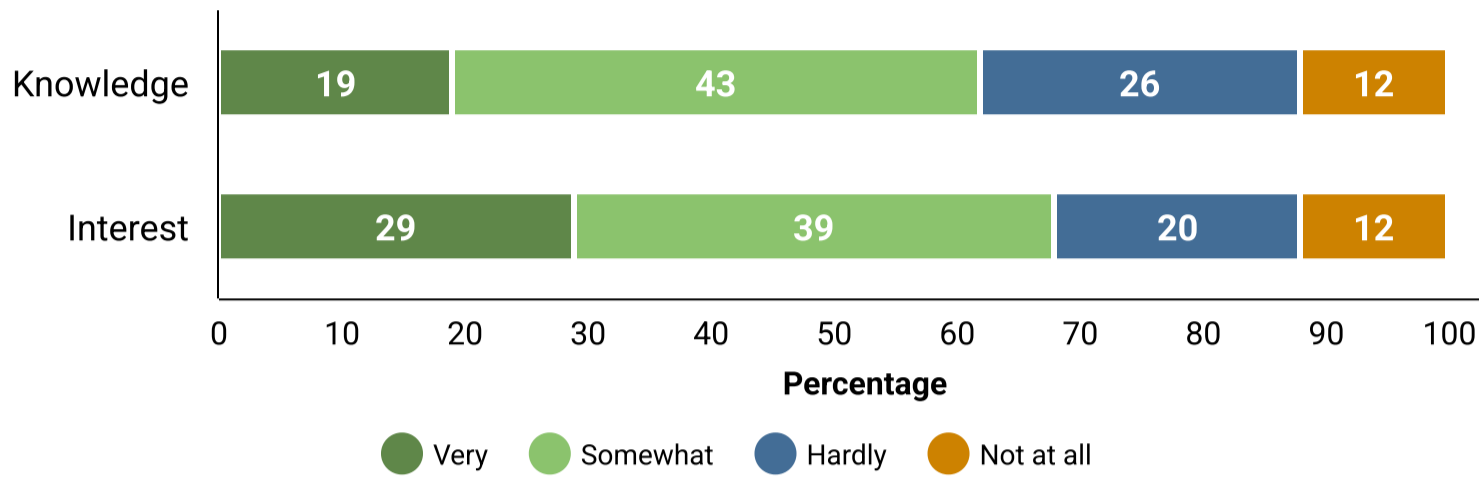


# OUR KNOWLEDGE, OUR STORIES. SOUTH AFRICANS' CONNECTION WITH TRADITIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Knowledge takes many forms. While modern science relies on analytical and reductionist methods, traditional knowledge emphasises intuition and holistic understanding. Both of these forms of knowledge are vital and worth promoting.

By *traditional knowledge*, we mean local knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society and usually passed from generation to generation. It is also referred to as indigenous knowledge.

## Perceived knowledge and interest in traditional S&T



62% of the public felt they were 'somewhat' or 'very' knowledgeable about traditional S&T, while 68% were 'somewhat' or 'very' interested in these areas.

KNOWLEDGE AND INTEREST



PROMISE OF TRADITIONAL S&T

## Promise of traditional S&T



64%

Traditional small-scale farming provides healthy food for many South Africans



63%

Traditional knowledge provides solutions to improve the quality of life



48%

People should visit a traditional healer in times of difficulty

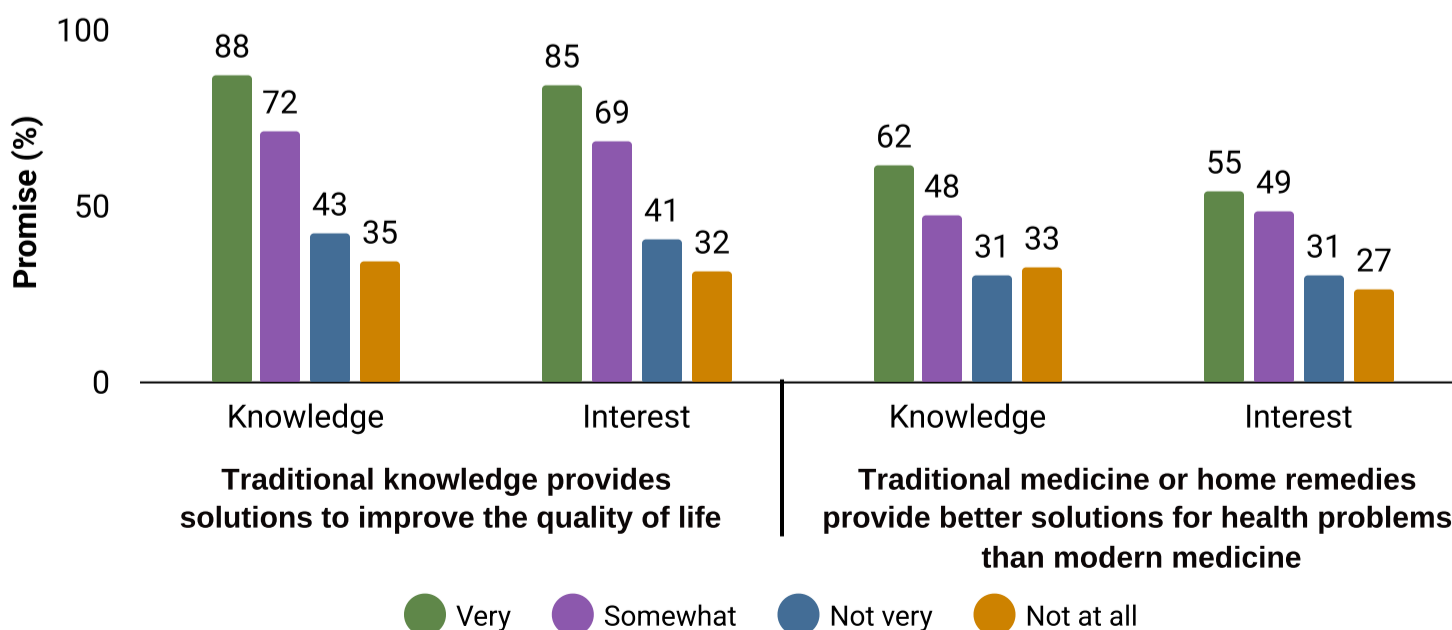


45%

Traditional medicine or home remedies provide better solutions for health problems than modern medicine

Nearly two-thirds of the public saw the value of small-scale farming and traditional knowledge in improving quality of life, but fewer turned to traditional healers and medicine.

## How are measures of knowledge and interest related to attitudes of promise in traditional S&T?



Those with higher levels of knowledge of, and interest in, traditional S&T had more positive attitudes. This pattern was evident across all 4 promise items.

INTEREST, KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES



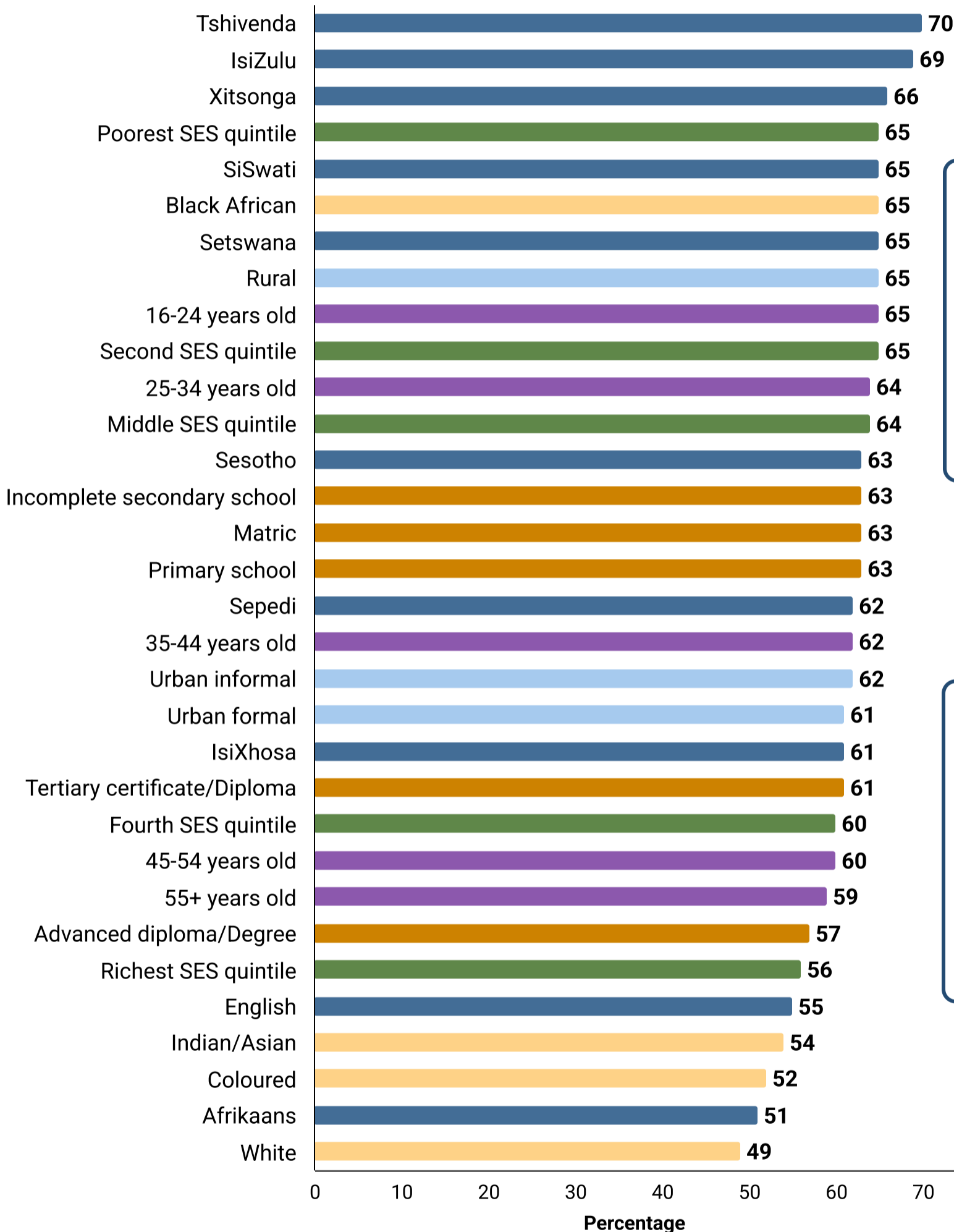
# DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES RELATED TO THE PROMISE OF TRADITIONAL S&T



## Promise attitudes by different socio-demographic characteristics

We created an *Index of promise towards traditional S&T* from the four promise items, on a 0–100 scale, with higher scores representing attitudes of greater promise.

Views on the promise of traditional S&T varied widely, with average scores ranging from 49 to 70 across several socio-demographic characteristics, including home language, socio-economic status (SES) quintiles, population group, geographic location, age, and education level.



The highest promise was reported among Tshivenda, isiZulu, Xitsonga, siSwati and Setswana speakers, rural residents, those in lower socio-economic groups (quintiles), Black African adults, and young people aged 16–24.

**National mean score:**  
**62**

In contrast, the lowest promise scores were recorded among White, Coloured and Indian/Asian adults, Afrikaans and English speakers, those in higher socio-economic groups, and people with a tertiary education.

In South Africa, traditional (indigenous) S&T play a vital role in preserving cultural identity, supporting sustainable farming and healthcare, protecting biodiversity, and generating economic opportunities through the commercialisation of traditional knowledge.

Traditional S&T is most valued by young, rural, Black South Africans who speak indigenous languages. By sharing these lessons across cultures — especially on days like Heritage Day — we make science feel closer, more valuable, and more relevant to all South Africans.