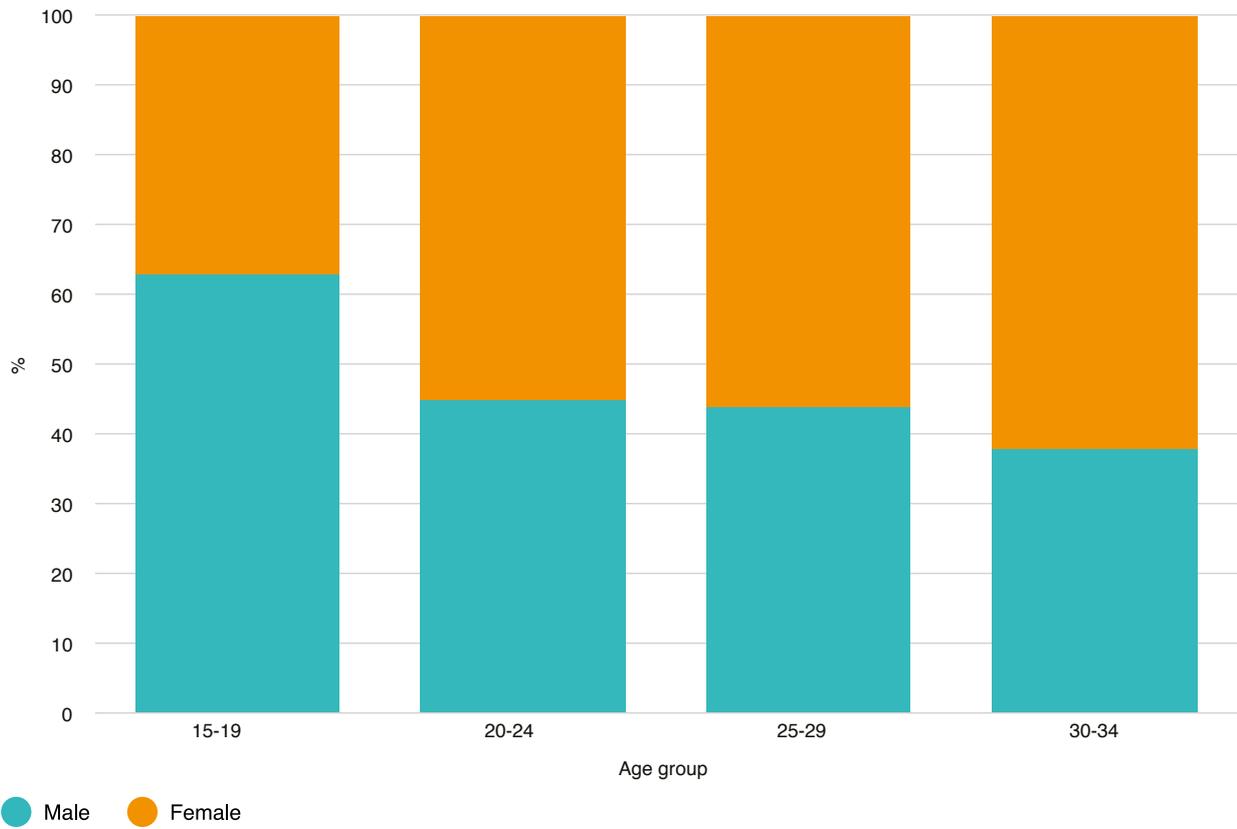


Figure 27c. Atolls





7. Education

7.1. Introduction

The education sector plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable development through capacity building of individuals for the socioeconomic advancement of society. In the Maldives, considering the importance of education, the constitution made education a human right and mandated the Government to provide free education up to grade 10.

Key Indicators on education, literacy, school attendance and education attainment of the population are vital developmental indicators not only to monitor the productivity of the education system, but also to communicate the relationship between educational attainment and the characteristics of manpower supply, demographic changes and other socioeconomic variables.

Educational development in the Maldives is manifest in the rapid rise of student enrolment, which has risen from 42,598 in 1983 to 87,083 in 2014, while the number of educational institutions increased from 265 in 1983 to 455 in 2014. Access to primary and secondary education has been provided across the country, whereas higher secondary and tertiary education are being expanded through government and private sector involvement.

The education component in the 2014 census collected information on: literacy in Dhivehi and in English, individuals' highest educational levels, the population that ever attended schools and other educational institutions along with the highest grade attained, and the current student population with the level and type of education. All persons aged five years and over were asked whether they ever attended any educational institution or were currently studying by any means, while literacy questions were asked for those 10 years and above and the highest certificate achieved for those 15 years and above. The objective was to determine the extent to which the population eligible to participate in education was actually enrolled, and in turn gauge the achievement level of the national goal to ensure universal primary education and equal education opportunity for all citizens.

Key findings

- School attendance rates are close to 100 per cent for both boys and girls up to age 15, but decline rapidly afterwards.
- The rate of school attendance declines with age more quickly for boys than girls, especially in Malé.
- Nearly all young people have had some level of schooling.
- Secondary education attainment is higher for girls than boys, and a significantly higher proportion of males than females of all age groups is without a certificate.
- Literacy rates in both Dhivehi and English are high for youth aged 15 to 24, with close to 100 per cent literate in Dhivehi and over 90 per cent literate in English.
- It is important that young people have the opportunity to be engaged in study or employment so that they spend

their time productively and develop skills and confidence. Without study, work or home duties, these youth may need support and other options to spend their time constructively. The proportion of males and females aged 15 to 34 who are neither in employment nor studying/training is expressed in the NEET rate. It shows a steady, steep increase from ages 15 to 19 when about 27 per cent of males and females are neither employed nor in education or training. For males, from age 19 the NEET rate continuously decreases and stabilizes at 6 per cent for ages 30 and older.

· While the NEET rate is very similar for males and females for ages 15 to 20, it is higher for females 20 years and older; it is 20 per cent for females aged 23 and 13 per cent for females aged 30 and older. The NEET rate is significantly higher for females than males in the atolls.

School attendance rates are close to 100 per cent for both boys and girls up to age 15, but decline rapidly afterwards (figures 28a to 28c), more quickly so for males than for females. By age 18, the school attendance rate is less than half (46 per cent) for males but still 55 per cent for females. Again, the drop in school attendance shows that the rate of attendance declines more quickly for boys than for girls as age increases.

Most young people in the Maldives have been to school. The proportion of 5 to 14 year olds attending school was close to 100 per cent for boys and girls. As figures 28a to 28c show, young people begin to leave school significantly after age 16 and, by age 19, most have left and only 33 per cent of girls and 25 per cent of boys remain.

The data show that much higher proportions of young people aged 19 and older residing in Malé (figure 28b) remain in school, compared to those residing in the atolls (figure 28c). Furthermore, the difference in school attendance between males and females is significantly higher in Malé, where the proportion of females remaining in school after age 18 is much higher than that of males.

The type of schooling attended by Maldivian residents by age and sex is displayed in figures 29a and 29b. It shows that there are much larger proportions of women aged 17 years and older who attend other training institutions, in addition to attending school, than their male counterparts. On the other hand, males are more likely to attend other modes of studies than females.

Figure 28. Current school students by age and sex, Maldives: 2014

Figure 28a. Republic

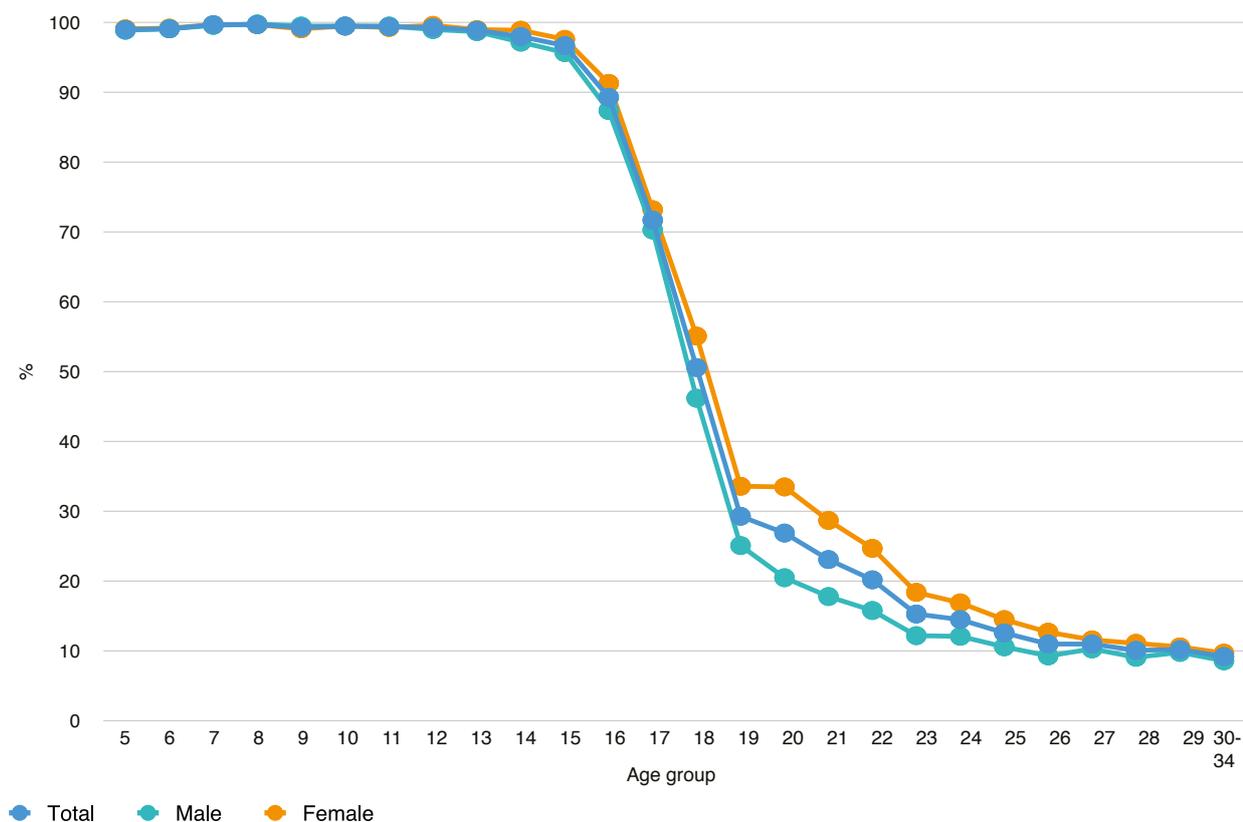


Figure 28b. Malé

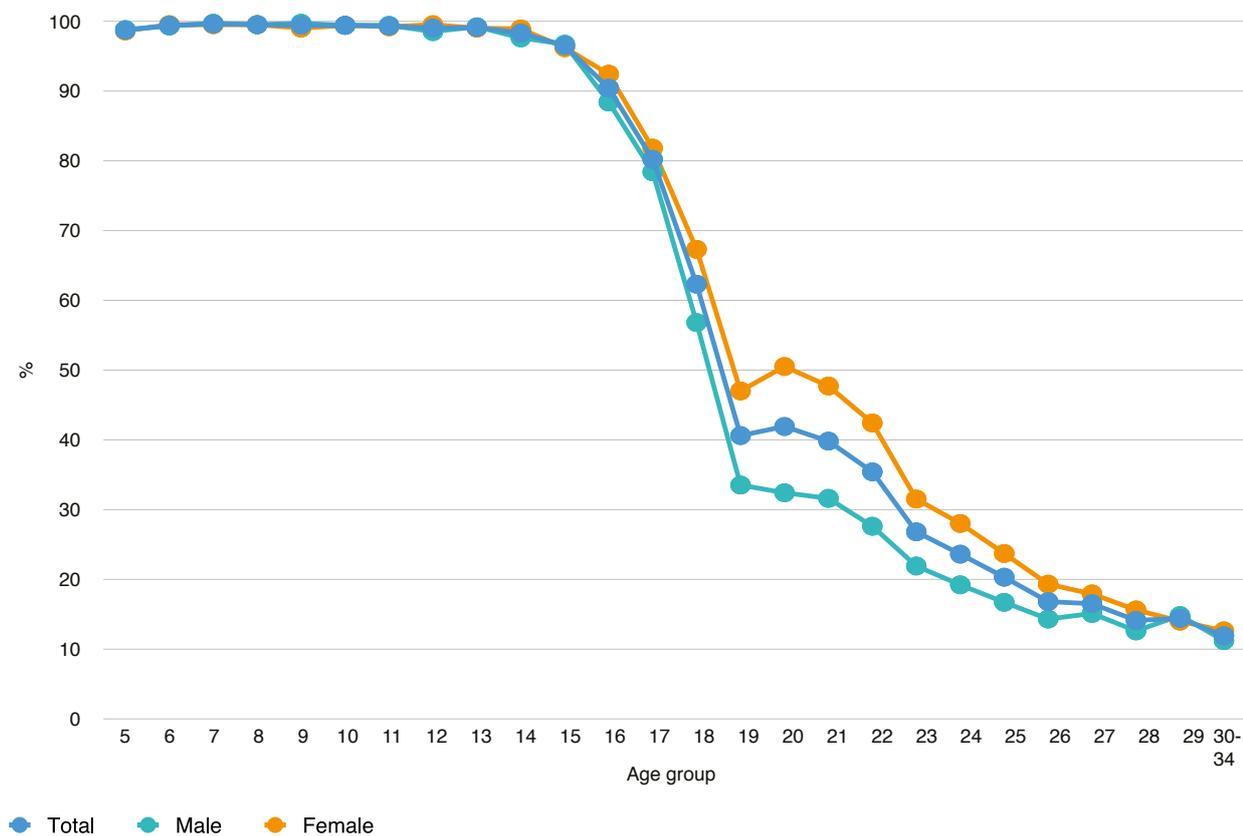


Figure 28c. Atolls

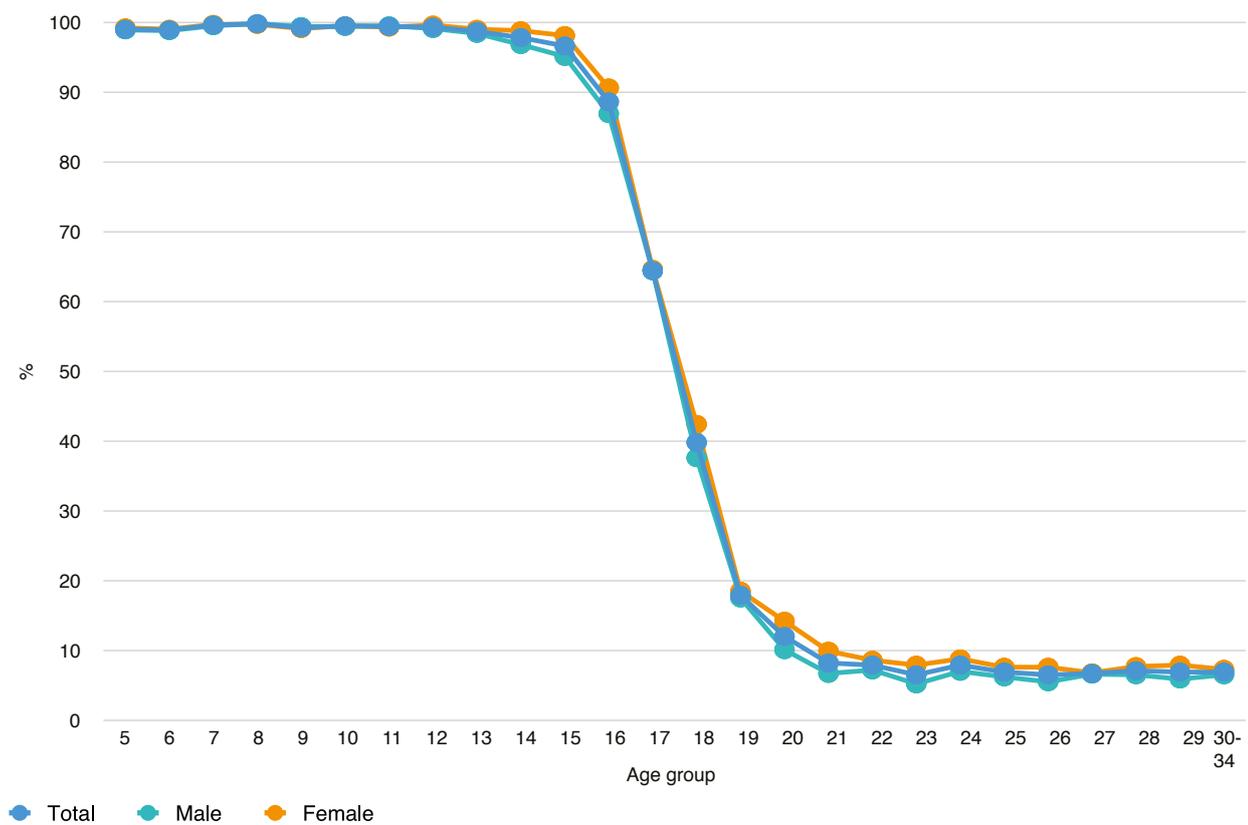


Figure 29. Proportion of Maldivian resident population that is currently studying through any mode of study by type of study undertaken, age and sex, Maldives: 2014

Figure 29a. Males

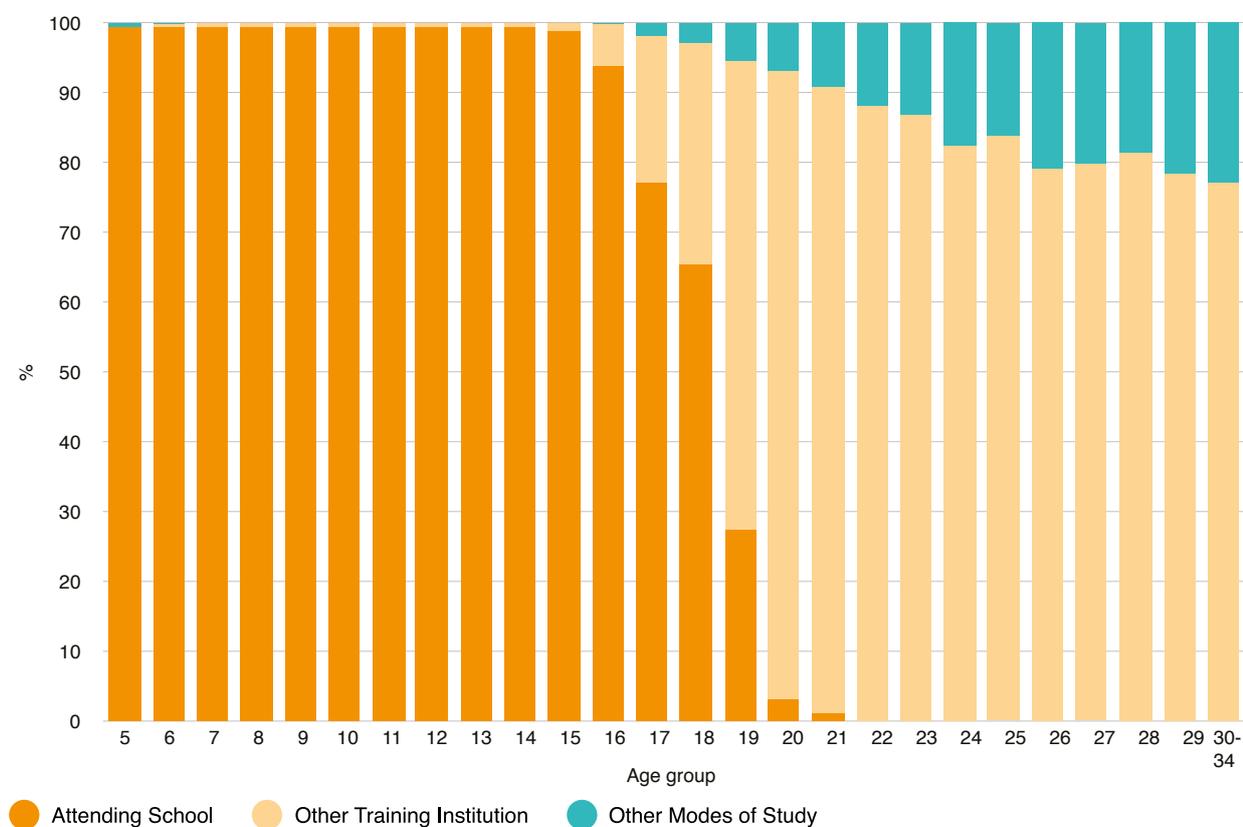
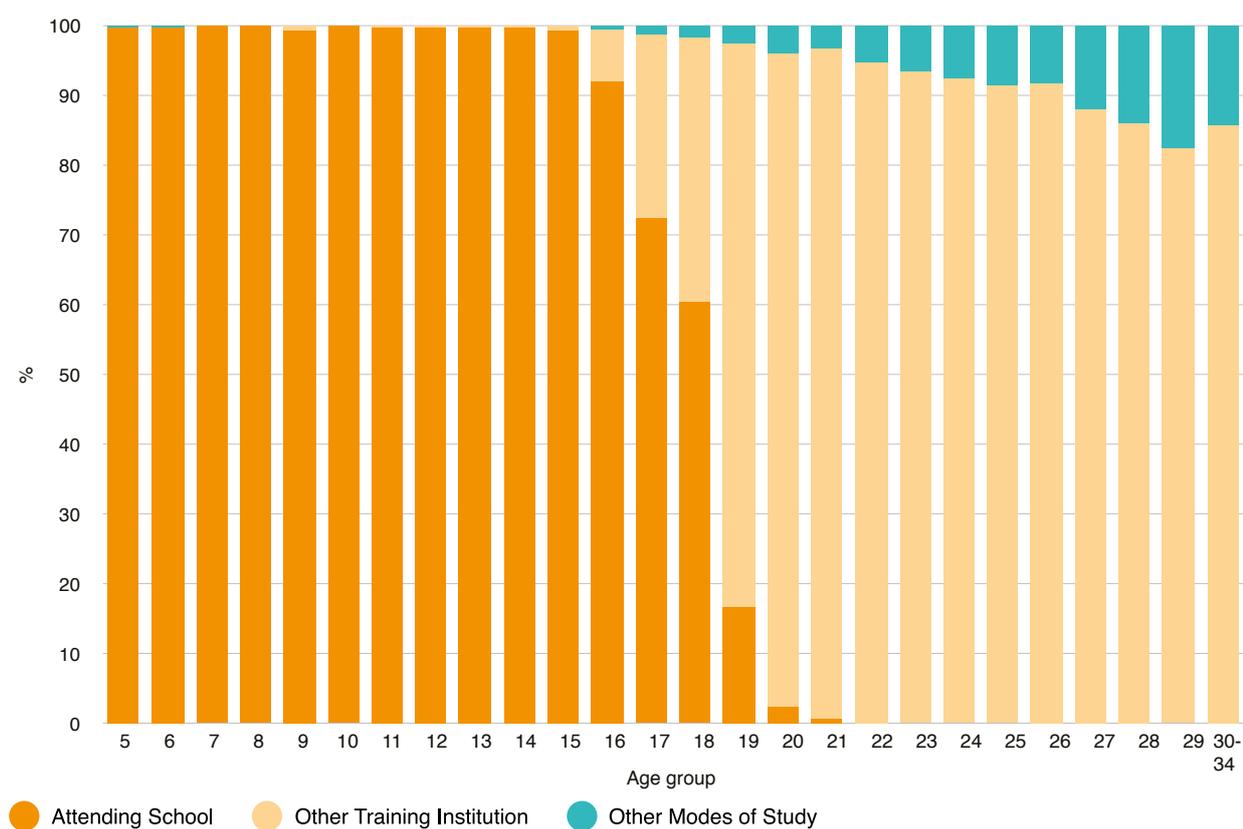


Figure 29b. Females



7.2. Literacy

The Government has made education a key area for social investment in the Maldives national development context. It recognizes that literacy paves the way for the overall development of individuals by empowering them to understand their social, political and cultural environment better and respond to it accordingly.

In the 2014 census, literacy in the mother tongue, Dhivehi, was determined by a person's ability to read and write with understanding. The literacy rate of the Maldivian resident population, which was 70.7 per cent in 1977, increased to 98 per cent in 2014.

A person is considered literate if she or he can read and write in at least one language.

The literacy rates of Maldivians in Dhivehi are high for both males and females, with close to 100 per cent literacy. The literacy rate of the foreign resident population in their own mother tongues is lower, with only 84 per cent literacy. While there is not a significant difference in literacy rates between males and females in general, it is interesting to note that there is a higher proportion of literate males than females among foreign residents in Malé, and higher literacy rates among foreign females than among foreign males in the atolls (figures 30a to 30f).

The Maldivian resident population's literacy rates in English is found predominantly among young people aged 10 to 29, although not to the same degree as their literacy rates in Dhivehi. Literacy rates in English of young people living in Malé are close to 100 per cent. The general pattern, however, is that literacy in English is higher in Malé than in the atolls. English literacy rates decline rapidly for those 35 and older, and are higher among males than females.

The pattern and levels of literacy rates in English of the foreign resident population are very different compared to the Maldivian resident population. While literacy rates in English for foreign males is lower than Maldivian males, the literacy rates of foreign females are about the same as that of Maldivian females. The very high literacy rates in English among the foreign resident population aged 10 to 14 can be explained by their small numbers (figures 31a to 31f).

Important to know:

The census relies on self-assessment and does not actually test a person's ability to read and write.

Persons are asked if they can read and write a simple sentence in any language(s). A person is considered literate if they can read and write in at least one language.

Figure 30. Literacy in Dhivehi of the resident population by age, sex, locality and nationality, Maldives: 2014

Figure 30a. Maldivian, Republic

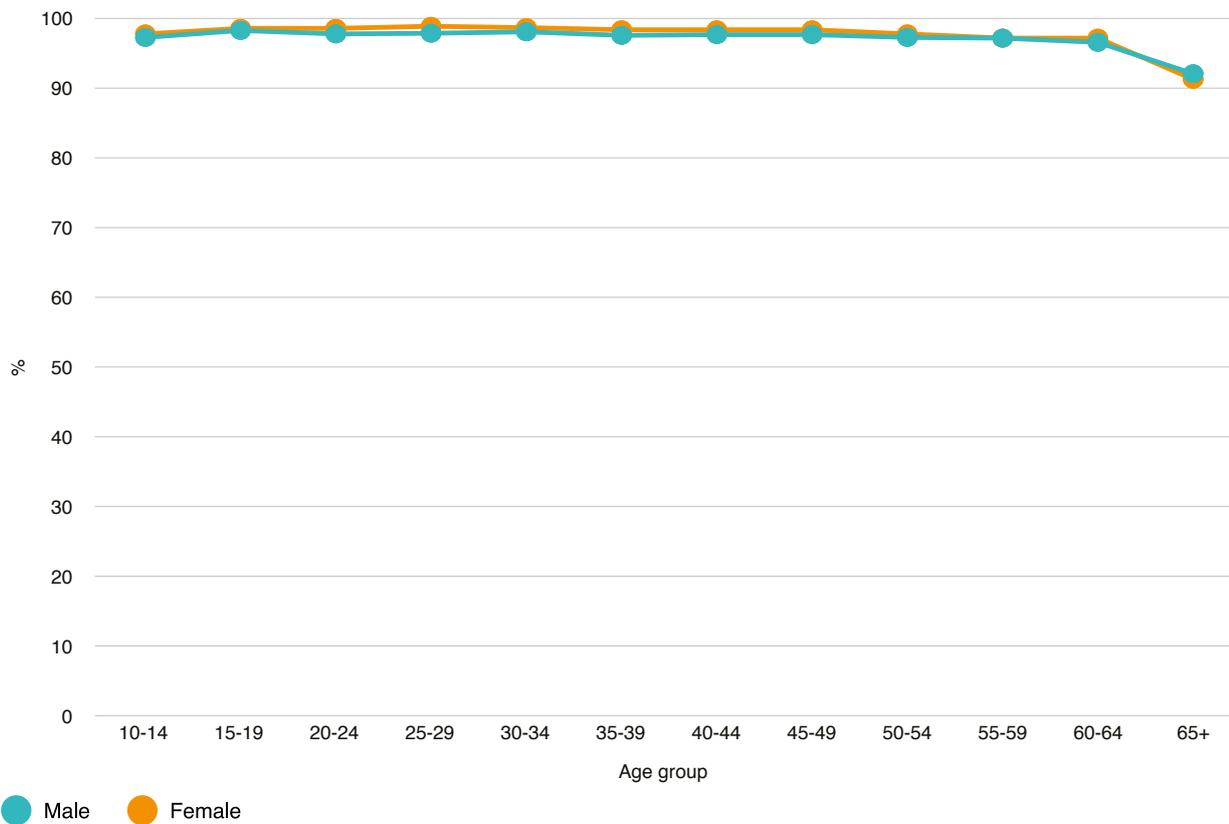


Figure 30b. Foreign, Republic

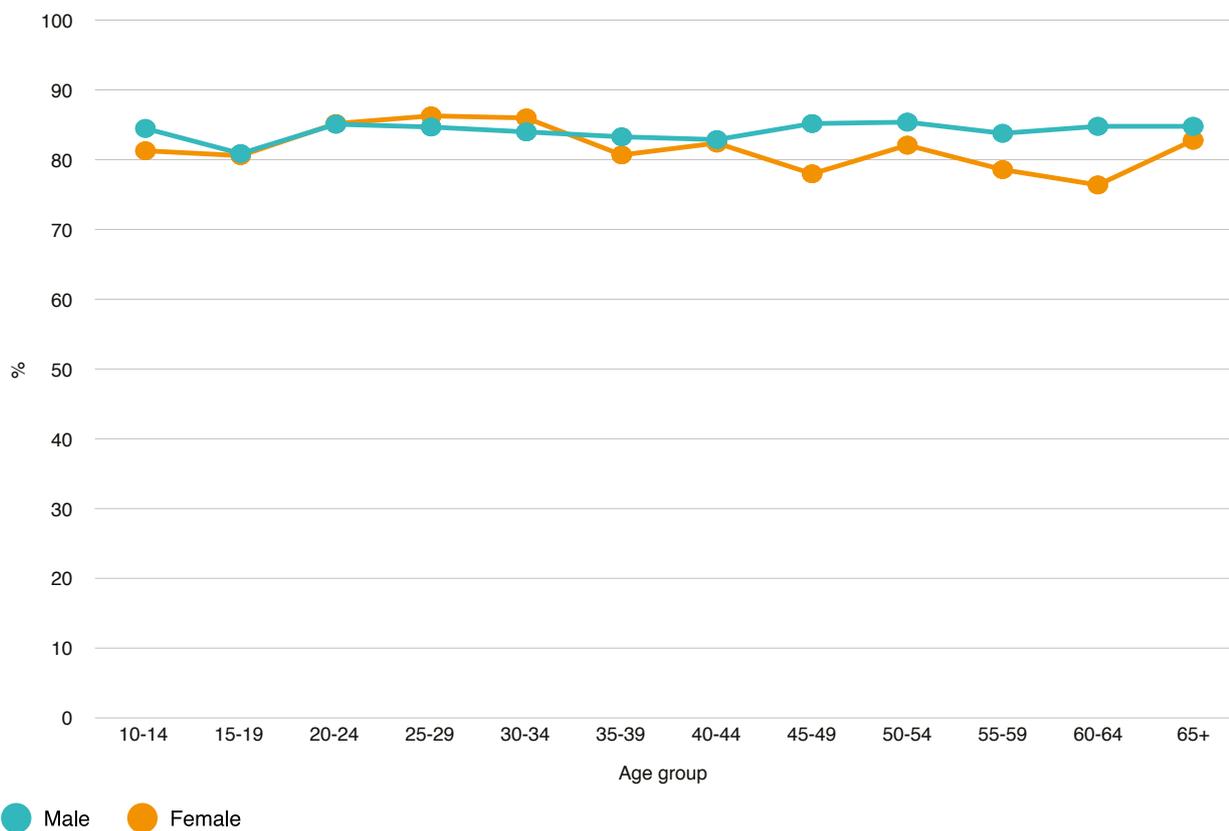


Figure 30c. Maldivian, Malé

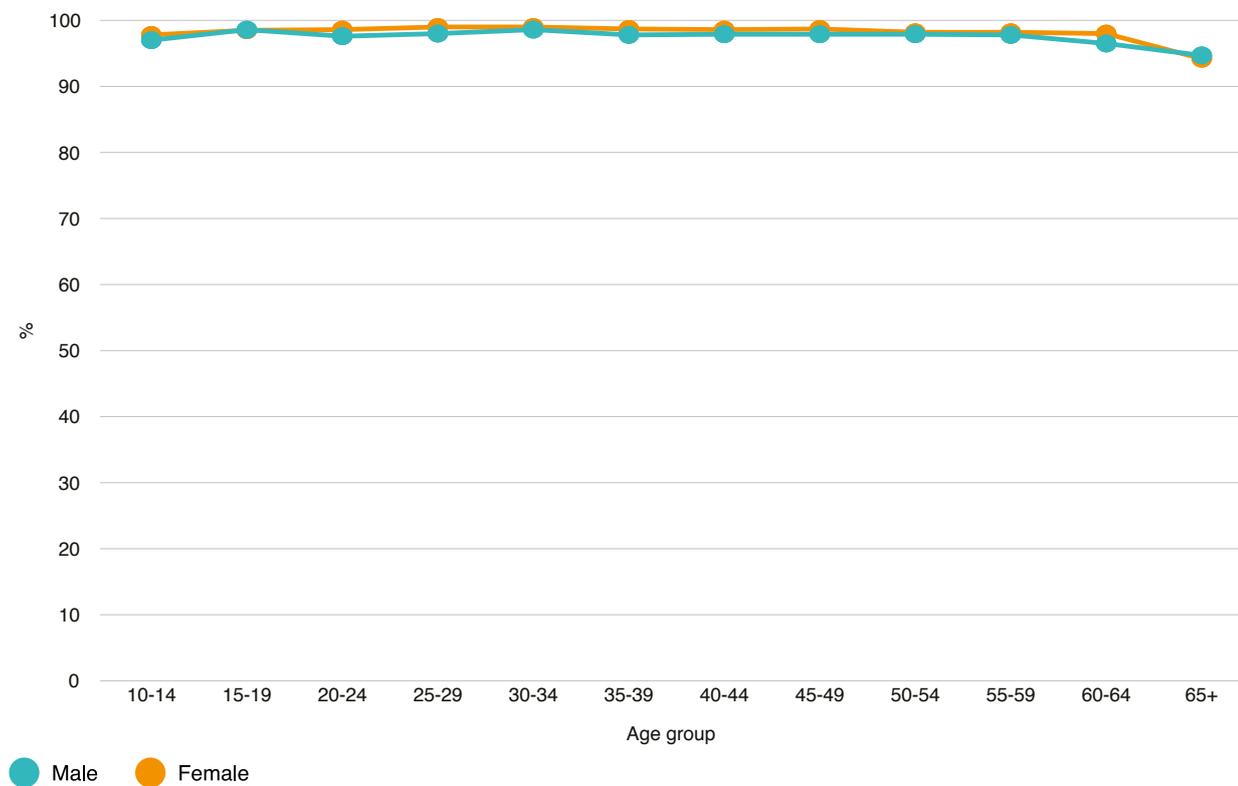


Figure 30d. Foreign, Malé

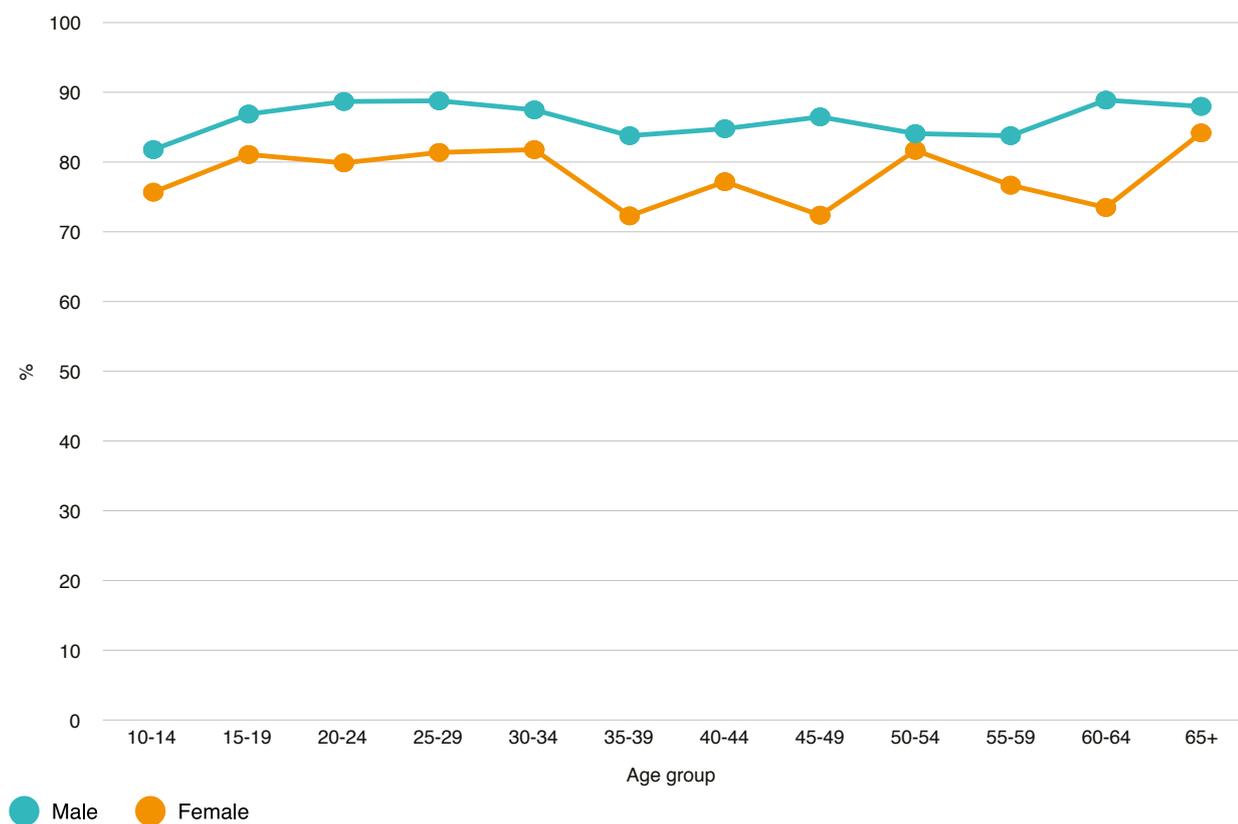


Figure 30e. Maldivian, Atolls

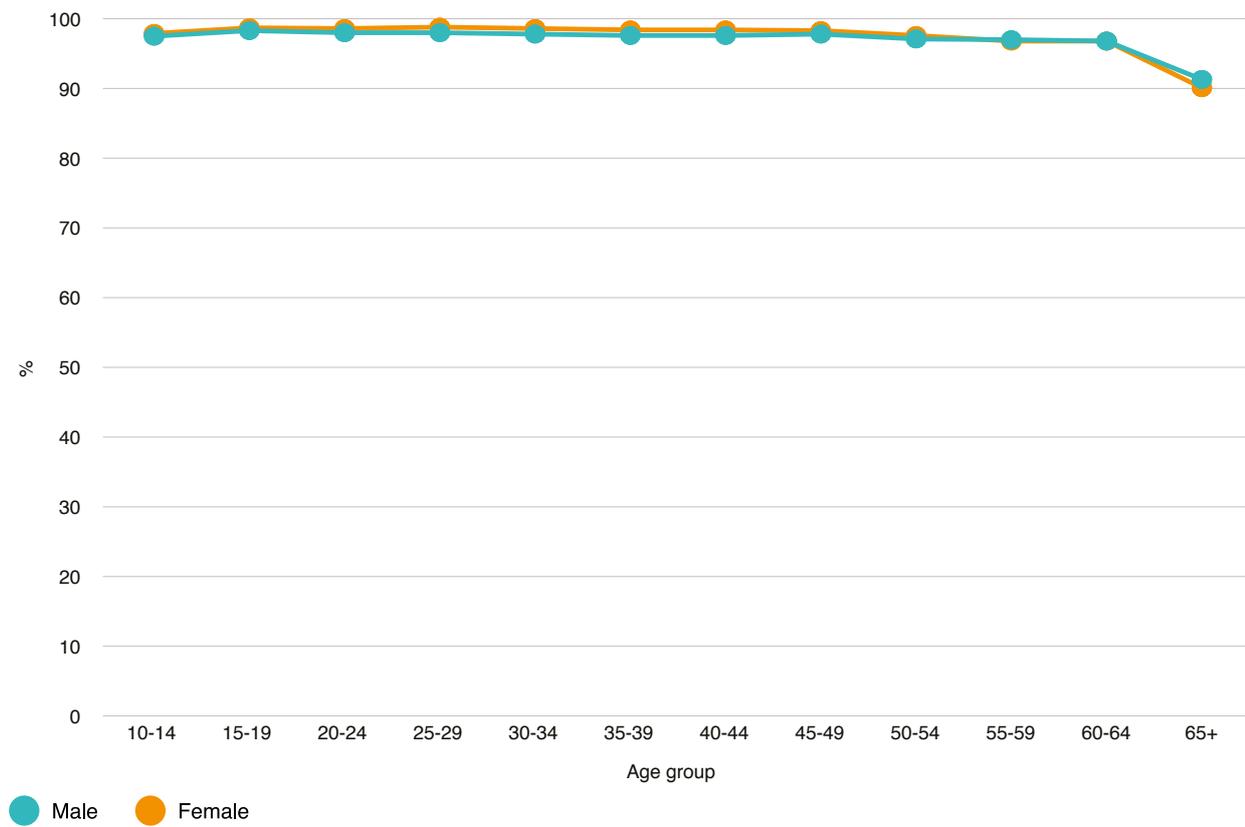


Figure 30f. Foreign, Atolls

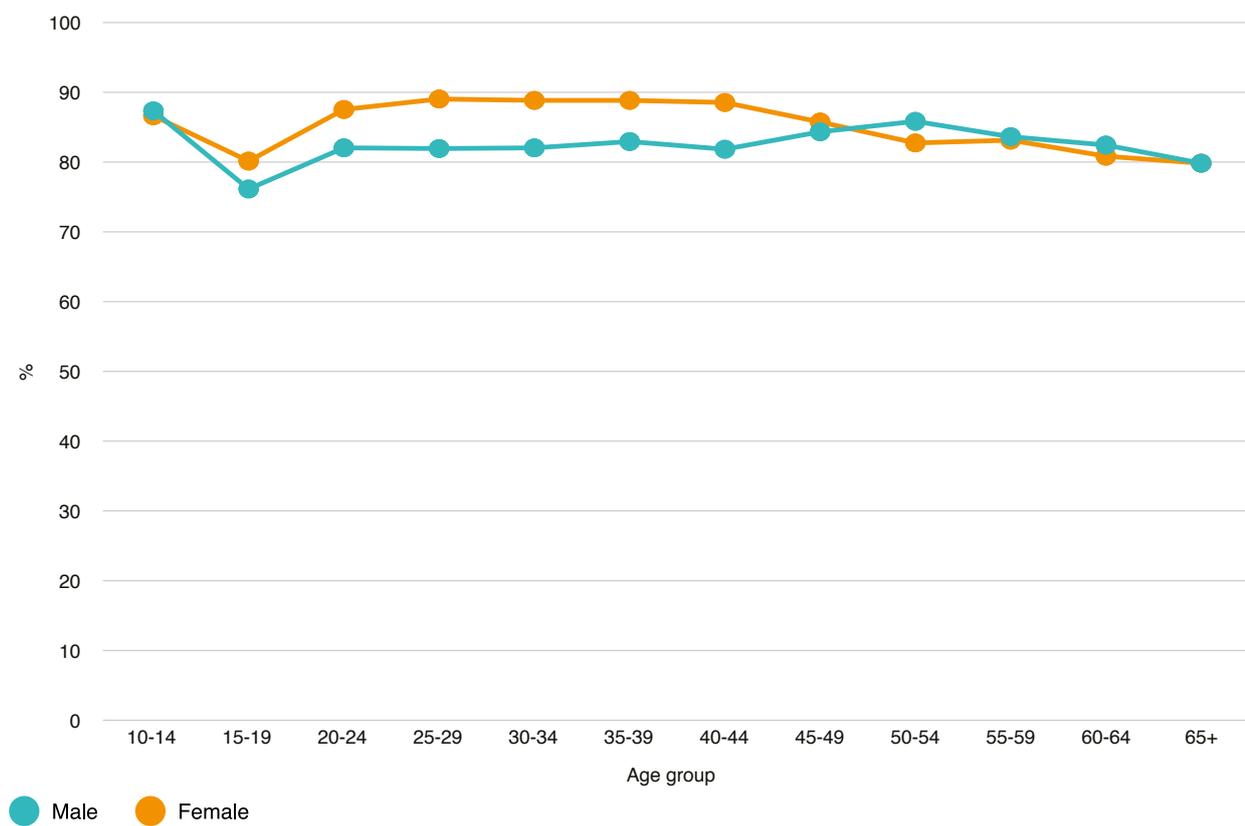


Figure 31. Literacy in English of the resident population by age, sex, locality and nationality, Maldives: 2014

Figure 31a. Maldivian, Republic

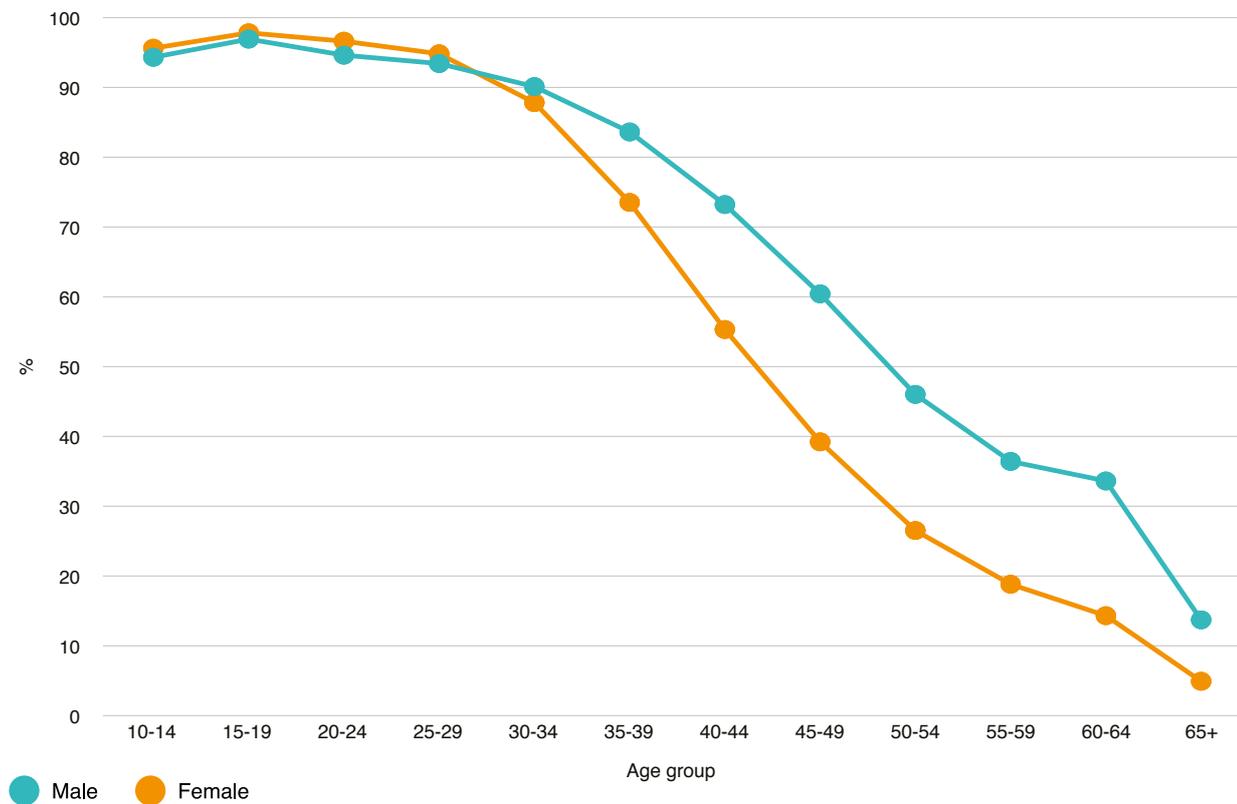


Figure 31b. Foreign, Republic

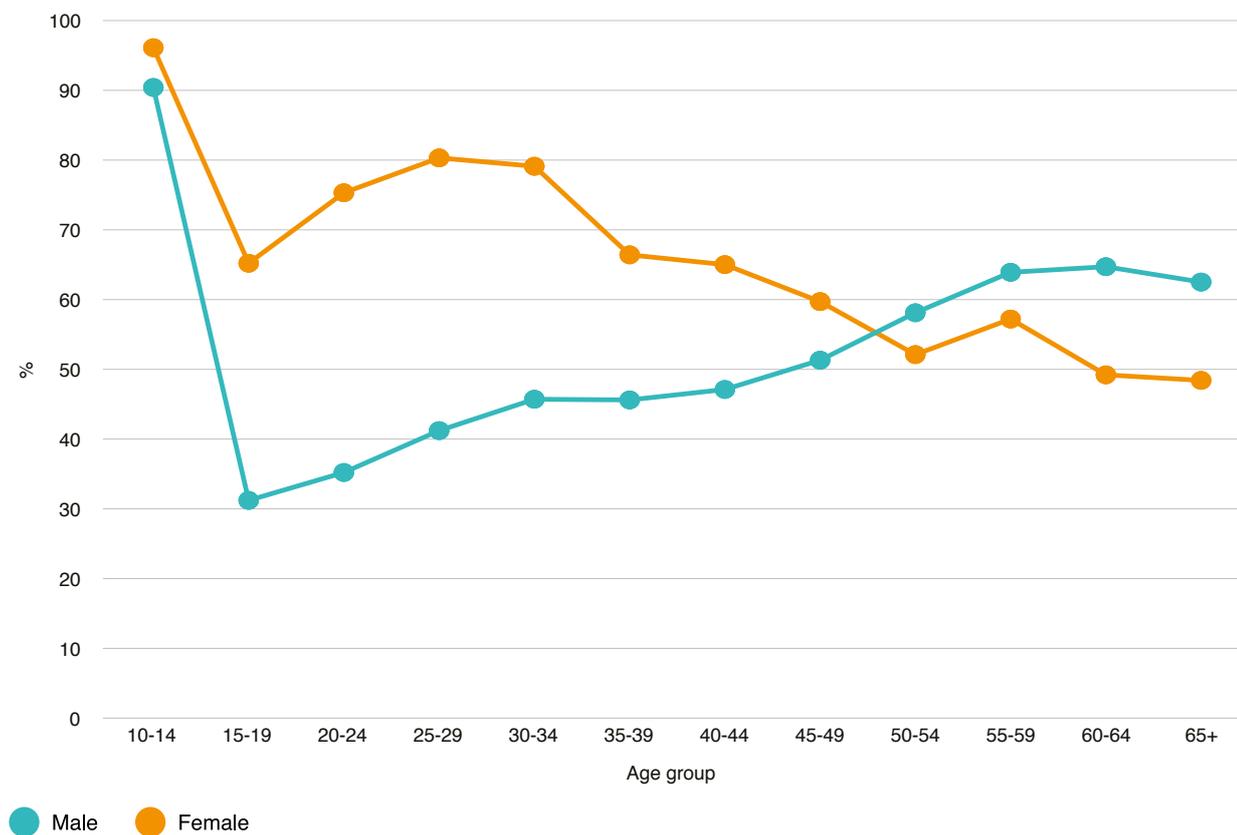


Figure 31c. Maldivian, Malé

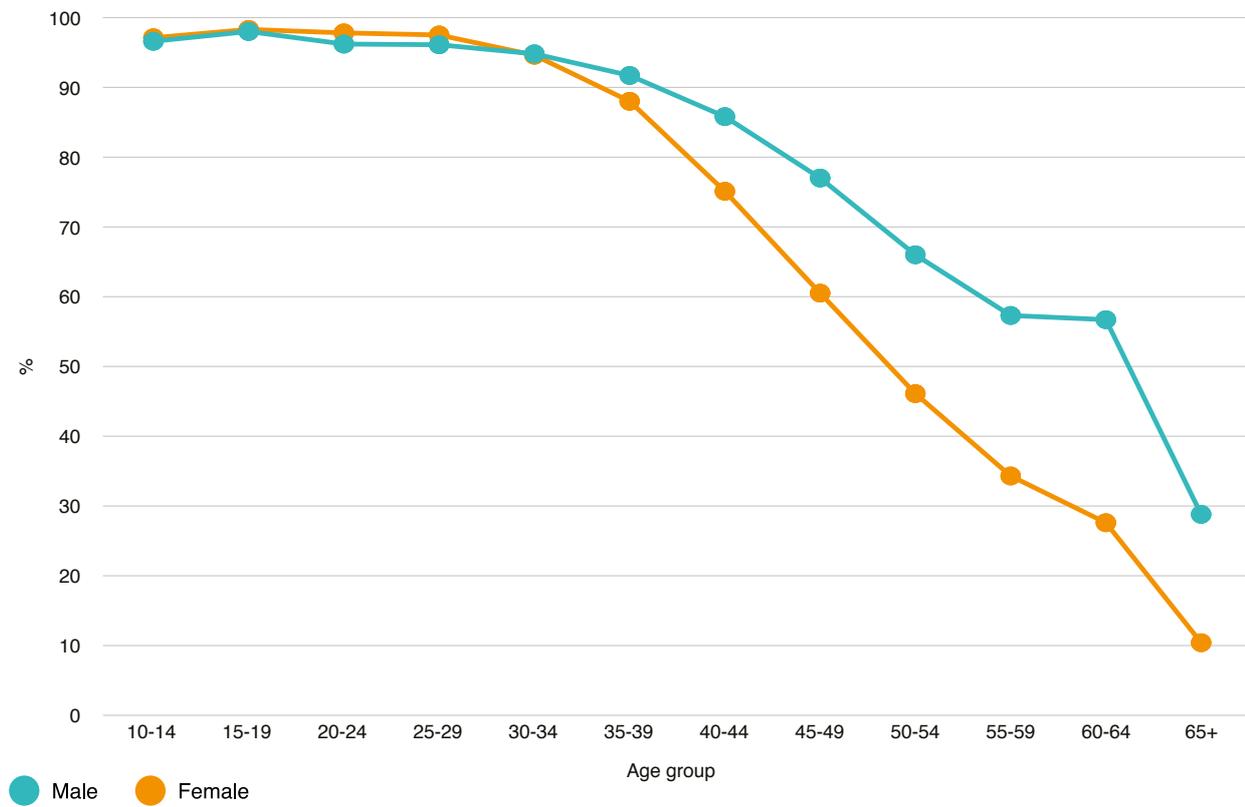


Figure 31d. Foreign, Malé



Figure 31e. Maldivian, Atolls

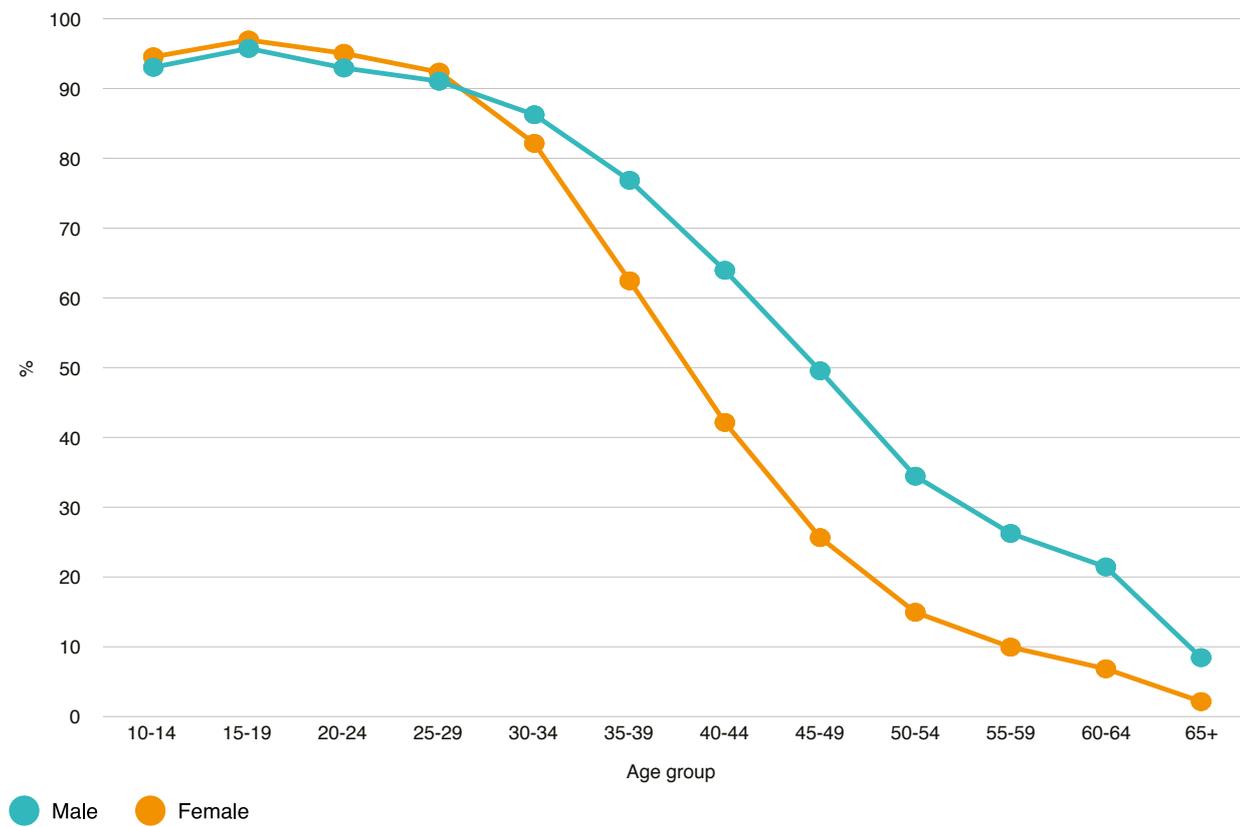
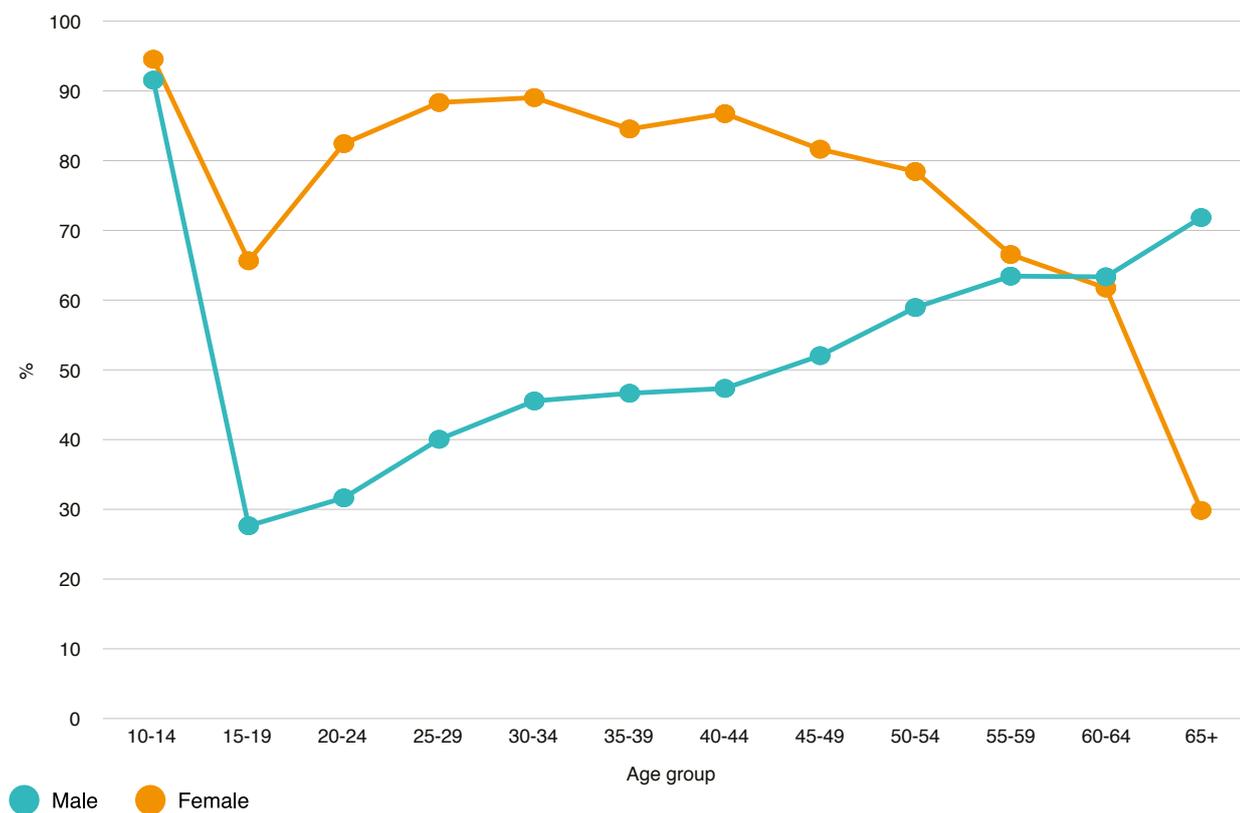


Figure 31f. Foreign, Atolls



7.3. Educational attainment

Data on the highest educational attainment levels of the resident Maldivian population who has ever attended an educational institution by age and sex is shown in figures 32a to 32c.

A significantly higher proportion of males than females of all age groups are without a certificate. At ages 25 to 34, 29 per cent of males and 24 per cent of females are without certificate. At the same time, higher proportions of females 19 and older possess an academic/vocational certificate/diploma than males of the same age.

Furthermore, these data confirm that young people in Malé are much better educated than their counterparts living in the atolls. While only 17 per cent of males and 12 per cent of females aged 25 to 34 in Malé do not hold a certificate, in the atolls those figures rise to 38 per cent for males and 33 per cent for females of the same age.

That the highest proportion of people without a certificate falls in the 15 to 18 age group is explained by the fact that many of them are still in school and many will receive a certificate once they complete their schooling. However, it is interesting to note that there is a much smaller proportion of 19 to 24 year olds without a certificate than those aged 25 to 29. This seems to point to the fact that higher proportions of those aged 19 to 24 remain in educational institutions in order to obtain certificates than those aged 25 to 34.

Overall, only 320 people obtained a first degree/MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery), 143 a master’s degree, and 20 a doctorate degree. In all these groups, most were 35 years and older.

Figure 32. Proportion of Maldivian resident population (by highest educational attainment) of those who attended school or a training institution by age, sex and locality, Maldives: 2014

Figure 32a. Republic

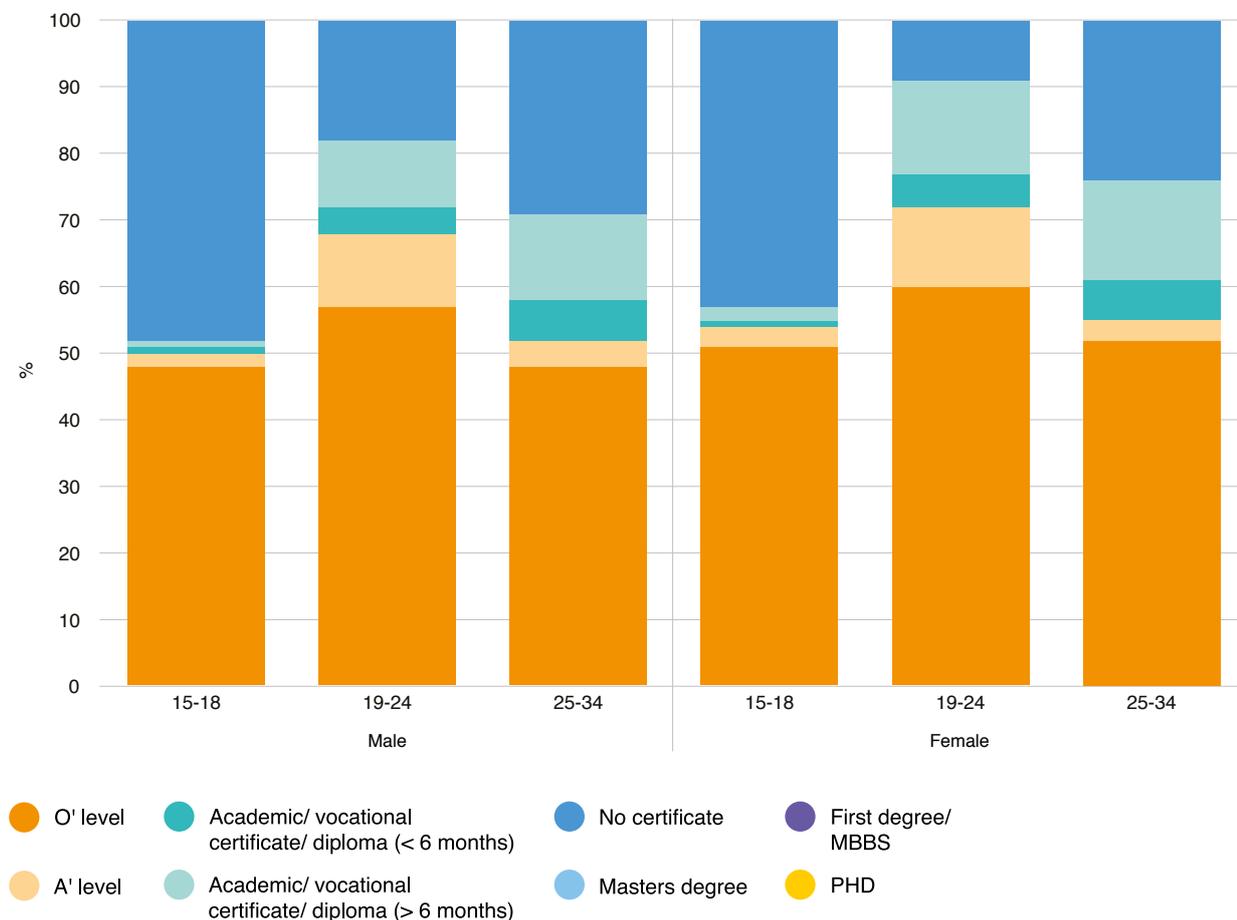


Figure 32b. Malé

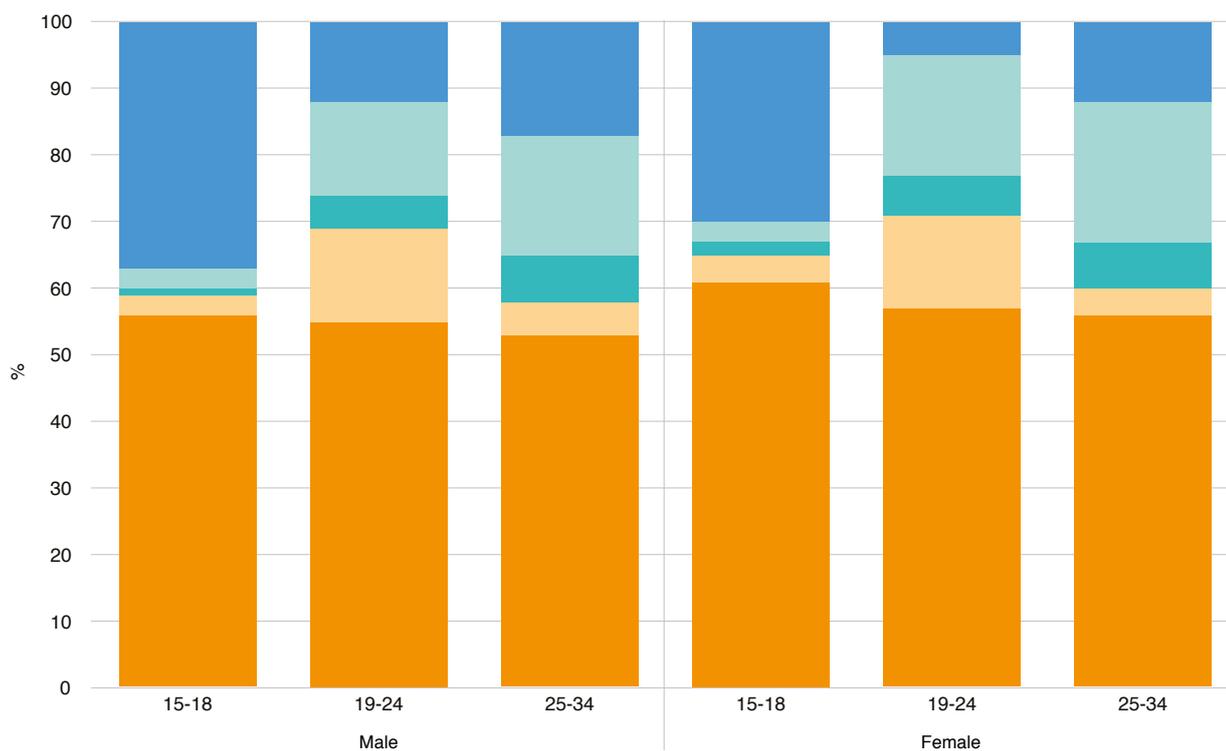
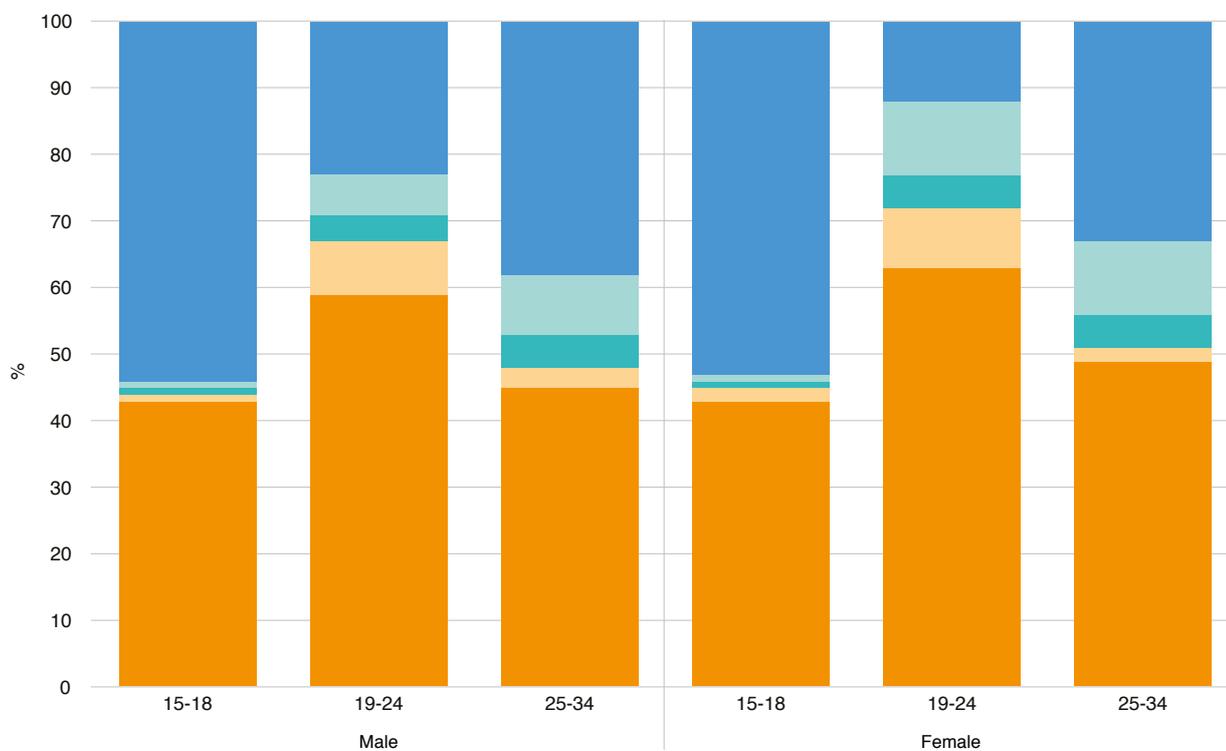


Figure 32c. Atolls



- O' level
- Academic/ vocational certificate/ diploma (< 6 months)
- No certificate
- First degree/ MBBS
- A' level
- Academic/ vocational certificate/ diploma (> 6 months)
- Masters degree
- PHD

7.4. Youth who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)

The share of a society's youth who are neither in employment nor in education or training (known as the NEET rate) is a relatively new indicator, but one that international organizations and the media are giving increasing importance. The popularity of the NEET concept is associated with its assumed potential to address a broad array of vulnerabilities among youth, touching on issues of unemployment, early school leaving and labour market discouragement. These issues warrant greater attention as young people continue to live in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis, particularly in advanced economies.

From a little known indicator aimed at focusing attention on the issue of school drop-out among teenagers in the early 2000s, NEET has gained enough weight to be proposed as the sole youth-specific target for Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) 8 to “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”. Within the Goal, youth are identified in two proposed targets: (a) By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value; and (b) By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.¹⁰

It is important that young people have the opportunity to engage in study or employment so they can spend their time productively and develop their skills and confidence. Without study, work or home duties, these youths may need support and other options through which they can spend their time constructively.

The 2014 Maldives census questionnaire sought information on respondents' employment status and current pursuit, or not, of study, which includes attending school or training institutions, home schooling and learning online. It is therefore possible to filter the census dataset for people who are neither employed nor studying in any form.

The proportion of males and females aged 15 to 34 who are neither in employment nor studying/training (NEET rate) is shown in figures 33a to 33c.

The NEET rate pattern of young people is similar in different localities of the Maldives, and shows a steady and steep increase from age 15 to age 19 when about 27 per cent of males and females are neither employed nor

in education or training. For males, from age 19, the NEET rate continuously decreases and stabilizes at 6 per cent for ages 30 years and older.

For females, two different NEET rates have been calculated. One includes women who are engaged with household chores and/or are caring for children; the other does not include women engaged in these activities. The reason for this approach is that many women who are not employed and not studying are involved with household chores and childcare, which are deemed essential activities in the fabric of society. In the case of the Maldives, census data show that these tasks are almost exclusively undertaken by women; including these women in the NEET rate calculation would inflate the female NEET rate to unrealistic levels, as shown by the light green line with black dots. The dark green line with white dots shows women who are not employed, not studying and not involved with household chores and childcare, making it possible to compare their numbers with the NEET rate of males (yellow line with square dots). While the NEET rate is very similar for males and females for ages 15 to 20, it is higher for females from 20 years and older: 20 per cent for females aged 23 and 13 per cent for females aged 30 years and older. The NEET rate is significantly higher for females than males in the atolls.

10. “What does NEETs mean and why is the concept so easily misinterpreted?”, Technical Brief No. 1, International Labour Organization, Sara Elder, January 2015.

Figure 33. NEET rate by age, sex and locality, Maldives: 2014

Figure 33a. Republic

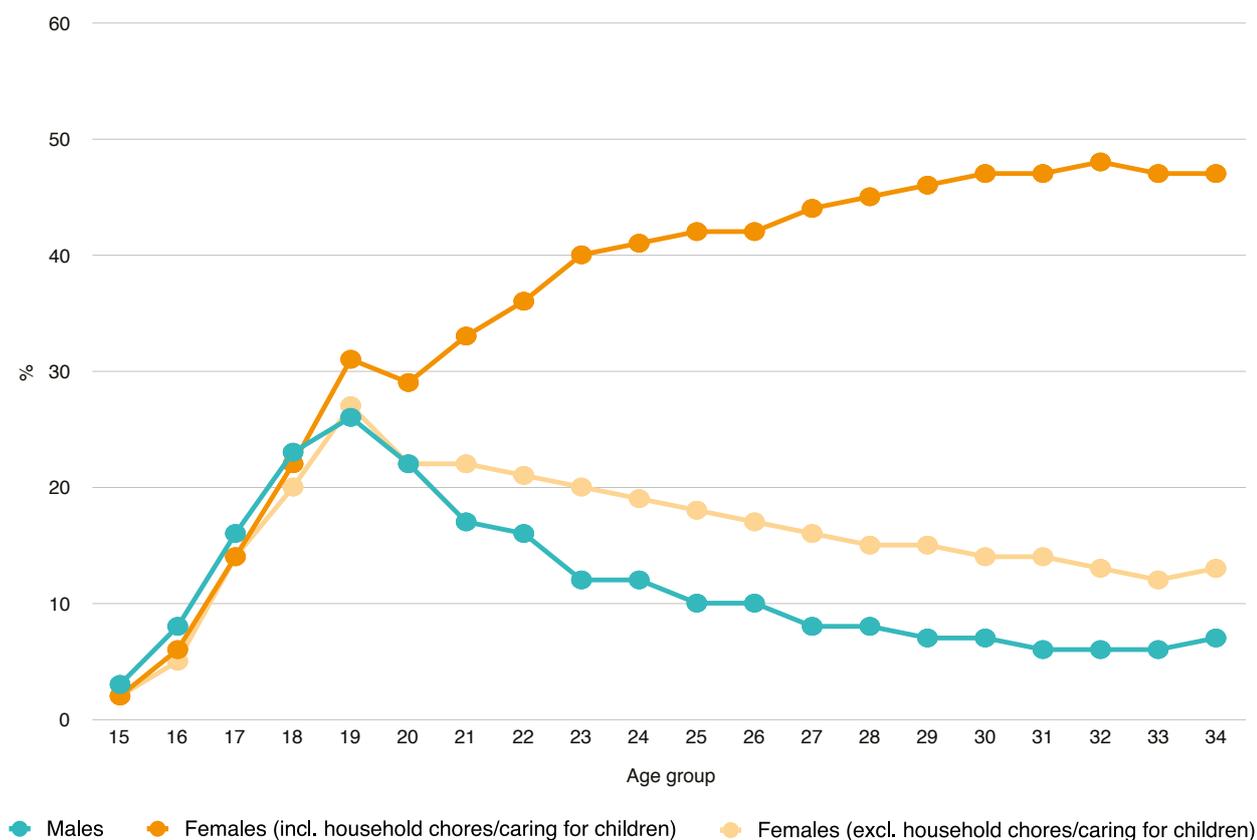


Figure 33b. Malé

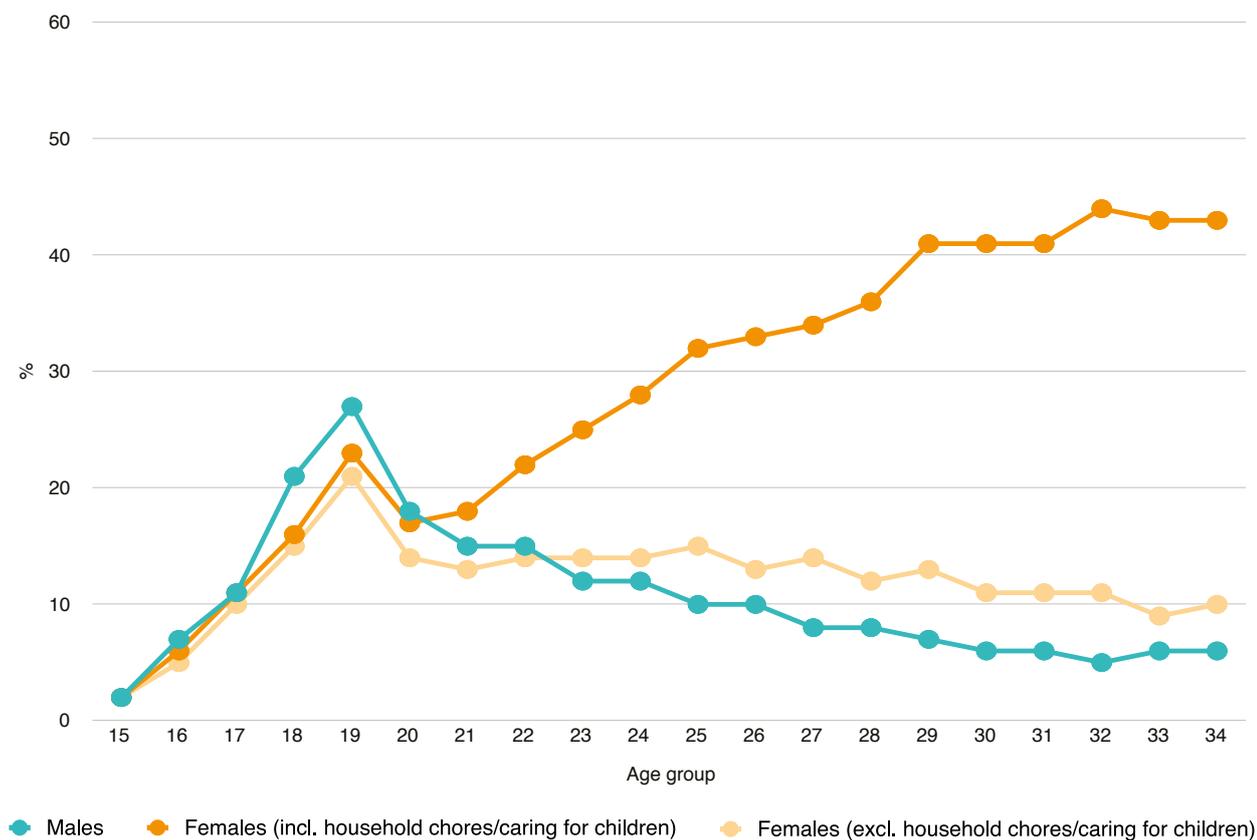
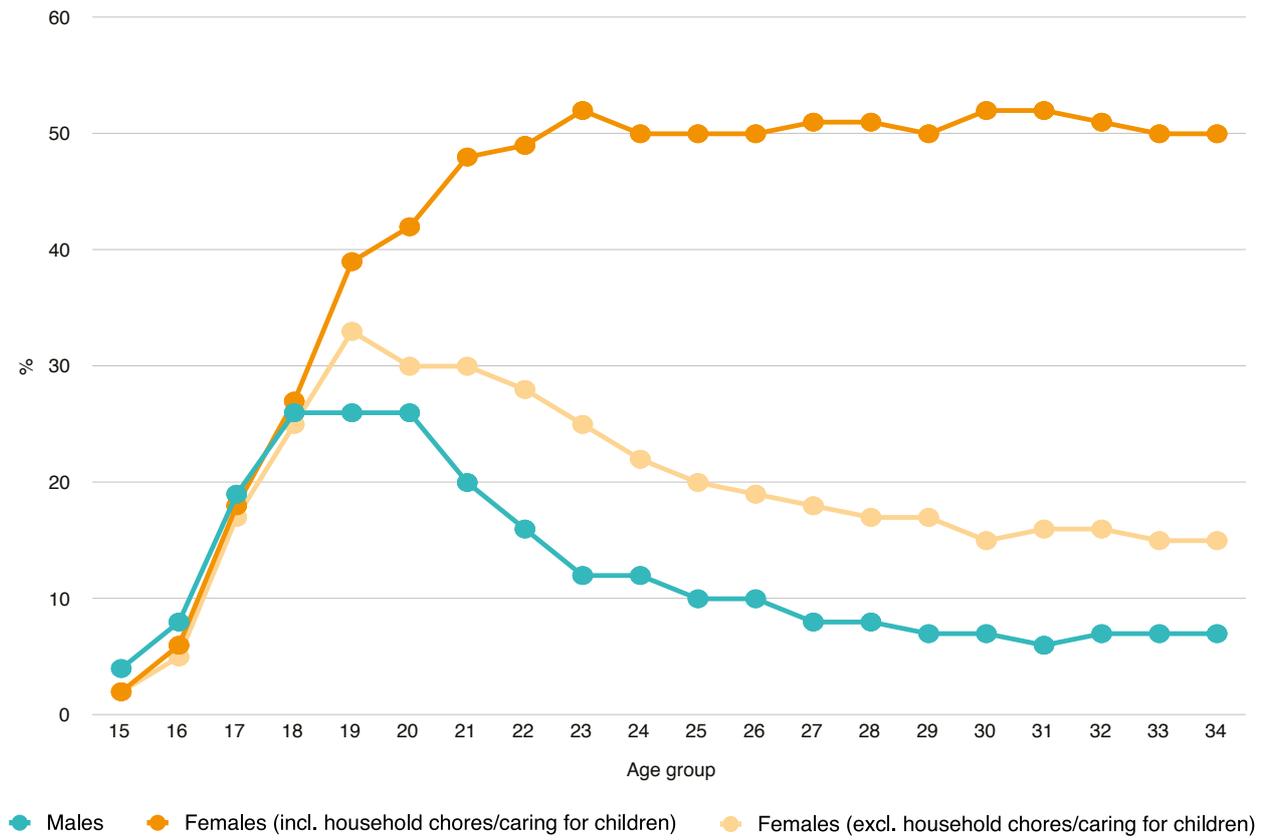


Figure 33c. Atolls





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8. Employment

8.1. The Maldives economic background

The economy of the Maldives has expanded significantly in recent decades and especially in the past 20 years. The tourism industry, together with fisheries and the agriculture sector have essentially driven this rapid growth. The country's demography has also changed in tandem and the population appears to have almost completed its demographic transition –the shift from high to low crude birth rates and crude death rates having reached a new equilibrium between births and deaths.

However, while the economy of the Maldives offers opportunities, it also presents several challenges.

Economy

It is worth noting that the Maldives enjoys the highest gross national income (GNI) per capita in South Asia after the Islamic Republic of Iran, as expressed in purchasing power parity (PPP) (Population Reference Bureau, 2015). Economic growth has built up significantly in the past four decades (especially in the past 20 years), and is essentially driven by a multi-billion dollar tourism industry. About 109 islands have been developed as tourist resorts. The tourist industry has picked up again since the 2007-2008 recession (International Monetary Fund, 2015: 4). The fisheries industry is the second most important economic sector in the country (tuna being the number one commodity). The third engine of economic growth is agriculture, although this sector suffers from scarcity of arable land on the atoll islands.

Like other island economies, the Maldives has a small domestic market and limited labour force. Still, the country is in a far better position than most other island economies and is one of the most rapidly developing economies in the world (Republic of Maldives, 2005b: 5). Today, the Maldives qualifies as an upper middle-income economy in the World Bank's classification. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) lists the Maldives as an emerging and developing economy.

Although the economy of the Maldives is growing (Republic of Maldives, 2005a), it remains relatively fragile. First, the tourism sector needs more investments, not only to build new and/or upgrade existing resorts but also to mitigate the effects of beach erosion and climate change, which could jeopardize the country's unique touristic capital. The tourism sector is also sensitive to

economic trends in countries sending tourists to the Maldives. About one third of tourists visiting the Maldives come from China whose economic slowdown may portend decreasing numbers of Chinese tourists heading to the Maldives. Last but not least, the tourism sector is not as inclusive, in terms of employment, as it could be. The sector employs many resident foreigners, mainly from Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh but not enough resident Maldivians (especially among youth), who are underrepresented in the sector, perhaps because work in this sector is an unattractive prospect for young Maldivians, owing to both their cultural view of tourism and skills mismatch.

Unemployment on the atoll islands can be high. While fisheries may suffer from the potential depletion of the major commodity, tuna, the Maldives traditional fisheries' techniques still remain environmentally friendly. The pole and line method of fishing used in the Maldives has been recognized as a model for environmental fisheries, while the official ban on shark fishing and turtle harvesting help to promote environmentally friendly fishing and ensure employment in the sector.

Finally, the agricultural sector suffers from both scarcity of arable land on the atoll islands and the narrow domestic market, not to mention transportation constraints. To a large extent, the future of agriculture in the Maldives is linked to the potential expansion of the tourism sector.

Key findings

- Young people make up a significant proportion of the labour force, more than half (54 per cent) aged 18 to 34 and 23 per cent aged 15 to 24.
- Most young people join the labour force by the time they are aged in their early twenties.
- Of the 8,000 unemployed persons, almost 6,000 (75 per cent) are aged 18 to 34: 3,550 males and 2,440 females.
- The main reason why youth aged 15 to 19 are not in the labour force is because they are students. For women ages 20 to 34, it is because they are engaged with household chores/caring for children; for men, there is a variety of reasons, such as inability to find suitable work matching their education level, lack of employment opportunities in their island of residence, and ill health and/or disability.
- A surprisingly large number of people (17,000) do not work because of ill health or disability, although most were people aged 65 and older. However, 2,550 of those were ages 18 to 34: 800 males and 1,750 females.
- Unemployment for those aged 18 to 19 is much higher than for others, where 22 per cent of males and 18 per cent of females who are ready to enter the labour force are still unemployed.
- Although the average labour force participation rate of the population 15 years and older is 78 per cent for men and 47 per cent for women, it plateaus at ages 25 to 49 for men (more than 90 per cent in the labour force) and ages 20 to 49 for women (more than 50 per cent in the labour force).
- The main industries of employment for the resident male Maldivian youth

population aged include: accommodation, public administration and defence, and fishing and aquaculture. For females aged 15 to 34, it is education, retail trade, except for motor vehicles and motorcycles, and public administration and defence.

- The main occupations of the resident male Maldivian youth population aged 15 to 34 include: fishery workers, hunters and trappers, protective service workers, and domestic hotel and office cleaners and helpers. Females mostly work in teaching, as shop salespersons and general office clerks.

- The correlation between employment status and educational level of the youth population shows that a much higher proportion of females with a diploma or degree are employed than those without a certificate. With respect to unemployment, males with a

diploma or degree are less likely to be unemployed, while this relationship is not as obvious for females. However, the proportion of males and females not in the labour force is much higher for those without a certificate than those with a diploma or degree, with the exception of women aged 20 to 24.

- In total, there are 87,000 people 15 years and older not in the labour force (or 36 per cent). Of those, 34,000 are aged 18 to 34: 7,000 males and 27,000 females.

8.2. Young people in the labour force

There are many types of work, both paid and unpaid. Included in the national definition of employment is self-employment, employers, full and part-time employees, and unpaid work in a family business. Unlike in many developing countries, subsistence production is not a significant activity in the Maldives.

The population census gathers information, from everyone aged 15 and older, about whether they work and, if so, what type of work they do. With this information, the population can be classified into three mutually exclusive categories: employed, unemployed and outside the labour force. The theoretical labour force consists of all those aged 15 and older (245,000), while the actual labour force consists of all those people, employed or unemployed.

There are almost 154,000 Maldivian residents 15 years and older (97,000 men and 57,000 women) participating in the labour force, meaning they are either employed or unemployed (figures 34a to 34c). Young people make up a significant proportion of the labour force, with 54 per cent aged 18 to 34.

Of those in the labour force (154,000), 146,000 are employed and 8,000 are unemployed. With respect to the youth population aged 18 to 34, 48,000 males and 29,000 females are employed, or 33 per cent and 20 per cent of all employed persons, respectively.

Of the 8,000 unemployed persons, almost 6,000 (75 per cent) are aged 18 to 34: 3,550 males and 2,440 females.

Most young people join the labour force by the time they are in their early twenties. As shown in figures 34 to 37, there are distinct age differences in labour force participation. Although the average participation of the population 15 years and older is 78 per cent for men and 47 per cent for women, it plateaus at ages 25 to 49 for men (more than 90 per cent whom are in the labour force) and at ages 20 to 49 for women (more than 50 per cent of whom are in the labour force).

Summary statistics of the Maldivian resident labour force

LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION	OUTSIDE THE LABOUR FORCE
63.8%	36.2%

15+ POPULATION 244,956			
Labour force		Outside labour force	
153,762 persons		87,182 persons	
Employed	Unemployed	Potential labour force	Others outside labour force
145,757 persons	8,005 persons	20,055 persons	67,127 persons

EMPLOYMENT RATE	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
94.8%	5.2%

Source: Maldives National Bureau of Statistics

Figure 34. Number of people in labour force categories by age and sex, Maldives: 2014

Figure 34a. Number of people in the labour force

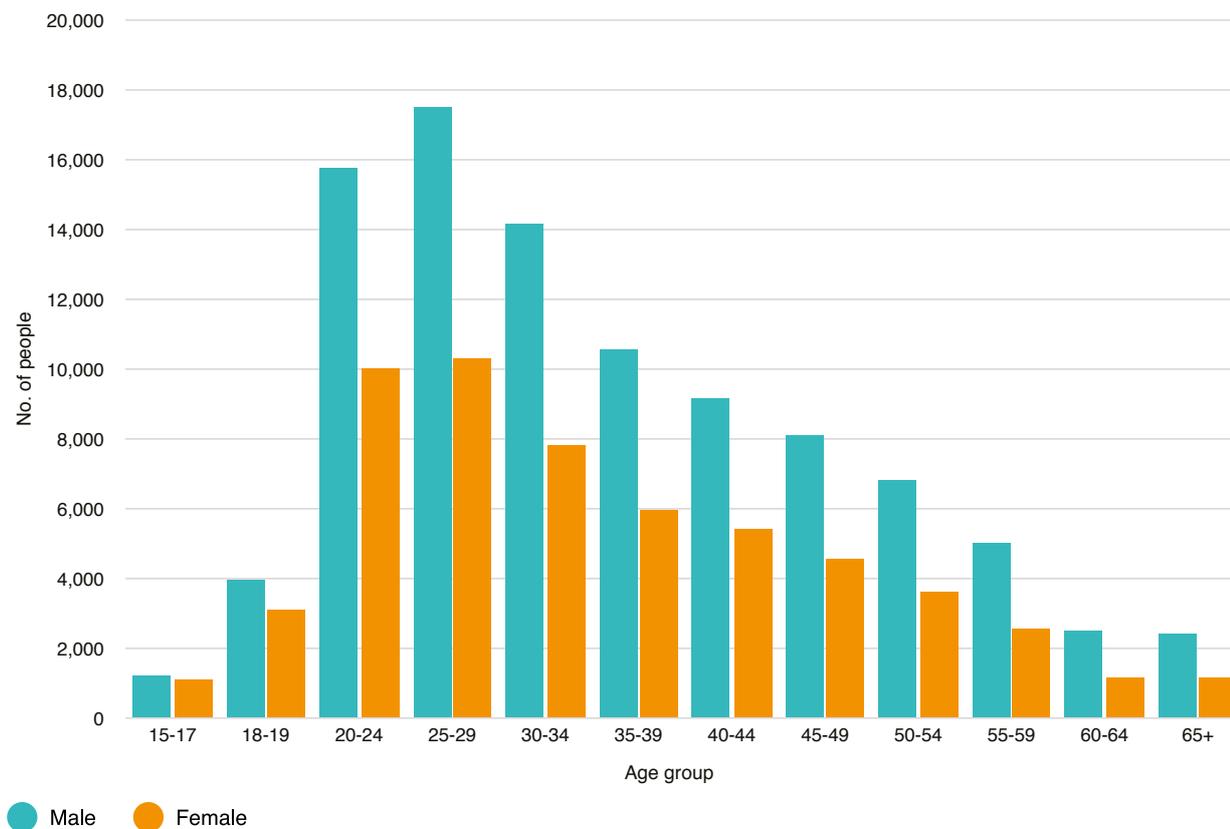


Figure 34b. Number of people in employment

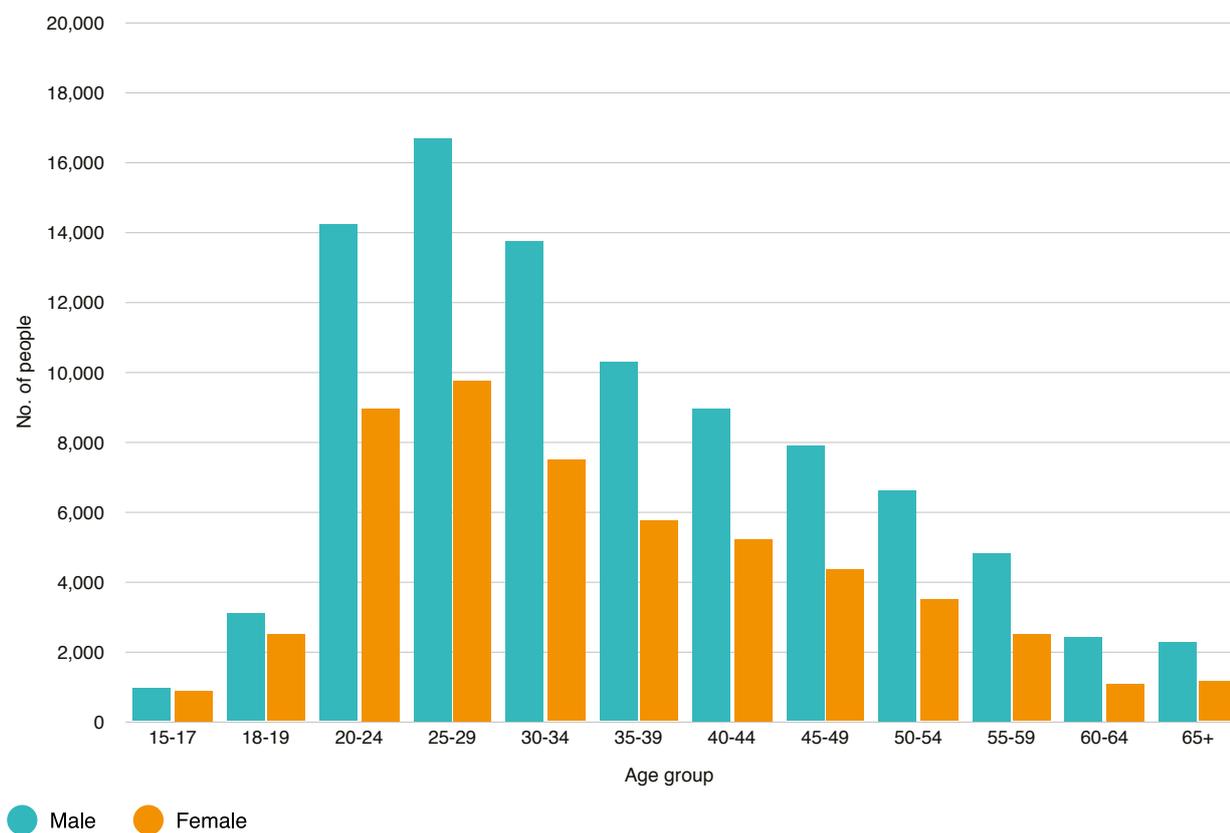


Figure 34c. Number of people unemployed

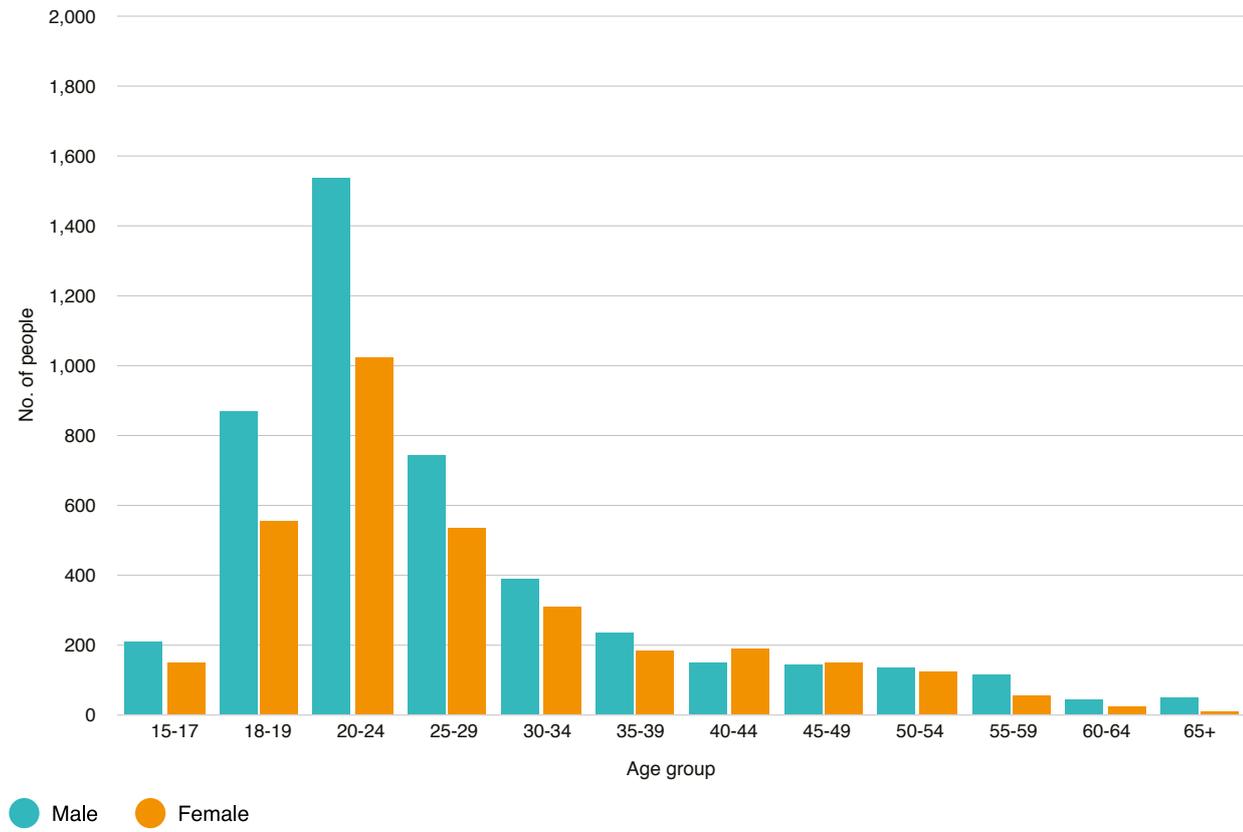


Figure 35. Labour force indicators by age group, Maldives: 2006 and 2014

Figure 35a. Labour force participation rate (LFPR)

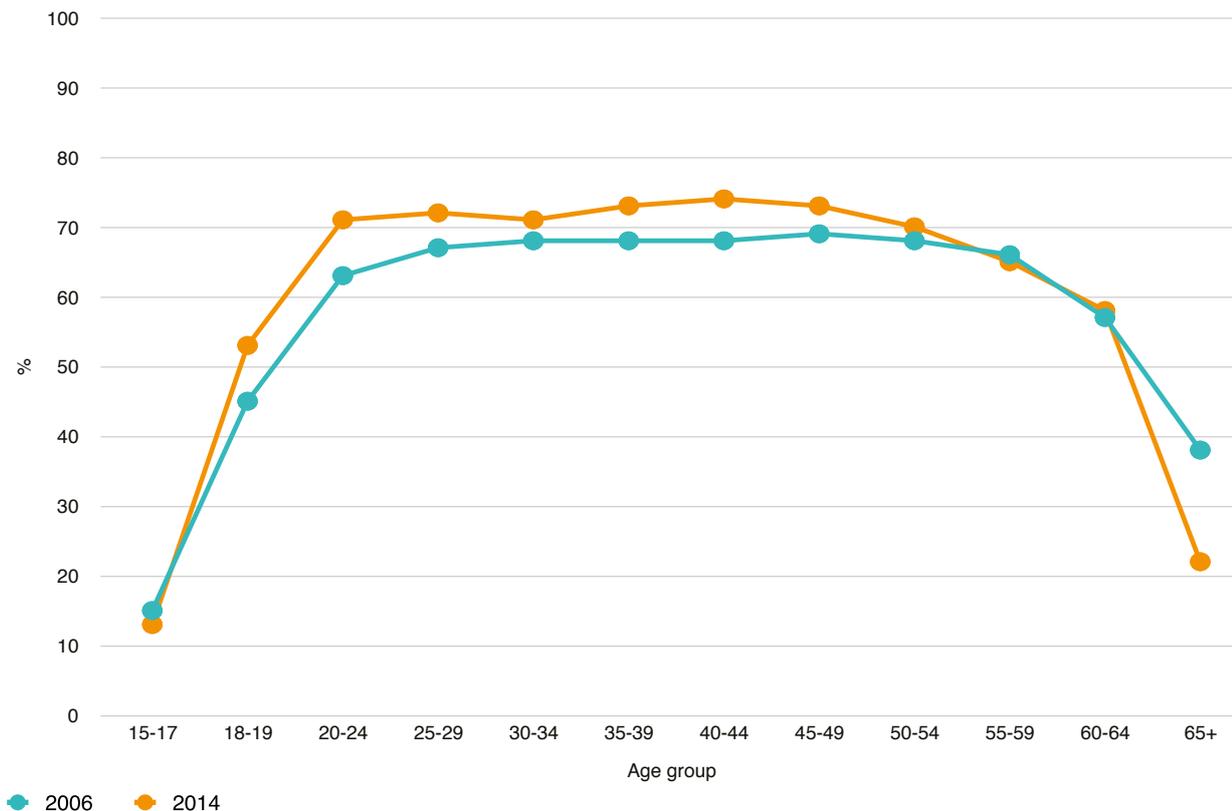


Figure 35b. Employment-population ratio (EPR)

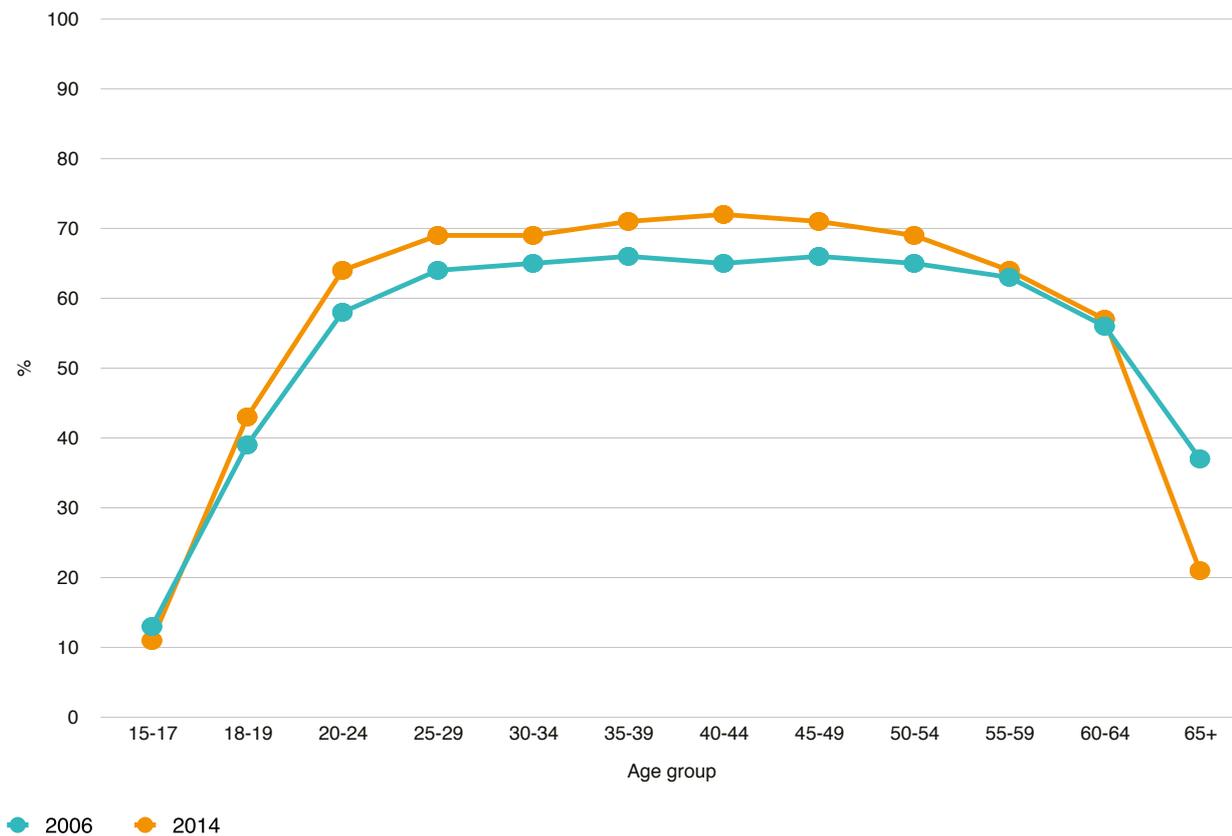


Figure 35c. Unemployment rate

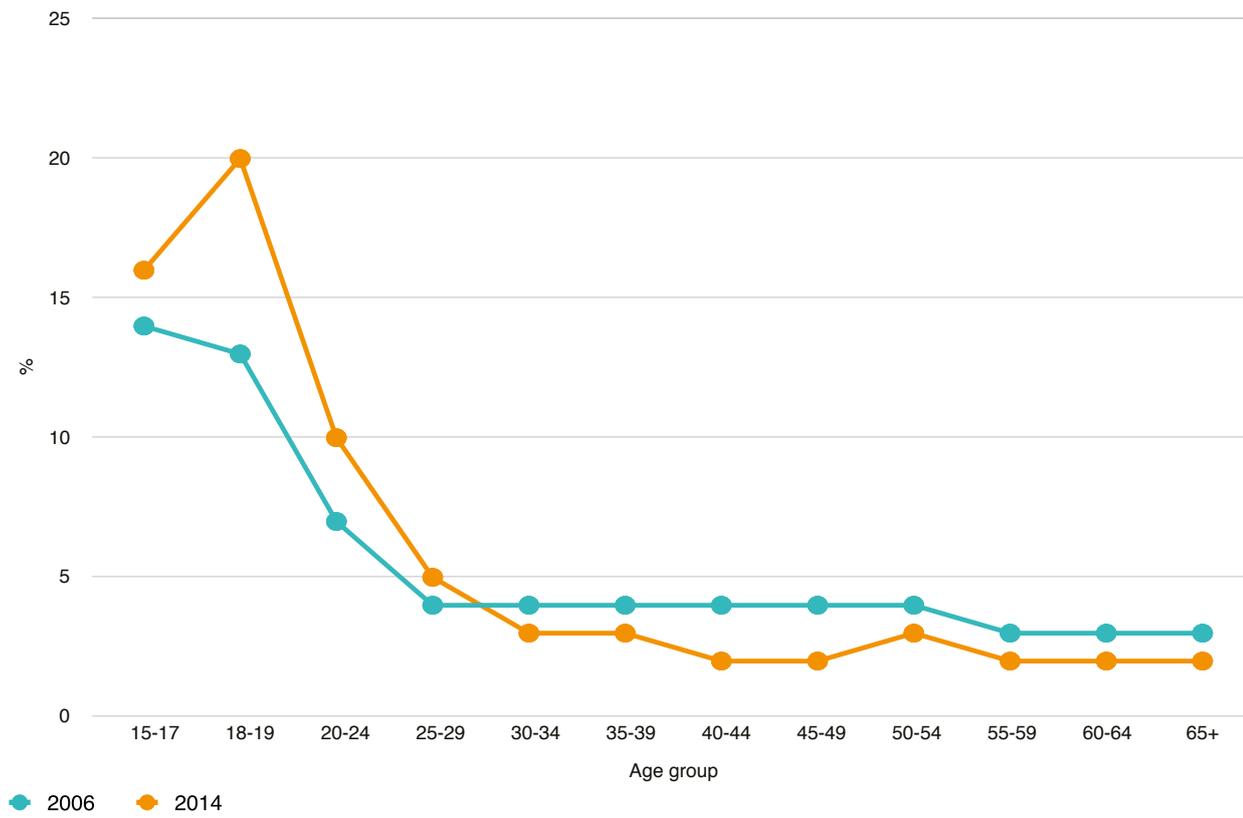


Figure 36. Labour force indicators by age and sex, Maldives: 2014

Figure 36a. Labour force participation rate (LFPR)

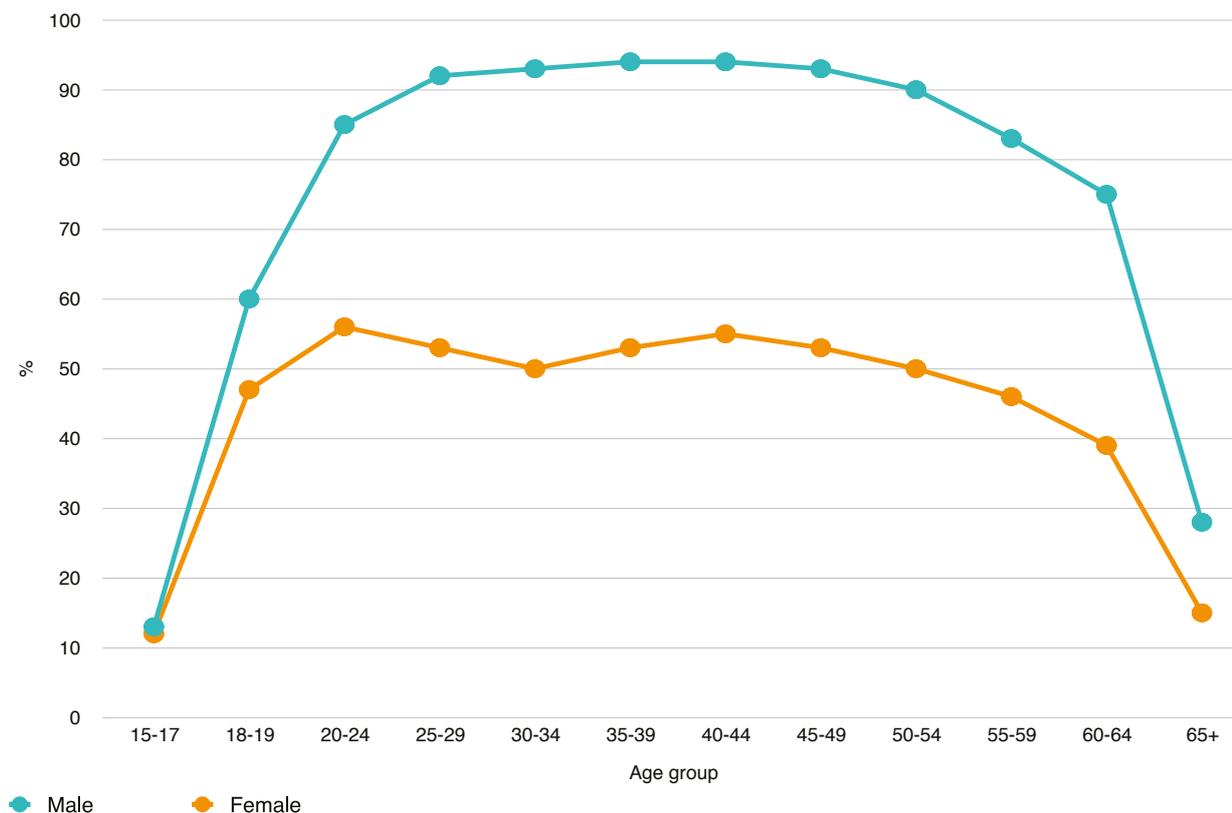


Figure 36b. Employment-population ratio (EPR)

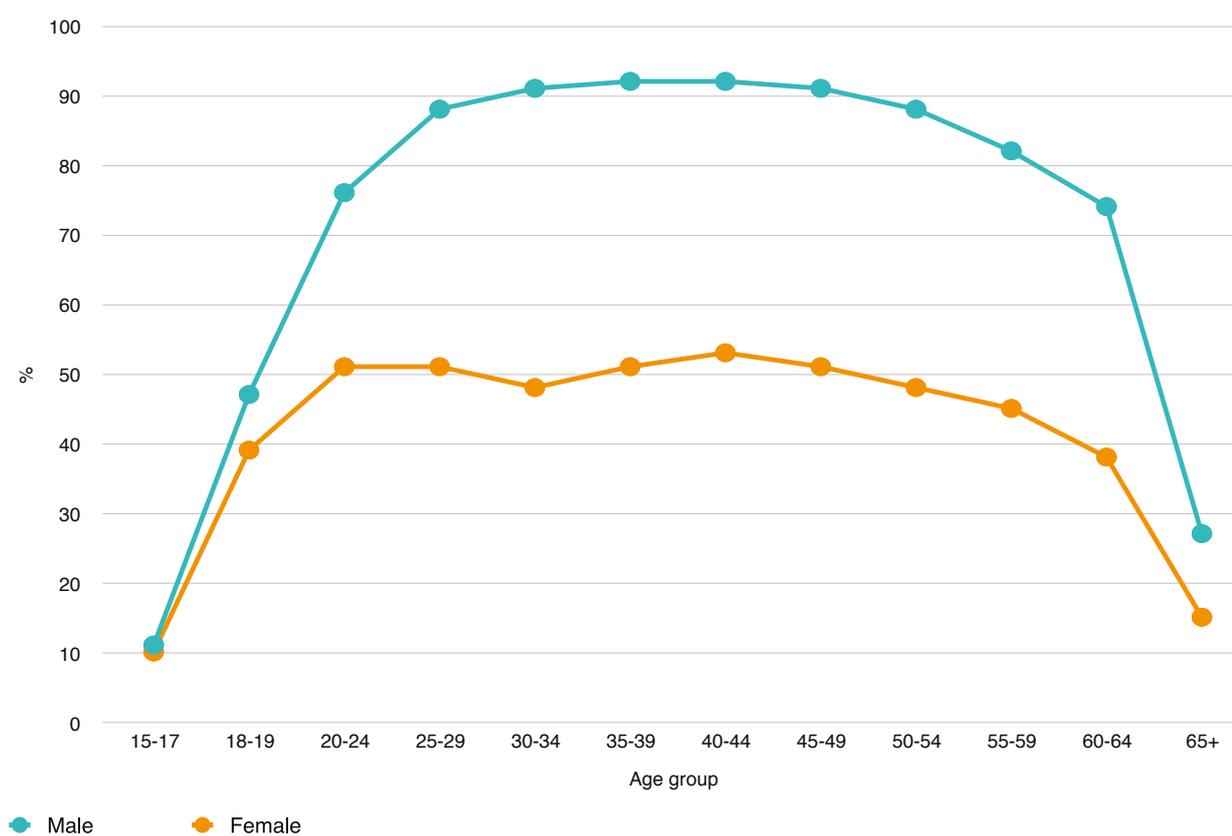


Figure 36c. Unemployment rate

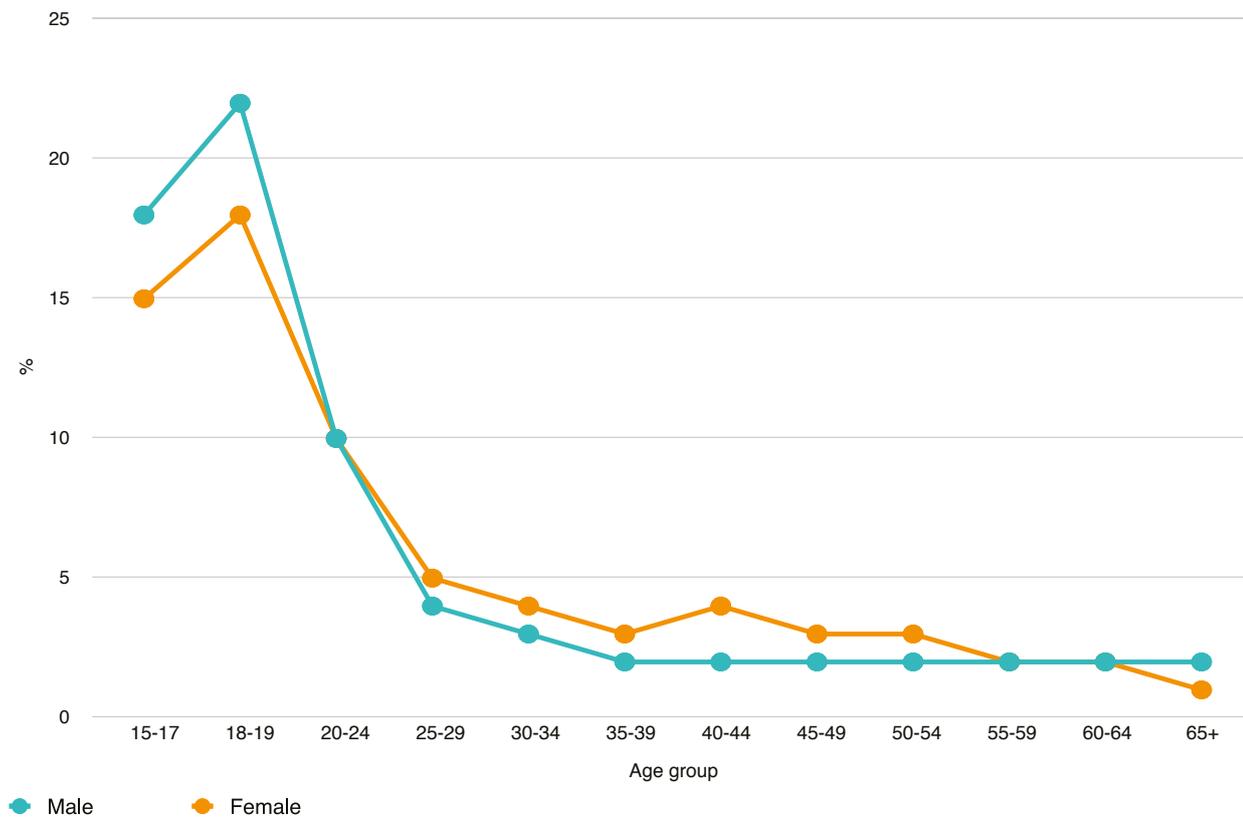


Figure 37. Labour force indicators by age and locality, Maldives: 2014

Figure 37a. Labour force participation rate (LFPR)

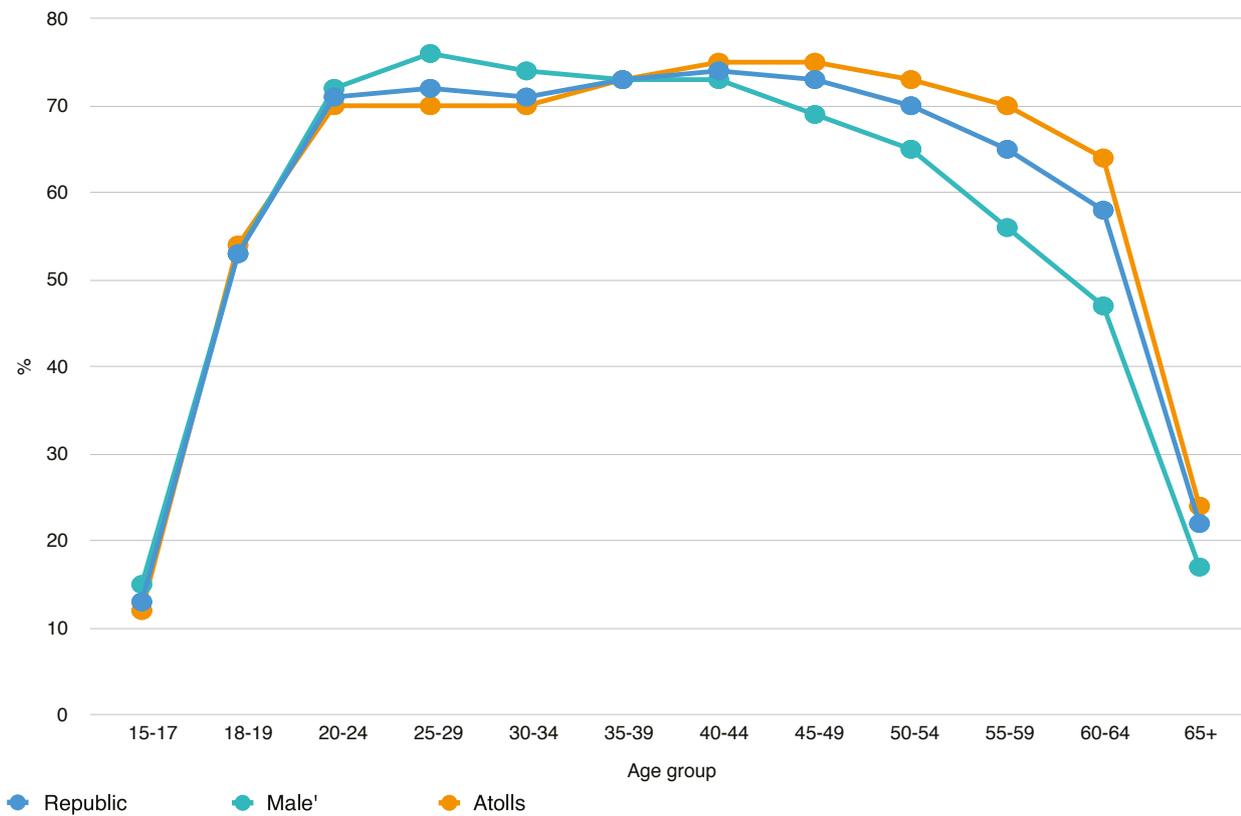


Figure 37b. Employment-population ratio (EPR)

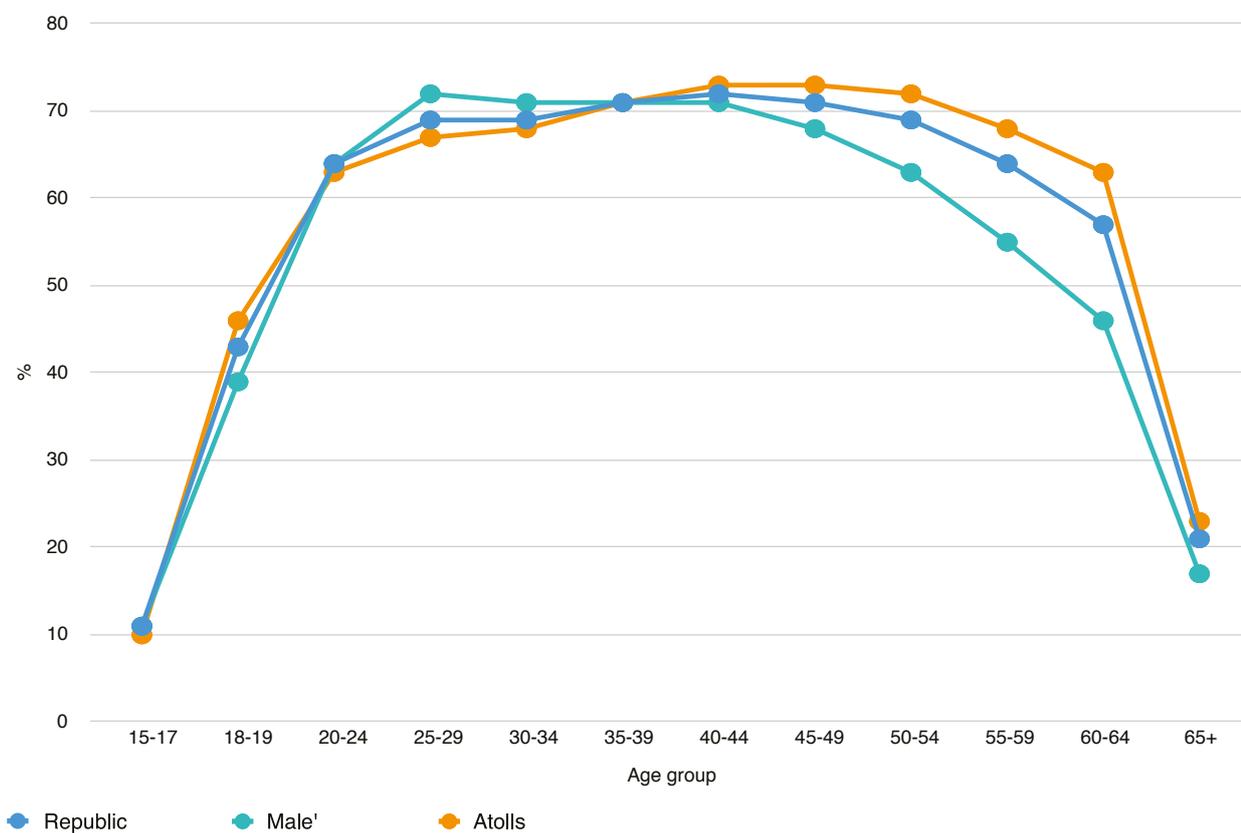
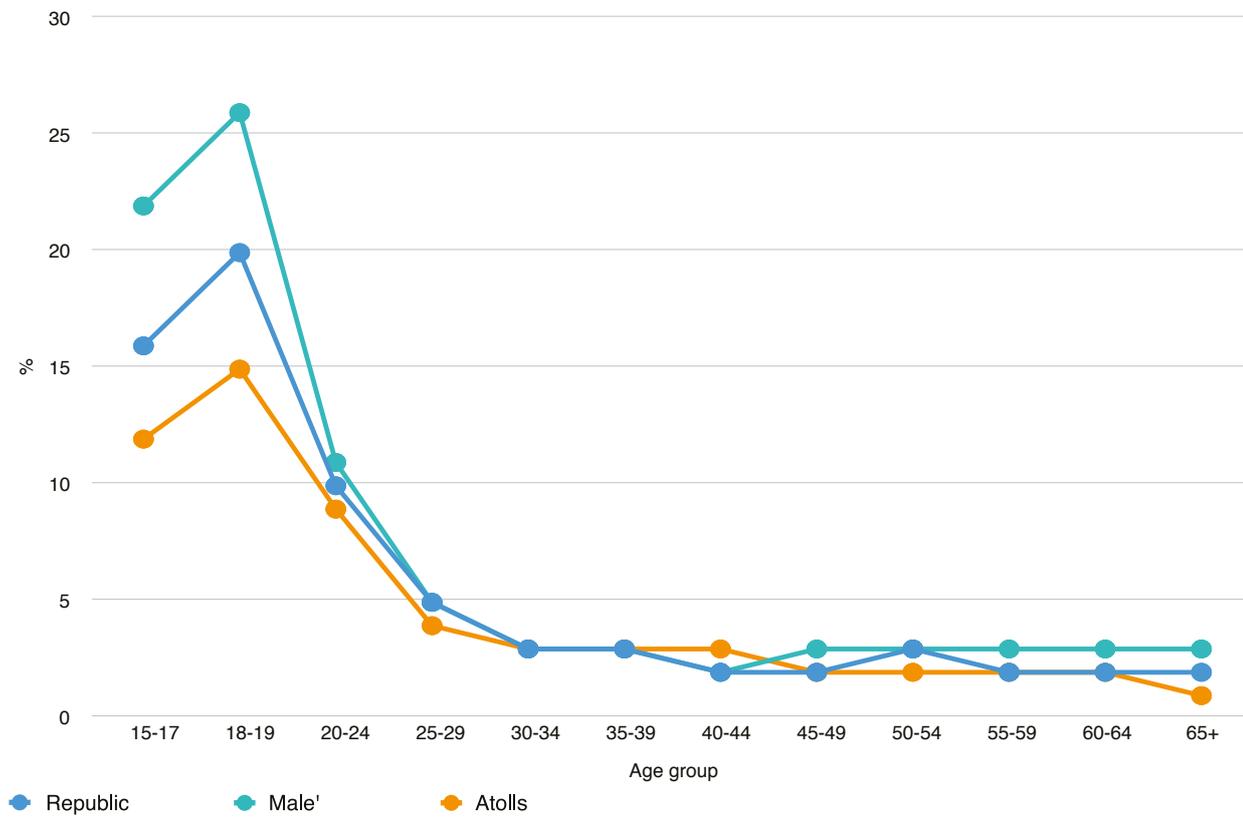


Figure 37c. Unemployment rate



8.3. Unemployment

It is often difficult for school leavers, who have little or no work experience, to find employment. This is especially so in countries where the economy is narrow and jobs are limited. Someone is unemployed if they do not have a job, they are actively looking for work and are available to work should a job be offered to them.

The overall unemployment rate in the Maldives is relatively low at 5 per cent, with a slightly higher unemployment rate of 6 per cent in Malé than in the atolls, which is at 4 per cent.

Unemployment for youth aged 15 to 24 is higher than overall unemployment, and the difference is greater for males. Unemployment for teenage youth is much higher than others in the labour force, with almost one in eight unemployed. This finding is not unique to the Maldives and is also common in other countries where young people are transitioning from school to work and have yet to acquire skills that make them valued in the workplace. However, youth unemployment rates have significantly increased since 2006 when only one in 11 youth aged 15 to 24 were unemployed. Unemployment rates have especially increased for people aged 18 to 19 (figure 35c), and are higher for males than females aged 15 to 24 (figure 36c). Another feature is the much higher unemployment rates of youth in Malé compared to youth residing in the atolls (figure 37c).

Education level of unemployed persons

With respect to unemployment, males with a diploma or degree are less likely to be unemployed, while this relationship is not as apparent for females (see section 8.9).

In terms of educational attainment, the census results show that the unemployment rate is generally highest among people who have completed 10 years of basic schooling and attained the London General Certificate of Education O-level standard (43.0 per cent) followed by those attending/having attended school/training but without having earned a certificate (28.8 per cent). It is lowest among those with tertiary education (0.2 per cent).

Higher proportions of unemployed are among those with lower educational attainment. The pattern is similar for male as well as for female. Generally, female unemployment rates are higher than male unemployment rates at every level of education among those who had gained a certificate.

Looking at the difference in educational attainment among the unemployed population in Male' and the administrative islands, a much higher percentage of the population with no certificate is found among the unemployed in the administrative islands in relation to Male' (37.9 per cent versus 19.5 per cent). The results also show unemployment is highest among those having achieved the O-level standard in both Male' as well as in the administrative islands (45.9 per cent and 40.1 per cent, respectively).

8.4. Status in employment

The status of employment of those employed aged 15 to 34 by age, sex and nationality is shown in figures 38a to 38b.

As expected, the vast majority of employed persons are wage employees, especially among foreign residents. About 79 per cent of employed Maldivian males and 71 per cent of employed Maldivian females aged 18 to 34 are wage employees. Among male and female foreign residents of the same age group, the figure is 90 per cent.

There is, however, a significantly higher proportion of females than males who are own-account workers and contributing family workers; on the other hand, there is a higher proportion of males than females among Maldivian youth who are group workers.

Figure 38. Percentage of employed resident population 15 years and older by employment status, age, sex and locality, Maldives: 2014

Figure 38a. Maldivians, Republic

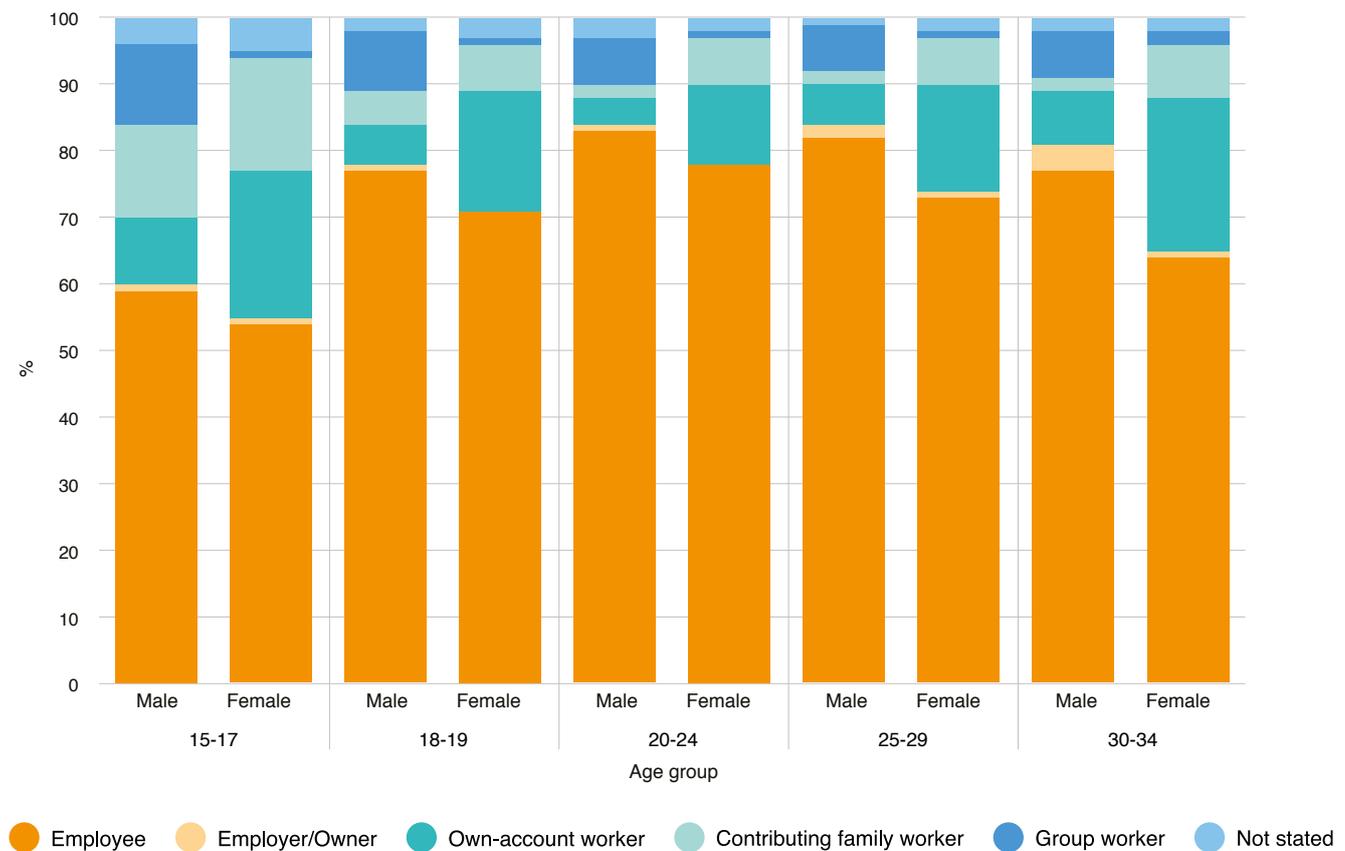
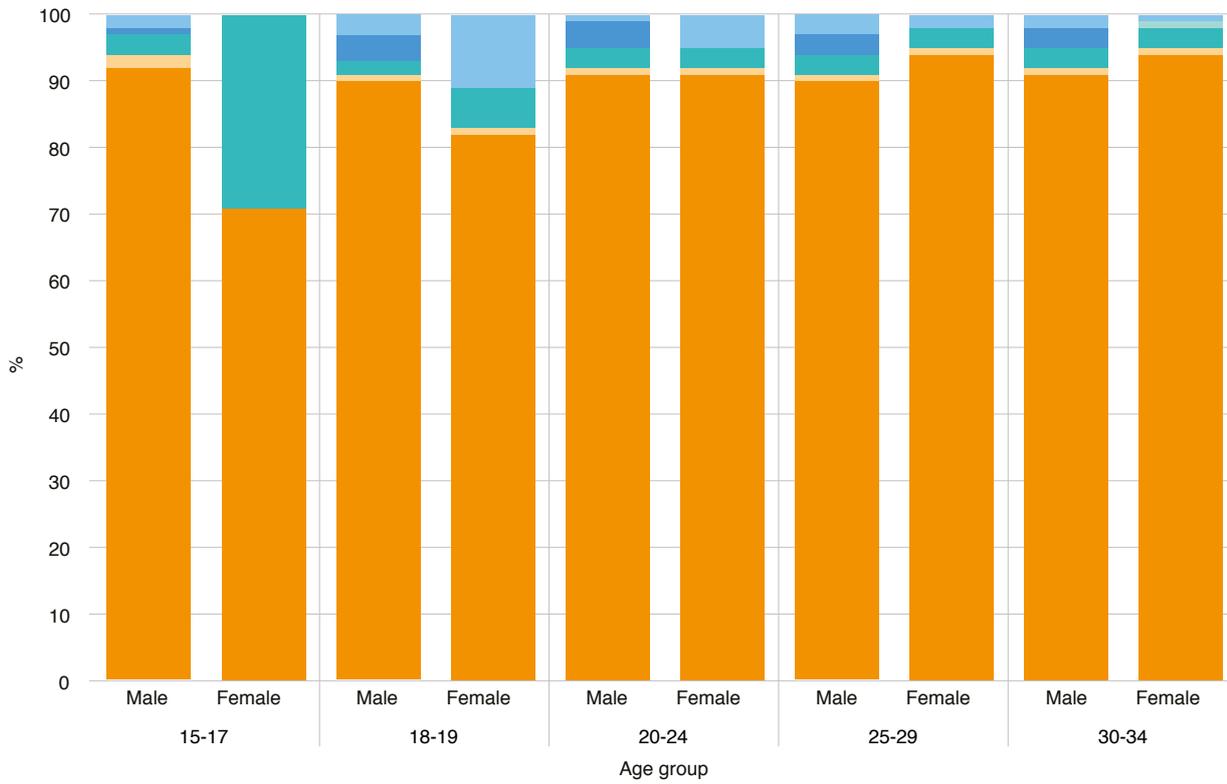


Figure 38b. Foreigners, Republic



● Employee
 ● Employer/Owner
 ● Own-account worker
 ● Contributing family worker
 ● Group worker
 ● Not stated

8.5. Type of establishments

The type of establishment in which the resident Maldivian youth population aged 15 to 34 is employed shows noticeable differences between males and females and between those living in Malé and the atolls (figures 39a to 39c).

While males predominantly work for a company (34 per cent), women are more likely to work for a government office or an independent organization (34 per cent). Another 21 per cent of women work from their own home or living quarters.

In general, the types of establishments are much more diverse in Malé than in the atolls, where males primarily work for a company (40 per cent) and women for a government office/independent organization (37 per cent) or from their own home or living quarters (31 per cent).

Figure 39. Resident Maldivian youth population aged 18 to 34 by sex, type of employment establishment, and locality (in percentages), Maldives: 2014

Figure 39a. Republic

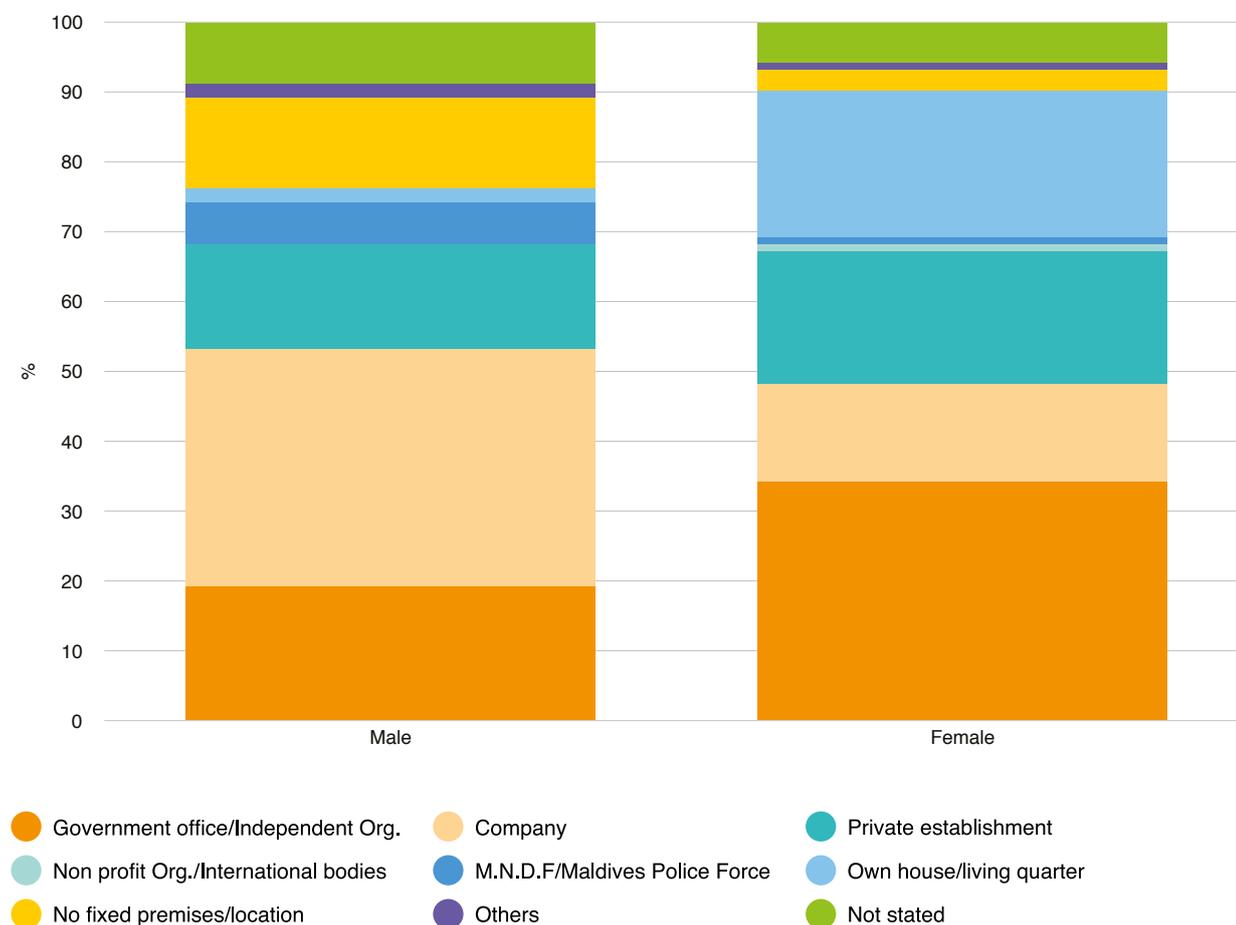


Figure 39b. Malé

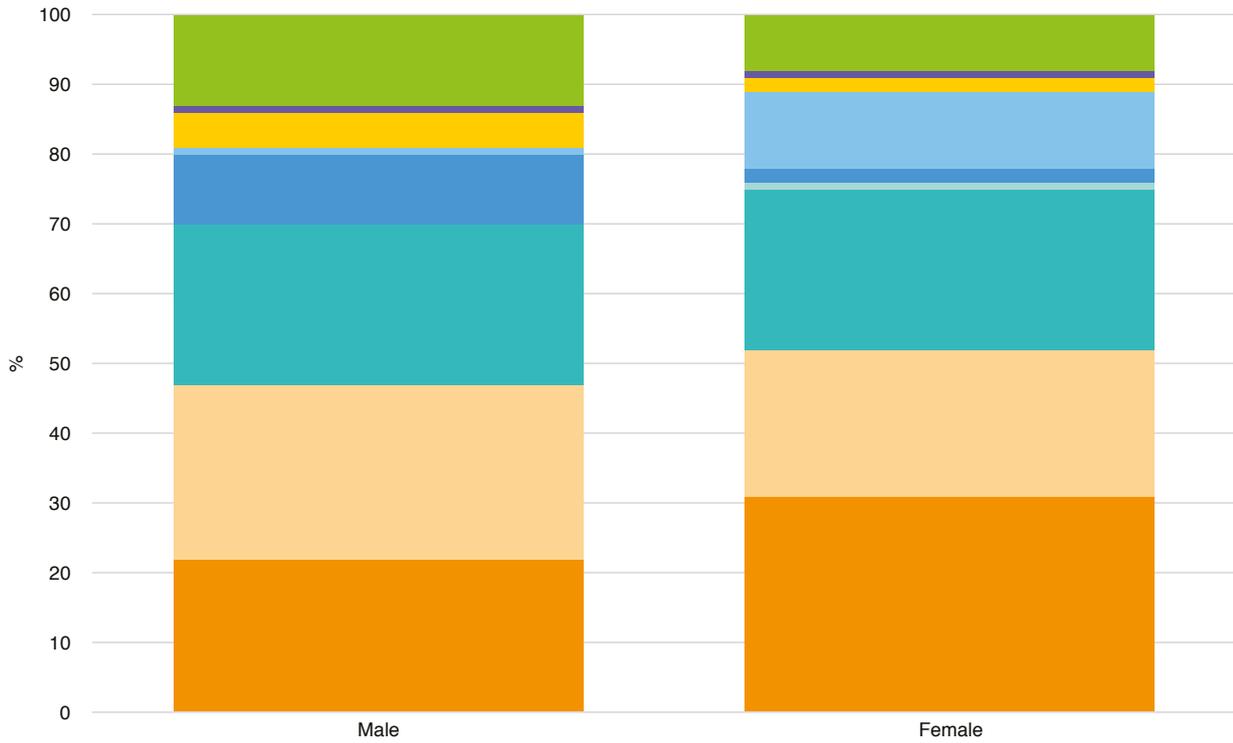
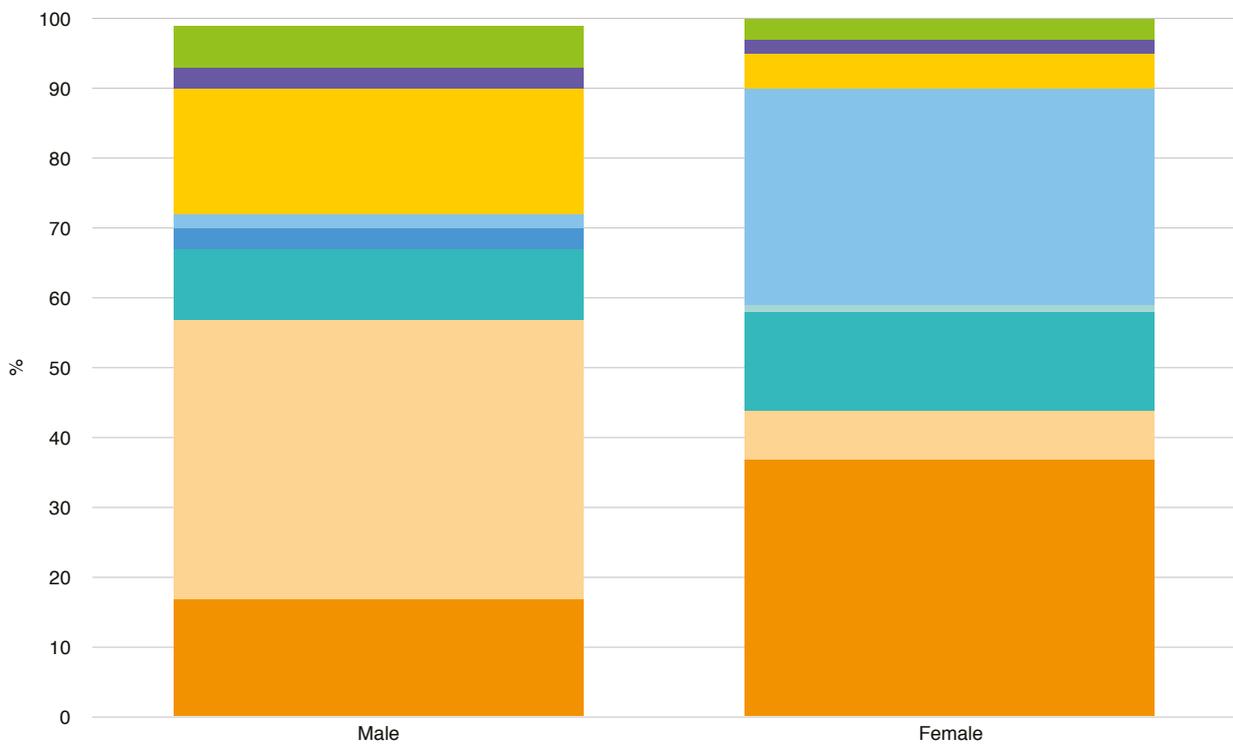


Figure 39c. Atolls

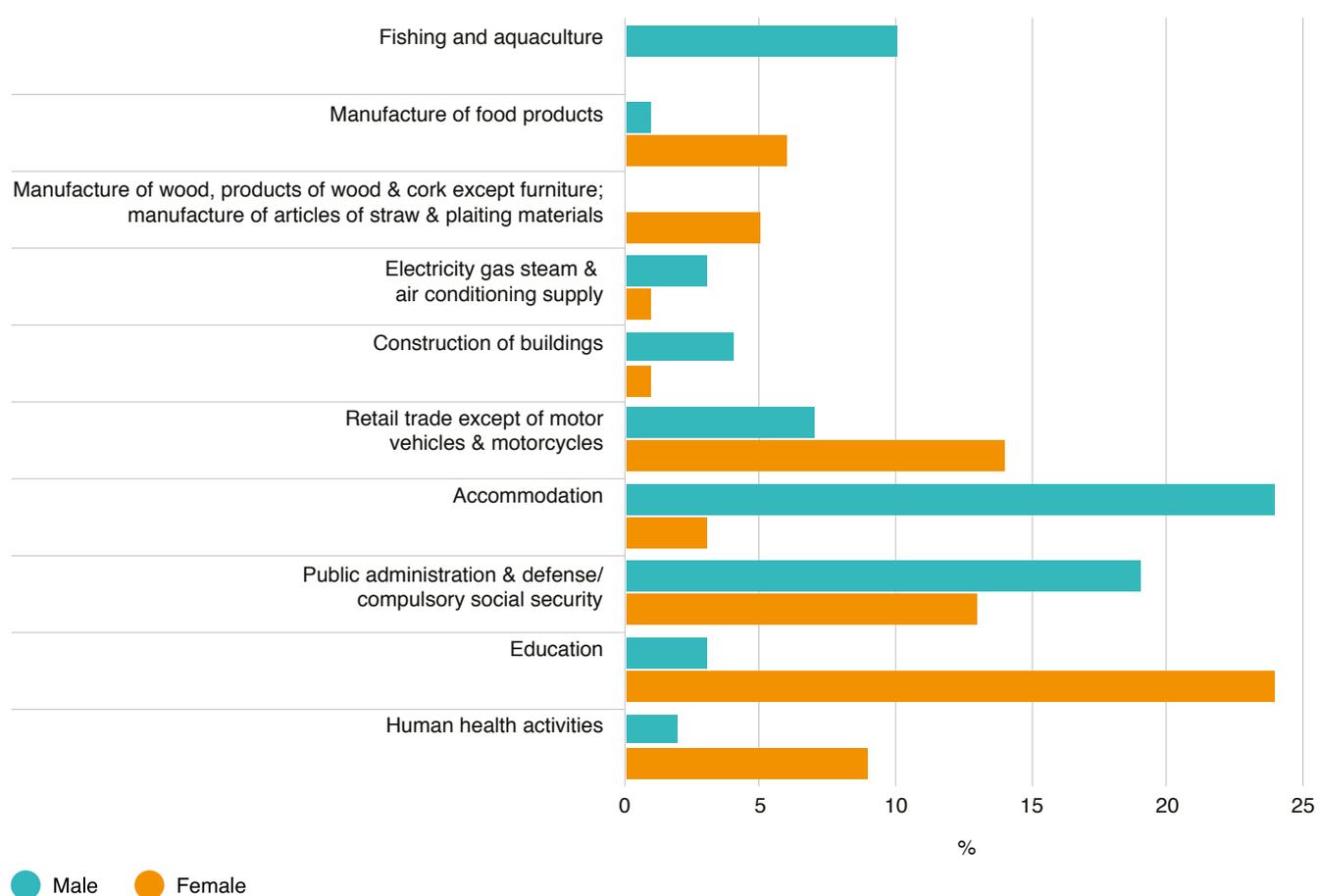


- Government office/Independent Org.
- Company
- Private establishment
- Non profit Org./International bodies
- M.N.D.F/Maldives Police Force
- Own house/living quarter
- No fixed premises/location
- Others
- Not stated

8.6. Industry

The main industries of employment for the resident Maldivian youth population aged 15 to 34 are, for males, accommodation (24 per cent), public administration and defence (19 per cent), and fishing and aquaculture (10 per cent). For females aged 15 to 34, they are education (24 per cent), retail trade (except for motor vehicles and motorcycles) (14 per cent), and public administration and defence (13 per cent) (figure 40).

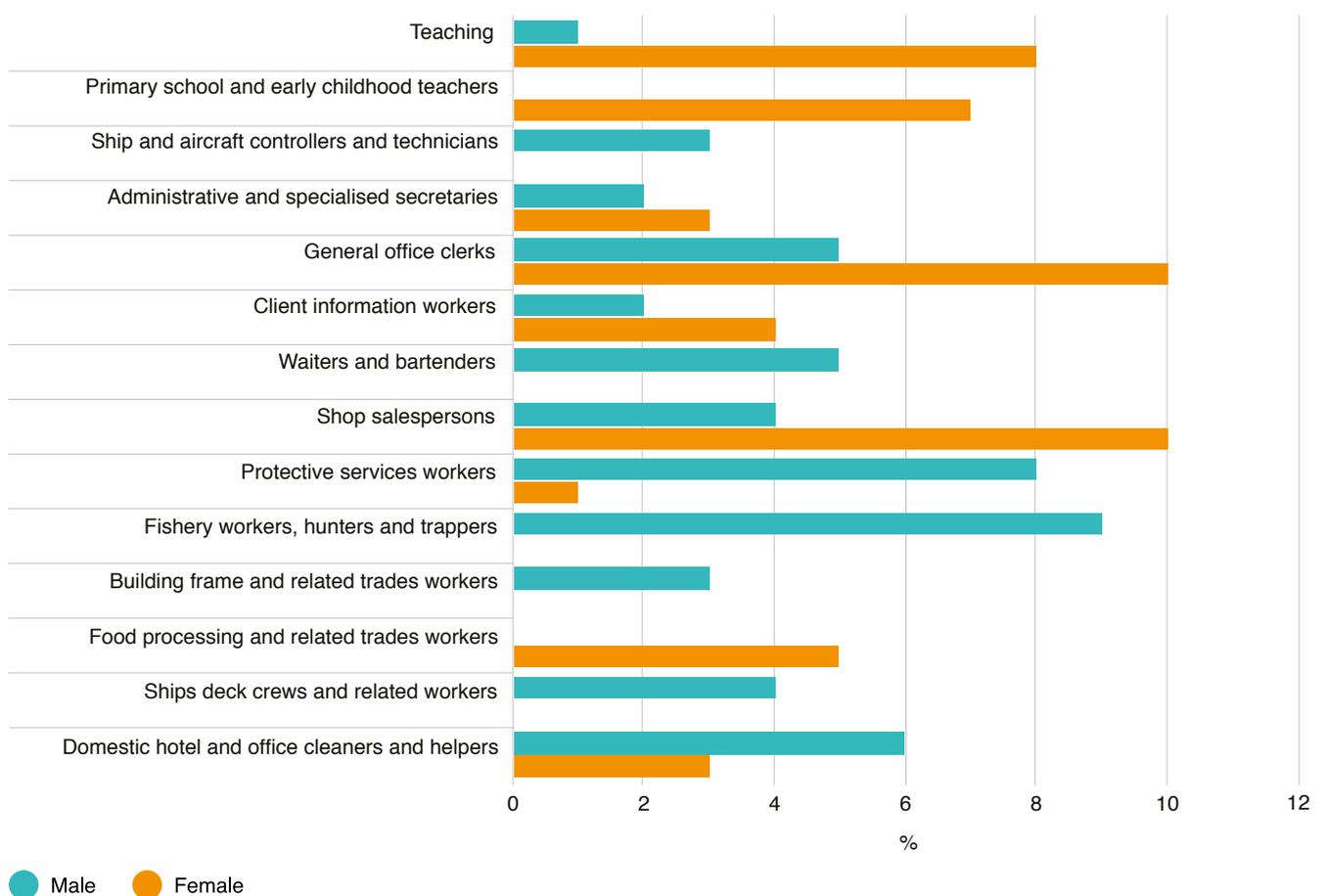
Figure 40. Resident Maldivian youth population aged 18 to 34 by sex and main industry, (in percentages), Maldives: 2014



8.7. Occupation

The differences in male and female occupations are also striking: while males aged 15 to 34 are mostly fishery workers, hunters and trappers (9 per cent), protective service workers (8 per cent), and domestic hotel and office cleaners and helpers (6 per cent), females mostly work in teaching (including primary school and early childhood education) (15 per cent), as well as shop salespersons (10 per cent) and general office clerks (10 per cent) (figure 41).

Figure 41. Resident Maldivian youth population aged 18 to 34 by sex and main occupations (in percentages), Maldives: 2014



8.8. Young people outside the labour force

Persons of working age (15 and above) neither employed nor unemployed are classified as persons outside the labour force. It consists of all people 15 years and older who are not employed or unemployed but who are: (a) seeking employment but not currently available; (b) currently available for employment but not seeking employment; and (c) currently not available for employment and not seeking employment.

Of the 87,000 people outside the labour force, 21,000 are students, 26,000 are engaged in household chores or caring for children, and 17,000 are unable to work owing to ill health or disability. Another 6,500 are unable to find a job for various reasons and another 6,000 people responded that family bears all their expenses.

Figures 42a to 42d shows the age and sex distribution of the three main categories of people outside the labour force.

In total, there are 87,000 people 15 years and older outside the labour force (36 per cent). Of them, 34,000 are aged 18 to 34: 7,000 males and 27,000 females (figure 42a).

Of the total of 21,000 students, 2,500 are males and 4,200 are females aged 18 to 34 (figure 42b).

Almost all people engaged in household chores or caring for children are women (99 per cent), of which 14,000 are aged 18 to 34. Only 83 men of the same age are involved in household chores or caring for children (figure 42c).

A surprisingly large number of people (17,000) do not work because of ill health or disability, although most are people aged 65 and older. However, 2,550 of them are aged 18 to 34: 800 males and 1,750 females (figure 42d).

Most people aged 15 to 19 who are not working indicated they are studying/attending school when asked why they are not looking for work. For those aged 20 to 34, the main reason women gave is their engagement in household chores/caring for children, while men gave a variety of reasons, such as lack of job opportunities, inability to find a suitable job matching their education level, or ill health or disability (figures 43a to 43f).

A much higher proportion of young people in Malé gave studying/attending school as the main reason for not working than youth in the atolls, where lack of job opportunities was mentioned more often.

Figure 42. Number of people outside the labour force by category, age and sex, Maldives: 2014

Figure 42a. Number of people outside the labour force

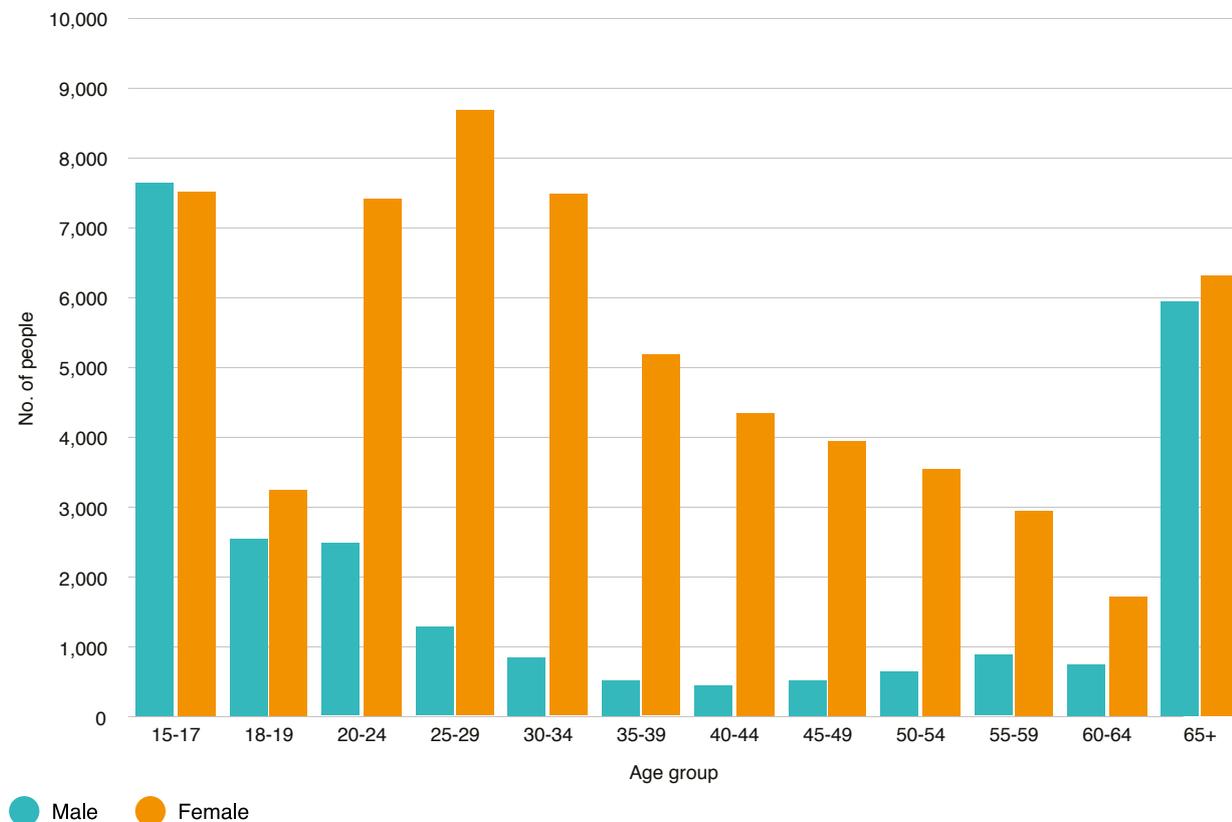


Figure 42b. Number of students

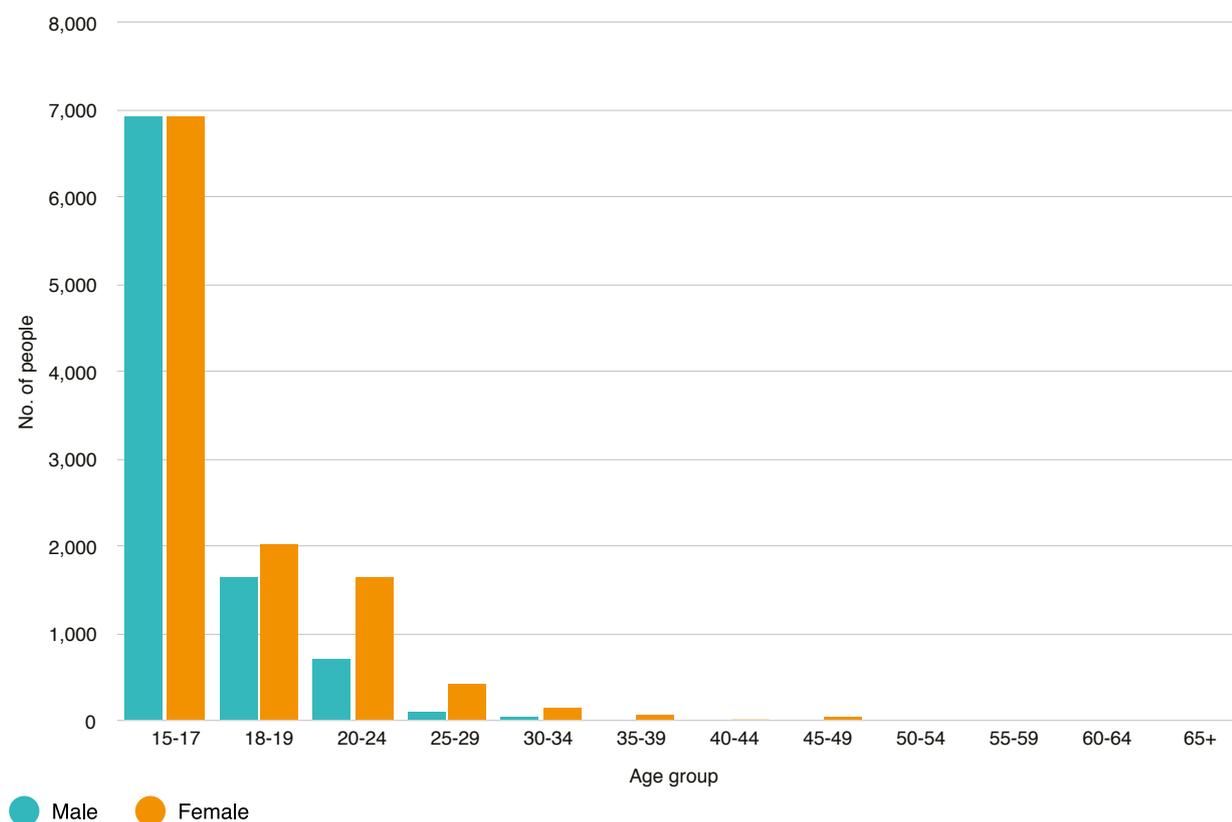


Figure 42c. Number of people involved with household chores/caring for children

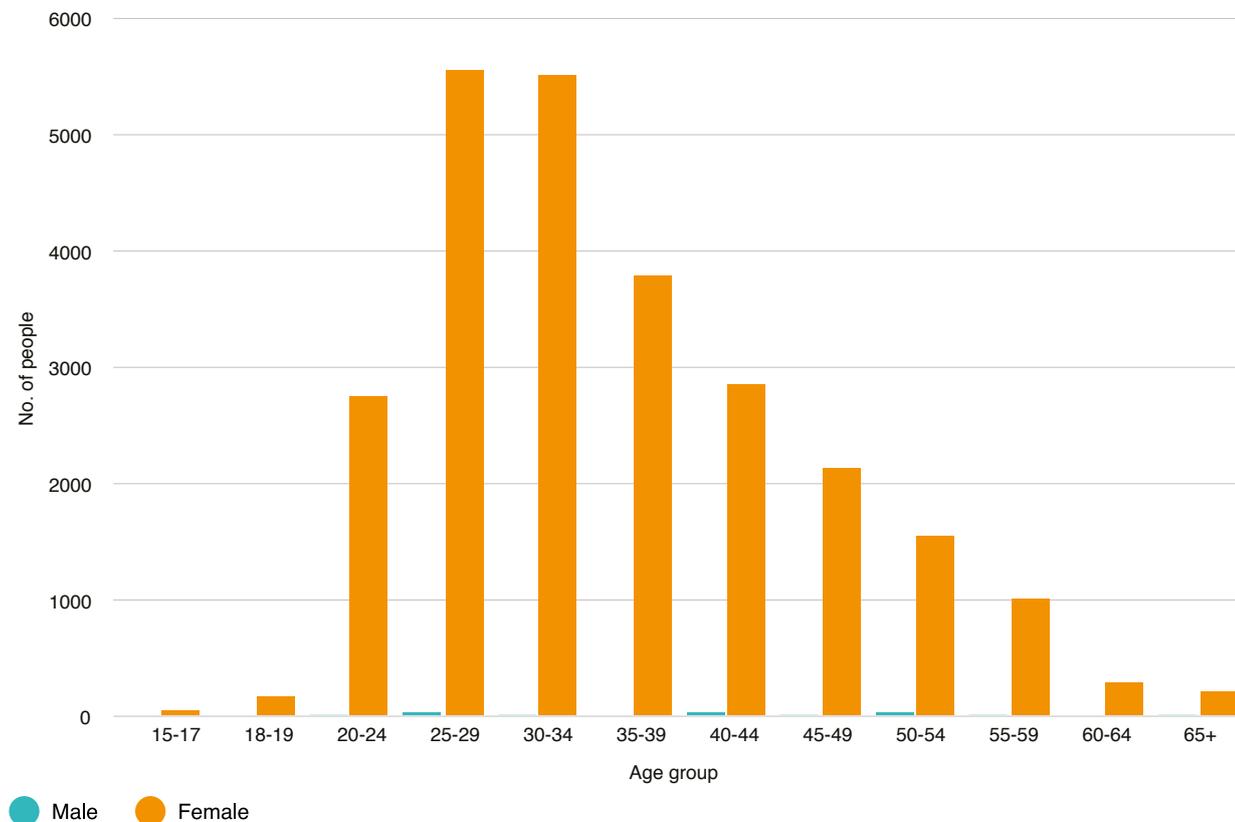


Figure 42d. Number of people not working owing to ill health or disability

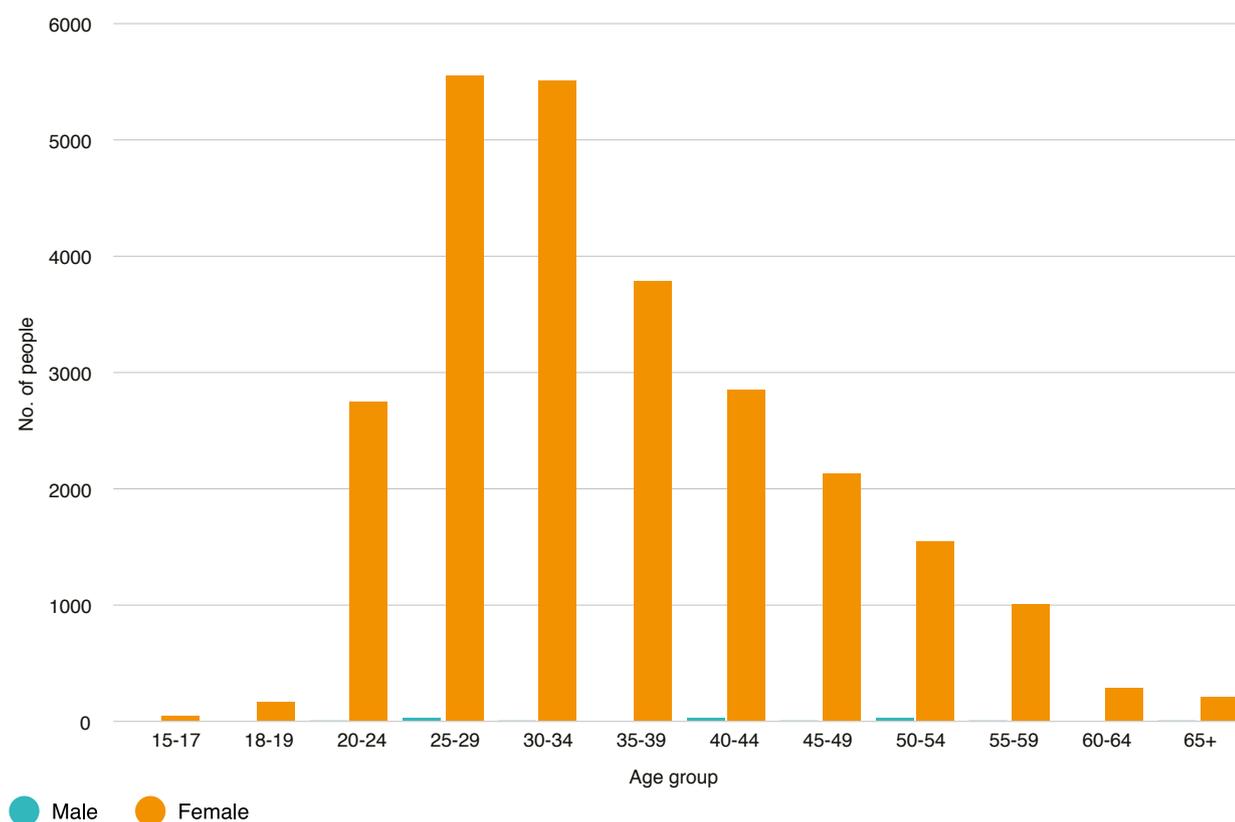


Figure 43. Main reason for not working among the Resident Maldivian population outside the labour force aged 15 and older by locality, age and sex (in percentages), Maldives: 2014

Figure 43a. Republic, Males

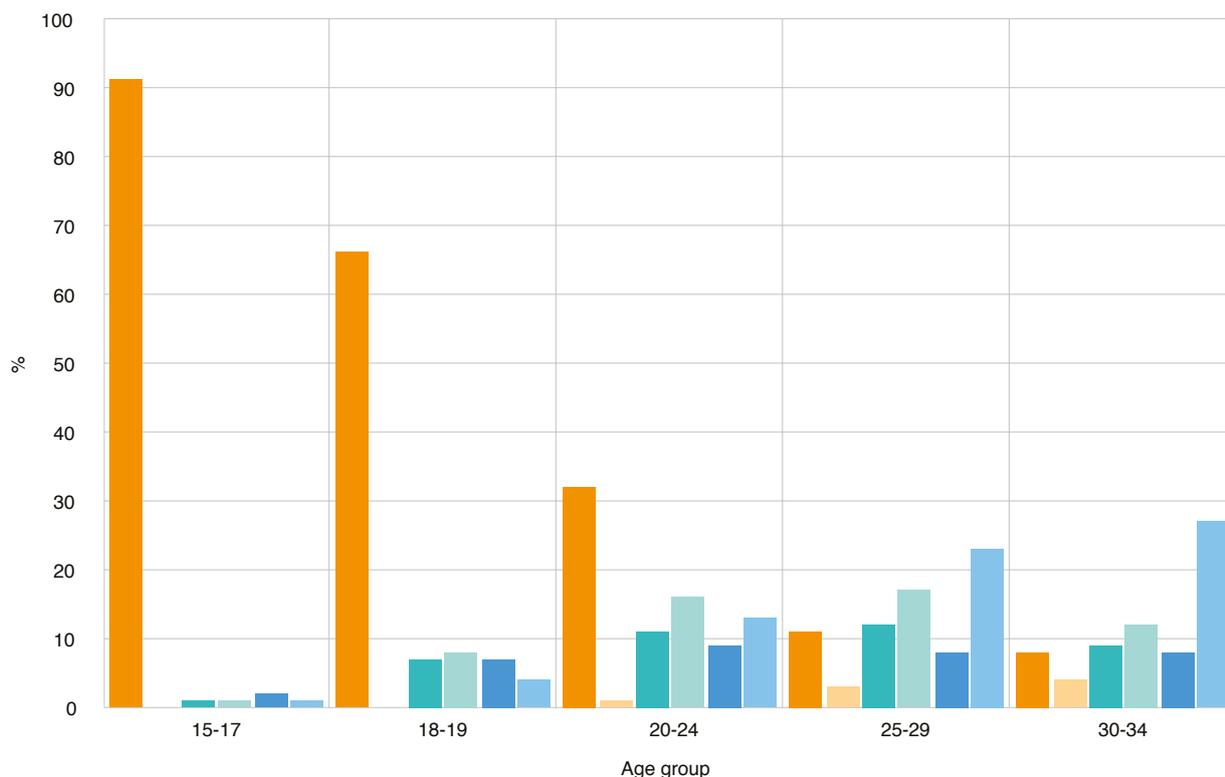
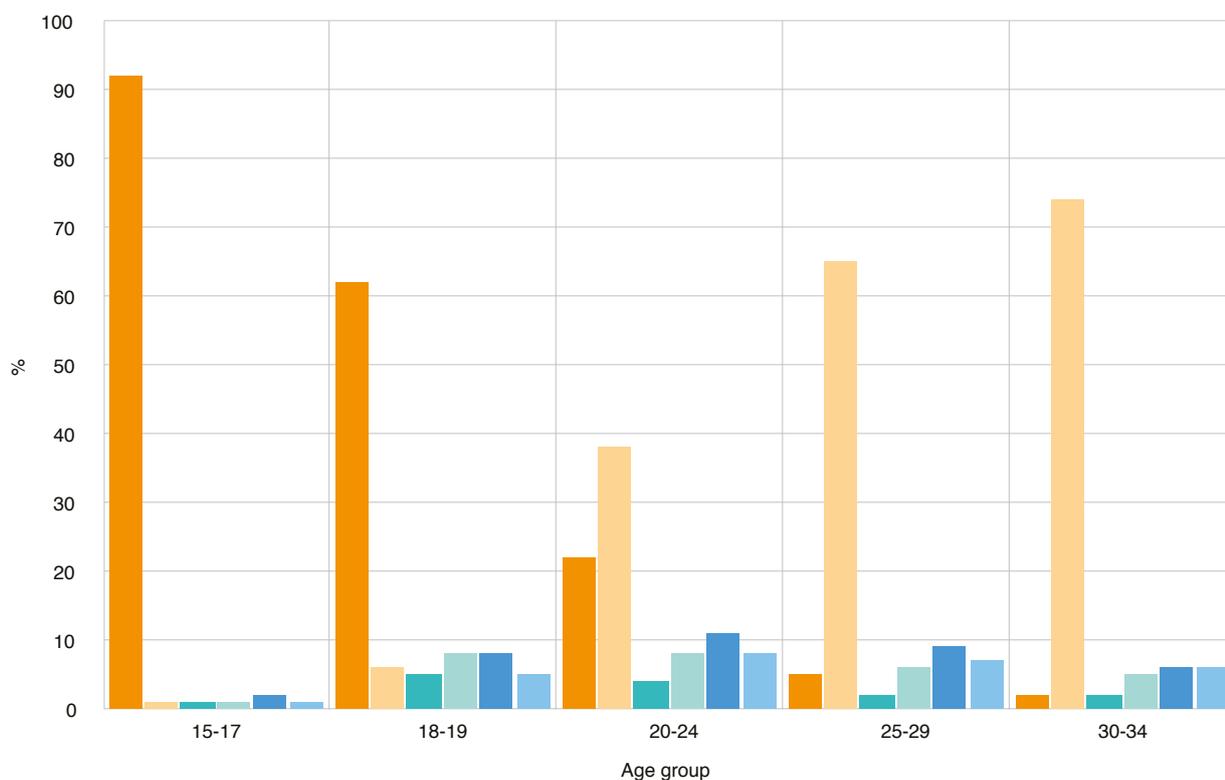


Figure 43b. Republic, Females



- Studying / Attending school
- Household chores / caring for children
- Unable to find a suitable job matching the level of education
- Lack of job opportunity in the island of residence
- All the expenses borne by Family
- Unable to work due to ill health condition/disability

Figure 43c. Malé, Males

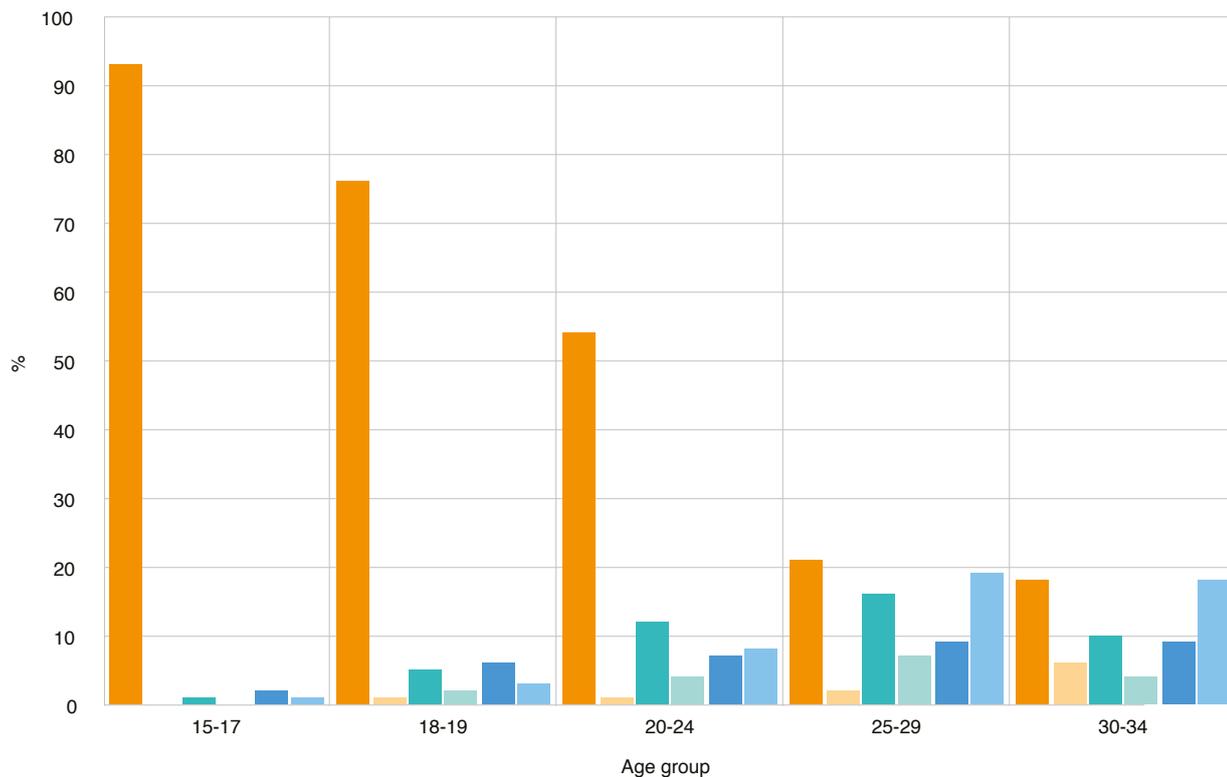
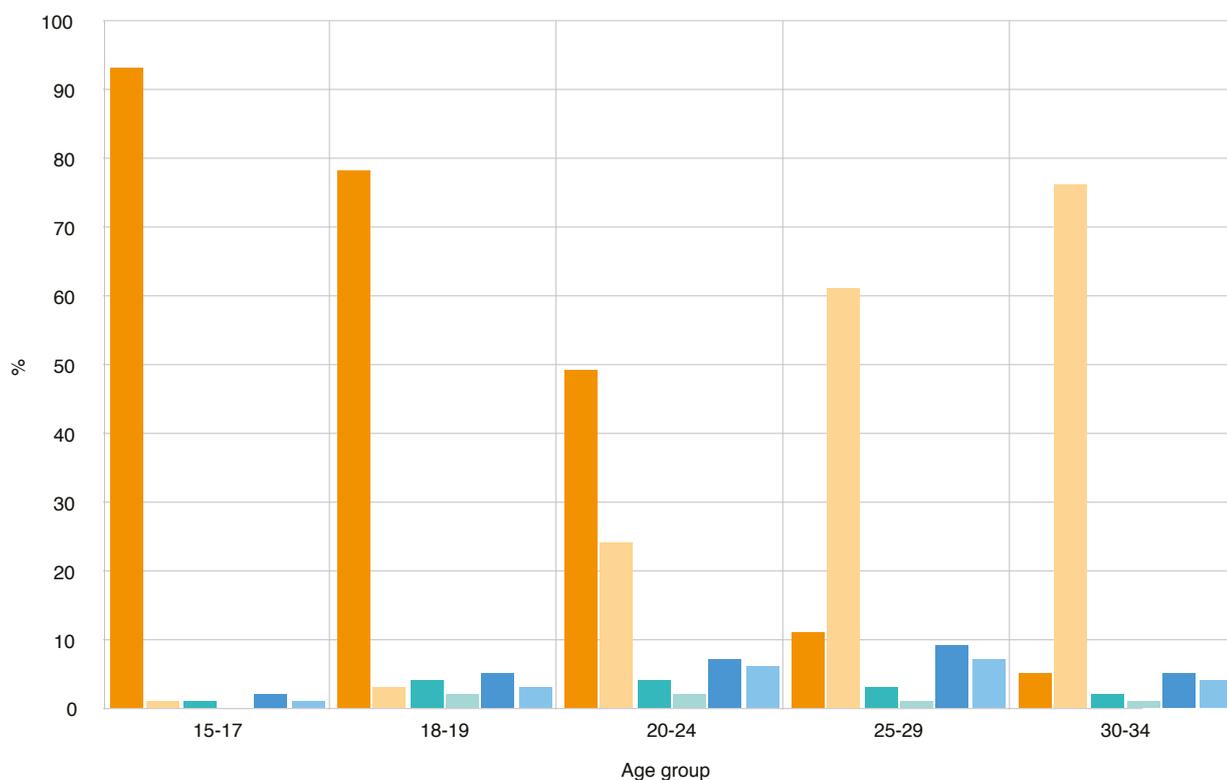


Figure 43d. Malé, Females



- Studying / Attending school
- Household chores / caring for children
- Unable to find a suitable job matching the level of education
- Lack of job opportunity in the island of residence
- All the expenses borne by Family
- Unable to work due to ill health condition/disability

Figure 43e. Atolls, Males

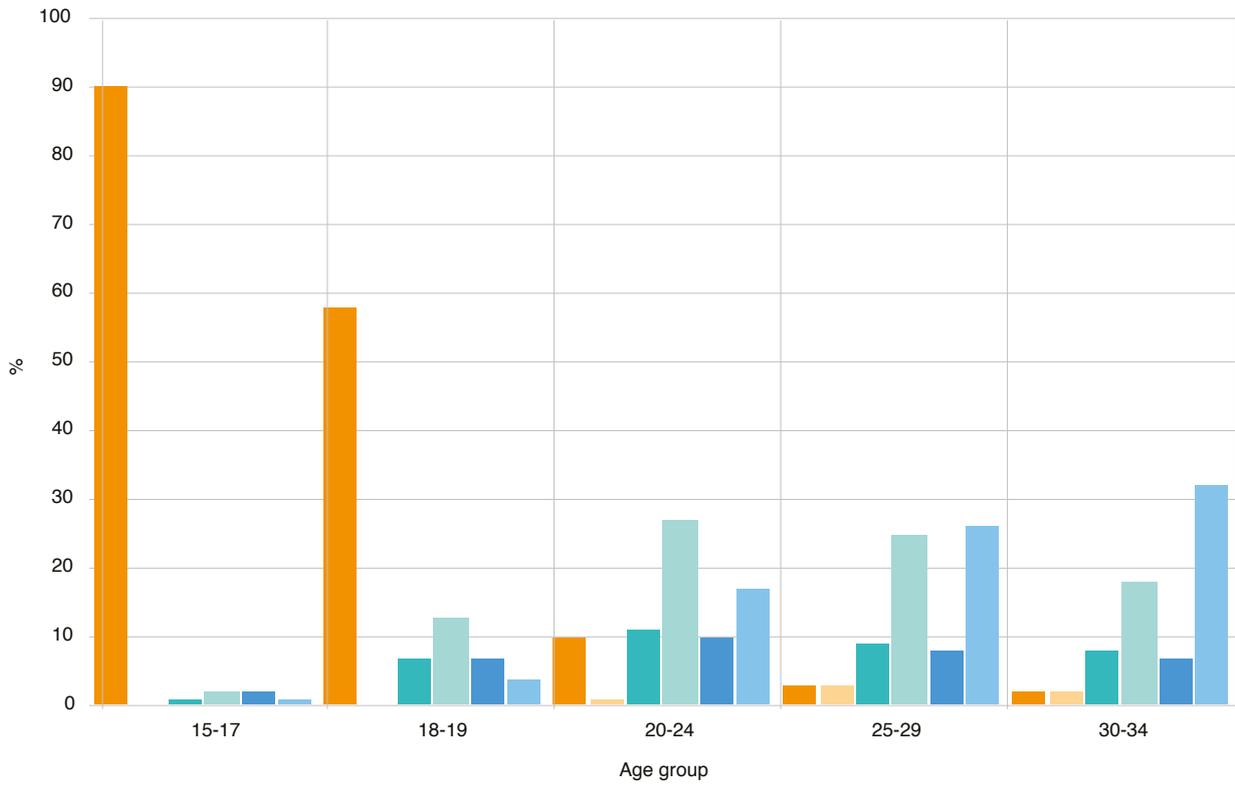
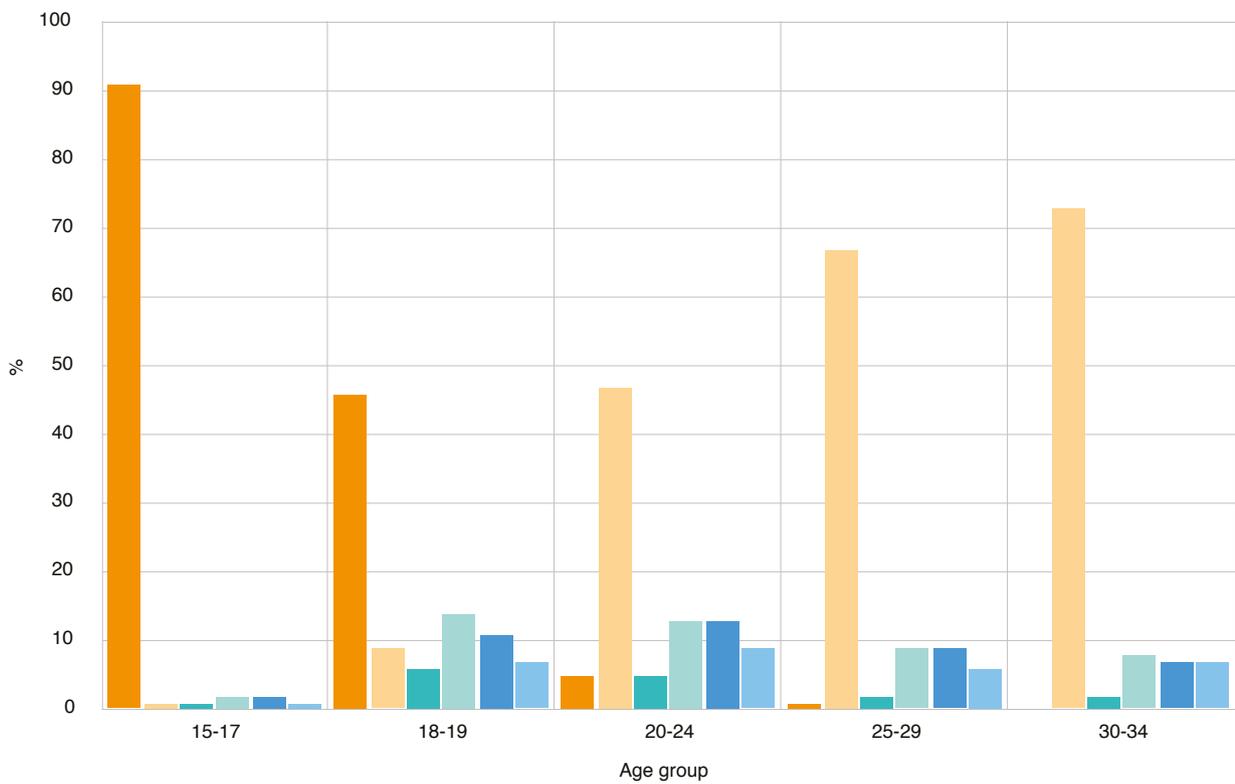


Figure 43f. Atolls, Females



- Studying / Attending school
- Household chores / caring for children
- Unable to find a suitable job matching the level of education
- Lack of job opportunity in the island of residence
- All the expenses borne by Family
- Unable to work due to ill health condition/disability

8.9. Employment status and educational level

The correlation between employment status and educational levels of the youth population is shown in figures 44a to 44c. It shows that a much higher proportion of females with a diploma or degree are employed than those without a certificate. For males, this relationship is not as clear (figure 44a).

With respect to unemployment, males with a diploma or degree are less likely to be unemployed, while this relationship is not as apparent for females (figure 44b).

However, the proportion of males and females outside the labour force is much higher for those without a certificate than those with a diploma or degree, with the exception of women aged 20 to 24 (figure 44c).

Figure 44. Resident Maldivian population by age, sex, employment status and highest educational certificate achieved (in percentages), Maldives: 2014

Figure 44a. Employed

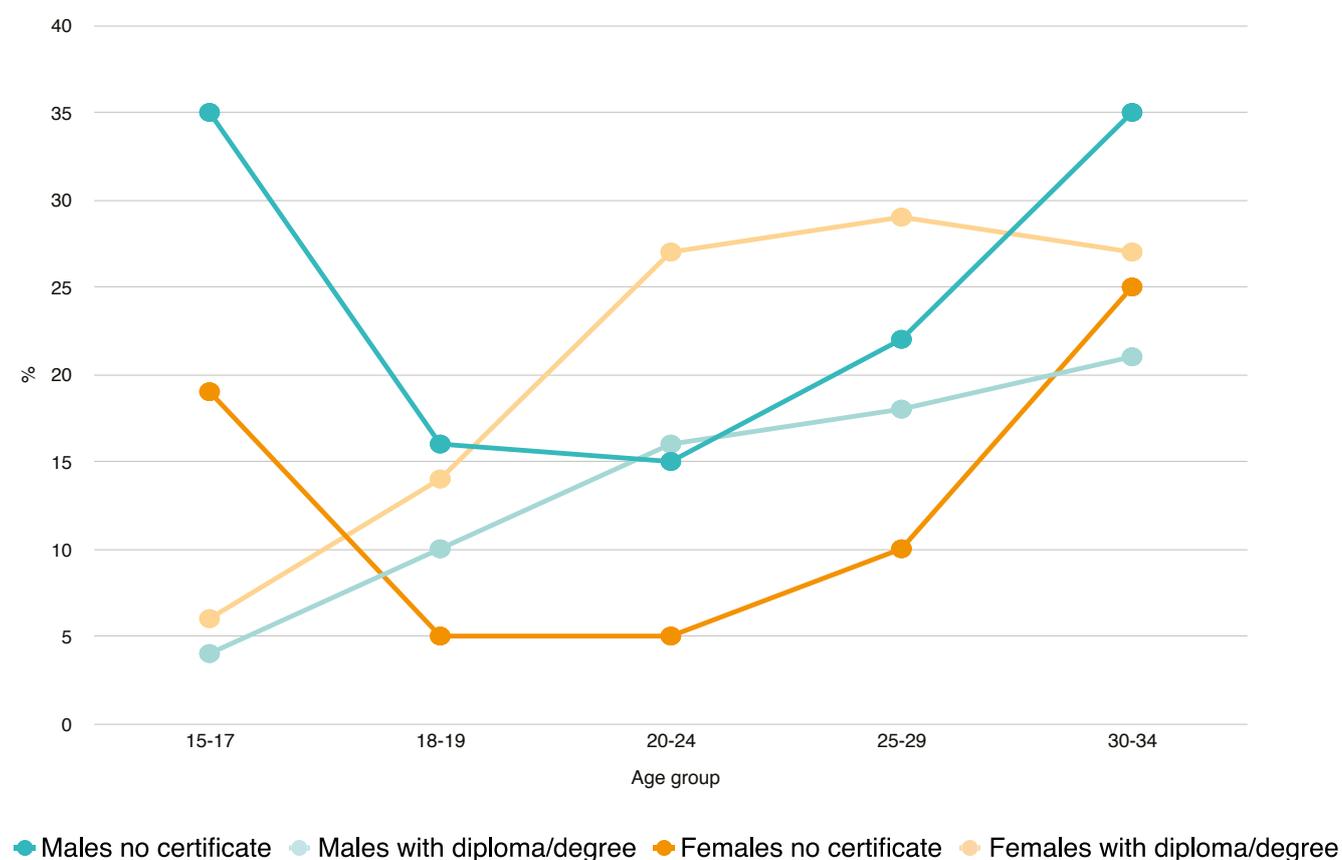


Figure 44b. Unemployed

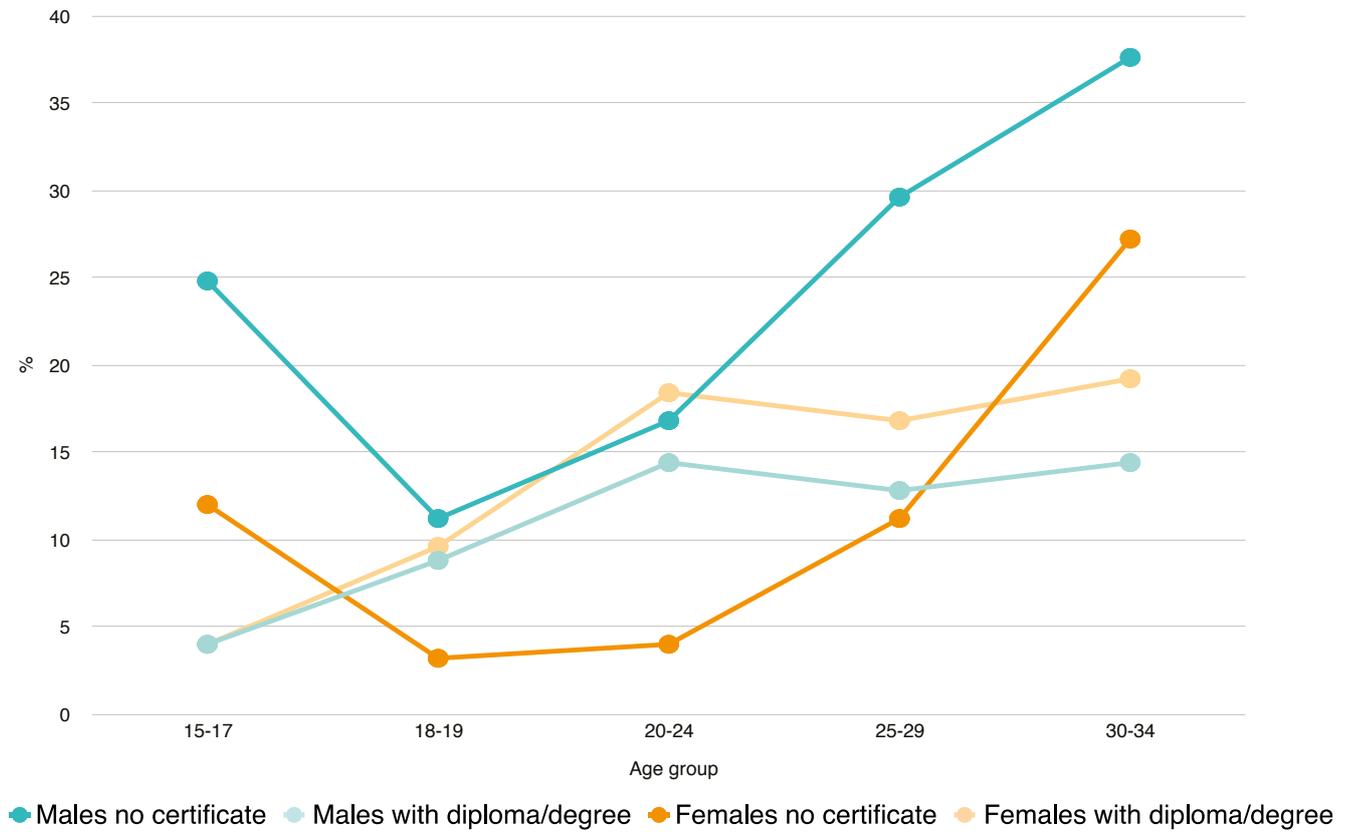
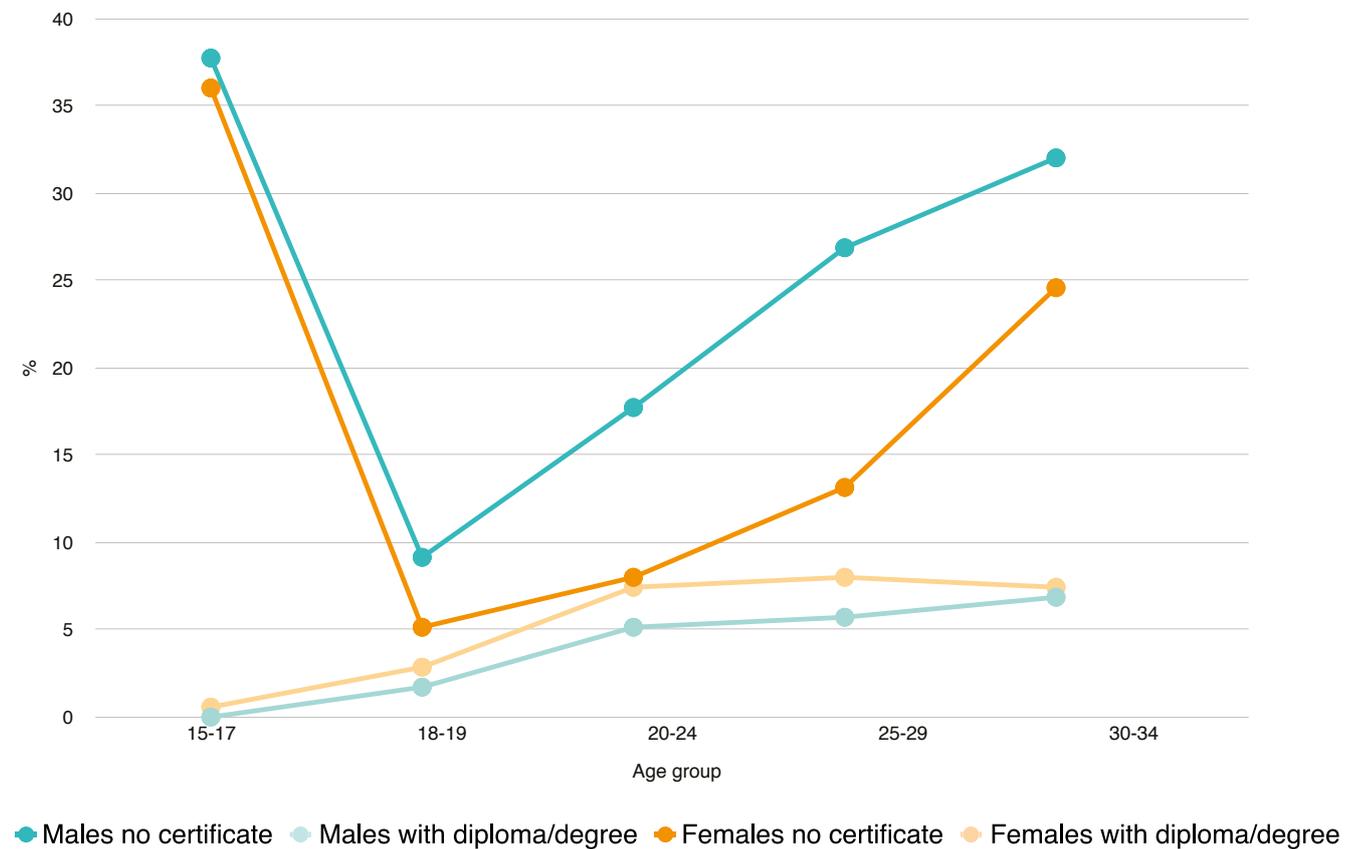


Figure 44c. Not in labour force





9. Gender statistics

Below is a summary of gender statistics derived from the 2014 census.

Population

- The census enumerated more Maldivian males than females. In 2014, there were 171,692 males and 166,472 females. There were also significantly more foreign males (55,787) than females (7,850).
- With respect to the youth population aged 18 to 34, there were about equal number of Maldivian males and females, 59,567 and 59,168, respectively. However, the foreign resident population included 38,596 males and 4,691 females aged 18 to 34.

Marriage

- On average, women tend to get married three years younger than men. In 2014, the average age at marriage for men was 25.8 years and for women 22.5 years.
- Twelve per cent of women and only 2 per cent of men were married at age 18 to 19, and more than half (59 per cent) of females and only about one quarter of males were married at age 20 to 24 years.
- While there does not seem to be a significant difference between males and females with respect to the number of times they marry, the census data suggest that women marry slightly more often than men.
- At age 65 and older, there are about three times as many widows than widowers, and 50 per cent of females are widowed at that age. In contrast, only 16% of males 65 years and older are widowers.

Migration

· The motives to migrate to Malé for people aged 15 to 19 is predominantly for education, especially for females, although from age 20, males also look for employment opportunities in Malé. From age 25, the reason for females to move to Malé is increasingly due to marriage and to care for children as parent or guardian.

Household formation – living independently

· The proportion of males and females living independently,¹¹ meaning that they are the head of a household or are the spouse of a head of household, steadily increases from age 25, where it is 12 per cent for males and 19 for females, to 42 per cent for males and 56 per cent for females at age 34. The proportion of independently living youths is higher for females, and it is higher for those living in Malé than those living in the atolls.

· While from age 20 about 60 per cent of households in Malé are headed by a male, it is the opposite in the atolls, where the majority of households are headed by a woman.

11. For the definition and further explanation on the term 'living independently', please refer to section 6.6

Education

- Women stay longer in school. While young people in general start to leave school significantly after age 16, by age 19, 75 per cent of boys leave school compared to 67 per cent of girls.
- By age 16, the school attendance rate for males falls below three quarters (71 per cent) but is still 87 per cent for females of the same age. The proportion of females remaining in school after age 18 is much higher than that of males.
- Literacy rates of Maldivians in their mother tongue Dhivehi are high for both males and females, with close to 100 per cent literacy. The literacy rate of the foreign resident population in their mother tongues is lower, with 84 per cent literacy.
- With respect to Maldivians' literacy rates in English, it is predominantly young people aged 10 to 29 years who are

literate, although rates decline rapidly for the population 35 years and older, for whom literacy rates in English are higher among males than females.

- A significantly higher proportion of males than females of all age groups is without a certificate. At age 25 to 34, 29 per cent of males and 24 per cent of females are without certificate. At the same time, higher proportions of females 19 years and older are with an academic/vocational certificate/diploma than males of the same age.

It is important that young people have the opportunity to engage in study or employment so that they spend their time productively and develop their skills and confidence. Without study, work or home duties, these youth may need support and other options to use their time constructively. The proportion of males and females aged 15 to 34 who are neither in employment nor studying/training is expressed by the NEET rate. It shows a steady and steep increase from age 15 to 19 when about 27 per cent of males and females are neither employed nor in education or training. For males, from age 19 the NEET rate continuously decreases and stabilizes at 6 per cent for those aged 30 and older.

While the NEET rate is very similar for males and females for ages 15 to 20, it is higher for females 20 years and older; it is 20 per cent for females aged 23 and 13 per cent for females aged 30 and older. The NEET rate is significantly higher for females than males in the atolls.

Employment

- There are 97,000 men and 57,000 women participating in the labour force.
- Of the 8,000 unemployed persons, almost 6,000 (75 per cent) are aged 18 to 34: 3,550 males and 2,440 females.
- Although the average labour force participation rate of the population 15 and older is 78 per cent for men and 47 per cent for women, it plateaus at ages 25 to 49 for men (more than 90 per cent of whom are in the labour force) and at ages 20 to 49 for women (more than 50 per cent of whom are in the labour force).
- In total, there are 87,000 people 15 and older not in the labour force (36 per cent). Of them, 34,000 are aged 18 to 34: 7,000 males and 27,000 females.
- Of the total of 21,000 students, 2,500 were males and 4,200 females aged 18 to 34.
- Almost all people engaged in household chores or caring for children were women (99 per cent), and 14,000 of these women are aged 18 to 34. Only 83 men of the same age are involved with household chores or caring for children.
- A surprisingly large number of people (17,000) did not work because of ill health or disability, although most were people aged 65 and older. However, 2,550 of them were aged 18 to 34 years: 800 males and 1,750 females.
- About 79 per cent of employed Maldivian males and 71 per cent of employed Maldivian females aged 18 to 34 are employees. This same statistic for male and female foreign residents of the same age group is 90 per cent. There are, however, a significantly higher proportion of females than males who are own-account workers and contributing family workers;

on the other hand, there is a higher proportion of males than females who are group workers among Maldivian youth.

· The main industries of employment for the resident Maldivian youth population aged 15 to 34 for males are: accommodation, public administration and defence/ compulsory social security, and fishing and aquaculture.

For females aged 15 to 34, the industries are education, retail trade (except for motor vehicles and motorcycles), and public administration and defence/ compulsory social security.

· The main occupations of the resident Maldivian youth population aged 15 to 34 for males are: fishery workers, hunters and trappers, protective service workers, and domestic hotel and office cleaners and helpers. Females mostly work in teaching, as shop salespersons and as general office clerks.

The correlation between employment status and educational level of the youth population shows that a much higher proportion of females with a diploma or degree are employed than those without a certificate. With respect to unemployment, males with a diploma or degree are less likely to be unemployed, while this relationship is not as obvious for females. However, the proportion of males and females not in the labour force is much higher for those without a certificate than those with a diploma or degree, with the exception of women aged 20 to 24.



10. Demographic dividend

The potential of the Maldives to capitalize on its demographic dividend is worth examining. The demographic dividend refers to the accelerated economic growth resulting from changes in the age structure of a population. However, without the right policies and expanded access of youth to employment, this potential demographic bonus can rapidly turn into a problem.

It is the relationship between young dependents (age group 0 to 14), on the one hand, and active adults (age group 15 to 64), on the other, that signals the period during which a country can seize its demographic dividend.

This relationship is called the child dependency ratio, i.e., the ratio of the population aged 0 to 14 per 100 persons aged 15 to 64. However, it should be stressed that various definitions have been proposed in the literature for the child dependency ratio (children between 0 to 14 or between 0 to 19). Moreover, adults who are underemployed or unemployed should be taken out of the total adult active population in order to calculate the child dependency ratios more accurately. Another approach is to calculate the total dependency ratios, i.e., including children and older dependents. When fertility declines, the child portion of the dependency ratio improves and dependency ratios become more favourable. When population ageing sets in, the older portion of the dependency ratio increases (this is the old age dependency ratio or the ratio of the population aged 65 and over per 100 persons aged 15 to 64). At that time, the overall dependency ratios begin to become less favourable.

According to the Maldives population censuses since 1985, the child dependency ratio decreased from more than 90 during the 1990s to 41 in 2014. The old age dependency ratio was five in 1985 and 1990, and increased to seven in 2014, resulting in an overall dependency ratio of 48 in 2014.

Depending on the level and trend of fertility, the child dependency ratio is affected accordingly. The old age dependency ratio is only affected indirectly through the size of the population 65 years and older in relation to the size of the younger population.

The recent increase in fertility levels will have an adverse effect on the prospects to fully harness the benefits from a possible demographic dividend, as illustrated by the

The **demographic dividend** is the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age structure, mainly when the share of the working-age population (15 to 64) is larger than the non-working-age share of the population (14 and younger, and 65 and older).

UNFPA

UNFPA

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".

projected increase in the proportion of the population aged younger than 15 and the increase of the child dependency ratio until at least 2020.¹² Furthermore, the old age dependency ratio started to increase before the young age dependency ratio has reached its lowest levels (according to the medium fertility projection). Therefore, the overall age dependency ratio will only reach a marginally more favourable level than what it was in 2014 (48.0) during the period 2035-2040 (~46) (figure 45b).

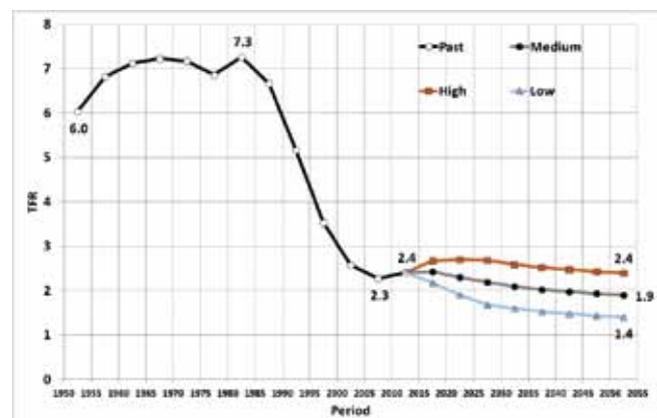
The overall dependency ratio will only fall significantly below the current level of 48 if fertility rates decrease to levels assumed in the low fertility scenario. The dependency ratio is expected to fall to 40 in 2040 (figure 45c).

According to all projection scenarios, the old age dependency ratio will increase to levels between 22 and 26 (figures 45a to 45c).

According to the United Nations, thresholds for low dependency are 'below 30 per cent' for the under-15 population and 'below 15 per cent' for the 65 and older population.¹³ All three projection variants indicate that this will be the case from now until 2050, with the exception that in 2050 the proportion of the population 65 and older might increase to levels above 15 per cent (figures 46a to 46c).

Assuming that the demographic window of opportunity opens when the child dependency ratio falls below the value of 50 (El-Saharty et al., 2014: 10-11), the Maldives

12. For the purpose of this report, and especially the section on the demographic dividend, a set of population projections have been prepared for the Republic, Malé, and the atolls. The projections include three different scenarios that differ by assumptions made on the future level and trend of fertility, as follows:



13. Parfait M. Eloundou-Enyegue (2013), "Harnessing a demographic dividend: challenges and opportunities in high and intermediate fertility countries". Population Division Expert Paper, No. 2013/7, p. 5.

has in fact already entered the demographic window. The challenge now will be to capitalize on the demographic dividend through the right mix of socioeconomic policies and good governance practices.

Capitalizing on the demographic dividend will require investments to improve human capital (for example, education and health) together with a wide spectrum of sound socioeconomic interventions and good governance policies (Gribble and Bremner, 2012). In this respect, assessing the quality of current investments is crucial. The Maldives has high social spending (including for youth, health and education), but it is yet to be determined if this spending is producing the much needed results.

In the future, the Maldives will have to prioritize policies that capitalize on the demographic dividend more than it has done in past decades. In particular, analysis of the demographic dividend will need to take into account the employment potential of the currently high number of unemployed youth, and link this issue to migration policies that place foreign workers in positions that Maldivians could occupy. In addition, the analysis of the demographic dividend will need to look at the income levels of the various segments of the population (using a wealth quintiles classification).

Last but not least, the Maldives will need to pay more attention to population ageing, which will emerge inexorably as the country goes through the final stages of its demographic transition. In particular, the Maldives will have to reassess the role of funded pensions and determine which retirement security system is most appropriate for its population in the decades to come (Jackson and Nakashima, 2015).

Figure 45. Dependency ratios according to three projection scenarios, Maldives: 2014-2050

Figure 45a. High fertility scenario

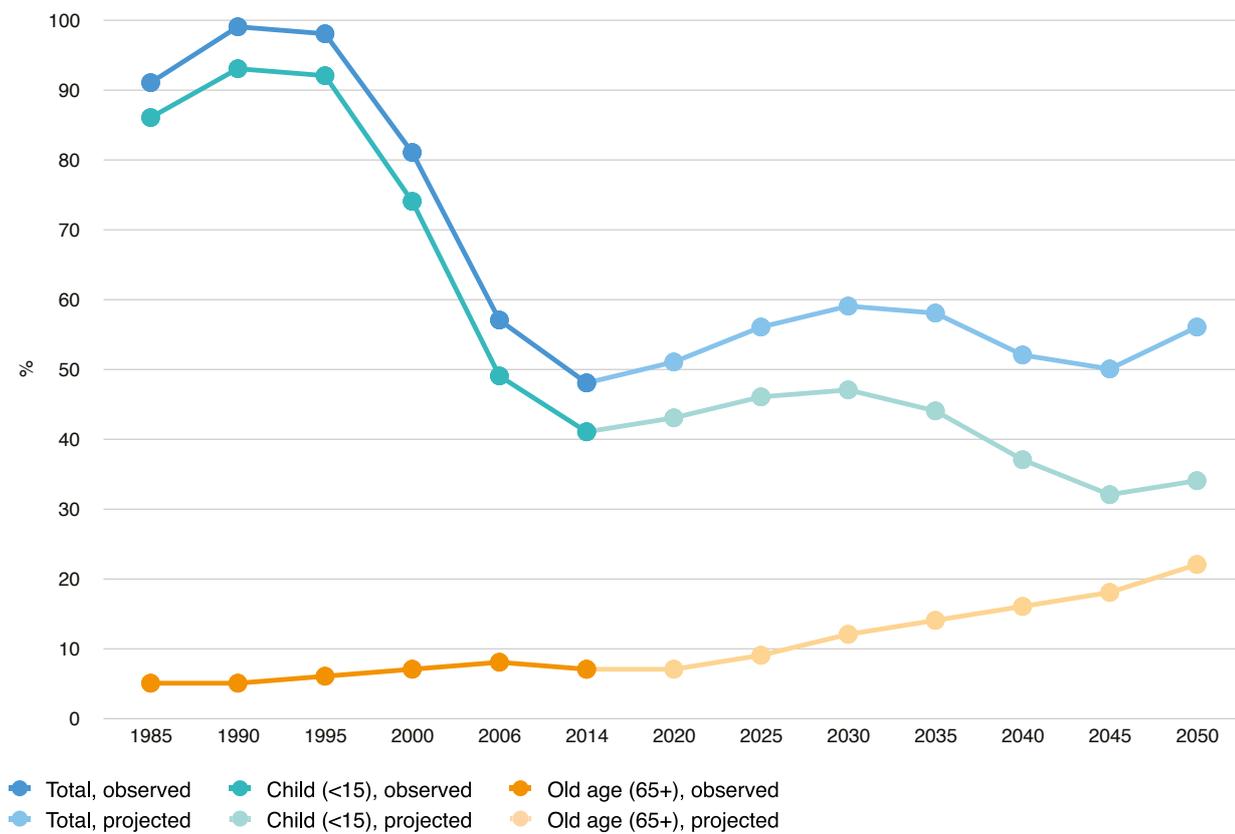


Figure 45b. Medium fertility scenario

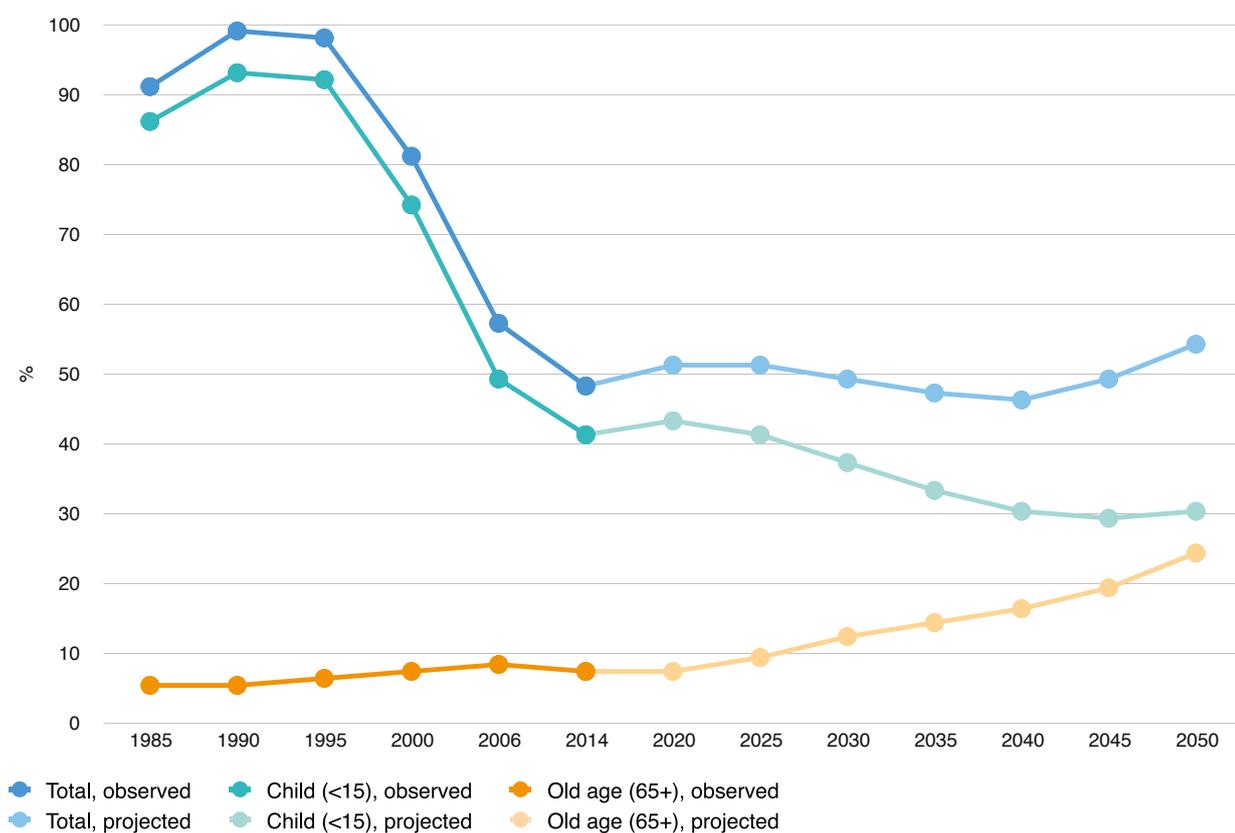


Figure 45c. Low fertility scenario

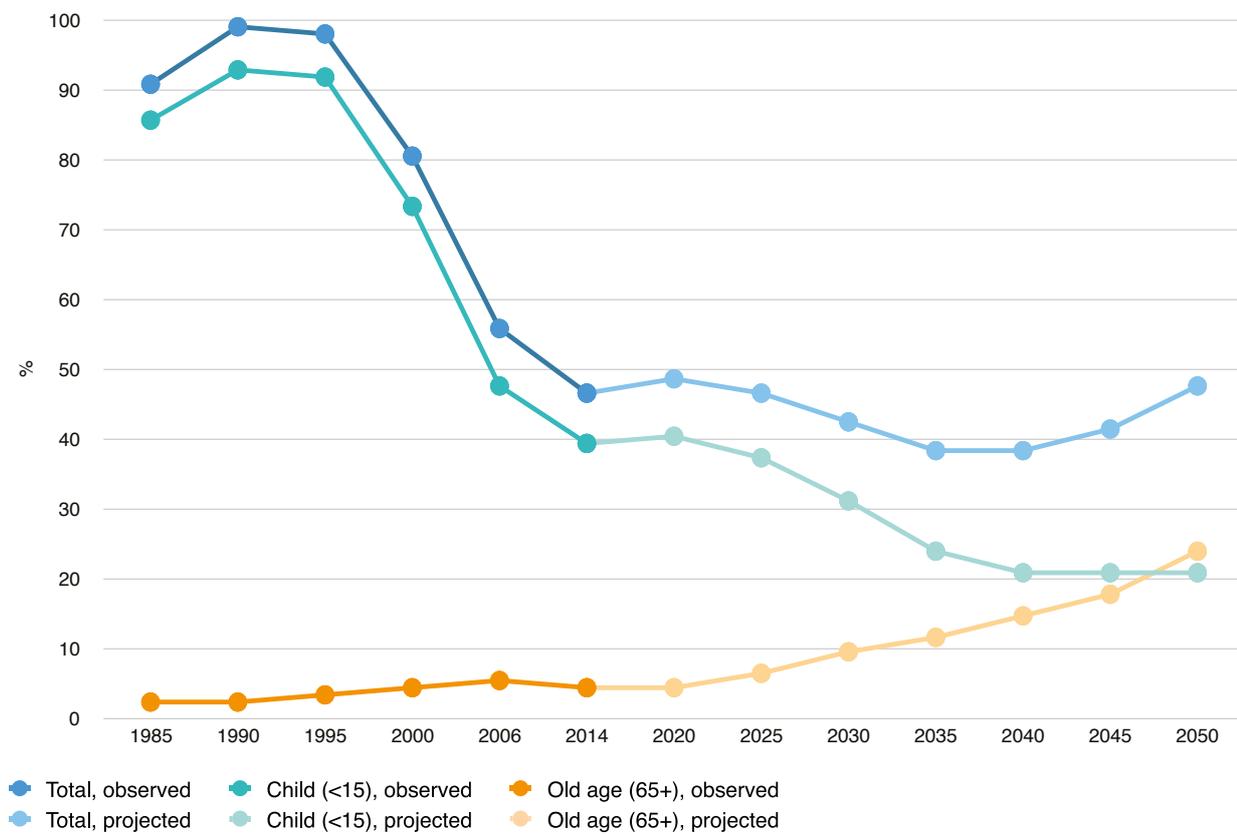


Figure 46. Proportion of population aged younger than 15 (<15) and proportion 65 years and older (65+) according to three projection scenarios, Maldives: 2014-2050

Figure 46a. High fertility scenario

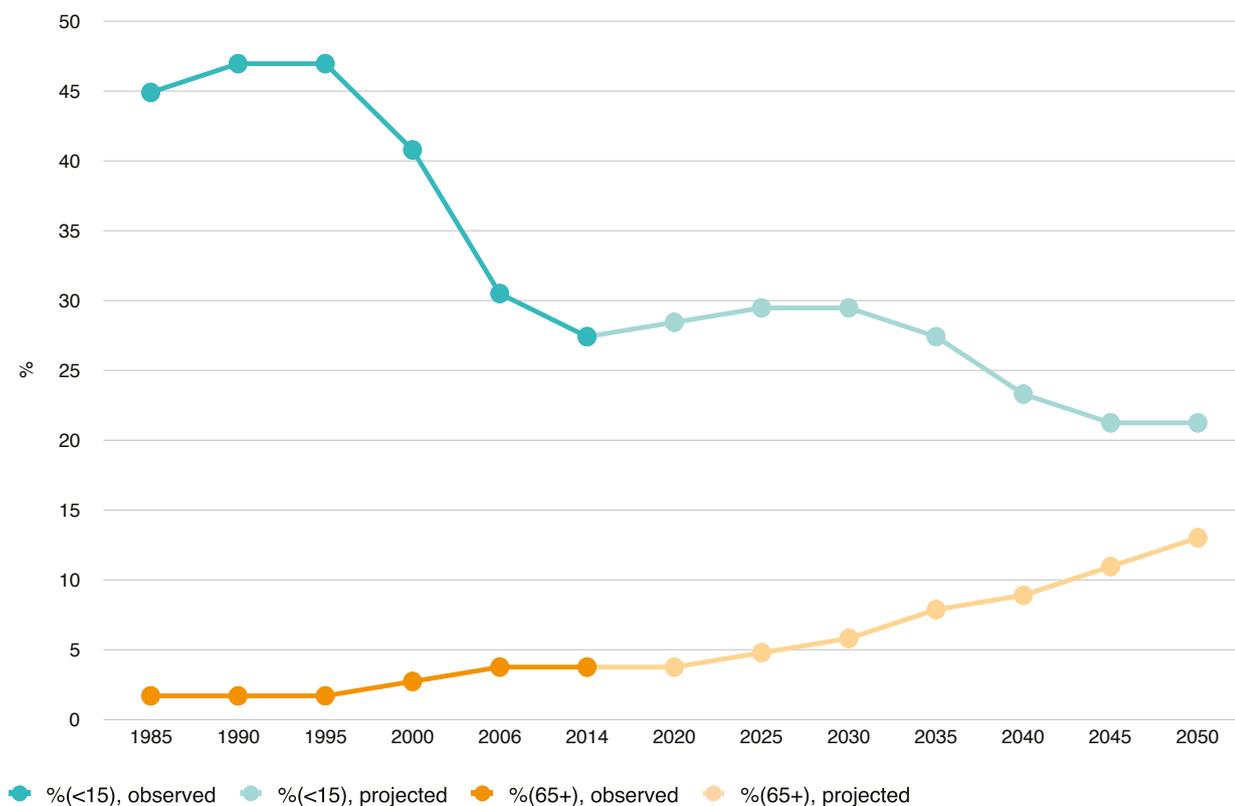


Figure 46b. Medium fertility scenario

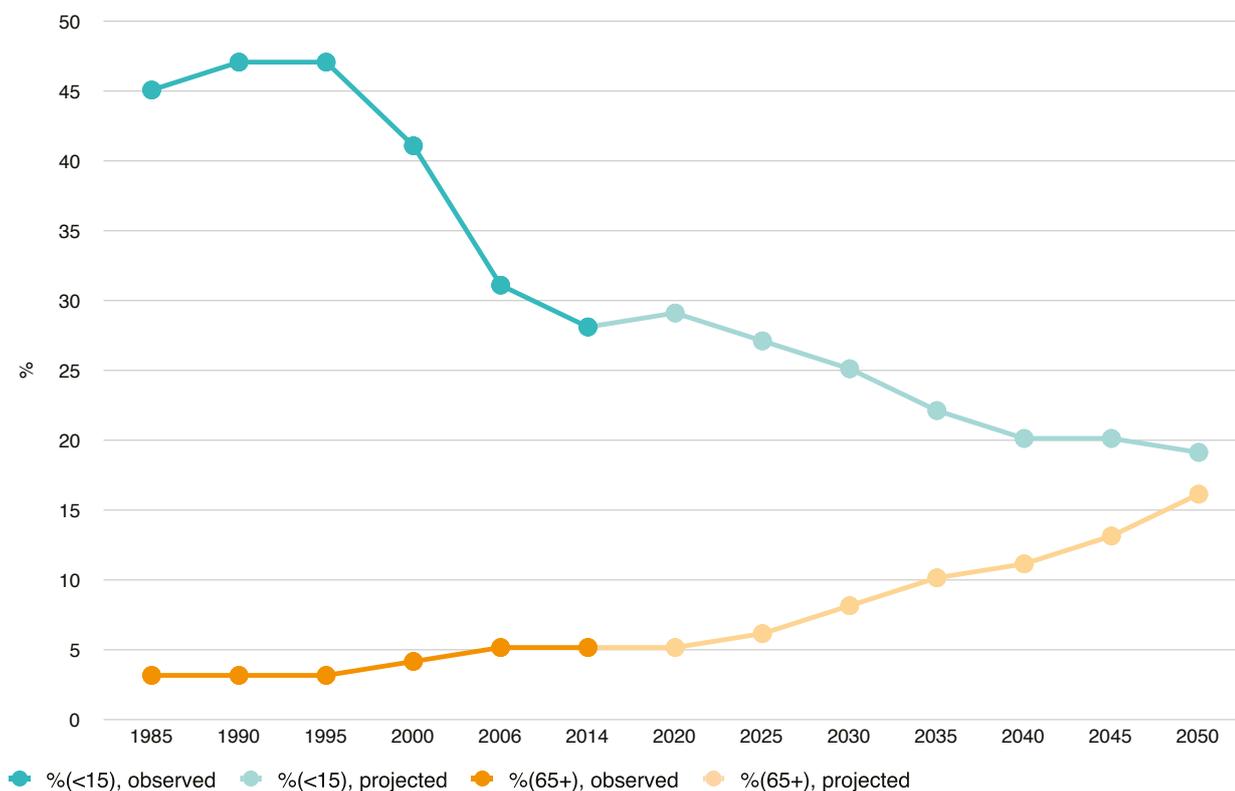
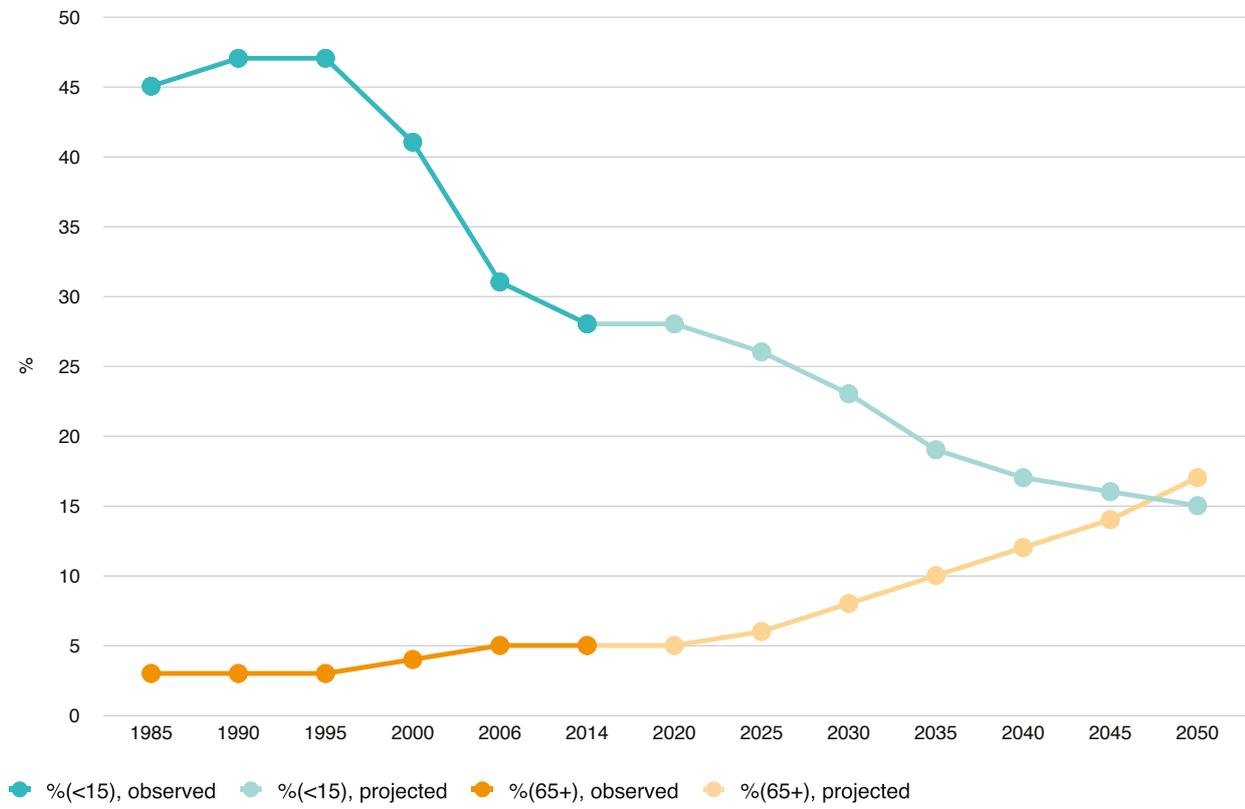


Figure 46c. Low fertility scenario





11. Policy implications of findings

“The future of humanity and of our planet lies in our hands. It lies also in the hands of today's younger generation who will pass the torch to future generations.”

2030 Agenda, paragraph 53.

11.1. Introduction

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their 169 targets were adopted in 2015. Sixty-five out of the 169 SDG targets reference young people explicitly or implicitly, with a focus on empowerment, participation and/or wellbeing. There are 20 youth-specific targets spread over six key SDGs:

Goal 2 (hunger);
Goal 4 (education);
Goal 5 (gender equality);
Goal 8 (decent work);
Goal 10 (inequality); and
Goal 13 (climate change).

Young people's involvement is also key if the call for participation, inclusion, accountability and revitalized global engagement embedded in Goal 16 (peaceful, just and inclusive societies) and Goal 17 (partnerships and implementation) are to be achieved.¹⁴

The Maldives should develop its youth policies in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals and other related global agreements, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Most of all, it should be guided by facts and statistical evidence, such as the 2014 census data.

14. UNDP, “Youth as partners for the implementation of the SDGs”, Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, January 2016.

11.2. Existing policies pertaining to young people

This section provides a summary of youth policies and strategies currently in place or for consideration.

1. Design policies and strategies that are youth focused

- The 2004 population policy addresses youth in its goal 14: “Provide population education to children, adolescent and adults” (Ministry of Planning and National Development, 2004).
- The goal of the 2011-2015 National Youth Health Strategy is to: promote and maintain optimal health and wellbeing of youth; provide evidence-based approaches to guide and deliver effective and efficient youth programmes; improve the quality of life of youth, including mainstream, vulnerable and high risk youth as well as youth with health needs and disabilities; and coordinate and collaborate among stakeholders to provide comprehensive youth health services (Ministry of Human Resources, Youth and Sport, 2015).

2. Ensure a holistic approach to policy development and follow-up actions

- The gender policy draft is an example of an inclusive policy that links to Islam, values, human rights, the constitution, and government policies and strategies. In this way, the policy is more likely to be adopted and implemented by stakeholders (Maldives Gender National Policy, Draft 2, 2015).

3. Foster the active participation of all key stakeholders to ensure sustainability

- Growing awareness of the scope of domestic violence has prompted the Government’s commitment to zero tolerance for family violence, the development of new laws and policies (Ibid).
- The Government set national health standards in 2013 on malnutrition, mental health, substance abuse, unsafe abortions, maternal health, unwanted pregnancies, accidents and injuries, sexually transmitted infections and HIV, domestic violence, gender-

based violence, sexual abuse and non-communicable diseases (Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization and UNFPA, 2015).

· The Government continues to recognize that reproductive health is a crucial component of general health, as stated in the National Reproductive Health Strategy, 2014-2018. It is seen as a major facilitating service for achieving the right of the individual and couples to protect their reproductive health and to take responsibility for their reproductive functions. It underscores the Government's commitment to implementing the ICPD Programme of Action and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. This strategy also links to the Health Master Plan, 2016-2025, (Ministry of Health, National Reproductive Health Strategy 2014-2018).

· In order to address the issue of overcrowded housing, the Government is committed to providing social housing and the private sector has agreed to develop condominiums as part of the official housing policy (Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, 2008). Since 2013, the Government has strengthened national policies on housing, which includes the rapid expansion and development of the reclaimed island of Hulhumale in the North Malé Atoll, focused on population concentration.

· The Government may use a quota system to ensure more equal participation and representation of women and men in decision-making and governance (Maldives Gender National Policy, Draft 2, 2015).

· The Government may consider setting up an outer islands development grant fund in the form of community grants

and business loans to support ventures of young men and women living on the outer islands.

4. Encourage and foster youth in decision-making bodies

- Promoting youth participation in the design of policies and programmes, such as the national youth policy and the preventative health care programme for young men and women, is crucial. The Manifesto on Youth has created a very dynamic movement for youth participation and engagement in various spheres of socioeconomic life in the Maldives. The outcome is now visible in many areas, including in most decision-making bodies in the parliament, the judiciary and the cabinet.

5. Encourage participation from youth, the private sector and the community

It is important to:

- Involve religious leaders as advocates for gender equality

(as found in Islam) and sexual health.

- Engage youth groups in the design and implementation of the National Youth Campaign, with assistance of United Nations organizations (UNDP 2015).

- Encourage local communities to provide venues for youth, places to meet, discuss issues and actions, access information and build networks and skills.

- Encourage the private sector to train young people in job-market-relevant skills, including through internships and programmes that allow them to gain work experience.

6. Create opportunities for youth

- To improve research on youth, consider hiring young people from the atolls to help design the questionnaire and collect data.

- Promote private sector financing of a mentoring

programme to support youth business ventures.

- Implement the current policy on skills development in formal education in schools.

Moreover, two policy documents of the Maldives pertain to youth: (a) The National Youth Health Strategy (Republic of Maldives, 2011) aims at promoting and maintaining complete, physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual health and wellbeing of Maldivian youth with the view to improving their quality of life; (b) The document National Standards for Adolescents and Youth Friendly Health Services defines adolescent and youth friendly health services through the use of national standards. These national standards have been developed to address the challenges identified with the current provision of health services to adolescents and young people. An annex of the National Standards for Adolescents and Youth Friendly Health Services elaborates on the package of services that is to be made accessible to all young people at the primary, secondary and tertiary-level health system of the Maldives.

All these policy documents could be revised and/or improved in order to prioritize sexual and reproductive health. For instance, a revised Health Master Plan could include specific strategies focusing on sexual and reproductive health. It is also necessary to include sexual education in the school curriculum. In addition, the policy documents and strategies of the Maldives should stress several overall development goals that aim to:

- Develop education at the secondary and tertiary levels.

- Provide jobs training for young people.

- Tackle climate change.

- Address migration issues, including sex ratio imbalances

(huge excess of male versus female migrants).

- Formulate strategies and policies in anticipation of the population aging process.

11.3. Main findings of the 2014 census and possible policy implications

Finally, here are the main findings of the 2014 census with respect to young people aged 18 to 34:

- The **motives for young people to migrate** from the atolls to Malé is **predominantly for education**.

Especially for females, although, from age 20, males also seek employment opportunities in Malé. To stem this trend, education and employment opportunities need to be made available in the outer islands (atolls).

- A **surprisingly large number of people do not work because of ill health or disability**; 23 per cent of males aged 25 to 29 and 27 per cent of males aged 30 to 34 reported some level of ill health or disability that prevented them from working, indicating there is a significant proportion of young males with serious health issues and disabilities.

It is recommended to urgently look into the cause of these particular health issues in order to establish preventative measures to keep young people in good health.

- **Secondary school attainment is more positive for girls than boys**. A significantly higher

proportion of males than females of all age groups is without a certificate.

The reasons for boys' poorer educational performance need to be investigated and measures put in place to improve their learning skills.

- The **correlation between employment status and educational level** of the youth population shows that a much higher proportion of females with a diploma or degree are employed than those without a certificate.

With respect to unemployment, males with a diploma or degree are less likely to be unemployed, while this relationship is not as obvious for females. However, the proportion of males and females not in the labour force is much higher for those without a certificate than those with a diploma or degree.

- It is **important that young people have the opportunity to engage in study or employment** so that they can use their time productively and develop their skills and confidence.

Without study, work or home duties, these young people may need support and other options to use their time constructively. The proportion of males and females aged 15 to 34 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET rate) increases from age 15 to age 19, accounting for about 27 per cent of males and females. While the NEET rate is very similar for males and females ages 15 to 20, it is higher for females 20 years and older. The NEET rate is significantly higher for females than males in the atolls. If women engaged in household chores and/or caring for children are included in the

NEET calculation, almost half of women aged 30 to 34 would be considered 'not in education, employment or training'.

· Young people make up a significant proportion of the labour force with more than half (54 per cent) of the labour force aged 18 to 34, and 23 per cent aged 15 to 24.

It is important that young people have the opportunity to develop their skills and confidence through further studies and skills training so that they can adapt to developments in the labour market.

· Of the 8,000 unemployed persons, almost 6,000 (75 per cent) are aged 18 to 34: 3,550 males and 2,440 females.

It is often difficult for school leavers, who have little or no work experience, to gain employment. This is especially so in small island countries where the economy is narrow and jobs are limited. At 7.2 per cent, the unemployment rate for young people is higher than the national average (5.2 per cent). This finding is not unique to the Maldives and is typically a result of the challenges young people face when transitioning from school to work – they have not yet acquired the skills and experience that make them valued in the workplace. There might be opportunities to provide more options for teenagers to transition to the workplace. This is a particular challenge for the outer islands where fewer opportunities exist. Migration to Malé, or elsewhere, increases the possibility of gaining work experience, which internships, work attachments and apprenticeship programmes can facilitate.

Nurturing business development and entrepreneurship are important life skills that can be cultivated through focused programmes and support for young people. Such activities can provide young people with opportunities to exploit their creativity and initiative.

Management of personal finances and money is a key life skill that will affect the lives of all Maldivians in their youth and for the rest of their lives. Having young people manage their money effectively not only provides

personal short and long-term benefits, but can also contribute to a more sustainable and vibrant economy in the future, with young people making smarter decisions about investment and finance. Developing 'financial literacy' in youth can be achieved through the formal education system and programmes provided by the private sector and banks.





GLOSSARY

Indicator	Definition	Indicator	Definition
Age dependency ratio	Number of people in the “dependent” age category (population younger than 15 years plus population 60 years and older) per 100 persons in the “economically productive ages” of 15 to 59.	Labour force	People employed (cash work plus village work) and unemployed (excludes those not seeking employment).
Singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM)	Approximation of average age of marriage based on proportion of population never married (single).	Labour force participation rate	Proportion of people in the labour force (by a given age and sex), as part of the corresponding total number of people of the same age and sex.
Balance equation	Population growth = births – deaths + net migration.	Language ability	See literacy rate.
Births – estimated number for 2009	Estimated age-specific fertility rates (ASFR) multiplied by enumerated number of women by age in 2009.	Life expectancy at birth	Number of years a newborn baby can expect to live on average.
Child-woman ratio (CWR)	Number of children under age five per 1,000 women aged 15 to 49.	Life expectancy at age 20	Number of additional years a 20 year old can expect to live on average.
Child mortality rate (1q5)	The probability of dying between ages one and five.	Literacy rate	Proportion of the population aged 15 and older, or 15 to 24, who are able to read and write a simple sentence in any language.
Crude birth rate (CBR)	Estimated number of births per 1,000 population (7,335/234,023 X 1,000).	Living independently	People who have formed their own household and are the head of household or are the spouse of a head of household.
Crude death rate (CDR)	Estimated number of deaths per 1,000 population (1,260/234,023 X 1,000).	Mean age at childbearing	Average age of women when giving birth.
Crude net migration rate	Rate of growth minus rate of natural increase.	Median age	The age at which exactly half the population is older and half is younger.
Deaths – estimated number for 2009	Estimated age-specific death rates [m(x)] by sex (from life table, [m(x)] multiplied by enumerated population by age and sex in 2009).	NEET	Not in education, employment or training.
Employment-population ratio	Proportion of employed people in cash work (by a given age and sex), as part of the corresponding total number of people of the same age and sex.	Rate of growth (percentage)	Average annual growth rate during 1999-2009.
General fertility rate	Annual number of births per 1,000 women of childbearing age (15 to 49).	Rate of natural increase	Crude birth rate (CBR) minus crude death rate (CDR).
Infant mortality rate (IMR)	Number of infant deaths (children younger than one year) per 1,000 births.	Sex ratio	Number of males per 100 females.
Institutions	Boarding schools, prisons, hospitals, and hotels, hostels and guesthouses.	Teenage fertility rate	Number of births by women aged 15 to 19 per 1,000 persons.
Intercensal period	Time period between two censuses.	Total fertility rate (TFR)	Average number of children per woman.
		Under five mortality (q5)	The probability of dying between birth and age five.

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National Bureau of Statistics
Ministry of Finance and Treasury,
Ameenee Magu, Male' 20125, Republic of Maldives
info@stats.gov.mv www.statisticsmaldives.gov.mv

UNFPA Maldives Country Office
3rd Floor, Shinetree Building, Boduthakurufaanu Magu,
Maafannu, Male' 20184, Republic of Maldives
maldives.office@unfpa.org http://maldives.unfpa.org

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