



HelpAge

International

Country profile:

The rights and wellbeing of older persons in Kuwait

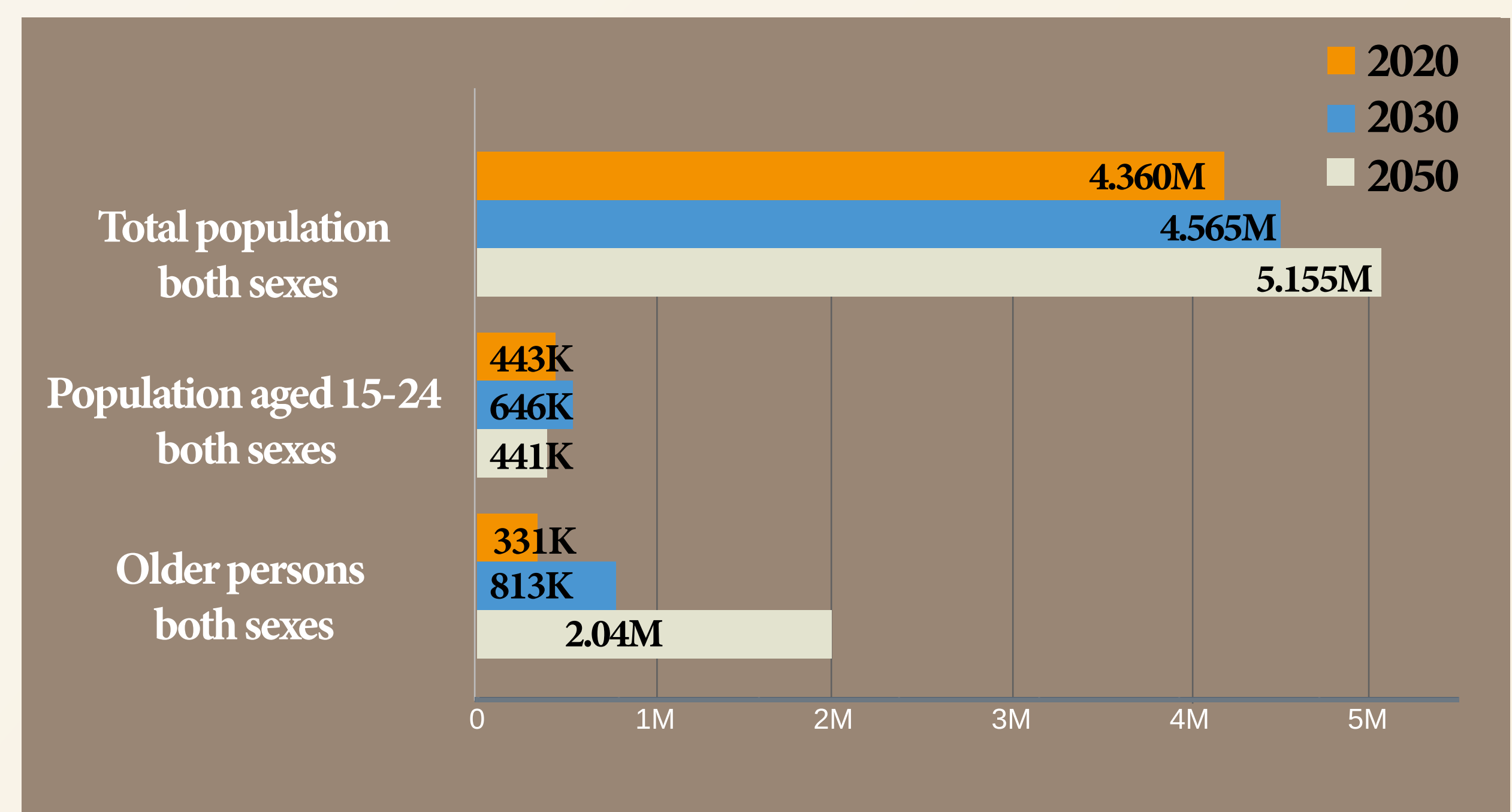
This infographic is part of the set of country profiles on ageing across the Arab region. Drawing on the latest openly available data from 2015 - 2020, it highlights the situation of older women and men¹ in relation to income, health, education, autonomy and safety, and how national systems and national strategies on ageing address their needs and their rights in these areas. These country profiles aim to help examine the progress towards older persons' inclusion in the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as to identify opportunities to strengthen national strategies and data.²



GENERAL CONTEXT

Number and proportion of older and younger persons, 2020 - 2050^{3 i}

Kuwait is going through a demographic shift as the number of persons aged 60+ is expected to increase six-fold between 2020 - 2050 from 331,000 (7.6% of the total population) to 2.04 million (39.6%).

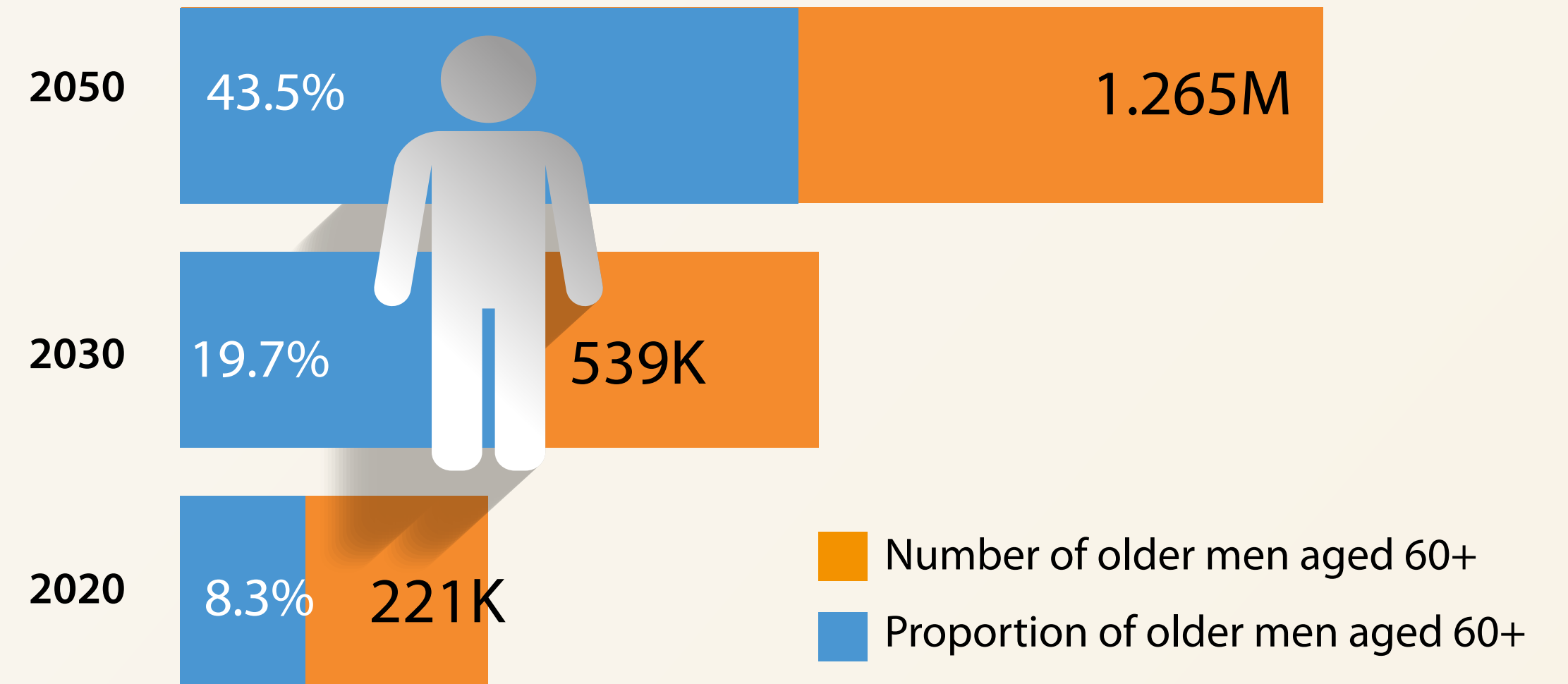
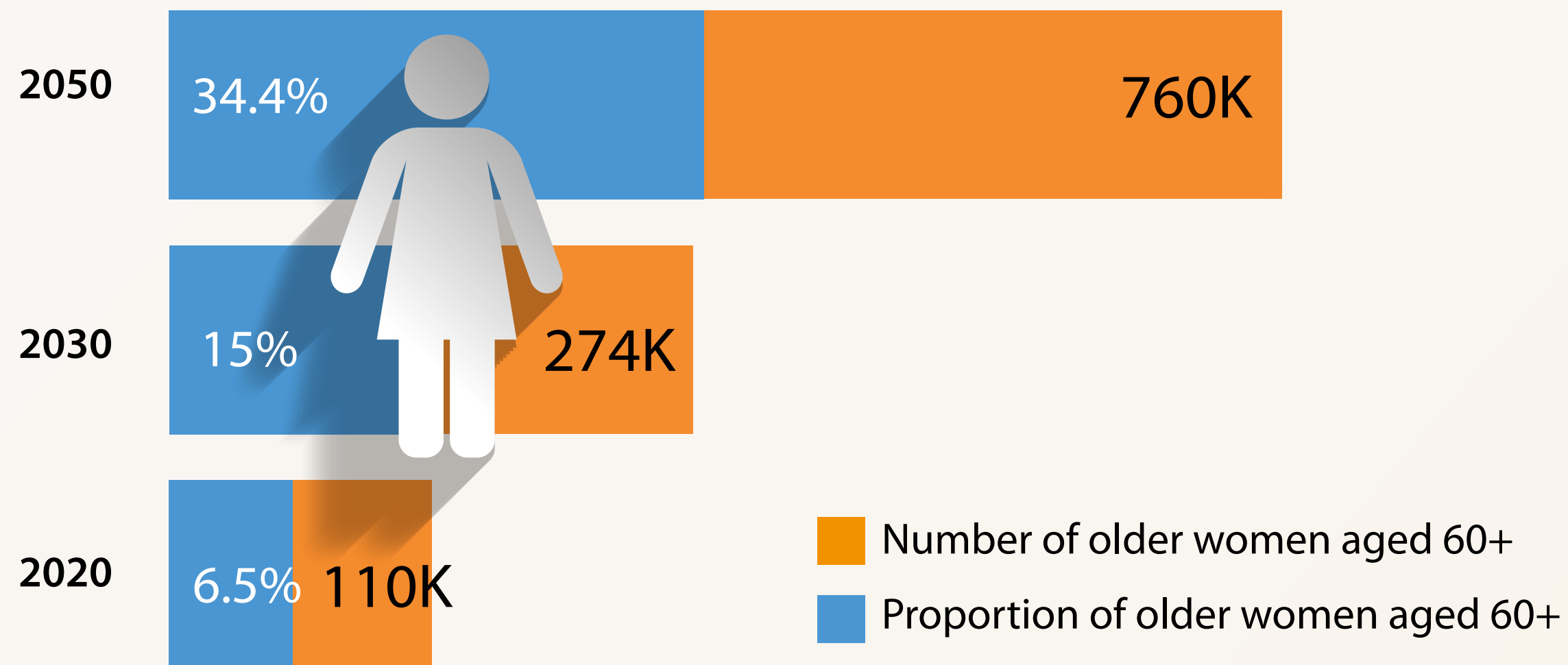
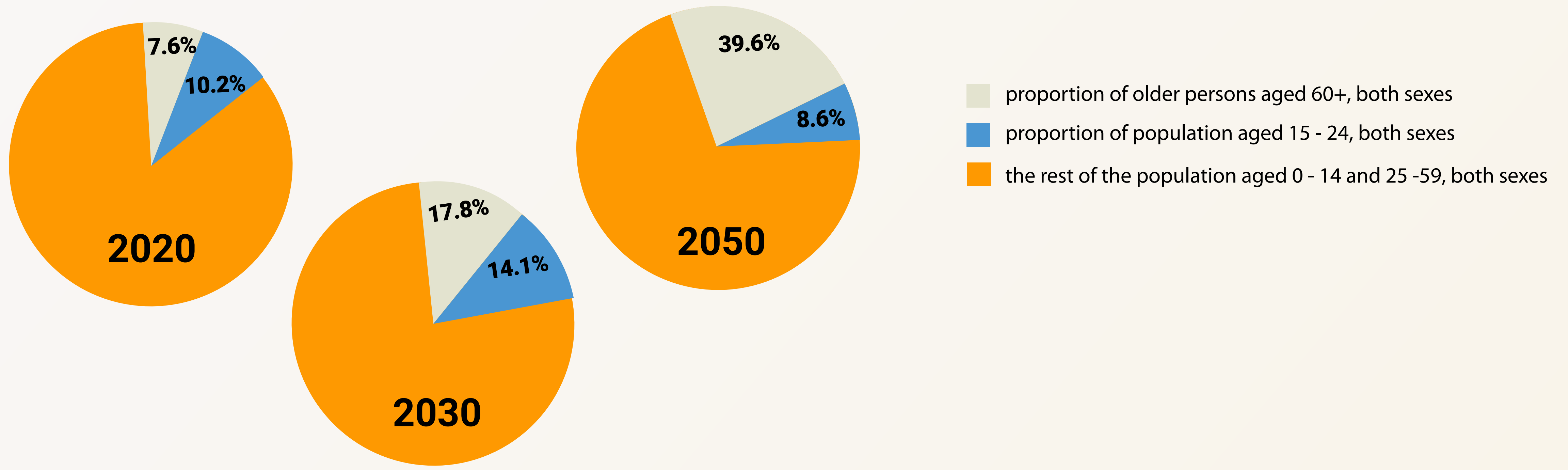


Over the same period, the number of persons aged 15 - 24 will increase by one-half by 2030 and decline by 2050 to the 2020 level.

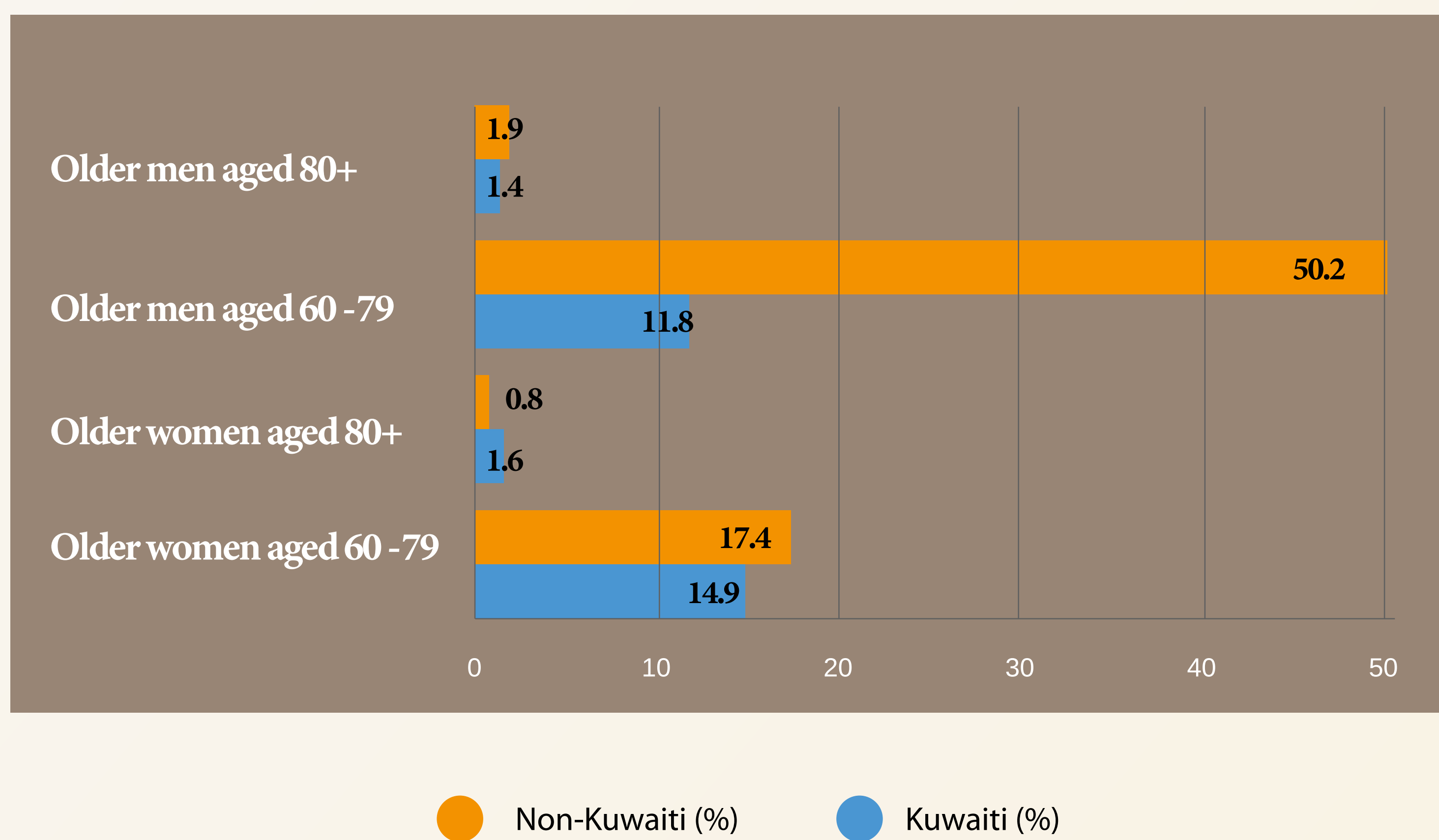
¹ For statistical purposes, 'older person' is defined as an individual aged 60 and over.

² The profiles were prepared by HelpAge International. The profiles do not reflect the views of UNFPA and any errors are attributed to the researchers.

³ Proportion of older women (men) is defined as the percentage of women (men) aged 60 and over of the women (men) of all ages. Throughout the profile some of the indicators are expressed as 'proportion of older persons/women/men'. Such indicators should be interpreted as a percentage of persons/women/men aged 60 and over of the respective population group, unless expressed otherwise. For example, '9.3% of older men have a disability' means that of all men aged 60 and over 9.3 per cent have a disability.



Proportion of Kuwaiti and Non-Kuwaiti population aged 60+ ⁱⁱ



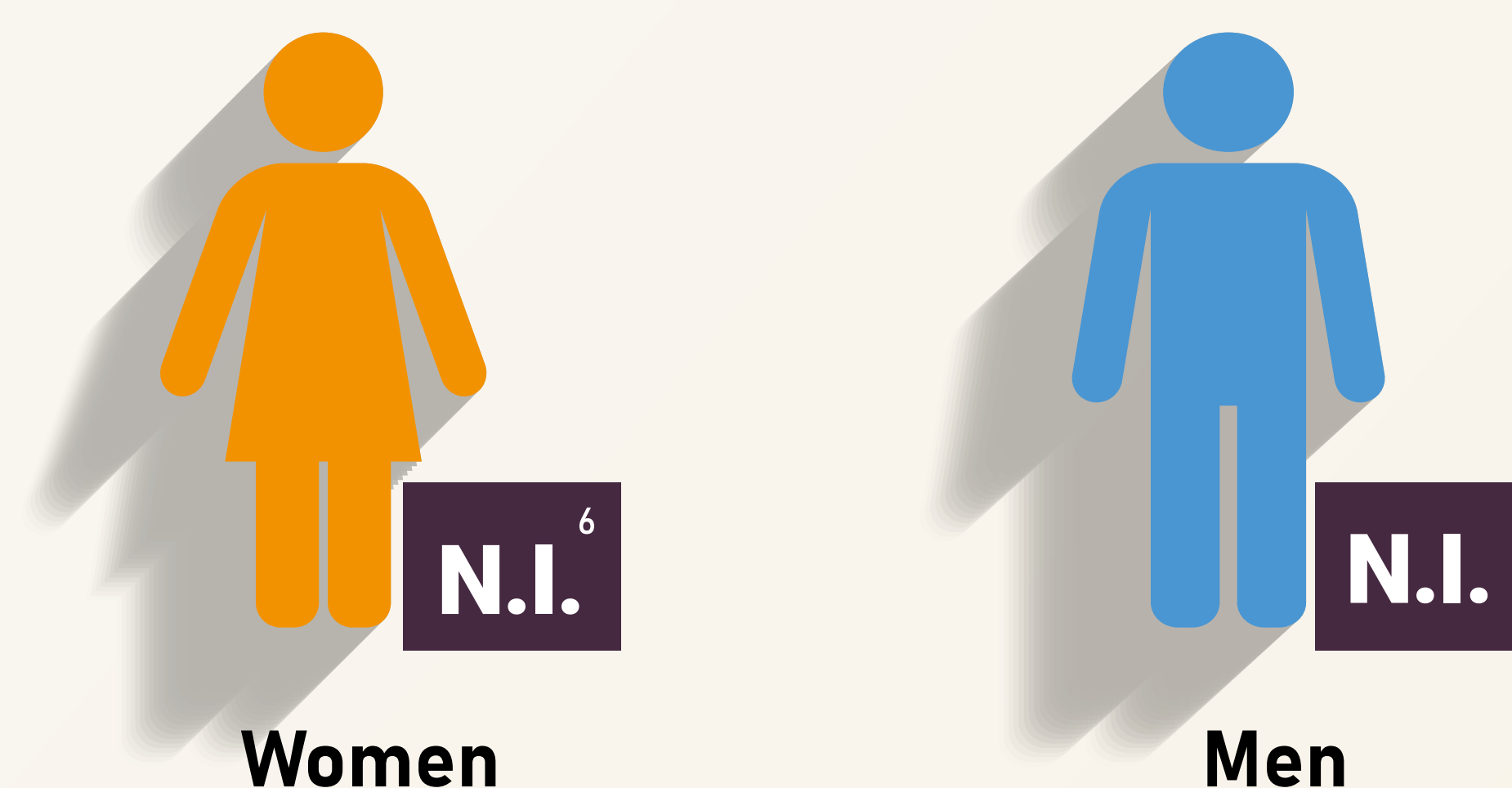
Kuwait hosts migrant population including older persons. 50.2% of Non-Kuwaiti men and 17.4% of Non-Kuwaiti women are aged 60-79.

The most recent data on prevalence of disability among older persons is not available.

To ensure every person is able to lead an independent and dignified life at any age, and their communities benefit from the demographic dividend⁴, national policies and systems across all sectors must address the wellbeing and rights of individuals across the life course⁵.

Various reports refer to Kuwait National Strategy on Ageing and National Health Strategy for the care of older adults.ⁱⁱⁱ However, neither of the documents is publicly available, and in the case of the National Strategy on Ageing it was not possible to confirm whether it exists. To assess the policy response, the profile examines the Kuwait Vision 2035,^{iv} henceforth referred to as the State Vision 2035 or the Vision.

Proportion of older persons with disabilities



Existence of national strategy on ageing **N.I.**

Existence of national legislation and enforcement strategy against age-based discrimination **N.I.**

THE RIGHT TO SOCIAL PROTECTION, SOCIAL SECURITY, AND WORK

Data on poverty rate among older women and men is not available. Older persons continue to work as 53.4% of men and 1.6% of women aged 65 and older are in employment. It is estimated that only 32.3% of older women and 16.7% of older men received a pension in 2020.

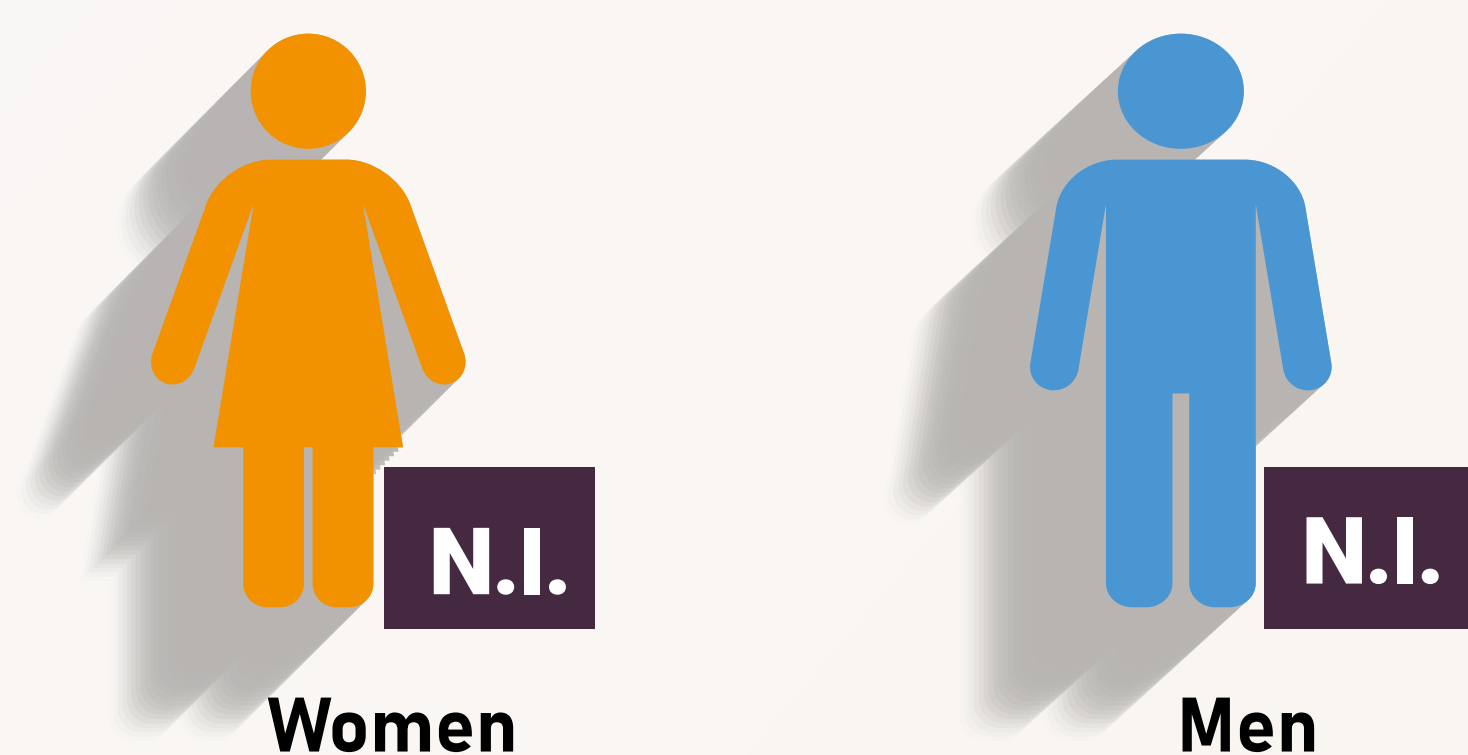
The State Vision 2035 aims to strengthen social protection in education and health sectors but it does not address the right of every older person to adequate and appropriate social protection as well as the right to work when in receipt of a pension.

⁴ The demographic dividend is the economic growth resulting from the number of persons in employment exceeding the number of persons outside of the labour market. Demographic dividend, <https://arabstates.unfpa.org/en/topics/demographic-dividend-6>

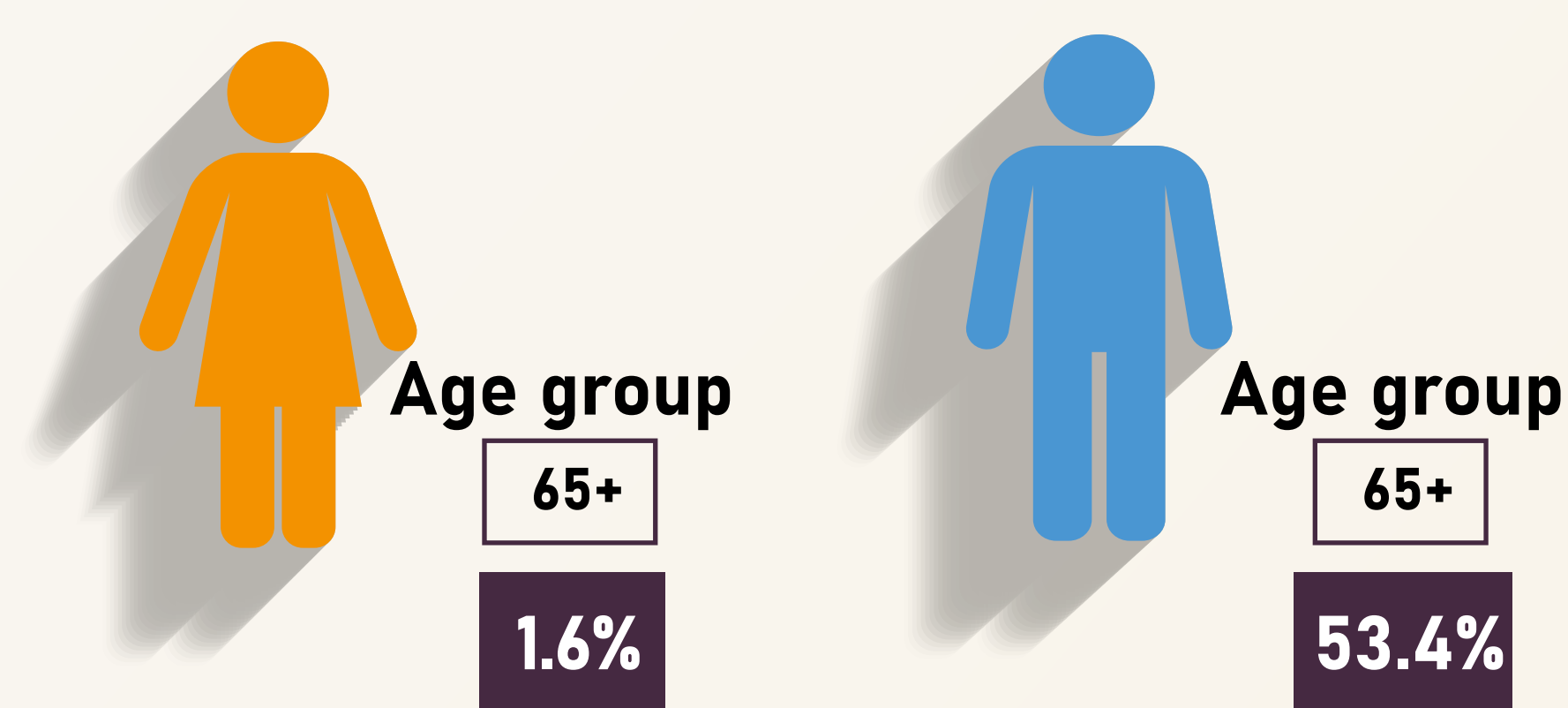
⁵ Life course approach to policy recognises that individuals' roles, abilities, and needs are shaped by positive and negative experiences, and as we age these experiences accumulate. To mitigate immediate and long-term impacts of disadvantages, policies must consider how intersecting identities and varying forms of discrimination experienced across the life course can lead to individual 'being left behind'. Life course approach to ageing, <https://www.helpage.org/what-we-do/life-course-approach-to-ageing/>

⁶ n.i. – data or information is not available.

How many older persons live in poverty?

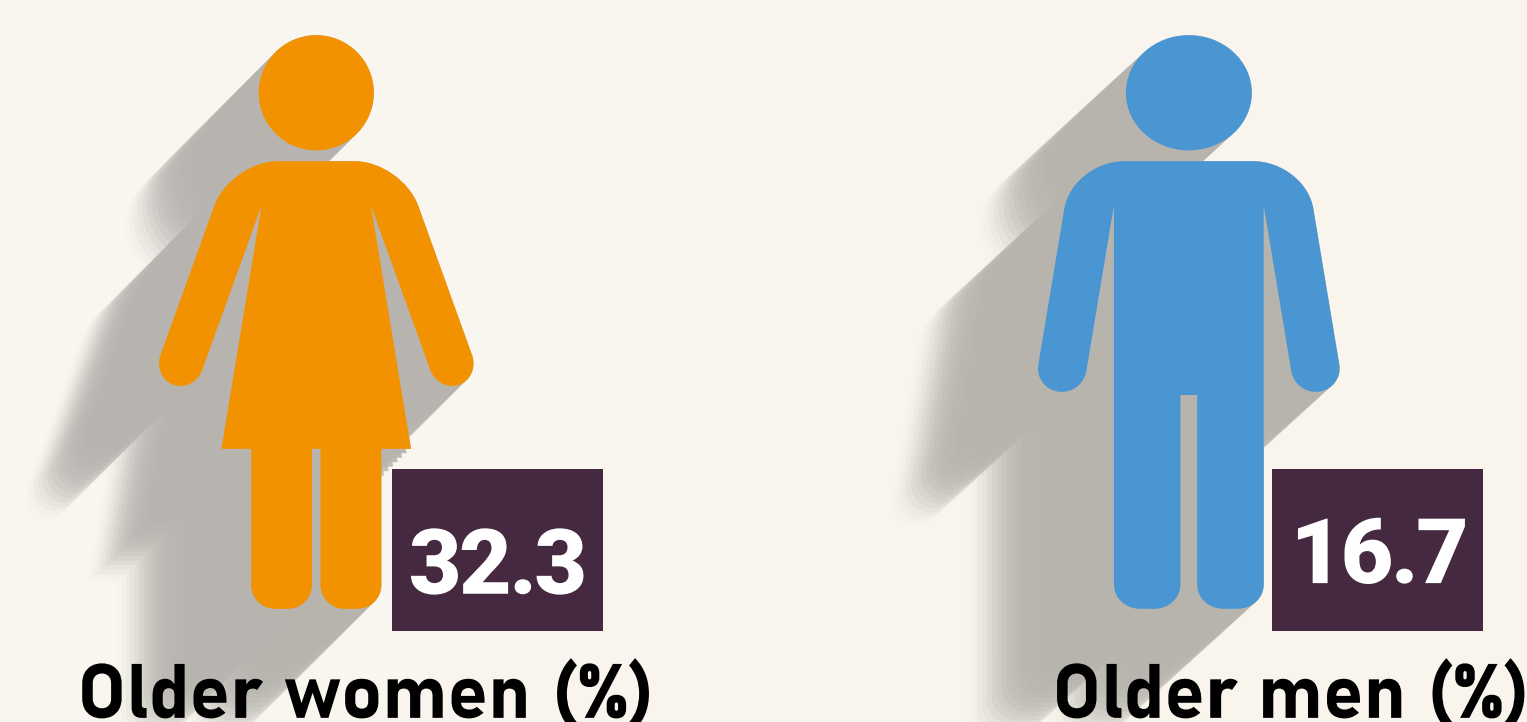


Who works in older age? ^v



How national systems and policies address the needs and rights of older persons

Pension systems provide income security for all older persons ^{vi}



State Vision 2035 addresses:

- Social protection and social security systems which provide universal coverage **NO**
- Social protection and social security measures that are of a high enough value, quantity and quality, and for the full period of life **NO**
- Freedom from discrimination on the basis of age and other grounds in all matters related to employment **NO**
- Right to work when receiving a pension **NO**

THE RIGHT TO AUTONOMY, EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Data on the ability of older women and men to make their own decisions about their finances, health, family life and other aspects of their lives is not available.

While the State Vision 2035 aims to support the inclusion and social, economic and political participation of young persons, women, persons with disabilities, and older persons, the Vision does not explicitly recognise their right to autonomy over all aspects of their lives or the legal capacity to make decisions.

How much freedom of choice and control do older persons feel they have over their life?

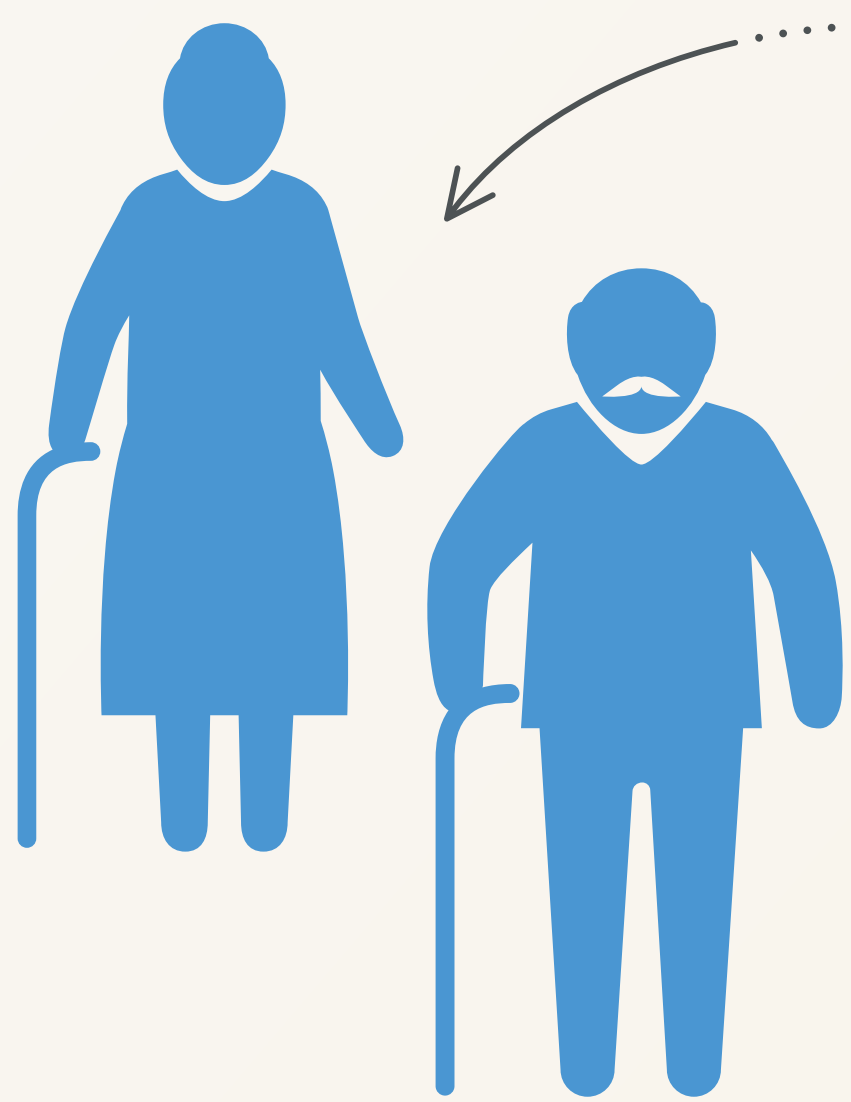


How national systems and policies address the needs and rights of older persons

State Vision 2035 addresses:

- Older persons' autonomy and independence over all aspects of their lives **NO**
- Enjoyment of legal capacity to make decisions, to determine life plans and to lead autonomous and independent lives **NO**

THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE, ABUSE AND NEGLECT



Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau annually reports number of victims by sex and type of crime. Additionally, the 2016 SDG report by the General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development reported statistics on gender-based violence. However, neither report includes age disaggregated data.

The State Vision 2035 creative human capital pillar recognises the need to provide safe and secure environment. However, the Vision prioritises traffic and fire safety, and does not address the protection of older women and men from violence, abuse and neglect.

How many older persons have experienced violence, abuse or neglect?



How national systems and policies address the needs and rights of older persons

State Vision 2035 addresses:

- All forms of violence, abuse and neglect in public and private settings **NO**
- Regular collection, analysis, utilisation and public dissemination of disaggregated information and statistics on all forms of violence, abuse and neglect. **NO**

THE RIGHT TO HEALTH

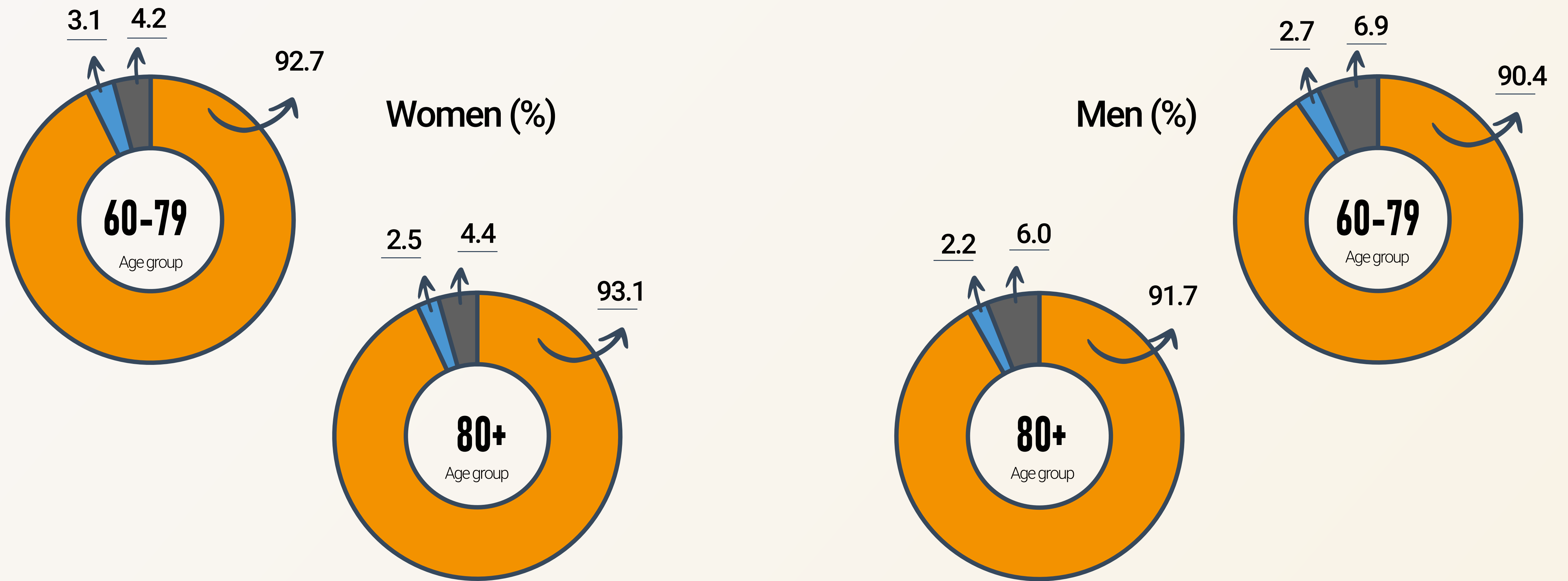
Non-communicable diseases account for more than 90% of years lived with disabilities among older persons. Diabetes and kidney diseases, and sense organ diseases are leading causes of disability for both older women and men. The latest national data on prevalence of hypertension and diabetes among older persons is from 2014 and was not included here. A more recent information was not openly available at the time of the publication.

Kuwait provides free health care to all Kuwaiti citizens.

The State Vision 2035 commits to improve healthcare quality and health outcomes for all, including care services for older persons. While the Vision projects aim to build care units that integrate all aspects of social, health, psychological, cultural and recreational care to enable older persons to lead independent lives longer, the Vision does not explicitly prioritise provision of integrated health services and enhanced palliative services.

What are the key causes of disability in older age?

● Non-communicable diseases ● Communicable, maternal, neonatal, and nutritional diseases ● Injuries



How many older women and men have diabetes?

Older women

N.I.

Older men

N.I.



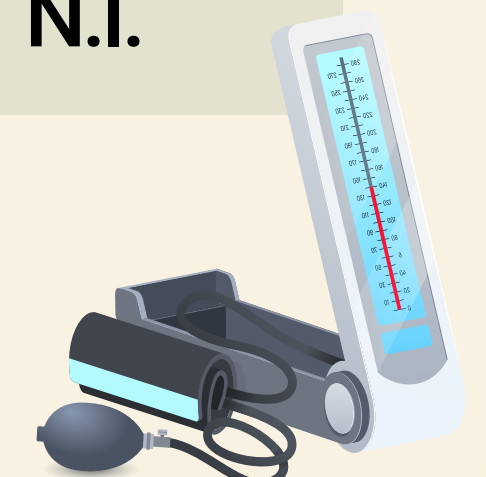
How many older women and men have hypertension?

Older women

N.I.

Older men

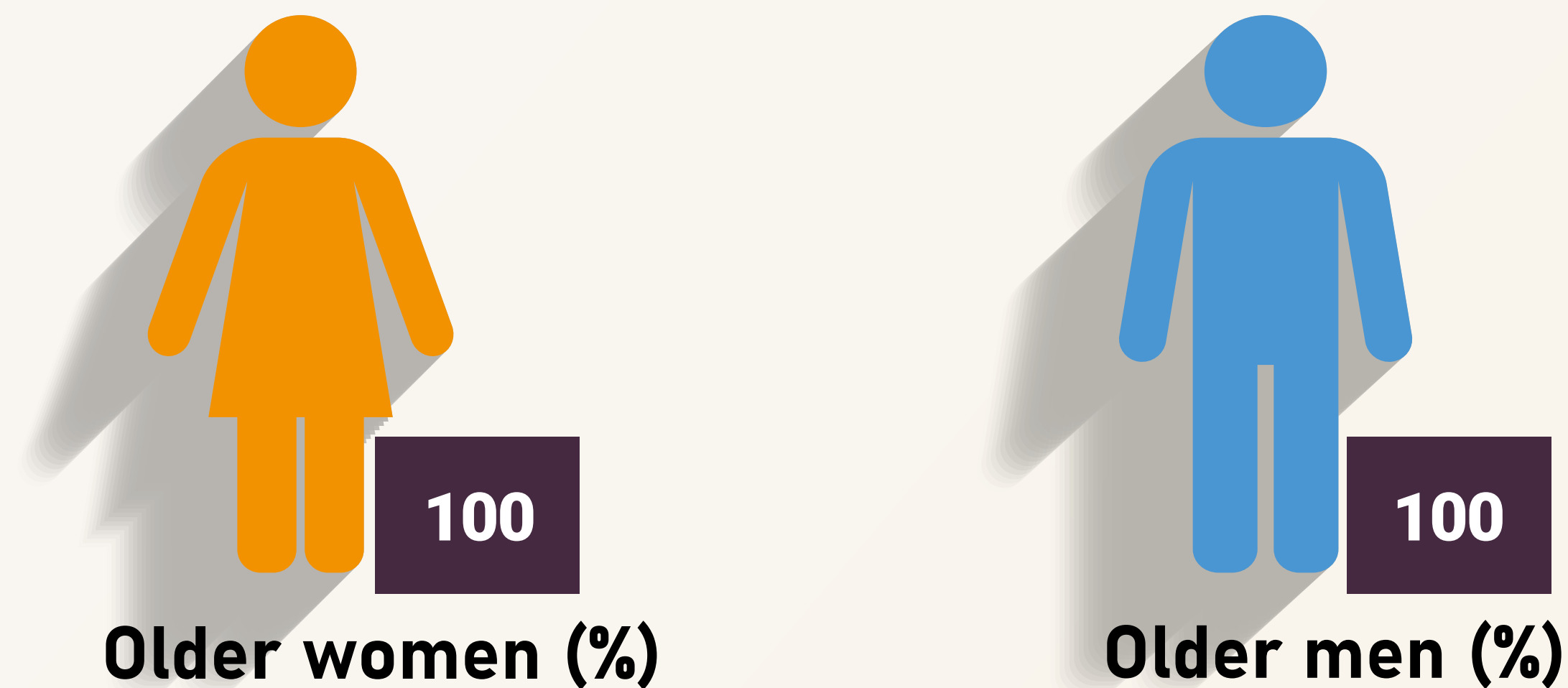
N.I.



How national systems and policies address the needs and rights of older persons

Health protection covers all older persons^{viii}

Proportion of older persons covered by any type of health insurance



State Vision 2035 addresses:

- Continuum of quality and appropriate physical, mental and cognitive health services available and accessible to older persons and which deliver primary, secondary and tertiary health care integrated with care and support, wherever they may reside **Partial**
- Holistic palliative care, including access to essential drugs and controlled medicines **NO**

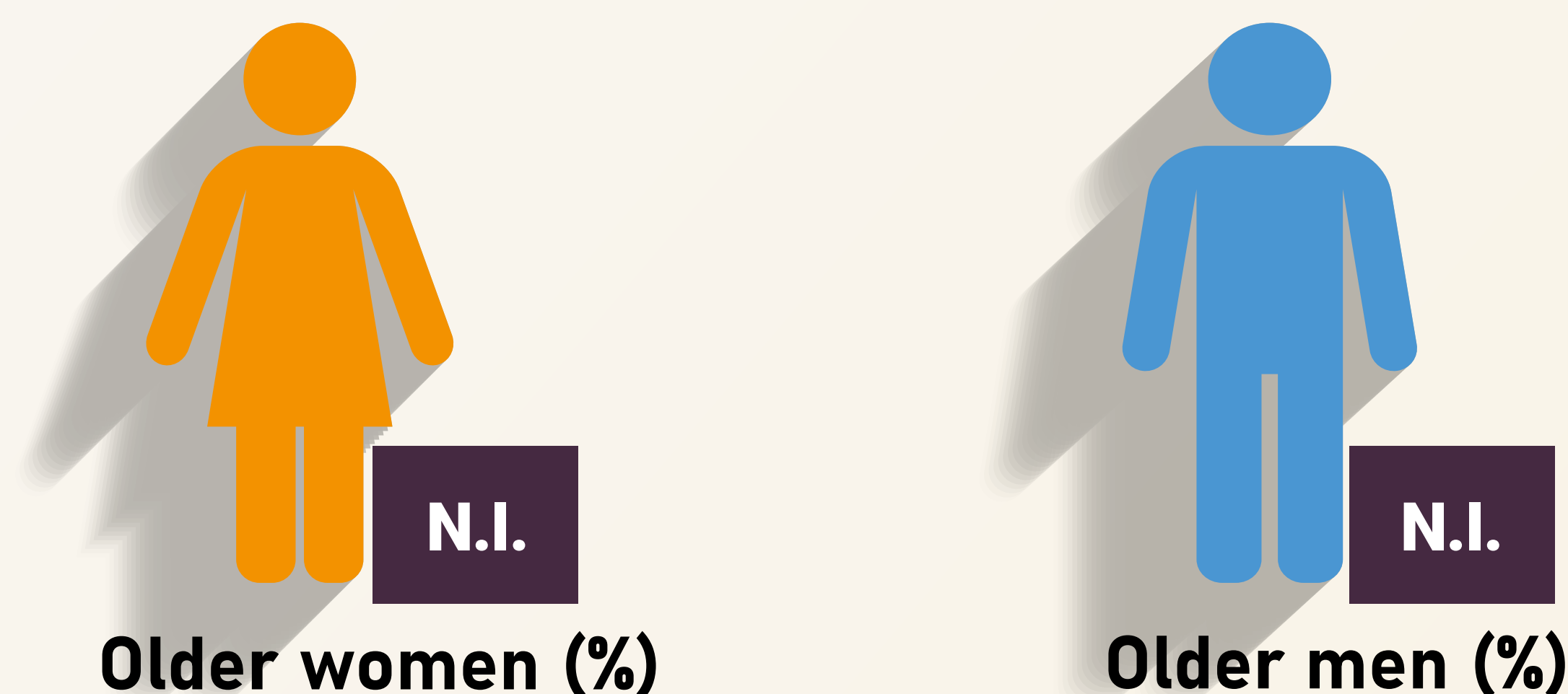
THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

At least two annual reports by the Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau - Statistical review and Education Statistics Bulletin – publish data on education. However, neither of the reports includes statistics on educational attainment of older women and men. The most recent national data on educational attainment of older persons is from 2014 and was not included here.

The State Vision 2035 recognises the importance of good quality education and training. However the Vision priorities education for younger persons to increase their competitiveness and productivity in the labour market. The Vision does not address the right of older persons to lifelong learning and skill building.

How many older persons have an education?

Educational attainment of older persons by the highest level of education completed



How national systems and policies address the needs and rights of older persons

State Vision 2035 addresses:

- All forms of lifelong learning, education and skill building^{ix}
NO
- Learning opportunities adapted to the specific needs of older persons
NO
- Lifelong learning, education and skills-building opportunities that are affordable and financially accessible
NO

Kuwait Vision 2035 covers policy priorities and programs on employment, education, security, and health, including care services and well-being of older persons. However, the Vision has limited considerations for the needs and rights of older women and men.

The review of statistics published during 2015 - 2021 by the Kuwait Government, Ministry of Justice, Central Statistical Bureau, General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, the Public Institution for Social Security, GCC-STAT data portal as well as UN agencies shows that data to understand the situation of older women and men is collected across a variety of socio-economic indicators. However, majority of these statistics is either outdated or not reported by age. Timely and sex-, age- and disability-disaggregated data on older persons is not available on poverty, violence, abuse and neglect, prevalence of diabetes and hypertension, and educational attainment.

In addition to concerted efforts to close data gaps and provide consistent analysis and reporting of disaggregated data, there is a need for a specialised survey to build more in-depth and comprehensive evidence on ageing and the situation of older persons.

Older persons, persons with disabilities, women and children are recognised by the Government of Kuwait as population groups that require support and protection. In this regard, the Vision 2035 pledges to prepare and implement a national policy for the rights of persons with disabilities in accordance with the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. A similar commitment, the development and publication of National Strategy on Ageing, is needed to advance the rights of older persons, unless such Strategy already exists.

NOTES

- i United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2022). World Population Prospects 2022, Online Edition. Excel files used: Population by select age groups – male, population by select age groups – female, population percentage by select age groups – male, population percentage by select age groups – female. <https://population.un.org/wpp/Download/Standard/Population/> Accessed 30 September 2022
- ii Author calculation based on Central Statistics Bureau, Population estimates in Kuwait by age, nationality and sex 1 January 2022, https://www.csb.gov.kw/Pages/Statistics_en?ID=67&ParentCatID=%201 Accessed 16 August 2022
- iii ESCWA, 2017, Ageing in ESCWA Member States. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/ageing/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2017/02/ageing-escwa-member-states-english.pdf>
- iv Government of Kuwait, Kuwait Vision 2035, <https://www.newkuwait.gov.kw/plan.aspx> Accessed 19 September 2022
- v ILOSTAT explorer, Employment-to-population ratio by sex and age (%) Annual, 2020. <https://www.ilo.org/shinyapps/bulkexplorer6/> Accessed 16 August 2022.
- vi ILOSTAT explorer, SDG indicator 1.3.1 - Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems (%) -Annual, 2020. https://www.ilo.org/shinyapps/bulkexplorer54/?lang=en&segment=indicator&id=SDG_0131_SEX_SOC_RT_A Accessed 16 August 2022
- vii Global Burden of Disease Collaborative Network. Global Burden of Disease Study 2019 (GBD 2019) Results. Seattle, United States: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), 2020. Years lived with disabilities 2019. Available from <http://ghdx.healthdata.org/gbd-results-tool> Accessed 6 September 2022
- viii Kuwait Voluntary National Review 2019, SDG 10 Reduced inequalities, Inclusiveness in Terms of the Elderly, p.65. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/23384Kuwait_VNR_FINAL.PDF
- ix This includes tertiary education, vocational training, digital and new technology-based education, adult education, self, informal recreational and community-based education, lifelong learning programmes, legal literacy, and skills training in literacy, numeracy and technological competences. HelpAge International and UNFPA (2020)

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