



St. Vincent and the Grenadines Population and Housing Census Report 2023

*They Counting You, They Counting Me.
The Information will Benefit the Whole Country*

**STATISTICAL OFFICE
ECONOMIC PLANNING DIVISION
MINISTRY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC PLANNING
KINGSTOWN, ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES**



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Introduction

Background

Population and Housing Censuses remain the most comprehensive statistical exercises conducted by a country. They provide detailed information on the size, structure, and distribution of the population, as well as on households and dwellings. These data are essential for guiding national planning, designing policies, monitoring social and economic progress, and ensuring equitable allocation of resources.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, censuses have been conducted periodically since the late nineteenth century, creating a valuable statistical record of demographic and housing change. Each census has built upon the last, documenting long-term shifts such as fertility decline, outward migration, ageing of the population, improvements in education and housing, and changes in labour force participation. The 2012 Census, for example, provided baseline information on migration trends, gender disparities in the labour force, and the expansion of housing infrastructure.

The 2023 Population and Housing Census, the sixteenth national census, is the most recent exercise and updates information last collected in 2012. It comes at a critical juncture as the country addresses the challenges of climate change, outward migration, recovery from global economic shocks, and the ongoing need for resilient and inclusive development. Unlike earlier rounds, the 2023 Census employed digital data collection technologies, significantly improving efficiency, timeliness, and accuracy.

To build public awareness and encourage participation, the exercise was conducted under the slogan: “Census 2023. They counting you, they counting me. The information will benefit the whole country.” This message underscored the national importance of the census and its role in producing data that serves everyone.

At the international and regional levels, the census forms part of the United Nations 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses and is guided by the CARICOM Regional Census Strategy, ensuring comparability with other countries in the Caribbean and beyond.¹ At the national level, it provides essential benchmarks for the National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP) 2013-2025, monitoring the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and strengthening statistical infrastructure for evidence-based decision-making.

Legal Framework

The census was conducted under the authority of the Census and Statistics Act, No. 24 of 1983, which establishes the mandate of the Statistical Office within the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Information Technology.

The Act authorizes the Chief Statistician to direct and oversee census operations, appoint field staff, and ensure the confidentiality of all information collected. The law stipulates that individual information

¹ *United Nations: Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses Revision 4*

provided during the census must not be disclosed or used for non-statistical purposes, and it prescribes penalties for breaches of secrecy or failure to participate. These legal safeguards ensure the credibility of the census and public trust in the process.

Objectives

The main objective of the 2023 Population and Housing Census was to generate benchmark statistical data to support development planning, policymaking, and service delivery at national and community levels. The specific objectives were to:

1. Ascertain the size, structure, and spatial distribution of the population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
2. Collect information on housing conditions, amenities, and access to basic services.
3. Monitor changes in key demographic, social, and economic indicators since the 2012 Census.
4. Update census maps and enumeration area lists to support census operations and future sample surveys.
5. Strengthen the statistical infrastructure to support policymaking and administration at national and local government levels.
6. Enhance the technical capacity of the Statistical Office to implement large-scale household surveys and censuses.
7. Provide data to inform policies and programmes that aim to improve the quality of life and sustainable development in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Phases of the Census

The 2023 Census was implemented in three main phases:

1. **Pre-enumeration Phase:** This phase involved updating the geographic frame and delineating enumeration districts, designing and pre-testing questionnaires, and recruiting and training field staff. A major innovation was the adoption of the World Bank's Survey Solutions CAPI (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing) platform for questionnaire design, testing, and deployment, which significantly modernized the census process. Publicity and awareness campaigns were also undertaken to prepare and engage the population.
2. **Enumeration Phase:** This was the core data collection stage. Enumerators, equipped with tablets running the Survey Solutions CAPI platform, visited every household and dwelling across the country. Data were captured electronically in real time, reducing errors and improving the speed of processing. Information was collected on all persons present on census night as well as usual residents.
3. **Post-enumeration Phase:** After enumeration, a Post-Enumeration Survey (PES) was conducted to assess the completeness and quality of the data. This phase also included data processing, validation, and analysis. Preliminary results were disseminated shortly after enumeration, followed by comprehensive final results and thematic reports.

Technical Note to Data Users

During census enumeration, interviewers relied on a designated household respondent to provide information for all household members. In many cases, responses were provided on behalf of individuals who were unavailable or difficult to contact during the data collection period. While every effort was made to secure direct information for all persons, this was not always feasible due to temporary absence, non-contact, or refusal to participate. In such cases, proxy responses from relatives or neighbors were sought to minimize undercoverage and ensure that all individuals were represented in the census.

Despite these measures, some degree of non-response was unavoidable. To safeguard data quality, the Statistical Office implemented a series of rigorous procedures, including consistency checks, editing, imputation, and validation, at the collection, processing, and analysis stages. These measures were designed to reduce errors, adjust for missing or inconsistent information, and ensure that the final census outputs were as accurate, reliable, and comparable as possible.

Main Concepts and Definitions

Some basic definitions and terminologies used in the census are presented below:

Population

The term, as used in most of the tables in this report, refers to the household or non-institutional population residing in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This includes persons who were temporarily overseas on June 15, 2023, for business, vacation, educational, medical, or other purposes. However, this excludes persons who were in prisons, hospitals (extended stay), and homes for the aged, etc.

Institutional Population

This comprises persons who are non-members of dwellings such as correctional and penal facilities, hospices, hospitals, youth detention centers, children's homes, and senior citizens' homes.

Household Population

This includes usual residents in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, residents temporarily abroad for study or other reasons, non-Vincentian workers, and other civilian residents.

Usual Resident

This is a person who has lived continuously for most of the last 12 months (that is, for at least six months and one day), not including temporary absences for holidays or work assignments, or intends to live for at least twelve months within the dwelling unit where she/he is found.

Resident Population

This includes the non-institutional population. Visitors to St. Vincent and the Grenadines are excluded.

Population

This refers to the country's de jure and de facto population; that is, the total number of usual residents in the country (de jure population), as well as all persons present in the country (de facto population), during the enumeration period. The total population in this report refers to the de jure population, which includes: Persons living in private dwellings (households), Persons living in non-private dwellings, group dwellings and institutions, Persons with no fixed abode (e.g. homeless), Persons at work (e.g. Vincentian workers on cruise ships), on vacation, at school, Persons seeking medical treatment outside of St. Vincent and the Grenadines for most of the last 12 months prior to Census enumeration.

Homeless Population

The homeless population consists of those who have no fixed abode. While these persons were counted on census night, they are excluded from the analysis.

Household

A household consists of one or more persons living together (i.e. sleeping most nights of a week 4 out of 7) and making common provision for food and other essentials for living. It is important to note that a member of a household need not be a relative of the main family. For example, a boarder or a domestic servant who sleeps most nights of the week is a member of the household. It is possible for a household to consist of just one person, or of more than one family, as long as they share living arrangements. A group of unrelated persons living together can also comprise a household.

One-person household

A person who makes provision for his or her own food and other essentials for living without combining with any other person to form a multi-person household.

A multi-person household

A group of two or more persons living together who make common provision for food and other essentials for living. The persons in the group may pool their resources and may have a common budget; and they may be related or unrelated persons, or constitute a combination of both related and unrelated persons.

Household Head

The household head is a man or woman, who is acknowledged as such by the other members. In the case of a group of unrelated persons sharing a dwelling on an equal basis, the person whom the others acknowledge as the head is accepted as such.

Dwelling Unit

A dwelling is defined as a set of living quarters. It must have direct access from the street or common landing, staircase, vestibule, hall, lobby, passage or gallery where occupants can enter or leave without passing through anybody else's living quarters. A dwelling unit is one in which a household can reside. This may be a single house, flat, apartment, out room, part of a commercial building or a boarding house catering for less than six persons.

Census Night

This refers to June 15, 2023. This being the day on which the survey to determine the physical population, of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, was carried out.

Economically Active Population²

This term refers to the body of persons, ages of 15 and over, who furnish the supply of labour for the production of economic goods and services. The term labour force is used interchangeably with economically active population; however, labour force refers only to persons, aged 15 years and older, who were either employed or seeking work during the week preceding Census Night, June 7 – 14, 2023. Hence, the labour force, is a combination of two groups: those who were employed (the working population), and those who were seeking work (the unemployed population). Note: tending a household garden, caring for children and elders, and volunteer work *are not considered examples of economic activity. These persons are therefore classified as economically inactive.*

Employment

Persons were labeled as Employed if they stated that they mostly worked during the short reference period. The question used to determine if a person should have been counted as employed was: ‘*Did you / “Name” work for a minimum of ONE HOUR during the past week?*’. Persons who were temporarily absent from their jobs with a formal attachment were also included among the employed. The following categories are included in relation to employment: Persons doing unpaid work in a family firm or business, Persons who are employed for payment in cash or in kind, but temporarily absent from work, Persons who are seasonal or occasional workers with formal attachment to their jobs, Persons who are apprentices and trainees.

Unemployment

Persons were labeled as Unemployed, if during the reference week, they were without work, wanted to work, and were available for work, but failed to secure a job. This includes those who actively looked for work, as well as those who did nothing about finding a job, because they knew none were available or were otherwise discouraged.

Disability³

The questions cover six functional domains: seeing, hearing, walking, cognition, self-care, and communication. Each question has four response categories: (1) No, no difficulty, (2) Yes, some difficulty, (3) Yes, a lot of difficulty, and (4) Cannot do it at all. Persons in St Vincent and the Grenadines classified as having a disability must be five years of age or older and be either unable to perform or have a lot of difficulty performing at least one of the six functional areas to be classified as having a disability. Scaled responses begin to describe the continuum of functioning from mild to severe.

² International Labour Organization. (2023a). ILOSTAT: *Concepts and definitions – Labour force statistics*.

³ Washington Group on Disability Statistics. (n.d.). *Definition of disability*. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/about/definition-of-disability/>

Methodology

For the purpose of the 2023 census, the country was divided into 13 geographic units, called Census Divisions (CD). There were 11 CDs on the mainland and 2 in the Grenadines. The CDs were further subdivided into 412 smaller groupings called Enumeration Districts (ED). The size of each ED was designed to ensure manageable and equitable distribution of the workload to the enumerators and supervisors. In general, the aim was to limit the size of each ED to 150 households, with allowances for some variation due to the varying sizes of the different CDs.

Questionnaire Design and Data Collection Approach

The census questionnaire was developed for a Survey Solutions Android Tablet through consultations with stakeholders in the public and private sectors, as well as Non-Government Organizations (NGOs). It was designed in accordance with the United Nations' guidelines for the conduct of the 2020 round of population and housing censuses. The questionnaire contained 6 Sections, 29 Sub-sections, 278 Questions.

Coverage of the Census

St. Vincent and the Grenadines' 2023 Population and Housing Census counted both the country's de jure and de facto population. This means that the census sought to determine the total number and characteristics of all persons who were usual residents in the country during the enumeration period (de jure population), as well as count all persons who were present in the country on census night (de facto population).

Reference Periods

The 2023 Population and Housing Census used three specific reference periods. These were the week, month, and year preceding the June 15, 2023, census night.

Main Topics Covered in the Questionnaire

The technical considerations, including the choice of topics, were guided by the United Nations' guidelines for the conduct of the 2020 round of population and housing censuses. The main topics addressed on the census questionnaire were as follows: Total population, by sex and age. Economically active population by:

1. Sex and age group
2. Industry
3. Occupation
4. Status in employment
5. Highest educational level
6. Hours of work
7. Other characteristics. The age is defined in terms of age at last birthday. Total number of months worked (by employed persons) during the reference year; and, number of hours worked during the reference week. Income and means of transport used to travel to work.

Classifications Used

Employed persons and unemployed persons previously employed are classified by industry, occupation, and status in employment.

Industry

Based on the question ‘*Describe the MAIN business activities carried out at the company/establishment for which you work, i.e, type of goods and/or services produced*’, for the coding industry, 21 groups of the national classification were used. Links to the ISIC-rev. 4 have been established to the tabulation category (2-digit) level.

Occupation

Based on the question, for the coding of occupation, 10 groups of the national classification were used. Links to the ISCO-08 have been established at the major group (1-digit) level.

Status in Employment

Based on the question ‘Did you carry on your own business, work for a wage or salary or as an unpaid worker in a family business?’ for coding status in employment, the following groups were used:

1. Paid employee, Government (Local and Central Gov't)
2. Paid employee, State Owned Company/Statutory Board
3. Paid employee, Private Business
4. Paid employee, Private Home
5. Own business with paid employees
6. Own business without paid employees (self-employed)
7. Apprentice/Learners
8. Unpaid family/worker/employee
9. Volunteer worker

Level of Education

Based on the question ‘What is the highest formal level of education that you have attained?’ for coding education level, the following groups from ISCED 2011 were used:

1. Daycare/Nursery
2. Pre-school
3. Pre-primary (Infant) or Primary
4. Lower / Junior Secondary (Forms 1-3) / Senior Primary
5. Upper Secondary (Forms 4 & 5)
6. Post Secondary, non-tertiary (diploma or associate degree)
7. Tertiary level - Bachelor's Degree
8. Tertiary level - Master's Degree
9. Doctorate level programmes
10. None/Not Stated

Main Differences Compared with the Previous Census

A few differences exist between previous censuses and the 2023 Census. In the 2023 Census the following were included: A module on crime was included; A module on health was included; Additional questions on the disability module; Additional questions on the training module.

Executive Summary

Total Population and Geographic Population Distribution

Between 2012 and 2023, Table 0-1 shows, the total population declined marginally, from 109,991 to 109,296 persons, representing a decrease of approximately 0.6percent. The vast majority of the population -over 99 percent - continued to reside in private households, confirming the dominance of family-based living arrangements. In 2023, the household population was 108,764, nearly identical to the 109,188 recorded in 2012, indicating demographic stability despite a minimal overall contraction. The institutional and homeless populations remained very small, together representing less than 1percent of the total residents. This pattern suggests limited expansion in institutional living, such as prisons, nursing homes, or special care facilities. It reflects the continued preference and availability of private household living across the population.

Gender distribution within institutions highlights a consistent imbalance, with males far more represented than females, particularly in prisons and homeless shelters. In 2023, institutionalized males totaled 443, compared to 89 females, similar to the 2012 ratio, in which males also dominated the institutional populations. Women, however, are more represented in nursing homes and special care settings, consistent with longer life expectancy and higher elderly care needs. Overall, while population totals have changed little, the data point to ongoing gendered differences in institutional residency and a steady household-based social structure, with institutional populations remaining marginal in national demographic terms

Table 0-1 Total Population Distribution by Households and Institutions 2012 & 2023

| 2023 | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------|---------------|--|----------------|
| Institutional Population | | | | | | |
| Sex | Household Population | Homeless Population | Prisons | Nursing Homes | Mental Homes, Hospital, Other Institutions, or Special Living Arrangements | Total |
| Male | 54,757 | 53 | 273 | 15 | 102 | 55,200 |
| Female | 54,007 | 2 | 9 | 38 | 40 | 54,096 |
| Total | 108,764 | 55 | 282 | 53 | 142 | 109,296 |

| 2012 | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------|---|---|----------------|
| Institutional Population | | | | | | |
| Sex | Household Population | Homeless Population | Prisons | Hospitals, Mental Homes & Nursing Homes | Other Institutions or Special Living Arrangements | Total |
| Male | 55,835 | 84 | 371 | 101 | 28 | 56,419 |
| Female | 53,353 | 1 | 12 | 186 | 20 | 53,572 |
| Total | 109,188 | 85 | 383 | 287 | 48 | 109,991 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 0-2 reveals notable regional shifts despite stable national totals, with the overall household population increasing slightly from 107,835 in 2001 to 108,764 in 2023. The capital, Kingstown, experienced a sharp population decline of 6.0 percent between 2001 and 2012 and a further 15.9 percent between 2012 and 2023, indicating sustained urban out-migration. At the same time, the Suburbs of Kingstown and Calliaqua experienced strong growth in both periods, reflecting suburban expansion and relocation to less-congested residential zones. This redistribution of population from the urban core to surrounding communities reflects a broader trend toward suburbanization, likely driven by housing availability and improved transport connectivity.

Table 0-2 Total Household Population Distribution by Census Division, 2001, 2012 & 2023

| Census Division | 2001 | | 2012 | | 2023 | | Percentage Change | |
|-------------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | Total | percent | Total | percent | Total | percent | 2001–2012 | 2012–2023 |
| Kingstown | 13,526 | 12.5 | 12,712 | 11.6 | 10,690 | 9.8 | -6.0 | -15.9 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 13,027 | 12.1 | 13,782 | 12.6 | 15,705 | 14.4 | 5.8 | 14.0 |
| Calliaqua | 22,345 | 20.7 | 23,908 | 21.9 | 26,560 | 24.4 | 7.0 | 11.1 |
| Marriaqua | 8,254 | 7.7 | 7,798 | 7.1 | 7,360 | 6.8 | -5.5 | -5.6 |
| Bridgetown | 6,779 | 6.3 | 6,564 | 6.0 | 6,424 | 5.9 | -3.2 | -2.1 |
| Colonarie | 7,490 | 6.9 | 6,849 | 6.3 | 6,742 | 6.2 | -8.6 | -1.6 |
| Georgetown | 6,964 | 6.5 | 7,049 | 6.5 | 7,139 | 6.6 | 1.2 | 1.3 |
| Sandy Bay | 2,805 | 2.6 | 2,576 | 2.4 | 2,554 | 2.3 | -8.2 | -0.9 |
| Layou | 6,338 | 5.9 | 6,335 | 5.8 | 6,344 | 5.8 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| Barrouallie | 5,459 | 5.1 | 5,625 | 5.2 | 5,624 | 5.2 | 3.0 | 0.0 |
| Chateaubelair | 6,081 | 5.6 | 5,756 | 5.3 | 4,900 | 4.5 | -5.3 | -14.9 |
| Total Mainland | 99,068 | 91.9 | 98,954 | 90.6 | 100,042 | 92.0 | -0.1 | 1.1 |
| Northern Grenadines | 5,413 | 5.0 | 6,184 | 5.7 | 5,107 | 4.7 | 14.2 | -17.4 |
| Southern Grenadines | 3,354 | 3.1 | 4,050 | 3.7 | 3,615 | 3.3 | 20.8 | -10.7 |
| Total Grenadines | 8,767 | 8.1 | 10,234 | 9.4 | 8,722 | 8.0 | 16.7 | -14.8 |
| Total | 107,835 | 100.0 | 109,188 | 100.0 | 108,764 | 100.0 | 1.3 | -0.4 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Population patterns across the census divisions also showed mixed results. Traditional agricultural regions such as Marriaqua, Bridgetown, and Colonarie recorded population declines, while Georgetown, Layou, and Barrouallie remained relatively stable. The Grenadines exhibited volatility (showing growth from 2001 to 2012 but sharp declines thereafter), likely linked to fluctuations in tourism and migration. Overall, the data illustrate a slow but clear demographic transition marked by population concentration in peri-urban zones, depopulation of rural and remote communities, and stabilization of total national numbers. These trends underscore the importance of regional planning to support balanced development and mitigate the effects of uneven population change.

Internal Migration

Internal migration intensified over the intercensal period, with birthplace retention falling from 72.0 percent in 2012 to 58.1 percent in 2023. Urban centers such as Calliaqua, Kingstown, and its suburbs

absorbed 60 percent of all internal migrants, while rural districts like Georgetown, Chateaubelair, and Marriacqua retained stronger birthplace populations. Women emerged as more mobile than men, with sex ratios among internal migrants showing clear female predominance (77 males per 100 females). Population density remained relatively stable nationally at 724 persons per square mile, but spatial disparities intensified between densely populated urban zones and declining rural areas.

International Migration

International migration continues to shape demographic outcomes. The foreign-born population declined from 4,898 persons (4.5 percent) in 2012 to 4,440 (4.1 percent) in 2023, with the majority concentrated in Calliaqua (38 percent) and Kingstown (18.2 percent). The foreign-born population aged considerably, with those 65+ rising from 8.3 percent to 15.3 percent, and became increasingly feminized, with women outnumbering men (a sex ratio of 89 males per 100 females in 2023).

Emigration patterns shifted notably. While Canada and the USA historically dominated as destinations, by 2023, the Caribbean Countries, as a group (30.6 percent), emerged as the leading destination, followed by the United Kingdom (24.6 percent), the USA (21.5 percent), and Canada (17.3 percent). Employment remained the primary driver of emigration (63.8 percent), and the educational profile of emigrants showed gradual upskilling, with college-educated and university-qualified individuals comprising growing shares. Return migration also increased, with nearly half of returnees originating from the Caribbean, reflecting strengthened regional mobility.

Education and Human Capital

Educational participation and attainment showed steady improvement despite demographic contraction. School attendance rates increased across all age groups, rising to 95.4 percent among children aged 3-14 years in 2023, compared to 91.7 percent in 2012. Early childhood education (3-4 years) expanded notably, with attendance rising from 74.3 percent to 86.9 percent. Gender parity remained stable at primary and secondary levels, though women continued to outpace men in post-secondary and tertiary participation.

Educational attainment improved markedly. The share of the population with no certification fell from 74.1 percent in 2001 to just 22.7 percent in 2023. CXC/CSEC passes became the most common qualification (18.2 percent), while associate and bachelor's degree holders more than doubled over the intercensal period. By 2023, associate degrees accounted for 6.1 percent and bachelor's degrees 4.4 percent of certifications, underscoring an expanding skills base. Women dominated higher education outcomes, holding larger shares of associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, and postgraduate qualifications compared to men.

Labour Market and Economic Activity

Labour force participation improved modestly from 63.2 percent in 2012 to 65.5 percent in 2023, but persistent disparities remained. Male participation stood at 70.9 percent, compared to 60.1 percent for females, maintaining an 11-percentage-point gender gap. Employment grew from 40,821 to 46,480 persons, while unemployment declined from 21.5 percent to 17.9 percent. However, youth unemployment remained critically high at 51.1 percent for 15-19 years old and 28.3 percent for 20-24 year old.

Employment remained concentrated in services and sales (25.0 percent), followed by elementary occupations (14.6 percent) and craft trades (12.4 percent). Agriculture's share declined from 11.8 percent to 9.1 percent, though it remained significant in absolute terms. The private sector accounted for 41 percent of jobs, while the public sector (government and state-owned enterprises combined) comprised 27.9 percent. Gender segmentation persisted, with women concentrated in education, health, and clerical roles, while men dominated agriculture, construction, and technical trades.

Among the unemployed, reliance on household and kinship networks remained dominant. In 2023, 22.3 percent of unemployed persons depended on parental support, 15.2 percent on local relatives, and 14.7 percent on spouses or partners. Overseas remittances declined to 6.5 percent, reflecting weakened transnational safety nets.

Housing and Living Conditions

The number of households expanded to 38,969 in 2023 while average household size declined to 2.8 persons, reflecting smaller family units and delayed household formation. Detached houses remained dominant (77.5percent), though attached dwellings, apartments, and duplexes grew in urban centers. Concrete and block construction exceeded 85percent of dwellings, underscoring investment in resilience, though nearly half of homes were built before 1999, pointing to an aging stock.

Service access improved significantly. Public-grid electricity reached 93 percent of households, piped water into dwellings rose from 71 percent to 80 percent, and LPG use remained near-universal at 96 percent. Sanitation showed the largest gains, with septic systems serving 86percent of households and pit latrine use nearly halving since 2012. Geographic disparities persisted, however, particularly in the Grenadines, where reliance on private catchments and traditional facilities remained higher than on the mainland.

Health and Chronic Disease

Chronic non-communicable diseases (NCDs) became increasingly dominant. Hypertension rose from 7.1 percent in 2001 to 11.3 percent in 2023, while diabetes climbed from 3.4 percent to 6.5 percent. Women reported higher prevalence across most conditions, including hypertension (12.9 percent vs. 9.6 percent for men) and diabetes (7.8 percent vs. 5.1 percent). Arthritis and asthma remained significant, though both showed slight declines since 2012. Age remained the strongest predictor of chronic illness, with nearly half of hypertension and diabetes cases occurring among persons 65+.

Medical facility use declined sharply from 24,443 persons in 2012 to 13,607 in 2023, despite rising disease prevalence. District health centers and private doctors' offices remained the backbone of service delivery, but reduced patronage highlighted potential barriers to access, including affordability and service availability. Among those with chronic illnesses, kidney disease (57.6 percent), lupus (51.6 percent), and cancer (50.9 percent) recorded the highest facility utilization rates.

Gender, Youth, and Vulnerable Populations

Gender disparities remained evident across multiple domains. Women dominated higher education, accounting for larger shares of associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, and postgraduate qualifications. However, they faced higher unemployment (19.8 percent vs. 16.3 percent for men) and earned less than men in most occupational categories, despite holding more advanced credentials. Women also reported a higher prevalence of chronic illnesses, but exhibited greater health-seeking behavior and longer life expectancy.

The youth population (15-24 years) declined from 18,519 in 2012 to 15,266 in 2023, representing 14.0 percent of the total population. School attendance remained high among 15-19 year olds (65.5 percent), though labour market outcomes were weak, with unemployment exceeding 28 percent among 20-24 year olds. Marriage and union formation declined sharply, with nearly 79 percent of youths reporting no spouse or partner in 2023.

Disability affected 4,437 persons (4.3 percent of those aged 5+), with prevalence rising steeply with age. Vision, mobility, and cognitive difficulties were most common, though the majority of cases were classified as mild to moderate. Women reported higher rates of mild and moderate disabilities, while men were slightly more represented in severe cases.

Conclusion

The 2023 Population and Housing Census confirms that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has entered a new demographic phase characterized by population decline, advanced aging, and spatial redistribution. Gains in education, housing quality, and access to services demonstrate progress toward sustainable development goals, yet persistent challenges remain, including high youth unemployment, gender wage gaps, chronic disease burdens, and rural depopulation. Policy interventions must balance support for an aging population with investments in youth development, gender equity, and balanced regional growth to ensure long-term demographic resilience and inclusive development.

Chapter 1. Population Size, Growth and Distribution



1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings on the size, growth, and distribution of the population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, drawing primarily on data from the 2023 Population and Housing Census and comparing them with results from the 2012 Census. The census remains the most comprehensive source of demographic data, and examining results across time provides insight into how the population has changed over the past decade.

The comparative analysis between 2012 and 2023 reveals not only whether the national population has expanded, contracted, or stabilized, but also where these shifts have occurred and which segments of the population have been most affected. Such insights are vital for policy formulation, as they underpin decisions related to labour markets, education and health services, housing needs, and infrastructure development.

Understanding demographic change is also central to sustainable development planning. Population size and distribution influence pressures on natural resources, community resilience, and the economy's ability to generate opportunities. By situating the 2023 results against the 2012 benchmark, this chapter provides a clear picture of demographic continuity and change, offering evidence to guide future policy and national development strategies. The next section examines population size and growth in detail, setting the foundation for further analysis.

1.2 Population Size and Growth

The historical trajectory regarding population change in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reveals distinct phases of demographic expansion and contraction. The mid-20th century represented the country's most dynamic growth period, particularly between 1946 and 1960, when the population expanded at an average annual rate of 1,307 persons. This rapid increase reflected relatively high fertility rates in the post-war years, combined with moderate levels of outward migration. The 1970s also registered substantial growth, with an average annual increase of 1,090 persons, marking the last decade of sustained population expansion.

From the 1980s onwards, however, the momentum of growth began to taper. Between 1980 and 1991, the annual increase moderated to 887 persons, and this figure continued to decline in each subsequent intercensal period. From 2001 to 2012, average annual growth slowed to just 88 persons, signaling the onset of demographic stagnation. This trend culminated in 2023, when for the first time in recorded census history, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines registered an absolute decline in its population. The total population decreased to 109,296 persons in 2023, down from 109,991 in 2012, resulting in a net loss of 695 persons, equivalent to an average annual decrease of approximately 65 persons. These shifts are clearly illustrated in Figure 1.1, which shows peak growth in the mid-20th century and a sharp contraction that followed, culminating in negative growth in 2023.

Figure 1.1 Average Annual Population Increase from 1881 to 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 1-1 Population Size and Growth, 1871 to 2012

| Date of Census | Male | Female | Population | Sex Ratio | Average Annual Increase |
|----------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|------------|-------------------------|
| 1871 | 16,865 | 18,823 | 35,688 | 090 | - |
| 1881 | 19,047 | 21,501 | 40,548 | 089 | 486 |
| 1891 | 18,780 | 22,274 | 41,054 | 084 | 51 |
| 02-Apr-1911 | 18,345 | 23,532 | 41,877 | 078 | 82 |
| 24-Apr-1921 | 19,155 | 25,292 | 44,447 | 076 | 257 |
| 24-Apr-1931 | 21,208 | 26,753 | 47,961 | 079 | 351 |
| 09-Apr-1946 | 27,901 | 33,746 | 61,647 | 083 | 912 |
| 07-Apr-1960 | 37,561 | 42,387 | 79,948 | 089 | 1,307 |
| 07-Apr-1970 | 41,150 | 45,794 | 86,944 | 090 | 700 |
| 12-May-1980 | 47,409 | 50,436 | 97,845 | 094 | 1,090 |
| 12-May-1991 | 53,977 | 53,621 | 107,598* | 101 | 887 |
| 12-Jun-2001 | 55,456 | 53,566 | 109,022* | 104 | 142 |
| 12-Jun-2012 | 56,419 | 53,572 | 109,991* | 105 | 88 |
| June 15, 2023 | 55,200 | 54,096 | 109,296* | 102 | -63 (decline) |

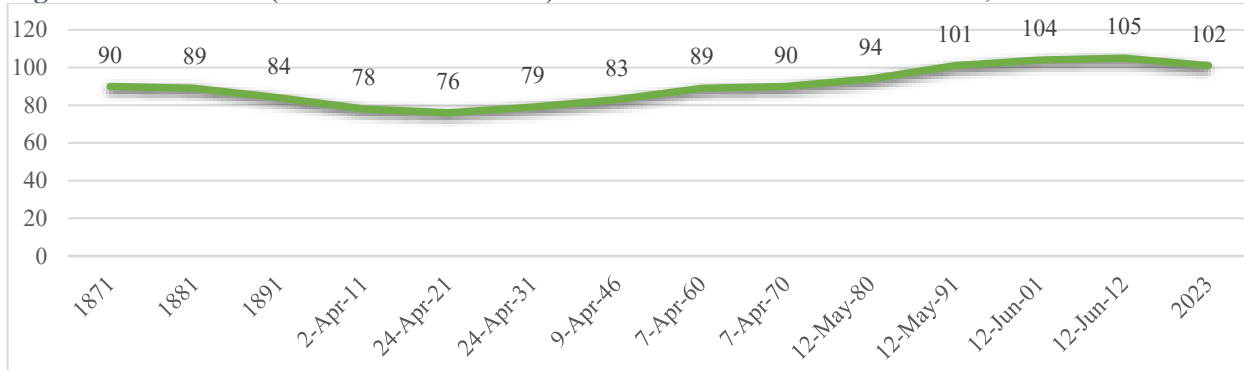
*Note: For 1991, 2001, 2012, and 2023, the total population figures are used.

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The results from 2023, therefore, mark a critical demographic turning point. After more than a century of steady increases, the population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has shifted from positive growth to outright decline. This reversal reflects the long-term decline in natural increase and highlights the growing roles of migration and aging in shaping population size. The evidence from Table 1-1 and Figure 1.1 underscores that the country has entered a new demographic phase, one in which planning for a

shrinking and potentially older population will become an essential consideration for future national development.

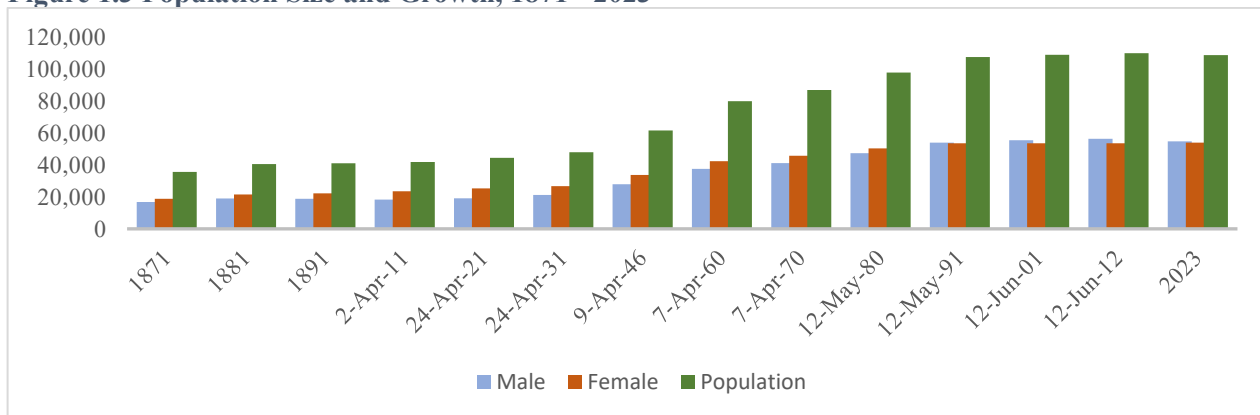
Figure 1.2 Sex Ratio (Males to 100 Females) in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 1871 - 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The sex composition of the population in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has undergone noticeable shifts over the past century. In 1921, the sex ratio reached its lowest point at 76 males per 100 females, reflecting a clear female majority. From that point onward, the ratio gradually increased, reaching parity in 1991 with 101 males per 100 females. The upward trend continued through the early 2000s, peaking at 105 in 2012, before moderating to 102 in 2023. These long-term fluctuations, as illustrated in Figure 1.2, indicate a transition from a persistent female dominance in the population structure to a more balanced sex distribution in recent decades. While the drivers of these shifts may reflect a combination of demographic processes, including improvements in male survival rates, changing fertility levels, and evolving migration flows that increasingly involve both sexes. Nonetheless, monitoring future shifts in the sex ratio will be critical, as even small imbalances can have broader social and economic implications in a small population context.

Figure 1.3 Population Size and Growth, 1871 - 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

1.3 Population by Census Division

The distribution of the population across census divisions in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines highlights both continuity and change in settlement patterns over the last two decades. As shown in Table 1-2, the majority of the population remains concentrated on the mainland, which accounted for 92.0 percent of the total in 2023, compared with 90.6 percent in 2012. The Grenadines, by contrast, saw their share of the national population decline from 9.4 percent in 2012 to 8.0 percent in 2023, reversing the growth recorded in the previous intercensal period.

On the mainland, the Suburbs of Kingstown and Calliaqua continue to grow in demographic importance. Together, they accounted for 38.8 percent of the total population in 2023, up from 34.5 percent in 2012. Between 2012 and 2023, the Suburbs of Kingstown grew by 14.0 percent while Calliaqua increased by 11.1 percent, confirming the ongoing trend of peri-urban expansion and residential relocation from the urban core to surrounding districts. These shifts reflect the continued spread of population into areas outside the capital where housing and services are more accessible.

Table 1-2 Total Household Population Distribution by Census Division, 2001, 2012 & 2023

| Census Division | 2001 | | 2012 | | 2023 | | Percentage Change | |
|-------------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | 2001–2012 | 2012–2023 |
| Kingstown | 13,526 | 12.5 | 12,712 | 11.6 | 10,690 | 9.8 | -6.0 | -15.9 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 13,027 | 12.1 | 13,782 | 12.6 | 15,705 | 14.4 | 5.8 | 14.0 |
| Calliaqua | 22,345 | 20.7 | 23,908 | 21.9 | 26,560 | 24.4 | 7.0 | 11.1 |
| Marriaqua | 8,254 | 7.7 | 7,798 | 7.1 | 7,360 | 6.8 | -5.5 | -5.6 |
| Bridgetown | 6,779 | 6.3 | 6,564 | 6.0 | 6,424 | 5.9 | -3.2 | -2.1 |
| Colonarie | 7,490 | 6.9 | 6,849 | 6.3 | 6,742 | 6.2 | -8.6 | -1.6 |
| Georgetown | 6,964 | 6.5 | 7,049 | 6.5 | 7,139 | 6.6 | 1.2 | 1.3 |
| Sandy Bay | 2,805 | 2.6 | 2,576 | 2.4 | 2,554 | 2.3 | -8.2 | -0.9 |
| Layou | 6,338 | 5.9 | 6,335 | 5.8 | 6,344 | 5.8 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| Barrouallie | 5,459 | 5.1 | 5,625 | 5.2 | 5,624 | 5.2 | 3.0 | 0.0 |
| Chateaubelair | 6,081 | 5.6 | 5,756 | 5.3 | 4,900 | 4.5 | -5.3 | -14.9 |
| Total Mainland | 99,068 | 91.9 | 98,954 | 90.6 | 100,042 | 92.0 | -0.1 | 1.1 |
| Northern Grenadines | 5,413 | 5.0 | 6,184 | 5.7 | 5,107 | 4.7 | 14.2 | -17.4 |
| Southern Grenadines | 3,354 | 3.1 | 4,050 | 3.7 | 3,615 | 3.3 | 20.8 | -10.7 |
| Total Grenadines | 8,767 | 8.1 | 10,234 | 9.4 | 8,722 | 8.0 | 16.7 | -14.8 |
| Total | 107,835 | 100.0 | 109,188 | 100.0 | 108,764 | 100.0 | 1.3 | -0.4 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

By contrast, the census division of Kingstown experienced a marked decline, with its population falling from 12,712 in 2012 to 10,690 in 2023, a contraction of 15.9 percent over the period. Marriaqua also registered a 5.6 percent decrease, continuing its downward trend from the previous intercensal period. Other rural divisions such as Colonarie, Chateaubelair, and Sandy Bay also recorded losses, though at more moderate levels, reflecting persistent depopulation in some agricultural and remote areas. In

contrast, divisions such as Georgetown, Layou, and Barrouallie remained largely unchanged, with stable population sizes across the intercensal period.

The Grenadines, which had previously recorded robust growth between 2001 and 2012, experienced substantial contractions in the most recent intercensal period. The Northern Grenadines population declined by 17.4 percent and the Southern Grenadines by 10.7 percent, together reducing the overall Grenadines share of the national population to 8.0 percent in 2023. While small in absolute terms, these declines are significant relative to earlier decades, signaling shifting dynamics in migration, tourism, and residential settlement patterns across the island divisions.

Overall, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is experiencing a shift in population away from traditional urban and rural centers toward peri-urban areas. These changes have important implications for planning, infrastructure, and service delivery. The growing concentration of people in a few rapidly expanding divisions highlights the need for policies that address uneven growth, manage rural decline, and respond to population loss in the Grenadines. These emerging patterns of redistribution are further reflected in population density and settlement trends, which are examined in the following section.

1.4 Population Density and Settlement

Population density patterns in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have remained broadly stable over the last two decades. The 2023 Census reveals subtle shifts in line with overall demographic change. At the national level, density stood at 724 persons per square mile in 2023, slightly below the 732 recorded in 2012 and almost identical to the 725 observed in 2001. The mainland continues to account for the bulk of the population, with a density of 748 persons per square mile in 2023, while the Grenadines declined to 529 persons per square mile, reversing previous growth.

As shown in Table 1-3, densities differ sharply across census divisions. Kingstown, among the most densely populated census divisions, fell further to 5,626 persons per square mile in 2023, reflecting its continued population decline from 2001. In contrast, the Suburbs of Kingstown (2,454) and Calliaqua (2,251) recorded notable increases, consolidating their role as the fastest-growing peri-urban settlements. Bridgetown (892) and Marriaqua (783) also remained above the national average, though both showed modest decreases compared to 2012.

Rural and less accessible divisions continue to exhibit lower densities. Colonarie (503), Sandy Bay (482), Barrouallie (396), and particularly Chateaubelair (159) reflect persistent depopulation linked to migration and limited economic activity. Georgetown (322) and Layou (572) remained relatively unchanged, showing stability across the intercensal period. In the Grenadines, both the Northern (567) and Southern (482) divisions experienced significant declines in density, consistent with the overall population losses recorded there.

Table 1-3 Population Density by Census Division, 2001, 2012 & 2023

| Census Division | Area (Sq. Miles) | 2001 Population | 2012 Population | 2023 Population | 2001 Density | 2012 Density | 2023 Density |
|-------------------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Kingstown | 1.9 | 13,857 | 12,909 | 10,690 | 7,293 | 6,794 | 5,626 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 6.4 | 13,782 | 13,812 | 15,705 | 2,154 | 2,158 | 2,454 |
| Calliaqua | 11.8 | 22,706 | 24,205 | 26,560 | 1,924 | 2,051 | 2,251 |
| Marriaqua | 9.4 | 8,254 | 7,798 | 7,360 | 878 | 830 | 783 |
| Bridgetown | 7.2 | 6,779 | 6,568 | 6,424 | 942 | 912 | 892 |
| Colonarie | 13.4 | 7,491 | 6,849 | 6,742 | 559 | 511 | 503 |
| Georgetown | 22.2 | 6,985 | 7,061 | 7,139 | 315 | 318 | 322 |
| Sandy Bay | 5.3 | 2,805 | 2,576 | 2,554 | 529 | 486 | 482 |
| Layou | 11.1 | 6,338 | 6,339 | 6,344 | 571 | 571 | 572 |
| Barrouallie | 14.2 | 5,463 | 5,884 | 5,624 | 385 | 414 | 396 |
| Chateaubelair | 30.9 | 6,081 | 5,756 | 4,900 | 197 | 186 | 159 |
| Total Mainland | 133.8 | 99,786 | 99,757 | 100,042 | 746 | 746 | 748 |
| Northern Grenadines | 9.0 | 5,647 | 6,184 | 5,107 | 627 | 687 | 567 |
| Southern Grenadines | 7.5 | 3,589 | 4,050 | 3,615 | 479 | 540 | 482 |
| Total Grenadines | 16.5 | 9,236 | 10,234 | 8,722 | 560 | 620 | 529 |
| Total | 150.3 | 109,022 | 109,991 | 108,764 | 725 | 732 | 724 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Overall, national population density has remained stable, but settlements are becoming increasingly uneven. Growth is concentrated in peri-urban areas, while Kingstown, rural districts, and the Grenadines face ongoing decline. These imbalances reemphasize the need to plan for public service delivery and infrastructure in expanding areas, while addressing depopulation and underuse of resources elsewhere.

1.5 Population by Age Group and Sex

The age and sex structure of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has undergone marked transformations over the past three censuses, driven by declining fertility, rising life expectancy, and the progressive aging of the population. In 2001, the population pyramid showed a broad base, with children under 15 years of age accounting for 30.7 percent of the total population (Table 1-5, Figure 1.6). By 2012, this share had declined to 24.6 percent, and by 2023 it fell further to 20.7 percent, underscoring a sustained reduction in fertility. The steepest contraction occurred in the youngest cohort (0-4 years), which represented 9.4 percent of the population in 2001, fell to 7.9 percent in 2012, and dropped again to 5.2 percent in 2023 (Table 1-5 and Figures 1.6 to 1.8). These changes are clearly reflected in the narrowing base of successive pyramids, signaling a sustained decline in fertility.

Table 1-4 Household Population by Age Group and Sex, 2012 & 2023

| Age Group | 2012 | | | | 2023 | | | |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Sex Ratio | Male | Female | Total | Sex Ratio |
| 0-4 | 4,314 | 4,331 | 8,645 | 100 | 2807 | 2802 | 5609 | 100 |
| 5-9 | 4,308 | 4,212 | 8,520 | 102 | 4179 | 4037 | 8216 | 104 |
| 10-14 | 5,042 | 4,718 | 9,760 | 107 | 4350 | 4207 | 8557 | 103 |
| 15-19 | 5,053 | 4,859 | 9,912 | 104 | 4121 | 3928 | 8049 | 105 |
| 20-24 | 4,354 | 4,253 | 8,607 | 102 | 3731 | 3486 | 7217 | 107 |
| 25-29 | 4,228 | 4,089 | 8,317 | 103 | 3577 | 3837 | 7414 | 93 |
| 30-34 | 3,887 | 3,976 | 7,863 | 098 | 3608 | 3806 | 7414 | 95 |
| 35-39 | 3,839 | 3,714 | 7,553 | 103 | 3567 | 3784 | 7351 | 94 |
| 40-44 | 3,772 | 3,383 | 7,155 | 111 | 3736 | 3942 | 7678 | 95 |
| 45-49 | 3,861 | 3,605 | 7,466 | 107 | 3638 | 3491 | 7129 | 104 |
| 50-54 | 3,436 | 3,112 | 6,548 | 110 | 3801 | 3485 | 7286 | 109 |
| 55-59 | 2,642 | 2,389 | 5,031 | 111 | 3498 | 3136 | 6634 | 112 |
| 60-64 | 1,970 | 1,851 | 3,821 | 106 | 3465 | 3083 | 6548 | 112 |
| 65-69 | 1,457 | 1,384 | 2,841 | 105 | 2706 | 2483 | 5189 | 109 |
| 70-74 | 1,282 | 1,254 | 2,536 | 102 | 1705 | 1713 | 3418 | 100 |
| 75-79 | 964 | 1,014 | 1,978 | 095 | 1154 | 1191 | 2345 | 97 |
| 80+ | 1,142 | 1,493 | 2,635 | 076 | 1114 | 1596 | 2710 | 70 |
| Total | 55,551 | 53,637 | 109,188 | 104 | 54,757 | 54,007 | 108,764 | 101 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Sex ratios highlight further nuances in demographic change. In 2001, the overall sex ratio was 98 males per 100 females, rising to 104 in 2012, before moderating to 101 in 2023 (Table 1-4). Among children (0-14 years), the ratio has consistently remained near parity, with a slight male advantage. However, in the prime working ages (25-44 years), male deficits appear, with sex ratios dropping below 100 in several cohorts, reflecting male out-migration and higher male mortality. By contrast, in the 55-64 cohorts, sex ratios rise above 110, before dropping steeply among the oldest-old. In the 80+ cohort, the sex ratio fell from 76 in 2001 to 83 in 2012 and to 70 in 2023, highlighting the clear female survival advantage at older ages.

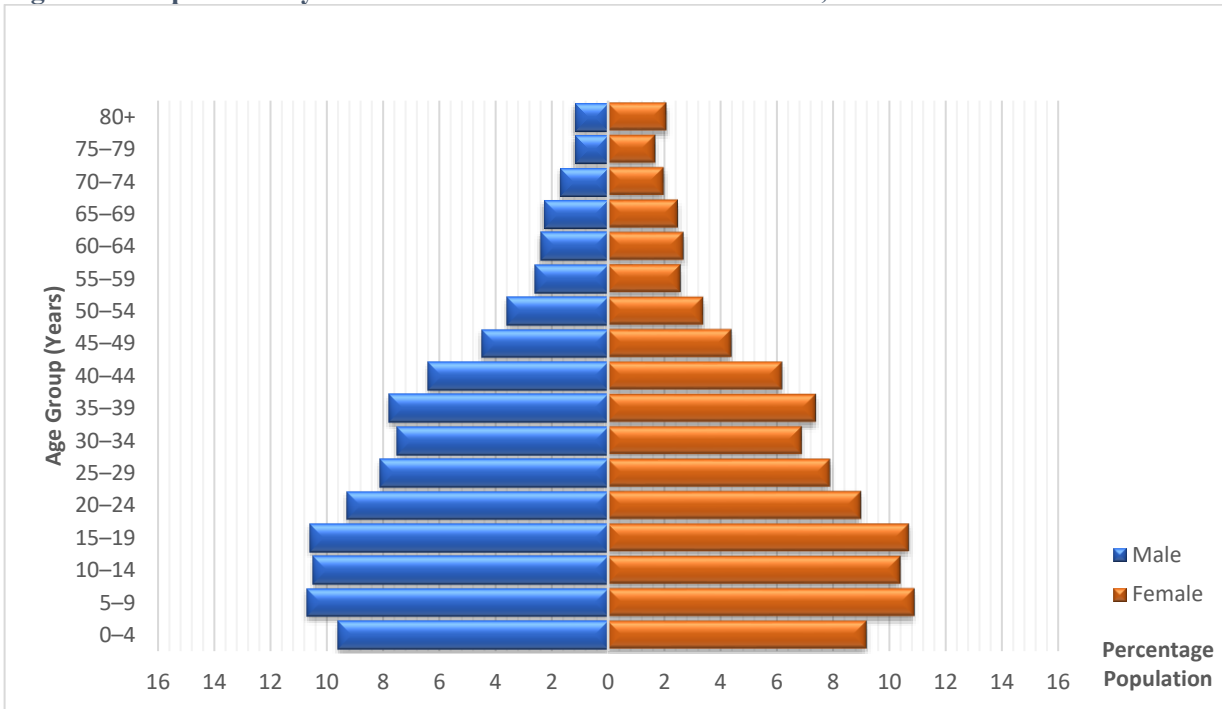
The youth population aged 15-24 years followed a similar trajectory. In 2001, this age group made up 20.6 percent of the population, declining to 17.1 percent in 2012 and further to 14.1 percent in 2023 (Table 1-5, Figures 1.6-1.8). Over the same period, the working-age population (15-64 years) expanded proportionally, rising from 63 percent in 2001 to 66.3 percent in 2012, and stabilizing at 67 percent in 2023. Within this broad category, the composition has shifted upward: younger working cohorts (25-44 years) dominated in 2001 and 2012, but older cohorts (45-64 years) expanded most rapidly by 2023. For instance, the 55-64 age group grew from 4.9 percent of the population in 2001 to 6.6 percent in 2012, and nearly doubled to 12.1 percent in 2023 (Table 1-5). These changes reflect both the maturation of earlier large birth cohorts and the ongoing aging of the labour force.

Table 1-5 Percentage Distribution of Household Population by Age Group and Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023

| Age Group | 2001 | | | 2012 | | | 2023 | | |
|--------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| 0-4 | 9.6 | 9.2 | 9.4 | 7.8 | 8.1 | 7.9 | 5.1 | 5.2 | 5.2 |
| 5-9 | 10.7 | 10.9 | 10.8 | 7.8 | 7.9 | 7.8 | 7.6 | 7.5 | 7.6 |
| 10-14 | 10.5 | 10.4 | 10.5 | 9.1 | 8.8 | 8.9 | 7.9 | 7.8 | 7.9 |
| 15-19 | 10.6 | 10.7 | 10.6 | 9.1 | 9.1 | 9.1 | 7.5 | 7.3 | 7.4 |
| 20-24 | 9.3 | 9.0 | 9.1 | 7.8 | 7.9 | 7.9 | 6.8 | 6.5 | 6.6 |
| 25-29 | 8.1 | 7.9 | 8.0 | 7.6 | 7.6 | 7.6 | 6.5 | 7.1 | 6.8 |
| 30-34 | 7.5 | 6.9 | 7.2 | 7.0 | 7.4 | 7.2 | 6.6 | 7.0 | 6.8 |
| 35-39 | 7.8 | 7.4 | 7.6 | 6.9 | 6.9 | 6.9 | 6.5 | 7.0 | 6.8 |
| 40-44 | 6.4 | 6.2 | 6.3 | 6.8 | 6.3 | 6.6 | 6.8 | 7.3 | 7.1 |
| 45-49 | 4.5 | 4.4 | 4.5 | 7.0 | 6.7 | 6.8 | 6.6 | 6.5 | 6.6 |
| 50-54 | 3.6 | 3.4 | 3.5 | 6.2 | 5.8 | 6.0 | 6.9 | 6.5 | 6.7 |
| 55-59 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 4.8 | 4.5 | 4.6 | 6.4 | 5.8 | 6.1 |
| 60-64 | 2.4 | 2.7 | 2.6 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 3.5 | 6.3 | 5.7 | 6.0 |
| 65-69 | 2.3 | 2.5 | 2.4 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 4.9 | 4.6 | 4.8 |
| 70-74 | 1.7 | 2.0 | 1.8 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 2.3 | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.1 |
| 75-79 | 1.2 | 1.7 | 1.4 | 1.7 | 1.9 | 1.8 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.2 |
| 80+ | 1.2 | 2.1 | 1.6 | 2.1 | 2.8 | 2.4 | 2.0 | 3.0 | 2.5 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

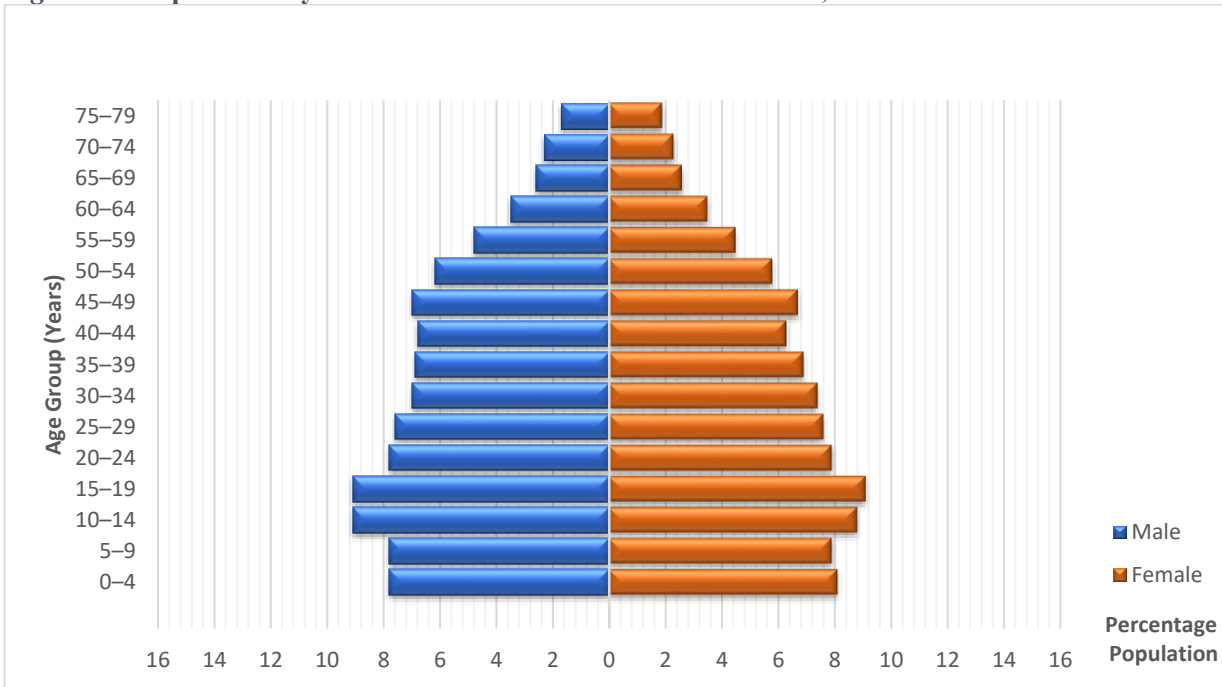
Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Figure 1.4 Population Pyramid of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 2001



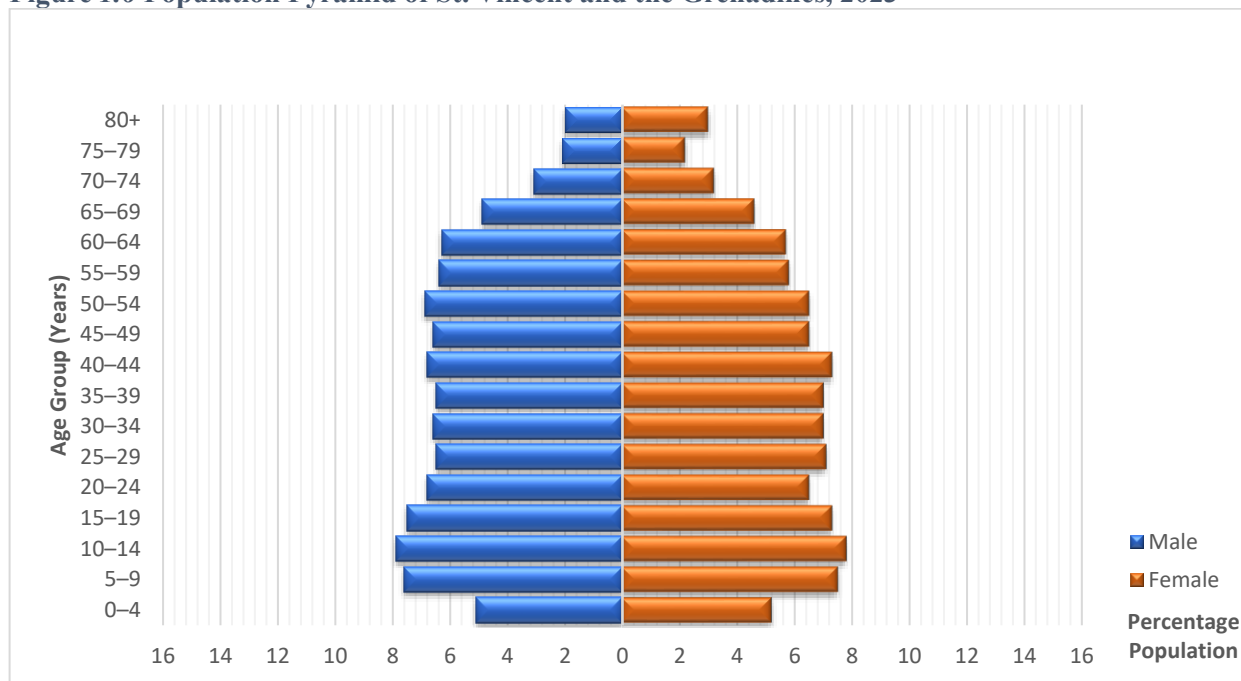
Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Figure 1.5 Population Pyramid of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 2012



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Figure 1.6 Population Pyramid of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 2023



Source: *Population and Housing Census 2023*

Moreover, the elderly population (65 years and over) has expanded steadily and now represents the most dynamic component of the age structure. In 2001, this group comprised 7.8 percent of the population, increasing to 10.5 percent in 2012 and rising sharply to 14.4 percent in 2023 (Tables 1-4 and 1-5). The 80+ population also grew, moving from 1.6 percent in 2001 to 2.4 percent in 2012 and 2.5 percent in 2023. The widening of the upper tiers of the pyramids illustrates this aging process, contrasting the more youthful structure of 2001 with the increasingly top-heavy profile of 2023.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines’ demographic transition: from a youthful, broad-based structure in 2001, to a transitional form in 2012, and to an aging population by 2023. The steady contraction of the child population, the plateauing of working ages, the sharp rise in the elderly, and the shifting sex ratios point to profound long-term implications for labour supply, healthcare systems, pensions, and social support.

1.6 Age Dependency Ratios

An important measure of population structure is the dependency ratio, which relates the size of the dependent population to the working-age population. Following Swanson and Siegel (2004), the dependency ratio is defined as the number of persons aged 0-14 years and 65 years and over divided by those aged 15-64 years, expressed per 100⁴. This measure can be further disaggregated into the Youth Age Dependency Ratio (YADR) and the Old-Age Dependency Ratio (OADR). In 2001, Saint Vincent

⁴ Swanson, D. A., & Siegel, J. S. (2004). *The Methods and Materials of Demography* (2nd ed.). Elsevier Academic Press.

and the Grenadines had a YADR of 49 and an OADR of 12, giving a Total Age Dependency Ratio (TADR) of 61. The burden was overwhelmingly child-driven, consistent with a youthful population. By 2012, the YADR had fallen to 37, while the OADR rose modestly to 14, lowering the TADR to 51, the lowest across the three censuses. This represented a demographic window where the working-age population reached its largest share.

Further transformations occurred in 2023. The YADR dropped again to 31, but this was offset by a sharp rise in the OADR, which reached 21. Consequently, the TADR rose slightly to 52, but the composition of dependents had shifted dramatically: old-age dependency now accounted for nearly 40 percent of the total dependency burden, up from 20 percent in 2001. This underscores the accelerating process of population aging and the gradual transition from child-driven to old-age-driven dependency.

Taken together, the trajectory of dependency ratios between 2001 and 2023 illustrates Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' demographic transition. The country has moved from a youthful structure, marked by heavy child dependency, to one in which the elderly exert increasing weight on the support burden. This shift carries significant implications for labour supply, pensions, healthcare, and long-term social protection policies.

1.7 Conclusion

The 2023 Census marks a significant demographic milestone for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, recording the first population decline in the country's history after more than a century of steady growth. This reversal reflects the combined effects of sustained fertility decline, continued out-migration, and population ageing. While peri-urban areas such as the Suburbs of Kingstown and Calliaqua have grown, rural divisions and the Grenadines have contracted, signaling a redistribution of population away from traditional centers toward expanding suburban zones.

The age structure has also undergone a marked transformation, with children comprising a smaller share of the population, the working-age population stabilizing, and older cohorts expanding rapidly. The elderly population now accounts for a growing share of the total, shifting the dependency burden from child-driven to old-age driven. These changes underscore the demographic transition toward an ageing society and highlight the urgent need for policies that address labour force sustainability, social protection, and the balanced provision of services across both expanding and declining areas.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER I

POPULATION GROWTH, SIZE AND DISTRIBUTION



Population Decline:

Population decreased from 109,188 in 2012 to 108,764 in 2023



National density:

725 persons per sq. mile (2023)



Population Aged Under 15:

Children under 15 declined to 20.6% of the population in 2023



Youth & Labour Force:

Youth aged 15 to 24 accounted for 14.0% of the population, while the working-age population (15 to 64) represented 66.9% in 2023



Ageing Population:

Elderly (65+) increased to 12.6% of the population in 2023



Dependency Burden :

Approximately 50 dependents per 100 workers

Chapter 2. Social and Demographic Characteristics



2.1 Introduction

The social and demographic characteristics of a population provide essential context for understanding its cultural identity, social organization, and patterns of change. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, features such as place of birth, sex composition, ethnicity, religious affiliation, and marital or union status reflect the diversity of the population and its evolving social fabric.

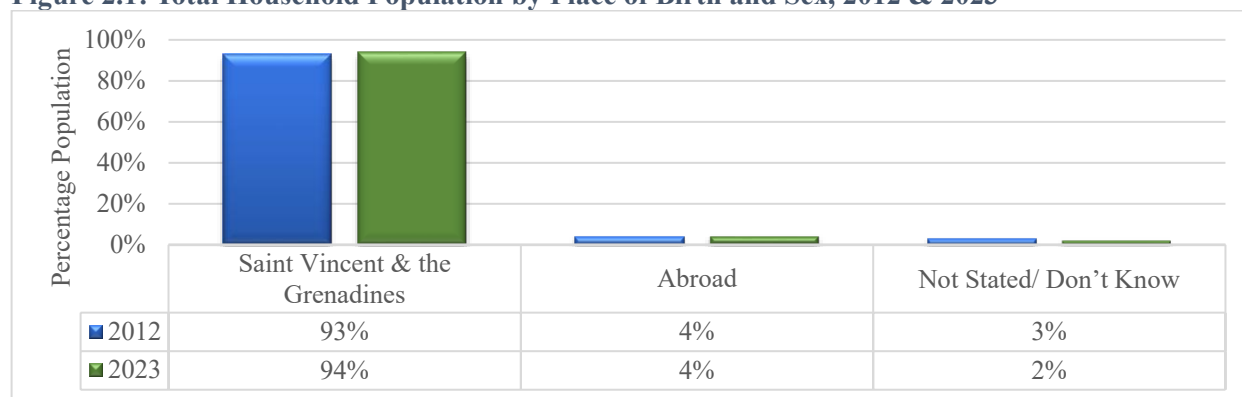
This chapter examines these characteristics using data from the 2001, 2012 and 2023 Population and Housing Censuses, highlighting shifts that occurred during the intercensal period. Section 2.2 explores patterns of place of birth, offering insights into nativity, migration, and their implications for population structure. Section 2.3 reviews the sex ratio, tracing changes in the balance between males and females and linking these trends to broader demographic processes. Section 2.4 focuses on ethnicity, documenting the persistence and transformation of cultural identities. Section 2.5 addresses religion and denomination, capturing the role of faith communities in shaping Vincentian society. Finally, Section 2.6 considers marital and union status, providing evidence on family formation, stability, and changing partnership arrangements.

Taken together, these dimensions show how social and demographic attributes intersect with broader forces such as fertility decline, ageing, and migration. They highlight the ways in which identity, culture, and family life are being reshaped in response to these demographic shifts. Understanding these patterns is critical, as they carry important implications for social cohesion, policy planning, and the long-term development trajectory of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

2.2 Place of Birth

The 2023 Census shows that the population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines continue to be predominantly native-born, although modest changes highlight the influence of migration on the country’s demographic profile.

Figure 2.1: Total Household Population by Place of Birth and Sex, 2012 & 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Of the 108,764 persons enumerated in 2023, 102,546 or 94.3 percent reported being born in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. This marks an increase from 93.0 percent in 2012, though slightly below the 95.7 percent recorded in 2001 (Table 2-1 to 2.2 and Figure 2.1). The results point to the persistence of a strong native-born majority, while also reflecting the long-term demographic effects of international mobility.

The foreign-born population accounted for a total of 4,440 persons (4.1 percent) in 2023, down from 4,898 (4.5 percent) in 2012 and slightly below the 4,665 (4.3 percent) recorded in 2001. In absolute terms, the foreign-born declined by 458 persons between 2012 and 2023, representing a 9.4 percent reduction. This contraction suggests fewer immigration inflows during the period, possibly influenced by regional labour market conditions, out-migration of foreign residents, or broader socio-economic challenges. Despite the decline, the foreign-born population continues to contribute to the country's cultural and demographic diversity.

Table 2-1: Total Population by Place of Birth and Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023

| Place of Birth | 2001 | | | 2012 | | | 2023 | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| St. Vincent and the Grenadines | 52,145 | 51,016 | 103,161 | 51,545 | 49,970 | 101,515 | 51,753 | 50,793 | 102,546 |
| Abroad | 2,272 | 2,393 | 4,665 | 2,474 | 2,424 | 4,898 | 2,085 | 2,355 | 4,440 |
| Don't Know/Not Stated | 8 | 1 | 9 | 1,532 | 1,243 | 2,775 | 919 | 859 | 1,778 |
| Total | 54,425 | 53,410 | 107,835 | 55,551 | 53,637 | 109,188 | 54,757 | 54,007 | 108,764 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 2-2 Percentage Population by Place of Birth and Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023

| Place of Birth | 2001 | | | 2012 | | | 2023 | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| St. Vincent and the Grenadines | 95.8 | 95.5 | 95.7 | 92.8 | 93.2 | 93 | 94.5 | 94.0 | 94.3 |
| Abroad | 4.2 | 4.5 | 4.3 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 3.8 | 4.4 | 4.1 |
| Don't Know/Not Stated | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2.7 | 2.3 | 2.5 | 1.7 | 1.6 | 1.6 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Overall, these findings reaffirm that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remain largely a native-born society. However, international migration and improved reporting practices have introduced subtle changes in population composition. The decline in foreign-born residents since 2012 highlights the limited role of immigration in counterbalancing broader demographic challenges, such as low natural increase, declining fertility, and population aging.

2.2.1 Sex Ratio

The sex ratio by place of birth highlights differences between the native and foreign-born populations. Among the local-born, there were 102 males per 100 females in 2023 (i.e. 51,753 males and 50,793 females). This ratio has remained stable over the last three censuses, with 103 in 2012 and 102 in 2001, confirming a slight male predominance in the native-born population.

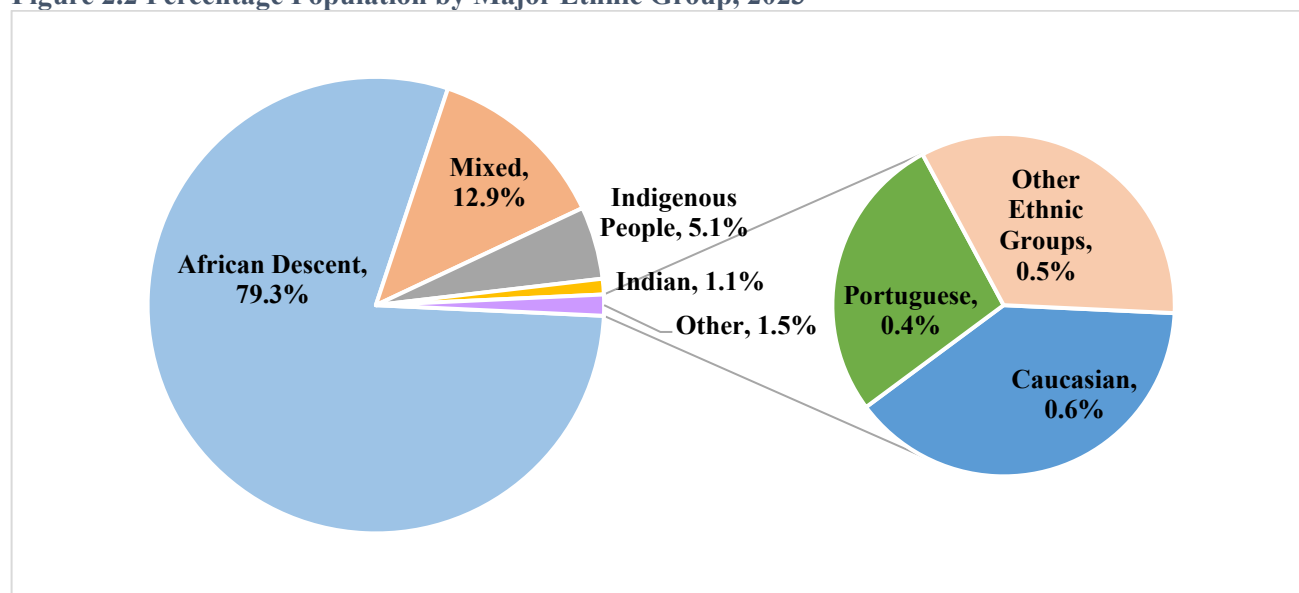
The foreign-born population stands out in contrast. In 2023, the sex ratio stood at 89 males per 100 females (i.e. 2,085 males and 2,355 females), down sharply from 102 in 2012 and lower than the 95 recorded in 2001. This shift reflects a clear tendency toward female-dominated migration during the last intercensal period, consistent with migration patterns linked to family reunification, caregiving roles, and employment in the services sector.

These findings show that the native-born population has maintained a stable balance between men and women, while the foreign-born population has become increasingly female-dominated. This pattern reflects the gendered nature of migration to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and suggests implications for household formation, the labour force participation, and gender roles.

2.3 Ethnicity

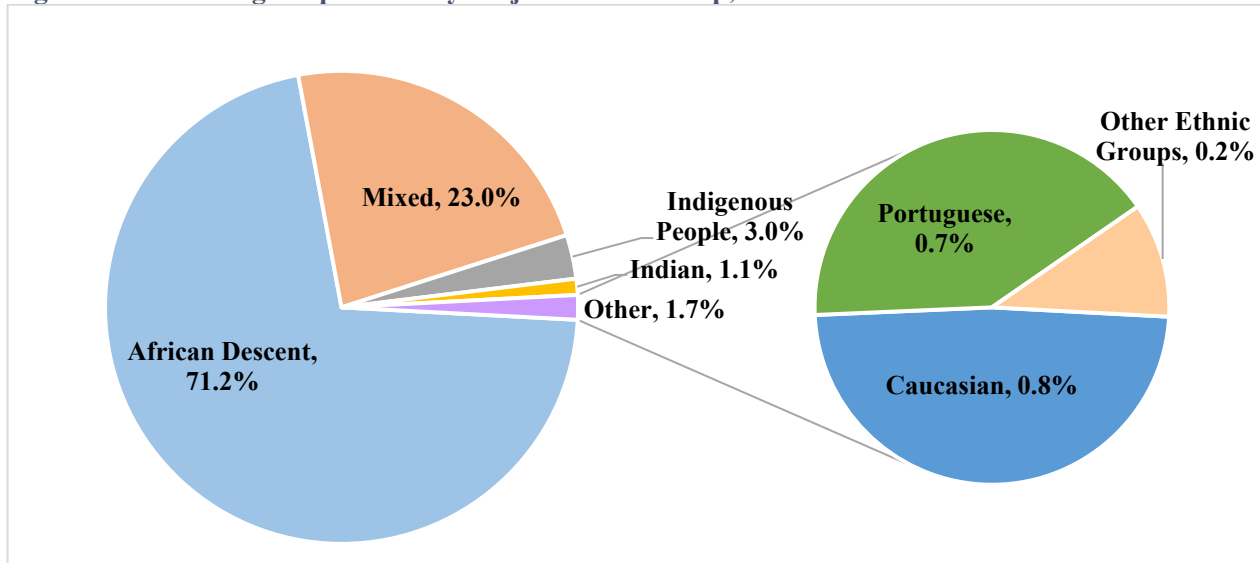
The population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines continues to be dominated by persons of African descent, but census data reveal important shifts in the ethnic composition between 2001, 2012, and 2023.

Figure 2.2 Percentage Population by Major Ethnic Group, 2023



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Figure 2.3 Percentage Population by Major Ethnic Group, 2012



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

In 2023, 79.3 percent or 86,222 persons identified as African/Black/Negro, up from 71.2 percent in 2012 and 72.8 percent in 2001 (Tables 2-3 and 2-5). While this group remained the overwhelming majority throughout the period, the increase between 2012 and 2023 points to a further expansion in its share of the population.

Table 2-3 Household Population by Major Ethnic Group and Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023

| Major Ethnic Group | 2001 | | | 2012 | | | 2023 | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| African Descent/Black/Negro | 40,423 | 38,116 | 78,539 | 40,255 | 37,509 | 77,764 | 43,990 | 42,232 | 86,222 |
| Indigenous People | 1,945 | 1,953 | 3,898 | 1,591 | 1,689 | 3,280 | 2,653 | 2,934 | 5,587 |
| White/Caucasian | 438 | 445 | 883 | 453 | 436 | 889 | 338 | 295 | 633 |
| East Indian/Indian | 717 | 736 | 1,453 | 595 | 604 | 1,199 | 616 | 586 | 1,202 |
| Mixed | 10,226 | 11,379 | 21,605 | 12,133 | 12,978 | 25,111 | 6,594 | 7,413 | 14,007 |
| Portuguese | 300 | 316 | 616 | 406 | 347 | 753 | 233 | 209 | 442 |
| Other Ethnic Group | 108 | 98 | 206 | 118 | 74 | 192 | 262 | 275 | 537 |
| Not Stated | 270 | 365 | 635 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 71 | 63 | 134 |
| All Groups | 54,427 | 53,408 | 107,835 | 55,551 | 53,637 | 109,188 | 54,757 | 54,007 | 108,764 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The Mixed population remained the second largest ethnic group, but its share declined notably over time. In 2023, 14,007 persons, or 12.9 percent, identified as Mixed, compared with 25,111 persons, or 23.0 percent, in 2012, and 21,605 persons, or 20.0 percent, in 2001. This suggests that, although still significant, the Mixed category represented a smaller proportion of the total population in 2023 than in previous census years.

Table 2-4 Household Population Change by Major Ethnic Group and Sex, 2001-2012 & 2012-2023

| Major Ethnic Group | Percentage Change 2001 to 2012 | | | Percentage Change 2012 to 2023 | | |
|--|--------------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------------------------|------------|------------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| African Descent/Black/Negro Indigenous People | -0.4 | -1.6 | -1 | 9.3 | 12.6 | 10.9 |
| White/Caucasian | -18.2 | -13.5 | -15.9 | 66.8 | 73.7 | 70.3 |
| East Indian/Indian | 3.4 | -2 | 0.7 | -25.4 | -32.3 | -28.8 |
| Mixed | -17 | -17.9 | -17.5 | 3.5 | -3 | 0.3 |
| Portuguese | 18.6 | 14.1 | 16.2 | -45.7 | -42.9 | -44.2 |
| Other Ethnic Group | 35.3 | 9.8 | 22.2 | -42.6 | -39.8 | -41.3 |
| Not Stated | 9.3 | -24.5 | -6.8 | 122 | 271.6 | 179.7 |
| All Groups | -100 | -100 | -100 | Undefined | Undefined | Undefined |
| | 2.1 | 0.4 | 1.3 | -1.4 | 0.7 | -0.4 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 2-5 Percentage Distribution of Population by Major Ethnic Group and Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023

| Major Ethnic Group | 2001 | | | 2012 | | | 2023 | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| African Descent/Black/Negro Indigenous People | 74.3 | 71.4 | 72.8 | 72.5 | 69.9 | 71.2 | 80.3 | 78.2 | 79.3 |
| White/Caucasian | 3.6 | 3.7 | 3.6 | 2.9 | 3.1 | 3.0 | 4.8 | 5.4 | 5.1 |
| East Indian/Indian | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 0.6 |
| Mixed | 1.3 | 1.4 | 1.3 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.1 |
| Portuguese | 18.8 | 21.3 | 20.0 | 21.8 | 24.2 | 23.0 | 12 | 13.7 | 12.9 |
| Other Ethnic Group | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.4 |
| Not Stated | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| All Groups | 0.5 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The Indigenous population (Carib/Amerindian) increased significantly in both absolute and relative terms, reaching 5,587 persons, or 5.1 percent of the population, in 2023, up from 3,280 persons, or 3.0 percent, in 2012. Compared with 3,898 persons or 3.6 percent in 2001, this indicates a strong increase over the last intercensal period and may reflect greater recognition of Indigenous identity, improved self-identification, or improved enumeration.

Smaller ethnic groups recorded mixed patterns over the period. The White/Caucasian population declined from 889 persons (0.8 percent) in 2012 to 633 persons (0.6 percent) in 2023. Similarly, the Portuguese group fell from 753 persons (0.7 percent) in 2012 to 442 persons (0.4 percent) in 2023. By contrast, the category of “Other ethnic groups,” which includes groups such as Middle Eastern (Syrian/Lebanese), Hispanic/Spanish, and Chinese, increased from 192 persons or 0.2 percent in 2012 to 537 persons or 0.5 percent in 2023, despite still representing a very small share of the total population. The East Indian/Indian population remained relatively stable, moving only slightly from 1,199 persons in 2012 to 1,202 persons in 2023, and continued to account for 1.1 percent of the population in both years.

In summary, the ethnic composition of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains dominated by its African heritage. However, the most recent intercensal period was marked by a greater concentration of the African/Black/Negro population, a decline in the share of the Mixed population, and growth in the Indigenous population and in some smaller ethnic categories. These shifts reflect the evolving nature of Vincentian identity and underscore the importance of recognizing and accommodating ethnic diversity within national development planning and cultural policy.

2.3.1 Population Distribution by Census Divisions and Major Ethnic Groups

The distribution of ethnic groups across census divisions highlights both historical settlement trends and current demographic shifts. Persons of African descent remain numerically dominant in every division, but their relative concentration varies geographically (Tables 2-6 and 2-7).

In 2023, persons of African descent remained the largest ethnic group in all divisions. Their share exceeded 80.0 percent in divisions such as Layou, Bridgetown, and Barrouallie, reflecting long-standing settlement patterns in the central and rural mainland. Conversely, lower proportions were observed in the Grenadines and Calliaqua, where population diversity was greatest. This points to a clear spatial pattern of ethnic concentration, with rural mainland divisions appearing more homogeneous and urban and coastal divisions more diverse (Tables 2-6 and 2-7).

Table 2-6 Total Household Population by Census Division and Major Ethnic Group, 2023

| Census Division | Major Ethnic Grouping | | | | | | | | Total |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| | African Descent | Indigenous People | White/Caucasian | East Indian /Indian | Mixed | Portuguese | Other | Not Stated | |
| Kingstown | 6,918 | 668 | 50 | 146 | 2,518 | 75 | 305 | 10 | 10,690 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 14,057 | 229 | 15 | 18 | 1,283 | 44 | 26 | 33 | 15,705 |
| Calliaqua | 20,999 | 877 | 319 | 514 | 3,515 | 152 | 136 | 48 | 26,560 |
| Marriaqua | 5,807 | 162 | 13 | 298 | 1,050 | 23 | 2 | 5 | 7,360 |
| Bridgetown | 5,818 | 71 | 7 | 37 | 458 | 22 | 5 | 6 | 6,424 |
| Colonarie | 5,498 | 225 | 6 | 50 | 877 | 78 | 2 | 6 | 6,742 |
| Georgetown | 5,151 | 1,062 | 6 | 42 | 845 | 19 | 10 | 4 | 7,139 |
| Sandy Bay | 630 | 1,536 | 3 | 7 | 372 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2,554 |
| Layou | 5,553 | 56 | 12 | 60 | 625 | 14 | 22 | 2 | 6,344 |
| Barrouallie | 5,407 | 111 | 5 | 7 | 67 | 10 | 10 | 7 | 5,624 |
| Chateaubelair | 3,883 | 261 | 4 | 10 | 732 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 4,900 |
| Northern Grenadines | 3,408 | 60 | 154 | 5 | 1,470 | 2 | 8 | 0 | 5,107 |
| Southern Grenadines | 3,093 | 269 | 39 | 8 | 195 | 0 | 6 | 5 | 3,615 |
| Total | 86,222 | 5,587 | 633 | 1,202 | 14,007 | 442 | 537 | 134 | 108,764 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 2-7 Percentage Household Population by Census Division and Major Ethnic Group, 2023

| Census Division | Major Ethnic Grouping | | | | | | | | Total |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | African Descent | Indigenous People | White/Caucasian | East Indian /Indian | Mixed | Portuguese | Other | Not Stated | |
| Kingstown | 8.0 | 12.0 | 7.9 | 12.1 | 18.0 | 17.0 | 56.8 | 7.5 | 9.8 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 16.3 | 4.1 | 2.4 | 1.5 | 9.2 | 10.0 | 4.8 | 24.6 | 14.4 |
| Calliaqua | 24.4 | 15.7 | 50.4 | 42.8 | 25.1 | 34.4 | 25.3 | 35.8 | 24.4 |
| Marriaqua | 6.7 | 2.9 | 2.1 | 24.8 | 7.5 | 5.2 | 0.4 | 3.7 | 6.8 |
| Bridgetown | 6.7 | 1.3 | 1.1 | 3.1 | 3.3 | 5.0 | 0.9 | 4.5 | 5.9 |
| Colonarie | 6.4 | 4.0 | 0.9 | 4.2 | 6.3 | 17.6 | 0.4 | 4.5 | 6.2 |
| Georgetown | 6.0 | 19.0 | 0.9 | 3.5 | 6.0 | 4.3 | 1.9 | 3.0 | 6.6 |
| Sandy Bay | 0.7 | 27.5 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 2.7 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 1.5 | 2.3 |
| Layou | 6.4 | 1.0 | 1.9 | 5.0 | 4.5 | 3.2 | 4.1 | 1.5 | 5.8 |
| Barrouallie | 6.3 | 2.0 | 0.8 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 2.3 | 1.9 | 5.2 | 5.2 |
| Chateaubelair | 4.5 | 4.7 | 0.6 | 0.8 | 5.2 | 0.2 | 0.6 | 4.5 | 4.5 |
| Northern Grenadines | 4.0 | 1.1 | 24.3 | 0.4 | 10.5 | 0.5 | 1.5 | 0.0 | 4.7 |
| Southern Grenadines | 3.6 | 4.8 | 6.2 | 0.7 | 1.4 | 0.0 | 1.1 | 3.7 | 3.3 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

In 2023, the distribution of major ethnic groups varied across census divisions, with the largest concentrations recorded in selected urban and peri-urban divisions as well as parts of the Grenadines (see Table 2-7). Calliaqua accounted for the highest concentration of the Mixed population at 25.1 percent, followed by Kingstown at 18.0 percent and the Northern Grenadines at 10.5 percent (Table 2-7). These divisions have historically shown higher levels of inter-ethnic interaction, mobility, and urban influence. The persistence of these patterns suggests that urbanization, occupational diversity, and social integration continue to shape ethnic identity across divisions.

The Indigenous population also continued to demonstrate strong territorial concentration. In 2023, Indigenous persons comprised 27.5 percent of Sandy Bay and 19.0 percent of Georgetown (Table 2-7). These figures confirm the continued concentration of the Indigenous population in north-eastern Saint Vincent and affirm the enduring presence of Carib and Garifuna heritage in these communities.

The White/Caucasian population, though numerically small, reveals a distinctive spatial pattern. In 2023, the Northern Grenadines accounted for 24.3 percent of the White/Caucasian population, while Calliaqua accounted for 50.4 percent (Table 2-7). This pattern reflects the continued importance of the Grenadines and Calliaqua as areas associated with expatriate settlement, tourism activity, and international mobility. The Portuguese community, while declining overall, also remained visible in Calliaqua and Kingstown, reflecting earlier urban settlement and assimilation trends (Table 2-7).

Table 2-8 Percentage Distribution of Population by Census Division and Major Ethnic Group, 2001

| Census Division | Major Ethnic Grouping | | | | | | | | Total |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| | African Descent | Indigenous People | White/Caucasian | East Indian /Indian | Mixed | Portuguese | Other | Not Stated | |
| Kingstown | 11.8 | 4.7 | 16.3 | 8.4 | 16.1 | 20 | 42.2 | 24.7 | 12.5 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 13.6 | 6.6 | 5 | 2.2 | 9 | 4.7 | 1.9 | 9.4 | 12.1 |
| Calliaqua | 19.6 | 8 | 42.2 | 32.2 | 24.8 | 30.5 | 18.4 | 33.4 | 20.7 |
| Marriaqua | 8.4 | 1.8 | 1.4 | 31 | 5 | 5.8 | 0.5 | 4.1 | 7.7 |
| Bridgetown | 7.6 | 1.8 | 0.6 | 4.1 | 2.8 | 5.4 | 1.5 | 2.8 | 6.3 |
| Colonarie | 7.2 | 0.8 | 0.5 | 5.5 | 7.4 | 13 | 0 | 4.4 | 6.9 |
| Georgetown | 5.6 | 20.7 | 0.5 | 5.4 | 7.6 | 7.5 | 4.4 | 1.3 | 6.5 |
| Sandy Bay | 0.5 | 42.1 | 0 | 0.4 | 3.6 | 1.6 | 0.5 | 1.4 | 2.6 |
| Layou | 6.9 | 0.9 | 4.4 | 2.8 | 3.5 | 3.2 | 1.9 | 1.7 | 5.9 |
| Barrouallie | 6.1 | 1.6 | 0.3 | 0.6 | 2.7 | 3.2 | 0 | 1.6 | 5.1 |
| Chateaubelair | 5.4 | 6.6 | 1.1 | 4 | 6 | 0.8 | 0.5 | 2.4 | 5.6 |
| Northern Grenadines | 3.8 | 3.3 | 19.7 | 3 | 9 | 2.4 | 24.3 | 10.2 | 5 |
| Southern Grenadines | 3.6 | 1.2 | 8 | 0.4 | 1.7 | 1.8 | 3.9 | 2.5 | 3.1 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Generally, the urban divisions, particularly Kingstown, the Suburbs of Kingstown, and Calliaqua, continued to exhibit the greatest ethnic heterogeneity, accounting for a disproportionate share of the Mixed, White/Caucasian, Portuguese, and Other ethnic groups. By contrast, rural divisions such as Layou, Bridgetown, and Barrouallie retained a more ethnically homogeneous profile, with persons of African descent comprising the clear majority of their populations (Tables 2-6 and 2-7).

For historical comparison, the 2012 distribution shows that these broad spatial patterns were already evident, although some divisions have since become more concentrated or more diverse (Tables 2-9 and 2-10). In particular, Calliaqua remained among the most diverse divisions in both periods, while Sandy Bay and Georgetown continued to exhibit strong Indigenous concentration. Similarly, the 2001 distribution confirms that the broad geography of ethnicity has remained relatively stable, even as the relative shares of some groups have shifted over time (Table 2-8).

Table 2-9 Total Household Population by Census Division and Major Ethnic Group, 2012

| Census Division | Major Ethnic Grouping | | | | | | | Total |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| | African Descent | Indigenous People | White/Caucasian | East Indian/Indian | Mixed | Portuguese | Other | |
| Kingstown | 8,276 | 191 | 114 | 129 | 3,708 | 163 | 131 | 12,712 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 10,480 | 285 | 57 | 49 | 2,853 | 56 | 2 | 13,782 |
| Calliaqua | 16,920 | 348 | 324 | 438 | 5,522 | 323 | 33 | 23,908 |
| Marriaqua | 6,010 | 54 | 38 | 294 | 1,375 | 19 | 8 | 7,798 |
| Bridgetown | 5,287 | 206 | 4 | 40 | 998 | 28 | 1 | 6,564 |
| Colonarie | 5,320 | 45 | 3 | 63 | 1,369 | 49 | 0 | 6,849 |
| Georgetown | 4,239 | 866 | 9 | 73 | 1,803 | 53 | 6 | 7,049 |
| Sandy Bay | 472 | 988 | 3 | 8 | 1,101 | 4 | 0 | 2,576 |
| Layou | 5,576 | 31 | 49 | 48 | 598 | 32 | 1 | 6,335 |
| Barrouallie | 5,001 | 53 | 10 | 10 | 539 | 12 | 0 | 5,625 |
| Chateaubelair | 4,199 | 35 | 3 | 17 | 1,502 | 0 | 0 | 5,756 |
| Northern Grenadines | 2,778 | 104 | 218 | 16 | 3,047 | 12 | 9 | 6,184 |
| Southern Grenadines | 3,206 | 74 | 57 | 14 | 696 | 2 | 1 | 4,050 |
| Total | 77,764 | 3,280 | 889 | 1199 | 25,111 | 753 | 192 | 109,188 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 2-10 Percentage Household Population by Census Division and Major Ethnic Group, 2012

| Census Division | Major Ethnic Grouping | | | | | | | Total |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | African Descent | Indigenous People | White/Caucasian | East Indian/Indian | Mixed | Portuguese | Other | |
| Kingstown | 10.6 | 5.8 | 12.8 | 10.8 | 14.8 | 21.6 | 68.2 | 11.6 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 13.5 | 8.7 | 6.4 | 4.1 | 11.4 | 7.4 | 1.0 | 12.6 |
| Calliaqua | 21.8 | 10.6 | 36.4 | 36.5 | 22 | 43 | 17.2 | 21.9 |
| Marriaqua | 7.7 | 1.6 | 4.3 | 24.5 | 5.5 | 2.5 | 4.2 | 7.1 |
| Bridgetown | 6.8 | 6.3 | 0.4 | 3.3 | 4.0 | 3.7 | 0.5 | 6.0 |
| Colonarie | 6.8 | 1.4 | 0.3 | 5.3 | 5.5 | 6.5 | 0.0 | 6.3 |
| Georgetown | 5.5 | 26.4 | 1.0 | 6.1 | 7.2 | 7.0 | 3.1 | 6.5 |
| Sandy Bay | 0.6 | 30.1 | 0.3 | 0.7 | 4.4 | 0.5 | 0.0 | 2.4 |
| Layou | 7.2 | 0.9 | 5.5 | 4.0 | 2.4 | 4.2 | 0.5 | 5.8 |
| Barrouallie | 6.4 | 1.6 | 1.1 | 0.8 | 2.1 | 1.6 | 0.0 | 5.2 |
| Chateaubelair | 5.4 | 1.1 | 0.3 | 1.4 | 6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 5.3 |
| Northern Grenadines | 3.6 | 3.2 | 24.5 | 1.3 | 12.1 | 1.6 | 4.7 | 5.7 |
| Southern Grenadines | 4.1 | 2.3 | 6.4 | 1.2 | 2.8 | 0.3 | 0.5 | 3.7 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

2.3.2 Population Distribution by Major Ethnic Group and Broad Age Group

The distribution of ethnic groups across broad age cohorts reveals important differences in population structure, intercensal change, and identity dynamics.⁵

Tables 2-11 and 2-12 show that persons of African descent remained the largest ethnic group in numerical terms across all broad age cohorts in both 2012 and 2023. In 2023, this population totaled 17,447 persons aged 0-14, 18,196 aged 15-29, 17,869 aged 30-44, 22,173 aged 45-64, and 10,537 aged 65 and over (Table 2-11). The Mixed population remained the second largest group across the age structure, while the Indigenous population also maintained a visible presence across all broad age categories.

Table 2-6 Total Household Population by Major Ethnic Group and Broad Age Group, 2023

| Major Ethnic Group | Broad Age Group | | | | | Total |
|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| | 0-14 | 15-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65+ | |
| African Descent | 17,447 | 18,196 | 17,869 | 22,173 | 10,537 | 86,222 |
| Indigenous People | 1,162 | 1,145 | 1,166 | 1,482 | 632 | 5,587 |
| White/Caucasian | 45 | 45 | 91 | 216 | 236 | 633 |
| East Indian/Indian | 101 | 136 | 226 | 411 | 328 | 1,202 |
| Mixed | 3,439 | 3,065 | 2,778 | 3,005 | 1,720 | 14,007 |
| Portuguese | 46 | 29 | 75 | 136 | 156 | 442 |
| Other Ethnic Group | 117 | 47 | 206 | 139 | 28 | 537 |
| Not Stated | 25 | 17 | 32 | 35 | 25 | 134 |
| Total | 22,382 | 22,680 | 22,443 | 27,597 | 13,662 | 108,764 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 2-7 Total Household Population by Major Ethnic Group and Broad Age Group, 2012

| Major Ethnic Group | Broad Age Group | | | | | Total |
|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| | 0-14 | 15-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65+ | |
| African Descent | 18,400 | 19,225 | 16,485 | 16,577 | 7,077 | 77,764 |
| Indigenous People | 676 | 707 | 781 | 749 | 367 | 3,280 |
| White/Caucasian | 86 | 110 | 151 | 311 | 231 | 889 |
| East Indian/Indian | 111 | 175 | 246 | 449 | 218 | 1,199 |
| Mixed | 7,564 | 6,461 | 4,705 | 4,470 | 1,911 | 25,111 |
| Portuguese | 67 | 107 | 144 | 257 | 178 | 753 |
| Other Ethnic Group | 21 | 51 | 59 | 53 | 8 | 192 |
| Total | 26,925 | 26,836 | 22,571 | 22,866 | 9,990 | 109,188 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

⁵ Note: Tables 2-13 to 2-15 present the percentage distribution within each ethnic group across broad age cohorts. The figures, therefore, show the age composition of each ethnic group and do not represent the ethnic composition of each age group in the total population.

Persons of African descent also show changes in their internal age composition over time. In 2023, 20.2 percent of the African descent population was aged 0-14, 21.1 percent was aged 15-29, 20.7 percent was aged 30-44, 25.7 percent was aged 45-64, and 12.2 percent was aged 65 and over (Tables 2-13). Compared with earlier distributions, this points to greater concentration in the older working-age population and a smaller share of children, suggesting a gradual aging of the group.

The Indigenous population shows a somewhat similar pattern. In 2023, 20.8 percent of Indigenous persons were aged 0-14, 20.5 percent were aged 15-29, 20.9 percent were aged 30-44, 26.5 percent were aged 45-64, and 11.3 percent were aged 65 and over (Tables 2-13). Relative to the earlier census years, this indicates a more mature age profile, with stronger representation in the working-age cohorts. This may reflect both demographic change and stronger self-identification over time.

The Mixed population continues to display a relatively youthful, though gradually maturing, age structure. In 2023, 24.6 percent of the Mixed population was aged 0-14, and 21.9 percent was aged 15-29, while 19.8 percent was aged 30-44, 21.5 percent was aged 45-64, and 12.3 percent was aged 65 and over (Tables 2-13). While children and youth still account for a substantial share of this group, the distribution also indicates an increasing share among older working-age adults.

Table 2-8 Percentage Distribution of Population by Major Ethnic Group and Broad Age Group, 2023

| Major Ethnic Group | Broad Age Group | | | | | Total |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| | 0-14 | 15-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65+ | |
| African Descent | 20.2 | 21.1 | 20.7 | 25.7 | 12.2 | 100.0 |
| Indigenous People | 20.8 | 20.5 | 20.9 | 26.5 | 11.3 | 100.0 |
| White/Caucasian | 7.1 | 7.1 | 14.4 | 34.1 | 37.3 | 100.0 |
| East Indian/Indian | 8.4 | 11.3 | 18.8 | 34.2 | 27.3 | 100.0 |
| Mixed | 24.6 | 21.9 | 19.8 | 21.5 | 12.3 | 100.0 |
| Portuguese | 10.4 | 6.6 | 17.0 | 30.8 | 35.3 | 100.0 |
| Other Ethnic Group | 21.8 | 8.8 | 38.4 | 25.9 | 5.2 | 100.0 |
| Not Stated | 18.7 | 12.7 | 23.9 | 26.1 | 18.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 20.6 | 20.9 | 20.6 | 25.4 | 12.6 | 100.0 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 2-9 Percentage Distribution of Population by Major Ethnic Group and Broad Age Group, 2012

| Major Ethnic Group | Broad Age Group | | | | | Total |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| | 0-14 | 15-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65+ | |
| African Descent | 23.7 | 24.7 | 21.2 | 21.3 | 9.1 | 100.0 |
| Indigenous People | 20.6 | 21.6 | 23.8 | 22.8 | 11.2 | 100.0 |
| White/Caucasian | 9.7 | 12.4 | 17.0 | 35.0 | 26.0 | 100.0 |
| East Indian/Indian | 9.3 | 14.6 | 20.5 | 37.4 | 18.2 | 100.0 |
| Mixed | 30.1 | 25.7 | 18.7 | 17.8 | 7.6 | 100.0 |
| Portuguese | 8.9 | 14.2 | 19.1 | 34.1 | 23.6 | 100.0 |
| Other Ethnic Group | 10.9 | 26.6 | 30.7 | 27.6 | 4.2 | 100.0 |
| Total | 24.7 | 24.6 | 20.7 | 20.9 | 9.1 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 2-10 Percentage Distribution of Population by Major Ethnic Group and Broad Age Group, 2001

| Major Ethnic Group | Broad Age Group | | | | | Total |
|---------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|--------------|
| | 0-14 | 15-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65+ | |
| African Descent | 30.2 | 28.2 | 21.6 | 12.9 | 7.1 | 100.0 |
| Indigenous People | 26.4 | 27.4 | 21.8 | 15.7 | 8.6 | 100.0 |
| White/Caucasian | 16.8 | 19.5 | 23.8 | 25.0 | 14.9 | 100.0 |
| East Indian/Indian | 11.5 | 16.6 | 21.9 | 25.6 | 24.4 | 100.0 |
| Mixed | 11.5 | 16.0 | 24.3 | 32.8 | 15.4 | 100.0 |
| Portuguese | 35.7 | 27.8 | 18.6 | 11.7 | 6.2 | 100.0 |
| Other Ethnic Group | 14.6 | 18.9 | 38.8 | 17.5 | 10.2 | 100.0 |
| Not Stated | 20.9 | 29.6 | 27.1 | 14.6 | 7.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 30.6 | 27.8 | 21.1 | 13.2 | 7.3 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

The smaller ethnic groups exhibit more varied age structures. In 2023, the White/Caucasian population was concentrated in the older age groups, with 34.1 percent aged 45-64 and 37.3 percent aged 65 and over (Table 2-13). The Portuguese population showed a similar pattern, while the East Indian/Indian population was also more heavily represented in the older cohorts. By contrast, the Other Ethnic Group category was more concentrated in the working-age population, especially among persons aged 30-44 and 45-64.

Overall, the broad age distribution across the major ethnic groups indicates distinct demographic patterns. The African-descent population remains numerically dominant, as shown in Tables 2-11 and 2-12, but its internal age profile suggests a gradual aging pattern. The Indigenous population appears increasingly concentrated in the working-age cohorts, while the Mixed population retains a younger profile, though it too shows signs of demographic maturation. Some of the smaller ethnic groups, particularly White/Caucasian and Portuguese, display comparatively older age structures. Together, these patterns highlight the evolving relationship between ethnicity and demographic change in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

2.4 Religion and Denomination

Religion is more than a set of beliefs; it is, as Émile Durkheim (1954) observed, “*an eminently collective thing*” that binds individuals into a moral community through shared practices and beliefs. He defined religion as “*a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things beliefs and practices which unite in one single community called a Church all those who adhere to them*” (p. 47)⁶. In this sense, religion serves as a source of moral guidance, collective identity, and social cohesion, while also offering individuals strength and meaning as they navigate life’s challenges.

⁶ Elwell, Frank W., 2003, "Emile Durkheim on Religion," Retrieved September 12, 2025, <https://faculty.rsu.edu/users/f/felwell/www/Theorists/Essays/Durkheim2.htm>

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, religion has historically played a central role in shaping cultural and national identity. However, the Constitution of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines⁷ does not prescribe a state religion; instead, Section 9 affirms every person’s freedom of conscience, including the right to hold, change, and manifest religious beliefs, individually or collectively, in both public and private life. This constitutional protection ensures that all religious groups (from established Christian denominations to smaller faith communities such as Hindus, Muslims, and Rastafarians) coexist on equal legal footing, alongside individuals who profess no religion.

The 2023 Population and Housing Census captured these dynamics through Question A6: “**What is your religious affiliation/denomination?**”. The responses to this question provided a demographic portrait of both continuity and change in religious life, highlighting the persistence of Christianity as well as the expansion of minority faiths and secular identities⁸.

2.4.1 Religion

Religion in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines continues to play a central role in shaping cultural identity and community life, although patterns of affiliation have shifted over time. Census data from 2001, 2012, and 2023 (Table 2-16) show that Christianity has consistently remained the dominant religion, but its overall share of the population has declined. In 2001, Christians represented 81.5 percent of the population; this proportion increased slightly to 82.4 percent in 2012, then fell to 78.1 percent in 2023. This decline suggests that, although Christianity remains the principal faith tradition, its relative dominance has weakened over time.

Table 2-11 Percentage Distribution of Population by Religion, 2001, 2012 & 2023

| Religion/Religious Denomination | 2001 | | | 2012 | | | 2023 | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Christian | 77.3 | 85.8 | 81.5 | 78.0 | 86.8 | 82.3 | 72.2 | 84.2 | 78.1 |
| Hindu | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Muslim/Islam | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0.2 |
| Rastafarian | 2.5 | 0.4 | 1.5 | 1.8 | 0.3 | 1.1 | 1.4 | 0.3 | 0.8 |
| Other Religion/Religious Denomination | 5.8 | 7.2 | 6.5 | 4.0 | 4.6 | 4.3 | 2.8 | 3.6 | 3.2 |
| None/No Religion | 12.4 | 5.1 | 8.8 | 10.7 | 4.1 | 7.5 | 19.0 | 8.8 | 14.0 |
| Not Stated | 1.7 | 1.3 | 1.5 | 5.3 | 4.0 | 4.7 | 4.3 | 3.0 | 3.6 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

⁷ OAS. Constitution of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 1979 STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS 1979 No. 916. Retrieved September 12, 2025, https://www.oas.org/juridico/PDFs/mesicic4_svg_const.pdf

⁸ Secular identity denotes a personal identity that exists independently of religious beliefs or affiliations, emphasizing individual meaning and understanding outside of religious frameworks, as highlighted by regional sources. Source: <https://www.wisdomlib.org/concept/secular-identity>

At the same time, the category “None/No Religion” expanded significantly, rising from 8.8 percent in 2001 to 14.0 percent in 2023. This increase was especially pronounced among men, whose proportion rose from 12.4 percent in 2001 to 19.0 percent in 2023 (Table 2-16). The trend points to a growing movement toward secular identification, indicating that non-religious affiliation is becoming a more visible feature of the national religious profile.

Tables 2-17 and 2-18 reinforce these shifts in absolute terms. Although the Christian population remained numerically dominant, it declined from 89,991 in 2012 to 84,978 in 2023, a 5.5 percent decrease. By contrast, the number of persons reporting no religion increased sharply from 8,147 in 2012 to 15,174 in 2023, representing an 86.3 percent increase. This pattern reflects not only a decline in the relative share of Christianity but also a substantial expansion in the number of persons identifying outside formal religious affiliation.

Table 2-12 Total Household Population and Percentage Change by Religion, 2012 & 2023

| Religion/Religious Denomination | 2012 | | | 2023 | | | Percentage Change (2012/2023) | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Christian | 43,327 | 46,564 | 89,891 | 39,525 | 45,453 | 84,978 | -8.8 | -2.4 | -5.5 |
| Hindu | 47 | 42 | 89 | 45 | 46 | 91 | -4.3 | 9.5 | 2.2 |
| Muslim/Islam | 77 | 34 | 111 | 152 | 70 | 222 | 97.4 | 105.9 | 100.0 |
| Rastafarian | 1,025 | 156 | 1,181 | 756 | 144 | 900 | -26.2 | -7.7 | -23.8 |
| Other Religion/Religious Denomination | 2,200 | 2,473 | 4,673 | 1,534 | 1,931 | 3,465 | -30.3 | -21.9 | -25.9 |
| None/No Religion | 5,925 | 2,222 | 8,147 | 10,411 | 4,763 | 15,174 | 75.7 | 114.4 | 86.3 |
| Not Stated | 2,950 | 2,146 | 5,096 | 2,334 | 1,600 | 3,934 | -20.9 | -25.4 | -22.8 |
| Total | 55,551 | 53,637 | 109,188 | 54,757 | 54,007 | 108,764 | -1.4 | 0.7 | -0.4 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 2-13 Total Household Population and Percentage Change by Religion, 2001 & 2012

| Religion/Religious Denomination | 2001 | | | 2012 | | | Percentage Change (2001/2012) | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Christian | 42,086 | 45,821 | 87,907 | 43,327 | 46,564 | 89,891 | -3.0 | 1.6 | 2.3 |
| Hindu | 48 | 36 | 84 | 47 | 42 | 89 | -2.1 | 16.7 | 6.0 |
| Muslim/Islam | 51 | 28 | 79 | 77 | 34 | 111 | 51.0 | 21.4 | 40.5 |
| Rastafarian | 1,366 | 228 | 1,594 | 1,025 | 156 | 1,181 | -25.0 | -31.6 | -25.9 |
| Other Religion/Religious Denomination | 3,173 | 3,834 | 7,007 | 2,200 | 2,473 | 4,673 | -30.7 | -35.5 | -33.3 |
| None/No Religion | 6,758 | 2,746 | 9,504 | 5,925 | 2,222 | 8,147 | -12.3 | -19.1 | -14.1 |
| Not Stated | 942 | 718 | 1,660 | 2,950 | 2,146 | 5,096 | 213.2 | 198.9 | 207.0 |
| Total | 54,424 | 53,411 | 107,835 | 55,551 | 53,637 | 109,188 | 2.1 | 0.4 | 1.3 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Minority religions remained relatively small, but they displayed important internal changes over the period. The Muslim population doubled between 2012 and 2023, increasing from 111 to 222 persons (Table 2-17), and accounted for 0.2 percent of the total population in 2023. Hinduism remained stable at approximately 0.1 percent across all three census years, indicating very limited change in its demographic weight. Rastafarianism, by contrast, declined in both absolute and relative terms, falling from 1,594 persons or 1.5 percent in 2001 to 900 persons or 0.8 percent in 2023 (Tables 2-16 to 2-18).

The category “Other Religion/Religious Denomination” also declined notably, from 6.5 percent in 2001 to 3.2 percent in 2023. In absolute terms, the number of persons in this category fell from 7,007 in 2001 to 3,465 in 2023 (Table 2-17 and 2-18). Meanwhile, the proportion of respondents who did not state their religion rose from 1.5 percent in 2001 to 3.6 percent in 2023, and the number of such responses increased from 1,660 in 2001 to 3,934 in 2023 (Table 2-17 and 2-18). These responses may reflect either a preference for privacy, religious pluralism beyond standard categories, or ambivalence toward institutional religion. Collectively, these figures illustrate that while Christianity remains dominant, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is experiencing religious diversification and a significant increase in secular identification, reshaping the nation's cultural landscape.

Concurrently, these patterns suggest that while Christianity continues to anchor the religious landscape of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, there is a gradual diversification of belief systems and a steady rise in secular and non-religious identities. The data underline the importance of religion as both a persistent cultural force and an evolving dimension of identity in Vincentian society (Tables 2-16 to 2-19).

2.4.2 Christian Denominations

Christianity has long been the dominant religion in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, but denominational affiliation has undergone marked change between 2001 and 2023. The data reveal both continuity in certain long-standing churches and significant shifts toward evangelical and Pentecostal traditions (Tables 2-19 to 2-21).

The Anglican Church, once the principal denomination, has steadily declined. In 2001, Anglicans accounted for 17.8 percent of the population, but by 2023 their share had fallen to 10.5 percent (Table 2-19). This trend reflects broader secularization pressures and reduced denominational loyalty, particularly among younger cohorts.

Table 2-19 Percentage Distribution of Population by Christian Denomination, 2001, 2012 & 2023

| Religion/Religious Denomination | 2001 | | | 2012 | | | 2023 | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Anglican | 18.5 | 17.0 | 17.8 | 14.6 | 13.1 | 13.9 | 10.7 | 10.2 | 10.5 |
| Evangelical | 2.5 | 3.1 | 2.8 | 3.3 | 4.2 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 4.7 | 4.3 |
| Methodist | 10.9 | 10.8 | 10.9 | 9.0 | 8.3 | 8.7 | 6.1 | 6.6 | 6.3 |
| Pentecostal | 15.7 | 19.6 | 17.6 | 24.7 | 30.5 | 27.6 | 23.3 | 29.6 | 26.4 |
| Presbyterian/ Congregational | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Roman Catholic | 7.4 | 7.5 | 7.5 | 6.3 | 6.3 | 6.3 | 4.1 | 4.7 | 4.4 |
| Salvation Army | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Seventh Day Adventist | 9.5 | 10.9 | 10.2 | 11.1 | 12.2 | 11.6 | 11.0 | 12.1 | 11.6 |
| Jehovah's Witness | 0.5 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 1.0 | 0.8 | 0.5 | 0.7 | 0.6 |
| Baptist (Spiritual) | 8.5 | 11.5 | 9.9 | 7.5 | 10.3 | 8.9 | 8.7 | 11.2 | 9.9 |
| Rastafarian | 2.5 | 0.4 | 1.5 | 1.8 | 0.3 | 1.1 | 1.4 | 0.3 | 0.8 |
| Other Religious Denominations | 9.4 | 11.5 | 10.5 | 4.4 | 5.0 | 4.7 | 6.9 | 7.7 | 7.3 |
| None/No Religion | 12.5 | 5.2 | 8.8 | 10.7 | 4.1 | 7.5 | 19.0 | 8.8 | 14.0 |
| Not Stated | 1.7 | 1.3 | 1.5 | 5.3 | 4.0 | 4.7 | 4.3 | 3.0 | 3.6 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

By contrast, the Pentecostal denomination has grown, increasing from 17.6 percent in 2001 to 26.4 percent in 2023, making it the single largest Christian denomination (Table 2-19). The rapid growth of Pentecostal churches is consistent with research that links their success to the dynamics of urbanization, social mobility, and youth identity formation. Pentecostalism’s flexibility, charismatic worship, and adaptability to the needs of urban and transitional communities make it especially appealing in societies experiencing demographic change. Pentecostalism thrives in such contexts because it offers both spiritual empowerment and practical support through strong community networks, social outreach, and effective use of mass media to engage members (Ukah, 2020). These features help explain why Pentecostalism has overtaken older denominations and continues to attract large numbers of persons in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Other denominations show mixed trends. Seventh-Day Adventists remained resilient, accounting for 10.2 percent of the population in 2001, 11.6 percent in 2012, and 11.6 percent again in 2023 (Table 2-19), indicating broad stability over the period. Evangelicals nearly doubled their share, rising from 2.8 percent in 2001 to 4.3 percent in 2023 (Table 2-19), reflecting the wider appeal of revivalist movements. Smaller groups such as Jehovah’s Witnesses, Salvation Army, and Presbyterians remained below 1.0 percent and continued to represent a modest but persistent presence.

Methodists and Roman Catholics also experienced a decline over the period. Methodists fell from 10.9 percent in 2001 to 6.3 percent in 2023, while Roman Catholics declined from 7.5 percent to 4.4 percent (Table 2-19). Rastafarianism also declined, moving from 1.5 percent in 2001 to 0.8 percent in 2023, while Other Religion/Religious Denominations fell from 10.5 percent to 7.3 percent. These shifts point to weakening adherence among some traditional and minority groupings, alongside the continued diversification of the national religious profile.

Table 2-20 Total Household Population by Christian Denomination, 2012 & 2023

| Religion/Religious Denomination | 2012 | | | 2023 | | | Percentage Change (2012/2023) | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Anglican | 8,130 | 7,045 | 15,175 | 5,853 | 5,535 | 11,388 | -28.0 | -21.4 | -25.0 |
| Evangelical | 1,855 | 2,263 | 4,118 | 2,066 | 2,559 | 4,625 | 11.4 | 13.1 | 12.3 |
| Methodist | 4,984 | 4,474 | 9,458 | 3,318 | 3,580 | 6,898 | -33.4 | -20.0 | -27.1 |
| Pentecostal | 13,733 | 16,375 | 30,108 | 12,756 | 15,969 | 28,725 | -7.1 | -2.5 | -4.6 |
| Presbyterian/ Congregational | 141 | 153 | 294 | 88 | 74 | 162 | -37.6 | -51.6 | -44.9 |
| Roman Catholic | 3,515 | 3,362 | 6,877 | 2,266 | 2,530 | 4,796 | -35.5 | -24.7 | -30.3 |
| Salvation Army | 142 | 144 | 286 | 96 | 125 | 221 | -32.4 | -13.2 | -22.7 |
| Seventh Day Adventist | 6,170 | 6,540 | 12,710 | 7,785 | 8,293 | 16,078 | 26.2 | 26.8 | 26.5 |
| Jehovah's Witness | 370 | 539 | 909 | 259 | 377 | 636 | -30.0 | -30.1 | -30.0 |
| Baptist (Spiritual) | 4,150 | 5,525 | 9,675 | 4,740 | 6,042 | 10,782 | 14.2 | 9.4 | 11.4 |
| Rastafarian | 1,025 | 156 | 1,181 | 756 | 144 | 900 | -26.2 | -7.7 | -23.8 |
| Other Religion/ Religious Denominations | 2,461 | 2,693 | 5,154 | 2,029 | 2,416 | 4,445 | -17.6 | -10.3 | -13.8 |
| None/No Religion | 5,925 | 2,222 | 8,147 | 10,411 | 4,763 | 15,174 | 75.7 | 114.4 | 86.3 |
| Not Stated | 2,950 | 2,146 | 5,096 | 2,334 | 1,600 | 3,934 | -20.9 | -25.4 | -22.8 |
| Total | 55,551 | 53,637 | 109,188 | 54,757 | 54,007 | 108,764 | -1.4 | 0.7 | -0.4 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 2-21 Total Household Population by Christian Denomination, 2001 & 2012

| Religion/Religious Denomination | 2001 | | | 2012 | | | Percentage Change (2001/2012) | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------------------|------------|------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Anglican | 10,090 | 9,066 | 19,156 | 8,130 | 7,045 | 15,175 | -19.4 | -22.3 | -20.8 |
| Evangelical | 1,369 | 1,670 | 3,039 | 1,855 | 2,263 | 4,118 | 35.5 | 35.5 | 35.5 |
| Methodist | 5,943 | 5,774 | 11,717 | 4,984 | 4,474 | 9,458 | -16.1 | -22.5 | -19.3 |
| Pentecostal | 8,539 | 10,484 | 19,023 | 13,733 | 16,375 | 30,108 | 60.8 | 56.2 | 58.3 |
| Presbyterian/ Congregational | 64 | 61 | 125 | 141 | 153 | 294 | 120.3 | 150.8 | 135.2 |
| Roman Catholic | 4,061 | 4,012 | 8,073 | 3,515 | 3,362 | 6,877 | -13.4 | -16.2 | -14.8 |
| Salvation Army | 126 | 164 | 290 | 142 | 144 | 286 | 12.7 | -12.2 | -1.4 |
| Seventh Day Adventist | 5,169 | 5,830 | 10,999 | 6,170 | 6,540 | 12,710 | 19.4 | 12.2 | 15.6 |
| Jehovah's Witness | 286 | 388 | 674 | 370 | 539 | 909 | 29.4 | 38.9 | 34.9 |
| Baptist (Spiritual) | 4,617 | 6,111 | 10,728 | 4,150 | 5,525 | 9,675 | -10.1 | -9.6 | -9.8 |
| Rastafarian | 1,366 | 228 | 1,594 | 1,025 | 156 | 1,181 | -25 | -31.6 | -25.9 |
| Other Religion/ Religious Denominations | 5,094 | 6,159 | 11,253 | 2,461 | 2,693 | 5,154 | -51.7 | -56.3 | -54.2 |
| None/No Religion | 6,758 | 2,746 | 9,504 | 5,925 | 2,222 | 8,147 | -12.3 | -19.1 | -14.3 |
| Not Stated | 942 | 718 | 1,660 | 2,950 | 2,146 | 5,096 | 213.2 | 198.9 | 207 |
| Total | 54,424 | 53,411 | 107,835 | 55,551 | 53,637 | 109,188 | 2.1 | 0.4 | 1.3 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Tables 2-20 and 2-21 reinforce these changes in absolute terms. Pentecostal adherents increased from 19,023 in 2001 to 30,108 in 2012, then eased slightly to 28,723 in 2023, yet remained the largest Christian denomination by count. Anglican adherents, by contrast, declined from 19,156 in 2001 to 15,175 in 2012 and further to 11,388 in 2023. Seventh-Day Adventists also increased in absolute terms from 10,999 in 2001 to 12,710 in 2012 and 16,078 in 2023, while Evangelicals grew from 3,039 in 2001 to 4,118 in 2012 and 4,625 in 2023 (Tables 2-20 and 2-21).

The denominational profile of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has therefore shifted markedly over the past two decades. Traditional mainline churches such as Anglican, Methodist, and Roman Catholic have declined, while Pentecostalism and Evangelical movements have grown rapidly and now represent the largest share of Christians. This transformation reflects the adaptability and urban appeal of Pentecostalism, alongside broader processes of secularization and religious diversification. The evidence suggests that Christian identity in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is becoming more dynamic and responsive to social change.

2.4.3 Population Distribution by Christian Denomination and Census Division

The distribution of Christian denominations across census divisions reflects both historical settlement patterns and more recent shifts in religious affiliation. While Christianity remains the dominant religion nationally, the denominational mix varies considerably across geographic areas (Tables 2-22 to 2-24).

Anglicanism, once closely associated with colonial settlement and missionary activity, continues to show strong concentration in the Grenadines and Sandy Bay. In 2023, the Northern Grenadines accounted for 28.6 percent of all Anglicans, compared with the national average distribution of 10.5 percent (Table 2-22). This suggests that Anglican affiliation remains especially concentrated in a few historically established areas, even though its overall national share has declined.

Pentecostals remain widely distributed across the mainland, with especially strong concentration in the Suburbs of Kingstown, Layou, Colonarie, and Calliaqua. In 2023, these divisions accounted for 51.0 percent, 38.3 percent, 38.0 percent, and 35.5 percent of the Pentecostal population, respectively, all above the national average distribution of 33.8 percent (Table 2-22). Their strong presence in urban and peri-urban centres reflects the movement's appeal to younger, mobile populations and its resonance with changing social and community lifestyles. Pentecostal congregations also maintained a notable presence in rural divisions such as Marriaqua and Barrouallie, illustrating their broad reach across settlement types.

Seventh-Day Adventists display notable regional concentration. In 2023, Marriaqua accounted for 34.2 percent of the Seventh-Day Adventist population, while Layou and Chateaubelair accounted for 23.7 percent and 23.0 percent, respectively, all significantly above the national average of 18.9 percent (Table 2-22). This suggests that Adventism retains a particularly strong foothold in selected rural and semi-rural communities.

Methodists and Roman Catholics, by contrast, are more unevenly distributed and generally less dominant across the divisions. Methodists were most concentrated in Kingstown and Chateaubelair, while Roman

Catholics were more concentrated in the Southern Grenadines and Kingstown (Table 2-22). Although these denominations remain present across the country, their spatial distribution suggests more localized pockets of adherence rather than broad territorial dominance.

Smaller denominations, including Evangelicals, Baptists (Spiritual), and Jehovah's Witnesses, are also unevenly distributed across the country. In 2023, Evangelicals were most concentrated in Barrouallie, the Northern Grenadines, and Kingstown, while Baptists (Spiritual) were most concentrated in Georgetown and Sandy Bay. Jehovah's Witnesses remained small in all divisions, though their relative presence was somewhat stronger in the Northern Grenadines (Table 2-22). These patterns reflect a broader diversification of Christian affiliation beyond the traditional mainstream churches.

Christian denominations vary across the country, with Anglicanism remaining most concentrated in the Grenadines. Pentecostalism led the urban and peri-urban divisions, and Seventh-Day Adventism retains a clear presence in parts of rural Saint Vincent. These patterns show how tradition and new movements shape religious life in both rural and urban divisions (Tables 2-22 to 2-24).

Table 2-14 Percentage Distribution of Population by Census Division and Christian Denominations, 2023

| Census Division | Christian Denomination | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Anglican | Baptist | Evangelical | Jehovah Witnesses | Methodist | Pentecostal | Presbyterian | Roman Catholic | Salvation Army | Seventh Day Adventist | Other Christian Denominations |
| Kingstown | 15.7 | 8.4 | 6.1 | 1.2 | 13.2 | 36.3 | 0.2 | 9.8 | 0.4 | 7.6 | 1.1 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 9.7 | 10.6 | 5.9 | 0.7 | 6.8 | 51.0 | 0.5 | 3.9 | 0.1 | 10.1 | 0.8 |
| Calliaqua | 14.9 | 8.9 | 3.1 | 0.7 | 11.9 | 35.5 | 0.2 | 6.9 | 0.4 | 16.5 | 1.0 |
| Marriaqua | 5.8 | 10.5 | 1.3 | 0.4 | 8.6 | 31.6 | 0.0 | 5.3 | 1.1 | 34.2 | 1.1 |
| Bridgetown | 6.5 | 18.8 | 3.6 | 1.0 | 4.9 | 22.9 | 0.1 | 2.2 | 0.1 | 39.4 | 0.5 |
| Colonarie | 7.6 | 17.1 | 7.0 | 0.2 | 4.0 | 38.0 | 0.2 | 4.0 | 0.0 | 21.6 | 0.2 |
| Georgetown | 17.9 | 24.4 | 6.2 | 0.8 | 3.5 | 20.4 | 0.1 | 6.1 | 0.0 | 19.6 | 0.9 |
| Sandy Bay | 21.5 | 36.5 | 1.1 | 0.2 | 0.5 | 24.1 | 0.0 | 4.1 | 0.1 | 11.9 | 0.0 |
| Layou | 10.4 | 9.1 | 3.6 | 0.4 | 10.4 | 38.3 | 0.3 | 3.1 | 0.0 | 23.7 | 0.8 |
| Barrouallie | 17.5 | 11.5 | 13.7 | 0.3 | 5.0 | 32.7 | 0.1 | 0.6 | 0.1 | 18.1 | 0.4 |
| Chateaubelair | 12.1 | 23.4 | 10.5 | 0.9 | 11.8 | 15.4 | 0.1 | 2.6 | 0.0 | 23.0 | 0.2 |
| Northern Grenadines | 28.6 | 7.6 | 11.7 | 3.0 | 0.2 | 20.7 | 0.0 | 6.5 | 0.0 | 21.6 | 0.0 |
| Southern Grenadines | 21.7 | 8.9 | 7.5 | 0.1 | 3.3 | 22.0 | 0.0 | 14.8 | 0.0 | 20.0 | 1.6 |
| Total | 13.4 | 12.7 | 5.4 | 0.7 | 8.1 | 33.8 | 0.2 | 5.6 | 0.3 | 18.9 | 0.8 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 2-15 Percentage Distribution of Population by Census Division and Christian Denominations, 2012

| Census Division | Christian Denomination | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Anglican | Baptist | Evangelical | Jehovah Witnesses | Methodist | Pentecostal | Presbyterian | Roman Catholic | Salvation Army | Seventh Day Adventist | Other Christian Denominations |
| Kingstown | 15.4 | 5.5 | 3.4 | 0.9 | 14.7 | 29.8 | 0.1 | 9.2 | 0.3 | 4.5 | 0.7 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 10.2 | 6.3 | 4.3 | 0.7 | 8.3 | 35.9 | 0.4 | 4.3 | 0.2 | 8.3 | 0.5 |
| Calliaqua | 15.7 | 6.7 | 3.0 | 1.3 | 11.4 | 27.0 | 0.2 | 7.2 | 0.4 | 11.2 | 0.3 |
| Marriaqua | 7.0 | 9.1 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 11.1 | 22.3 | 0.1 | 7.2 | 1.2 | 28.9 | 0.0 |
| Bridgetown | 8.4 | 11.6 | 2.5 | 0.7 | 4.6 | 22.6 | 0.5 | 2.0 | 0.1 | 22.7 | 0.1 |
| Colonarie | 8.3 | 13.1 | 3.9 | 0.9 | 4.6 | 35.3 | 0.1 | 5.9 | 0.0 | 10.4 | 0.3 |
| Georgetown | 16.3 | 13.0 | 4.9 | 0.9 | 3.5 | 30.3 | 0.4 | 6.8 | 0.1 | 6.2 | 0.3 |
| Sandy Bay | 23.4 | 10.0 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 33.7 | 0.2 | 5.3 | 0.2 | 5.7 | 0.0 |
| Layou | 11.0 | 6.7 | 2.8 | 0.7 | 10.2 | 27.0 | 0.3 | 3.6 | 0.1 | 16.7 | 0.0 |
| Barrouallie | 16.3 | 8.0 | 7.7 | 0.1 | 5.3 | 25.0 | 0.7 | 1.4 | 0.1 | 11.0 | 0.1 |
| Chateaubelair | 13.7 | 23.6 | 5.6 | 0.7 | 15.5 | 23.0 | 0.2 | 3.8 | 0.0 | 2.2 | 0.0 |
| Northern Grenadines | 22.6 | 6.7 | 9.0 | 1.5 | 0.8 | 17.5 | 0.1 | 7.0 | 0.0 | 15.4 | 0.3 |
| Southern Grenadines | 21.0 | 7.4 | 1.0 | 0.5 | 2.4 | 18.2 | 0.1 | 18.4 | 0.1 | 12.8 | 0.0 |
| Total | 13.9 | 8.9 | 3.8 | 0.8 | 8.7 | 27.6 | 0.3 | 6.3 | 0.3 | 11.6 | 0.3 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 2-16 Percentage Distribution of Population by Census Division and Christian Denominations, 2001

| Census Division | Christian Denomination | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| | Anglican | Baptist | Evangelical | Jehovah Witnesses | Methodist | Pentecostal | Presbyterian | Roman Catholic | Salvation Army | Seventh Day Adventist | Other Christian Denominations |
| Kingstown | 19.7 | 7.2 | 2.3 | 0.9 | 18.3 | 20.2 | 0.1 | 11.6 | 0.4 | 3.8 | 3.1 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 14.5 | 8.9 | 3.8 | 0.5 | 11.0 | 25.6 | 0.1 | 5.0 | 0.2 | 7.7 | 2.1 |
| Calliaqua | 18.9 | 8.6 | 1.8 | 1.0 | 14.5 | 18.4 | 0.1 | 8.2 | 0.5 | 9.4 | 4.4 |
| Marriaqua | 8.7 | 11.4 | 0.9 | 0.5 | 12.5 | 16.2 | 0.1 | 9.8 | 0.9 | 24.1 | 4.8 |
| Bridgetown | 11.8 | 17.7 | 1.9 | 0.6 | 5.1 | 10.2 | 0.0 | 3.3 | 0.1 | 20.6 | 7.4 |
| Colonarie | 11.1 | 11.0 | 2.0 | 0.2 | 7.1 | 23.5 | 0.6 | 6.9 | 0.0 | 8.5 | 3.9 |
| Georgetown | 20.9 | 16.2 | 2.4 | 0.5 | 4.5 | 4.9 | 0.0 | 7.5 | 0.0 | 5.3 | 4.1 |
| Sandy Bay | 32.8 | 17.8 | 0.9 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 13.4 | 0.0 | 6.7 | 0.0 | 4.8 | 2.3 |
| Layou | 11.7 | 5.9 | 2.1 | 0.2 | 11.5 | 19.7 | 0.0 | 4.5 | 0.0 | 15.3 | 4.4 |
| Barrouallie | 21.7 | 7.6 | 6.9 | 0.2 | 7.6 | 20.7 | 0.0 | 1.2 | 0.0 | 10.4 | 2.8 |
| Chateaubelair | 18.4 | 12.2 | 4.6 | 0.6 | 17.6 | 15.5 | 0.1 | 4.5 | 0.0 | 2.5 | 2.8 |
| Northern Grenadines | 30.2 | 6.9 | 8.4 | 1.1 | 1.4 | 11.4 | 0.1 | 7.8 | 0.0 | 13.6 | 2.6 |
| Southern Grenadines | 28.9 | 5.7 | 1.1 | 0.4 | 2.0 | 11.8 | 0.1 | 21.4 | 0.1 | 12.8 | 3.7 |
| Total | 17.8 | 9.9 | 2.8 | 0.6 | 10.9 | 17.6 | 0.1 | 7.5 | 0.3 | 10.2 | 3.8 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

2.4.4 Population Distribution by Christian Denomination and Sex

The distribution of Christian denominations by sex shows that both men and women are most strongly affiliated with Pentecostal, Anglican, and Seventh-Day Adventist churches (Tables 2-22 - 2-24). Pentecostalism has become the leading denomination for both sexes, growing from 17.6 percent in 2001 to 33.8 percent in 2023. However, women make up a larger share of Pentecostal membership than men, highlighting their central role in the denomination's expansion. Seventh-Day Adventists also gained followers over the period, with women again more strongly represented, while Anglican affiliation declined for both sexes.

Smaller gender differences are seen elsewhere. Men are slightly more represented in Rastafarian congregations, while women continue to outnumber men in most of the other denominations, including Evangelical, Roman Catholic, and Jehovah's Witnesses.

In summary, the denominational profile indicates that while the major Christian groups attract both sexes, women play a particularly strong role in the growth of many of these denominations, specifically, Pentecostal and Adventist churches. This reinforces broader patterns of higher female participation in religious life.

2.4.5 Population Distribution by Christian Denominations and Broad Age Group

Assessing the age structure of Christian denominations provides insight into how each group is sustained across generations (Tables 2-25 to 2-29). The data reveal that while some denominations are growing through younger cohorts, others are increasingly concentrated among older populations, reflecting patterns of continuity, aging, and renewal within the religious landscape.

In 2001, Anglican and Pentecostal were the largest denominations overall, accounting for 17.8 percent and 17.6 percent of the Christian population, respectively (Table 2-29). Pentecostals stood out for their youthful profile, with 22.9 percent of Christians aged 0-14 and 18.7 percent of those aged 15-29 identifying as Pentecostal. Anglican affiliation, by contrast, was more concentrated among older groups, particularly those aged 65 and over, among whom Anglicans accounted for 25.2 percent. Methodists, Baptists (Spiritual), and Seventh-Day Adventists were more evenly distributed across age groups, although Adventists showed a somewhat stronger presence among younger cohorts.

By 2012, Pentecostalism had expanded further and had become the largest denomination across all age groups, accounting for 33.5 percent of the total Christian population (Table 2-28). Its presence was especially strong among children and young adults, comprising 41.6 percent of Christians aged 0-14 and 37.3 percent of those aged 15-29. Seventh-Day Adventists also maintained a strong position, accounting for 14.1 percent overall and showing notable representation among younger cohorts. In contrast, Anglican, Methodist, and Roman Catholic affiliations showed a more mature age profile, with larger shares concentrated among middle-aged and older persons, suggesting aging congregations and weaker recruitment among younger generations.

Table 2-17 Total Household Population by Christian Denomination and Broad Age Group, 2023

| Christian Denomination | 0-14 | 15-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65+ | Total |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Anglican | 1,598 | 2,029 | 2,103 | 3,350 | 2,308 | 11,388 |
| Baptist (Spiritual) | 2,560 | 2,152 | 2,021 | 2,504 | 1,545 | 10,782 |
| Evangelical | 1,174 | 984 | 918 | 979 | 570 | 4,625 |
| Jehovah's Witness | 124 | 76 | 158 | 167 | 111 | 636 |
| Methodist | 1,019 | 1,218 | 1,337 | 1,900 | 1,424 | 6,898 |
| Pentecostal | 7,245 | 6,653 | 5,962 | 6,514 | 2,351 | 28,725 |
| Presbyterian/Congregational | 42 | 36 | 19 | 43 | 22 | 162 |
| Roman Catholic | 870 | 873 | 895 | 1,323 | 835 | 4,796 |
| Salvation Army | 39 | 33 | 51 | 56 | 42 | 221 |
| Seventh Day Adventist | 3,834 | 3,419 | 3,068 | 3,936 | 1,821 | 16,078 |
| Other Christian Denominations | 139 | 131 | 123 | 151 | 123 | 667 |
| Total | 18,644 | 17,604 | 16,655 | 20,923 | 11,152 | 84,978 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 2-18 Percentage Household Population by Christian Denomination and Broad Age Group, 2023

| Christian Denomination | 0-14 | 15-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65+ | Total |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Anglican | 8.6 | 11.5 | 12.6 | 16.0 | 20.7 | 13.4 |
| Baptist (Spiritual) | 13.7 | 12.2 | 12.1 | 12.0 | 13.9 | 12.7 |
| Evangelical | 6.3 | 5.6 | 5.5 | 4.7 | 5.1 | 5.4 |
| Jehovah's Witness | 0.7 | 0.4 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 1.0 | 0.7 |
| Methodist | 5.5 | 6.9 | 8.0 | 9.1 | 12.8 | 8.1 |
| Pentecostal | 38.9 | 37.8 | 35.8 | 31.1 | 21.1 | 33.8 |
| Presbyterian/Congregational | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Roman Catholic | 4.7 | 5.0 | 5.4 | 6.3 | 7.5 | 5.6 |
| Salvation Army | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.3 |
| Seventh Day Adventist | 20.6 | 19.4 | 18.4 | 18.8 | 16.3 | 18.9 |
| Other Christian Denominations | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 1.1 | 0.8 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Likewise, the 2023 Census confirmed and, in some respects, strengthened these patterns. Pentecostalism remained the largest denomination across all age groups, accounting for 33.8 percent of the Christian population overall (Table 2-26). Its membership was strongest among children and young adults, reaching 38.9 percent among those aged 0-14 and 37.8 percent among those aged 15-29, reinforcing its strong appeal among younger cohorts. Seventh-Day Adventists followed at 18.9 percent overall and also showed notable concentration among the younger age groups, particularly 0-14 and 15-29. By contrast, Anglican affiliation was highest among older adults, accounting for 16.0 percent of Christians aged 45-64 and 20.7 percent of those aged 65 and over. Methodist and Roman Catholic affiliations also showed greater concentration among older cohorts, pointing to ageing congregations and weaker recruitment among youth.

Table 2-19 Total Household Population by Christian Denomination and Broad Age Group, 2012

| Christian Denomination | 0-14 | 15-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65+ | Total |
|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| Anglican | 2,443 | 3,012 | 3,353 | 4,176 | 2,191 | 15,175 |
| Baptist (Spiritual) | 2,557 | 2,218 | 1,686 | 2,001 | 1,213 | 9,675 |
| Evangelical | 1,229 | 1,114 | 733 | 729 | 314 | 4,119 |
| Jehovah's Witness | 227 | 218 | 184 | 187 | 93 | 909 |
| Methodist | 1,715 | 2,210 | 1,843 | 2,336 | 1,355 | 9,459 |
| Pentecostal | 9,528 | 8,192 | 5,773 | 5,004 | 1,610 | 30,107 |
| Presbyterian/Congregational | 84 | 80 | 43 | 60 | 26 | 293 |
| Roman Catholic | 1,329 | 1,468 | 1,635 | 1,672 | 773 | 6,877 |
| Salvation Army | 71 | 91 | 60 | 46 | 19 | 287 |
| Seventh Day Adventist | 3,613 | 3,289 | 2,629 | 2,269 | 909 | 12,709 |
| Other Christian Denominations | 82 | 68 | 62 | 48 | 21 | 281 |
| Total | 22,879 | 21,960 | 18,001 | 18,528 | 8,524 | 89,891 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 2-20 Percentage Household Population by Christian Denomination and Broad Age group, 2012

| Christian Denomination | 0-14 | 15-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65+ | Total |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Anglican | 10.7 | 13.7 | 18.6 | 22.5 | 25.7 | 16.9 |
| Baptist (Spiritual) | 11.2 | 10.1 | 9.4 | 10.8 | 14.2 | 10.8 |
| Evangelical | 5.4 | 5.1 | 4.1 | 3.9 | 3.7 | 4.6 |
| Jehovah's Witness | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.1 | 1.0 |
| Methodist | 7.5 | 10.1 | 10.2 | 12.6 | 15.9 | 10.5 |
| Pentecostal | 41.6 | 37.3 | 32.1 | 27.0 | 18.9 | 33.5 |
| Presbyterian/Congregation | 0.4 | 0.4 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Roman Catholic | 5.8 | 6.7 | 9.1 | 9.0 | 9.1 | 7.7 |
| Salvation Army | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.3 |
| Seventh Day Adventist | 15.8 | 15.0 | 14.6 | 12.2 | 10.7 | 14.1 |
| Other Christian Denominations | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.3 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 2-21 Percentage Household Population by Christian Denomination and Broad Age group, 2001

| Christian Denomination | 0-14 | 15-29 | 30-44 | 45-64 | 65+ | Total |
|-------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Anglican | 12.7 | 17.8 | 19.5 | 22.3 | 25.2 | 17.8 |
| Baptist (Spiritual) | 11.0 | 7.7 | 8.0 | 11.9 | 16.2 | 9.9 |
| Evangelical | 3.4 | 2.9 | 2.4 | 2.6 | 1.9 | 2.8 |
| Jehovah Witness | 0.5 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.6 | 0.6 |
| Methodist | 9.1 | 10.0 | 10.6 | 13.3 | 17.9 | 10.9 |
| Pentecostal | 22.9 | 18.7 | 15.3 | 12.2 | 8.3 | 17.6 |
| Presbyterian | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Roman Catholic | 6.0 | 7.3 | 9.2 | 8.9 | 6.9 | 7.5 |
| Salvation Army | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.3 |
| Seventh Day Adventist | 11.7 | 10.6 | 9.7 | 8.1 | 7.3 | 10.2 |
| Other Christian Denominations | 4.5 | 3.7 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 3.4 | 3.8 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Smaller denominations, such as Evangelical, Baptist (Spiritual), and Jehovah’s Witnesses, maintained a more modest but still visible presence across age groups. Baptists (Spiritual), in particular, retained a fairly even spread across the age structure, while Evangelicals remained somewhat more concentrated among younger and working-age adults. Jehovah’s Witnesses continued to account for only a small proportion of Christians across all broad age groups (Tables 2-26, 2-28, and 2-29).

Overall, the age structure of Christian denominations reveals a clear generational shift in the religious landscape. Pentecostal and Seventh-Day Adventist churches continue to show strong representation among younger cohorts, while Anglican, Methodist, and Roman Catholic churches are increasingly characterized by older memberships. These patterns suggest that the future configuration of Christian affiliation in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines will likely be shaped by the continued vitality of the more youthful denominations and the aging profile of some of the older, more established churches.

2.5 Marital and Union Status

Marital and union status is a core demographic characteristic that shapes household composition, fertility, and the overall social fabric of a population. The United Nations defines marital status as an individual’s legal or customary position in relation to marriage laws or traditions, typically classified as single (never married), married, widowed, divorced, or separated (United Nations, 2013)⁹. Union status extends beyond these categories to include consensual partnerships, whether formalized through registration or existing informally, reflecting evolving social practices.

In the 2023 Population and Housing Census, two questions addressed these areas: **G1: What is your marital status?** and **G2: What is your present union status?** These questions capture both the legal dimension of marriage and the practical reality of unions, including informal partnerships.

From a demographic perspective, analyzing marital and union status by sex allows for the identification of gender-specific differences in marriage, singlehood, widowhood, divorce, and consensual unions. Comparing results from the 2012 and 2023 Censuses highlights patterns of continuity in traditional marital arrangements alongside shifts in the prevalence of non-marital and consensual unions.

2.5.1 Marital Status

The marital structure of the population has changed significantly between 2012 and 2023. In 2012, over half of the adult population (54.3percent) was single and never married (Table 2-31). By 2023, this proportion increased sharply to 65.6percent, making singleness the most common marital status among both sexes (Table 2-30). This rise in never-married individuals signals that more Vincentians are postponing or forgoing marriage altogether.

⁹ United Nations. (n.d.), *Metadata: Definitions and Methods of Computations – Marital Status of Men and Women*. Retrieved https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/dataset/marriage/wmd2012/Metadata/Marriage_Metadata.pdf

At the same time, the proportion of the married population declined significantly, from 38.7 percent in 2012 to 26.0 percent in 2023. Both sexes experienced declines, though the reduction was slightly steeper among women (from 37.2 percent to 25.2 percent) than among men (from 40.3 percent to 27.1 percent) (Table 2-30 to 2-31). These changes point to a shift away from formal marriage as the dominant form of union, consistent with broader Caribbean patterns. St. Bernard (2003) notes that educational attainment, female economic participation, and shifting gender norms have contributed to a delay in marriage across the region, with common-law and visiting unions increasingly replacing early formal marriage as preferred arrangements¹⁰.

Other marital categories, though smaller in size, reveal important gendered dynamics. Widowhood was higher among women (6.6 percent) than among men (2.5 percent) in 2023, reflecting longer female life expectancy and earlier male mortality. Divorce also showed a higher share among women (2.9 percent) compared to men (2.3 percent), suggesting women are usually more exposed to marital termination. Legal separation remained negligible, under 1 percent for both sexes across the two censuses.

Table 2-22 Population 15 Years and Older by Marital Status and Sex, 2023

| Union Status | Male | Percent | Female | Percent | Total | Percent |
|-----------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|-------------|
| Single Never Married | 20,228 | 67.1 | 23,269 | 64.4 | 43,497 | 65.6 |
| Married | 8,157 | 27.1 | 9,103 | 25.2 | 17,260 | 26.0 |
| Divorced | 694 | 2.3 | 1,035 | 2.9 | 1,729 | 2.6 |
| Widowed | 750 | 2.5 | 2,373 | 6.6 | 3,123 | 4.7 |
| Legally Separated | 229 | 0.8 | 269 | 0.7 | 498 | 0.8 |
| Not Stated | 68 | 0.2 | 90 | 0.2 | 158 | 0.2 |
| Total | 30,126 | 100 | 36,139 | 100 | 66,265 | 100 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 2-23 Population 15 Years and Older by Marital Status and Sex, 2012

| Union Status | Male | Percent | Female | Percent | Total | Percent |
|-----------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|-------------|
| Single Never Married | 23,854 | 56.9 | 20,812 | 51.6 | 44,666 | 54.3 |
| Married | 15,907 | 37.9 | 15,956 | 39.5 | 31,863 | 38.7 |
| Divorced | 813 | 1.9 | 890 | 2.2 | 1,703 | 2.1 |
| Widowed | 752 | 1.8 | 2,213 | 5.5 | 2,965 | 3.6 |
| Legally Separated | 307 | 0.7 | 342 | 0.9 | 649 | 0.8 |
| Not Stated | 233 | 0.6 | 144 | 0.4 | 377 | 0.5 |
| Don't Know | 21 | 0.1 | 19 | 0.1 | 40 | 0.1 |
| Total | 41,887 | 100 | 40,376 | 100 | 82,263 | 100 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Overall, the data reflect a demographic shift toward lower marriage prevalence and delayed entry into formal unions. While marriage continues to structure family life, its universality has weakened as larger proportions remain never married. The higher incidence of widowhood and divorce among women

¹⁰ St. Bernard, G. (2003). *Major trends affecting families in Central America and the Caribbean*. United Nations. Retrieved <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/family/Publications/mtstbernard.pdf>

further illustrates how mortality differentials and marital dissolution contribute to gendered differences in marital status.

2.5.2 Union Status

Union status offers additional insight into partnership patterns by capturing both legal marriages and informal arrangements. It provides insights into family formation, household composition, and the evolving dynamics of intimate relationships. In 2012, about 22.4 percent of persons aged 15 years and older were married and living with a spouse, 14.1 percent were in common-law unions, and 11.5 percent were in visiting partnerships. Meanwhile, 19.9 percent reported not being in a union, and nearly one-third (29.9 percent) stated that they had never had a spouse or partner (Table 2-33).

Table 2-24 Population 15 Years and Older by Current Union Status and Sex, 2023

| Union Status | Male | Percent | Female | Percent | Total | Percent |
|---|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|-------------|
| Never had a spouse or common-law partner | 5,466 | 18.1 | 5,162 | 14.3 | 10,628 | 16.0 |
| Married and living with spouse | 7,091 | 23.5 | 7,718 | 21.4 | 14,809 | 22.3 |
| Married and not living with spouse | 949 | 3.2 | 1,242 | 3.4 | 2,191 | 3.3 |
| Common-law | 3,274 | 10.9 | 4,190 | 11.6 | 7,464 | 11.3 |
| Visiting partner | 2,921 | 9.7 | 3,326 | 9.2 | 6,247 | 9.4 |
| Not in a union | 8,364 | 27.8 | 12,058 | 33.4 | 20,422 | 30.8 |
| Not Stated | 2,061 | 6.8 | 2,443 | 6.8 | 4,504 | 6.8 |
| Total | 30,126 | 100 | 36,139 | 100 | 66,265 | 100 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 2-25 Population 15 Years and Older by Current Union Status and Sex, 2012

| Union Status | Male | Percent | Female | Percent | Total | Percent |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|-------------|
| Never had a Spouse/Partner | 13,660 | 32.6 | 10,958 | 27.1 | 24,618 | 29.9 |
| Married and Living with Spouse | 9,190 | 21.9 | 9,242 | 22.9 | 18,432 | 22.4 |
| Common Law Union | 5,752 | 13.7 | 5,872 | 14.6 | 11,624 | 14.1 |
| Visiting Partner | 4,811 | 11.5 | 4,666 | 11.6 | 9,477 | 11.5 |
| Not in a Union | 7,411 | 17.7 | 8,965 | 22.2 | 16,376 | 19.9 |
| Not Stated | 1,063 | 2.5 | 673 | 1.7 | 1,736 | 2.1 |
| Total | 41,887 | 100 | 40,376 | 100 | 82,263 | 100 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

By 2023, these patterns had shifted. The share of adults married and living with a spouse remained relatively stable at 22.3 percent, while common-law unions accounted for 11.3 percent, and visiting partnerships declined slightly to 9.4 percent. The most striking change was in the proportion of those not in a union, which increased from 19.9 percent in 2012 to 30.8 percent. Similarly, those who reported never having had a spouse or partner declined to 16.0 percent, suggesting that while fewer individuals are formally entering unions, more individuals are identifying as not being in any current union (Table 2-32).

These results indicate a trend toward delayed or foregone unions, aligning with broader Caribbean patterns where economic pressures, migration, and changing cultural norms shape partnership choices. St. Bernard (2003) notes that younger adults increasingly postpone marriage or opt for informal unions, reflecting wider social and economic shifts across the region¹¹.

2.6 Conclusion

Overall, the analysis of ethnicity, religion, and marital and union status points to both continuity and gradual transformation in the Vincentian population. The population remained predominantly of African descent, yet diversity increased as persons of Mixed heritage expanded their share, consolidating their position as the second largest ethnic category. Smaller groups, including Indigenous peoples and East Indians, also maintained a visible presence, underscoring the country's multi-ethnic character.

Furthermore, Christianity continued as the dominant religion; however, denominational change was evident. Pentecostalism surpassed Anglicanism to become the largest Christian denomination, reflecting a broader regional trend toward revivalist movements that attract younger people. At the same time, the growing share of persons reporting "None/No religion" points to a subtle but steady secularization process, particularly among younger generations, underscoring changes in spiritual identity and practice.

Marital and union patterns further highlight the evolving social landscape. A marked rise in the proportion of adults outside formal unions, alongside the persistence of common-law and visiting relationships, indicates changing pathways in family formation. These shifts reflect delayed marriage, economic constraints, and changing cultural preferences, aligning with wider Caribbean demographic trends. Taken together, these patterns illustrate how continuity in tradition coexists with transformation, producing a society that is both rooted in its heritage and adapting to the demands of modern life.

¹¹ St. Bernard, G. (2003). *Major trends affecting families in Central America and the Caribbean*. United Nations. Retrieved <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/family/Publications/mtstbernard.pdf>

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER 2

SOCIAL & DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS



Nativity & Migration :

94.3% are native-born (102,546); foreign-born are 4.1% (4,440)



Ethnic Composition:

African descent remains the majority at ~79.3% (86,222)



Religion Overall:

Christian affiliation: 78.1% and None/No religion rose to 14.0%



Christian Denominations:

Pentecostal is largest at 26.4%; Seventh-day Adventist 11.6%; Anglican 10.5% (declining)



Marital Status (15+):

Never married 65.6%; Married 26.0%;
Widowed 4.7% and Divorced 2.6%.



Union Status (15+):

Not in a union 30.8%; Married & living with spouse 22.3%;
Common-law 11.3%

Chapter 3. Migration Patterns and Distribution



3.1 Introduction

Migration is one of the most influential demographic processes shaping Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. It affects the size, structure, and distribution of the population, with broader social and economic implications. Both internal movements within the country and international flows (whether through emigration, immigration, or return migration) have played a critical role in transforming households, labor markets, and communities.

The Caribbean remains one of the most migration-intensive regions in the world, with high emigrant populations. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is no exception, as a reasonable share of its citizens reside abroad, contributing to remittance inflows, skills circulation, and cultural linkages (Jaupart, 2023)¹². At the same time, immigration and return migration, though smaller in scale, add to the country's demographic diversity and economic resilience (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2023a)¹³. Internal migration within Saint Vincent and the Grenadines also redistributes people between rural and urban areas, influencing housing demand, service provision, and labor availability.

This chapter explores the dynamics of migration in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, drawing on the 2023 Population and Housing Census to highlight both continuity and change since the 2001 and 2012 Population and Housing Census. Attention is given to movements within the country, the presence and role of the foreign-born population, the experiences of emigrants, and the reintegration of returnees. Collaboratively, these dimensions underscore how migration (whether internal, outward, or return) continues to shape the demographic composition, household structures, and the wider development trajectory of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

3.2 Local-born Population Internal Migration

The concept of the local-born population refers to persons born in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines who were residents in the country on Census Night. Internal migration, in this context, captures those who live at an address or in a census division different from their place of birth.

The local-born population continues to dominate the demographic structure of the country. In 2012, this group was estimated at 101,515 persons, representing 93.0 percent of the total population (Table 3-3). By 2023, the number declined to 84,978 persons, or 89.8 percent of the population, reflecting demographic change and the impact of emigration over the intercensal period (Table 3-2).

A key feature of local-born migration is the distinction between those who remain in their census division of birth and those who relocate elsewhere within the country. In 2012, 72.0 percent of local-born persons lived in their census division of birth, comprising 37,807 males and 35,319 females. The sex ratio of 107

¹² Jaupart, P. (2023). *International migration in the Caribbean: Background paper for the World Development Report 2023: Migrants, refugees, and societies*. Washington, DC: World Bank. Retrieved from <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/3c5cf49b10dd0607472f4a2fb8a063ce-0050062023/original/WDR2023-Caribbean-Background-Paper-FORMATTED.pdf>

¹³ International Organization for Migration. (2023a). *Fundamentals of migration*. Retrieved from <https://www.iom.int/fundamentals-migration>

males per 100 females indicated that men were slightly more likely to remain in their birthplace. By 2023, however, the proportion of persons residing in their birthplace fell sharply to 58.1 percent (49,370 persons), while those reporting residence in another census division increased to 37.0 percent (31,450 persons). This shift represents a notable rise in internal migration over the intercensal period, with birthplace retention declining by almost 14 percentage points between 2012 and 2023.

Patterns of movement show a strong urban pull. In absolute terms, the largest numbers of in-migrants were recorded in Calliaqua (9,714 persons), the Suburbs of Kingstown (5,604), and Kingstown (3,584) (Table 3-3). Together, these three centers absorbed 60.1 percent of all internal migrants in 2023. Their proportions of internal migrants relative to their local-born totals were also among the highest: 47.5 percent in Calliaqua, 44.0 percent in the Suburbs of Kingstown, and 41.5 percent in Kingstown. These figures highlight the appeal of urban and peri-urban areas for employment, education, and services.

By contrast, rural and northern districts showed stronger birthplace retention. In 2023, 72.8 percent of Georgetown's population (3,825 of 5,255) were locally born, along with 70.2 percent in Chateaubelair (2,636 of 3,755), 65.7 percent in Marriaqua (4,358 of 6,630), and 66.8 percent in Layou (2,988 of 4,470) (Table 3-1; Table 3-3). These patterns indicate lower in-migration flows and a stronger attachment to place, consistent with the persistence of agriculture and fishing as anchors of rural economies.

The sex distribution of internal migration reveals distinct gender dynamics. Among those who remained in their birth division, the sex ratio was 96 males per 100 females (24,118 males versus 25,252 females), indicating slightly higher female retention. In contrast, among those who had migrated to another census division, the sex ratio fell to 77 males per 100 females (13,630 males versus 17,820 females). This suggests that women are more likely than men to engage in internal migration, indicating greater female mobility within the national settlement system.

In summary, internal migration in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reflects a clear urban–rural divide. Urban centres such as Calliaqua, Kingstown, and its suburbs function as major magnets for internal migrants, while rural districts like Georgetown, Chateaubelair, and Marriaqua display strong local retention. These movements mirror long-standing rural-to-urban dynamics driven by access to jobs, services, and opportunities, and underscore the continuing demographic weight of urban areas in shaping the country's internal migration profile.

Table 3-1 Population Born Elsewhere in this Country by Place of Birth and Place of Residence and Gender, Place of Residence and Gender, 2023

| Place of Residence | Gender | Place of Birth | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Total |
|----------------------|--------|----------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------|---------------|
| | | Kingstown | Suburbs of Kingstown | Calliaqua | Marriaqua | Bridgetown | Colonarie | Georgetown | Sandy Bay | Layout | Barrouallie | Chateaubelair | Northern Grenadines | Southern Grenadines | Not Stated | |
| Kingstown | Male | 678 | 156 | 110 | 99 | 18 | 26 | 42 | 70 | 27 | 36 | 99 | 32 | 46 | 0 | 1,439 |
| | Female | 876 | 182 | 190 | 168 | 57 | 73 | 87 | 76 | 80 | 49 | 177 | 62 | 66 | 2 | 2,145 |
| | Total | 1,554 | 338 | 300 | 267 | 75 | 99 | 129 | 146 | 107 | 85 | 276 | 94 | 112 | 2 | 3,584 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | Male | 725 | 834 | 185 | 90 | 46 | 56 | 55 | 44 | 124 | 80 | 214 | 24 | 33 | 4 | 2,514 |
| | Female | 756 | 963 | 235 | 139 | 61 | 93 | 77 | 81 | 185 | 99 | 288 | 61 | 47 | 5 | 3,090 |
| | Total | 1,481 | 1,797 | 420 | 229 | 107 | 149 | 132 | 125 | 309 | 179 | 502 | 85 | 80 | 9 | 5,604 |
| Calliaqua | Male | 849 | 235 | 1,455 | 467 | 195 | 211 | 149 | 131 | 105 | 74 | 170 | 68 | 81 | 1 | 4,191 |
| | Female | 949 | 353 | 1,842 | 623 | 312 | 251 | 280 | 235 | 129 | 90 | 206 | 153 | 100 | 0 | 5,523 |
| | Total | 1,798 | 588 | 3,297 | 1,090 | 507 | 462 | 429 | 366 | 234 | 164 | 376 | 221 | 181 | 1 | 9,714 |
| Marriaqua | Male | 78 | 20 | 114 | 456 | 60 | 45 | 15 | 23 | 19 | 15 | 15 | 8 | 16 | 3 | 887 |
| | Female | 96 | 60 | 187 | 566 | 90 | 33 | 19 | 17 | 23 | 19 | 24 | 19 | 8 | 4 | 1,165 |
| | Total | 174 | 80 | 301 | 1,022 | 150 | 78 | 34 | 40 | 42 | 34 | 39 | 27 | 24 | 7 | 2,052 |
| Bridgetown | Male | 22 | 19 | 39 | 49 | 244 | 105 | 36 | 18 | 26 | 8 | 34 | 11 | 8 | 0 | 619 |
| | Female | 46 | 24 | 39 | 72 | 337 | 128 | 59 | 17 | 16 | 14 | 24 | 11 | 7 | 0 | 794 |
| | Total | 68 | 43 | 78 | 121 | 581 | 233 | 95 | 35 | 42 | 22 | 58 | 22 | 15 | 0 | 1,413 |
| Colonarie | Male | 25 | 19 | 28 | 19 | 74 | 404 | 47 | 12 | 9 | 14 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 661 |
| | Female | 25 | 7 | 40 | 40 | 97 | 513 | 97 | 36 | 30 | 10 | 15 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 921 |
| | Total | 50 | 26 | 68 | 59 | 171 | 917 | 144 | 48 | 39 | 24 | 17 | 8 | 8 | 3 | 1,582 |
| Georgetown | Male | 40 | 4 | 13 | 19 | 11 | 71 | 270 | 111 | 4 | 2 | 11 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 567 |
| | Female | 64 | 6 | 10 | 26 | 8 | 80 | 364 | 158 | 7 | 4 | 17 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 752 |
| | Total | 104 | 10 | 23 | 45 | 19 | 151 | 634 | 269 | 11 | 6 | 28 | 10 | 4 | 5 | 1,319 |
| Sandy Bay | Male | 11 | 8 | 13 | 10 | 9 | 5 | 26 | 63 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 162 |
| | Female | 9 | 7 | 2 | 11 | 3 | 5 | 25 | 74 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 153 |
| | Total | 20 | 15 | 15 | 21 | 12 | 10 | 51 | 137 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 5 | 10 | 0 | 315 |
| Layout | Male | 79 | 34 | 26 | 50 | 11 | 6 | 14 | 9 | 186 | 35 | 72 | 8 | 13 | 0 | 543 |
| | Female | 117 | 48 | 29 | 62 | 13 | 21 | 12 | 6 | 247 | 67 | 100 | 9 | 13 | 1 | 745 |
| | Total | 196 | 82 | 55 | 112 | 24 | 27 | 26 | 15 | 433 | 102 | 172 | 17 | 26 | 1 | 1,288 |
| Barrouallie | Male | 65 | 20 | 10 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 12 | 6 | 24 | 221 | 64 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 445 |
| | Female | 91 | 19 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 42 | 244 | 103 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 550 |
| | Total | 156 | 39 | 16 | 12 | 7 | 12 | 20 | 15 | 66 | 465 | 167 | 11 | 9 | 0 | 995 |
| Chateaubelair | Male | 52 | 17 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 10 | 10 | 29 | 317 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 460 |
| | Female | 93 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 10 | 13 | 18 | 20 | 383 | 5 | 7 | 0 | 575 |
| | Total | 145 | 25 | 11 | 12 | 6 | 7 | 16 | 23 | 28 | 49 | 700 | 5 | 8 | 0 | 1,035 |
| Northern Grenadines | Male | 17 | 9 | 20 | 12 | 7 | 12 | 19 | 26 | 4 | 5 | 21 | 398 | 2 | 0 | 552 |
| | Female | 30 | 18 | 21 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 18 | 31 | 4 | 12 | 10 | 587 | 15 | 0 | 767 |
| | Total | 47 | 27 | 41 | 20 | 11 | 21 | 37 | 57 | 8 | 17 | 31 | 985 | 17 | 0 | 1,319 |
| Southern Grenadines | Male | 96 | 33 | 34 | 28 | 17 | 35 | 37 | 42 | 23 | 32 | 66 | 14 | 133 | 0 | 590 |
| | Female | 129 | 36 | 36 | 46 | 26 | 26 | 20 | 37 | 39 | 14 | 62 | 8 | 161 | 0 | 640 |
| | Total | 225 | 69 | 70 | 74 | 43 | 61 | 57 | 79 | 62 | 46 | 128 | 22 | 294 | 0 | 1,230 |
| Total | | 6,018 | 3,139 | 4,695 | 3,084 | 1,713 | 2,227 | 1,804 | 1,355 | 1,386 | 1,198 | 2,503 | 1,512 | 788 | 28 | 31,450 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 3-2 Local-born Population by Place of Birth, Place of Residence and Gender, 2023

| Place of Residence | Gender | Country or Geographic Division of Birth | | | | | Total |
|----------------------|--------------|---|--------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| | | At this address | Elsewhere in the country | Abroad | Not Stated | Don't Know | |
| Kingstown | Male | 2,253 | 1,439 | 210 | 39 | 10 | 3,951 |
| | Female | 2,184 | 2,145 | 298 | 50 | 18 | 4,695 |
| | Total | 4,437 | 3,584 | 508 | 89 | 28 | 8,646 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | Male | 3,104 | 2,514 | 188 | 72 | 64 | 5,942 |
| | Female | 3,288 | 3,090 | 232 | 102 | 70 | 6,782 |
| | Total | 6,392 | 5,604 | 420 | 174 | 134 | 12,724 |
| Calliaqua | Male | 4,391 | 4,191 | 507 | 102 | 29 | 9,220 |
| | Female | 4,843 | 5,523 | 692 | 150 | 36 | 11,244 |
| | Total | 9,234 | 9,714 | 1,199 | 252 | 65 | 20,464 |
| Marriaqua | Male | 2,192 | 887 | 55 | 19 | 5 | 3,158 |
| | Female | 2,166 | 1,165 | 89 | 18 | 34 | 3,472 |
| | Total | 4,358 | 2,052 | 144 | 37 | 39 | 6,630 |
| Bridgetown | Male | 1,905 | 619 | 56 | 3 | 5 | 2,588 |
| | Female | 1,875 | 794 | 41 | 2 | 2 | 2,714 |
| | Total | 3,780 | 1,413 | 97 | 5 | 7 | 5,302 |
| Colonarie | Male | 1,734 | 661 | 49 | 5 | 4 | 2,453 |
| | Female | 1,864 | 921 | 69 | 5 | 4 | 2,863 |
| | Total | 3,598 | 1,582 | 118 | 10 | 8 | 5,316 |
| Georgetown | Male | 1,888 | 567 | 31 | 14 | 10 | 2,510 |
| | Female | 1,937 | 752 | 36 | 14 | 6 | 2,745 |
| | Total | 3,825 | 1,319 | 67 | 28 | 16 | 5,255 |
| Sandy Bay | Male | 823 | 162 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 998 |
| | Female | 800 | 153 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 970 |
| | Total | 1,623 | 315 | 12 | 12 | 6 | 1,968 |
| Layou | Male | 1,448 | 543 | 65 | 9 | 7 | 2,072 |
| | Female | 1,540 | 745 | 91 | 9 | 13 | 2,398 |
| | Total | 2,988 | 1,288 | 156 | 18 | 20 | 4,470 |
| Barrouallie | Male | 1,295 | 445 | 26 | 8 | 1 | 1,775 |
| | Female | 1,495 | 550 | 42 | 6 | 5 | 2,098 |
| | Total | 2,790 | 995 | 68 | 14 | 6 | 3,873 |
| Chateaubelair | Male | 1,221 | 460 | 23 | 4 | 7 | 1,715 |
| | Female | 1,415 | 575 | 35 | 12 | 3 | 2,040 |
| | Total | 2,636 | 1,035 | 58 | 16 | 10 | 3,755 |
| Northern Grenadines | Male | 899 | 552 | 71 | 0 | 0 | 1,522 |
| | Female | 972 | 767 | 89 | 4 | 0 | 1,832 |
| | Total | 1,871 | 1,319 | 160 | 4 | 0 | 3,354 |
| Southern Grenadines | Male | 965 | 590 | 58 | 5 | 3 | 1,621 |
| | Female | 873 | 640 | 72 | 8 | 7 | 1,600 |
| | Total | 1,838 | 1,230 | 130 | 13 | 10 | 3,221 |
| Total | | 49,370 | 31,450 | 3,137 | 672 | 349 | 84,978 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 3-3 Local-born Population by Place of Birth, Place of Residence and Gender, 2012

| Place of Residence | Gender | Place of Birth | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Total |
|----------------------|--------|----------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|----------------|
| | | Kingstown | Suburbs of Kingstown | Calliaqua | Marriaqua | Bridgetown | Colonarie | Georgetown | Sandy Bay | Layout | Barrouallie | Chateaubelair | Northern Grenadines | Southern Grenadines | Not Stated | |
| Kingstown | Male | 3,880 | 239 | 288 | 99 | 60 | 73 | 69 | 61 | 72 | 78 | 138 | 45 | 54 | 506 | 5,662 |
| | Female | 3,578 | 283 | 345 | 144 | 82 | 118 | 85 | 69 | 115 | 94 | 177 | 89 | 62 | 496 | 5,737 |
| | Total | 7,458 | 522 | 633 | 243 | 142 | 191 | 154 | 130 | 187 | 172 | 315 | 134 | 116 | 1,002 | 11,399 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | Male | 765 | 3,912 | 223 | 98 | 63 | 80 | 50 | 65 | 139 | 83 | 218 | 48 | 32 | 581 | 6,357 |
| | Female | 807 | 3,741 | 253 | 132 | 73 | 93 | 49 | 75 | 194 | 90 | 245 | 66 | 51 | 639 | 6,508 |
| | Total | 1,572 | 7,653 | 476 | 230 | 136 | 173 | 99 | 140 | 333 | 173 | 463 | 114 | 83 | 1,220 | 12,865 |
| Calliaqua | Male | 943 | 248 | 7,261 | 507 | 294 | 292 | 197 | 141 | 133 | 109 | 176 | 103 | 83 | 346 | 10,833 |
| | Female | 984 | 262 | 6,881 | 619 | 335 | 325 | 253 | 214 | 134 | 106 | 187 | 149 | 75 | 404 | 10,928 |
| | Total | 1,927 | 510 | 14,142 | 1,126 | 629 | 617 | 450 | 355 | 267 | 215 | 363 | 252 | 158 | 750 | 21,761 |
| Marriaqua | Male | 49 | 23 | 138 | 3,054 | 86 | 38 | 11 | 16 | 29 | 13 | 16 | 8 | 6 | 231 | 3,718 |
| | Female | 46 | 38 | 164 | 2,979 | 87 | 35 | 20 | 28 | 27 | 16 | 22 | 11 | 10 | 210 | 3,693 |
| | Total | 95 | 61 | 302 | 6,033 | 173 | 73 | 31 | 44 | 56 | 29 | 38 | 19 | 16 | 441 | 7,411 |
| Bridgetown | Male | 22 | 15 | 75 | 98 | 2,629 | 96 | 32 | 14 | 16 | 15 | 11 | 5 | 5 | 163 | 3,196 |
| | Female | 37 | 13 | 75 | 93 | 2,437 | 123 | 34 | 23 | 20 | 10 | 10 | 6 | 6 | 161 | 3,048 |
| | Total | 59 | 28 | 150 | 191 | 5,066 | 219 | 66 | 37 | 36 | 25 | 21 | 11 | 11 | 324 | 6,244 |
| Colonarie | Male | 25 | 9 | 36 | 24 | 97 | 2,962 | 72 | 15 | 15 | 5 | 12 | 7 | 7 | 69 | 3,355 |
| | Female | 28 | 23 | 38 | 26 | 110 | 2,753 | 103 | 26 | 11 | 7 | 11 | 3 | 8 | 62 | 3,209 |
| | Total | 53 | 32 | 74 | 50 | 207 | 5,715 | 175 | 41 | 26 | 12 | 23 | 10 | 15 | 131 | 6,564 |
| Georgetown | Male | 17 | 16 | 37 | 25 | 25 | 103 | 2,241 | 258 | 9 | 2 | 15 | 4 | 6 | 697 | 3,455 |
| | Female | 12 | 13 | 28 | 22 | 34 | 73 | 2,131 | 305 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 3 | 2 | 669 | 3,320 |
| | Total | 29 | 29 | 65 | 47 | 59 | 176 | 4,372 | 563 | 18 | 11 | 25 | 7 | 8 | 1,366 | 6,775 |
| Sandy Bay | Male | 10 | 18 | 18 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 12 | 1,125 | 3 | 8 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 65 | 1,290 |
| | Female | 6 | 8 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 1,065 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 11 | 6 | 69 | 1,215 |
| | Total | 16 | 26 | 24 | 8 | 13 | 16 | 21 | 2,190 | 11 | 13 | 11 | 14 | 8 | 134 | 2,505 |
| Layout | Male | 96 | 100 | 39 | 29 | 24 | 21 | 9 | 11 | 2,329 | 59 | 103 | 14 | 7 | 182 | 3,023 |
| | Female | 107 | 100 | 36 | 65 | 17 | 23 | 18 | 23 | 2,047 | 51 | 112 | 16 | 12 | 179 | 2,806 |
| | Total | 203 | 200 | 75 | 94 | 41 | 44 | 27 | 34 | 4,376 | 110 | 215 | 30 | 19 | 361 | 5,829 |
| Barrouallie | Male | 32 | 39 | 23 | 12 | 12 | 14 | 17 | 13 | 46 | 2,199 | 104 | 8 | 6 | 221 | 2,746 |
| | Female | 41 | 25 | 26 | 11 | 13 | 11 | 13 | 14 | 66 | 1,962 | 93 | 6 | 12 | 257 | 2,550 |
| | Total | 73 | 64 | 49 | 23 | 25 | 25 | 30 | 27 | 112 | 4,161 | 197 | 14 | 18 | 478 | 5,296 |
| Chateaubelair | Male | 29 | 22 | 20 | 7 | 7 | 16 | 9 | 23 | 21 | 43 | 2,636 | 8 | 11 | 71 | 2,923 |
| | Female | 25 | 24 | 15 | 10 | 12 | 6 | 8 | 18 | 23 | 36 | 2,368 | 8 | 7 | 58 | 2,618 |
| | Total | 54 | 46 | 35 | 17 | 19 | 22 | 17 | 41 | 44 | 79 | 5,004 | 16 | 18 | 129 | 5,541 |
| Northern Grenadines | Male | 25 | 13 | 48 | 19 | 23 | 24 | 13 | 60 | 6 | 11 | 17 | 2,504 | 15 | 304 | 3,082 |
| | Female | 25 | 6 | 13 | 5 | 11 | 11 | 6 | 31 | 4 | 9 | 22 | 2,339 | 13 | 200 | 2,695 |
| | Total | 50 | 19 | 61 | 24 | 34 | 35 | 19 | 91 | 10 | 20 | 39 | 4,843 | 28 | 504 | 5,777 |
| Southern Grenadines | Male | 77 | 45 | 71 | 62 | 52 | 53 | 64 | 60 | 30 | 46 | 104 | 31 | 1,075 | 132 | 1,902 |
| | Female | 39 | 53 | 31 | 45 | 27 | 36 | 23 | 48 | 23 | 33 | 95 | 23 | 1,038 | 132 | 1,646 |
| | Total | 116 | 98 | 102 | 107 | 79 | 89 | 87 | 108 | 53 | 79 | 199 | 54 | 2,113 | 264 | 3,548 |
| Total | | 11,705 | 9,288 | 16,188 | 8,193 | 6,623 | 7,395 | 5,548 | 3,801 | 5,529 | 5,099 | 6,913 | 5,518 | 2,611 | 7,104 | 101,515 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

3.3 Foreign-born Population

The foreign-born population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines consists of persons born outside of the country but who were resident on Census Night. This group includes:

- a) persons born abroad with Vincentian parentage;
- b) persons born abroad who later acquired Vincentian citizenship through other channels; and
- c) residents who are not Vincentian citizens, regardless of their legal status in the State.

In 2012, the foreign-born population was estimated at 4,898 persons, representing 4.5 percent of the total population. By 2023, the number had declined to 4,440 persons, but accounted for a slightly higher share of the population, 4.7 percent. This reflects two processes: overall population decline due to emigration and natural demographic change, and the continued limited presence of migrants. While small in number, the foreign-born group plays an important role in shaping the country's demographic and socio-economic landscape.

3.3.1 Age Group and Sex of Foreign-born Population

The age composition of the foreign-born population underscores an important demographic transition.

In 2012, the age profile was relatively young, with higher proportions recorded among children and young adults. For example, 8.8 percent of foreign-born persons were 0-4 years old, 9.6 percent were aged 5-9 years, while 9.3 percent were aged 25-29 years. At the opposite end, 8.3 percent were aged 65 years and over. The overall sex ratio was 102 males per 100 females, indicating near gender balance (Table 3-5).

Table 3-4 Foreign-born Population by Age Group, Sex and Sex Ratio, 2023

| Age Group | Male | Female | Total | Male Percent | Female Percent | Total Percent | Sex Ratio |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|-----------|
| 0 – 4 | 70 | 51 | 121 | 3.4 | 2.2 | 2.7 | 137 |
| 5 – 9 | 133 | 152 | 285 | 6.4 | 6.5 | 6.4 | 88 |
| 10 – 14 | 192 | 201 | 393 | 9.2 | 8.5 | 8.9 | 96 |
| 15 – 19 | 156 | 183 | 339 | 7.5 | 7.8 | 7.6 | 85 |
| 20 – 24 | 92 | 100 | 192 | 4.4 | 4.2 | 4.3 | 92 |
| 25 – 29 | 83 | 121 | 204 | 4.0 | 5.1 | 4.6 | 69 |
| 30 – 34 | 123 | 123 | 246 | 5.9 | 5.2 | 5.5 | 100 |
| 35 – 39 | 187 | 221 | 408 | 9.0 | 9.4 | 9.2 | 85 |
| 40 – 44 | 195 | 198 | 393 | 9.4 | 8.4 | 8.9 | 98 |
| 45 – 49 | 144 | 172 | 316 | 6.9 | 7.3 | 7.1 | 84 |
| 50 – 54 | 150 | 130 | 280 | 7.2 | 5.5 | 6.3 | 115 |
| 55 – 59 | 131 | 154 | 285 | 6.3 | 6.5 | 6.4 | 85 |
| 60 – 64 | 133 | 165 | 298 | 6.4 | 7.0 | 6.7 | 81 |
| 65+ | 296 | 384 | 680 | 14.2 | 16.3 | 15.3 | 77 |
| Total | 2,085 | 2,355 | 4,440 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 89 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 3-5 Foreign-born Population by Age Group, Sex and Sex Ratio, 2012

| Age Group | Male | Female | Total | Male percent | Female percent | Total percent | Sex Ratio |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|------------|
| 0 – 4 | 239 | 194 | 433 | 9.7 | 8.0 | 8.8 | 123 |
| 5 – 9 | 257 | 215 | 472 | 10.4 | 8.9 | 9.6 | 120 |
| 10 – 14 | 189 | 181 | 370 | 7.6 | 7.5 | 7.6 | 104 |
| 15 – 19 | 134 | 129 | 263 | 5.4 | 5.3 | 5.4 | 104 |
| 20 – 24 | 161 | 144 | 305 | 6.5 | 5.9 | 6.2 | 112 |
| 25 – 29 | 239 | 214 | 453 | 9.7 | 8.8 | 9.3 | 112 |
| 30 – 34 | 158 | 175 | 333 | 6.4 | 7.2 | 6.8 | 90 |
| 35 – 39 | 151 | 163 | 314 | 6.1 | 6.7 | 6.4 | 93 |
| 40 – 44 | 163 | 158 | 321 | 6.6 | 6.6 | 6.5 | 103 |
| 45 – 49 | 168 | 180 | 348 | 6.8 | 7.4 | 7.1 | 93 |
| 50 – 54 | 158 | 171 | 329 | 6.4 | 7.1 | 6.7 | 92 |
| 55 – 59 | 148 | 139 | 287 | 5.6 | 6.2 | 5.9 | 93 |
| 60 – 64 | 132 | 131 | 263 | 5.3 | 5.4 | 5.4 | 101 |
| 65+ | 187 | 220 | 407 | 7.6 | 9.1 | 8.3 | 85 |
| Total | 2,484 | 2,414 | 4,898 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 102 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

By 2023, however, the profile had shifted toward older age groups. Only 2.7 percent of foreign-born residents were aged 0-4 years, compared with 15.3 percent who were 65 years and older, a near doubling of the elderly share. Middle-aged groups such as 35-39 (9.2 percent) and 40-44 (8.9 percent) also became more prominent (Table 3-4). These changes are indicative of a decline in the inflow of young migrant families and the aging of earlier migrant cohorts.

Gender composition also shifted over the intercensal period. In 2012, males slightly outnumbered females, but by 2023, females represented a majority: 2,355 females versus 2,085 males, yielding a sex ratio of 89 males per 100 females, compared with 102 males per 100 females in 2012 (Table 3-4 – 3-5). This feminization is most evident among older age groups, suggesting that female migrants either remained in the country at higher rates or lived longer than their male counterparts.

3.3.2 Place of Residence of Foreign-born Population

The spatial distribution of the foreign-born population reveals notable concentrations in urban and semi-urban centers, with Calliaqua and Kingstown emerging as the primary destinations across both census periods. In 2012, Calliaqua accounted for nearly one-third (32.4 percent) of all foreign-born residents, followed by Kingstown with 16.5 percent and the Suburbs of Kingstown with 9.2 percent (Table 3-7). Collectively, these three divisions accounted for 58.1 percent of the foreign-born population, underscoring the importance of urban areas as centers of settlement, employment, and social integration.

Table 3-6 Foreign-born Population by Census Division and Sex, 2023

| Census Division | 2023 Frequency | | | 2023 Percentage | | |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Kingstown | 371 | 436 | 807 | 17.8 | 18.5 | 18.2 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 244 | 273 | 517 | 11.7 | 11.6 | 11.6 |
| Calliaqua | 780 | 907 | 1,687 | 37.4 | 38.5 | 38.0 |
| Marriaqua | 63 | 97 | 160 | 3.0 | 4.1 | 3.6 |
| Bridgetown | 83 | 61 | 144 | 4.0 | 2.6 | 3.2 |
| Colonarie | 68 | 79 | 147 | 3.3 | 3.4 | 3.3 |
| Georgetown | 54 | 45 | 99 | 2.6 | 1.9 | 2.2 |
| Sandy Bay | 9 | 7 | 16 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.4 |
| Layou | 106 | 118 | 224 | 5.1 | 5.0 | 5.0 |
| Barrouallie | 40 | 48 | 88 | 1.9 | 2.0 | 2.0 |
| Chateaubelair | 47 | 37 | 84 | 2.3 | 1.6 | 1.9 |
| Northern Grenadines | 130 | 154 | 284 | 6.2 | 6.5 | 6.4 |
| Southern Grenadines | 90 | 93 | 183 | 4.3 | 3.9 | 4.1 |
| Total | 2,085 | 2,355 | 4,440 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 3-7 Foreign-born Population by Census Division and Sex, 2012

| Census Division | 2012 Frequency | | | 2012 Percentage | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Kingstown | 418 | 390 | 808 | 16.9 | 16.1 | 16.5 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 225 | 227 | 452 | 9.1 | 9.4 | 9.2 |
| Calliaqua | 749 | 838 | 1,587 | 30.3 | 34.6 | 32.4 |
| Marriaqua | 150 | 109 | 259 | 6.1 | 4.5 | 5.3 |
| Bridgetown | 98 | 105 | 203 | 4.0 | 4.3 | 4.1 |
| Colonarie | 90 | 82 | 172 | 3.6 | 3.4 | 3.5 |
| Georgetown | 91 | 72 | 163 | 3.7 | 3.0 | 3.3 |
| Sandy Bay | 21 | 11 | 32 | 0.8 | 0.5 | 0.7 |
| Layou | 156 | 156 | 312 | 6.3 | 6.4 | 6.4 |
| Barrouallie | 73 | 70 | 143 | 3.0 | 2.9 | 2.9 |
| Chateaubelair | 79 | 63 | 142 | 3.2 | 2.6 | 2.9 |
| Northern Grenadines | 166 | 171 | 337 | 6.7 | 7.1 | 6.9 |
| Southern Grenadines | 158 | 130 | 288 | 6.4 | 5.4 | 5.9 |
| Total | 2,474 | 2,424 | 4,898 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

By 2023, this trend became even more pronounced. Calliaqua alone absorbed 38.0 percent of the foreign-born population, while Kingstown and its Suburbs accounted for 18.2 percent and 11.6 percent, respectively (Table 3-6). Combined, these three divisions accounted for 67.8 percent of all foreign-born residents, a significant increase from 2012. This shift highlights the ongoing urban pull of the southern corridor, where opportunities in commerce and services, and access to infrastructure, are greatest.

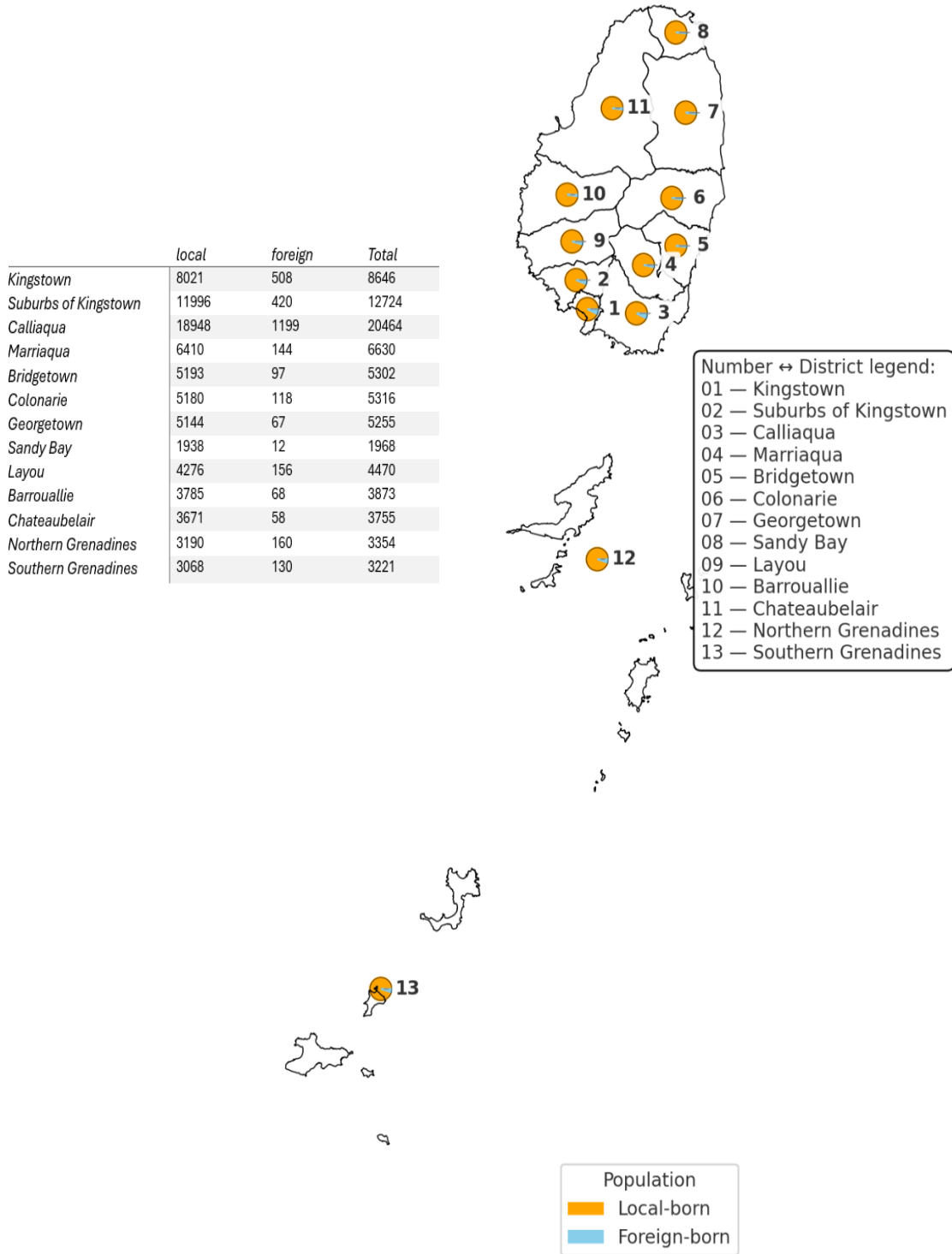
In contrast, rural and northern districts maintained relatively small shares of the foreign-born population. In 2023, Georgetown (2.2 percent), Sandy Bay (0.4 percent), and Barrouallie (2.0 percent) had minimal foreign-born populations. While retention in these areas remains limited, this suggests that these regions are less attractive to foreign-born persons, likely due to fewer employment opportunities and weaker service networks. Still, modest concentrations exist in semi-rural divisions such as Marriacqua (3.6 percent), Layou (5.0 percent), and Chateaubelair (1.9 percent), reflecting some level of localized integration.

Regarding the Grenadines in 2012, the Northern and Southern Grenadines together accounted for 12.8 percent of the foreign-born population, while in 2023 their combined share declined slightly to 10.5 percent. This suggests that although the Grenadines remain destinations for some foreign-born residents, possibly linked to tourism-related activities, their relative importance has diminished compared to the mainland urban centers.

Map 1 illustrates that the foreign-born population is concentrated mainly within the three urban census divisions and the Grenadine Islands. On the mainland, their presence diminishes progressively with distance from the urban centers, as non-urban census divisions further inland recorded smaller shares of foreign-born residents. Outside of the urban and Grenadines areas, the distribution of the foreign-born population varied in direct relation to the degree of rurality of each census division.

Overall, the foreign-born population's place of residence underscores the critical role of urbanization in shaping settlement choices. The dominance of Calliaqua, Kingstown, and its Suburbs points to a concentration of foreign-born persons in areas of higher economic activity, while rural districts remain relatively marginal in attracting this group.

Map 1 Foreign-born, Local-born and Total Population by Census Division, 2023
 Foreign-born vs Local-born by District (equal pie sizes, numbered labels)



Source: 2023 Population and Housing Census

3.3.3 Labour Force Participation of Foreign-born Population

The economic participation of foreign-born residents reveals both continuity and change over time. In 2012, 65.4 percent of foreign-born persons aged 15 years and over were economically active, while 34.6 percent were outside the labour force (Table 3-8). Among participants, the unemployment rate stood at 12.5 percent, significantly below the national average of 21.5 percent, suggesting strong integration into the labour market (Table 3-9).

Table 3-8 Labour Force Participation Rate of Foreign-born Population 15 Years and Over, 2012-2023

| Population 15+ (Foreign-born) | 2012 | | 2023 | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| Not in Labour Force | 1,255 | 34.6 | 1,524 | 41.9 |
| In Labour Force | 2,369 | 65.4 | 2,117 | 58.1 |
| Total | 3,624 | 100.0 | 3,641 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 3-9 Unemployment Rate of Foreign-born Population 15 Years and Over, 2012-2023

| Population 15+ (Foreign-born) | 2012 | | 2023 | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| Employed | 2,073 | 87.5 | 1,839 | 86.9 |
| Unemployed | 296 | 12.5 | 278 | 13.1 |
| Total | 2,369 | 100.0 | 2,117 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

By 2023, labour force participation had fallen to 58.1 percent, with 41.9 percent of foreign-born adults outside the workforce (Table 3-8). Among those active, 86.9 percent were employed and 13.1 percent were unemployed, reflecting a modest increase in unemployment compared with 2012 (Table 3-9). This decline in participation aligns with the aging profile of the foreign-born, as older residents are more likely to be retired or otherwise economically inactive.

Overall, while foreign-born residents remain an important part of the labour force, their demographic profile increasingly reflects long-term settlement and aging rather than recent inflows of working-age migrants. The concentration of foreign-born residents in cities shows that their livelihoods are closely linked to the urban economic activity.

3.4 Former Residents

The destinations of Vincentian emigrants reflect both long-standing historical migration routes and evolving regional opportunities. In 2012, the majority of emigrants resided in Canada (37.7 percent), followed by the United States (25.2 percent) and the Caribbean (21.0 percent). The United Kingdom accounted for 13.3 percent, while only small proportions were recorded under “Other” destinations (1.7

percent) and “Not Stated” (1.5 percent). These figures highlighted the enduring pull of North America, with Canada and the USA together attracting nearly two-thirds (62.9 percent) of emigrants (Table 3-11).

Table 3-10 Total Residents Emigrating by Country of Destination and Sex, 2023

| Country of Destination | 2023 Frequency | | | 2023 Percentage | | |
|------------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Other | 102 | 105 | 207 | 4.9 | 5.3 | 5.1 |
| Caribbean | 648 | 603 | 1251 | 30.9 | 30.3 | 30.6 |
| Canada | 379 | 327 | 706 | 18.1 | 16.5 | 17.3 |
| USA | 402 | 477 | 879 | 19.2 | 24.0 | 21.5 |
| United Kingdom | 547 | 459 | 1006 | 26.1 | 23.1 | 24.6 |
| Not Stated | 18 | 16 | 34 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 0.8 |
| Total | 2096 | 1987 | 4083 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 3-11 Total Residents Emigrating by Country of Destination and Sex, 2012

| Country of Destination | 2012 Frequency | | | | 2012 Percentage | | | |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Not Stated | Total | Male | Female | Not Stated | Total |
| Caribbean | 485 | 499 | 39 | 1,023 | 22.3 | 19.9 | 22.7 | 21.0 |
| Canada | 768 | 979 | 63 | 1,810 | 35.5 | 39.0 | 36.6 | 37.7 |
| United Kingdom | 378 | 244 | 23 | 645 | 17.5 | 9.7 | 13.4 | 13.3 |
| USA | 470 | 708 | 41 | 1,219 | 21.7 | 28.2 | 23.8 | 25.2 |
| Other | 37 | 43 | 3 | 83 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.7 |
| Not Stated | 32 | 36 | 3 | 71 | 1.5 | 1.4 | 1.7 | 1.5 |
| Total | 2,170 | 2,509 | 172 | 4,851 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

By 2023, the distribution of emigrants shifted in notable ways. The Caribbean (30.6 percent) emerged as the leading destination, surpassing Canada and the USA, and reflecting the strengthening of intra-regional migration, possibly linked to CARICOM mobility frameworks, educational opportunities, and closer labour market integration. The United Kingdom also gained prominence, rising to 24.6 percent of emigrants, up from 13.3 percent in 2012, signaling renewed migration to Europe, likely driven by family networks and historical ties. The United States (21.5 percent) remained a key destination but declined relative to its earlier share, while Canada (17.3 percent) experienced the sharpest drop, from 37.7 percent in 2012 (Table 3-10).

Overall, these shifts reflect a diversification of migration flows. North America remains important, but intra-regional movement within the Caribbean has grown, and the United Kingdom has re-emerged as a major destination. The rising share of “Other” destinations (1.7 percent in 2012 to 5.1 percent in 2023) also points to the expansion of settlement beyond traditional destinations. Together, these trends

highlight both the adaptability of Vincentian migrants and the continued role of social, historical, and economic ties in shaping migration choices.

3.4.1 Age Group when Emigrated

The age distribution of emigrants reflects the stages of the life cycle most associated with international movement. In 2012, the majority of emigrants were in the 15-24 age group (36.6 percent), followed by those aged 25-44 (24.7 percent) (Table 3-13). Together, these two groups accounted for more than three-fifths (61.3 percent) of all emigrants, underscoring that migration was largely concentrated among young adults seeking education, training, or early-career opportunities abroad. Children under 15 years accounted for 5.0 percent, while older adults (45 years and over) represented only 5.1 percent, indicating that emigration in later life was relatively uncommon.

Table 3-12 Residents by Sex and Age Group Post-emigration, 2023

| Age Group | 2023 Frequency | | | 2023 Percentage | | |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| 0 – 14 | 131 | 105 | 236 | 6.3 | 5.3 | 5.8 |
| 15 – 24 | 682 | 630 | 1,312 | 32.5 | 31.7 | 32.1 |
| 25 – 44 | 713 | 616 | 1,329 | 34.0 | 31.0 | 32.5 |
| 45 – 59 | 124 | 133 | 257 | 5.9 | 6.7 | 6.3 |
| 60+ | 17 | 53 | 70 | 0.8 | 2.7 | 1.7 |
| Not Stated | 429 | 450 | 879 | 20.5 | 22.6 | 21.5 |
| Total | 2,096 | 1,987 | 4,083 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

By 2023, these patterns persisted but showed notable shifts. The 25-44 age group (32.5 percent) overtook the 15-24 cohort (32.1 percent) as the dominant emigrant category (Table 3-12). This change highlights the growing importance of prime working-age adults in migration flows, possibly driven by employment. Children under 15 years rose slightly to 5.8 percent, while persons aged 45-59 increased to 6.3 percent, suggesting a broader age distribution of emigrants compared to 2012. Overall, the age profile of emigrants in 2023 reflects both continuity in youth-driven migration and an emerging role of mid-life movement tied to labour demand and family reunification abroad.

Table 3 13 Residents by Sex and Age Group Post-emigration, 2012

| Age Group | 2012 Frequency | | | | 2012 Percentage | | | |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Not Stated | Total | Male | Female | Not Stated | Total |
| 0 – 14 | 122 | 111 | 8 | 241 | 5.6 | 4.4 | 4.7 | 5.0 |
| 15 – 24 | 829 | 938 | 10 | 1,777 | 38.2 | 37.4 | 5.9 | 36.6 |
| 25 – 44 | 544 | 650 | 3 | 1,197 | 25.1 | 25.9 | 0.6 | 24.7 |
| 45 – 59 | 64 | 114 | 2 | 179 | 2.9 | 4.5 | 0.6 | 3.7 |
| 60+ | 21 | 47 | 0 | 68 | 1.0 | 1.9 | 0.0 | 1.4 |
| Not Stated | 590 | 649 | 150 | 1,389 | 27.2 | 25.9 | 88.2 | 28.6 |
| Total | 2,170 | 2,509 | 172 | 4,851 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

3.4.2 Reason for Emigrating

The motivations for emigration also shifted significantly between the 2012 and 2023 intercensal periods. In 2012, employment was the leading driver, accounting for 45.0 percent of all emigrants, followed by family reunification (28.5 percent) and study opportunities (12.6 percent) (Table 3-15). Medical reasons and other causes each contributed less than 4 percent, while crime and insecurity played a negligible role (0.2 percent). These findings highlight the dual pull of economic opportunity and family networks as the primary forces shaping Vincentian emigration during that period.

In 2023, however, the structure of emigration drivers became more concentrated. Employment accounted for nearly two-thirds (63.8 percent) of all emigrants, reinforcing its dominance as the primary factor (Table 3-14). Other reasons accounted for 34.3 percent of emigrants, representing the second-largest category. Medical reasons remained marginal at 1.5 percent, while natural disasters accounted for a very small proportion (0.1 percent).

Table 3-13 Residents by Sex and Reason for Emigrating, 2023

| Reason for Migration | Frequency | | | Percentage | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Employment | 1,420 | 1,183 | 2,603 | 67.7 | 59.5 | 63.8 |
| Medical | 22 | 41 | 63 | 1.0 | 2.1 | 1.5 |
| Natural Disaster | 3 | 2 | 5 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Other (specify) | 647 | 754 | 1,401 | 30.9 | 37.9 | 34.3 |
| Not Stated | 4 | 7 | 11 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 0.3 |
| Total | 2,096 | 1,987 | 4,083 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 3-14 Residents by Sex and Reason for Emigrating, 2012

| Reason for Migration | Frequency | | | | Percentage | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Not Stated | Total | Male | Female | Not Stated | Total |
| Family Reunification | 588 | 780 | 12 | 1,380 | 27.1 | 31.1 | 7.0 | 28.5 |
| Employment | 1,149 | 1,020 | 13 | 2,182 | 52.9 | 40.6 | 7.6 | 45.0 |
| Study | 240 | 369 | 4 | 613 | 11.1 | 14.7 | 2.3 | 12.6 |
| Crime Rate | 2 | 11 | 0 | 13 | 0.1 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 0.2 |
| Medical | 20 | 52 | 0 | 72 | 0.9 | 2.1 | 0.0 | 1.5 |
| Other (specify) | 58 | 117 | 3 | 178 | 2.7 | 4.7 | 1.7 | 3.7 |
| Not Stated | 113 | 160 | 140 | 413 | 5.2 | 6.4 | 81.4 | 8.5 |
| Total | 2,170 | 2,509 | 172 | 4,851 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

The comparison reveals a clear intensification of labour-driven emigration between 2012 and 2023. While family and education once played a significant role, their relative decline suggests that economic imperatives have become the overwhelming driver of outward migration. This trend is consistent with

regional migration patterns, where labour demand in North America and Europe continues to attract Vincentians in their most economically active years.

3.4.3 Highest Education Attained

Educational attainment of emigrants provides useful insights into the type of human capital being lost through migration. In 2012, the majority of migrants had attained secondary education (44.7 percent), followed by primary education (23.8 percent) and pre-university qualifications (12.4 percent). Only a small proportion held university/tertiary education (8.1percent), while negligible shares reported no schooling, pre-primary education, or “other” qualifications (Table 3-16).

Table 3-15 Total Migrating Residents by Sex and Highest Education Attained, 2023

| Highest Education Attained | Frequency | | | Percentage | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Nursery/Kindergarten | 12 | 17 | 29 | 0.6 | 0.9 | 0.7 |
| Primary | 316 | 257 | 573 | 15.1 | 12.9 | 14.0 |
| Secondary | 854 | 675 | 1,529 | 40.7 | 34.0 | 37.4 |
| Technical/Vocational | 139 | 90 | 229 | 6.6 | 4.5 | 5.6 |
| College | 489 | 581 | 1,070 | 23.3 | 29.2 | 26.2 |
| University/Tertiary | 123 | 193 | 316 | 5.9 | 9.7 | 7.7 |
| None | 155 | 162 | 317 | 7.4 | 8.2 | 7.8 |
| Not Stated | 8 | 12 | 20 | 0.4 | 0.6 | 0.5 |
| Total | 2,096 | 1,987 | 4,083 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 3-16 Total Migrating Residents by Sex and Highest Education Attained, 2012

| Highest Education Attained | Frequency | | | | Percentage | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Not Stated | Total | Male | Female | Not Stated | Total |
| None/No Schooling | 11 | 15 | 0 | 26 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 0.0 | 0.5 |
| Pre-Primary Education | 27 | 25 | 3 | 55 | 1.2 | 1.0 | 1.7 | 1.2 |
| Primary | 606 | 538 | 8 | 1,152 | 27.9 | 21.5 | 4.7 | 23.8 |
| Secondary | 988 | 1,163 | 16 | 2,167 | 45.5 | 46.3 | 9.3 | 44.7 |
| Pre-University | 241 | 360 | 2 | 603 | 11.1 | 14.3 | 1.2 | 12.4 |
| University/Tertiary | 156 | 234 | 2 | 392 | 7.2 | 9.3 | 1.2 | 8.1 |
| Other | 13 | 34 | 1 | 48 | 0.6 | 1.3 | 0.6 | 1.0 |
| Not Stated | 128 | 140 | 140 | 408 | 5.9 | 5.6 | 81.4 | 8.4 |
| Total | 2,170 | 2,509 | 172 | 4,851 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

By 2023, the overall pattern remained weighted toward secondary-educated emigrants, who accounted for 37.4 percent (1,529 persons) of the total. However, notable shifts were evident. The share of emigrants with a college education rose to 26.2 percent (1,070 persons), up from 12.4 percent in 2012 (pre-university). Similarly, the proportion with university/tertiary education stood at 7.7 percent,

remaining close to the 2012 level. Primary-educated emigrants declined to 14.0 percent, suggesting improvements in educational attainment among more recent emigrants (Table 3-16).

These results indicate a gradual change in the composition of emigrant skills. While secondary-level emigrants still dominate, the 2023 data show an increasing share of those with higher education, especially college-level qualifications. This shift reflects both expanding educational opportunities within Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the tendency for better-educated individuals to seek opportunities abroad.

In summary, migration continues to involve large numbers of individuals at the secondary level, but the rise in college and tertiary-level emigrants points toward a “brain drain” risk, with more highly skilled Vincentians contributing to the country’s outflows.

3.4.4 Broad Occupational Group of Emigrants

The occupational profile of emigrants provides insight into the types of skills and labour resources that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines lost through outward migration. In 2012, a total of 4,851 emigrants were recorded by broad occupational group. The largest share, i.e., 39.2 percent (1,899 persons), was students, indicating that education-related migration was the dominant factor. Beyond this, significant proportions were employed in services and sales (10.2 percent), craft and related trades (7.0 percent), and professionals (7.2 percent), suggesting that both skilled and semi-skilled groups were represented among those leaving the country (Table 3-19).

Table 3-17 Total Emigrating Residents by Sex and Broad Occupational Group when Moved, 2023

| Broad Occupational Group | Frequency | | | Percentage | | |
|---|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Managers | 16 | 23 | 39 | 1.6 | 2.7 | 2.1 |
| Professionals | 105 | 205 | 310 | 10.4 | 24.4 | 16.7 |
| Technicians and Associate Professionals | 69 | 51 | 120 | 6.8 | 6.1 | 6.5 |
| Clerical Support Workers | 46 | 121 | 167 | 4.5 | 14.4 | 9.0 |
| Service and Sales Workers | 194 | 156 | 350 | 19.2 | 18.6 | 18.9 |
| Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries Workers | 42 | 14 | 56 | 4.2 | 1.7 | 3.0 |
| Craft and Related Trades Workers | 182 | 10 | 192 | 18.0 | 1.2 | 10.4 |
| Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers | 77 | 4 | 81 | 7.6 | 0.5 | 4.4 |
| Elementary Occupations | 110 | 52 | 162 | 10.9 | 6.2 | 8.7 |
| Not Stated | 171 | 204 | 375 | 16.9 | 24.3 | 20.2 |
| Total | 1,012 | 840 | 1,852 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 3-18 Total Emigrating Residents by Sex and Broad Occupational Group when Moved, 2012

| Broad Occupational Group | Frequency | | | | Percentage | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Not Stated | Total | Male | Female | Not Stated | Total |
| Armed forces occupations | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| Managers | 24 | 20 | 0 | 44 | 1.1 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 0.9 |
| Professionals | 103 | 239 | 9 | 351 | 4.8 | 9.5 | 5.3 | 7.2 |
| Technicians and Associate Professionals | 68 | 62 | 7 | 137 | 3.1 | 2.5 | 4.1 | 2.8 |
| Clerical Support Workers | 83 | 199 | 5 | 287 | 3.8 | 7.9 | 2.9 | 5.9 |
| Services and Sales Workers | 206 | 268 | 21 | 495 | 9.5 | 10.7 | 12.4 | 10.2 |
| Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries | 67 | 33 | 0 | 100 | 3.1 | 1.3 | 0.0 | 2.1 |
| Craft and Related Trades Workers | 293 | 33 | 13 | 339 | 13.5 | 1.3 | 7.1 | 7.0 |
| Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers | 108 | 9 | 3 | 120 | 5.0 | 0.4 | 1.8 | 2.5 |
| Elementary Occupations | 141 | 119 | 16 | 276 | 6.5 | 4.7 | 8.8 | 5.7 |
| Students | 747 | 1,090 | 62 | 1,899 | 34.4 | 43.5 | 36.5 | 39.2 |
| Not Stated | 325 | 443 | 30 | 798 | 15.0 | 17.7 | 17.7 | 16.5 |
| Total | 2,170 | 2,509 | 172 | 4,851 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

By 2023, however, the occupational structure of emigrants had shifted significantly. Students were no longer a major reported category, reflecting changes in classification and reporting. Instead, emigrants were more concentrated in services and sales (18.9 percent), professionals (16.7 percent), clerical support (9.0 percent), and elementary occupations (8.7 percent). This indicates that outward migration increasingly involves persons already participating in the labour force, rather than those leaving primarily for education. The data also highlighted a strong representation in craft and related trades (10.4 percent) and plant and machine operators (4.4 percent), underscoring the continued movement of semi-skilled workers (Table 3-18).

Gender differences were evident but not absolute. Men were strongly represented in craft and related trades (18.0 percent), service and sales (19.2 percent), elementary occupations (10.9 percent), and professionals (10.4 percent). These categories highlight men’s active role in both skilled manual work and knowledge-based sectors. At the same time, women were more concentrated in professional (24.4 percent) and clerical support roles (14.4 percent), but were also significantly involved in service and sales (18.6 percent). These patterns show that while certain occupational divisions persist, both men and women are migrating from overlapping areas of the economy, particularly services and professional employment.

The 2023 emigration data reflect a shift away from student-dominated migration toward the movement of active workers across service, professional, and craft occupations. Both men and women are represented in these sectors, pointing to a direct loss of skilled labour and service workers from the national workforce.

3.5 Returning Residents

Returning residents are Vincentians who once lived abroad and subsequently returned to reside in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. In 2012, they accounted for 11.6 percent of the total population, representing an important component of the country’s demographic dynamics (Table 3-21). According to the 2012 Population and Housing Census, only 22.9 percent of returning residents identified their country of origin, with the majority originating from the Caribbean (10.5 percent), followed by Canada (4.4 percent), the USA (4.0 percent), and the UK (3.5 percent). A smaller proportion (0.5 percent) returned from other destinations. Notably, more males than females were reported among returnees, pointing to a slight gender imbalance in the composition of return migration during that period.

By 2023, the profile of returning residents had shifted significantly (Table 3-20). Nearly half (44.6 percent) originated from the Caribbean, reflecting the importance of regional mobility. Extra-regional flows also featured strongly, with Canada (22.0 percent), the USA (19.3 percent), and the UK (11.9 percent) together accounting for over half of all returnees. The proportion from “Other” destinations rose to 2.1 percent, indicating increasing diversification of return flows. Unlike 2012, the sex balance in 2023 was more even, with males (52.1 percent) only slightly outnumbering females (47.9 percent).

Table 3-19 Returning (Local-born) Residents, by Country of Origins and Sex, 2023

| Country of Origin | Frequency | | | Percentage | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Other | 99 | 63 | 162 | 2.5 | 1.7 | 2.1 |
| Caribbean | 1,821 | 1,551 | 3,372 | 46.2 | 42.9 | 44.6 |
| Canada | 753 | 907 | 1,660 | 19.1 | 25.1 | 22.0 |
| USA | 815 | 643 | 1,458 | 20.7 | 17.8 | 19.3 |
| United Kingdom | 447 | 450 | 897 | 11.4 | 12.4 | 11.9 |
| Not Stated | 3 | 1 | 4 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| Total | 3,938 | 3,615 | 7,553 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 3-20 Returning (Local-born) Residents, by Country of Origins and Sex, 2012

| Country of Origin | Frequency | | | Percentage | | |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Caribbean | 703 | 621 | 1,324 | 10.7 | 10.2 | 10.5 |
| UK | 221 | 215 | 436 | 3.4 | 3.5 | 3.5 |
| USA | 273 | 234 | 507 | 4.2 | 3.9 | 4.0 |
| Other | 23 | 37 | 60 | 0.4 | 0.6 | 0.5 |
| Canada | 282 | 275 | 557 | 4.3 | 4.5 | 4.4 |
| Not Stated | 5,061 | 4,677 | 9,738 | 77.1 | 77.2 | 77.2 |
| Total | 6,563 | 6,059 | 12,622 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Return migration to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reflects both regional and extra-regional linkages. While the Caribbean has emerged as the leading source of returnees in 2023, flows from Canada, the USA, and the UK remain substantial. This pattern underscores the continuing importance of diaspora

ties and highlights the dual role of regional proximity and overseas connections in shaping the dynamics of return migration.

3.6 Conclusion

Migration remains a predominant force in shaping the demographic and socio-economic landscape of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Internal migration intensified over the intercensal period, with birthplace retention falling from 72.0 percent in 2012 to 58.1 percent in 2023. This shift underscores the strong pull of urban and peri-urban centers such as Calliaqua, Kingstown, and its suburbs, which together absorbed over 60 percent of internal movers. By contrast, rural districts like Georgetown, Chateaubelair, and Marriaqua retained large shares of their local-born populations, reflecting lower in-migration and the persistence of agriculture and fishing livelihoods. Women emerged as more mobile than men, highlighting gendered dynamics in internal population redistribution.

The foreign-born population, though relatively small at 4.7 percent of the total, has undergone marked demographic shifts. Its age structure now reflects a mature, settled community: in 2023, 15.3 percent were aged 65 years and over, nearly double the share recorded in 2012. At the same time, the population has become more feminized, with women now outnumbering men, especially at older ages. Labour force participation declined to 58.1 percent, a direct outcome of this aging profile, although those engaged in the workforce maintain relatively high employment rates. Spatially, foreign-born residents remain heavily concentrated in the southern urban corridor (particularly Calliaqua, Kingstown, and its suburbs) where access to jobs, services, and infrastructure is greatest.

International migration remains a cornerstone of demographic change in Vincent and the Grenadines, but patterns have diversified. While Canada and the USA once dominated, their shares declined as the Caribbean (30.6 percent) and the United Kingdom (24.6 percent) gained importance. The bulk of emigrants remain in the 15-44 age range, but there has been a rise in college-educated migrants, signaling risks of brain drain. Occupationally, outward flows have shifted from being student-dominated to active workers across professional, services, and craft categories, pointing to more direct losses of labour resources from the domestic workforce.

Return migration further illustrates the cyclical nature of population mobility. By 2023, nearly half of returnees originated from the Caribbean, while significant flows came from Canada, the USA, and the UK, underscoring both regional and extra-regional linkages. Together, these findings show that migration continues to reshape the country's size, structure, and settlement system.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER 3 MIGRATION PATTERNS & DISTRIBUTION



Peri-Urban Concentration:

Calliaqua (30.9%) and the Suburbs of Kingstown (17.8%) together accounted for 48.7% of all internal movers



Reduced Central Concentration:

Kingstown accounted for 11.4% of all internal movers in 2023.



High Mobility:

About 31,450 persons (29%) lived outside their birth division.



Female Majority:

Women formed 57% of internal migrants, suggesting strong female-led mobility.



Age-Linked Migration Pressures :

Children and youth made up over 20% of the foreign-born and internal migrant streams



Labour Force Dimension:

Among foreign-born residents aged 15+, 58% were in the labour force, with nearly 87% employed

Chapter 4. Education and Training



4.1 Introduction

Education is widely recognized as a cornerstone of human development, enabling individuals to acquire knowledge, skills, and competencies that enhance personal well-being and contribute to national growth. Education plays a dual role as it reflects the characteristics of the current population and shapes future economic and social trajectories through its influence on fertility, employment, and productivity. The Population and Housing Censuses of 2001, 2012, and 2023 provide a valuable opportunity to examine trends in access to and outcomes of education across Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

At the global level, education has been prioritized under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which calls for inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all (United Nations, 2015)¹⁴. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, education policy has been shaped by frameworks such as the Education Sector Development Plan (2014-2019), which sought to strengthen universal access at the primary and secondary levels, expand post-secondary opportunities, and reduce inequities across gender, geography, and socio-economic status. These initiatives provide an important context for interpreting the census findings.

Despite progress, notable challenges remain. The 2017 UNICEF Situation Analysis highlighted gaps in early childhood education, rural–urban disparities, and gendered outcomes, with girls continuing to outperform boys at the secondary and tertiary levels (UNICEF, 2017)¹⁵. The census results confirm both advances, such as the expansion of secondary and tertiary attainment, and persistent areas of concern, especially at the pre-primary level and among disadvantaged populations. This chapter, therefore, examines education within a demographic framework, focusing on school attendance, institutional participation, and the highest level of attainment, while assessing progress toward SDG 4 and identifying areas where continued investment is required.

4.2 Education and Demography

Education and demography are closely intertwined, as demographic shifts directly affect the size and composition of the school-age population and, in turn, demand for educational services. Census results from 2001, 2012, and 2023 reveal that the overall number of school-aged children has declined, reflecting fertility reductions and smaller cohort sizes. This demographic contraction has significant implications for school enrollment levels, as well as for planning teacher deployment, infrastructure needs, and the delivery of equitable educational opportunities (UNICEF, 2017). The census data therefore provide a critical lens through which to track not only access to education but also the broader demographic transition underway in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

¹⁴ United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. United Nations. Retrieved from: <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

¹⁵ United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2017). *Situation analysis of children in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*. UNICEF Office for the Eastern Caribbean Area. Retrieved from: <https://www.unicef.org/easterncaribbean/reports/situation-analysis-children-saint-vincent-and-grenadines>

School attendance by age (Tables 4-1 and 4-2) reveals long-term declines in the number of children enrolled across most age groups. Between 2001 and 2012, steep contractions were observed, particularly among children aged 6 to 9 years, where attendance fell by more than one-quarter, reflecting smaller cohort sizes linked to fertility decline. The 2012 to 2023 period shows a continuation of this trend, with further reductions in the lower age groups, particularly among those aged 3 to 5 years, where attendance dropped by 14 to 26 percent. However, modest increases are evident among older adolescents (15-17 years), suggesting extended participation in education, consistent with global efforts to expand access to secondary and post-secondary education. This indicates that while the school-age population is shrinking, the demand for higher-level educational opportunities is increasing.

Table 4-1 School Attendance by Age, 2012 & 2023

| Age Group | 2012 | | | 2023 | | | 2012-2023 Change percent | | |
|------------|-------|--------|--------------|-------|--------|--------------|--------------------------|--------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| 3 | 601 | 610 | 1,211 | 499 | 498 | 997 | -17.0 | -18.4 | -17.7 |
| 4 | 732 | 771 | 1,503 | 538 | 580 | 1,118 | -26.5 | -24.8 | -25.6 |
| 5 | 812 | 834 | 1,646 | 746 | 664 | 1,410 | -8.1 | -20.4 | -14.3 |
| 6 | 805 | 753 | 1,558 | 759 | 656 | 1,415 | -5.7 | -12.9 | -9.2 |
| 7 | 887 | 813 | 1,700 | 866 | 878 | 1,744 | -2.4 | 8.0 | 2.6 |
| 8 | 810 | 815 | 1,625 | 802 | 887 | 1,689 | -1.0 | 8.8 | 3.9 |
| 9 | 790 | 826 | 1,616 | 831 | 839 | 1,670 | 5.2 | 1.6 | 3.3 |
| 10 | 948 | 929 | 1,877 | 891 | 758 | 1,649 | -6.0 | -18.4 | -12.1 |
| 11 | 1,072 | 968 | 2,040 | 860 | 839 | 1,699 | -19.8 | -13.3 | -16.7 |
| 12 | 906 | 870 | 1,776 | 786 | 821 | 1,607 | -13.2 | -5.6 | -9.5 |
| 13 | 883 | 847 | 1,730 | 829 | 806 | 1,635 | -6.1 | -4.8 | -5.5 |
| 14 | 954 | 873 | 1,827 | 835 | 862 | 1,697 | -12.5 | -1.3 | -7.1 |
| 15 | 838 | 854 | 1,692 | 796 | 823 | 1,619 | -5.0 | -3.6 | -4.3 |
| 16 | 747 | 755 | 1,502 | 689 | 672 | 1,361 | -7.8 | -11.0 | -9.4 |
| 17 | 721 | 665 | 1,386 | 598 | 645 | 1,243 | -17.1 | -3.0 | -10.3 |
| 18 | 443 | 402 | 845 | 368 | 328 | 696 | -16.9 | -18.4 | -17.6 |
| 19 | 207 | 236 | 443 | 167 | 184 | 351 | -19.3 | -22.0 | -20.8 |
| 20+ | 817 | 1,632 | 2,449 | 1,082 | 2,246 | 3,328 | 32.4 | 37.6 | 35.9 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 4-2 School Attendance by Age, 2001 & 2012

| Age Group | 2001 | | | 2012 | | | 2001-2012 Change percent | | |
|------------|-------|--------|--------------|-------|--------|--------------|--------------------------|--------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| 3 | 588 | 603 | 1,191 | 601 | 610 | 1,211 | 2.2 | 1.2 | 1.7 |
| 4 | 837 | 808 | 1,645 | 732 | 771 | 1,503 | -12.5 | -4.6 | -8.6 |
| 5 | 1,047 | 1,042 | 2,089 | 812 | 834 | 1,646 | -22.4 | -20.0 | -21.2 |
| 6 | 1,255 | 1,183 | 2,438 | 805 | 753 | 1,558 | -35.9 | -36.3 | -36.1 |
| 7 | 1,105 | 1,105 | 2,210 | 887 | 813 | 1,700 | -19.7 | -26.4 | -23.1 |
| 8 | 1,081 | 1,140 | 2,221 | 810 | 815 | 1,625 | -25.1 | -28.5 | -26.8 |
| 9 | 1,110 | 1,124 | 2,234 | 790 | 826 | 1,616 | -28.8 | -26.5 | -27.7 |
| 10 | 1,129 | 1,040 | 2,169 | 948 | 929 | 1,877 | -16.0 | -10.7 | -13.5 |
| 11 | 1,180 | 1,140 | 2,320 | 1,072 | 968 | 2,040 | -9.2 | -15.1 | -12.1 |
| 12 | 1,037 | 978 | 2,015 | 906 | 870 | 1,776 | -12.6 | -11.0 | -11.9 |
| 13 | 1,023 | 1,098 | 2,121 | 883 | 847 | 1,730 | -13.7 | -22.9 | -18.4 |
| 14 | 971 | 1,017 | 1,988 | 954 | 873 | 1,827 | -1.8 | -14.2 | -8.1 |
| 15 | 760 | 927 | 1,687 | 838 | 854 | 1,692 | 10.3 | -7.9 | 0.3 |
| 16 | 661 | 767 | 1,428 | 747 | 755 | 1,502 | 13.0 | -1.6 | 5.2 |
| 17 | 510 | 673 | 1,183 | 721 | 665 | 1,386 | 41.4 | -1.2 | 17.2 |
| 18 | 323 | 496 | 819 | 443 | 402 | 845 | 37.2 | -19.0 | 3.2 |
| 19 | 169 | 242 | 411 | 207 | 236 | 443 | 22.5 | -2.5 | 7.8 |
| 20+ | 448 | 828 | 1,276 | 817 | 1,632 | 2,449 | 82.4 | 97.1 | 91.9 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

School attendance among young children aged 3-4 years is especially significant for early childhood development and later educational outcomes. Data from Tables 4-3 through 4-5 show marked declines in both the absolute number and the proportion attending school. In 2001, 2,836 children in this age group were attending school; by 2012, this had fallen to 2,714, and by 2023, to 2,115. Proportionally, attendance rates among children 3-4 years decreased across nearly all census divisions, with particularly sharp contractions in areas such as Kingstown, Marriaqua, and the Grenadines. These patterns highlight uneven access to early childhood education, a concern given the importance of pre-primary participation for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4. Strengthening early childhood access, therefore, remains a critical priority for sustaining educational progress across the life course.

The distribution of students across census divisions also points to geographic disparities in education. For example, in 2012, Calliaqua recorded the highest number of children aged 3-4 years in school (566), while in 2023 it remained the largest contributor (431), though still showing a decline of 24 percent. Smaller divisions such as Sandy Bay and the Southern Grenadines consistently registered the lowest numbers, underscoring challenges in rural and remote areas where educational infrastructure and access may be limited.

Table 4-3 Population 3 to 4 Years by Census Division and School Attendance, 2012 & 2023

| Census Division | 2012 | | | | 2023 | | |
|----------------------|--------------|---------------|------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Attending | Not Attending | Not Stated | Total | Attending | Not Attending | Total |
| Kingstown | 297 | 60 | 20 | 377 | 205 | 10 | 215 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 362 | 89 | 38 | 489 | 303 | 49 | 352 |
| Calliaqua | 566 | 137 | 57 | 760 | 431 | 100 | 531 |
| Marriaqua | 197 | 24 | 25 | 246 | 140 | 27 | 167 |
| Bridgetown | 145 | 56 | 17 | 218 | 123 | 19 | 142 |
| Colonarie | 167 | 53 | 8 | 228 | 157 | 11 | 168 |
| Georgetown | 215 | 61 | 4 | 280 | 182 | 25 | 207 |
| Sandy Bay | 62 | 31 | 9 | 102 | 47 | 11 | 58 |
| Layou | 149 | 22 | 30 | 201 | 129 | 24 | 153 |
| Barrouallie | 138 | 53 | 10 | 201 | 110 | 15 | 125 |
| Chateaubelair | 171 | 46 | 2 | 219 | 115 | 10 | 125 |
| Northern Grenadines | 150 | 40 | 8 | 198 | 103 | 3 | 106 |
| Southern Grenadines | 95 | 15 | 17 | 127 | 70 | 8 | 78 |
| Total | 2,714 | 687 | 245 | 3,646 | 2,115 | 312 | 2,427 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 4-4 Proportion of Population 3 to 4 Years by Census Division and School Attendance, 2012 & 2023

| Census Division | 2012 | | | | 2023 | | |
|----------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Attending | Not Attending | Not Stated | Total | Attending | Not Attending | Total |
| Kingstown | 10.9 | 8.7 | 8.2 | 10.3 | 9.7 | 3.2 | 8.9 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 13.3 | 13.0 | 15.5 | 13.4 | 14.3 | 15.7 | 14.5 |
| Calliaqua | 20.9 | 19.9 | 23.3 | 20.8 | 20.4 | 32.1 | 21.9 |
| Marriaqua | 7.3 | 3.5 | 10.2 | 6.7 | 6.6 | 8.7 | 6.9 |
| Bridgetown | 5.3 | 8.2 | 6.9 | 6.0 | 5.8 | 6.1 | 5.9 |
| Colonarie | 6.2 | 7.7 | 3.3 | 6.3 | 7.4 | 3.5 | 6.9 |
| Georgetown | 7.9 | 8.9 | 1.6 | 7.7 | 8.6 | 8.0 | 8.5 |
| Sandy Bay | 2.3 | 4.5 | 3.7 | 2.8 | 2.2 | 3.5 | 2.4 |
| Layou | 5.5 | 3.2 | 12.2 | 5.5 | 6.1 | 7.7 | 6.3 |
| Barrouallie | 5.1 | 7.7 | 4.1 | 5.5 | 5.2 | 4.8 | 5.2 |
| Chateaubelair | 6.3 | 6.7 | 0.8 | 6.0 | 5.4 | 3.2 | 5.2 |
| Northern Grenadines | 5.5 | 5.8 | 3.3 | 5.4 | 4.9 | 1.0 | 4.4 |
| Southern Grenadines | 3.5 | 2.2 | 6.9 | 3.5 | 3.3 | 2.6 | 3.2 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 4-5 Population 3 to 4 Years by Census Division and School Attendance, 2001 & 2012

| Census Division | 2001 | | | | 2012 | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|------------|--------------|
| | Attending | Not Attending | Not Stated | Total | Attending | Not Attending | Not Stated | Total |
| Kingstown | 346 | 128 | 1 | 475 | 297 | 60 | 20 | 377 |
| Kingstown Suburbs | 341 | 180 | 1 | 522 | 362 | 89 | 38 | 489 |
| Calliaqua | 556 | 255 | - | 811 | 566 | 137 | 57 | 760 |
| Marriaqua | 284 | 93 | - | 377 | 197 | 24 | 25 | 246 |
| Bridgetown | 181 | 99 | - | 280 | 145 | 56 | 17 | 218 |
| Colonarie | 194 | 67 | 1 | 262 | 167 | 53 | 8 | 228 |
| Georgetown | 192 | 71 | - | 263 | 215 | 61 | 4 | 280 |
| Sandy Bay | 86 | 39 | 1 | 126 | 62 | 31 | 9 | 102 |
| Layou | 143 | 98 | - | 241 | 149 | 22 | 30 | 201 |
| Barrouallie | 134 | 85 | - | 219 | 138 | 53 | 10 | 201 |
| Chateaubelair | 183 | 86 | - | 269 | 171 | 46 | 2 | 219 |
| North Grenadines | 105 | 49 | - | 154 | 150 | 40 | 8 | 198 |
| South Grenadines | 91 | 46 | 1 | 138 | 95 | 15 | 17 | 127 |
| Total | 2,836 | 1,296 | 5 | 4,137 | 2,714 | 687 | 245 | 3,646 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 4-6 Proportion of Population 3 to 4 Years by Census Division and School Attendance, 2001 & 2012

| Census Division | 2001 | | | | 2012 | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Attending | Not Attending | Not Stated | Total | Attending | Not Attending | Not Stated | Total |
| Kingstown | 12.2 | 9.9 | 20.0 | 11.5 | 10.9 | 8.7 | 8.2 | 10.3 |
| Kingstown Suburbs | 12.0 | 13.9 | 20.0 | 12.6 | 13.3 | 13.0 | 15.5 | 13.4 |
| Calliaqua | 19.6 | 19.7 | 0.0 | 19.6 | 20.9 | 19.9 | 23.3 | 20.8 |
| Marriaqua | 10.0 | 7.2 | 0.0 | 9.1 | 7.3 | 3.5 | 10.2 | 6.7 |
| Bridgetown | 6.4 | 7.6 | 0.0 | 6.8 | 5.3 | 8.2 | 6.9 | 6.0 |
| Colonarie | 6.8 | 5.2 | 20.0 | 6.3 | 6.2 | 7.7 | 3.3 | 6.3 |
| Georgetown | 6.8 | 5.5 | 0.0 | 6.4 | 7.9 | 8.9 | 1.6 | 7.7 |
| Sandy Bay | 3.0 | 3.0 | 20.0 | 3.0 | 2.3 | 4.5 | 3.7 | 2.8 |
| Layou | 5.0 | 7.6 | 0.0 | 5.8 | 5.5 | 3.2 | 12.2 | 5.5 |
| Barrouallie | 4.7 | 6.6 | 0.0 | 5.3 | 5.1 | 7.7 | 4.1 | 5.5 |
| Chateaubelair | 6.5 | 6.6 | 0.0 | 6.5 | 6.3 | 6.7 | 0.8 | 6.0 |
| North Grenadines | 3.7 | 3.8 | 0.0 | 3.7 | 5.5 | 5.8 | 3.3 | 5.4 |
| South Grenadines | 3.2 | 3.5 | 20.0 | 3.3 | 3.5 | 2.2 | 6.9 | 3.5 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Tables 4-7 to 4-10 present the distribution of the school-attending population by census division and type of institution in 2023 and 2012. In 2023, a total of 26,928 persons were attending school (Table 4-7).

The largest numbers were enrolled at the primary level (10,652), followed by secondary general (8,623). Early childhood enrolment, comprising daycare/nursery (808), preschool (2,142), and infant/kindergarten (556), totalled 3,506 students. Smaller numbers were recorded in special education (130), post primary/non-secondary technical or vocational (196), post-secondary A-Level (1,094), post-secondary professional/technical or vocational (619), post-secondary UWI/other (929), adult education (143), and online/distance learning (737). These figures indicate that school attendance in 2023 remained concentrated at the primary and secondary levels.

In 2012, the total school-attending population was 28,426 (Table 4-9), which was 1,498 higher than in 2023. As in 2023, the largest enrolment was at the primary level (11,243), followed by secondary school (8,481). Pre-primary enrolment totalled 2,335, while community college (1,020) and university (1,114) accounted for smaller but still important shares. Technical and professional institutions remained comparatively small, with 443 students in technical/vocational education and 139 in professional education. Overall, the comparison between 2012 and 2023 shows a modest decline in the school-attending population, consistent with the broader demographic contraction observed during the intercensal period.

The geographic distribution of the school-attending population remained concentrated in a few major census divisions in both census years. In 2023, Calliaqua recorded the largest number of students, with 6,267 persons, representing 23.3 percent of all persons attending school (Tables 4-7 and 4-8). This was followed by the Suburbs of Kingstown, with 4,326 students (16.1 percent), and Kingstown, with 2,481 students (9.2 percent). In 2012, the same pattern was evident. Calliaqua had the highest number of students, with 6,280 persons, or 22.1 percent of the total, followed by the Suburbs of Kingstown with 3,788 (13.3 percent) and Kingstown with 3,208 (11.3 percent) (Tables 4-9 and 4-10). By contrast, Sandy Bay, the Northern Grenadines, and the Southern Grenadines accounted for relatively small shares of the student population in both years.

The percentage distributions further highlight the concentration of educational participation across divisions and institution types. In 2023, Calliaqua accounted for the largest shares in many categories, including daycare/nursery (26.9 percent), preschool (21.5 percent), infant/kindergarten (25.4 percent), primary (20.7 percent), and secondary general (22.5 percent) (Table 4-8). It also recorded particularly high shares in post-secondary UWI/other (39.5 percent) and online/distance learning (35.0 percent). The Suburbs of Kingstown accounted for the largest share of adult education (29.4 percent), while the Northern Grenadines had the largest share of special education (23.1 percent). In 2012, Calliaqua also dominated most categories, accounting for 22.0 percent of pre-primary enrolment, 20.6 percent of primary school enrolment, 21.4 percent of secondary school enrolment, 23.7 percent of technical/vocational education enrolment, 26.2 percent of community college enrolment, and 36.1 percent of university enrolment (Table 4-10). These results confirm the strong concentration of educational participation in the larger and more urbanized census divisions.

Overall, the data in Tables 4-7 to 4-10 show that although the total school-attending population declined between 2012 and 2023, the overall structure of enrolment remained broadly similar. Primary and secondary education continued to account for the majority of students, while Calliaqua and the Suburbs of Kingstown remained the main centres of educational participation. These patterns mirror the broader

population distribution of the country and suggest that educational demand continues to be concentrated in the larger mainland divisions.

Table 4-7 Total Population Attending School by Census Division and Type of Institution, 2023

| Census Division | Daycare/ Nursery | Preschool | Infant/ Kindergarten | Primary | Special Education | Post Primary (Non- Secondary Tech/Voc) | Secondary (General) | Home Schooling (Primary) | Home Schooling (Secondary) | Post Secondary - A Level | Post Secondary - Professional Tech/Voc | Post Secondary- UWI/other | Adult Education | Online/ Distance learning | Other (specify) | Not Stated | Total |
|----------------------|---------------------|--------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Kingstown | 67 | 220 | 51 | 982 | 5 | 10 | 776 | - | 1 | 110 | 54 | 94 | 11 | 81 | 16 | 3 | 2,481 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 115 | 310 | 100 | 1,704 | 25 | 34 | 1,365 | - | - | 170 | 114 | 152 | 42 | 146 | 45 | 4 | 4,326 |
| Calliaqua | 217 | 461 | 141 | 2,210 | 27 | 52 | 1,944 | 3 | 5 | 316 | 155 | 367 | 32 | 258 | 57 | 22 | 6,267 |
| Marriaqua | 35 | 117 | 40 | 778 | 5 | 9 | 605 | - | - | 81 | 48 | 59 | 10 | 60 | 16 | 2 | 1,865 |
| Bridgetown | 52 | 102 | 13 | 656 | 8 | 14 | 514 | - | 1 | 44 | 42 | 44 | 10 | 36 | 9 | 1 | 1,546 |
| Colonarie | 57 | 139 | 39 | 685 | 9 | 14 | 558 | - | 2 | 60 | 48 | 29 | 6 | 42 | 13 | - | 1,701 |
| Georgetown | 57 | 182 | 25 | 794 | 10 | 10 | 583 | - | - | 54 | 27 | 33 | 7 | 12 | 23 | 3 | 1,820 |
| Sandy Bay | 3 | 46 | 21 | 266 | 1 | 3 | 210 | - | - | 24 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 4 | - | 605 |
| Layou | 62 | 119 | 38 | 603 | 2 | 9 | 480 | - | 2 | 58 | 31 | 72 | 5 | 34 | 29 | 2 | 1,546 |
| Barrouallie | 36 | 129 | 34 | 618 | 2 | 12 | 500 | - | - | 68 | 36 | 20 | 6 | 17 | 25 | - | 1,503 |
| Chateaubelair | 27 | 108 | 32 | 555 | 5 | 16 | 440 | 1 | 1 | 59 | 24 | 27 | 5 | 21 | 4 | 1 | 1,326 |
| Northern Grenadines | 34 | 126 | 13 | 430 | 30 | 13 | 376 | - | - | 43 | 33 | 24 | - | 10 | - | - | 1,132 |
| Southern Grenadines | 46 | 83 | 9 | 371 | 1 | - | 272 | - | 1 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 2 | 1 | 810 |
| Total | 808 | 2,142 | 556 | 10,652 | 130 | 196 | 8,623 | 4 | 13 | 1,094 | 619 | 929 | 143 | 737 | 243 | 39 | 26,928 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 4-8 Percentage Population Attending School by Census Division and Type of Institution, 2023

| Census Division | Daycare/ Nursery | Preschool | Infant/ Kindergarten | Primary | Special Education | Post Primary (Non- Secondary Tech/Voc) | Secondary (General) | Home Schooling (Primary) | Home Schooling (Secondary) | Post Secondary - A Level | Post Secondary - Professional Tech/Voc | Post Secondary- UWI/other | Adult Education | Online/ Distance learning | Other (specify) | Not Stated | Total |
|----------------------|---------------------|------------|-------------------------|------------|----------------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|------------|
| Kingstown | 8.3 | 10.3 | 9.2 | 9.2 | 3.8 | 5.1 | 9.0 | 0.0 | 7.7 | 10.1 | 8.7 | 10.1 | 7.7 | 11.0 | 6.6 | 7.7 | 9.2 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 14.2 | 14.5 | 18.0 | 16.0 | 19.2 | 17.3 | 15.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 15.5 | 18.4 | 16.4 | 29.4 | 19.8 | 18.5 | 10.3 | 16.1 |
| Calliaqua | 26.9 | 21.5 | 25.4 | 20.7 | 20.8 | 26.5 | 22.5 | 75.0 | 38.5 | 28.9 | 25.0 | 39.5 | 22.4 | 35.0 | 23.5 | 56.4 | 23.3 |
| Marriaqua | 4.3 | 5.5 | 7.2 | 7.3 | 3.8 | 4.6 | 7.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 7.4 | 7.8 | 6.4 | 7.0 | 8.1 | 6.6 | 5.1 | 6.9 |
| Bridgetown | 6.4 | 4.8 | 2.3 | 6.2 | 6.2 | 7.1 | 6.0 | 0.0 | 7.7 | 4.0 | 6.8 | 4.7 | 7.0 | 4.9 | 3.7 | 2.6 | 5.7 |
| Colonarie | 7.1 | 6.5 | 7.0 | 6.4 | 6.9 | 7.1 | 6.5 | 0.0 | 15.4 | 5.5 | 7.8 | 3.1 | 4.2 | 5.7 | 5.3 | 0.0 | 6.3 |
| Georgetown | 7.1 | 8.5 | 4.5 | 7.5 | 7.7 | 5.1 | 6.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 4.9 | 4.4 | 3.6 | 4.9 | 1.6 | 9.5 | 7.7 | 6.8 |
| Sandy Bay | 0.4 | 2.1 | 3.8 | 2.5 | 0.8 | 1.5 | 2.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2.2 | 1.0 | 0.6 | 4.2 | 1.2 | 1.6 | 0.0 | 2.2 |
| Layou | 7.7 | 5.6 | 6.8 | 5.7 | 1.5 | 4.6 | 5.6 | 0.0 | 15.4 | 5.3 | 5.0 | 7.8 | 3.5 | 4.6 | 11.9 | 5.1 | 5.7 |
| Barrouallie | 4.5 | 6.0 | 6.1 | 5.8 | 1.5 | 6.1 | 5.8 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6.2 | 5.8 | 2.2 | 4.2 | 2.3 | 10.3 | 0.0 | 5.6 |
| Chateaubelair | 3.3 | 5.0 | 5.8 | 5.2 | 3.8 | 8.2 | 5.1 | 25.0 | 7.7 | 5.4 | 3.9 | 2.9 | 3.5 | 2.8 | 1.6 | 2.6 | 4.9 |
| Northern Grenadines | 4.2 | 5.9 | 2.3 | 4.0 | 23.1 | 6.6 | 4.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 3.9 | 5.3 | 2.6 | 0.0 | 1.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 4.2 |
| Southern Grenadines | 5.7 | 3.9 | 1.6 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.0 | 3.2 | 0.0 | 7.7 | 0.6 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 2.1 | 1.5 | 0.8 | 2.6 | 3.0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 4-9 Total Population Attending School by Census Division and Type of Institution, 2012

| Census Division | Pre-Primary | Special Education | Primary School | Secondary | Technical/Vocational | Professional | Community College | University | Adult Education | Other | Not Stated | Total |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|------------|--------------|---------------|
| Kingstown | 233 | 13 | 1,161 | 822 | 46 | 21 | 139 | 174 | 24 | 57 | 518 | 3,208 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 268 | 10 | 1,456 | 1,068 | 66 | 18 | 146 | 147 | 28 | 31 | 550 | 3,788 |
| Calliaqua | 513 | 20 | 2,317 | 1,818 | 105 | 48 | 267 | 402 | 51 | 128 | 611 | 6,280 |
| Marriaqua | 161 | 11 | 858 | 704 | 43 | 12 | 79 | 86 | 14 | 12 | 92 | 2,072 |
| Bridgetown | 117 | 7 | 656 | 545 | 14 | 2 | 77 | 57 | 14 | 21 | 203 | 1,713 |
| Colonarie | 164 | 5 | 773 | 593 | 28 | 8 | 58 | 31 | 9 | 6 | 122 | 1,797 |
| Georgetown | 186 | 12 | 749 | 578 | 13 | 1 | 67 | 53 | 12 | 5 | 147 | 1,823 |
| Sandy Bay | 59 | 2 | 331 | 205 | 9 | - | 6 | 7 | 20 | 9 | 31 | 679 |
| Layou | 133 | 8 | 680 | 474 | 38 | 11 | 60 | 57 | 5 | 19 | 155 | 1,640 |
| Barrouallie | 126 | 1 | 687 | 486 | 29 | 7 | 34 | 39 | 7 | 5 | 173 | 1,594 |
| Chateaubelair | 148 | 1 | 661 | 550 | 18 | 6 | 45 | 24 | 5 | 4 | 128 | 1,590 |
| Northern Grenadines | 147 | 21 | 549 | 405 | 20 | 4 | 28 | 24 | 5 | 13 | 151 | 1,367 |
| Southern Grenadines | 80 | 2 | 365 | 233 | 14 | 1 | 14 | 13 | 2 | 12 | 139 | 875 |
| Total | 2,335 | 113 | 11,243 | 8,481 | 443 | 139 | 1,020 | 1,114 | 196 | 322 | 3,020 | 28,426 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 4-10 Percentage Population Attending School by Census Division and Type of Institution, 2012

| Census Division | Pre-Primary | Special Education | Primary School | Secondary | Technical/Vocational | Professional | Community College | University | Adult Education | Other | Not Stated | Total |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------------|----------------|------------|----------------------|--------------|-------------------|------------|-----------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| Kingstown | 10.0 | 11.5 | 10.3 | 9.7 | 10.4 | 15.1 | 13.6 | 15.6 | 12.2 | 17.7 | 17.2 | 11.3 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 11.5 | 8.8 | 13.0 | 12.6 | 14.9 | 12.9 | 14.3 | 13.2 | 14.3 | 9.6 | 18.2 | 13.3 |
| Calliaqua | 22.0 | 17.7 | 20.6 | 21.4 | 23.7 | 34.5 | 26.2 | 36.1 | 26.0 | 39.8 | 20.2 | 22.1 |
| Marriaqua | 6.9 | 9.7 | 7.6 | 8.3 | 9.7 | 8.6 | 7.7 | 7.7 | 7.1 | 3.7 | 3.0 | 7.3 |
| Bridgetown | 5.0 | 6.2 | 5.8 | 6.4 | 3.2 | 1.4 | 7.5 | 5.1 | 7.1 | 6.5 | 6.7 | 6.0 |
| Colonarie | 7.0 | 4.4 | 6.9 | 7.0 | 6.3 | 5.8 | 5.7 | 2.8 | 4.6 | 1.9 | 4.0 | 6.3 |
| Georgetown | 8.0 | 10.6 | 6.7 | 6.8 | 2.9 | 0.7 | 6.6 | 4.8 | 6.1 | 1.6 | 4.9 | 6.4 |
| Sandy Bay | 2.5 | 1.8 | 2.9 | 2.4 | 2.0 | 0.0 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 10.2 | 2.8 | 1.0 | 2.4 |
| Layou | 5.7 | 7.1 | 6.0 | 5.6 | 8.6 | 7.9 | 5.9 | 5.1 | 2.6 | 5.9 | 5.1 | 5.8 |
| Barrouallie | 5.4 | 0.9 | 6.1 | 5.7 | 6.5 | 5.0 | 3.3 | 3.5 | 3.6 | 1.6 | 5.7 | 5.6 |
| Chateaubelair | 6.3 | 0.9 | 5.9 | 6.5 | 4.1 | 4.3 | 4.4 | 2.2 | 2.6 | 1.2 | 4.2 | 5.6 |
| Northern Grenadines | 6.3 | 18.6 | 4.9 | 4.8 | 4.5 | 2.9 | 2.7 | 2.2 | 2.6 | 4.0 | 5.0 | 4.8 |
| Southern Grenadines | 3.4 | 1.8 | 3.2 | 2.7 | 3.2 | 0.7 | 1.4 | 1.2 | 1.0 | 3.7 | 4.6 | 3.1 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

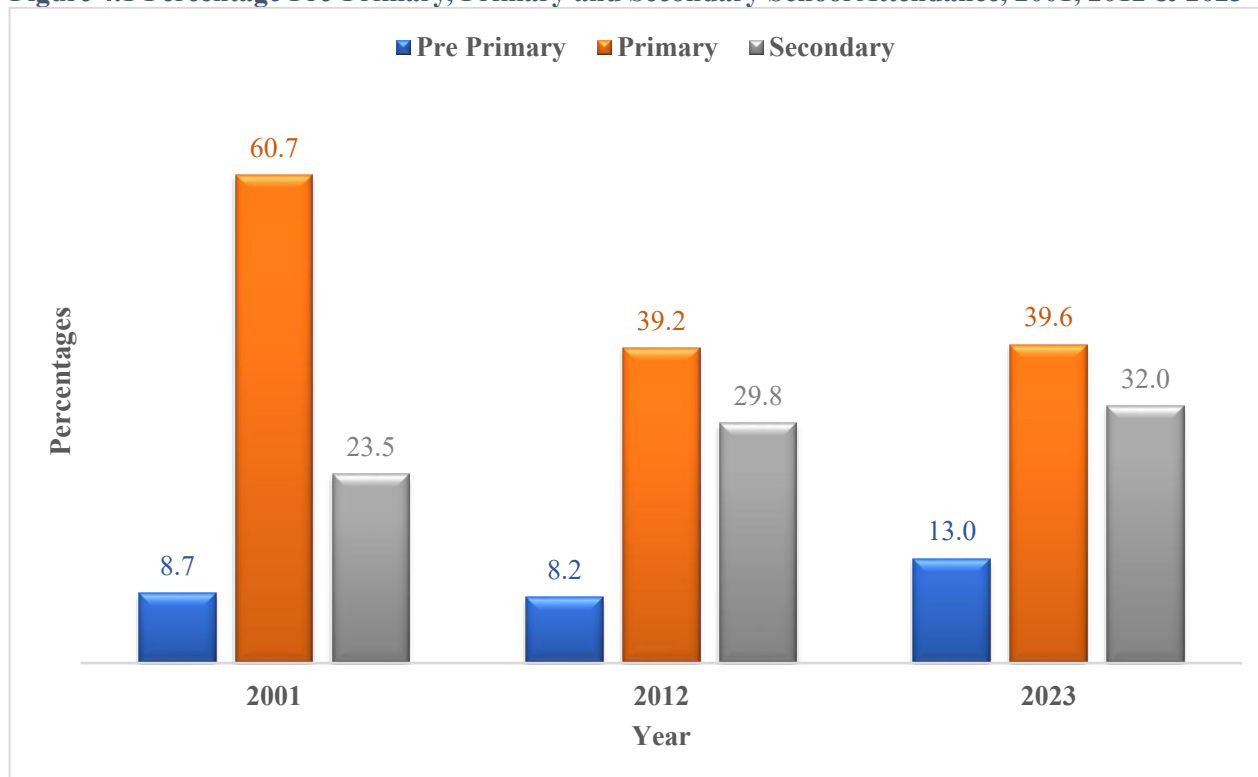
4.3 School Attending Population by Type of Educational Institution

4.3.1 Pre-Primary Education

Pre-primary education provides the foundation for early cognitive, social, and emotional development, ensuring children are better prepared for entry into primary school. Census results show that participation at this level, while modest compared to higher levels, remains significant for educational progression. In 2012, 2,335 children aged 3-5 years were enrolled in pre-primary institutions, representing 8.2 percent of the population aged three years and older (Table 4-12). By 2023, this number fell slightly to 2,142 children, or 8.0 percent of the corresponding population (Table 4-11). The contraction reflects smaller cohort sizes due to fertility decline and highlights persistent disparities in access across communities.

The 2023 data provide further detail by distinguishing between daycare/nursery, preschools, and infant/kindergarten programs. Of the 3,506 children enrolled, preschools absorbed the largest share with 2,142 children, while daycare/nursery accounted for 808 and infant/kindergarten for 556. This distribution underscores the dominant role of preschools in early childhood learning, but also reflects household choices and structural constraints such as affordability and the uneven availability of facilities.

Figure 4.1 Percentage Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary School Attendance, 2001, 2012 & 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Gender parity in pre-primary participation has remained consistent. In both 2012 and 2023, boys and girls enrolled in nearly equal numbers, showing no significant gender-based disparities in access. This suggests that the challenge lies less in gender equity and more in ensuring adequate coverage and

participation rates, particularly for children from smaller census divisions and rural communities where access to early childhood institutions is often limited.

Table 4-11 Population 3 Years or Older by Type of Educational Institution and Sex, 2023

| Educational Institution | Male | | Female | | Total | |
|--|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|-------------|
| | Count | Percent | Count | Percent | Count | Percent |
| Daycare/Nursery | 412 | 3.2 | 396 | 2.8 | 808 | 3.0 |
| Preschool | 1,067 | 8.2 | 1,075 | 7.7 | 2,142 | 8.0 |
| Infant/Kindergarten | 269 | 2.1 | 287 | 2.1 | 556 | 2.1 |
| Primary | 5,462 | 42.2 | 5,190 | 37.1 | 10,652 | 39.6 |
| Special Education | 93 | 0.7 | 37 | 0.3 | 130 | 0.5 |
| Post Primary (Non-Secondary Tech/Voc) | 100 | 0.8 | 96 | 0.7 | 196 | 0.7 |
| Secondary (General) | 4,321 | 33.4 | 4,302 | 30.8 | 8,623 | 32.0 |
| Home Schooling (Primary) | 1 | 0.0 | 3 | 0.0 | 4 | 0.0 |
| Home Schooling (Secondary) | 6 | 0.0 | 7 | 0.1 | 13 | 0.0 |
| Post Secondary - A Level | 444 | 3.4 | 650 | 4.6 | 1,094 | 4.1 |
| Post Secondary - Professional Tech/Voc | 247 | 1.9 | 372 | 2.7 | 619 | 2.3 |
| Post Secondary - UWI/other | 258 | 2.0 | 671 | 4.8 | 929 | 3.4 |
| Adult Education | 35 | 0.3 | 108 | 0.8 | 143 | 0.5 |
| Online/Distance learning | 152 | 1.2 | 585 | 4.2 | 737 | 2.7 |
| Other (specify) | 56 | 0.4 | 187 | 1.3 | 243 | 0.9 |
| Not Stated | 19 | 0.1 | 20 | 0.1 | 39 | 0.1 |
| Total | 12,942 | 100 | 13,986 | 100 | 26,928 | 100 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 4-12 Population 3 Years or Older by Type of Educational Institution and Sex, 2012

| Educational Institution | Male | | Female | | Total | |
|-------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|-------------|
| | Count | Percent | Count | Percent | Count | Percent |
| Pre-Primary | 1,150 | 8.2 | 1,185 | 8.2 | 2,335 | 8.2 |
| Special Education | 80 | 0.6 | 33 | 0.2 | 113 | 0.4 |
| Primary School | 5,776 | 41.3 | 5,467 | 37.8 | 11,243 | 39.6 |
| Secondary | 4,315 | 30.9 | 4,166 | 28.8 | 8,481 | 29.8 |
| Technical/Vocational | 219 | 1.6 | 224 | 1.5 | 443 | 1.6 |
| Professional | 29 | 0.2 | 110 | 0.8 | 139 | 0.5 |
| Community College | 362 | 2.6 | 658 | 4.6 | 1,020 | 3.6 |
| University | 368 | 2.6 | 746 | 5.2 | 1,114 | 3.9 |
| Adult Education | 43 | 0.3 | 153 | 1.1 | 196 | 0.7 |
| Other | 111 | 0.8 | 211 | 1.5 | 322 | 1.1 |
| Not Stated | 1,520 | 10.9 | 1,500 | 10.4 | 3,020 | 10.6 |
| Total | 13,973 | 100 | 14,452 | 100 | 28,425 | 100 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Geographic differences, however, remain more pronounced. Larger divisions such as Kingstown and Calliaqua reported the highest numbers of children in pre-primary education, while smaller or more remote divisions like Sandy Bay and the Grenadines recorded consistently lower figures. These disparities highlight the structural inequalities in access to early learning opportunities, a concern given the emphasis placed on early childhood education under Sustainable Development Goal 4.

4.3.2 Primary Education

Primary education remains the largest segment of the education system in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, reflecting its role as the foundational stage of compulsory schooling. In 2012, a total of 11,243 children were enrolled at this level, representing 39.6 percent of the population aged three years and older (Table 4-12). By 2023, the absolute number fell to 10,652, maintaining an identical share of 39.6 percent (Table 4-11). This consistency in proportional terms, despite a decline of nearly 600 pupils, mirrors the broader demographic contraction in the child population, particularly among younger age cohorts. The figures suggest that while fertility decline has reduced the number of children entering primary school, participation rates remain stable and nearly universal.

School attendance at the primary level has remained fairly balanced by sex across census years. In 2012, 5,776 males (51.4 percent) and 5,467 females (48.6 percent) were enrolled in primary school, while in 2023 the figures stood at 5,462 males (51.3 percent) and 5,190 females (48.7 percent), as shown in Tables 4-11 and 4-12. This consistency highlights a sustained gender parity in access to primary education, suggesting that both boys and girls are equally benefiting from opportunities at this level.

Although the share of primary school enrollment remained stable, the declining absolute numbers point to structural challenges. Fewer students mean reduced demand in some divisions, which can affect the viability of smaller schools, particularly in rural areas such as Sandy Bay, Chateaubelair, and the Grenadines. Conversely, larger urban and peri-urban divisions such as Calliaqua and the Suburbs of Kingstown continue to absorb the largest numbers of primary students, thereby maintaining pressure on facilities in those areas.

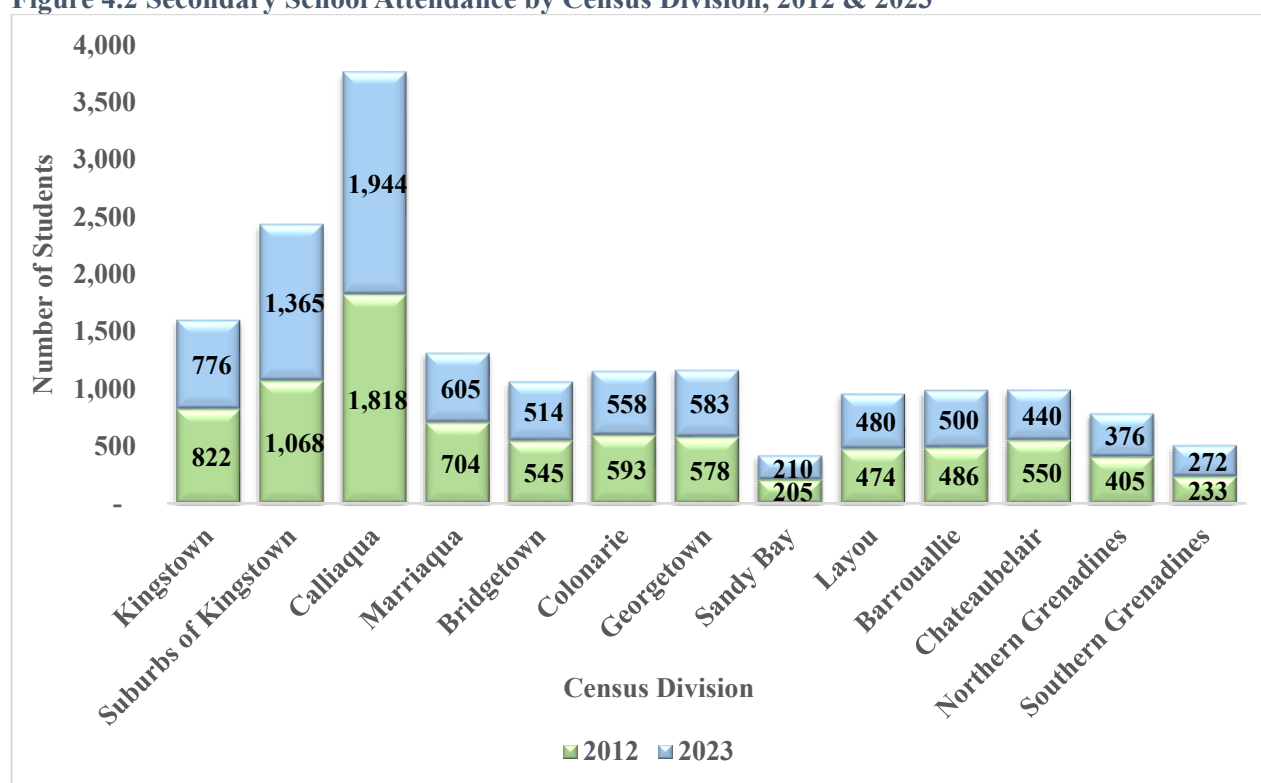
4.3.3 Secondary Education

Secondary education continues to play a central role in the educational profile of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, reflecting both the transition from compulsory primary schooling and the country's ongoing investment in expanding access at this level. According to the 2012 Population and Housing Census Report, universal access to secondary education was achieved in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in 2005. Entry into secondary school follows the completion of the Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment (CPEA), which replaced the Common Entrance Examination (CEE). At the end of this cycle, students sit the Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examination, which provides the foundation for transition into post-secondary or tertiary institutions.

Between 2012 and 2023, the number of persons enrolled in secondary schools increased slightly from 8,481 to 8,623, even as the overall school-aged population contracted. This modest growth suggests stronger retention and progression into secondary education, consistent with global trends toward near-universal participation in lower secondary education.

Sex differentials remain minimal, with males and females showing nearly identical attendance levels across both years. In 2012, 4,315 males and 4,166 females were enrolled (Table 4-12), while in 2023 enrollment reached 4,321 males and 4,302 females (Table 4-11). This balance points to sustained gender parity at the secondary level, reinforcing earlier patterns observed in primary schooling. Importantly, this parity contrasts with tertiary-level enrollment, where women tend to outnumber men, as discussed later in Section 4.4.

Figure 4.2 Secondary School Attendance by Census Division, 2012 & 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Geographic differences in secondary school attendance, however, are more pronounced. Figure 4.2 shows that in 2012, larger divisions such as Calliaqua, the Suburbs of Kingstown, and Georgetown accounted for the highest numbers of secondary students. By 2023, these areas continued to dominate enrollment but registered slight declines in absolute numbers, reflecting broader population contraction. Rural and remote divisions, particularly Sandy Bay, the Grenadines, and Chateaubelair, maintained lower attendance levels, highlighting persistent disparities in access to secondary education by location.

The census data confirm that secondary education remains a cornerstone of the national education system, with strong enrollment levels reflecting the policy of universal access. Continued attention to quality, equity, and progression into higher education will be essential to ensure that gains in access translate into improved outcomes for all students.

4.3.4 Post Secondary Education

Post-secondary education has expanded between 2012 and 2023, reflecting growing opportunities for advanced learning. In 2012, approximately 9.6 percent of persons aged 3 years and older were enrolled in post-secondary institutions, including community colleges (3.6 percent), universities (3.9 percent), technical/vocational programmes (1.6 percent), and professional courses (0.5 percent) (Table 4-12). By 2023, the categories became more diversified, with enrollment recorded in A-Levels (4.1 percent), professional technical/vocational programmes (2.3 percent), UWI/other universities (3.4 percent), and online/distance learning (2.7 percent) (Table 4-11). This expansion, particularly the emergence of distance learning, demonstrates how post-secondary education is adapting to changing demands and study modalities.

Gender differences are notable across the post-secondary landscape. Females consistently outnumber males in higher education participation, particularly at university and professional levels. In 2023, for example, 671 females were enrolled in university-level programmes compared to only 258 males, and women were also more likely to be engaged in distance and continuing education. This gendered advantage mirrors regional and global patterns of female outperformance in post-secondary and tertiary education, with implications for women's growing role in the skilled labor force.

4.3.5 Special Education

Special education continues to serve a very small share of the population, though the numbers increased slightly over the intercensal period. In 2012, 113 persons (0.4 percent) reported enrollment in special education institutions (Table 4-12). By 2023, this number rose to 130 persons (0.5 percent), with males continuing to outnumber females (93 versus 37) (Table 4-11). This male dominance is consistent with global evidence that boys are more frequently diagnosed with learning and developmental disabilities.

The persistence of low enrollment, however, points to broader structural challenges. Limited resources, social stigma, and inadequate institutional capacity may contribute to underrepresentation in special education programmes, especially among girls. This suggests that while policy efforts are slowly improving access, greater investment and gender-sensitive strategies are needed to ensure equitable educational opportunities for both boys and girls with disabilities across Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

4.3.6 Adult and Continuing Education

Adult and continuing education remains a limited but evolving component of the education system. In 2012, only 196 persons (0.7 percent) reported participation in adult education programmes (Table 4-12).

By 2023, this number had declined to 143 persons (0.5 percent) (Table 4-11). However, the 2023 Census also introduced a new category for online/distance learning, with 737 persons (2.7 percent) reporting enrollment. This suggests a shift in how continuing education is being accessed, with digital platforms playing an increasingly important role in broadening opportunities for lifelong learning.

Gender patterns again show female dominance in participation. In 2023, 585 females were enrolled in online/distance education compared to 152 males, and women also outnumbered men in professional post-secondary programmes (372 as compared to 247). These results confirm that women are driving much of the expansion in adult and continuing education, positioning themselves to benefit more strongly from lifelong learning opportunities. This reflects both a demand for upskilling and a response to labor market conditions where women increasingly need formal qualifications to secure professional advancement.

4.4 Highest Level of Education and Highest Certificate Attained

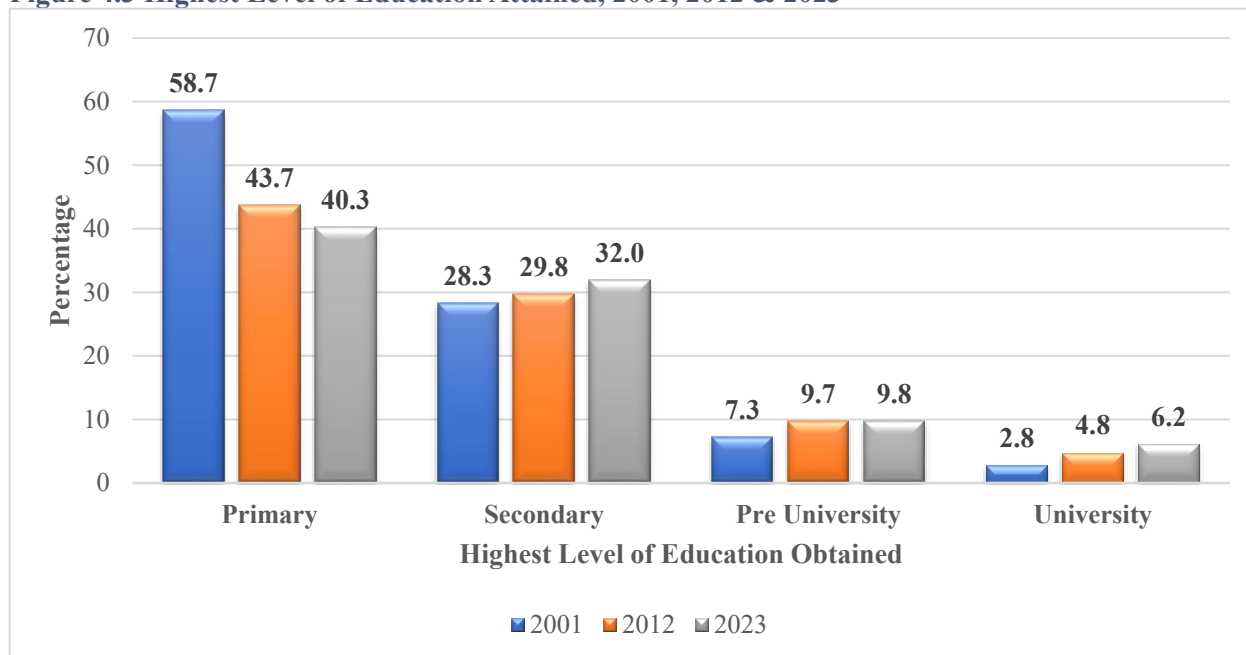
Educational attainment has shown notable shifts across intercensal periods, reflecting improvements in access to schooling and opportunities for higher education. In 2001, the majority of the population reported primary education as their highest level attained (58.7 percent). By 2012, this share had declined to 43.7 percent and further to 40.3 percent in 2023, suggesting that more Vincentians are advancing beyond the primary level. At the same time, the proportion attaining secondary education increased steadily, from 28.3 percent in 2001 to 32.0 percent in 2023, consolidating its role as the modal level of attainment. Smaller but important gains were also recorded at the pre-university and university levels, underscoring the gradual expansion of tertiary education in the country.

Tables 4-13 and 4-14 provide additional insight by detailing the highest certificates, diplomas, and degrees earned across the three census rounds. A key finding is the sharp reduction in the proportion of the population reporting “none,” which fell from 74.1 percent in 2001 to 22.7 percent in 2023. This signals a substantial expansion in formal certification, with more persons leaving the education system equipped with recognized qualifications. In particular, CXC General and CSEC passes became the most commonly reported certifications by 2023 (18.2 percent), while associate and bachelor’s degrees also gained prominence.

The expansion of post-secondary and tertiary attainment is further highlighted by the doubling of bachelor’s degree holders between 2012 and 2023 (from 2.5 percent to 4.4 percent). Associate degree attainment also increased significantly, from just 1.2 percent in 2012 to 6.1 percent in 2023. Though postgraduate qualifications remain relatively limited, the census shows incremental growth in both master’s and doctoral degrees, suggesting a slowly diversifying and deepening skills base.

Gender patterns remain central to these developments. Women continue to outpace men in tertiary education, particularly in university and professional qualifications. In 2023, females accounted for a larger share of associate and bachelor’s degree holders, as well as those completing postgraduate study. These outcomes mirror regional trends of female outperformance in educational attainment and carry important implications for labor force participation, earnings, and gender equity in the future.

Figure 4.3 Highest Level of Education Attained, 2001, 2012 & 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 4 13 Highest Certificate, Diploma or Degree Earned, 2023

| Highest Certificate, Diploma or Degree Earned | Count | percent |
|---|---------------|------------|
| Common Entrance | 10,111 | 11.1 |
| CPEA | 9,715 | 10.6 |
| School Leaving (Standard Six or Seven) | 10,113 | 11.1 |
| Cambridge School Certificate | 109 | 0.1 |
| CXC Basic | 3,582 | 3.9 |
| CCSLC | 196 | 0.2 |
| GCE 'O' Levels, CXC General, CSEC | 16,595 | 18.2 |
| High School Certificate | 652 | 0.7 |
| GCE 'A' Levels, CAPE | 2,850 | 3.1 |
| Associate Degree | 5,551 | 6.1 |
| College Certificate | 1,992 | 2.2 |
| College Diploma | 1,005 | 1.1 |
| Professional Certificate (RSA, City & Guilds etc) | 640 | 0.7 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 4,005 | 4.4 |
| Post Graduate Certificate | 145 | 0.2 |
| Post Graduate Diploma | 167 | 0.2 |
| Higher Degree (Master's) | 1,558 | 1.7 |
| Higher Degree (Doctoral) | 227 | 0.2 |
| Other (Specify) | 764 | 0.8 |
| None | 20,727 | 22.7 |
| Not Stated | 522 | 0.6 |
| | 91,226 | 100 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 4-13 Highest Certificate, Diploma or Degree Earned, 2001 & 2012

| Highest Certificate, Diploma or Degree Earned | 2001 | | 2012 | |
|---|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| | Count | percent | Count | percent |
| School Leaving Certificate | 2,099 | 2.8 | 2,361 | 2.9 |
| GCE or CXC O-Level Passes | 8,531 | 11.4 | 12,397 | 15.1 |
| GCE A-Levels/CAPE | 1,072 | 1.4 | 2,361 | 2.9 |
| Associate Degree | 253 | 0.3 | 960 | 1.2 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 1,145 | 1.5 | 2,071 | 2.5 |
| Post Graduate Diploma/Certificate | 142 | 0.2 | 487 | 0.6 |
| Higher Degree (Masters or PhD) | 335 | 0.4 | 885 | 1.1 |
| Other | 4,197 | 5.6 | 8,242 | 10 |
| None | 55,473 | 74.1 | 48,092 | 58.5 |
| Not Stated | 1,581 | 2.1 | 4,405 | 5.4 |
| Total | 74,828 | 100 | 82,263 | 100 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

4.5 Conclusion

Census results from 2001, 2012, and 2023 show that the education system is adjusting to a smaller school-age population. Attendance has fallen most among children ages 3-5, while participation at older ages has held steady or risen slightly, pointing to better retention into secondary grades. Geographic gaps remain: larger divisions such as Calliaqua and the Suburbs of Kingstown enroll the most students, whereas smaller and remote divisions, including the Grenadines and Sandy Bay, continue to record lower participation, especially at pre-primary.

At primary and secondary levels, access remains broad, and gender parity is stable. Primary enrolment held a constant share of total students (39.6 percent) despite fewer children overall, and secondary enrolment inched upward between 2012 and 2023, reflecting sustained progress. Beyond compulsory schooling, the profile of attainment continues to rise: the share with no certification has fallen sharply since 2001, while CXC/CSEC passes have become widespread, and the numbers holding associate and bachelor's degrees have grown. Women are leading gains in post-secondary and continuing education, including university and online/distance learning.

The census findings show steady gains in educational attainment, with nearly universal participation at the primary and secondary levels and rising numbers completing post-secondary and tertiary studies. Women continue to outpace men in higher education, reflecting regional trends and strengthening the country's skills base. However, uneven early childhood access and geographic disparities highlight that progress, while significant, is not uniform across all groups.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER 4 EDUCATION & TRAINING



High Enrolment:

26,928 children (ages 3–20) were in school, with near-universal attendance between ages 7–14.



Early Childhood Gaps :

Only 2,115 children aged 3–4 years attended school (87%), leaving 312 not enrolled.



Primary & Secondary Balance:

10,652 students (40%) were in primary and 8,623 (32%) in secondary,



Gender Parity:

Boys and girls were almost equally represented at both primary and secondary levels



Certification Growth :

74% of adults held a certificate or higher, including 5,551 and 4005 with associate and bachelor's degrees



No Formal Qualification:

Adult population (20,727 people) reported no formal certification

Chapter 5. Economic Activity



5.1 Introduction

The economic activity of a population is one of the most critical dimensions of demographic inquiry, as it reveals how human resources are mobilized to sustain livelihoods and drive national development. By examining who works, who seeks work, and who remains outside the labour force, we gain insight into both the capacity of the economy and the vulnerabilities of different population groups.

The 2023 Population and Housing Census captures these dynamics at a pivotal point in the country's development trajectory. Over the past decade, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has confronted demographic ageing, outward migration, and exposure to global economic shocks, all of which have shaped the structure of the labour force. These influences are manifested in shifts in labour force participation, the balance between formal and informal work, and the persistence of challenges such as gender inequality and youth unemployment.

This chapter explores the main features of economic activity in 2023, beginning with the size and composition of the working-age population, then examining labour force participation, employment by status, occupation and industry, unemployment, and those outside the labour force. Comparisons with the 2012 Census highlight both continuity and emerging changes, providing a long-term perspective on labour market developments. These results serve as an important benchmark for tracking progress toward Sustainable Development Goal 8, which emphasizes inclusive economic growth and decent work opportunities for all.

5.2 Methodological Issues

The 2023 Population and Housing Census adhered to the international standard of defining the economically active population as persons aged 15 and older. Consistent with the 2012 Population and Housing Census, two reference periods were used, specifically, the 12 months prior to enumeration and the week immediately preceding Census Night. While both periods provide valuable perspectives, the analysis presented in this chapter relies primarily on the shorter reference week, as it offers a more accurate and timely measure of current labour market status.

For each individual, the main activity was identified as the one in which they were most engaged, even if they participated in multiple forms of work or livelihood support. This allowed the classification of persons as employed, unemployed, or not in the labour force. Employed persons include those who worked for pay, profit, or family gain for at least one hour during the reference week, as well as those with a job but temporarily absent. Unemployed persons were identified as those without work, available for work, and seeking employment, including discouraged workers who did not actively search because they believed no jobs were available.

By retaining consistency with the 2012 methodology, the 2023 results are directly comparable across census rounds, ensuring continuity in measuring labour force trends. This methodological framework thus provides a robust basis for analyzing the structure and evolution of economic activity in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

5.3 Working Age Population

The working-age population is commonly defined as persons aged 15 years and older, but this varies from country to country (International Labour Organization [ILO], n.d.)¹⁶. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the 2023 Census recorded 86,382 persons in this group, compared with 82,263 in 2012 and 74,828 in 2001 (Tables 5-1 to 5-3). This reflects a 5percent increase over the past decade and 16percent growth over two decades, though the pace of expansion has slowed, consistent with the broader demographic transition of declining fertility and net out-migration.

Moreover, the composition of the working-age population reveals the advancing aging process. The 25-44 years cohorts continue to make up the bulk of the population, underscoring the enduring importance of prime working years. However, the sharpest growth has occurred among older cohorts, particularly those aged 55 years and above. Between 2012 and 2023, the number of persons aged 65 and over increased by 37 percent (from 9,990 to 13,662). This trend is the result of declining mortality, improved life expectancy, and the maturing of larger birth cohorts from the 1960s and 1970s into older age groups. This reflects not only lower fertility over the past two decades but also the emigration of young people pursuing education and employment abroad.

Within this aging working-age population, economic activity levels show modest improvements. In 2023, 65.5 percent of persons aged 15 years and over were economically active (employed or unemployed), compared to 63.2 percent in 2012 (Table 5-1 and 5-2). This increase suggests a slight expansion of labour market engagement despite demographic and economic headwinds. The employed population grew by 5,659 persons over the decade, rising from 40,821 in 2012 to 46,480 in 2023, while the unemployed population fell from 11,193 to 10,124. Consequently, the unemployment rate dropped from 21.5 percent to 17.9 percent (Table 5-4). These shifts indicate some progress in absorbing the labour force into employment. Age-specific analysis reveals this imbalance starkly: youth (15-19 years) faced an unemployment rate of 51.1 percent in 2023, while the rate among those aged 20-24 was 28.3 percent. Both figures far exceed the national average and may indicate the long and difficult school-to-work transition faced by young Vincentians. By contrast, adults aged 45-64 experienced unemployment below 15percent, reflecting stronger and more secure integration into the labour market. Interestingly, among the 65+ population, a growing minority remained economically active, and, while smaller in number, those seeking work faced unemployment rates similar to or slightly above the national average.

Gender patterns add further complexity to the observed trends in the labour force. Although both men and women benefited from declining unemployment since 2012, women continue to face higher barriers. Female unemployment stood at 19.8 percent in 2023, compared with 16.3 percent for men. Women's concentration in inactivity may be linked to their caregiving and household responsibilities, despite a gradual increase in female labor market participation. These patterns highlight the ongoing gender gap in access to decent work, amid incremental gains.

¹⁶ International Labour Organization. (n.d.). *Definitions and metadata*. WESO Data Finder. <https://weso-data.ilo.org/definitions-and-metadata/>

Table 5-1 Working Age Population by Economic Activity, Age Group and Sex, 2023

| Age Group | Working Age Population | Unemployment Rate | Employment Rate | Economically Active (Labour force) | | | Not in Labour Force |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------|
| | | | | Employed | Unemployed | Total | |
| Both Sexes | | | | | | | |
| 15–19 | 8,049 | 51.1 | 48.9 | 1,038 | 1,085 | 2,123 | 5,926 |
| 20–24 | 7,217 | 28.3 | 71.7 | 4,061 | 1,602 | 5,663 | 1,554 |
| 25–29 | 7,414 | 19.4 | 80.6 | 4,933 | 1,186 | 6,119 | 1,295 |
| 30–34 | 7,414 | 16.6 | 83.4 | 5,319 | 1,058 | 6,377 | 1,037 |
| 35–39 | 7,351 | 15.3 | 84.7 | 5,405 | 973 | 6,378 | 973 |
| 40–44 | 7,678 | 13.5 | 86.5 | 5,729 | 894 | 6,623 | 1,055 |
| 45–49 | 7,129 | 14.0 | 86.0 | 5,190 | 845 | 6,035 | 1,094 |
| 50–54 | 7,286 | 13.7 | 86.3 | 5,171 | 818 | 5,989 | 1,297 |
| 55–59 | 6,634 | 14.1 | 85.9 | 4,241 | 694 | 4,935 | 1,699 |
| 60–64 | 6,548 | 15.1 | 84.9 | 2,932 | 523 | 3,455 | 3,093 |
| 65+ | 13,662 | 15.3 | 84.7 | 2,461 | 446 | 2,907 | 10,755 |
| Total | 86,382 | 17.9 | 82.1 | 46,480 | 10,124 | 56,604 | 29,778 |
| Male | | | | | | | |
| 15–19 | 4,121 | 48.0 | 52.0 | 599 | 552 | 1,151 | 2,970 |
| 20–24 | 3,731 | 27.2 | 72.8 | 2,255 | 843 | 3,098 | 633 |
| 25–29 | 3,577 | 16.5 | 83.5 | 2,569 | 508 | 3,077 | 500 |
| 30–34 | 3,608 | 14.8 | 85.2 | 2,733 | 475 | 3,208 | 400 |
| 35–39 | 3,567 | 13.9 | 86.1 | 2,791 | 449 | 3,240 | 327 |
| 40–44 | 3,736 | 11.7 | 88.3 | 2,947 | 392 | 3,339 | 397 |
| 45–49 | 3,638 | 12.6 | 87.4 | 2,821 | 407 | 3,228 | 410 |
| 50–54 | 3,801 | 12.3 | 87.7 | 2,968 | 416 | 3,384 | 417 |
| 55–59 | 3,498 | 13.4 | 86.6 | 2,464 | 380 | 2,844 | 654 |
| 60–64 | 3,465 | 13.6 | 86.4 | 1,931 | 303 | 2,234 | 1,231 |
| 65+ | 6,679 | 14.5 | 85.5 | 1,703 | 289 | 1,992 | 4,687 |
| Total | 43,421 | 16.3 | 83.7 | 25,781 | 5,014 | 30,795 | 12,626 |
| Female | | | | | | | |
| 15–19 | 3,928 | 54.8 | 45.2 | 439 | 533 | 972 | 2,956 |
| 20–24 | 3,486 | 29.6 | 70.4 | 1,806 | 759 | 2,565 | 921 |
| 25–29 | 3,837 | 22.3 | 77.7 | 2,364 | 678 | 3,042 | 795 |
| 30–34 | 3,806 | 18.4 | 81.6 | 2,586 | 583 | 3,169 | 637 |
| 35–39 | 3,784 | 16.7 | 83.3 | 2,614 | 524 | 3,138 | 646 |
| 40–44 | 3,942 | 15.3 | 84.7 | 2,782 | 502 | 3,284 | 658 |
| 45–49 | 3,491 | 15.6 | 84.4 | 2,369 | 438 | 2,807 | 684 |
| 50–54 | 3,485 | 15.4 | 84.6 | 2,203 | 402 | 2,605 | 880 |
| 55–59 | 3,136 | 15.0 | 85.0 | 1,777 | 314 | 2,091 | 1,045 |
| 60–64 | 3,083 | 18.0 | 82.0 | 1,001 | 220 | 1,221 | 1,862 |
| 65+ | 6,983 | 17.2 | 82.8 | 758 | 157 | 915 | 6,068 |
| Total | 42,961 | 19.8 | 80.2 | 20,699 | 5,110 | 25,809 | 17,152 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 5-2 Working Age Population by Economic Activity, Age Group and Sex, 2012

| Age Group | Working Age Population | Economically Active (Labourforce) | | | Not in Labour Force |
|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------|
| | | Employed | Unemployed | Total | |
| Both Sexes | | | | | |
| 15–19 | 9,912 | 978 | 1,575 | 2,553 | 7,359 |
| 20–24 | 8,607 | 3,866 | 2,547 | 6,413 | 2,194 |
| 25–29 | 8,317 | 4,895 | 1,634 | 6,529 | 1,788 |
| 30–34 | 7,863 | 5,016 | 1,288 | 6,304 | 1,559 |
| 35–39 | 7,553 | 5,046 | 1,017 | 6,063 | 1,490 |
| 40–44 | 7,155 | 4,943 | 802 | 5,745 | 1,410 |
| 45–49 | 7,466 | 5,080 | 788 | 5,868 | 1,598 |
| 50–54 | 6,548 | 4,340 | 545 | 4,885 | 1,663 |
| 55–59 | 5,031 | 2,930 | 427 | 3,357 | 1,674 |
| 60–64 | 3,821 | 1,590 | 179 | 1,769 | 2,052 |
| 65+ | 9,990 | 2,137 | 391 | 2,528 | 7,462 |
| Total | 82,263 | 40,821 | 11,193 | 52,014 | 30,249 |
| Male | | | | | |
| 15–19 | 5,053 | 601 | 794 | 1,395 | 3,658 |
| 20–24 | 4,354 | 2,279 | 1,208 | 3,487 | 867 |
| 25–29 | 4,228 | 2,725 | 801 | 3,526 | 702 |
| 30–34 | 3,887 | 2,728 | 604 | 3,332 | 555 |
| 35–39 | 3,839 | 2,809 | 487 | 3,296 | 543 |
| 40–44 | 3,772 | 2,814 | 425 | 3,239 | 533 |
| 45–49 | 3,861 | 2,869 | 423 | 3,292 | 569 |
| 50–54 | 3,436 | 2,549 | 310 | 2,859 | 577 |
| 55–59 | 2,642 | 1,771 | 280 | 2,051 | 591 |
| 60–64 | 1,970 | 1,062 | 121 | 1,183 | 787 |
| 65+ | 4,845 | 1,483 | 240 | 1,723 | 3,122 |
| Total | 41,887 | 23,690 | 5,693 | 29,383 | 12,504 |
| Female | | | | | |
| 15–19 | 4,859 | 377 | 781 | 1,158 | 3,701 |
| 20–24 | 4,253 | 1,587 | 1,339 | 2,926 | 1,327 |
| 25–29 | 4,089 | 2,170 | 833 | 3,003 | 1,086 |
| 30–34 | 3,976 | 2,288 | 684 | 2,972 | 1,004 |
| 35–39 | 3,714 | 2,237 | 530 | 2,767 | 947 |
| 40–44 | 3,383 | 2,129 | 377 | 2,506 | 877 |
| 45–49 | 3,605 | 2,211 | 365 | 2,576 | 1,029 |
| 50–54 | 3,112 | 1,791 | 235 | 2,026 | 1,086 |
| 55–59 | 2,389 | 1,159 | 147 | 1,306 | 1,083 |
| 60–64 | 1,851 | 528 | 58 | 586 | 1,265 |
| 65+ | 5,145 | 654 | 151 | 805 | 4,340 |
| Total | 40,376 | 17,131 | 5,500 | 22,631 | 17,745 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 5-3 Working Age Population by Economic Activity Status, Age Group and Sex, 2001

| Age Group | Working Age Population | Economically Active (Labourforce) | | | Not in Labour Force |
|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|
| | | Employed | Unemployed | Total | |
| Both Sexes | | | | | |
| 15-19 | 11,454 | 1,907 | 2,020 | 3,927 | 7,527 |
| 20-24 | 9,859 | 4,827 | 2,230 | 7,057 | 2,802 |
| 25-29 | 8,644 | 5,103 | 1,397 | 6,500 | 2,144 |
| 30-34 | 7,802 | 4,910 | 1,055 | 5,965 | 1,837 |
| 35-39 | 8,199 | 5,425 | 915 | 6,340 | 1,859 |
| 40-44 | 6,803 | 4,524 | 687 | 5,211 | 1,592 |
| 45-49 | 4,802 | 3,169 | 415 | 3,584 | 1,218 |
| 50-54 | 3,794 | 2,332 | 298 | 2,630 | 1,164 |
| 55-59 | 2,830 | 1,363 | 198 | 1,561 | 1,269 |
| 60-64 | 2,784 | 935 | 110 | 1,045 | 1,739 |
| 65+ | 7,857 | 1,093 | 71 | 1,164 | 6,693 |
| Total | 74,828 | 35,588 | 9,396 | 44,984 | 29,844 |
| Male | | | | | |
| 15-19 | 5,760 | 1,332 | 1,340 | 2,672 | 3,088 |
| 20-24 | 5,051 | 2,933 | 1,408 | 4,341 | 710 |
| 25-29 | 4,420 | 3,043 | 909 | 3,952 | 468 |
| 30-34 | 4,080 | 3,006 | 693 | 3,699 | 381 |
| 35-39 | 4,259 | 3,239 | 634 | 3,873 | 386 |
| 40-44 | 3,502 | 2,693 | 482 | 3,175 | 327 |
| 45-49 | 2,454 | 1,869 | 307 | 2,176 | 278 |
| 50-54 | 1,967 | 1,448 | 239 | 1,687 | 280 |
| 55-59 | 1,421 | 897 | 160 | 1,057 | 364 |
| 60-64 | 1,332 | 628 | 94 | 722 | 610 |
| 65+ | 3,448 | 755 | 52 | 807 | 2,641 |
| Total | 37,694 | 21,843 | 6,318 | 28,161 | 9,533 |
| Female | | | | | |
| 15-19 | 5,694 | 575 | 680 | 1,255 | 4,439 |
| 20-24 | 4,808 | 1,894 | 822 | 2,716 | 2,092 |
| 25-29 | 4,224 | 2,060 | 488 | 2,548 | 1,676 |
| 30-34 | 3,722 | 1,904 | 362 | 2,266 | 1,456 |
| 35-39 | 3,940 | 2,186 | 281 | 2,467 | 1,473 |
| 40-44 | 3,301 | 1,831 | 205 | 2,036 | 1,265 |
| 45-49 | 2,348 | 1,300 | 108 | 1,408 | 940 |
| 50-54 | 1,827 | 884 | 59 | 943 | 884 |
| 55-59 | 1,409 | 466 | 38 | 504 | 905 |
| 60-64 | 1,452 | 307 | 16 | 323 | 1,129 |
| 65+ | 4,409 | 338 | 19 | 357 | 4,052 |
| Total | 37,134 | 13,745 | 3,078 | 16,823 | 20,311 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 5-4 Employment and Unemployment Rate by Census Division and Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023

| Census Division | 2001 | | 2012 | | 2023 | |
|----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| | Employment Rate | Unemployment Rate | Employment Rate | Unemployment Rate | Employment Rate | Unemployment Rate |
| Both | | | | | | |
| Kingstown | 82.3 | 17.7 | 82.0 | 18.0 | 86.0 | 14.0 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 77.2 | 22.8 | 75.6 | 24.5 | 87.2 | 12.8 |
| Calliaqua | 81.6 | 18.4 | 81.3 | 18.7 | 84.0 | 16.3 |
| Marriaqua | 83.1 | 16.9 | 80.1 | 19.9 | 86.5 | 13.5 |
| Bridgetown | 76.8 | 23.2 | 78.2 | 21.9 | 82.9 | 17.1 |
| Colonarie | 74.6 | 25.4 | 72.5 | 27.5 | 79.1 | 20.9 |
| Georgetown | 75.8 | 24.2 | 73.4 | 26.6 | 77.0 | 23.0 |
| Sandy Bay | 71.6 | 28.4 | 81.5 | 18.5 | 73.3 | 26.7 |
| Layout | 71.2 | 28.8 | 74.3 | 25.7 | 83.8 | 16.2 |
| Barrouallie | 76.2 | 23.8 | 74.5 | 25.5 | 81.1 | 18.9 |
| Chateaubelair | 73.7 | 26.2 | 73.6 | 26.4 | 74.1 | 25.9 |
| Northern Grenadines | 82.9 | 17.1 | 79.3 | 20.7 | 88.9 | 11.1 |
| Southern Grenadines | 86.9 | 13.1 | 87.3 | 12.8 | 92.0 | 8.0 |
| Total | 79.1 | 20.9 | 78.5 | 21.5 | 83.7 | 16.3 |
| Male | | | | | | |
| Kingstown | 79.5 | 20.5 | 83.1 | 16.9 | 83 | 17 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 77.1 | 22.9 | 77.5 | 22.5 | 84.0 | 16 |
| Calliaqua | 78.9 | 21.1 | 82.0 | 18.0 | 83.4 | 16.6 |
| Marriaqua | 82.8 | 17.2 | 81.0 | 19.0 | 84.2 | 15.8 |
| Bridgetown | 75.8 | 24.2 | 82.1 | 17.9 | 76.1 | 23.9 |
| Colonarie | 74.2 | 25.8 | 74.9 | 25.1 | 69.9 | 30.1 |
| Georgetown | 73.2 | 26.8 | 77.6 | 22.4 | 65.1 | 34.9 |
| Sandy Bay | 68.1 | 32.0 | 87.4 | 12.6 | 60.7 | 39.3 |
| Layout | 72.9 | 27.1 | 78.7 | 21.3 | 82.4 | 17.6 |
| Barrouallie | 78.3 | 21.7 | 77.8 | 22.2 | 82.4 | 17.6 |
| Chateaubelair | 73.6 | 26.4 | 81.4 | 18.7 | 61.6 | 38.4 |
| Northern Grenadines | 80.4 | 19.6 | 89.3 | 10.7 | 85.2 | 14.8 |
| Southern Grenadines | 85.2 | 14.9 | 80.6 | 19.4 | 90.0 | 10 |
| Total | 77.6 | 22.5 | 80.6 | 19.4 | 80.2 | 19.8 |
| Female | | | | | | |
| Kingstown | 85.8 | 14.2 | 80.7 | 19.3 | 84.6 | 15.4 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 77.5 | 22.5 | 73.4 | 26.6 | 85.7 | 14.3 |
| Calliaqua | 85.3 | 14.7 | 80.6 | 19.4 | 83.7 | 16.3 |
| Marriaqua | 83.7 | 16.4 | 79.0 | 21.0 | 85.5 | 14.5 |
| Bridgetown | 79.3 | 20.8 | 72.3 | 27.7 | 80.1 | 19.9 |
| Colonarie | 75.4 | 24.6 | 68.8 | 31.2 | 75.0 | 25 |
| Georgetown | 81.7 | 18.3 | 67.5 | 32.5 | 71.8 | 28.2 |
| Sandy Bay | 82.7 | 17.3 | 70.3 | 29.7 | 68.4 | 31.6 |
| Layout | 68.1 | 31.9 | 69.0 | 31.0 | 83.2 | 16.8 |
| Barrouallie | 72.0 | 28.1 | 68.4 | 31.6 | 81.6 | 18.4 |
| Chateaubelair | 74.1 | 25.9 | 66.2 | 33.8 | 68.7 | 31.3 |
| Northern Grenadines | 88.2 | 11.8 | 76.1 | 23.9 | 87.2 | 12.8 |
| Southern Grenadines | 89.9 | 10.1 | 89.3 | 16.1 | 91.2 | 8.8 |
| Total | 81.7 | 18.3 | 75.7 | 24.3 | 82.1 | 17.9 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The working-age population has expanded and is aging, with modest gains in participation and reduced unemployment since 2012. Yet, high joblessness among youth, persistent gender gaps, and divisional disparities reveal that access to employment remains uneven across groups and regions.

5.4 Labour Force

The labour force comprises all persons of working age (15 years and older) who are either employed or unemployed, and thus actively contributing to or seeking entry into the labour market (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2023a)¹⁷. This measure is central for understanding how human resources are mobilized and how demographic and socio-economic conditions shape patterns of participation. In the 2023 Census, the labour force totaled 56,604 persons, up from 52,014 in 2012 (Table 5-5). This increase reflects growth in the working-age population together with a modest improvement in economic activity over the intercensal period.

Regional data reveal notable disparities. In 2023, Calliaqua reported the largest labour force (13,867 persons), followed by the Suburbs of Kingstown (8,366). By contrast, smaller divisions such as Chateaubelair (2,333) and Sandy Bay (1,282) had the lowest labour force counts (Table 5-5). Importantly, the Grenadines, despite being smaller in population size, maintained relatively strong participation levels compared to some rural mainland divisions. At the same time, many rural districts showed higher proportions of persons not in the labour force relative to their total working-age population.

Moreover, age- and sex-based participation patterns provide further insight into labour market dynamics. The Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR), defined as the proportion of the working-age population that is economically active (ILO, 2023b), rose from 63.2 percent in 2012 to 65.5 percent in 2023 (Table 5-6). Participation peaks during the prime working ages (25-49), where more than 80 percent are engaged in the labour force, underscoring the centrality of this group to economic output and household livelihoods. In contrast, the 15-19 cohort recorded a participation rate of only 26.4 percent in 2023, consistent with higher school enrollment and delayed entry into the job market, while the 65 years and over population reported 21.3 percent, reflecting retirement and declining work capacity.

An examination of gender gaps remains another defining feature of the labour force. In 2023, the male LFPR was 70.9 percent, compared to 60.1 percent for females. Although female participation improved relative to 2012, the nearly 11 percentage-point gap underscores persistent structural barriers, including women's disproportionate share of household and care responsibilities, occupational segregation into lower-paying sectors, and limited access to flexible or formal work arrangements. These constraints continue to limit women's full participation in economic activity, even as they have achieved notable gains in educational attainment and increased representation in the expanding service sector.

¹⁷ International Labour Organization. (2023a). ILOSTAT: *Concepts and definitions – Labour force statistics*. Retrieved <https://ilostat.ilo.org/methods/concepts-and-definitions/description-labour-force-statistics/>

Table 5-5 Working Age Population by Economic Activity and Census Division, 2012 & 2023

| Census Division | Work Age Population | Economically Active (Labour Force) | | | Persons Not in Labour Force |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | Employed | Unemployed | Total Labour Force | |
| 2012 | | | | | |
| Kingstown | 9,721 | 5,219 | 1,148 | 6,367 | 3,354 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 10,207 | 5,155 | 1,668 | 6,823 | 3,384 |
| Calliaqua | 18,407 | 9,762 | 2,241 | 12,003 | 6,404 |
| Marriaqua | 5,821 | 2,954 | 733 | 3,687 | 2,134 |
| Bridgetown | 4,935 | 2,307 | 645 | 2,952 | 1,983 |
| Colonarie | 5,124 | 2,146 | 813 | 2,959 | 2,165 |
| Georgetown | 5,172 | 2,291 | 830 | 3,121 | 2,051 |
| Sandy Bay | 1,874 | 861 | 196 | 1,057 | 817 |
| Layou | 4,791 | 2,172 | 751 | 2,923 | 1,868 |
| Barrouallie | 4,076 | 1,808 | 617 | 2,425 | 1,651 |
| Chateaubelair | 4,168 | 1,740 | 623 | 2,363 | 1,805 |
| Northern Grenadines | 4,851 | 2,470 | 645 | 3,115 | 1,736 |
| Southern Grenadines | 3,116 | 1,936 | 283 | 2,219 | 897 |
| Total | 82,263 | 40,821 | 11,193 | 52,014 | 30,249 |
| 2023 | | | | | |
| Kingstown | 8,757 | 4,855 | 883 | 5,738 | 3,019 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 12,244 | 7,168 | 1,198 | 8,366 | 3,878 |
| Calliaqua | 21,537 | 11,606 | 2,261 | 13,867 | 7,670 |
| Marriaqua | 5,814 | 3,301 | 562 | 3,863 | 1,951 |
| Bridgetown | 5,135 | 2,714 | 673 | 3,387 | 1,748 |
| Colonarie | 5,281 | 2,631 | 875 | 3,506 | 1,775 |
| Georgetown | 5,454 | 2,429 | 955 | 3,384 | 2,070 |
| Sandy Bay | 1,971 | 877 | 405 | 1,282 | 689 |
| Layou | 5,046 | 2,640 | 533 | 3,173 | 1,873 |
| Barrouallie | 4,357 | 2,193 | 493 | 2,686 | 1,671 |
| Chateaubelair | 3,761 | 1,603 | 730 | 2,333 | 1,428 |
| Northern Grenadines | 4,152 | 2,475 | 363 | 2,838 | 1,314 |
| Southern Grenadines | 2,873 | 1,988 | 193 | 2,181 | 692 |
| Total | 86,382 | 46,480 | 10,124 | 56,604 | 29,778 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 5-6 Labour Force Participation Rate by Age Group and Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023

| Age Group | 2001 | | | 2012 | | | 2023 | | |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| 15 – 19 | 46.4 | 22.0 | 34.3 | 27.6 | 23.8 | 25.8 | 27.9 | 24.7 | 26.4 |
| 20 – 24 | 85.9 | 56.4 | 71.5 | 80.1 | 68.8 | 74.5 | 83.0 | 73.6 | 78.5 |
| 25 – 29 | 89.4 | 60.3 | 75.2 | 83.4 | 73.4 | 78.5 | 86.0 | 79.3 | 82.5 |
| 30 – 34 | 90.7 | 60.8 | 76.4 | 85.7 | 74.8 | 80.2 | 88.9 | 83.3 | 86.0 |
| 35 – 39 | 91.0 | 62.5 | 77.3 | 85.9 | 74.5 | 80.3 | 90.8 | 82.9 | 86.8 |
| 40 – 44 | 90.7 | 61.6 | 76.6 | 85.9 | 74.1 | 80.3 | 89.4 | 83.3 | 86.3 |
| 45 – 49 | 88.7 | 59.9 | 74.6 | 85.2 | 71.5 | 78.6 | 88.7 | 80.4 | 84.7 |
| 50 – 54 | 85.8 | 51.6 | 69.3 | 83.2 | 65.1 | 74.6 | 89.0 | 74.7 | 82.2 |
| 55 – 59 | 74.4 | 35.7 | 55.2 | 77.6 | 54.7 | 66.7 | 81.3 | 66.7 | 74.4 |
| 60 – 64 | 54.3 | 22.3 | 37.6 | 60.1 | 31.7 | 46.4 | 64.5 | 39.6 | 52.8 |
| 65+ | 23.4 | 8.1 | 14.8 | 35.6 | 15.7 | 25.3 | 29.8 | 13.1 | 21.3 |
| Total | 74.7 | 45.2 | 60.1 | 70.2 | 56.1 | 63.2 | 70.9 | 60.1 | 65.5 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The evidence shows that the labour force has expanded and participation has improved since 2012, but progress remains uneven. Young people still struggle to secure work, women continue to participate at lower levels than men, and rural divisions still lag behind districts with more diverse economic opportunities, particularly Kingstown and the Grenadines.

5.5 Employed Labour Force

The employed labour force represents all working-age persons who were engaged in paid work, self-employment, or other economic activities during the reference period (ILO, 2023a).¹⁸ Employment patterns provide critical insight into how jobs are distributed by type, sector, and occupational category, reflecting both structural shifts in the economy and demographic patterns in participation.

5.5.1 Status in Employment

Between 2012 and 2023, the number of employed persons increased from 40,821 to 47,198, reflecting a 16 percent rise over the intercensal period. This expansion demonstrates the economy’s capacity to generate jobs, but also reveals shifts in the composition of employment.

The private sector continues to dominate, accounting for 41.0 percent of employed persons in 2023, slightly lower than the 42.6 percent recorded in 2012. The public sector (government and state-owned

¹⁸ International Labour Organization. (2023a). *ILOSTAT: Concepts and definitions – Employment statistics*. Retrieved <https://ilostat.ilo.org/methods/concepts-and-definitions/>

enterprises combined) grew from 25.5 percent to nearly 27.9 percent, underscoring its enduring importance as a stabilizing force in the labour market.

Self-employment without paid employees declined from 19.2 percent in 2012 to 17.9 percent in 2023, suggesting reduced reliance on micro and own-account activities. Employers with paid staff remained relatively small, contributing just over 3.2 percent of jobs. Domestic workers made up nearly 5 percent of total employment in 2023, with women strongly overrepresented in this category.

Gender disparities remain clear. Women’s share of total employment increased modestly from 42.0 percent in 2012 to 44.4 percent in 2023, but their employment remains concentrated in government, state-owned enterprises, and private household work, while men are more dominant in self-employment, apprenticeships, and trade-based roles.

Table 5-7 Employed Population by Status in Employment and Sex, 2012 & 2023

| Status in Employment | Male | percent | Female | percent | Both | percent |
|---|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| 2012 | | | | | | |
| Paid Employee, Government (Local and Central Government) | 3,839 | 44.0 | 4,891 | 56.0 | 8,731 | 21.4 |
| Paid Employee, State Owned Company/Statutory Board | 1,069 | 63.6 | 612 | 36.4 | 1,681 | 4.1 |
| Paid Employee, Private Business | 10,684 | 61.4 | 6,712 | 38.6 | 17,396 | 42.6 |
| Paid Employee, Private Home | 736 | 37.3 | 1,238 | 62.7 | 1,973 | 4.8 |
| Own Business with Paid Employees | 873 | 69.1 | 390 | 30.9 | 1,263 | 3.1 |
| Own Business without Paid Employees (Self-Employed) | 5,327 | 67.9 | 2,523 | 32.1 | 7,850 | 19.2 |
| Apprentice/Learners | 45 | 70.3 | 19 | 29.7 | 64 | 0.2 |
| Unpaid Family Worker/Employee | 198 | 44.4 | 248 | 55.6 | 445 | 1.1 |
| Volunteer Worker | 64 | 57.1 | 48 | 42.9 | 112 | 0.3 |
| Other | 271 | 70.4 | 114 | 29.6 | 384 | 0.9 |
| Don't Know | 58 | 81.7 | 13 | 18.3 | 70 | 0.2 |
| Not Stated | 527 | 61.9 | 324 | 38.1 | 851 | 2.1 |
| Total | 23,690 | 58 | 17,131 | 42.0 | 40,821 | 100 |
| 2023 | | | | | | |
| Paid Employee, Government (Local and Central Government) | 4,262 | 38.9 | 6,703 | 61.1 | 10,965 | 23.2 |
| Paid Employee, State Owned Company/Statutory Board | 1,265 | 57.2 | 948 | 42.8 | 2,213 | 4.7 |
| Paid Employee, Private Business | 11,259 | 58.2 | 8,101 | 41.8 | 19,360 | 41.0 |
| Paid Employee, Private Home | 1,132 | 48.5 | 1,200 | 51.5 | 2,332 | 4.9 |
| Own Business with Paid Employees | 1,083 | 71.1 | 441 | 28.9 | 1,524 | 3.2 |
| Own Business without Paid Employees (Self-Employed) | 5,691 | 67.2 | 2,772 | 32.8 | 8,463 | 17.9 |
| Apprentice/Learners | 78 | 70.9 | 32 | 29.1 | 110 | 0.2 |
| Unpaid Family Worker/Employee | 348 | 55.4 | 280 | 44.6 | 628 | 1.3 |
| Volunteer Worker | 49 | 60.5 | 32 | 39.5 | 81 | 0.2 |
| Other (Specify) | 714 | 70.6 | 298 | 29.4 | 1,012 | 2.1 |
| Don't Know | 261 | 65.4 | 138 | 34.6 | 399 | 0.8 |
| Not Stated | 77 | 69.4 | 34 | 30.6 | 111 | 0.2 |
| Total | 26,219 | 55.6 | 20,979 | 44.4 | 47,198 | 100 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

5.5.2 Occupation

The occupational profile of employment also reflects important shifts over time. Service and sales workers remained the largest group in 2023, accounting for 25.0 percent of total employment, a near continuation of the 26.0 percent observed in 2012. Elementary occupations (14.6 percent) and craft and related trades workers (12.4 percent) followed, together accounting for more than a quarter of the workforce (Table 5-8).

Higher-skilled roles show modest but steady growth. The share of professionals increased from 11.1 percent in 2012 to 11.9 percent in 2023, while technicians and associate professionals rose from 7.1 percent to 8.8 percent, reflecting the gradual expansion of skilled employment linked to educational gains. Conversely, skilled agricultural, forestry, and fishery workers declined sharply, from 12.5 percent in 2012 to 9.1 percent in 2023, underscoring the declining weight of agriculture in the labour market. Managerial positions, while relatively balanced by sex, remain small, accounting for only 4.7 percent of jobs in 2023, highlighting limited upward mobility.

Table 5-8 Currently Employed Population by Occupational Group, 2012 & 2023

| Occupational Group | Count | | | Percentage | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| 2012 | | | | | | |
| Managers | 968 | 661 | 1,629 | 4.1 | 3.9 | 4.0 |
| Professionals | 1,553 | 2,991 | 4,544 | 6.6 | 17.5 | 11.1 |
| Technicians and associate professionals | 1,436 | 1,470 | 2,906 | 6.1 | 8.6 | 7.1 |
| Clerical support workers | 606 | 1,905 | 2,511 | 2.6 | 11.1 | 6.2 |
| Service and sales workers | 4,442 | 6,188 | 10,630 | 18.8 | 36.1 | 26.0 |
| Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers | 4,230 | 880 | 5,110 | 17.9 | 5.1 | 12.5 |
| Craft and related trades workers | 4,995 | 472 | 5,467 | 21.1 | 2.8 | 13.4 |
| Plant and machine operators, and assemblers | 1,928 | 110 | 2,038 | 8.1 | 0.6 | 5.0 |
| Elementary occupations | 3,246 | 2,220 | 5,466 | 13.7 | 13 | 13.4 |
| Not Stated | 286 | 234 | 520 | 1.2 | 1.4 | 1.3 |
| Total | 23,690 | 17,131 | 40,821 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| 2023 | | | | | | |
| Armed Forces Occupations | 8 | 1 | 9 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Managers | 1,099 | 1,077 | 2,176 | 4.3 | 5.2 | 4.7 |
| Professionals | 1,719 | 3,797 | 5,516 | 6.7 | 18.3 | 11.9 |
| Technicians and Associate Professionals | 1,989 | 2,115 | 4,104 | 7.7 | 10.2 | 8.8 |
| Clerical Support workers | 903 | 2,434 | 3,337 | 3.5 | 11.8 | 7.2 |
| Service and sales workers | 4,640 | 6,991 | 11,631 | 18.0 | 33.8 | 25.0 |
| Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers | 3,481 | 758 | 4,239 | 13.5 | 3.7 | 9.1 |
| Craft and related trades workers | 5,113 | 642 | 5,755 | 19.8 | 3.1 | 12.4 |
| Plant and Machine Operators and assemblers | 2,033 | 114 | 2,147 | 7.9 | 0.6 | 4.6 |
| Elementary Occupations | 4,360 | 2,404 | 6,764 | 16.9 | 11.6 | 14.6 |
| Not Stated | 436 | 366 | 802 | 1.7 | 1.8 | 1.7 |
| Total | 25,781 | 20,699 | 46,480 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Gender continues to shape occupational outcomes. Women are concentrated in clerical, service, and elementary work, while men dominate agriculture, craft, and technical trades. Although women's presence in professional and managerial roles has grown, men still retain a slight advantage in these higher-status occupations.

5.5.3 Industry

Employment by industry reflects both the productive structure of the economy and the opportunities available across sectors. In 2012, the leading industries were wholesale and retail trade (16.9 percent), construction (11.6 percent), and agriculture, forestry, and fishing (11.8 percent) (Table 5-10). By 2023, while trade (12.7 percent) and agriculture (14.4 percent) remained major employers, construction's share declined to 9.2 percent, signaling structural adjustments in the labour market (Table 5-9).

Table 5-9 Currently Employed Population by Industry, 2023

| Industry | Count | | | Percentage | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Agriculture, forestry and fishing | 5,263 | 1,431 | 6,694 | 20.4 | 6.9 | 14.4 |
| Mining and quarrying | 688 | 719 | 1,407 | 2.7 | 3.5 | 3.0 |
| Manufacturing | 1,401 | 619 | 2,020 | 5.4 | 3.0 | 4.3 |
| Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply | 232 | 38 | 270 | 0.9 | 0.2 | 0.6 |
| Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities | 267 | 73 | 340 | 1.0 | 0.4 | 0.7 |
| Construction | 4,045 | 230 | 4,275 | 15.7 | 1.1 | 9.2 |
| Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles | 2,841 | 3,045 | 5,886 | 11.0 | 14.7 | 12.7 |
| Transportation and storage | 2,224 | 574 | 2,798 | 8.6 | 2.8 | 6.0 |
| Accommodation and food service activities | 1,595 | 2,252 | 3,847 | 6.2 | 10.9 | 8.3 |
| Information and communication | 239 | 221 | 460 | 0.9 | 1.1 | 1.0 |
| Financial and insurance activities | 289 | 510 | 799 | 1.1 | 2.5 | 1.7 |
| Real estate activities | 69 | 36 | 105 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Professional, scientific and technical activities | 224 | 406 | 630 | 0.9 | 2.0 | 1.4 |
| Administrative and support service activities | 895 | 835 | 1,730 | 3.5 | 4.0 | 3.7 |
| Public administration and defence; compulsory social security | 1,787 | 1,707 | 3,494 | 6.9 | 8.2 | 7.5 |
| Education | 716 | 2,731 | 3,447 | 2.8 | 13.2 | 7.4 |
| Human health and social work activities | 310 | 1,300 | 1,610 | 1.2 | 6.3 | 3.5 |
| Arts, entertainment and recreation | 212 | 218 | 430 | 0.8 | 1.1 | 0.9 |
| Other service activities | 367 | 455 | 822 | 1.4 | 1.2 | 1.8 |
| Activities of households as employers; activities of households for own use | 318 | 895 | 1,213 | 1.2 | 4.3 | 2.6 |
| Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies | 2 | 8 | 10 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Not Stated | 1,797 | 2,396 | 4,193 | 7.0 | 11.6 | 9.0 |
| Total | 25,781 | 20,699 | 46,480 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 5-10 Currently Employed Population by Industry, 2012

| Industry | Count | | | Percentage | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing | 3,903 | 905 | 4,808 | 16.5 | 5.3 | 11.8 |
| Mining and quarrying | 34 | 7 | 41 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| Manufacturing | 1,446 | 615 | 2,061 | 6.1 | 3.6 | 5.1 |
| Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply | 276 | 60 | 336 | 1.2 | 0.4 | 0.8 |
| Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities | 270 | 54 | 324 | 1.1 | 0.3 | 0.8 |
| Construction | 4,433 | 317 | 4,750 | 18.7 | 1.9 | 11.6 |
| Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles | 3,370 | 3,512 | 6,882 | 14.2 | 20.5 | 16.9 |
| Transportation and storage | 2,571 | 525 | 3,096 | 10.9 | 3.1 | 7.6 |
| Accommodation and food service activities | 1,234 | 1,788 | 3,022 | 5.2 | 10.4 | 7.4 |
| Information and communication | 304 | 228 | 532 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.3 |
| Financial and insurance activities | 240 | 552 | 792 | 1.0 | 3.2 | 1.9 |
| Real estate activities | 29 | 19 | 48 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Professional, scientific and technical activities | 221 | 375 | 596 | 0.9 | 2.2 | 1.5 |
| Administrative and support service activities | 765 | 416 | 1,181 | 3.2 | 2.4 | 2.9 |
| Public administration and defense; compulsory social security | 2,125 | 1,851 | 3,976 | 9.0 | 10.8 | 9.7 |
| Education | 840 | 2,328 | 3,168 | 3.6 | 13.6 | 7.8 |
| Human health and social work activities | 262 | 1,136 | 1,398 | 1.1 | 6.6 | 3.4 |
| Arts, entertainment and recreation | 150 | 208 | 358 | 0.6 | 1.2 | 0.9 |
| Other service activities | 433 | 449 | 882 | 1.8 | 2.6 | 2.2 |
| Activities of households as employers | 470 | 1,494 | 1,964 | 2.0 | 8.7 | 4.8 |
| Activities of extraterritorial organizations & bodies | 14 | 17 | 31 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Not Stated | 300 | 275 | 575 | 1.3 | 1.6 | 1.4 |
| Total | 23,690 | 17,131 | 40,821 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Agriculture registered notable growth in absolute employment, rising from 4,808 persons in 2012 to 6,694 in 2023, although its relative share of total jobs fluctuated, highlighting the sector’s continued but evolving role. Conversely, manufacturing experienced a small decline in share, falling from 5.1 percent to 4.3 percent, consistent with regional trends toward limited industrial expansion.

Expansions were noted in the service-based sectors, with accommodation and food services increasing from 7.4 percent in 2012 to 8.3 percent in 2023, reflecting the importance of tourism. Human health and social work activities also grew from 3.4 percent to 3.5 percent, tied to rising demand for health services. While public administration declined from 9.7 percent to 7.5 percent, a sign of slower government employment growth relative to other industries.

Gender differences also remain distinct. Women dominate education, health, and accommodation services, while men are concentrated in agriculture, construction, and transport. These patterns demonstrate both sectoral specialization and persistent gender segmentation of the labour market.

5.6 Unemployed Labour Force

Unemployment is one of the central measures of labour underutilization. According to ILO/ILOSTAT, the unemployment rate is defined as the share of persons in the labour force who are unemployed, that is, those of working age who are without work during the reference period, are currently available for work, and have actively sought employment (ILO, n.d.).¹⁹

In 2023, the unemployment rate declined to 17.9 percent, down from 21.5 percent in 2012, reflecting some improvement in labour absorption (Table 5-11). However, this decline conceals sharp disparities by age and gender. Among youth aged 15-19, unemployment remained extremely high at 51.1 percent, while for those aged 20-24 it stood at 28.3 percent in 2023, both well above the national average. These outcomes highlight persistent challenges faced by young labour force entrants.

Adults in the 30-49 age group registered relatively lower unemployment rates (13 to 17 percent), reflecting stronger attachment to the labor market. Older workers aged 50-64 also displayed moderate unemployment (12 to 15 percent), while among the 65 years and over age group, unemployment stood at 15.3 percent, suggesting that older individuals still seeking work face barriers comparable to the national average.

Gender disparities in unemployment remain persistent. In 2023, women recorded an unemployment rate of 19.8 percent, compared to 16.3 percent for men. In 2012, the rates were 23.5 percent for women and 19.8 percent for men, showing that while unemployment declined for both sexes, the gap has endured. Women remain more concentrated in less secure and lower-paying forms of work, such as domestic and service-related jobs, and are more affected by caregiving responsibilities, which can limit access to stable employment.

¹⁹ International Labour Organization. (n.d.). *Labour force statistics: Concepts and definitions*. ILOSTAT. Retrieved from <https://ilostat ilo.org/methods/concepts-and-definitions/description-labour-force-statistics/>

Table 5-11 Employment and Unemployment Rates by Age Group and Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023

| Age Group | 2001 | | 2012 | | 2023 | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| | Employment Rate | Unemployment Rate | Employment Rate | Unemployment Rate | Employment Rate | Unemployment Rate |
| Both sexes | | | | | | |
| 15–19 | 48.5 | 51.5 | 38.3 | 61.7 | 48.9 | 51.1 |
| 20–24 | 68.4 | 31.7 | 60.3 | 39.7 | 71.7 | 28.3 |
| 25–29 | 78.5 | 21.5 | 75.0 | 25.0 | 80.6 | 19.4 |
| 30–34 | 82.3 | 17.7 | 79.6 | 20.4 | 83.4 | 16.6 |
| 35–39 | 85.6 | 14.4 | 83.2 | 16.8 | 84.7 | 15.3 |
| 40–44 | 86.8 | 13.2 | 86.0 | 14.0 | 86.5 | 13.5 |
| 45–49 | 88.4 | 11.6 | 86.6 | 13.4 | 86.0 | 14.0 |
| 50–54 | 88.7 | 11.3 | 88.8 | 11.2 | 86.3 | 13.7 |
| 55–59 | 87.3 | 12.7 | 87.3 | 12.7 | 85.9 | 14.1 |
| 60–64 | 89.4 | 10.6 | 89.9 | 10.1 | 84.9 | 15.1 |
| 65+ | 93.9 | 6.1 | 84.5 | 15.5 | 84.7 | 15.3 |
| Total | 79.1 | 20.9 | 78.5 | 21.5 | 82.1 | 17.9 |
| Male | | | | | | |
| 15–19 | 49.8 | 50.2 | 43.1 | 56.9 | 52.0 | 48.0 |
| 20–24 | 67.5 | 32.5 | 65.4 | 34.6 | 72.8 | 27.2 |
| 25–29 | 77.0 | 23.0 | 77.3 | 22.7 | 83.5 | 16.5 |
| 30–34 | 81.3 | 18.8 | 81.9 | 18.1 | 85.2 | 14.8 |
| 35–39 | 83.6 | 16.4 | 85.2 | 14.8 | 86.1 | 13.9 |
| 40–44 | 84.8 | 15.2 | 86.9 | 13.1 | 88.3 | 11.7 |
| 45–49 | 85.9 | 14.1 | 87.2 | 12.9 | 87.4 | 12.6 |
| 50–54 | 85.9 | 14.2 | 89.2 | 10.8 | 87.7 | 12.3 |
| 55–59 | 84.8 | 15.2 | 86.4 | 13.7 | 86.6 | 13.4 |
| 60–64 | 87.0 | 13.0 | 89.8 | 10.2 | 86.4 | 13.6 |
| 65+ | 93.6 | 6.4 | 86.1 | 13.9 | 85.5 | 14.5 |
| Total | 77.6 | 22.5 | 80.6 | 19.4 | 83.7 | 16.3 |
| Female | | | | | | |
| 15–19 | 45.8 | 54.2 | 32.6 | 67.4 | 45.2 | 54.8 |
| 20–24 | 69.7 | 30.3 | 54.2 | 45.8 | 70.4 | 29.6 |
| 25–29 | 80.8 | 19.2 | 72.3 | 27.7 | 77.7 | 22.3 |
| 30–34 | 84.0 | 16.0 | 77.0 | 23.0 | 81.6 | 18.4 |
| 35–39 | 88.6 | 11.4 | 80.9 | 19.2 | 83.3 | 16.7 |
| 40–44 | 89.9 | 10.1 | 85.0 | 15.0 | 84.7 | 15.3 |
| 45–49 | 92.4 | 7.7 | 85.8 | 14.2 | 84.4 | 15.6 |
| 50–54 | 93.8 | 6.3 | 88.4 | 11.6 | 84.6 | 15.4 |
| 55–59 | 92.5 | 7.5 | 88.7 | 11.3 | 85.0 | 15.0 |
| 60–64 | 95.0 | 5.0 | 90.1 | 9.9 | 82.0 | 18.0 |
| 65+ | 94.6 | 5.4 | 81.2 | 18.8 | 82.8 | 17.2 |
| Total | 81.7 | 18.3 | 75.7 | 24.3 | 80.2 | 19.8 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Patterns of livelihood among the unemployed also shifted markedly (Table 5-12). In 2012, 70.2 percent relied on support from local friends or relatives, and 12.0 percent on overseas relatives. By 2023, these figures declined, giving way to more diverse support systems: 22.3 percent relied on parents, 15.2

percent on local relatives, and 14.7 percent on spouses or partners. Overseas remittances declined to 6.5 percent, while pensions, savings, and other forms of support grew in relative importance.

Table 5-12 Total Number of Persons Unemployed by Source of Livelihood, 2012 & 2023

| Sources of Livelihood | Number | percent |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| 2012 | | |
| Disability Benefits | 21 | 0.2 |
| Employment | 335 | 3.0 |
| Investments | 48 | 0.4 |
| Public Assistance | 118 | 1.1 |
| Pension (Local) | 108 | 1.0 |
| Pension (Overseas) | 37 | 0.3 |
| Savings or Interest on Savings | 751 | 6.7 |
| Subsistence Farming | 487 | 4.4 |
| Support From Friends or Relatives (Local - Cash or Kind) | 7,863 | 70.2 |
| Support From Friends or Relatives (Overseas - Cash or Kind) | 1,338 | 12.0 |
| Other | 1,273 | 11.4 |
| 2023 | | |
| Pension (Local) | 145 | 1.4 |
| Pension (Overseas) | 26 | 0.3 |
| Other (Unspecified) | 62 | 0.6 |
| Remittances (Overseas – Cash/Kind) | 229 | 2.3 |
| Savings/Interest on Savings | 950 | 9.4 |
| Employment | 744 | 7.3 |
| Disability Benefits | 17 | 0.2 |
| Unemployment Benefits | 30 | 0.3 |
| Social Security Benefits (NIS) | 73 | 0.7 |
| Other Public Assistance | 162 | 1.6 |
| Support from Friends/Relatives (Local - Cash/Kind) | 1,538 | 15.2 |
| Support from Friends/Relatives (Overseas - Cash/Kind) | 662 | 6.5 |
| Spouse/Partner Support (Cash/Kind) | 1,485 | 14.7 |
| Children Support (Cash/Kind) | 315 | 3.1 |
| Parent(s) Support (Cash/Kind) | 2,260 | 22.3 |
| Guardian(s) Support (Cash/Kind) | 91 | 0.9 |
| Farming (Backyard, Garden etc.) | 350 | 3.5 |
| Other (Specify) | 263 | 2.6 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The evidence shows that while unemployment has fallen since 2012, challenges remain entrenched. Youth and women continue to face disproportionate risks of unemployment, while reliance on household and kinship networks remains the dominant safety net. These findings reinforce the need for targeted policies to create decent jobs for young people and to reduce gendered barriers to employment.

5.7 Population Not in the Labour Force

The population not in the labour force includes persons aged 15 years and older who were neither employed nor actively seeking work during the reference period, such as students, retirees, homemakers, and those unable to work due to illness or disability (ILO, 2023).

In 2023, 29,679 persons were outside the labour force, a slight decline from 30,249 in 2012 (Table 5-13). Retirement was the main reason for inactivity, increasing from 25.5 percent in 2012 to 36.0 percent in 2023, consistent with population aging. School attendance remained high, though slightly lower at 21.1 percent in 2023 compared to 22.3 percent in 2012. Home duties also declined from 20.0 percent to 18.8 percent, while disability and illness fell from 8.3 percent to 7.2 percent. About 6.9 percent of the inactive population in 2023 reported looking for work or being available for work, showing some latent attachment to the labour market.

Table 5-13 Main Activity of the Economically Inactive Population, 2012 & 2023

| Main Activity in the Past Month | Count | percent |
|---|---------------|------------|
| 2012 | | |
| Own illness, disability, injury, pregnancy | 2,510 | 8.3 |
| Home duties, personal/family responsibilities | 6,052 | 20.0 |
| In school/training | 6,732 | 22.3 |
| Retirement/old age | 7,698 | 25.5 |
| Believe no work is available | 575 | 1.9 |
| Do not know how or where to seek work | 311 | 1.0 |
| Not yet started to seek work | 672 | 2.2 |
| Other | 726 | 2.4 |
| Not Stated | 4,973 | 16.4 |
| Total | 30,249 | 100 |
| 2023 | | |
| Had a job and worked | 1,474 | 5.0 |
| Had a job but did not work | 317 | 1.1 |
| Looked for work | 1,510 | 5.1 |
| Wanted work and available | 521 | 1.8 |
| Did home duties | 5,575 | 18.8 |
| Attended school/student | 6,251 | 21.1 |
| Retired, did not work | 10,688 | 36.0 |
| Disabled, unable to work | 2,148 | 7.2 |
| Other (Specify) | 877 | 3.0 |
| Not Stated | 318 | 1.1 |
| Total | 29,679 | 100 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Furthermore, sources of livelihood show notable shifts (Table 5-14). In 2012, local family support (50.2 percent) and overseas remittances (10.9 percent) were the dominant sources. By 2023, these declined to 7.4 percent and 3.9 percent, respectively. Pensions became more important, with local pensions rising

from 10.3 percent to 15.0 percent, while parental support grew sharply to 20.9 percent, the largest single source in 2023. Savings and interest also increased, from 2.9 percent in 2012 to 6.5 percent in 2023, while reliance on public assistance decreased from 7.2 percent to 5.4 percent.

Table 5-14 Economically Inactive population by Source of Livelihood, 2012 & 2023

| Sources of Livelihood | Count | percent |
|--|--------|---------|
| 2012 | | |
| Disability Benefits | 134 | 0.4 |
| Employment | 1,815 | 6.0 |
| Investments | 265 | 0.9 |
| Public Assistance | 2,173 | 7.2 |
| Pension (Local) | 3,104 | 10.3 |
| Pension (Overseas) | 1,496 | 4.9 |
| Savings or Interest on Savings | 877 | 2.9 |
| Subsistence Farming | 855 | 2.8 |
| Support From Friends or Relatives (Local - Cash or Kind) | 15,173 | 50.2 |
| Support From Friends or Relatives (Overseas - Cash or Kind) | 3,306 | 10.9 |
| Other | 3,059 | 10.1 |
| 2023 | | |
| Pension (local) | 4,443 | 15.0 |
| Pension (overseas) | 1,418 | 4.8 |
| Other (Unspecified) | 313 | 1.1 |
| Remittances (overseas – Cash/Kind) | 415 | 1.4 |
| Savings/interest on savings | 1,942 | 6.5 |
| Employment | 1,074 | 3.6 |
| Disability benefits | 226 | 0.8 |
| Unemployment benefits | 103 | 0.3 |
| Social security benefits (NIS) | 1,084 | 3.7 |
| Other public assistance | 1,608 | 5.4 |
| Support from friends/relatives (local – Cash/Kind) | 2,193 | 7.4 |
| Support from friends/relatives (Overseas – Cash/Kind) | 1,157 | 3.9 |
| Spouse/Partner Support (Cash/Kind) | 2,448 | 8.2 |
| Children Support (Cash/Kind) | 2,157 | 7.3 |
| Parent(s) Support (Cash/Kind) | 6,194 | 20.9 |
| Guardian(s) Support (Cash/Kind) | 259 | 0.9 |
| Farming (Backyard, garden etc.) | 445 | 1.5 |
| Other (specify) | 338 | 1.1 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Generally, while the size of the inactive population remained relatively stable, its composition has shifted. Retirement and formal sources of support such as pensions and savings are becoming more prominent, while reliance on remittances and informal transfers has declined. These shifts reflect both demographic ageing and changing household support systems, with a gradual move toward more formal and structured means of support.

5.8 Conclusion

The 2023 Census highlights a labour market that is larger and more engaged than in 2012, yet still marked by deep structural challenges. The working-age population has grown and aged, with participation improving modestly and unemployment declining to 17.9 percent. However, youth continue to struggle with high levels of joblessness, women remain underrepresented and face higher unemployment, and several rural divisions lag behind more diversified areas such as Kingstown and the Grenadines.

Additionally, employment is concentrated in services, while professional and technical roles are slowly expanding, and agriculture's relative importance is declining despite some growth in absolute jobs. Among those outside the labour force, retirement has become the leading reason for inactivity, and support systems have shifted toward pensions and savings, with declining reliance on remittances and informal transfers.

These dynamics show some progress in labour market absorption but also reveal ongoing challenges, including youth unemployment, persistent gender and regional gaps, and the probable growing demands on social support systems as the population ages.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER 5 ECONOMIC ACTIVITY



Labour Force Participation:

Of the 86,382 working-age persons, 56,604 (65.5%) were economically active in 2023



Labour Force Participation & Gender:

Men recorded a higher Labour Force Participation Rate (70.9%) than women (60.1%)



Overall Unemployment :

The unemployment rate stood at 17.9% nationally in 2023, with a lower rate among men (16.3%) than women (19.8%)



Youth Unemployment :

Unemployment was highest among young persons, reaching 51.1% for ages 15-19 and 28.3% for ages 20-24



Employment Status:

In 2023, 73.8% of employed persons were paid employees, mainly in private business (41.0%) and government (23.2%)



Inactive Population:

In 2023, the largest inactive groups were students (27.4%), retired persons (19.4%), and those in home duties (18.7%)

Chapter 6. Household and Housing Characteristics



6.1 Introduction

Household and housing characteristics are key measures of living standards and social well-being. They reflect not only the physical condition of housing but also access to essential services such as water, lighting, sanitation, and energy. These indicators provide insight into inequalities across regions and population groups and are closely linked to health, economic security, and environmental resilience.

Globally, adequate housing is embedded in the framework of sustainable development. According to the Global Goals, Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, one target is to ensure access for all to adequate, safe, and affordable housing and basic services by 2030 (Global Goals, n.d.)²⁰. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, comparing data from the 2012 and 2023 censuses provides a forward-looking view of how housing quality and household conditions are evolving in response to demographic, social, and economic change.

This chapter examines multiple dimensions of household and housing conditions across census divisions and over time. It explores materials of construction, dwelling size in terms of rooms and bedrooms, and access to key services such as lighting, water supply, cooking fuel, and toilet facilities. Through comparative analysis, the chapter highlights both gains in housing adequacy and the persistent challenges that remain.

6.2 Households

Households provide a vital lens for understanding demographic change. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the number of households has grown steadily from 16,940 in 1970 to 38,969 in 2023 (Table 6-1). Over the same period, average household size fell from 5.1 in 1970 to 3.0 in 2012 and to 2.8 persons in 2023. This decline reflects key demographic shifts such as falling fertility, increased female labour force participation, and migration, alongside social preferences for smaller family units and independent living.

Table 6-1 Number of Households and Average Size (1970-2023)

| Census Year | Household Population | Number of Households | Average Size |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| 1970 | 86944 | 16940 | 5.1 |
| 1980 | 97845 | 20290 | 4.8 |
| 1991 | 106499 | 27002 | 3.9 |
| 2001 | 107835 | 30558 | 3.5 |
| 2012 | 109188 | 36829 | 3.0 |
| 2023 | 108764 | 38969 | 2.8 |

Source: 2001 Population and Housing Census Report; 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

²⁰ Global Goals. (n.d.). *Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities*. Retrieved from <https://globalgoals.org/goals/11-sustainable-cities-and-communities/>

Census division data show that by 2023, most areas recorded fewer than three persons per household (Table 6-2). Sandy Bay had the largest average at 3.5, while the Southern Grenadines had the smallest at 2.2. These differences point to contrasting demographic and social dynamics: rural and traditional communities often maintain larger households due to extended family living, while urban and island divisions are more likely to experience smaller households influenced by aging populations, migration, and the rise of single-person or nuclear households.

Table 6-2 Average Household Size by Census Division, 2001, 2012 & 2023

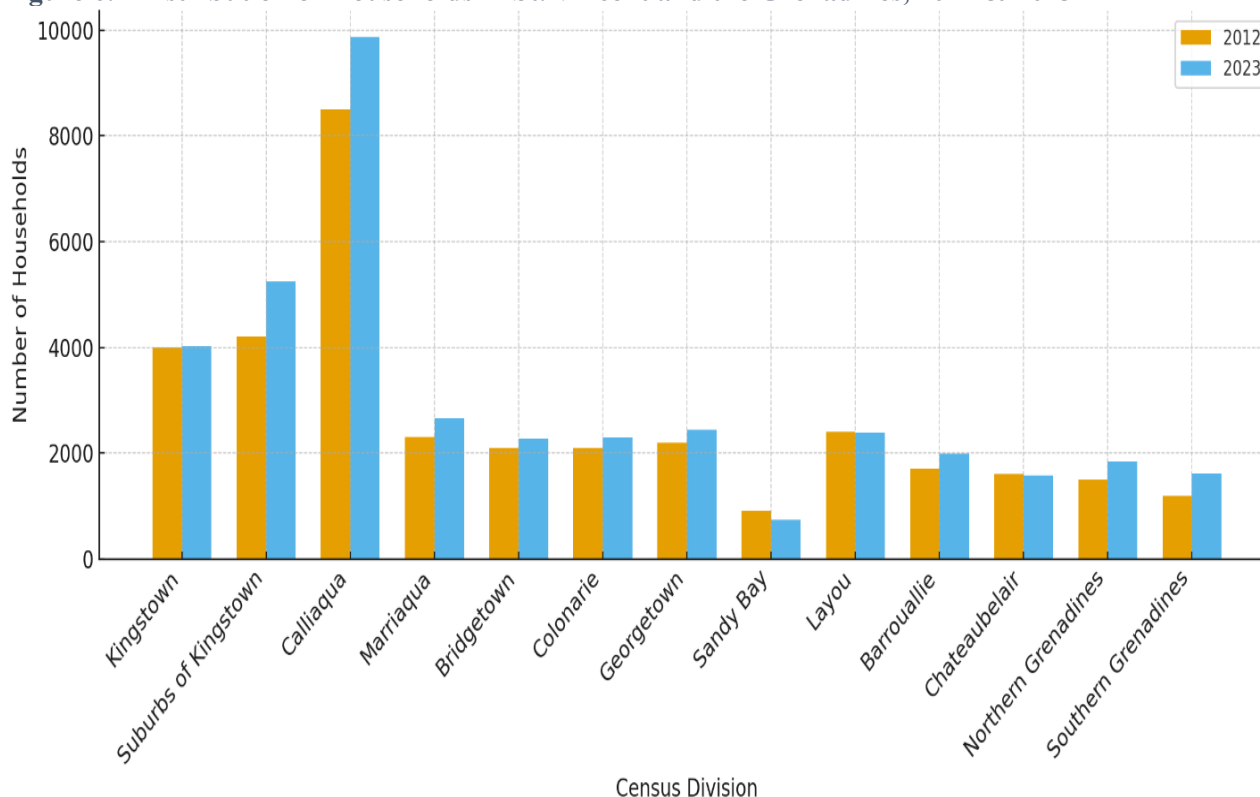
| Census Division | Average Household Size | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|------------|------------|
| | 2001 | 2012 | 2023 |
| Kingstown | 3.4 | 3.0 | 2.7 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 3.9 | 3.1 | 3.0 |
| Calliaqua | 3.4 | 2.8 | 2.7 |
| Marriaqua | 3.7 | 3.2 | 2.8 |
| Bridgetown | 3.7 | 3.1 | 2.8 |
| Colonarie | 3.8 | 3.2 | 2.9 |
| Georgetown | 3.6 | 3.2 | 2.9 |
| Sandy Bay | 4.2 | 3.9 | 3.5 |
| Layou | 3.4 | 2.9 | 2.7 |
| Barrouallie | 3.5 | 3.1 | 2.8 |
| Chateaubelair | 3.8 | 3.4 | 3.1 |
| Northern Grenadines | 3.1 | 2.3 | 2.8 |
| Southern Grenadines | 2.7 | 2.5 | 2.2 |
| Total | 3.5 | 3.0 | 2.8 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Household numbers have also expanded unevenly across divisions (Table 6-3). Calliaqua more than doubled from 3,710 households in 1980 to 9,877 in 2023, making it the largest division, followed by the Suburbs of Kingstown with 5,250. By contrast, smaller areas such as Sandy Bay and the Southern Grenadines reported 738 and 1,616 households, respectively. Such disparities illustrate the growing concentration of households in peri-urban and economically active regions.

Growth rates highlight strong geographic contrasts in household formation (Table 6-4). In earlier decades, particularly 1980-1991, most divisions saw rapid expansion, but the pace slowed considerably by 2012-2023, when national household growth fell to single digits. Peri-urban areas such as Calliaqua and the Suburbs of Kingstown continued to expand, reflecting their role as growing residential hubs. In contrast, urban core areas such as Kingstown and Chateaubelair recorded declines, consistent with patterns of ageing, migration, and slower household formation. These divergent trends illustrate how demographic and social shifts are reshaping the distribution of households across the country.

Figure 6.1 Distribution of Households in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, 2012 & 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 6-3 Total Households by Census Divisions (1980-2023)

| Census Division | Total Number of Households | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | 1980 | 1991 | 2001 | 2012 | 2023 |
| Kingstown | 3,761 | 4,175 | 3,983 | 4,278 | 4,021 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 1,711 | 2,551 | 3,378 | 4,385 | 5,250 |
| Calliaqua | 3,710 | 5,430 | 6,562 | 8,655 | 9,877 |
| Marriaqua | 1,633 | 2,167 | 2,206 | 2,436 | 2,669 |
| Bridgetown | 1,221 | 1,679 | 1,849 | 2,085 | 2,281 |
| Colonarie | 1,361 | 1,895 | 1,993 | 2,174 | 2,296 |
| Georgetown | 1,420 | 1,946 | 1,921 | 2,188 | 2,436 |
| Sandy Bay | 486 | 575 | 662 | 662 | 738 |
| Layou | 1,119 | 1,516 | 1,861 | 2,178 | 2,386 |
| Barrouallie | 1,021 | 1,393 | 1,577 | 1,806 | 1,986 |
| Chateaubelair | 1,232 | 1,449 | 1,603 | 1,669 | 1,580 |
| Northern Grenadines | 1,045 | 1,450 | 1,721 | 2,673 | 1,833 |
| Southern Grenadines | 570 | 776 | 1,242 | 1,640 | 1,616 |
| Total | 20,290 | 27,002 | 30,558 | 36,829 | 38,969 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 6-4 Percentage Change of Households by Census Divisions

| Census Division | Household Percentage Change | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| | 1980-1991 | 1991-2001 | 2001-2012 | 2012-2023 |
| Kingstown | 11.0 | -4.6 | 7.4 | -6.0 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 49.1 | 32.4 | 29.8 | 19.7 |
| Calliaqua | 46.4 | 20.8 | 31.9 | 14.1 |
| Marriaqua | 32.7 | 1.8 | 10.4 | 9.6 |
| Bridgetown | 37.5 | 10.1 | 12.8 | 9.4 |
| Colonarie | 39.2 | 5.2 | 9.1 | 5.6 |
| Georgetown | 37.0 | -1.3 | 13.9 | 11.3 |
| Sandy Bay | 18.3 | 15.1 | 0.0 | 11.5 |
| Layou | 35.5 | 22.8 | 17.0 | 9.6 |
| Barrouallie | 36.4 | 13.2 | 14.5 | 10.0 |
| Chateaubelair | 17.6 | 10.6 | 4.1 | -5.3 |
| Northern Grenadines | 38.8 | 18.7 | 55.3 | -31.4 |
| Southern Grenadines | 36.1 | 60.1 | 32.0 | -1.5 |
| Total | 33.1 | 13.2 | 20.5 | 5.8 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The combined effect of shrinking household size and uneven growth patterns has important implications. Smaller households increase demand for housing units even when population growth slows, while regional disparities intensify pressure on fast-growing areas.

6.3 Type of Dwelling

The type of dwelling provides insight into both housing quality and spatial settlement patterns across Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Detached or undivided private houses remain the dominant dwelling type, but data from 2012 and 2023 highlight a gradual diversification in the housing stock, especially in more urbanized census divisions.

In 2012, 85 percent of households resided in detached or undivided private houses (Table 6-7). By 2023, this share fell to 77.5 percent, even though the absolute number remained high at just over 30,000 units. This decline was offset by increases in attached dwellings, apartments, and duplexes. The proportion of households in part of a private house grew from 6.4 percent in 2012 to 9.2 percent in 2023, while flats or apartments increased from 5.3 percent to 6.2 percent. Duplex housing experienced the sharpest rise, tripling from 494 households in 2012 to 1,542 in 2023 (4 percent of all dwellings) (Table 6-7).

Census division data (Tables 6-5 and 6-6) reveal where these shifts are most pronounced. Calliaqua recorded 517 apartments in 2012, rising to 847 in 2023, accounting for more than one-third of the national total in both years. Similarly, attached dwellings in Calliaqua grew from 597 in 2012 to 832 in 2023. The Suburbs of Kingstown also saw marked increases, with attached dwellings rising from 256 to 725 and duplexes from 41 to 61 over the same period (Table 6-6). By contrast, rural divisions such as Marriaqua, Layou, and Barrouallie remain heavily dominated by detached houses, which made up over 80 percent of households in 2023. Still, modest shifts are visible, including the growth of duplexes in Layou (from 35 in 2012 to 70 in 2023) and the emergence of improvised housing in Marriaqua (from 1 in 2012 to 4 in 2023).

At the same time, the number of improvised structures (though a very small share overall) grew from just 9 in 2012 to 153 in 2023. Many of these were concentrated in the Grenadines and in selected rural areas, indicating ongoing housing vulnerability despite improvements elsewhere. The persistence of combined business-and-dwelling units, which rose slightly from 493 in 2012 to 577 in 2023, may highlight the continued integration of livelihood and residence, particularly in smaller towns and trading centers.

Table 6-5 Number of Households by Type of Dwelling, 2023

| Census Division | Separate house/ Detached / Undivided private house | Part of a private house/ Attached | Flat, Apartment/ Condominium | Townhouse | Double house/ Duplex | Combined business and dwelling | Barracks | Out- room | Yacht | Group dwelling | Improvised Housing Unit (Earth/ Leaves/ Branches etc) | Other (specify) | Not Stated | Total |
|-------------------------|---|--|------------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|---|----------|--------------|----------|-------------------|--|--------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Kingstown | 2,473 | 557 | 508 | 1 | 336 | 78 | - | - | - | 6 | 10 | 49 | 3 | 4,021 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 3,830 | 725 | 430 | 1 | 61 | 91 | 3 | - | - | - | 25 | 52 | 32 | 5,250 |
| Calliaqua | 7,308 | 832 | 847 | 13 | 648 | 128 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 46 | 19 | 27 | 9,877 |
| Marriaqua | 2,290 | 196 | 89 | 2 | 29 | 37 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 4 | 11 | 9 | 2,669 |
| Bridgetown | 2,063 | 41 | 74 | 6 | 21 | 31 | - | - | - | 2 | 10 | 27 | 6 | 2,281 |
| Colonarie | 2,043 | 107 | 18 | 3 | 63 | 35 | - | - | - | 2 | 8 | 12 | 5 | 2,296 |
| Georgetown | 2,206 | 73 | 85 | - | 15 | 13 | - | 2 | - | - | 11 | 17 | 14 | 2,436 |
| Sandy Bay | 681 | 26 | 1 | - | 15 | 5 | - | - | - | - | 3 | 1 | 6 | 738 |
| Layou | 1,819 | 330 | 55 | 1 | 70 | 38 | 1 | - | - | 2 | 6 | 49 | 15 | 2,386 |
| Barrouallie | 1,554 | 127 | 163 | 2 | 71 | 33 | - | - | - | - | 15 | 7 | 14 | 1,986 |
| Chateaubelair | 1,334 | 134 | 20 | - | 40 | 25 | - | - | - | - | 8 | 15 | 4 | 1,580 |
| Northern Grenadines | 1,397 | 319 | 32 | 10 | 35 | 29 | - | - | - | - | 5 | 6 | - | 1,833 |
| Southern Grenadines | 1,198 | 128 | 94 | 3 | 138 | 34 | 1 | - | - | - | 2 | 10 | 8 | 1,616 |
| Total | 30,196 | 3,595 | 2,416 | 42 | 1,542 | 577 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 16 | 153 | 275 | 143 | 38,969 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 6-6 Number of Households by Type of Dwelling, 2012

| Census Division | Undivided Private House | Part of a Private House | Flat/ Apartment | Townhouse | Double House/Duplex | Combined Business & Dwelling | Barrack | Group Dwelling | Improvised Housing Unit | Other | Not Stated | Total |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|------------|---------------------|------------------------------|-----------|----------------|-------------------------|-----------|------------|---------------|
| Kingstown | 3,209 | 468 | 442 | 4 | 69 | 66 | - | 4 | - | 7 | 9 | 4,278 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 3,756 | 256 | 258 | 2 | 41 | 44 | - | 9 | - | 11 | 8 | 4,385 |
| Calliaqua | 7,252 | 597 | 517 | 113 | 74 | 83 | 4 | 5 | - | 6 | 4 | 8,655 |
| Marriaqua | 2,200 | 164 | 33 | - | 8 | 21 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2,436 |
| Bridgetown | 1,818 | 53 | 91 | - | 72 | 45 | - | - | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2,085 |
| Colonarie | 2,014 | 107 | 10 | - | 11 | 28 | - | - | 1 | 3 | - | 2,174 |
| Georgetown | 2,039 | 99 | 3 | - | 3 | 26 | - | 3 | 1 | 14 | - | 2,188 |
| Sandy Bay | 543 | 18 | 62 | 14 | 4 | 18 | - | 1 | - | 2 | - | 662 |
| Layou | 1,873 | 140 | 96 | - | 35 | 31 | - | 2 | - | 1 | - | 2,178 |
| Barrouallie | 1,701 | 87 | 1 | - | 2 | 13 | - | - | - | 2 | - | 1,806 |
| Chateaubelair | 1,425 | 63 | 94 | - | 68 | 16 | - | 2 | 1 | - | - | 1,669 |
| Northern Grenadines | 2,386 | 116 | 31 | 2 | 72 | 54 | - | - | 4 | 5 | 3 | 2,673 |
| Southern Grenadines | 1,070 | 171 | 300 | 1 | 35 | 48 | 3 | 1 | - | 6 | 5 | 1,640 |
| Total | 31,286 | 2,339 | 1,938 | 136 | 494 | 493 | 10 | 31 | 9 | 60 | 33 | 36,829 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 6-7 Total and Percentage Household by Type of Dwelling, 2012 & 2023

| Type of Dwelling Unit | 2012 | | 2023 | |
|---|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Count | Percent | Count | Percent |
| Separate house/Detached/Undivided private house | 31,286 | 85.0 | 30,196 | 77.5 |
| Part of a private house/Attached | 2,339 | 6.4 | 3,595 | 9.2 |
| Flat, Apartment/Condominium | 1,938 | 5.3 | 2,416 | 6.2 |
| Townhouse | 136 | 0.4 | 42 | 0.1 |
| Double house/Duplex | 494 | 1.3 | 1,542 | 4.0 |
| Combined business and dwelling | 493 | 1.3 | 577 | 1.5 |
| Barracks | 10 | 0.0 | 7 | 0.0 |
| Out-room | - | - | 4 | 0.0 |
| Yacht | - | - | 3 | 0.0 |
| Group dwelling | 31 | 0.1 | 16 | 0.0 |
| Improvised Housing Unit (Earth/Leaves/Branches etc) | 9 | 0.0 | 153 | 0.4 |
| Other (specify) | 60 | 0.2 | 275 | 0.7 |
| Not Stated | 33 | 0.1 | 143 | 0.4 |
| Total | 36,829 | 100.0 | 38,969 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

6.4 Type of Tenure

Patterns of household tenure in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reveal both continuity and gradual transformation in housing arrangements. Ownership remains the dominant form of tenure, but the data show shifts in the balance between ownership, renting, and alternative arrangements over the past two decades.

Table 6-8 Total and Percentage Households by Type of Tenure, 2001, 2012 & 2023

| Type of Tenure of Dwelling Unit | 2001 | | 2012 | | 2023 | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Count | Percent | Count | Percent | Count | Percent |
| Owned Fully or with Mortgage | 23,130 | 75.7 | 28,987 | 78.7 | 28,572 | 73.3 |
| Rented Private (paying) | 3,903 | 12.8 | 4,181 | 11.4 | 5,073 | 13.0 |
| Rented Govt. (paying) | 37 | 0.1 | 63 | 0.2 | 83 | 0.2 |
| Rent free | 2,756 | 9.0 | 3,083 | 8.4 | 3,510 | 9.0 |
| Leased | 27 | 0.1 | 40 | 0.1 | 52 | 0.1 |
| Squatted | 133 | 0.4 | 203 | 0.5 | 307 | 0.8 |
| Other | 487 | 1.6 | 187 | 0.5 | 445 | 1.1 |
| Not Stated | - | - | - | - | 582 | 1.5 |
| Don't Know | 85 | 0.3 | 85 | 0.2 | 345 | 0.9 |
| Total | 30,558 | 100.0 | 36,829 | 100.0 | 38,969 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

In 2001, owner-occupied dwellings (fully owned or mortgaged) represented 23,130 households (75.7 percent), rising to 28,987 (78.7 percent) in 2012. By 2023, ownership grew only slightly to 28,572 households, but its share dropped to 73.3 percent, as other forms of tenure expanded more quickly (Table

6-8). This shift indicates that while ownership remains the preferred arrangement, alternative housing options are becoming increasingly significant.

Private rental housing shows the clearest growth. The number of households renting privately increased from 3,903 (12.8 percent) in 2001 to 4,181 (11.4 percent) in 2012, and further to 5,073 (13.0 percent) in 2023 (Table 6-8). These steady gains suggest a stronger role for the rental market, particularly in urban and peri-urban centers where housing demand outpaces the supply of owner-occupied homes. By contrast, government rental has remained negligible, with fewer than 100 households across all three census years.

Rent-free living also remains an important feature of the tenure landscape. In 2001, 2,756 households (9.0 percent) lived rent-free, increasing to 3,083 (8.4 percent) in 2012 and 3,510 (9.0 percent) in 2023. This stability highlights the continued role of family and informal support networks in meeting housing needs. Smaller categories such as leased dwellings and squatting also showed modest growth, with squatting rising from 133 (0.4 percent) in 2001 to 307 (0.8 percent) in 2023 (Table 6-8), possibly reflecting persistent challenges in affordability and access to secure housing.

Taken together, the data show that while ownership still dominates, the growing share of renting, squatting, and uncertain tenure points to diversifying housing arrangements and emerging pressures on land and housing security.

6.5 Year Dwelling was Built

The age profile of the housing stock in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines shows that a large share of households continues to occupy older dwellings. In 2012, 22.8 percent of households, or 8,384 units, reported living in homes built before 1980. By 2023, the data show that nearly half of all households (47.9 percent, or 18,676 units) were residing in dwellings constructed before 1999 (Table 6-9). This expansion highlights that much of the housing stock is aging, with limited recent construction to offset the reliance on older homes. The findings underscore the growing importance of maintenance and rehabilitation to ensure housing safety and resilience.

The distribution across construction periods further illustrates the slowdown in housing development over time. In 2012, relatively active building phases were recorded between 1990 and 1999, accounting for 16.7 percent (6,147 units), and between 2000 and 2005, at 11.6 percent (4,270 units). By 2023, the most significant additions since 1999 were from 1999-2004, contributing 13.3 percent (5,169 units), and 2005-2010, at 8.5 percent (3,313 units). More recent periods have been less productive: 2011-2016 added only 6.2 percent (2,425 units), while each year from 2017 to 2024 contributed less than 2 percent of the stock (Table 6-9). These figures confirm that housing growth has slowed sharply over the past decade.

Moreover, uncertainty in reporting remains, with 15.0 percent of households in 2023 and 23.6 percent in 2012 not specifying the year their dwelling was built. Even with these gaps, the data clearly show that the housing stock is becoming increasingly weighted toward older construction.

Table 6-9 Number of Households by Year Dwelling was Built 2012 & 2023

| Year Dwelling Built | Count | Percent |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 2012 | | |
| Before 1980 | 8,384 | 22.8 |
| 1980 – 1989 | 4,773 | 13.0 |
| 1990 – 1999 | 6,147 | 16.7 |
| 2000 – 2005 | 4,270 | 11.6 |
| 2006 | 590 | 1.6 |
| 2007 | 591 | 1.6 |
| 2008 | 551 | 1.5 |
| 2009 | 656 | 1.8 |
| 2010 | 665 | 1.8 |
| 2011 | 593 | 1.6 |
| 2012 | 252 | 0.7 |
| Don't Know | 8,705 | 23.6 |
| Not Stated | 653 | 1.8 |
| Total | 36,829 | 100 |
| 2023 | | |
| Before 1999 | 18,676 | 47.9 |
| 1999-2004 | 5,169 | 13.3 |
| 2005-2010 | 3,313 | 8.5 |
| 2011-2016 | 2,425 | 6.2 |
| 2017 | 527 | 1.4 |
| 2018 | 417 | 1.1 |
| 2019 | 434 | 1.1 |
| 2020 | 451 | 1.2 |
| 2021 | 409 | 1.0 |
| 2022 | 360 | 0.9 |
| 2023 | 210 | 0.5 |
| 2024 | 8 | 0.0 |
| Not Stated | 740 | 1.9 |
| Don't Know | 5,830 | 15.0 |
| Total | 38,969 | 100 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

6.6 Material of Outer Walls

The composition of outer wall materials highlights both resilience and disparity in housing construction across Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. In 2012, concrete and blocks overwhelmingly dominated, accounting for 25,723 dwellings or 69.9 percent of the housing stock (Table 6-11). By 2023, reporting distinctions separated “concrete” (18,121 dwellings, 46.5 percent) from “concrete and blocks” (15,038 dwellings, 38.6 percent) (Table 6-10). When combined, these materials continue to represent over 85 percent of all dwellings, underscoring the nation’s strong reliance on durable, hurricane- and climate-resilient construction. This dominance reflects broader shifts in building standards, urban expansion, and household investment in permanence.

At the same time, the use of traditional construction materials has fallen. Wooden dwellings declined from 3,619 units (9.8 percent) in 2012 to 2,093 units (5.4 percent) in 2023, marking a nearly 42 percent drop in absolute numbers (Table 6-11). This reduction is especially pronounced in urban and peri-urban divisions where housing policies and market demand favor concrete structures. However, hybrid materials such as wood and concrete edged upward slightly, from 2,473 dwellings (6.7 percent) in 2012 to 2,676 (6.9 percent) in 2023 (Table 6-10). These incremental or mixed-material houses often represent transitional housing strategies that balance cost constraints with aspirations for durability.

Spatial patterns reveal important contrasts. Calliaqua remains the largest contributor, recording 4,380 concrete units and 4,194 concrete-and-block dwellings in 2023, together representing nearly a quarter of the national total. The Suburbs of Kingstown also saw significant concentrations, with 2,766 concrete units and 1,812 concrete and blocks. By comparison, rural divisions such as Sandy Bay (536 concrete and block units) and the Southern Grenadines (377 concrete and block units) still report higher shares of wood and mixed-material dwellings in 2023 (Table 6-10), reflecting both economic constraints and exposure to housing vulnerability.

Minor categories such as stone, brick, and wattle/adobe have largely disappeared, with fewer than 200 dwellings combined in 2023. While their presence is marginal, they highlight residual reliance on outdated or improvised structures in some communities. Notably, the persistence of 153 improvised units in 2023 (Table 6-7) indicates that a small segment of the population remains in fragile housing, raising concerns about vulnerability to natural hazards and the adequacy of shelter in these areas.

Table 6-10 Number of Households by Type of Construction Material and Census Division, 2023

| Census Division | Wood | Wood and brick | Wood and concrete | Wood and galvanize | Concrete | Concrete and blocks | Stone | Stone and brick | Wattle/Adobe/Tapia | Other (specify) | Total |
|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------------|-----------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Kingstown | 172 | 25 | 392 | 21 | 2,499 | 880 | 13 | 13 | - | 6 | 4,021 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 268 | 51 | 262 | 56 | 2,766 | 1,812 | 1 | 15 | 2 | 17 | 5,250 |
| Calliaqua | 440 | 76 | 593 | 141 | 4,380 | 4,194 | 5 | 25 | 4 | 19 | 9,877 |
| Marriaqua | 131 | 13 | 199 | 24 | 1,618 | 661 | 14 | 4 | - | 5 | 2,669 |
| Bridgetown | 95 | 10 | 115 | 25 | 1,071 | 939 | - | 1 | - | 25 | 2,281 |
| Colonarie | 107 | 23 | 168 | 34 | 924 | 1,021 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 14 | 2,296 |
| Georgetown | 181 | 28 | 144 | 59 | 1,151 | 830 | - | 9 | 1 | 33 | 2,436 |
| Sandy Bay | 19 | 3 | 21 | 9 | 145 | 536 | - | 3 | 1 | 1 | 738 |
| Layou | 179 | 37 | 150 | 33 | 632 | 1,347 | - | 5 | - | 3 | 2,386 |
| Barrouallie | 103 | 10 | 161 | 25 | 582 | 1,105 | - | - | - | - | 1,986 |
| Chateaubelair | 55 | 8 | 80 | 13 | 366 | 1,054 | - | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1,580 |
| Northern Grenadines | 189 | 6 | 232 | 15 | 1,096 | 282 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 1,833 |
| Southern Grenadines | 154 | 21 | 159 | 7 | 891 | 377 | 2 | 1 | - | 4 | 1,616 |
| Total | 2,093 | 311 | 2,676 | 462 | 18,121 | 15,038 | 38 | 82 | 13 | 135 | 38,969 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 6-11 Number of Households by Type of Construction Material and Census Division, 2012

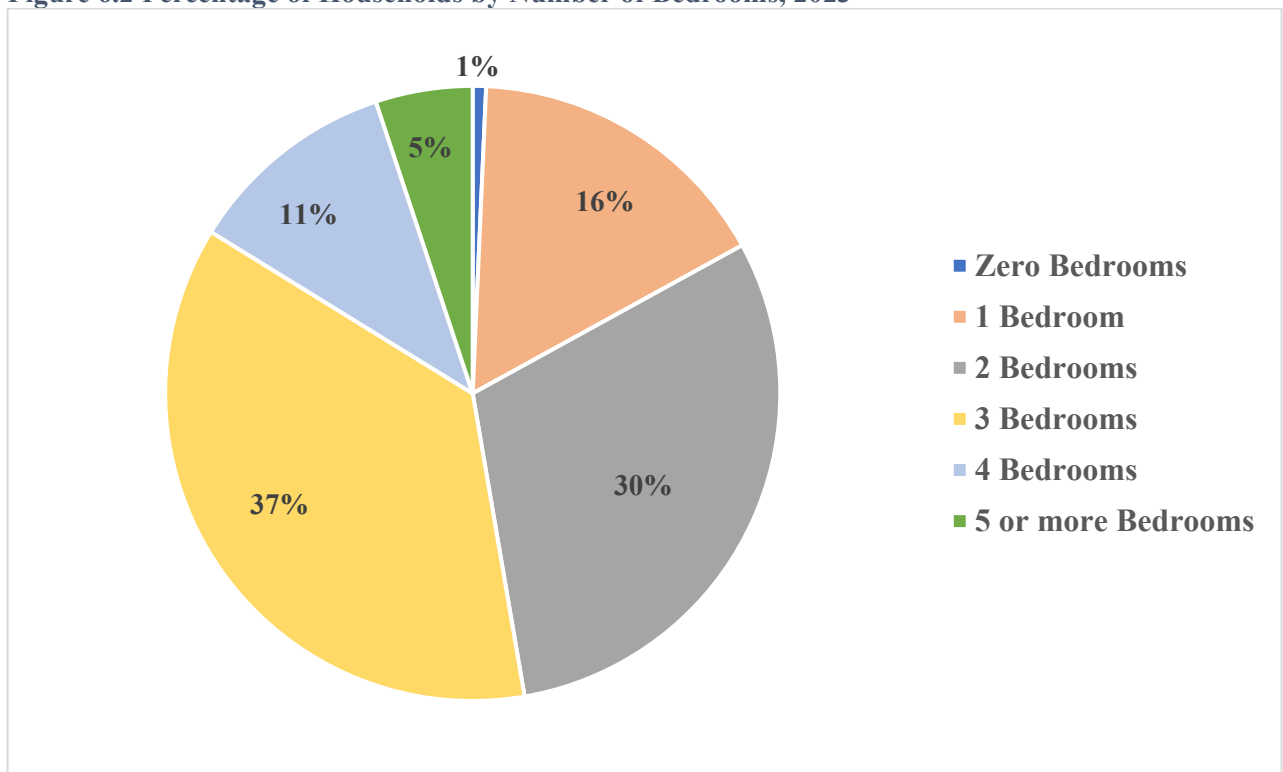
| Census Division | Stone | Brick | Concrete | Concrete and Blocks | Wood and Brick | Wood and Concrete | Wood and Galvanize | Wood | Wattle Adobe | Other | Not Stated | Total |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|--------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| Kingstown | 45 | 56 | 586 | 2,666 | 55 | 331 | 44 | 470 | - | 18 | 7 | 4,278 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 38 | 52 | 428 | 3,044 | 41 | 261 | 91 | 423 | - | 7 | - | 4,385 |
| Calliaqua | 115 | 180 | 819 | 6,167 | 81 | 413 | 102 | 726 | 2 | 43 | 5 | 8,655 |
| Marriaqua | 14 | 29 | 140 | 1,738 | 27 | 188 | 27 | 267 | - | 1 | 3 | 2,436 |
| Bridgetown | 24 | 36 | 340 | 1,336 | 14 | 119 | 39 | 166 | - | 8 | 3 | 2,085 |
| Colonarie | 14 | 44 | 117 | 1,609 | 24 | 88 | 47 | 216 | 1 | 14 | 1 | 2,174 |
| Georgetown | 4 | 25 | 55 | 1,620 | 12 | 124 | 47 | 294 | 4 | 4 | - | 2,188 |
| Sandy Bay | 10 | 16 | 224 | 333 | 9 | 25 | 9 | 35 | - | - | - | 662 |
| Layou | 22 | 23 | 100 | 1,508 | 27 | 182 | 28 | 286 | 2 | - | 1 | 2,178 |
| Barrouallie | 11 | 4 | 23 | 1,480 | 15 | 106 | 17 | 144 | - | 2 | 1 | 1,806 |
| Chateaubelair | 15 | 17 | 3 | 1,406 | 11 | 87 | 33 | 75 | 21 | 1 | - | 1,669 |
| Northern Grenadines | 9 | 21 | 135 | 1,740 | 55 | 371 | 28 | 293 | 2 | 16 | 3 | 2,673 |
| Southern Grenadines | 18 | 31 | 80 | 1,078 | 11 | 178 | 12 | 222 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 1,640 |
| Total | 337 | 533 | 3,049 | 25,723 | 384 | 2,473 | 523 | 3,619 | 36 | 119 | 31 | 36,829 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

6.7 Number of Rooms

The number of bedrooms in a household is a key measure of housing adequacy and crowding. In 2023, the distribution was concentrated in smaller to mid-sized dwellings, as shown in Table 6-12 and Figure 6.2. Households with three bedrooms accounted for approximately 37 percent of the total, followed by two-bedroom households at 30 percent and one-bedroom households at 16 percent. Four-bedroom households represented about 11 percent, while zero-bedroom households accounted for roughly 1 percent. Collectively, these categories accounted for the vast majority of homes. At the upper end, households with five or more bedrooms accounted for about 5 percent of all households, suggesting a modest expansion in larger dwellings.

Figure 6.2 Percentage of Households by Number of Bedrooms, 2023

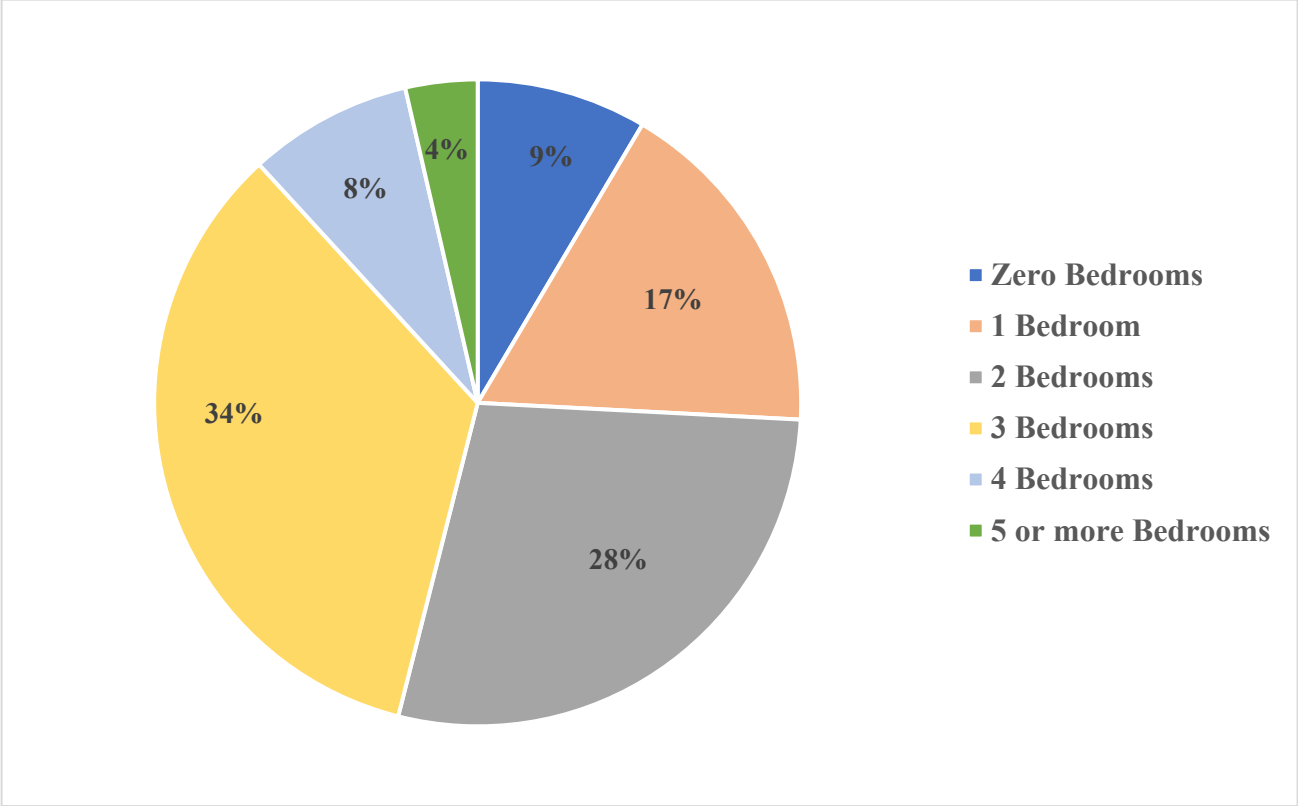


Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

In 2012, the pattern was also concentrated in smaller to mid-sized dwellings, as shown in Table 6-13 and Figure 6.3. Households with three bedrooms accounted for approximately 34 percent, followed by two-bedroom households at 28 percent and one-bedroom households at 17 percent. Four-bedroom households represented about 8 percent, while zero-bedroom households accounted for roughly 9 percent. At the upper end, only about 4 percent of households had five or more bedrooms, confirming that larger, more spacious housing was relatively uncommon in 2012. The census division data reveal where these differences are most pronounced. Calliaqua stood out in both 2012 and 2023, reporting 2,242 two-bedroom and 3,203 three-bedroom households in 2012, growing to 2,802 and 3,655, respectively,

in 2023. Similarly, the Suburbs of Kingstown maintained a concentration of mid-sized dwellings, with three-bedroom houses rising from 1,365 to 1,968 (Tables 6-12 and 6-13). By contrast, rural areas such as Marriaqua and Layou remained anchored in smaller homes, with fewer households transitioning into larger categories. The Grenadines also showed relatively small numbers overall, reflecting their lower household base.

Figure 6.3 Percentage of Households by Number of Bedrooms, 2012



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

A comparison of the two years indicates a modest shift toward larger dwellings. Three-bedroom households increased from about 34 percent in 2012 to 36 percent in 2023, while two-bedroom households rose from 28 percent to 30 percent. Four-bedroom households also increased, from roughly 8 percent to 11 percent. At the upper end, households with five bedrooms increased from 918 in 2012 to 1,390 in 2023, while six-bedroom dwellings rose from 246 to 459 (Tables 6-12 and 6-13). These changes suggest gradual improvements in living space and housing adequacy over the intercensal period.

Together, the tables and figures point to a housing landscape still dominated by smaller and mid-sized homes, but with gradual improvement at the upper end, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas.

Table 6-12 Number of Households by Number of Bedrooms and Census Division, 2023

| Census Division | Zero | One | Two | Three | Four | Five | Six | Seven | Eight + | Total |
|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| Kingstown | 39 | 632 | 1,175 | 1,383 | 517 | 208 | 43 | 13 | 11 | 4,021 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 66 | 778 | 1,707 | 1,968 | 514 | 152 | 57 | 5 | 3 | 5,250 |
| Calliaqua | 89 | 1,434 | 2,802 | 3,655 | 1,183 | 446 | 197 | 54 | 17 | 9,877 |
| Marriaqua | 2 | 417 | 773 | 983 | 356 | 97 | 30 | 6 | 5 | 2,669 |
| Bridgetown | 7 | 404 | 704 | 836 | 225 | 83 | 13 | 6 | 3 | 2,281 |
| Colonarie | 16 | 363 | 722 | 870 | 249 | 57 | 14 | 4 | 1 | 2,296 |
| Georgetown | 11 | 458 | 790 | 921 | 197 | 50 | 8 | 1 | - | 2,436 |
| Sandy Bay | 4 | 137 | 201 | 251 | 111 | 25 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 738 |
| Layou | 7 | 426 | 695 | 849 | 302 | 83 | 15 | 6 | 3 | 2,386 |
| Barrouallie | 3 | 337 | 583 | 741 | 232 | 59 | 30 | 1 | - | 1,986 |
| Chateaubelair | 5 | 224 | 493 | 588 | 185 | 57 | 27 | - | 1 | 1,580 |
| Northern Grenadines | 1 | 272 | 610 | 733 | 155 | 48 | 11 | 2 | 1 | 1,833 |
| Southern Grenadines | 9 | 464 | 569 | 431 | 98 | 25 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 1,616 |
| Total | 259 | 6,346 | 11,824 | 14,209 | 4,324 | 1,390 | 459 | 107 | 51 | 38,969 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 6-13 Number of Households by Number of Bedrooms and Census Division, 2012

| Census Division | Zero | One | Two | Three | Four | Five | Six | Seven | Eight | Nine+ | Total |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Kingstown | 345 | 711 | 1,176 | 1,415 | 427 | 147 | 41 | 10 | 5 | 2 | 4,278 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 398 | 747 | 1,365 | 1,337 | 354 | 121 | 37 | 11 | 13 | 1 | 4,385 |
| Calliaqua | 745 | 1,248 | 2,242 | 3,203 | 814 | 275 | 74 | 33 | 15 | 5 | 8,655 |
| Marriaqua | 225 | 406 | 720 | 794 | 196 | 64 | 18 | 4 | 8 | - | 2,436 |
| Bridgetown | 149 | 343 | 637 | 753 | 136 | 47 | 15 | 1 | 4 | - | 2,085 |
| Colonarie | 165 | 433 | 655 | 677 | 185 | 35 | 12 | 3 | 9 | - | 2,174 |
| Georgetown | 161 | 495 | 595 | 745 | 146 | 29 | 10 | 3 | 4 | - | 2,188 |
| Sandy Bay | 52 | 99 | 209 | 226 | 59 | 15 | 2 | - | - | - | 662 |
| Layou | 242 | 386 | 554 | 763 | 160 | 52 | 10 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 2,178 |
| Barrouallie | 194 | 357 | 488 | 572 | 135 | 42 | 11 | 3 | 3 | - | 1,806 |
| Chateaubelair | 128 | 297 | 487 | 577 | 144 | 25 | 6 | 1 | 3 | - | 1,669 |
| Northern Grenadines | 171 | 400 | 728 | 1,116 | 197 | 51 | 7 | 2 | 2 | - | 2,673 |
| Southern Grenadines | 158 | 447 | 509 | 424 | 78 | 14 | 3 | 4 | 2 | - | 1,640 |
| Total | 3,134 | 6,368 | 10,364 | 12,603 | 3,032 | 918 | 246 | 79 | 72 | 11 | 36,829 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 6-14 Number of Households by Number of Bedrooms and Census Division, 2023

| Census Division | Zero | One | Two | Three | Four | Five | Six | Seven | Eight + | Total |
|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| Kingstown | 39 | 632 | 1,175 | 1,383 | 517 | 208 | 43 | 13 | 11 | 4,021 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 66 | 778 | 1,707 | 1,968 | 514 | 152 | 57 | 5 | 3 | 5,250 |
| Calliaqua | 89 | 1,434 | 2,802 | 3,655 | 1,183 | 446 | 197 | 54 | 17 | 9,877 |
| Marriaqua | 2 | 417 | 773 | 983 | 356 | 97 | 30 | 6 | 5 | 2,669 |
| Bridgetown | 7 | 404 | 704 | 836 | 225 | 83 | 13 | 6 | 3 | 2,281 |
| Colonarie | 16 | 363 | 722 | 870 | 249 | 57 | 14 | 4 | 1 | 2,296 |
| Georgetown | 11 | 458 | 790 | 921 | 197 | 50 | 8 | 1 | - | 2,436 |
| Sandy Bay | 4 | 137 | 201 | 251 | 111 | 25 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 738 |
| Layou | 7 | 426 | 695 | 849 | 302 | 83 | 15 | 6 | 3 | 2,386 |
| Barrouallie | 3 | 337 | 583 | 741 | 232 | 59 | 30 | 1 | - | 1,986 |
| Chateaubelair | 5 | 224 | 493 | 588 | 185 | 57 | 27 | - | 1 | 1,580 |
| Northern Grenadines | 1 | 272 | 610 | 733 | 155 | 48 | 11 | 2 | 1 | 1,833 |
| Southern Grenadines | 9 | 464 | 569 | 431 | 98 | 25 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 1,616 |
| Total | 259 | 6,346 | 11,824 | 14,209 | 4,324 | 1,390 | 459 | 107 | 51 | 38,969 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

6.8 Main Source of Lighting

Access to reliable lighting is a critical aspect of housing quality and modern living standards, reflecting both the reach of infrastructure and household affordability. The 2012 Census revealed that the overwhelming majority of households in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, 32,721 or 88.9 percent, relied on electricity supplied publicly through the national grid. Small numbers also reported electricity from private generators (103 households, or 0.3 percent) and gas-powered lighting (241 households, or 0.7 percent). Traditional sources such as kerosene lamps remained in limited use (939 households, or 2.6 percent), while solar was almost negligible at just 33 households (Table 6-14). Notably, 373 households reported having no lighting, underscoring persistent energy poverty, particularly in rural or remote areas.

By 2023, access to electricity through the public grid had expanded significantly, reaching 36,238 households or 93 percent of all households, reflecting continued improvements in national electrification. Dependence on private generators declined slightly to 90 households, while gas lighting dropped to only 32 households. Kerosene lighting also fell sharply to 341 households, representing less than 1 percent, signaling a clear retreat from traditional, less efficient sources. Solar energy, though still relatively small, grew more than fivefold, from 167 households in 2018 to 867 in 2020, pointing to the gradual adoption of renewable energy solutions (Table 6-14). Despite this progress, 1,092 households (2.8 percent) still reported no lighting, a higher figure than in 2012, suggesting affordability and access challenges for specific groups.

Census division data highlight the spatial distribution of lighting sources. In 2012, Calliaqua recorded the largest share of households using public electricity (7,948), followed by Kingstown (3,942). By 2023, Calliaqua's reliance had expanded to 9,311 households, maintaining its dominance, while the Suburbs of Kingstown increased to 4,883 from 3,910 in 2012. In contrast, the Grenadines reported relatively lower totals, with the Northern Grenadines falling from 2,444 public electricity users in 2012 to 1,737 in 2023, suggesting potential challenges in energy coverage (Table 6-14). Moreover, the persistence of kerosene, none, and "other" sources was also more pronounced in the Grenadines.

The shift away from kerosene and gas toward electricity and, to a smaller extent, solar reflects broader development progress. The data suggest not only improvements in electrical infrastructure but also an evolving energy landscape in which renewable options are gaining traction. However, the overall increase in households without lighting between 2012 and 2023 raises concerns about affordability gaps or disconnection issues, which may disproportionately affect vulnerable groups.

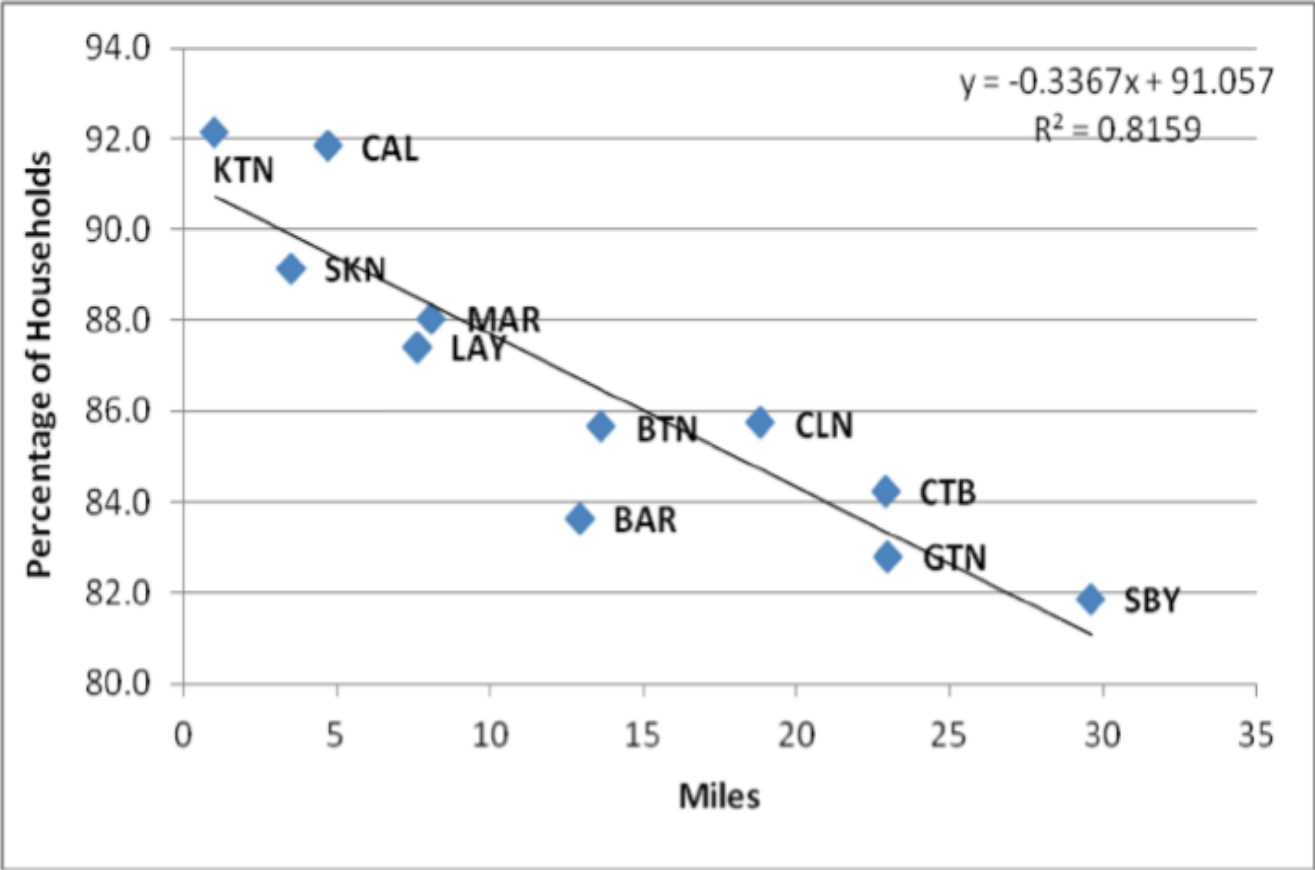
Table 6-15 Number of Households by Type of Lighting Used, 2012 & 2023

| Census Division | Main Source of Lighting | | | | | | | | Total |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| | Electricity - Public | Electricity - Private Generator | Gas | Kerosene | Solar | None | Other | Not Stated | |
| 2012 | | | | | | | | | |
| Kingstown | 3,942 | 8 | 6 | 87 | - | 39 | 133 | 63 | 4,278 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 3,910 | 8 | 32 | 126 | 5 | 24 | 197 | 84 | 4,385 |
| Calliaqua | 7,948 | 30 | 39 | 189 | 6 | 68 | 315 | 60 | 8,655 |
| Marriaqua | 2,144 | 5 | 11 | 71 | 1 | 25 | 167 | 11 | 2,436 |
| Bridgetown | 1,786 | - | 8 | 49 | 2 | 21 | 193 | 26 | 2,085 |
| Colonarie | 1,864 | 4 | 8 | 68 | - | 40 | 170 | 20 | 2,174 |
| Georgetown | 1,811 | 10 | 10 | 88 | 2 | 32 | 228 | 6 | 2,188 |
| Sandy Bay | 542 | 4 | 9 | 42 | - | 17 | 42 | 6 | 662 |
| Layou | 1,903 | 3 | 30 | 51 | 5 | 22 | 134 | 29 | 2,178 |
| Barrouallie | 1,510 | 9 | 17 | 69 | 1 | 27 | 119 | 53 | 1,806 |
| Chateaubelair | 1,406 | 3 | 20 | 38 | 2 | 14 | 158 | 28 | 1,669 |
| Northern Grenadines | 2,444 | 10 | 30 | 40 | 7 | 26 | 108 | 9 | 2,673 |
| Southern Grenadines | 1,511 | 8 | 21 | 22 | 3 | 18 | 38 | 20 | 1,640 |
| Total | 32,721 | 103 | 241 | 939 | 33 | 373 | 2,003 | 416 | 36,829 |
| 2023 | | | | | | | | | |
| Kingstown | 3,856 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 16 | 57 | 81 | 1 | 4,021 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 4,883 | 9 | 9 | 29 | 28 | 81 | 188 | 23 | 5,250 |
| Calliaqua | 9,311 | 26 | 4 | 78 | 27 | 217 | 201 | 13 | 9,877 |
| Marriaqua | 2,502 | 1 | - | 10 | 10 | 64 | 78 | 4 | 2,669 |
| Bridgetown | 2,057 | 3 | - | 40 | 7 | 101 | 72 | 1 | 2,281 |
| Colonarie | 2,094 | - | - | 4 | 1 | 118 | 76 | 3 | 2,296 |
| Georgetown | 2,196 | 26 | 8 | 24 | 7 | 118 | 56 | 1 | 2,436 |
| Sandy Bay | 634 | - | - | 17 | 4 | 54 | 27 | 2 | 738 |
| Layou | 2,173 | 4 | 2 | 65 | 25 | 72 | 43 | 2 | 2,386 |
| Barrouallie | 1,804 | 5 | 7 | 24 | 6 | 84 | 51 | 5 | 1,986 |
| Chateaubelair | 1,455 | 1 | 1 | 14 | 9 | 62 | 36 | 2 | 1,580 |
| Northern Grenadines | 1,737 | 6 | - | 27 | 13 | 40 | 10 | - | 1,833 |
| Southern Grenadines | 1,536 | 2 | - | 7 | 14 | 24 | 26 | 7 | 1,616 |
| Total | 36,238 | 90 | 32 | 341 | 167 | 1,092 | 945 | 64 | 38,969 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

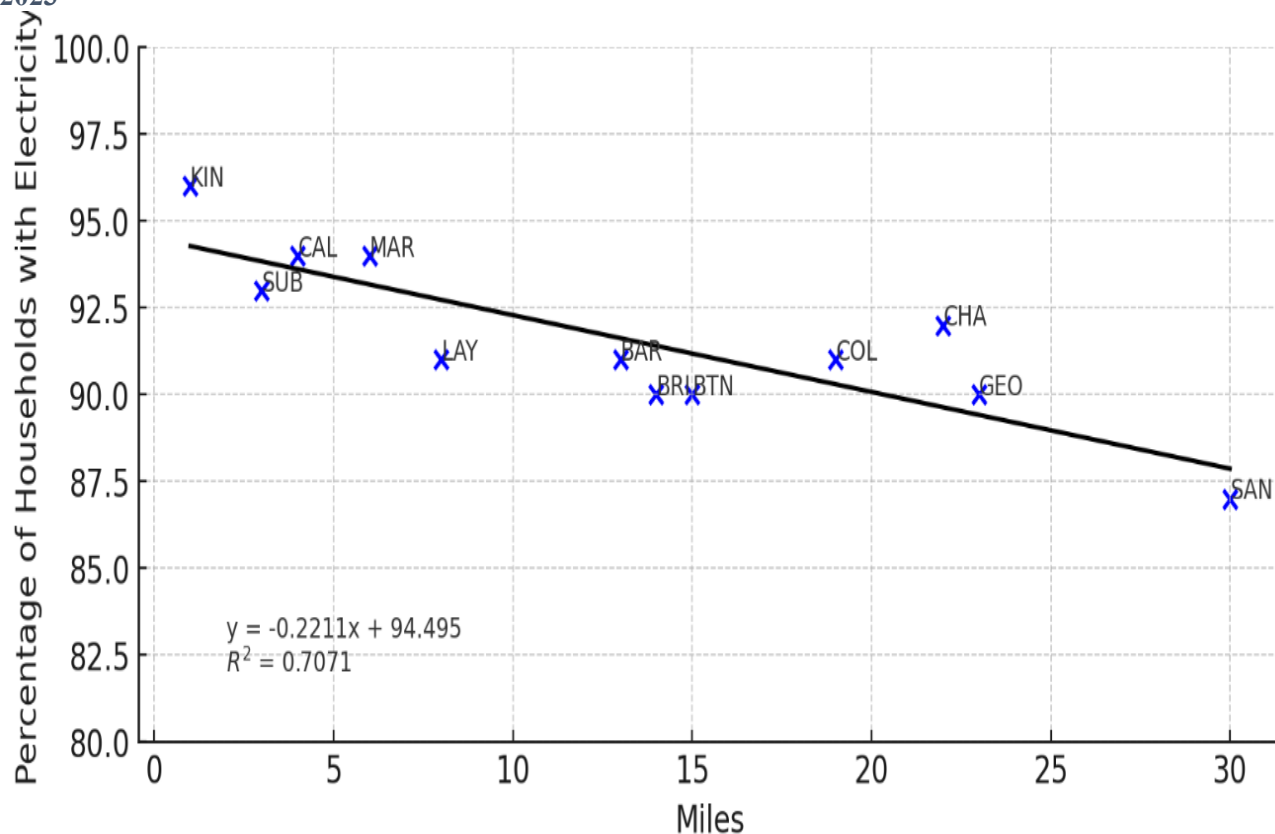
On mainland St. Vincent, there is a consistent inverse relationship between proximity to the main urban center and the rate of public electricity penetration. In 2012, the proportion of households without electricity increased by an average of 0.3 percent for every additional mile from Kingstown, with distance explaining 81.6 percent of the variation in public electricity penetration (Figure 6.4). By 2023, the pattern persisted, though with a weaker strength of association. On average, households without electricity increased by about 0.2 percent per mile, and distance accounted for 70.7 percent of the variation in electricity penetration across census divisions (Figure 6.5). These findings suggest that while distance from Kingstown continues to influence access to electricity, the strength of this relationship has declined over time. Table 6-15 on the following page provides the reference data underpinning these calculations.

Figure 6.4 Relationship between Distance from Main Urban Center and Public Electricity Penetration, 2012



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Figure 6.5 Relationship between Distance from Main Urban Centre and Public Electricity Penetration, 2023



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

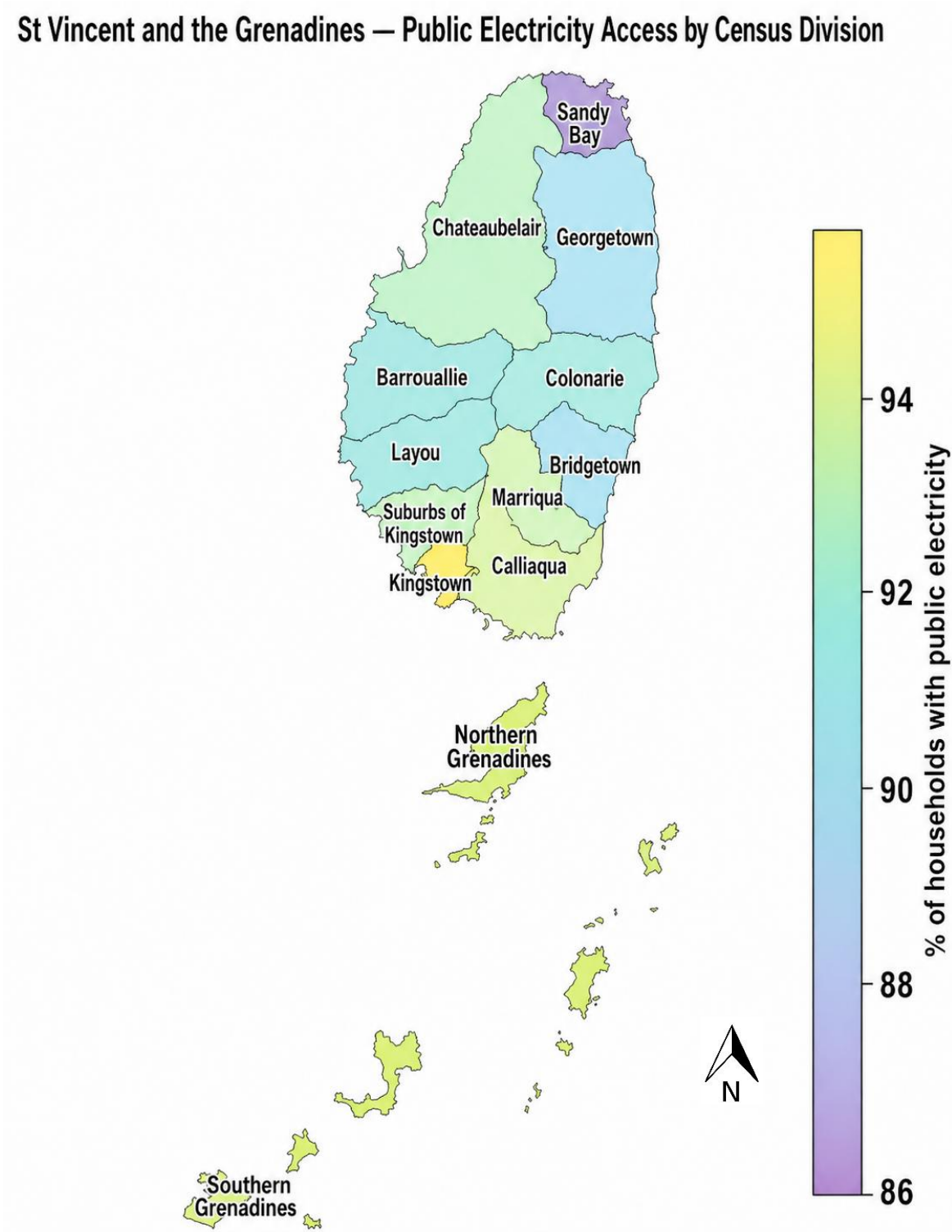
Table 6-16 Distance from Urban Centre

| Census Division | Abbreviation | Reference Point | Distance (Miles) |
|----------------------|--------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| Kingstown | KTN | Radius from Court House | 1.0 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | SKN | Questelles Police Station | 3.5 |
| Calliaqua | CAL | Calliaqua Police Station | 4.7 |
| Marriaqua | MAR | Mesopotamia Primary School | 8.1 |
| Bridgetown | BTN | Biabou Police Station | 13.6 |
| Colonaire | CLN | Colonaire Police Station | 18.8 |
| Georgetown | GTN | Caratal Bridge | 23.0 |
| Sandy Bay | SBY | Sandy Bay Police Station | 29.6 |
| Layout | LAY | Velox Corner | 7.6 |
| Barrouallie | BAR | Kearnton's Playing Field | 12.9 |
| Chateaubelair | CTB | Chateaubelair Police Station | 22.9 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Moreover, Map 2, shows the penetration of public electricity, as a main source of lighting, by census divisions. Map 2 illustrates that the census divisions of Kingstown (96 percent) and Calliaqua (94 percent) had the highest concentration of public electricity as a main source of lighting. Both fell within the range of 94 - 96 percent. The census division of Sandy Bay, at 86 percent, had the least concentration of public electricity as a source of lighting. In addition, the number of households using Private generators and Kerosene as a main source of lighting declined by 87.2 percent and 76.0 percent, respectively. By 2023, the use of gas lanterns had become negligible, following earlier increases noted between 2001 and 2012.

St Vincent and the Grenadines — Public Electricity Access by Census Division

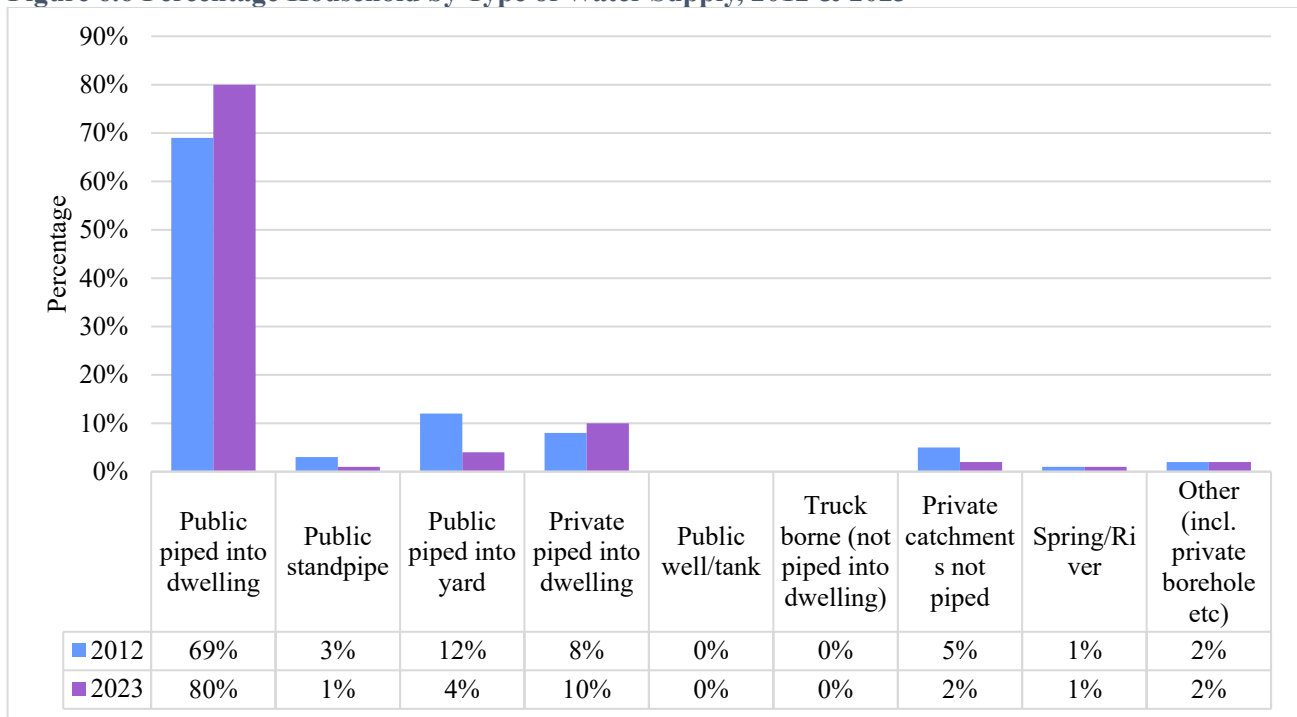


Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

6.9 Main Source of Water

Access to a reliable water supply is a key dimension of housing quality and public health. Between 2012 and 2023, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines registered notable progress in expanding household connections to improved water sources. The census data reveal that piped water into dwellings has become the dominant supply type nationwide, reducing reliance on public standpipes, private catchments, and other less secure sources. These improvements underscore investments in infrastructure, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas, while also highlighting persistent disparities in the Grenadines.

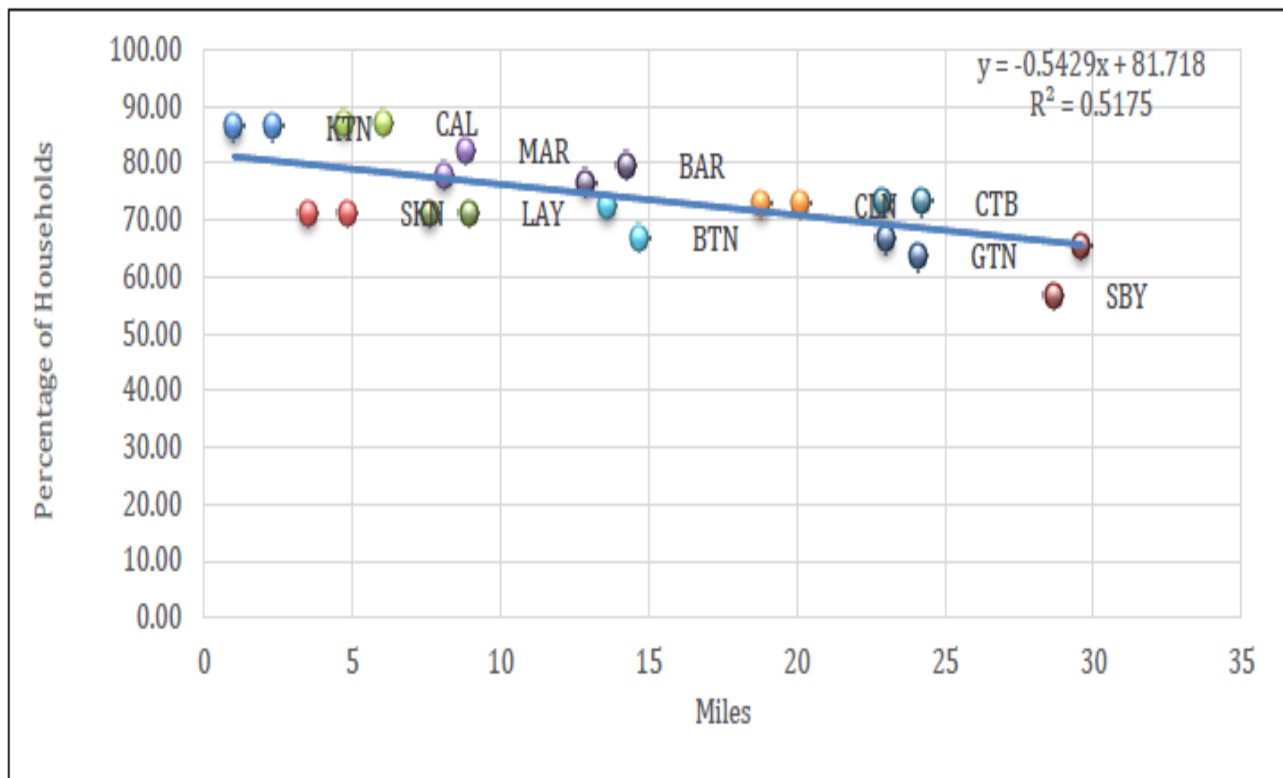
Figure 6.6 Percentage Household by Type of Water Supply, 2012 & 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

In 2012, about 71 percent of households (25,365) reported having water piped directly into their dwellings (Table 6-17). By 2023, this proportion increased to 80 percent (31,005 households) (Table 6-16), representing growth of more than 5,600 households. Over the same period, the share of households with water piped into their yard declined from 12 percent (4,270 households) to just 4 percent (1,692 households), reflecting the transition toward full in-home access. Reliance on public standpipes also decreased, falling from 944 households (3 percent) in 2012 to 499 (1 percent) in 2023, as shown in Figure 6.6.

Figure 6.7 Relationship between Distance and the Penetration of Public Piped Water into Dwelling, 2012



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

On the mainland of St. Vincent, the penetration of public piped water into dwellings in 2012 ranged from 65.1 percent in Sandy Bay to 87.1 percent in Calliaqua. Distance from the main urban center accounted for 51.8 percent of the variation in piped water penetration across census divisions, underscoring the moderate influence of geography on access to this service (Figure 6.7).

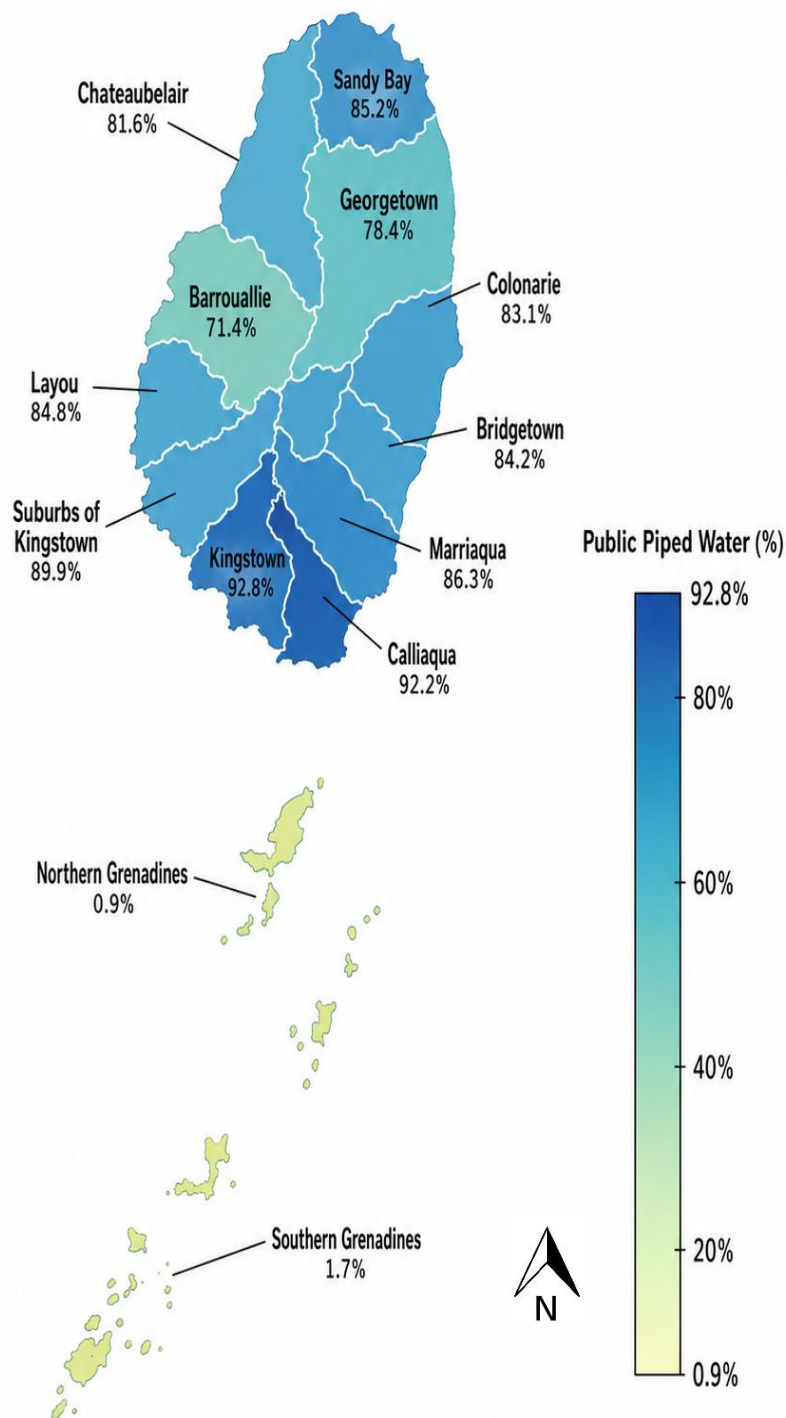
By 2023, the distribution of piped water connections continued to reflect the advantages of urban and peri-urban areas. At the census division level, Calliaqua recorded the largest number of in-dwelling piped connections, increasing from 7,537 households in 2012 to 9,108 in 2023 (Table 6-16). The Suburbs of Kingstown also registered substantial growth, with 4,720 households in 2023, up from 3,117 in 2012. Together with Kingstown, these areas demonstrate how infrastructure investments remain concentrated in urban and peri-urban zones.

In contrast, the Grenadine islands continue to lag significantly behind. In 2023, only 16 households in the Northern Grenadines and 28 in the Southern Grenadines reported piped water in their dwellings, compared with 3 and 0, respectively, in 2012. (See Map 3, which illustrates the penetration of Public Piped Water into Dwellings as a main source of drinking water by census divisions). Instead, reliance on localized sources dominates: 1,501 and 1,178 households in the Northern and Southern Grenadines, respectively, relied on private catchments piped into their dwellings, while 312 and 271 households relied on private catchments not piped into their dwellings (Table 6-16). This highlights persistent disparities between the mainland divisions and the Grenadines, where centralized systems remain limited and localized water collection remains the primary means of access.

Other sources of water remain but are experiencing an overall decline. In 2012, 1,932 households (5 percent) relied on private catchments not piped, but by 2023, this number fell to 813 households (2 percent). The use of springs and rivers remained marginal at about 1 percent in both census years, while truck-borne supplies, which were not reported in 2012, were used by 17 households in 2023 (Table 6-16). These shifts indicate that while most households now benefit from piped connections, rural areas and the Grenadines still face significant challenges in achieving equal access to a reliable water supply.

Map 3 Penetration of Public Piped Water into Dwellings by Census Division, 2023
Public Piped Water by Census Division – St. Vincent and the Grenadines

Percent of households whose main water source is public piped water into dwelling, 2023



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 6-17 Number of Households by Main Source of Water and Census Divisions, 2023

| Census Division | Water Supply Source | | | | | | | | | | Total |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| | Public piped into dwelling | Public standpipe | Public piped into yard | Private piped into dwelling | Public well | Truck borne (not piped into dwelling) | Private catchments not piped | Spring/River | Other (incl. private borehole etc) | Not Stated | |
| Kingstown | 3,731 | 34 | 143 | 22 | - | - | 15 | 7 | 67 | 2 | 4,021 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 4,720 | 20 | 240 | 15 | - | - | 44 | 11 | 175 | 25 | 5,250 |
| Calliaqua | 9,108 | 69 | 263 | 207 | - | 5 | 42 | 12 | 157 | 14 | 9,877 |
| Marriaqua | 2,304 | 9 | 207 | 37 | - | - | 26 | 23 | 59 | 4 | 2,669 |
| Bridgetown | 1,920 | 88 | 160 | 9 | - | - | 19 | 37 | 47 | 1 | 2,281 |
| Colonarie | 1,909 | 36 | 176 | 43 | 1 | 3 | 27 | 26 | 71 | 4 | 2,296 |
| Georgetown | 1,909 | 72 | 172 | 217 | - | 1 | 10 | 18 | 36 | 1 | 2,436 |
| Sandy Bay | 629 | 7 | 36 | 8 | - | - | 9 | 26 | 21 | 2 | 738 |
| Layou | 2,023 | 84 | 91 | 89 | - | - | 9 | 36 | 53 | 1 | 2,386 |
| Barrouallie | 1,418 | 35 | 97 | 350 | - | 2 | 24 | 16 | 38 | 6 | 1,986 |
| Chateaubelair | 1,290 | 43 | 104 | 97 | - | - | 5 | 15 | 24 | 2 | 1,580 |
| Northern Grenadines | 16 | - | 1 | 1,501 | - | - | 312 | - | 3 | - | 1,833 |
| Southern Grenadines | 28 | 2 | 2 | 1,178 | 4 | 6 | 271 | - | 119 | 6 | 1,616 |
| Total | 31,005 | 499 | 1,692 | 3,773 | 5 | 17 | 813 | 227 | 870 | 68 | 38,969 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 6-18 Number of Households by Main Source of Water and Census Divisions, 2012

| Census Division | Water Supply Source | | | | | | | | | Total |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|--------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| | Public piped into dwelling | Public standpipe | Public piped into yard | Private piped into dwelling | Public well/tank | Private catchments not piped | Spring/River | Other | Not Stated | |
| Kingstown | 3,691 | 119 | 292 | 15 | 2 | 18 | 2 | 83 | 56 | 4,278 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 3,117 | 43 | 629 | 326 | 4 | 46 | 29 | 133 | 57 | 4,385 |
| Calliaqua | 7,537 | 140 | 668 | 48 | 5 | 52 | 33 | 138 | 33 | 8,655 |
| Marriaqua | 1,894 | 16 | 347 | 11 | 2 | 43 | 43 | 73 | 7 | 2,436 |
| Bridgetown | 1,509 | 116 | 370 | 20 | - | 14 | 16 | 35 | 4 | 2,085 |
| Colonarie | 1,579 | 141 | 360 | 6 | - | 16 | 20 | 42 | 10 | 2,174 |
| Georgetown | 1,457 | 110 | 528 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 23 | 54 | 4 | 2,188 |
| Sandy Bay | 431 | 30 | 156 | 12 | - | 1 | 15 | 49 | 24 | 662 |
| Layout | 1,547 | 70 | 417 | 1 | 1 | 13 | 55 | 49 | 24 | 2,178 |
| Barrouallie | 1,380 | 48 | 241 | 6 | 11 | 21 | 18 | 37 | 43 | 1,806 |
| Chateaubelair | 1,220 | 110 | 254 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 31 | 19 | 27 | 1,669 |
| Northern Grenadines | 3 | - | 2 | 1,655 | 5 | 890 | - | 112 | 5 | 2,673 |
| Southern Grenadines | - | - | 7 | 776 | 11 | 808 | 1 | 22 | 13 | 1,640 |
| Total | 25,365 | 944 | 4,270 | 2,881 | 48 | 1,932 | 289 | 815 | 286 | 36,829 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

6.10 Main Source of Fuel for Cooking

The type of fuel households use for cooking is a key indicator of living standards, energy access, and environmental impact. Cooking fuel use in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is overwhelmingly dominated by Gas/LPG, as shown in Table 6-18. In 2012, 34,531 households, or 94 percent of all households, relied on Gas/LPG as their primary source of fuel. By 2023, this number rose to 37,527 households, representing 96 percent. This stability underscores the long-standing reliance on LPG as the preferred and most accessible cooking fuel across the country.

At the same time, there has been a clear decline in the use of traditional fuels. Wood use dropped from 742 households in 2012 to 388 in 2023, while charcoal use fell from 593 to 333 households over the same period (Table 6-18). This represents a nearly 5 percent decline in both categories, suggesting a gradual shift away from biomass fuels. The use of electricity and solar energy for cooking remains minimal, though in 2023, 17 households reported adopting solar for the first time, signaling early diversification of cooking energy sources.

Urban and peri-urban divisions account for most of the LPG use, with Calliaqua (9,569 households) and the Suburbs of Kingstown (5,034 households) standing out in 2023. In contrast, smaller divisions such as Sandy Bay and the Southern Grenadines continue to record higher proportional reliance on wood, charcoal, and other alternatives, reflecting disparities in access. Overall, the data point to stability in LPG's dominance, reductions in traditional fuel use, and the very early emergence of renewable alternatives such as solar.

Table 6-19 Number of Households by Type of Fuel most Used for Cooking and Census Division, 2012 & 2023

| Census Division | Fuel Used for Cooking | | | | | | | | | Not Stated | Total |
|----------------------|-----------------------|------------|------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|----------|------------|-----------|------------|---------------|
| | Wood | Charcoal | Kerosene | Electricity | Gas/LPG | Solar Energy | Biogas | None | Other | | |
| 2012 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Kingstown | 45 | 51 | 12 | 73 | 3,996 | - | - | 52 | 8 | 41 | 4,278 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 56 | 77 | 9 | 39 | 4,124 | - | - | 33 | 3 | 42 | 4,385 |
| Calliaqua | 132 | 105 | 10 | 68 | 8,244 | - | - | 55 | 12 | 30 | 8,655 |
| Marriaqua | 51 | 48 | 1 | 7 | 2,292 | - | - | 30 | 1 | 6 | 2,436 |
| Bridgetown | 66 | 23 | - | 2 | 1,962 | - | - | 21 | 3 | 8 | 2,085 |
| Colonarie | 90 | 19 | 2 | 8 | 2,021 | - | - | 28 | 1 | 5 | 2,174 |
| Georgetown | 105 | 34 | - | 8 | 2,007 | - | - | 32 | - | 2 | 2,188 |
| Sandy Bay | 32 | 32 | - | 2 | 584 | - | - | 11 | - | 1 | 662 |
| Layout | 39 | 45 | 1 | 19 | 2,025 | - | - | 21 | 8 | 21 | 2,178 |
| Barrouallie | 32 | 46 | - | 7 | 1,642 | - | - | 27 | - | 52 | 1,806 |
| Chateaubelair | 43 | 38 | 2 | 7 | 1,533 | - | - | 19 | 1 | 25 | 1,669 |
| Northern Grenadines | 33 | 59 | 2 | 13 | 2,548 | - | - | 12 | 3 | 3 | 2,673 |
| Southern Grenadines | 21 | 14 | 3 | 7 | 1,554 | - | - | 21 | - | 19 | 1,640 |
| Total | 742 | 593 | 42 | 261 | 34,531 | - | - | 364 | 40 | 256 | 36,829 |
| 2023 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Kingstown | 5 | 17 | 21 | 37 | 3,906 | - | - | 33 | 1 | 1 | 4,021 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 49 | 51 | 12 | 26 | 5,034 | 2 | 1 | 47 | 5 | 23 | 5,250 |
| Calliaqua | 80 | 64 | 22 | 88 | 9,569 | 6 | 1 | 27 | 5 | 15 | 9,877 |
| Marriaqua | 21 | 21 | 6 | 3 | 2,571 | - | - | 43 | - | 4 | 2,669 |
| Bridgetown | 42 | 23 | 3 | 9 | 2,194 | - | - | 8 | 1 | 1 | 2,281 |
| Colonarie | 34 | 27 | 12 | 6 | 2,186 | 2 | - | 23 | 1 | 5 | 2,296 |
| Georgetown | 35 | 18 | 6 | 20 | 2,330 | 5 | - | 20 | 1 | 1 | 2,436 |
| Sandy Bay | 15 | 18 | 8 | 1 | 681 | - | 1 | 12 | - | 2 | 738 |
| Layout | 33 | 32 | 4 | 29 | 2,277 | - | - | 8 | 2 | 1 | 2,386 |
| Barrouallie | 21 | 32 | 4 | 7 | 1,898 | 2 | - | 17 | - | 5 | 1,986 |
| Chateaubelair | 28 | 16 | 4 | 4 | 1,521 | - | - | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1,580 |
| Northern Grenadines | 9 | 10 | 1 | 24 | 1,785 | - | - | 4 | - | - | 1,833 |
| Southern Grenadines | 16 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 1,575 | - | - | 7 | - | 6 | 1,616 |
| Total | 388 | 333 | 108 | 257 | 37,527 | 17 | 3 | 253 | 17 | 66 | 38,969 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

6.11 Main Source of Toilet Facilities

Access to adequate toilet facilities is a critical indicator of housing quality, sanitation, and public health. The census data for 2012 and 2023 reveal significant progress in access to modern sanitation, though disparities persist across regions.

In 2012, the majority of households (65.7 percent or 24,208) relied on flush toilets linked to septic tanks, while just 2.7 percent (1,006 households) used flush toilets connected to a sewer system (Table 6-20). Pit latrines, however, remained widespread, with 9,529 households (25.9 percent) reporting use across three categories: ventilated and elevated (4.9 percent), ventilated and not elevated (6.7 percent), and non-ventilated (14.3 percent). This reliance on basic facilities highlighted gaps in sanitation infrastructure, particularly in rural divisions.

By 2023, sanitation patterns had shifted significantly. Flush toilets linked to septic tanks expanded to 33,544 households (86.0 percent), underscoring their dominance as the main type of facility (Table 6-19). Flush toilets connected to sewer systems also grew to 458 households, a modest but notable increase. Pit latrine use, meanwhile, fell sharply to 4,354 households (11.2 percent), nearly halving the 2012 figure. Within this category, ventilated and elevated/ ventilated improved pit (VIP) facilities accounted for 2.0 percent of households, ventilated and not elevated for 3.5 percent, and non-ventilated for 5.6 percent. This decline was driven primarily by reductions in non-ventilated latrines, which dropped from 5,249 households in 2012 to 2,194 in 2023.

Regional differences remain striking. In Kingstown, more than 93 percent of households now use flush toilets connected to either a sewer or a septic system, up from 81 percent in 2012. Calliaqua and the Suburbs of Kingstown also recorded strong improvements, both surpassing 85 percent coverage with modern toilet systems. By contrast, rural divisions such as Barrouallie and Chateaubelair, and the Grenadine islands, continue to depend on pit latrines at relatively higher rates. Even so, these areas recorded reductions in the number of households without facilities, pointing to gradual but uneven progress.

These shifts point to steady improvements in sanitation, with fewer households depending on basic pit latrines and more adopting flush toilets, particularly septic tank systems. Most households still rely on decentralized systems, such as septic tanks, in which waste is managed on-site rather than through a central sewer network. While this reflects limited sewer infrastructure, the overall trend indicates progress toward safer and more hygienic living conditions.

Table 6-20 Number of Households by Type of Toilet Facilities and Census Division, 2023

| Census Division | Type of Toilet Facility | | | | | | | | | Total |
|-----------------------------|--|--|---|---|----------------------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| | Water Closet (WC) (flush toilet) Linked to sewer (Uptown, downtown, Kingstown) | Water Closet (WC) (flush toilet) Linked to septic tank/Soak-away | Pit latrine ventilated and elevated/Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) | Pit latrine ventilated and not elevated | Pit latrine not ventilated | Other specify | None | Don't know | Not Stated | |
| Kingstown | 179 | 3,574 | 14 | 33 | 151 | 31 | 33 | 5 | 1 | 4,021 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 45 | 4,555 | 58 | 253 | 221 | 42 | 53 | - | 23 | 5,250 |
| Calliaqua | 42 | 8,955 | 182 | 191 | 394 | 15 | 83 | 1 | 14 | 9,877 |
| Marriaqua | 16 | 2,251 | 42 | 83 | 243 | 3 | 26 | 1 | 4 | 2,669 |
| Bridgetown | 3 | 1,844 | 65 | 168 | 167 | 8 | 22 | 3 | 1 | 2,281 |
| Colonarie | 10 | 1,894 | 137 | 75 | 128 | 7 | 39 | 1 | 5 | 2,296 |
| Georgetown | 36 | 2,036 | 71 | 81 | 187 | 5 | 19 | - | 1 | 2,436 |
| Sandy Bay | 1 | 589 | 24 | 73 | 31 | 1 | 10 | 7 | 2 | 738 |
| Layou | 13 | 1,974 | 75 | 147 | 138 | 5 | 32 | - | 2 | 2,386 |
| Barrouallie | 101 | 1,588 | 39 | 73 | 118 | 6 | 54 | 2 | 5 | 1,986 |
| Chateaubelair | 5 | 1,305 | 29 | 54 | 158 | 6 | 21 | - | 2 | 1,580 |
| Northern Grenadines | 1 | 1,580 | 17 | 72 | 160 | 2 | 1 | - | - | 1,833 |
| Southern Grenadines | 6 | 1,399 | 35 | 69 | 98 | - | 4 | - | 5 | 1,616 |
| Total | 458 | 33,544 | 788 | 1,372 | 2,194 | 131 | 397 | 20 | 65 | 38,969 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

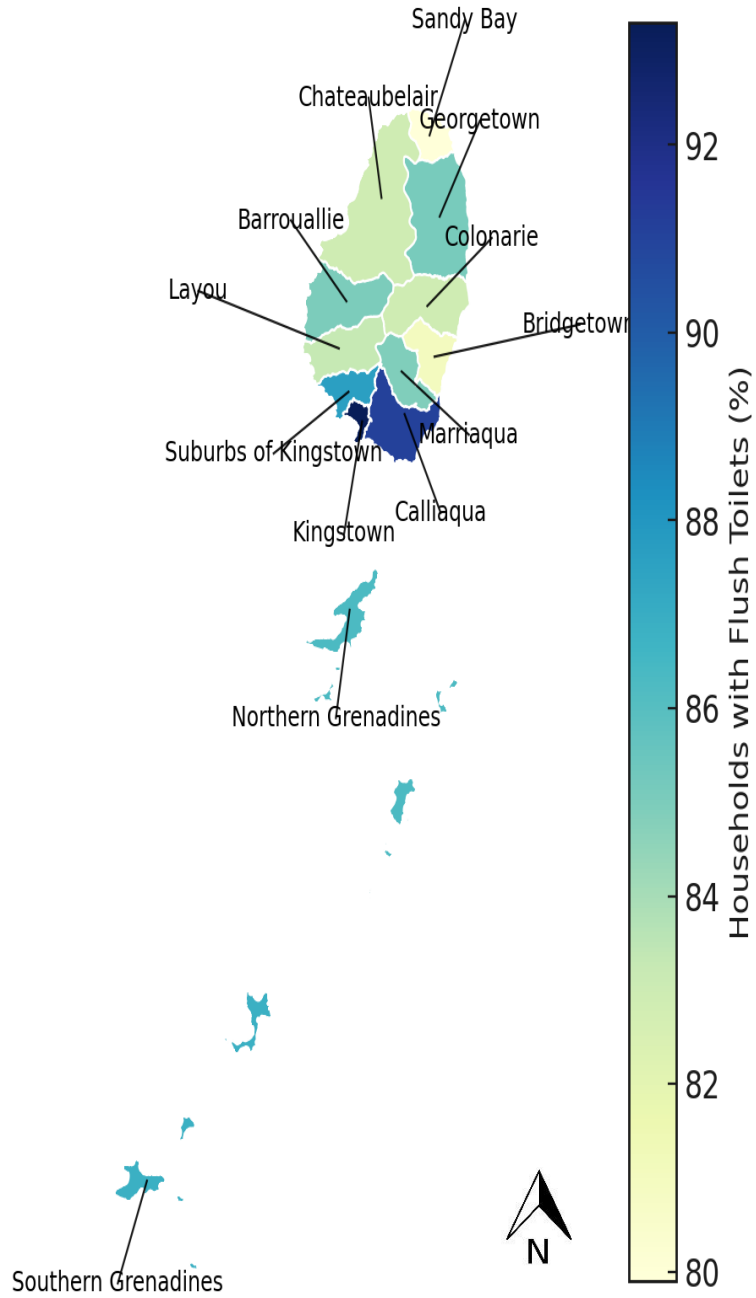
Table 6-21 Number of Households by Type of Toilet Facilities and Census Division, 2023

| Census Division | Type of Toilet Facility | | | | | | | | Total |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|------------|--------------|------------|---------------|
| | Flush toilet linked to sewer | Flush toilet linked to septic tank | Pit latrine ventilated and elevated | Pit latrine ventilated and not elevated | Pit latrine not ventilated | Other | None | Not Stated | |
| Kingstown | 131 | 3,317 | 85 | 99 | 413 | 23 | 146 | 63 | 4,278 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 135 | 3,013 | 198 | 255 | 591 | 24 | 125 | 44 | 4,385 |
| Calliaqua | 325 | 6,704 | 417 | 365 | 630 | 22 | 164 | 27 | 8,655 |
| Marriaqua | 7 | 1,553 | 171 | 189 | 433 | 1 | 75 | 7 | 2,436 |
| Bridgetown | 66 | 1,205 | 71 | 207 | 476 | 5 | 51 | 3 | 2,085 |
| Colonarie | 20 | 1,250 | 127 | 94 | 559 | 3 | 112 | 9 | 2,174 |
| Georgetown | 27 | 1,257 | 55 | 215 | 556 | 3 | 71 | 4 | 2,188 |
| Sandy Bay | 49 | 338 | 7 | 36 | 203 | 2 | 26 | 1 | 662 |
| Layou | 78 | 1,364 | 248 | 264 | 88 | 5 | 105 | 25 | 2,178 |
| Barrouallie | 8 | 1,095 | 175 | 224 | 180 | 10 | 67 | 45 | 1,806 |
| Chateaubelair | 23 | 912 | 42 | 61 | 539 | 3 | 62 | 26 | 1,669 |
| Northern Grenadines | 136 | 1,456 | 186 | 290 | 218 | - | 381 | 7 | 2,673 |
| Southern Grenadines | 1 | 742 | 35 | 162 | 362 | - | 321 | 16 | 1,640 |
| Total | 1,006 | 24,208 | 1,817 | 2,463 | 5,249 | 102 | 1,707 | 277 | 36,829 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Map 4 Penetration of Flush Toilets by Census Division, 2023

Flush Toilets by Census Division — St. Vincent and the Grenadines (Graduated colors, lighter scheme)



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

6.12 Conclusion

The analysis of household and housing characteristics highlights steady progress in living conditions in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, though with uneven outcomes across divisions. Household numbers rose to 38,969 in 2023 while average size declined to 2.8 persons, reflecting broader demographic shifts toward smaller, more independent living arrangements (Tables 6-1 to 6-4). Peri-urban areas such as Calliaqua and the Suburbs of Kingstown absorbed most of this growth, while older centers like Kingstown and Chateaubelair recorded stagnation or decline.

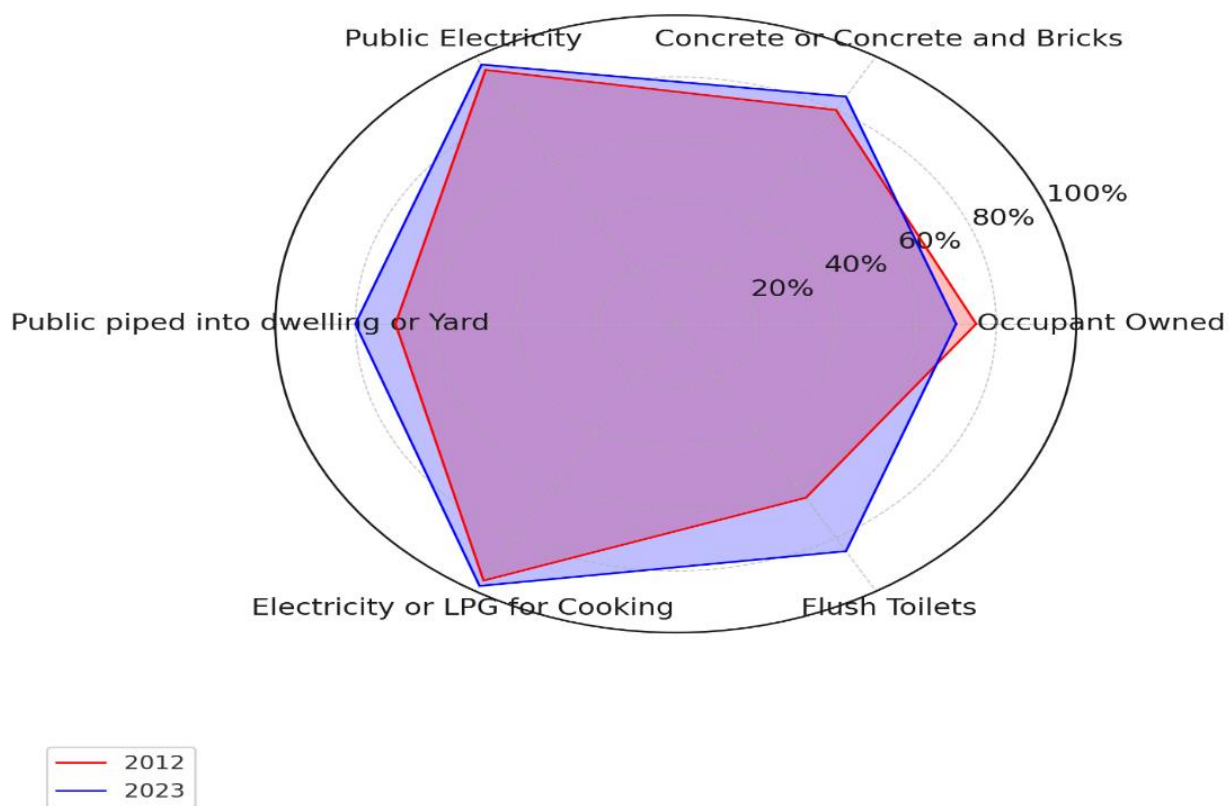
Housing stock remains dominated by detached dwellings, but the decade saw notable increases in attached units, apartments, and duplexes. Concrete and block construction, now accounting for more than 85 percent of dwellings, underscores investment in permanence and resilience, while wooden houses continue to decline (Tables 6-5 to 6-11). At the same time, nearly half of households live in homes built before 1999, indicating an aging stock with growing maintenance needs (Table 6-9).

Likewise, service access improved across the board. Public-grid electricity reached 93 percent of households in 2023, piped water into dwellings rose from 71 to 80 percent, and LPG strengthened its dominance as the main cooking fuel at 96 percent. Sanitation saw the largest gains, with septic systems serving 86 percent of households and pit latrine use nearly halving since 2012 (Tables 6-14, 6-16 to 6-20). Yet regional gaps persist, particularly in the Grenadines, where reliance on private catchments and traditional facilities remains higher.

The radar chart (Figure 6.8) visually reinforces these trends, showing broad improvements between 2012 and 2023 across key housing indicators, including material durability, access to public utilities, sanitation, and fuel use. The most substantial gains were observed in flush toilet access and piped water into dwellings, while electricity and LPG use reached near-universal levels. These patterns illustrate how infrastructure investments and shifts in household practices have translated into tangible quality-of-life improvements.

Overall, the census points to clear gains in housing adequacy, durability, and access to services, aligning with the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities. Still, the persistence of aging housing, regional disparities, and small shares of vulnerable households highlight areas where progress remains incomplete.

Figure 6.8 Housing Progress between 2012 & 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER 6

HOUSEHOLD AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS



Housing Patterns:

Most Households (77.5% or 30,196) live in separate detached houses, while apartments/condominiums account for just 6.2%



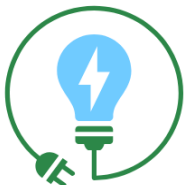
Home Ownership:

About 64.6% (25,193 households) own their homes outright, with another 8.7% (3,379) paying a mortgage



Age of Housing Stock:

Nearly 48% of dwellings were built before 1999, and just 11% since 2017, pointing to an ageing housing stock



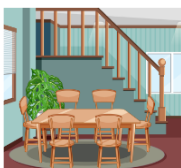
Energy Use:

Cooking is almost entirely gas-based (37,527 or 96%), with 93% (36,238) grid electricity but minimal solar uptake (<1%)



Water and Sanitation Access:

80% of households (31,005) have piped water inside their dwelling



Room Size Distribution:

Approximately 16.3% of households occupy one-bedroom units, while only 5.2% live in dwellings with five + bedrooms

Chapter 7. Household Heads



7.1 Introduction

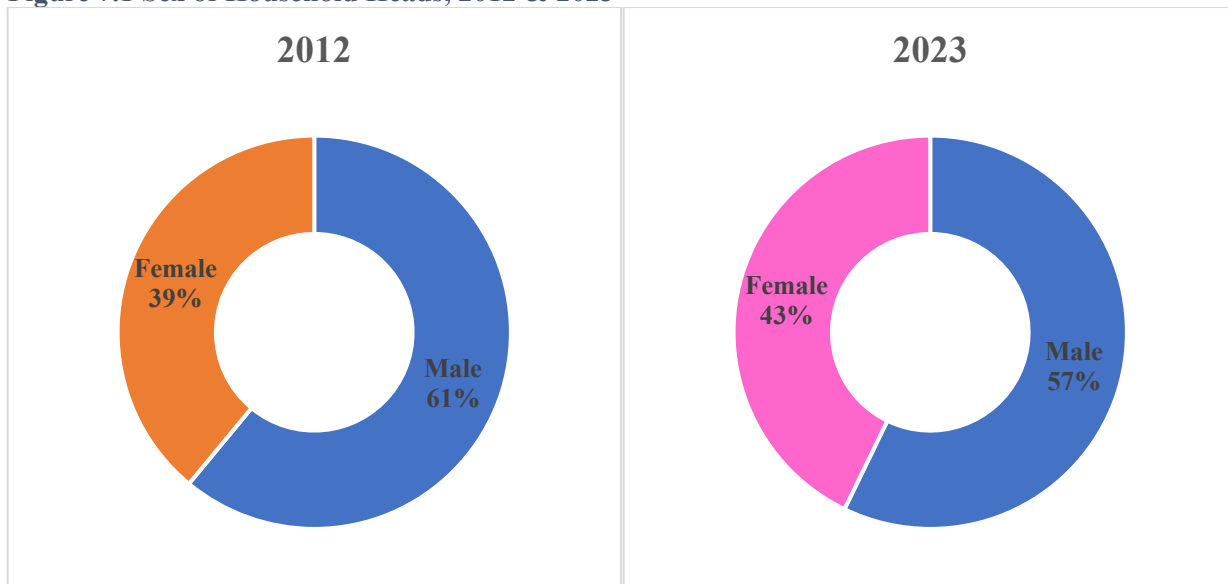
The household head plays a central role in determining the family unit's welfare, stability, and socio-economic trajectory. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 1997), the head of household is the person in the household acknowledged as head by the other household members. The head has primary authority and responsibility for household affairs (FAO, 1997)²¹. As the primary decision-maker, the head of household influences the allocation of resources, access to services, and the ability to respond to social and economic change. Understanding the characteristics of household heads, therefore, provides an important lens for examining household well-being and broader development dynamics.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, examining the profile of household heads across the 2012 and 2023 censuses sheds light on shifting gender dynamics, social structures, and economic pressures. These changes reflect broader demographic transitions while also highlighting evolving roles of men and women in household leadership and their implications for national development.

7.2 Sex of Household Heads

The sex of household heads is a key demographic indicator that reflects gender roles, household organization, and socio-economic conditions. It provides insight into the balance of male and female leadership within households and highlights broader patterns of social and economic change.

Figure 7.1 Sex of Household Heads, 2012 & 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

²¹ Food and Agriculture Organization. (1997). *Women, agriculture and rural development: A synthesis report of the Near East Region*. FAO. Retrieved from https://www.fao.org/4/w0022e/w0022e02.htm#P143_13377

Census data for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines show a gradual shift between 2012 and 2023. In 2012, male household heads accounted for 60.7 percent of all households, compared to 39.3 percent female (Table 7-1; Figure 7.1). By 2023, the proportion of female-headed households had risen to 42.8 percent, while male-headed households declined to 57.2 percent. The overall sex ratio of household heads fell from 1.5 in 2012 to 1.3 in 2023, indicating a narrowing of the gender gap in household leadership.

Table 7-1 Percentage Distribution of Household Heads by Sex and Census division, 2012 & 2023

| Census Division | 2012 | | | 2023 | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| | Male | Female | Sex Ratio | Male | Female | Sex Ratio |
| Kingstown | 58.5 | 41.5 | 1.4 | 55.0 | 45.0 | 1.2 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 60.3 | 39.7 | 1.5 | 55.5 | 44.5 | 1.2 |
| Calliaqua | 60.9 | 39.1 | 1.6 | 56.0 | 44.0 | 1.3 |
| Marriaqua | 59.5 | 40.6 | 1.5 | 56.9 | 43.1 | 1.3 |
| Bridgetown | 60.1 | 39.9 | 1.5 | 58.1 | 41.9 | 1.4 |
| Colonarie | 58.2 | 41.8 | 1.4 | 56.3 | 43.7 | 1.3 |
| Georgetown | 57.1 | 42.9 | 1.3 | 52.4 | 47.6 | 1.1 |
| Sandy Bay | 61.0 | 39.0 | 1.6 | 61.1 | 38.9 | 1.6 |
| Layou | 63.3 | 36.7 | 1.7 | 61.4 | 38.6 | 1.6 |
| Barrouallie | 60.2 | 39.8 | 1.5 | 59.2 | 40.8 | 1.5 |
| Chateaubelair | 64.7 | 35.3 | 1.8 | 59.6 | 40.4 | 1.5 |
| Northern Grenadines | 63.9 | 36.1 | 1.8 | 64.8 | 35.2 | 1.8 |
| Southern Grenadines | 67.6 | 32.4 | 2.1 | 61.8 | 38.2 | 1.6 |
| Total | 60.7 | 39.3 | 1.5 | 57.2 | 42.8 | 1.3 |

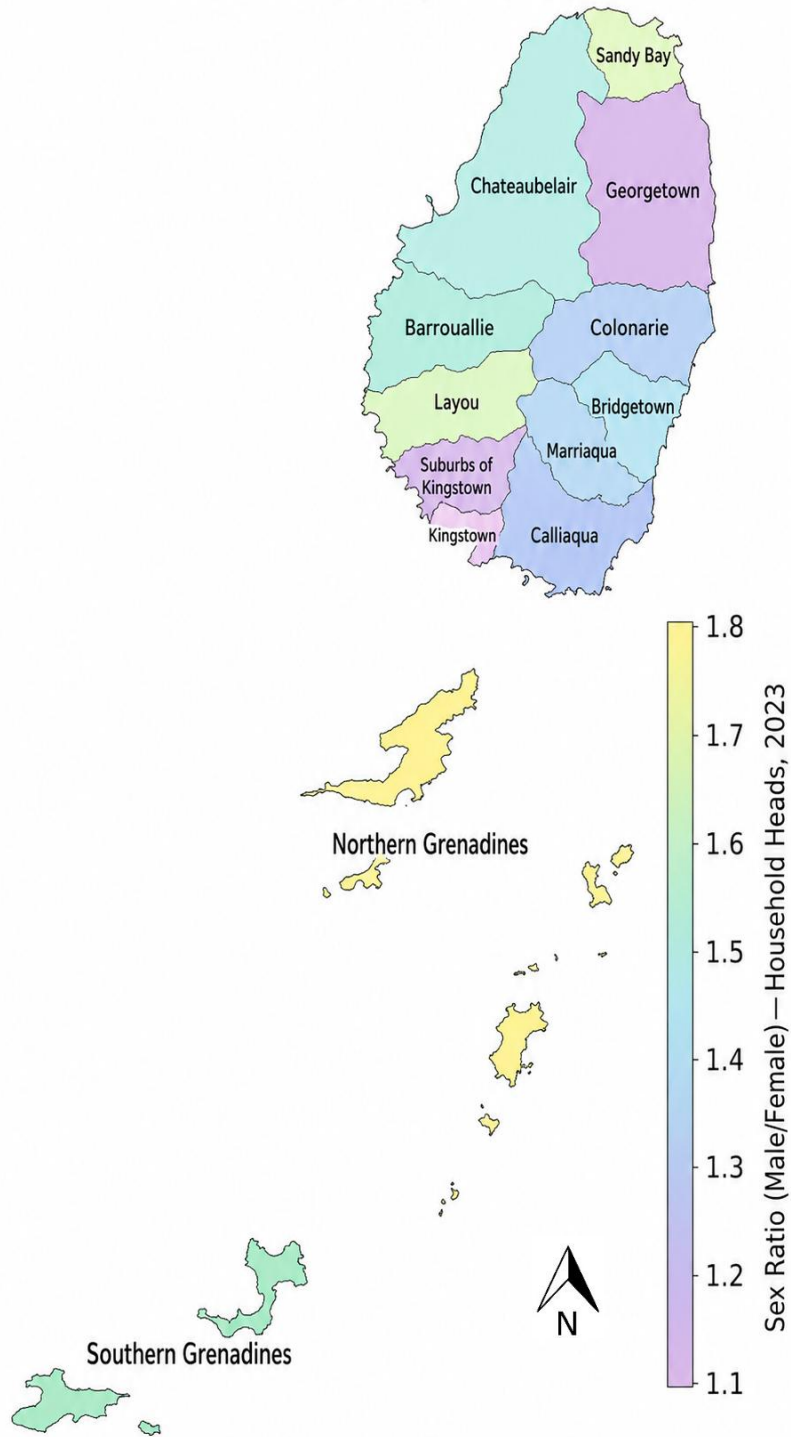
Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Census divisional data reveal that female-headed households are more common in urban and peri-urban areas. In 2023, Kingstown and the Suburbs of Kingstown reported female heads at 45.0 percent and 44.5 percent, respectively. In contrast, rural areas such as Sandy Bay and Layou remained more heavily male-dominated, with sex ratios of 1.6. The Grenadines present a mixed pattern, with the Southern Grenadines reporting 38.2 percent female heads, while the Northern Grenadines recorded 35.2 percent (Table 7-1).

Map 5 portrays a geospatial distribution of the male-to-female ratio of household heads by census division. The Northern Grenadines had the highest male-to-female ratio of household heads. For every 1.0 female-headed household, there were 1.8 male-headed households. Similarly, the census divisions of Sandy Bay, Layou, and the Southern Grenadines all recorded relatively high ratios of 1.6. On the other hand, the Georgetown census division had the smallest ratio. For every one female-headed household in that division, there were 1.1 male-headed households. Nationally, the overall ratio stood at 1.3, meaning that for every one female-headed household, there were about 1.3 male-headed households.

These results suggest that, while male household heads continue to predominate across all divisions, the proportion of female-headed households has steadily increased. This may reflect factors such as male out-migration, changing household structures, and rising economic independence among women.

Map 5 Male to Female Ratio of Household heads, 2023
St. Vincent & the Grenadines – Sex Ratio of Household Heads (M/F), 2023
 Continuous Gradient by Census Division



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

7.3 Union Status of Household Heads

Union status among household heads is an important indicator of household composition and family structure. It reflects not only personal and cultural choices but also broader demographic and social changes that shape how households are organized. An examination of the 2012 and 2023 census data reveals notable shifts in marital and partnership patterns across Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

In 2012, nearly one-third (28.9 percent) of household heads reported being not in a union, while 25.6 percent were married and living with a spouse. Common-law unions accounted for 14.9 percent, and 17.9 percent indicated they had never been married or had a common-law partner. Smaller proportions included visiting partner relationships (11.2 percent) and a limited share of responses not stated (1.4 percent).

Table 7-2 Percent Distribution of Household Heads by Union Status, 2012 & 2013

| Union Status of Household Heads | Percent (percent) Distribution |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 2012 | |
| Never had a Spouse or Common law partner | 17.9 |
| Married and Living with Spouse | 25.6 |
| Common law Union | 14.9 |
| Visiting partner | 11.2 |
| Not in union | 28.9 |
| Not Stated | 1.4 |
| 2023 | |
| Never had a spouse or common-law partner | 8.4 |
| Married and living with spouse | 21.9 |
| Married and not living with spouse | 5.1 |
| Common-law | 11.9 |
| Visiting partner | 9.0 |
| Not in a union | 35.5 |
| Not Stated | 8.2 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

By 2023, the distribution had shifted notably. The share of household heads not in a union rose to 35.5 percent, making it the single largest category. Meanwhile, the proportion married and living with a spouse declined to 21.9 percent, reflecting a move away from traditional marital arrangements. The share in common-law unions also fell slightly to 11.9 percent, while those in visiting partner arrangements decreased to 9.0 percent. A significant decline is also observed among those who reported never having a spouse or partner, which dropped from 17.9 percent in 2012 to 8.4 percent in 2023 (Table 7-2).

These results indicate a growing prevalence of single or non-union household heads, alongside a modest decline in both married and informal partnerships. These shifts suggest changing social norms and increasing diversity in household arrangements.

7.4 Age of Household Heads

The distribution of household heads by age group underscores both demographic transitions and changing patterns of household leadership. In 2001, younger age groups such as 25-34 years accounted for a significant share of household heads, with males strongly dominant (for example, 64.6 percent of male heads in the 30-34 age group compared to 35.4 percent female). By 2012, these middle-aged cohorts (35-54 years) continued to represent the bulk of household heads, while the overall gender gap narrowed slightly, reflecting modest increases in female headship across most age groups (Table 7-3).

Table 7-3 Percentage Distribution of Household Heads by Age Group and Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023²²

| Age Group | 2001 | | 2012 | | 2023 | |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| 15-19 | 59.4 | 40.6 | 57.1 | 42.9 | 65.3 | 34.7 |
| 20-24 | 58.1 | 41.9 | 61.0 | 39.0 | 52.4 | 47.6 |
| 25-29 | 60.4 | 39.6 | 57.4 | 42.6 | 50.1 | 49.9 |
| 30-34 | 64.6 | 35.4 | 60.1 | 39.9 | 54.3 | 45.7 |
| 35-39 | 64.0 | 36.0 | 61.7 | 38.3 | 55.7 | 44.3 |
| 40-44 | 64.0 | 36.0 | 63.2 | 36.8 | 55.8 | 44.2 |
| 45-49 | 62.8 | 37.2 | 63.6 | 36.4 | 58.0 | 42.0 |
| 50-54 | 62.9 | 37.1 | 63.1 | 36.9 | 59.5 | 40.5 |
| 55-59 | 60.6 | 39.4 | 62.7 | 37.3 | 60.8 | 39.2 |
| 60-64 | 56.3 | 43.7 | 62.1 | 37.9 | 61.1 | 38.9 |
| 65-69 | 56.9 | 43.1 | 62.5 | 37.6 | 59.8 | 40.2 |
| 70-74 | 52.7 | 47.3 | 58.7 | 41.4 | 57.2 | 42.8 |
| 75-79 | 46.6 | 53.4 | 53.1 | 46.9 | 56.1 | 43.9 |
| 80+ | 42.8 | 57.2 | 46.8 | 53.3 | 44.0 | 56.0 |
| Total | 60.1 | 39.9 | 60.7 | 39.3 | 57.2 | 42.8 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

By 2023, the age profile of household heads shifted further upward, with a greater concentration in older cohorts. Notably, 55.7 percent of household heads aged 35-39 were male and 44.3 percent female, while among those aged 60-64, the distribution stood at 61.1 percent male and 38.9 percent female (Table 7-3). This demonstrates that older age groups now account for a larger share of headship than in earlier periods. At the same time, younger cohorts, particularly those under 30, have become less prominent, with just 0.3 percent of total household heads aged 15-19 in 2023 (Table 7-4).

²² Note: Percentages in this table show the sex composition of household heads within each age group. For each age group, the male and female percentages add to 100 percent. For example, the figures show what percentage of household heads in a given age group were male or female.

Table 7-4 Percentage Distribution of Household Heads by Sex and Age Group, 2012 & 2023²³

| Age Group | 2012 | | | 2023 | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| 15-19 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.3 |
| 20-24 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 1.3 | 1.6 | 1.4 |
| 25-29 | 4.8 | 5.5 | 5.1 | 3.3 | 4.4 | 3.8 |
| 30-34 | 8.0 | 8.2 | 8.0 | 5.2 | 5.9 | 5.5 |
| 35-39 | 10.1 | 9.7 | 10.0 | 7.5 | 8.0 | 7.7 |
| 40-44 | 11.8 | 10.6 | 11.3 | 9.6 | 10.2 | 9.8 |
| 45-49 | 13.3 | 11.8 | 12.7 | 10.6 | 10.2 | 10.4 |
| 50-54 | 12.4 | 11.2 | 12.0 | 12.5 | 11.3 | 12.0 |
| 55-59 | 10.2 | 9.4 | 9.8 | 12.2 | 10.5 | 11.5 |
| 60-64 | 7.6 | 7.2 | 7.4 | 12.4 | 10.5 | 11.6 |
| 65-69 | 5.9 | 5.5 | 5.7 | 10.2 | 9.1 | 9.7 |
| 70-74 | 5.1 | 5.6 | 5.3 | 6.5 | 6.4 | 6.5 |
| 75-79 | 3.9 | 5.3 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.6 | 4.5 |
| 80+ | 4.3 | 7.6 | 5.6 | 4.0 | 6.9 | 5.4 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The overall shift in the age profile of the household heads reflects both population aging and a trend toward older individuals retaining headship roles for longer periods. In 2012, the highest shares of household heads were concentrated in the 40-54 age group, with each contributing around 12 percent of the total. By 2023, these age groups remained central but declined slightly, while headship shares rose among the 55-64 and 65-74 cohorts, which together accounted for over 21 percent of all household heads. This highlights a gradual aging of household leadership, consistent with broader demographic changes such as increased life expectancy and delayed transitions of household responsibility to younger generations.

7.5 Household Heads by Highest Certificate or Degree Earned

Educational attainment among household heads has shifted notably over the last two decades, reflecting both expanded access to formal education and changing qualifications within the labour market. In 2001, more than three-quarters of household heads (77.6 percent) reported having no formal certification, with just 6.4 percent holding GCE/CXC O' Levels and 2.0 percent possessing a bachelor's degree. By 2012, the share of household heads without certification had fallen to 66.9 percent, while O' Level attainment rose to 9.2 percent, and those with a bachelor's degree increased modestly to 2.7 percent (Table 7-6). This shift suggests gradual but steady improvement in access to secondary and tertiary education during the first decade of the 21st century.

²³ Note: Percentages in this table show the age distribution of household heads within each sex and for total household heads. The percentages in each column add to 100 percent. For example, the figures show what percentage of all male, all female, or all household heads fell within each age group.

Table 7-5 Proportion of Household Heads by Highest Certification Earned and Sex, 2023

| Level of Education | Male | Female | Total |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Common Entrance | 12.6 | 11.9 | 12.3 |
| CPEA | 0.7 | 0.9 | 0.8 |
| School Leaving (e.g. Standard Six or Seven School Leaving exam) | 17.3 | 18.7 | 17.9 |
| Cambridge School Certificate | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| CXC Basic | 2.9 | 3.9 | 3.3 |
| CCSLC | 0.1 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| GCE 'O' Levels, CXC General, CSEC | 13.9 | 15.8 | 14.7 |
| High School Certificate | 0.8 | 0.9 | 0.8 |
| GCE 'A' Levels, CAPE | 1.4 | 1.5 | 1.5 |
| Associate Degree | 3.1 | 4.7 | 3.8 |
| College Certificate | 2.0 | 2.1 | 2.1 |
| College Diploma | 1.4 | 1.2 | 1.3 |
| Professional Certificate e.g. RSA, City and Guilds etc | 1.0 | 0.8 | 0.9 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 4.5 | 6.0 | 5.2 |
| Post Graduate Certificate | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Post Graduate Diploma | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.3 |
| Higher Degree (Master's) | 2.2 | 1.9 | 2.1 |
| Higher Degree (Doctoral) | 0.4 | 0.2 | 0.3 |
| Other (Specify) | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.9 |
| None | 33.3 | 26.9 | 30.5 |
| Not Stated | 0.7 | 0.8 | 0.8 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 7-6 Proportion of Household Heads by Highest Certification Earned and Sex, 2001 & 2012

| Level of Education | 2001 | | | 2012 | | |
|--|------|--------|-------|------|--------|-------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| School Leaving Certificate | 3.0 | 3.3 | 3.1 | 3.2 | 4.0 | 3.5 |
| Cambridge School Certificate | 0.1 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.2 |
| GCE or CXC O'Levels (Gen. proficiency) | 6.1 | 6.9 | 6.4 | 8.5 | 10.3 | 9.2 |
| High School Certificate (HSC) | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 1.1 | 1.0 | 1.0 |
| GCE A'Levels/CAPE | 0.6 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 1.1 | 1.4 | 1.2 |
| College Certificate/Diploma | 1.9 | 1.1 | 1.6 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.4 |
| Associate Degree | 0.5 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 1.0 | 1.1 | 1.0 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 2.3 | 1.5 | 2.0 | 2.7 | 2.5 | 2.7 |
| Post Graduate Diploma/Certificate | 0.4 | 0.1 | 0.3 | 0.8 | 0.7 | 0.8 |
| Professional Certificate | 4.0 | 4.3 | 4.1 | 2.5 | 2.3 | 2.4 |
| Higher Degree (Master's) | 1.0 | 0.4 | 0.7 | 1.5 | 0.9 | 1.2 |
| Higher Degree (Doctoral) | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.3 | 0.1 | 0.2 |
| Other | 0.6 | 0.4 | 0.5 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.1 |
| None | 76.9 | 78.5 | 77.6 | 67.2 | 66.3 | 66.9 |
| Not Stated | 2.5 | 2.2 | 2.4 | 4.5 | 3.7 | 4.2 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

The 2023 Census presented a more diversified picture of educational outcomes. Household heads without certification declined further, to 30.5 percent, representing less than half the proportion recorded in 2012. The most common qualification in 2023 was the School Leaving Certificate, reported by 17.9 percent of heads, followed closely by O’ Levels/CSEC at 14.7 percent and Common Entrance Pass at 12.3 percent. Notably, new qualification categories such as CPEA (0.8 percent) and CCSLC (0.1 percent) emerged, reflecting curriculum reforms within the Caribbean Examination Council system. At the tertiary level, 5.2 percent of household heads reported holding a bachelor’s degree, double the proportion recorded in 2012. Those with postgraduate training also increased slightly, with 2.1 percent reporting a master’s degree and 0.3 percent a doctoral degree (Table 7-5).

Gender differences in educational attainment are also evident. In 2023, women were more likely than men to have obtained higher academic qualifications, such as bachelor’s degrees (6.0 percent versus 4.5 percent) and associate degrees (4.7 percent versus 3.1 percent). Conversely, men were slightly more likely to report no formal certification (33.3 percent compared with 26.9 percent) (Table 7-5). This pattern suggests that while men continue to dominate numerically as household heads, female heads are more likely to have pursued and completed tertiary-level qualifications.

7.6 Households Heads by Main Economic Activity and Source of Livelihood

The economic activity of household heads highlights both labor force participation and reliance on alternative income sources. In 2012, 59.6 percent of household heads worked, compared with 56.3 percent in 2023 (Table 7-7). This slight decline points to changes in labor market absorption and demographic pressures. Unemployment dynamics shifted as well; the share of those actively seeking work fell from 5.6 percent in 2012 to 3.4 percent in 2023, but those wanting work but not actively searching rose from 1.5 percent to 2.2 percent. Household heads engaged primarily in home duties also decreased, from 10.9 percent in 2012 to 9.0 percent in 2023. At the same time, retirees grew from 16.0 percent to 21.0 percent, reflecting population aging and the transition of more household heads into non-active economic roles.

Table 7-7 Percentage Distribution of Household Heads by Usual Economic Activity, 2012 & 2023

| Usual Activity Over Past 12 Months | 2012 | 2023 |
|------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| | Percent | |
| Had a Job and Worked | 59.6 | 56.3 |
| Had a Job, but did not Work | 0.5 | 1.0 |
| Looked for Work | 5.6 | 3.4 |
| Wanted Work and Available | 1.5 | 2.2 |
| Did Home Duties | 10.9 | 9.0 |
| Attended School/Student | 0.4 | 0.5 |
| Retired, did not Work | 16.0 | 21.0 |
| Disabled, Unable to Work | 2.6 | 2.8 |
| Other | 1.5 | 3.3 |
| Not Stated | 1.5 | 0.4 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

In terms of livelihood sources, employment remained the mainstay in 2012, accounting for 55.8 percent of household heads (Table 7-9). However, many households supplemented or replaced earnings with other income streams. Subsistence farming supported 7.1 percent of household heads, while pensions (7.7 percent local, 3.3 percent overseas) also played a prominent role. Public assistance and remittances provided important safety nets, with 4.5 percent and 7.7 percent of household heads, respectively, depending on these transfers. Notably, in 2012, female household heads were more likely than males to report reliance on public assistance and remittances, underscoring gendered vulnerabilities.

Table 7-8 Source of Livelihoods of Household Heads, 2023

| Source of Income | Count |
|--|-------|
| Pension (local) | 3,611 |
| Pension (overseas) | 1,106 |
| Investment | 605 |
| Remittances (overseas - Cash/Kind) | 428 |
| Savings/interest on savings | 2,798 |
| Disability benefits | 111 |
| Unemployment benefits | 96 |
| Social security benefits (NIS) | 971 |
| Other public assistance | 1,156 |
| Support from friends/relatives (local - Cash/Kind) | 1,519 |
| Support from friends/relatives (Overseas - Cash/Kind) | 927 |
| Spouse/Partner Support (Cash/Kind) | 1,015 |
| Children Support (Cash/Kind) | 1,777 |
| Parent(s) Support (Cash/Kind) | 272 |
| Guardian(s) Support (Cash/Kind) | 24 |
| Farming (Backyard, garden etc.) | 1,325 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 7-9 Source of Livelihoods of Household Heads, 2012

| Source of Livelihood | Male | Female | Total |
|---|------|--------|-------|
| Disability | 0.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Employment | 62.8 | 44.9 | 55.8 |
| Investment | 1.7 | 1.0 | 1.5 |
| Public Assistance | 2.9 | 6.9 | 4.5 |
| Pension (Local) | 7.2 | 8.6 | 7.7 |
| Pension (Overseas) | 3.8 | 2.6 | 3.3 |
| Savings/Interest on savings | 3.9 | 2.1 | 3.2 |
| Subsistence Farming | 9.3 | 3.7 | 7.1 |
| Support From Friends/ Relatives (Local-Cash/Kind) | 11.7 | 28.4 | 18.3 |
| Support From Friends/ Relatives (Overseas-Cash/Kind) | 4.4 | 12.8 | 7.7 |
| Other | 2.5 | 4.3 | 3.2 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

By 2023, a more diversified picture of livelihood sources emerged. Local pensions supported 3,611 household heads, while overseas pensions accounted for another 1,106. Savings and interest on savings (2,798) and farming activities, such as backyard or garden production (1,325), became notable sources of sustenance. Remittances continued to play an important role, with 428 household heads citing overseas cash or in-kind transfers, complemented by another 927 reporting regular support from overseas friends and relatives. Social security and other public assistance also supported over 2,000 household heads, while smaller but significant numbers relied on support from spouses (1,015), children (1,777), or parents (272) (Table 7-8).

Together, these findings indicate that while employment and pensions form the backbone of household livelihoods. Evidently, a wide range of secondary supports, including remittances, family transfers, farming, and savings, remain vital.

7.7 Conclusion

The 2012 and 2023 census findings highlight important demographic and socio-economic shifts in the profile of household heads in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Although men remain the majority, the growing presence of female heads, particularly in urban centers, signals gradual change in traditional leadership patterns within households.

Union status results point to declining prevalence of marriage and common-law arrangements, alongside a rise in household heads who report being outside of unions altogether. This trend reflects broader social transformations, including changing partnership norms and greater independence in household formation. At the same time, the age distribution shows that older cohorts are increasingly retaining headship roles, underscoring the influence of population aging and delayed generational turnover.

Rising levels of educational attainment, especially at the secondary and tertiary levels, illustrate expanding access to formal learning opportunities and a narrowing of gender gaps in higher education. Meanwhile, livelihood data reveal continued reliance on a mix of employment, pensions, remittances, savings, farming, and transfers from relatives, pointing to a diversified yet vulnerable household economy. Together, these findings underscore the intersection of gender, aging, education, and economic pressures in shaping the evolving character of household leadership.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER 7

HOUSEHOLD HEADS



Male-Dominated Household Heads:

Men account for 57% of household heads, highest in Northern Grenadines (65%), lowest in Georgetown (52%)



Union Status Divide:

Over a third (35.5%) of household heads are not in a union, while 22% are married and living with a spouse



Age Profile of Heads:

Household leadership peaks between ages 45–64 (about one-third of all heads), while youth (under 30) represent only 6%



Educational Attainment Gaps:

Nearly 31% of household heads have no formal certification. Only 5% hold a bachelor's degree or higher



Economic Engagement:

About 56% of household heads were employed in the past year, while 21% were retired, indicating an aging headship base.



Income Reliance:

Household heads depend heavily on pensions (local 3,611; overseas 1,106) and savings (2,798) as primary income sources

Chapter 8. Agriculture and Food Security



8.1 Introduction

Agriculture has long been a cornerstone of livelihoods and food security in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, contributing to both household sustenance and the broader national economy. Beyond its economic value, agriculture underpins rural employment, cultural identity, and resilience to external shocks. According to the Sectoral Recovery Capacity Assessment Report for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' Agriculture Sector, “*agriculture is predominantly practiced on Saint Vincent, with some subsistence farming on the larger Grenadines islands*” (World Bank, 2023, p. 8)²⁴, including islands in the Northern Grenadines. The report further notes that the sector remains important to the national economy and rural livelihoods and is largely composed of smallholder farmers, most of whom occupy less than five acres of land (World Bank, 2023).

The sector combines crop production, livestock rearing, and fisheries. The 2023 Population and Housing Census provides important insights into household participation in agriculture, landholding structures, vulnerability to natural hazards, and livestock ownership, offering a demographic perspective on this critical sector.

At the global level, agriculture is recognized as central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular, SDG 2 seeks to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture, underscoring the sector's pivotal role in human well-being and national development. This positions agriculture not only as a source of economic activity but also as a foundation for sustainable development and resilience.

Within Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, agricultural systems continue to face structural challenges, including limited land availability, vulnerability to natural hazards, and declining labor force participation. Nonetheless, the sector remains integral to household survival strategies, as many families supplement incomes with small-scale crop or livestock production. By linking census findings with these broader considerations, this chapter seeks to highlight both the demographic importance of agriculture and its evolving role in shaping food security, livelihoods, and development outcomes.

8.2 Household Participation and Agricultural Vulnerability

Agriculture continues to play an important role in the livelihood structure of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, though its scale and nature vary across households. In 2023, a total of 9,440 households were engaged in agricultural activity, representing just under one-quarter of all households. Of these, male-headed households dominated, accounting for 66.7 percent (6,295 households), while female-headed households contributed 33.3 percent (3,145 households) (Table 8-1). This male dominance underscores the persistence of gendered divisions in agricultural labour and decision-making, although women continue to play important roles in crop and small-scale livestock production.

²⁴ World Bank. (2023). *Sectoral recovery capacity assessment report for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' agriculture sector*. World Bank Group. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099020124173018289/pdf/P171256-57f354c3-d5d4-4859-83cb-64bfe198fcf3.pdf>

Table 8-1 Households engaged in agriculture, by Sex of Head of Household, 2023

| Engagement in Agricultural Activity | Sex | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|---------|--------|---------|-------|---------|
| | Male | | Female | | Total | |
| | Count | Percent | Count | Percent | Count | Percent |
| | 6295 | 66.7 | 3145 | 33.3 | 9440 | 100.0 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

When agricultural activity is disaggregated by type, crop production emerges as the most common, involving 8,147 households (Table 8-2). Animal production is also significant, with 2,622 households participating, followed by fisheries (414 households) and agro-processing (260 households). More specialized activities such as forestry (121 households), aquaculture (14 households), and apiculture (42 households) remain relatively marginal. These figures highlight a predominance of traditional farming practices, particularly crop and livestock production, while more modern or specialized subsectors remain underdeveloped. The fact that 29,441 households reported no engagement in agriculture underscores both the structural shift of the economy away from smallholder farming and the growing urban orientation of the population.

Table 8-2 Households engaged in agriculture, by activity type, 2023

| Type of Agricultural Activity | Count |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| Crop production | 8,147 |
| Animal production | 2,622 |
| Fisheries activity | 414 |
| Aquaculture activity | 14 |
| Forestry activity | 121 |
| Agro-processing | 260 |
| Apiculture Beekeeping | 42 |
| Others | 126 |
| None | 29,441 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 8-3 Households engaged in agriculture, by Census Division, 2023

| Census Division | Count | Percent |
|----------------------|--------------|------------|
| Kingstown | 349 | 3.7 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 1,046 | 11.1 |
| Calliaqua | 1,887 | 20.0 |
| Marriaqua | 1,066 | 11.3 |
| Bridgetown | 943 | 10.0 |
| Colonarie | 890 | 9.4 |
| Georgetown | 582 | 6.2 |
| Sandy Bay | 385 | 4.1 |
| Layou | 515 | 5.5 |
| Barrouallie | 621 | 6.6 |
| Chateaubelair | 749 | 7.9 |
| Northern Grenadines | 276 | 2.9 |
| Southern Grenadines | 131 | 1.4 |
| Total | 9,440 | 100 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Geographic differences are evident in the distribution of agricultural households across census divisions. The largest shares were recorded in Calliaqua (20.0 percent), Marriaqua (11.3 percent), and the Suburbs of Kingstown (11.1 percent) (Table 83). Smaller rural areas such as Sandy Bay (4.1 percent) and the Southern Grenadines (1.4 percent) registered relatively low proportions, reflecting differences in arable land availability, settlement patterns, and access to markets. These disparities suggest that while agriculture retains strongholds in key valleys and peri-urban zones, its importance is uneven across the national territory.

Table 8-4 Number and Percentage of Agricultural Households Affected by Natural Hazards, 2023

| Households Affected by Natural hazards | Count | Percent |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| Yes | 3,504 | 37.1 |
| No | 5,931 | 62.8 |
| Not Stated | 5 | 0.1 |
| Total | 9,440 | 100.0 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Agricultural households remain highly vulnerable to natural hazards. In 2023, 37.1 percent (3,504 households) reported being affected by at least one hazard, while 62.8 percent reported no such impact (Table 8-4). The single most significant event reported was a volcanic eruption, with 2,989 households citing impacts, reflecting the lasting effects of the 2021 La Soufrière eruption (Table 8-5). Other major hazards included hurricanes and tropical storms (851 households) and floods (153 households). Although smaller in absolute terms, drought (78 households), landslides (99 households), and storm surge (43 households) represent critical threats to livelihoods in specific ecological niches. These findings confirm that vulnerability is not only widespread but also hazard-specific, with volcanic and climatic shocks shaping the resilience of rural households.

Table 8-5 Number of Agricultural households affected by natural hazards by Type, 2023

| Type of Natural Disaster | Count |
|---|--------------|
| Hurricane / Tropical Storms | 851 |
| Bush fires | 8 |
| Storm surge / High seas / swells | 43 |
| Severe Storms | 81 |
| Extreme temperatures | 121 |
| Volcanic Eruption | 2,989 |
| Tsunami | - |
| Floods | 153 |
| Drought | 78 |
| Earthquake | 29 |
| Landslides | 99 |
| Other Specify | 30 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Household participation in agriculture remains significant but uneven, with crop and livestock production dominating while other subsectors remain small. Exposure to hazards such as volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, and floods underscores the vulnerability of rural livelihoods, highlighting the need for greater resilience and diversification.

8.3 Farm Structure and Livestock Ownership

Farm structure in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is characterized by small-scale and fragmented holdings, which continue to shape agricultural productivity and household livelihoods. Table 8-6 shows that the majority of farming households (62.0 percent, or 5,859 out of 9,440) operated a single parcel of land in 2023, while only 1,281 households (13.6 percent) managed two parcels. Very few households cultivated more than five parcels, highlighting the limited scale of farming operations. Additionally, 866 households reported no parcels, suggesting engagement in non-land-based agricultural activities such as livestock, fisheries, or agro-processing. This structure underscores the prevalence of subsistence and semi-commercial farming, with only a small fraction of farmers operating on larger, more consolidated holdings.

Table 8-6 Distribution of farm households by number of parcels farmed, 2023

| Number of Parcels | Count |
|-------------------|--------------|
| 0 | 866 |
| 1 | 5,859 |
| 2 | 1,281 |
| 3 | 421 |
| 4 | 176 |
| 5 | 93 |
| 6 | 38 |
| 7 | 24 |
| 8 | 5 |
| 9 | 4 |
| Not Stated | 673 |
| Total | 9,440 |

Source: *Population and Housing Census 2023*

Livestock ownership provides further insight into farm household composition and diversification strategies. Table 8-7 indicates that poultry dominates with an average of 102 birds per household, followed by rabbits (11), pigs (30), and small ruminants such as goats and sheep (5 each). However, median and modal values reveal that most households keep relatively small herds, reinforcing the subsistence nature of animal rearing. Cattle, though less common, remain important, with an average of 4 per household, while donkeys and horses are marginal.

The distribution of livestock-owning households by species (Table 8-8) confirms the prominence of small ruminants and pigs. Goats (1,733 households) and sheep (1,267 households) are the most widespread, followed by pigs (872) and cattle (755). Poultry is also significant, with 316 households reporting ownership, although concentrated in fewer but larger flocks. The presence of rabbits (204 households), beehives (10 households), and other species indicates a degree of diversification, though on a relatively small scale. These patterns highlight the dual role of livestock as both a source of food security and a source of supplementary income.

Table 8-7 Average number of livestock owned per household, 2023

| Type of Livestock | Mean | Median | Mode |
|-------------------|------|--------|------|
| Cattle | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| Pigs | 30 | 4 | 1 |
| Goats | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| Sheep | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| Horses | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| Donkeys | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Rabbits | 11 | 6 | 6 |
| Poultry | 102 | 24 | 12 |

Source: *Population and Housing Census 2023*

Table 8-8 Farm Households owning livestock, by species, 2023

| Type of Livestock | Count |
|------------------------------|-------|
| Cattle | 755 |
| Pigs | 872 |
| Goats | 1,733 |
| Sheep | 1,267 |
| Horses | 5 |
| Donkeys | 15 |
| Rabbits | 204 |
| Poultry | 316 |
| Beehives bee families | 10 |
| Other species | 60 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Farm structure and livestock ownership in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remain dominated by small-scale operations, with most households managing a single parcel of land and maintaining modest herds. These patterns emphasize the subsistence orientation of agriculture, while also highlighting the role of diversification in supporting food security and income stability.

8.4 Conclusion

The 2023 Population and Housing Census highlights that agriculture in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains a vital source of livelihoods, though it is characterized by small-scale farming, fragmented landholdings, and uneven participation across regions. With 9,440 households engaged in agriculture, crop production (8,147 households) and animal rearing (2,622 households) dominate, while activities such as aquaculture, apiculture, and agro-processing remain marginal. Geographic disparities are evident, with areas such as Calliaqua and Marriaqua recording higher participation levels than divisions like the Southern Grenadines. These patterns reveal both the enduring importance of agriculture and the challenges of scale and accessibility that shape its contribution to rural economies.

Livestock ownership further illustrates households' adaptive strategies, with goats (1,733 households), sheep (1,267 households), and poultry (316 households) playing an important role in supplementing food and income. Yet vulnerability to natural hazards remains a defining feature of the sector, as shown by the 37.1 percent of agricultural households affected in 2023, particularly from the 2021 volcanic eruption (2,989 households impacted) and tropical storms (851 households). These realities underscore the fragility of agricultural systems but also their necessity in sustaining food security. In this regard, the census findings reaffirm the centrality of agriculture to achieving SDG 2, ending hunger and promoting sustainable agriculture, while emphasizing the need for policies that enhance resilience, productivity, and equitable access across communities.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER 8 AGRICULTURE & FOOD SECURITY



Overall engagement low:

Only 24.2% (9,440 households) reported agricultural activity



Urban disengagement:

Agriculture is least common in Kingstown (3.7%) and Southern Grenadines (1.4%)



Agricultural strongholds:

Agricultural activity was concentrated in Calliaqua (20.0%), Marriaqua (11.3%) and the Suburbs of Kingstown (11.1%)



Hazard exposure:

Agricultural households were affected mainly by the volcanic eruption (2,989 households) and hurricanes/tropical storms (851)



Small parcel farming:

Farming is mostly small-scale: with 62.1% of farm households cultivating one parcel. Only 1.7% cultivated five or more



Livestock ownership limited:

Among livestock-owning farm households, goats (1,733) and sheep (1,267) were the most commonly reported species

Chapter 9. Health



9.1 Introduction

Health is one of the most critical dimensions of human development, shaping both individual well-being and national progress. The World Health Organization (WHO) Constitution defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 1948)²⁵. This definition emphasizes that health extends beyond treating illness to encompass people's overall capacity to live fulfilling and productive lives. The Constitution of the World Health Organization further affirms that the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is a fundamental right of every person and that governments carry the responsibility to ensure access to health and social measures that secure this right.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, health is not only a personal concern but also a matter of collective importance, influencing productivity, educational outcomes, and overall social stability. The prevalence of illness and access to healthcare directly affect households' capacity to thrive and shape the resources that governments must allocate to meet population needs. Examining health conditions, chronic disease prevalence, and patterns of medical facility use provides valuable insights into both the challenges faced by the population and the effectiveness of health systems in responding to these needs.

The census data for 2001, 2012, and 2023 offer a unique opportunity to trace health outcomes over time, revealing how demographic shifts, lifestyle changes, and improvements in healthcare access have influenced the burden of illness. Chronic non-communicable diseases (NCDs), in particular, have become increasingly prominent, raising concerns about long-term health risks and the sustainability of healthcare systems. At the same time, patterns of medical facility usage shed light on accessibility, affordability, and preferences in healthcare-seeking behavior across different communities.

This chapter, therefore, explores the health profile of the population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines with a focus on chronic illnesses and the use of medical facilities. By analyzing changes across the three census periods, it highlights progress made, persistent inequalities, and areas requiring policy attention to improve population health and strengthen resilience. Unless otherwise stated, percentages in this chapter are calculated using the household population as the denominator, consistent with Table 0-1. The household population was 109,188 in 2012 and 108,764 in 2023. Counts relating to medical facility use refer to persons who reported using a facility within the previous month and should not be interpreted as prevalence rates for the total population.⁵

9.2 Chronic Illnesses

Chronic illnesses remain one of the leading health concerns in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, shaping both the quality of life of individuals and the demands placed on the healthcare system. Census data from 2001, 2012, and 2023 reveal that non-communicable diseases have steadily increased in prevalence within the household population, reflecting the combined effects of population ageing, changing dietary

²⁵ World Health Organization. (1948). *Constitution of the World Health Organization*. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/about/governance/constitution>

habits, reduced physical activity, and other lifestyle factors. Hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and arthritis continue to dominate the health profile, while conditions such as glaucoma, kidney disease, and cancer, though less common, have become increasingly visible in recent years. These patterns mirror wider shifts in health, in which NCDs account for an increasing share of the disease burden.

Over time, the prevalence of the most common conditions has shown a clear upward trend. Hypertension remained the most widespread chronic illness, rising from 7.1 percent of the household population in 2001 to 10.0 percent in 2012 and further to 11.3 percent in 2023. Diabetes followed a similar trajectory, increasing from 3.4 percent of the household population in 2001 to 5.8 percent in 2012 and 6.5 percent in 2023. By contrast, asthma declined from 4.4 percent in 2001 to 4.3 percent in 2023, while arthritis fell from 5.1 percent of the household population in 2001 to 3.6 percent in 2023. Although less prevalent, glaucoma affected 0.6 percent of the household population in 2023, while kidney disease accounted for 0.4 percent, underscoring the growing importance of early detection and long-term care (Table 9-1).

Table 9-1 Cases of Chronic Illnesses by Type of Illness, 2001, 2012 & 2023

| Chronic Illness | 2001 | | 2012 | | 2023 | |
|---|-------|---------|-------|---------|-------|---------|
| | Count | Percent | Count | Percent | Count | Percent |
| Hypertension/High Blood Pressure | 7668 | 7.1 | 10935 | 10.0 | 12239 | 11.3 |
| Arthritis | 5469 | 5.1 | 5226 | 4.8 | 3891 | 3.6 |
| Asthma | 4702 | 4.4 | 6094 | 5.6 | 4683 | 4.3 |
| Diabetes | 3715 | 3.4 | 6308 | 5.8 | 7039 | 6.5 |
| Heart Disease | 964 | 0.9 | 958 | 0.9 | 955 | 0.9 |
| Sickle Cell Anemia | 865 | 0.8 | 1008 | 0.9 | 733 | 0.7 |
| Kidney Disease | 451 | 0.4 | 317 | 0.3 | 420 | 0.4 |
| Stroke | 360 | 0.3 | 419 | 0.4 | - | - |
| Cancer | 167 | 0.2 | 274 | 0.3 | 399 | 0.4 |
| Lupus | 19 | 0.0 | 27 | 0.0 | 62 | 0.1 |
| Carpal Tunnel Syndrome | 50 | 0.1 | 45 | 0.0 | - | - |
| Glaucoma | - | - | 581 | 0.5 | 654 | 0.6 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Note A total of 26,504 and 34,700 persons reported at least one chronic illness in 2012 and 2023 respectively

Gender differences in chronic illness prevalence add another dimension to the picture. Women were more likely than men to report hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and arthritis across all census years. In 2023, women accounted for 7,932 of the 12,239 reported hypertension cases and 4,438 of the 7,039 reported diabetes cases. Asthma (2,785 female cases out of 4,683) and arthritis/rheumatism (2,641 female cases out of 3,891) showed similar patterns, while heart disease also affected slightly more women (527) than men (428) (Table 9-2). These findings underscore the higher reported burden of chronic illness among females.

Table 9-2 Number of Persons Reporting Chronic Illnesses by Type of Illness and Sex, 2012 & 2023

| Illness | 2012 | | | 2023 | | |
|-------------------------------|-------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Sickle Cell Anemia | 318 | 690 | 1,008 | 254 | 479 | 733 |
| Arthritis/Rheumatism | 1,814 | 3,412 | 5,226 | 1,250 | 2,641 | 3,891 |
| Asthma | 2,754 | 3,340 | 6,094 | 1,898 | 2,785 | 4,683 |
| Diabetes | 2,233 | 4,075 | 6,308 | 2,601 | 4,438 | 7,039 |
| Hypertension | 3,817 | 7,118 | 10,935 | 4,307 | 7,932 | 12,239 |
| Heart Disease | 379 | 579 | 958 | 428 | 527 | 955 |
| Stroke | 194 | 225 | 419 | - | - | - |
| Kidney Disease | 138 | 179 | 317 | 199 | 221 | 420 |
| Cancer | 158 | 116 | 274 | 196 | 203 | 399 |
| Lupus | 8 | 19 | 27 | 10 | 52 | 62 |
| Carpal Tunnel Syndrome | 13 | 32 | 45 | - | - | - |
| Glaucoma | 291 | 290 | 581 | 325 | 329 | 654 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Furthermore, age distribution provides further evidence of the shifting burden of disease. In 2023, hypertension was concentrated among older adults, with 42.4 percent of all reported cases occurring among persons aged 45-64 and a further 47.0 percent among those aged 65 years and over, meaning that 89.4 percent of all hypertension cases were recorded among persons aged 45 years and over. Diabetes showed a similar pattern, with 40.9 percent of cases among persons aged 45-64 and 51.3 percent among those aged 65 years and over. Arthritis/rheumatism was even more heavily concentrated among older persons, with 34.6 percent of cases among those aged 45-64 and 59.6 percent among those aged 65 years and over. In contrast, asthma remained more concentrated among younger groups, with 30.7 percent of cases reported among children aged 0-14 years and 29.6 percent among those aged 15-29 years (Tables 9-3 and 9-4).

Simply put, chronic illnesses have become a defining feature of the health profile in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The steady rise in NCDs, coupled with clear gender and age disparities, highlights the need for ongoing monitoring and effective management to reduce their impact on population well-being.

9.2.1 Hypertension/High Blood Pressure

Hypertension remained the leading chronic illness in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and continued to increase over the last two decades. Census results indicate that prevalence rose from 7.1 percent of the household population in 2001 to 10.0 percent in 2012, and further to 11.3 percent in 2023 (Table 9-1). This upward trend reflects demographic change, particularly population aging, as well as lifestyle-related risk factors such as diet and reduced physical activity.

Differences by sex and age were also pronounced.²⁶ In 2023, 14.7 percent of females reported hypertension compared with 7.9 percent of males. Age distribution showed that hypertension was concentrated among older adults, with 42.4 percent of reported cases occurring among persons aged 45-64 years and 47.0 percent among those aged 65 years and over, meaning that nearly nine in every ten cases (89.4 percent) occurred among persons aged 45 years and over (Tables 9-2 and 9-4).

9.2.2 Diabetes

Diabetes has become an increasingly significant chronic illness in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, showing steady growth across census years. In 2001, 3.4 percent of the household population reported the condition, rising to 5.8 percent in 2012 and 6.5 percent in 2023 (Tables 9-1 and 9-2). This upward trend reflects broader global and regional patterns in which diabetes prevalence has risen due to population aging, lifestyle changes, and diet-related risk factors. Although still less prevalent than hypertension, the continued increase signals its growing contribution to the national burden of non-communicable diseases.

The condition was more prevalent among women than men. In 2023, 8.2 percent of females reported diabetes, compared with 4.7 percent of males. In 2012, the corresponding figures were 7.6 percent for females and 4.0 percent for males, confirming that women consistently recorded higher levels than men (Table 9-2). Age also played a central role. In 2023, persons aged 45-64 years accounted for 40.9 percent of all reported diabetes cases, while those aged 65 years and over accounted for 51.3 percent, meaning that 92.2 percent of all cases were concentrated among persons aged 45 years and older (Table 9-3). A similar pattern was evident in 2012, when 45.3 percent of cases were reported among persons aged 45-64 and 40.3 percent among those aged 65 years and over (Table 9-4). These findings confirm diabetes as a steadily rising concern, disproportionately affecting women and older adults.

9.2.3 Asthma

Asthma remains one of the more common chronic conditions in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, though its prevalence has declined slightly over time. In 2001, 4.4 percent of the household population reported asthma, compared with 5.6 percent in 2012 and 4.3 percent in 2023 (Table 9-1). While these figures suggest some reduction in overall prevalence, asthma continues to represent a substantial health challenge, particularly because of its early onset and impact on children and young adults.

Age distribution highlights asthma's distinct profile compared with other chronic illnesses. In 2023, 30.7 percent of all reported cases occurred among children aged 0-14 years, while a further 29.6 percent occurred among persons aged 15-29 years (Table 9-3). Together, this means that 60.3 percent of all asthma cases were reported among persons under 30 years of age. A similar pattern was evident in 2012, when 43.9 percent of cases were among children under 15 and 29.6 percent among persons aged 15-29,

²⁶ Note: Throughout Sections 9.2.1 to 9.2.5, percentages by sex are calculated using the household population by sex as the denominator, whereas percentages by age group are calculated using the total number of reported cases for the specific illness as the denominator.

indicating an even stronger concentration in younger age groups at that time (Table 9-4). Gender differences were also evident. In 2023, women recorded a higher prevalence of asthma (5.2 percent) than men (3.5 percent) (Table 9-2). These findings confirm asthma as a condition that disproportionately affects younger populations, distinguishing it from the older-age concentration observed for hypertension and diabetes.

9.2.4 Arthritis

Arthritis has remained a significant chronic health concern in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, although the prevalence recorded in the census declined over time. Census data show that 5.1 percent of the household population reported arthritis in 2001, compared with 4.8 percent in 2012 and 3.6 percent in 2023 (Tables 9-1 and 9-2). Despite this decline, arthritis continued to represent an important chronic condition, particularly because of its implications for mobility, physical functioning, and long-term care needs among older persons.

The age distribution in 2023 confirms that arthritis was heavily concentrated among older age groups. Persons aged 65 years and over accounted for 59.6 percent of all reported cases, while those aged 45-64 years accounted for a further 34.6 percent (Table 9-3). Together, this means that 94.2 percent of arthritis cases were reported among persons aged 45 years and older. A similar pattern was evident in 2012, when 47.8 percent of cases were among persons aged 65 years and over and 38.4 percent among those aged 45-64 years (Table 9-4). Women were more affected than men. In 2023, 4.9 percent of females reported arthritis, compared with 2.3 percent of males (Table 9-2). In 2012, the corresponding figures were 6.4 percent for females and 3.2 percent for males. These results confirm that arthritis remained strongly associated with aging and was consistently more prevalent among women.

9.2.5 Other Illnesses

Other selected chronic illnesses reported among the household population included heart disease, kidney disease, cancer, glaucoma, lupus, and sickle cell anemia. Although these conditions were reported at lower levels than hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and arthritis, they remain important because of their implications for long-term treatment, care needs, and quality of life. In 2023, heart disease affected 0.9 percent of the household population, sickle cell anemia 0.7 percent, glaucoma 0.6 percent, kidney disease and cancer 0.4 percent each, and lupus 0.1 percent (Tables 9-1 and 9-2). Compared with 2012, the prevalence of kidney disease increased from 0.3 percent to 0.4 percent, cancer from 0.3 percent to 0.4 percent, and glaucoma from 0.5 percent to 0.6 percent, while heart disease remained stable at 0.9 percent. By contrast, sickle cell anemia declined from 0.9 percent in 2012 to 0.7 percent in 2023 (Table 9-1).

Differences by sex and age were also evident. In 2023, females reported slightly higher prevalence than males for heart disease (1.0 percent versus 0.8 percent), sickle cell anemia (0.9 percent versus 0.5 percent), and lupus (0.1 percent versus negligible levels among males), while kidney disease, cancer, and glaucoma affected males and females at broadly similar levels (Table 9-2). Most of these conditions were concentrated among older persons, with those aged 65 years and over accounting for 49.5 percent

of kidney disease cases, 53.1 percent of cancer, 52.1 percent of heart disease, and 73.4 percent of glaucoma cases (Table 9-3). Lupus was more concentrated in the 45-64 age group, while sickle cell anemia showed a different age profile, with a greater concentration among younger persons, particularly those aged 15-29 and 30-44. Overall, while less prevalent than the major chronic conditions, these selected illnesses still contributed meaningfully to the national burden of disease and underscore the need for continued monitoring, early detection, and appropriate long-term care strategies.

Table 9-3 Total & Percentage of Persons Reporting Chronic Illnesses by Type of Illness and Age Group, 2023

| Age Group | Arthritis/ Rheumatism | Kidney Disease (Renal) | Asthma | Diabetes | Hypertension/ High Blood Pressure | Sickle Cell Anemia | Glaucoma | Cancer | Heart Disease | Lupus |
|--------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|---|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| | Count | | | | | | | | | |
| 0-14 | 11 | 11 | 1,438 | 11 | 5 | 143 | 3 | 5 | 43 | - |
| 15-29 | 47 | 20 | 1,388 | 81 | 187 | 206 | 15 | 4 | 69 | 10 |
| 30-44 | 169 | 40 | 989 | 451 | 1,113 | 191 | 26 | 29 | 73 | 19 |
| 45-64 | 1,345 | 141 | 626 | 2,882 | 5,184 | 145 | 130 | 149 | 272 | 27 |
| 65 + | 2,319 | 208 | 242 | 3,614 | 5,750 | 48 | 480 | 212 | 498 | 6 |
| Total | 3,891 | 420 | 4,683 | 7,039 | 12,239 | 733 | 654 | 399 | 955 | 62 |
| | Percentage | | | | | | | | | |
| 0-14 | 0.3 | 2.6 | 30.7 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 19.5 | 0.5 | 1.3 | 4.5 | 0.0 |
| 15-29 | 1.2 | 4.8 | 29.6 | 1.2 | 1.5 | 28.1 | 2.3 | 1.0 | 7.2 | 16.1 |
| 30-44 | 4.3 | 9.5 | 21.1 | 6.4 | 9.1 | 26.1 | 4.0 | 7.3 | 7.6 | 30.6 |
| 45-64 | 34.6 | 33.6 | 13.4 | 40.9 | 42.4 | 19.8 | 19.9 | 37.3 | 28.5 | 43.5 |
| 65 + | 59.6 | 49.5 | 5.2 | 51.3 | 47.0 | 6.5 | 73.4 | 53.1 | 52.1 | 9.7 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 9-4 Total & Percentage of Persons Reporting Chronic Illnesses by Type of Illness and Age Group, 2023

| Age Group | Hypertension | Diabetes | Asthma | Arthritis | Heart Disease | Stroke | Kidney Disease | Cancer | Sickle Cell Anemia | Lupus | Carpal Tunnel Syndrome | Glaucoma |
|------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------|----------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| | Count | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Under 15 | 23 | 32 | 2,678 | 41 | 81 | 5 | 25 | 1 | 280 | 2 | 2 | 18 |
| 15-29 | 249 | 132 | 1,805 | 146 | 84 | 6 | 60 | 12 | 343 | 3 | 13 | 23 |
| 30-44 | 1,515 | 750 | 853 | 533 | 100 | 34 | 66 | 33 | 227 | 10 | 16 | 48 |
| 45-64 | 4,999 | 2,855 | 536 | 2,006 | 298 | 148 | 96 | 87 | 119 | 8 | 10 | 164 |
| 65+ | 4,149 | 2,539 | 223 | 2,500 | 395 | 226 | 70 | 141 | 39 | 4 | 4 | 328 |
| Total | 10,935 | 6,308 | 6,094 | 5,226 | 958 | 419 | 317 | 274 | 1,008 | 27 | 45 | 581 |
| | Percentage | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Under 15 | 0.2 | 0.5 | 43.9 | 0.8 | 8.5 | 1.2 | 7.9 | 0.4 | 27.8 | 7.4 | 4.4 | 3.1 |
| 15-29 | 2.3 | 2.1 | 29.6 | 2.8 | 8.8 | 1.4 | 18.9 | 4.4 | 34.0 | 11.1 | 28.9 | 4.0 |
| 30-44 | 13.9 | 11.9 | 14.0 | 10.2 | 10.4 | 8.1 | 20.8 | 12.0 | 25.5 | 37.0 | 35.6 | 8.3 |
| 45-64 | 45.7 | 45.3 | 8.8 | 38.4 | 31.1 | 35.3 | 30.3 | 31.8 | 11.8 | 29.6 | 22.2 | 28.2 |
| 65+ | 37.9 | 40.3 | 3.7 | 47.8 | 41.2 | 53.9 | 22.1 | 51.5 | 3.9 | 14.8 | 8.9 | 56.5 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

9.3 Use of Medical Facilities

The use of medical facilities declined markedly between 2012 and 2023, falling from 24,443 to 13,607 persons reporting use within the previous month (Table 9-5). These figures refer to persons who utilized a medical facility, not to the total number of persons living with chronic illness or to the total population. The decline is notable given that the prevalence of chronic illnesses such as hypertension and diabetes increased over the same period, suggesting potential barriers to access, including affordability, service availability, and changing care-seeking behavior.

Despite the overall reduction, district health centers and clinics, as well as private doctors' offices, remained the backbone of health service delivery. In 2012, district health centers/clinics accounted for 11,815 reported users, followed by 7,051 for private doctors' offices and 4,205 for public hospitals. By 2023, these figures had declined to 6,350, 4,024, and 2,706, respectively (Table 9-5). Although public and private facilities both recorded lower usage, district health centers and private doctors' offices continued to form the backbone of healthcare access in the country.

Table 9-5 Main Medical Facility Utilized in the Past Month by Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023

| Main Facility | 2001 | | | 2012 | | | 2023 | | |
|--|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Public Hospital | 1,706 | 2,314 | 4,020 | 1,781 | 2,424 | 4,205 | 1,134 | 1,572 | 2,706 |
| District Health Centre/ Health Clinic | 3,061 | 5,250 | 8,311 | 4,585 | 7,230 | 11,815 | 2,378 | 3,972 | 6,350 |
| Private Doctor's Office | 2,762 | 4,190 | 6,952 | 2,888 | 4,163 | 7,051 | 1,600 | 2,424 | 4,024 |
| Pharmacy | 409 | 598 | 1,007 | 224 | 294 | 518 | 31 | 64 | 95 |
| Family Planning Clinic | 29 | 140 | 169 | 2 | 40 | 42 | - | 2 | 2 |
| Private Clinic/Hospital | 125 | 135 | 260 | 111 | 160 | 271 | 144 | 227 | 371 |
| Not Stated | - | - | - | 265 | 270 | 535 | 24 | 15 | 39 |
| Other | 83 | 113 | 196 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Don't Know | - | - | - | 3 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 12 | 20 |
| Total | 8,175 | 12,740 | 20,915 | 9,859 | 14,584 | 24,443 | 5,319 | 8,288 | 13,607 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

9.3.1 Use of Medical Facilities by Census Division

Census division data highlight the uneven distribution of medical facility use across Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (Table 9-6). In 2012, the highest visitation was recorded in Calliaqua (5,485), the Suburbs of Kingstown (2,653), and Kingstown (2,611). By 2023, however, these figures had declined sharply, with Calliaqua falling to 2,979 (45.7 percent decline), Kingstown to 1,405 (46.2 percent decline), and the Suburbs of Kingstown to 1,726 (34.9 percent decline). Smaller divisions such as Marriaqua and Barrouallie also recorded reductions, with Marriaqua declining from 1,909 in 2012 to 1,223 in 2023 and Barrouallie from 1,226 to 761 over the same period. Moreover, the data show that although declines were observed across all census divisions, some of the steepest reductions occurred in both the larger, historically more active divisions and in the Grenadines. Smaller but sustained decreases in rural

divisions further confirm that the reduction in medical facility use was not confined to urban centers, but instead reflected a broader national shift in health service utilization over the intercensal period.

The downward trend was also evident in other rural divisions and the Grenadines. Bridgetown declined from 1,518 in 2012 to 995 in 2023, a reduction of 34.5 percent, while Layou fell from 1,206 to 831, representing a 31.1 percent decline. In the Grenadines, utilization in the Northern Grenadines dropped from 1,288 to 588, while the Southern Grenadines declined from 957 to 380, equivalent to reductions of 54.3 percent and 60.3 percent, respectively (Table 9-6). Overall, the data show that the decline in medical facility use was widespread across the country, affecting both the more populous urban and peri-urban divisions and the smaller rural and Grenadines divisions.

These findings suggest a broad shift in health service utilization patterns over the intercensal period. While the reasons cannot be determined from census data alone, the decline may reflect changing care-seeking behavior, affordability challenges, service constraints, or other barriers affecting access across communities.

Table 9-6 Number of Persons Utilizing Medical Facilities within the Previous Month by Census Division, 2012 & 2023

| Census Division | Public Hospital | District Health Centres/ Clinic | Private Doctor's Office | Pharmacy | Family Planning Clinic | Private Clinic/ Hospital | Not Stated | Don't Know | Total |
|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| 2012 | | | | | | | | | |
| Kingstown | 779 | 662 | 930 | 120 | 10 | 25 | 85 | - | 2,611 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 675 | 848 | 842 | 176 | 7 | 32 | 73 | - | 2,653 |
| Calliaqua | 801 | 2,201 | 2,179 | 83 | 6 | 56 | 159 | - | 5,485 |
| Marriaqua | 206 | 1,107 | 514 | 44 | - | 16 | 22 | - | 1,909 |
| Bridgetown | 133 | 977 | 345 | 2 | - | 25 | 36 | - | 1,518 |
| Colonarie | 126 | 1,081 | 381 | 12 | 3 | 21 | 25 | - | 1,649 |
| Georgetown | 280 | 916 | 377 | 12 | 1 | 7 | 25 | - | 1,618 |
| Sandy Bay | 47 | 632 | 136 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 8 | - | 829 |
| Layou | 214 | 528 | 398 | 15 | 1 | 16 | 34 | - | 1,206 |
| Barrouallie | 146 | 676 | 365 | 8 | 1 | 17 | 13 | - | 1,226 |
| Chateaubelair | 258 | 995 | 210 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 17 | - | 1,494 |
| Northern Grenadines | 440 | 492 | 262 | 43 | 4 | 27 | 20 | - | 1,288 |
| Southern Grenadines | 100 | 699 | 113 | - | 3 | 19 | 23 | - | 957 |
| Total | 4,205 | 11,814 | 7,052 | 519 | 41 | 272 | 540 | - | 24,443 |
| 2023 | | | | | | | | | |
| Kingstown | 383 | 275 | 673 | 7 | 0 | 63 | 4 | 0 | 1,405 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 389 | 774 | 493 | 0 | 0 | 60 | 5 | 5 | 1,726 |
| Calliaqua | 439 | 1,140 | 1,245 | 26 | 0 | 114 | 11 | 4 | 2,979 |
| Marriaqua | 129 | 730 | 335 | 1 | 0 | 22 | 3 | 3 | 1,223 |
| Bridgetown | 194 | 491 | 291 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 4 | 1 | 995 |
| Colonarie | 200 | 565 | 218 | 27 | 0 | 17 | 1 | 1 | 1,029 |
| Georgetown | 313 | 226 | 83 | 5 | 0 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 637 |
| Sandy Bay | 46 | 283 | 85 | 1 | 0 | 16 | 2 | 0 | 433 |
| Layou | 153 | 495 | 161 | 4 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 3 | 831 |
| Barrouallie | 108 | 503 | 135 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 761 |
| Chateaubelair | 200 | 293 | 98 | 14 | 0 | 13 | 2 | 0 | 620 |
| Northern Grenadines | 103 | 318 | 145 | 9 | 1 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 588 |
| Southern Grenadines | 49 | 257 | 62 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 380 |
| Total | 2,706 | 6,350 | 4,024 | 95 | 2 | 371 | 39 | 20 | 13,607 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

9.3.2 Use of Medical Facilities by Chronic Illness

Patterns of medical facility utilization by chronic illness reveal notable changes between 2012 and 2023 (Table 9-7). In 2012, more than half of persons with diabetes (53.7 percent), heart disease (52.7 percent), stroke (54.7 percent), kidney disease (51.1 percent), and cancer (55.1 percent) reported using a medical facility within the previous month. Persons with hypertension also recorded relatively high utilization, at 49.3 percent, while those with arthritis/rheumatism (45.3 percent) and asthma (33.8 percent) showed more moderate levels of use. Persons with glaucoma reported 45.4 percent utilization, while those with sickle cell anemia recorded 37.1 percent.

Table 9-7 Number of Persons Utilizing Medical Facilities by Chronic Illness, 2012 & 2023²⁷

| Chronic Illness | 2012 | | 2023 | |
|---|-------|-------------------|-------|-------------------|
| | Count | Percent (percent) | Count | Percent (percent) |
| Sickle Cell Anemia | 374 | 37.1 | 198 | 27.0 |
| Arthritis/Rheumatism | 2,367 | 45.3 | 1,352 | 34.7 |
| Asthma | 2,058 | 33.8 | 1,086 | 23.2 |
| Diabetes | 3,388 | 53.7 | 2,722 | 38.7 |
| Hypertension/High Blood Pressure | 5,392 | 49.3 | 4,067 | 33.2 |
| Heart Disease | 524 | 52.7 | 443 | 46.4 |
| Stroke | 229 | 54.7 | - | - |
| Kidney Disease | 167 | 51.1 | 242 | 57.6 |
| Cancer | 151 | 55.1 | 203 | 50.9 |
| Lupus | 7 | 25.9 | 32 | 51.6 |
| Carpal tunnel Syndrome | 17 | 37.8 | - | - |
| Glaucoma | 264 | 45.4 | 294 | 45.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Note: It is important to note that stroke and carpal tunnel syndrome were not listed as categories in the 2023 census questionnaire. These cases may have been captured under “Other (specify),” but the absence of explicit categories makes direct comparison unreliable.

By 2023, the pattern had shifted. Kidney disease recorded the highest proportion of persons utilizing medical facilities, at 57.6 percent, followed by lupus (51.6 percent) and cancer (50.9 percent). Persons with heart disease also recorded relatively high utilization, at 46.4 percent, while glaucoma remained notable at 45.0 percent. Among the more common chronic conditions, however, utilization was lower than in 2012. Facility use among persons with hypertension fell to 33.2 percent, while diabetes declined to 38.7 percent. Arthritis/rheumatism (34.7 percent), asthma (23.2 percent), and sickle cell anemia (27.0 percent) also showed lower utilization levels in 2023 than in 2012 (Table 9-7).

The data suggest a transition from high levels of facility use among the most prevalent conditions in 2012 (such as hypertension and diabetes) toward relatively greater reliance on services among patients with less common but often more severe conditions like kidney disease, cancer, and lupus in 2023. This

²⁷ Note: In Table 9-7, percentages are calculated using the total number of reported cases for each specific chronic illness as the denominator.

points to possible changes in disease management strategies and care-seeking behavior across the population.

9.4 Conclusion

The health profile of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines continues to be shaped by the growing burden of chronic non-communicable diseases. Census data from 2001, 2012, and 2023 show persistent increases in major conditions such as hypertension and diabetes, while asthma and arthritis/rheumatism remain important contributors to the national burden of illness. Throughout this chapter, prevalence measures refer to the household population rather than the total population. Women and older adults remain disproportionately affected, particularly in relation to hypertension, diabetes, and arthritis, underscoring the importance of age and sex in understanding chronic disease patterns.

At the same time, the use of medical facilities declined markedly between 2012 and 2023, even as illness prevalence increased. District health centres/clinics and private doctors' offices remained the principal sources of care, but the overall reduction in utilization suggests possible barriers related to affordability, service availability, and uneven geographic access to healthcare. The decline was evident across most census divisions, including major centers such as Calliaqua, Kingstown, and the Suburbs of Kingstown, as well as in the Grenadines.

Analysis by chronic illness further shows that, while the most common conditions accounted for the largest number of reported cases, they did not necessarily have the highest healthcare utilization rates in 2023. Instead, persons with illnesses such as kidney disease, lupus, and cancer showed the highest levels of medical facility use, suggesting greater reliance on care among those with more severe or treatment-intensive conditions. Overall, these findings highlight the need to strengthen the healthcare system to ensure timely, equitable, and sustained access to care, particularly amid a growing chronic disease burden.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER 9 HEALTH



Chronic Illness Burden:

Hypertension (12,239) and diabetes (7,039) are the leading chronic conditions, followed by asthma and arthritis



Gendered Health Divide:

Women report higher rates of hypertension (14.7%) and diabetes (8.2%) than men



Age-Linked Risk:

Persons aged 65+ accounted for over half of reported cases of arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and glaucoma.



Medical Facility Dependence:

In 2023, district health centers are the most utilized (6,350), outpacing private doctors (4,024) and public hospitals (2,706)



Severe Conditions Drive Care Seeking:

Facility use was highest among persons with kidney disease (57.6%), lupus (51.6%), and cancer (50.9%)



Chronic Illness and Care Needs :

Common chronic illnesses such as diabetes, arthritis, and hypertension continued to generate substantial care needs

Chapter 10. Children



10.1 Introduction

Children, defined as persons from birth to 14 years of age, represent a vital sub-population in demographic analysis. They embody a dependent group within households and communities, as they are largely unable to contribute economically and therefore rely on family members, institutions, and the state for care and support. Beyond their demographic weight, children hold a central place in national development policy because of their rights to education, healthcare, protection, and nurturing.

International census standards emphasize the importance of treating children as a distinct population group. According to the United Nations, statistics on children should focus not only on their age and sex distribution but also on key aspects of well-being, including school attendance, relationship to household head, and health status. Particular attention is often directed to subgroups such as children under five, who are at risk of under-enumeration, and the girl child, whose outcomes in education, early marriage, and health remain priority areas in global monitoring.

This chapter, therefore, examines the demographic profile of children in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, drawing on data from the 2012 and 2023 Population and Housing Censuses. It analyses their size, age structure, and sex distribution, as well as key indicators such as school attendance, household relationships, and dependency status. In doing so, the chapter provides critical insights into children's well-being and highlights progress and challenges in meeting national development goals and international commitments.

10.2 Sub-population of Children

Children aged 0-14 years accounted for 22,382 persons in 2023, a decline of 16.9 percent from 2012, when 26,926 children were enumerated (Table 10-1). This contraction reflects broader demographic changes, including falling fertility and declining cohort size at younger ages. Despite the decline, the sex distribution remained relatively stable over time, with boys continuing to account for just over half of all children. In 2023, boys represented 50.6 percent of the child population, compared with 50.8 percent in 2012, while girls accounted for 49.4 percent in 2023 and 49.3 percent in 2012 (Table 10-1).

The age distribution of children further underscores the effects of demographic transition. The youngest cohort, children aged 0-4 years, experienced the sharpest decline, falling from 8,645 in 2012 to 5,609 in 2023, a reduction of 35.1 percent. By contrast, the 10-14 age group fell from 9,760 to 8,557, a decline of 12.3 percent, while the 5-9 age group declined from 8,520 to 8,216, or 3.6 percent (Table 10-1). These patterns suggest that fertility decline in recent years has already reduced the number of births, while older child cohorts remain relatively larger, reflecting higher birth levels in earlier years.

Table 10-1 Number of Children by Five-year Age Ranges and Sex, 2012 & 2023

| Age Group | Male | | Female | | Total | |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Count | Percent | Count | Percent | Count | Percent |
| 2012 | | | | | | |
| 0–4 | 4,314 | 49.9 | 4,331 | 50.1 | 8,645 | 100.0 |
| 5–9 | 4,308 | 50.6 | 4,212 | 49.4 | 8,521 | 100.0 |
| 10–14 | 5,043 | 51.7 | 4,717 | 48.3 | 9,760 | 100.0 |
| Total | 13,665 | 50.8 | 13,260 | 49.3 | 26,926 | 100.0 |
| 2023 | | | | | | |
| 0–4 | 2,807 | 50.0 | 2,802 | 50.0 | 5,609 | 100.0 |
| 5–9 | 4,179 | 50.9 | 4,037 | 49.1 | 8,216 | 100.0 |
| 10–14 | 4,350 | 50.8 | 4,207 | 49.2 | 8,557 | 100.0 |
| Total | 11,336 | 50.6 | 11,046 | 49.4 | 22,382 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 10-2 Number of Children by Five-year Age Range and Census Divisions, 2012 & 2023

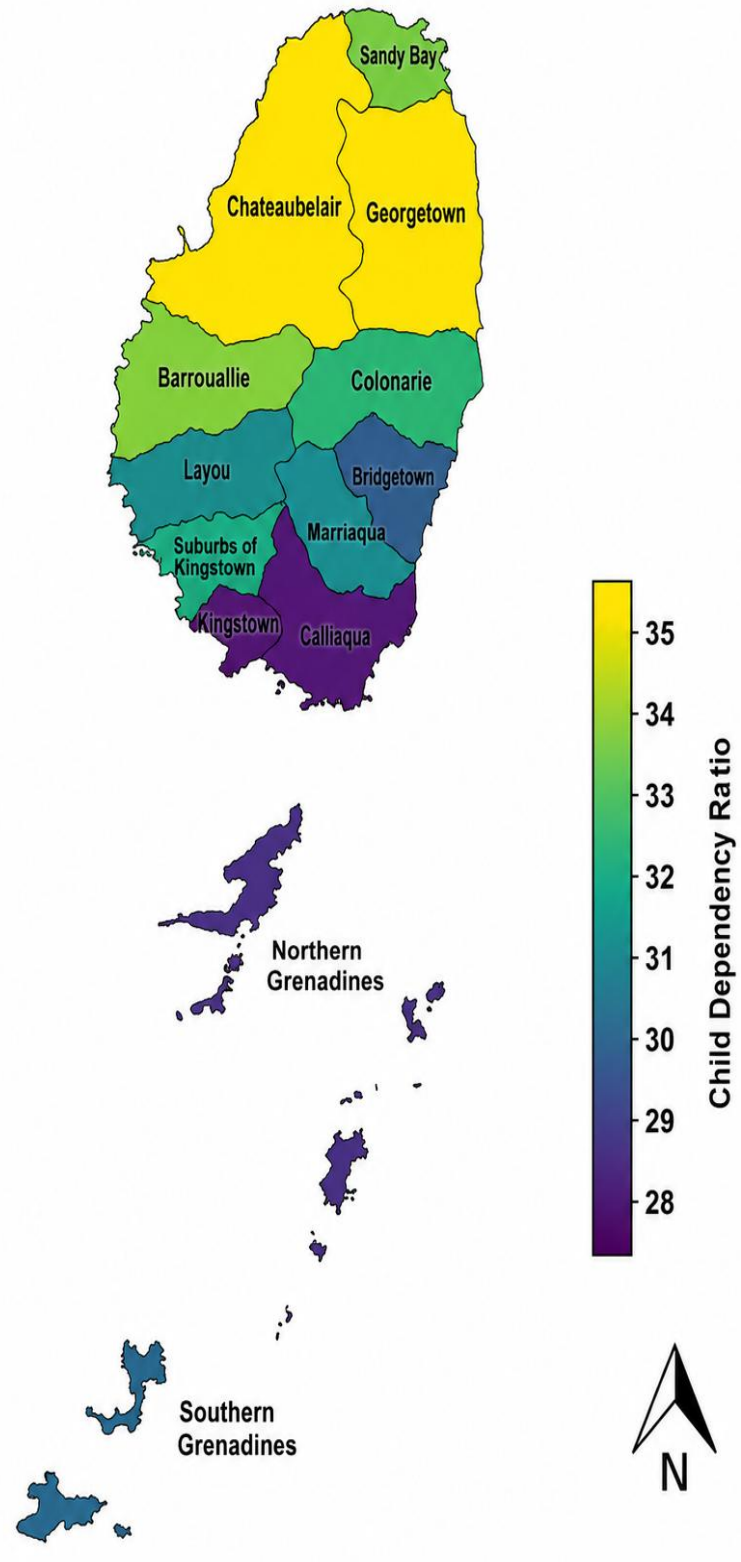
| Census Division | 2012 | | | | 2023 | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| | Five-Year Age Group | | | | Five-Year Age Group | | | |
| | 0-4 | 5-9 | 10-14 | Total | 0-4 | 5-9 | 10-14 | Total |
| Kingstown | 917 | 989 | 1,084 | 2,990 | 468 | 760 | 705 | 1,933 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 1,100 | 1,159 | 1,316 | 3,575 | 819 | 1,278 | 1,364 | 3,461 |
| Calliaqua | 1,766 | 1,696 | 2,039 | 5,501 | 1,233 | 1,819 | 1,971 | 5,023 |
| Marriaqua | 667 | 580 | 729 | 1,976 | 335 | 601 | 610 | 1,546 |
| Bridgetown | 502 | 506 | 621 | 1,629 | 333 | 483 | 473 | 1,289 |
| Colonarie | 552 | 581 | 592 | 1,725 | 388 | 520 | 553 | 1,461 |
| Georgetown | 652 | 560 | 665 | 1,877 | 469 | 628 | 588 | 1,685 |
| Sandy Bay | 223 | 213 | 266 | 702 | 153 | 184 | 246 | 583 |
| Layou | 471 | 492 | 581 | 1,544 | 356 | 455 | 487 | 1,298 |
| Barrouallie | 486 | 527 | 536 | 1,549 | 309 | 457 | 501 | 1,267 |
| Chateaubelair | 547 | 484 | 557 | 1,588 | 301 | 426 | 412 | 1,139 |
| Northern Grenadines | 450 | 430 | 455 | 1,335 | 252 | 339 | 364 | 955 |
| Southern Grenadines | 312 | 303 | 319 | 934 | 193 | 266 | 283 | 742 |
| Total | 8,645 | 8,520 | 9,760 | 26,925 | 5,609 | 8,216 | 8,557 | 22,382 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Between 2012 and 2023, the number of children declined across every census division, underscoring a nationwide demographic shift (Table 10-2). Calliaqua continued to record the largest child population in 2023 (5,023), followed by the Suburbs of Kingstown (3,461) and Kingstown (1,933) (Table 10-2). However, all three divisions recorded declines over the intercensal period. The reduction was particularly sharp in Kingstown, where the child population fell from 2,900 in 2012 to 1,933 in 2023, a decline of 33.3 percent. Other notable declines were recorded in Marriaqua, which fell from 1,951 to 1,546 (20.8 percent), Sandy Bay, which declined from 702 to 583 (17.0 percent), and the Southern Grenadines, which dropped from 742 to 522 (29.6 percent) (Table 10-2). Even in divisions where child populations remained relatively high, such as Calliaqua and the Suburbs of Kingstown, the number of children still declined by 8.8 percent and 3.2 percent, respectively, confirming that the reduction in the child population was widespread rather than confined to rural or remote areas.

The continued decline in the child population across all divisions signals important demographic changes with long-term implications for education, labour force renewal, and social development.

Map 6 Average Child per Household by Census Division, 2023



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

10.3 School Attendance

School attendance among children aged 3 to 14 years in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines improved notably between 2012 and 2023. In 2012, 20,109 children were reported as attending school, accounting for 91.7 percent of all children aged 3-14 years, while 1,024 were not attending, and 794 had their attendance status not stated. By 2023, the number of children attending school had declined to 18,330, reflecting the overall contraction in the child population, yet this represented 95.4 percent of all children aged 3-14 years (Table 10-3). Thus, although the total number of children in school fell, the proportion attending school increased, suggesting stronger school participation despite demographic decline.

Across age groups, attendance patterns showed some variation. Among children aged 3-4 years, the attendance rate rose from 74.3 percent in 2012 to 86.9 percent in 2023, indicating a significant improvement in participation in early childhood education. For children aged 5-9 years, attendance remained consistently high, exceeding 92 percent in both census years, although the total number attending declined from 8,522 in 2012 to 8,216 in 2023. Among children aged 10-14 years, attendance remained highest, at over 96 percent in both years, while the number attending fell from 9,760 in 2012 to 8,557 in 2023, mirroring the broader reduction in the child population (Table 10-3).

Table 10-3 Number of Children, Age 3 – 14 Attending School by Sex and Age Range, 2012 & 2023

| Age Group & Sex | School Attendance Status | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| | 2012 | | | | 2023 | | | |
| | Yes Attending | Not Attending | Not Stated | Total | Yes Attending | Not Attending | Not Stated | Total |
| Male | | | | | | | | |
| 3 – 4 | 1,333 | 358 | 131 | 1,822 | 1,037 | 173 | 3 | 1,213 |
| 5 – 9 | 4,104 | 74 | 131 | 4,309 | 4,004 | 166 | 9 | 4,179 |
| 10 – 14 | 4,763 | 127 | 152 | 5,042 | 4,201 | 140 | 9 | 4,350 |
| Total | 10,200 | 559 | 414 | 11,173 | 9,242 | 479 | 21 | 9,742 |
| Female | | | | | | | | |
| 3 – 4 | 1,381 | 328 | 114 | 1,823 | 1,078 | 139 | 3 | 1,220 |
| 5 – 9 | 4,041 | 59 | 113 | 4,213 | 3,924 | 108 | 5 | 4,037 |
| 10 – 14 | 4,487 | 78 | 153 | 4,718 | 4,086 | 109 | 12 | 4,207 |
| Total | 9,909 | 465 | 380 | 10,754 | 9,088 | 356 | 20 | 9,464 |
| Both Sexes | | | | | | | | |
| 3 – 4 | 2,714 | 689 | 246 | 3,649 | 2,115 | 312 | 6 | 2,433 |
| 5 – 9 | 8,145 | 133 | 244 | 8,522 | 7,928 | 274 | 14 | 8,216 |
| 10 – 14 | 9,250 | 205 | 305 | 9,760 | 8,287 | 249 | 21 | 8,557 |
| Total | 20,109 | 1,024 | 794 | 21,927 | 18,330 | 835** | 41** | 19,206 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

** See Footnote²⁸

²⁸ NA – Not applicable – Data not collected in 2012; A total of 835 children were not attending school, while 41 did not state their status, making 876 children not enrolled or undisclosed

Gender differences were minimal, with both boys and girls showing very similar attendance rates across all age groups. In 2023, for example, 95.1 percent of boys and 96.0 percent of girls aged 3-14 years were reported as attending school. This parity suggests that boys and girls had broadly similar levels of school attendance in the primary school ages. However, the modest number of children whose attendance status was not stated in 2023 (835, or 4.3 percent) remained an issue, particularly in the 3-4 age group, where one in eight children was not enrolled or had attendance not clearly stated (Table 10-3).

Overall, the data indicate that while demographic contraction reduced the number of children in school, school attendance rates improved between 2012 and 2023. This points to continued progress in school participation, particularly in early childhood education, even as the child population declined in size.

10.4 Child Dependency Ratio

The child dependency ratio measures the number of children aged 0-14 relative to the working-age population (15-64 years). It represents the proportion of dependents supported by those in their prime working years, reflecting the economic pressures on households and on society as a whole. According to the United Nations, this ratio provides an important demographic indicator of the balance between those who are economically dependent and those available to support them (United Nations, n.d.)²⁹

Table 10-4 Child Dependency by Census Divisions, 2012 & 2023

| Census Division | 2012 | | | 2023 | | |
|----------------------|---------------|---------------|------------------------|---------------|---------------|------------------------|
| | 0-14 | 15-64 | Child Dependency Ratio | 0-14 | 15-64 | Child Dependency Ratio |
| Kingstown | 2,990 | 8,486 | 35.2 | 1,933 | 7,091 | 27.3 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 3,575 | 9,305 | 38.4 | 3,461 | 10,704 | 32.3 |
| Calliaqua | 5,501 | 16,007 | 34.4 | 5,023 | 17,996 | 27.9 |
| Marriaqua | 1,976 | 5,156 | 38.3 | 1,546 | 4,905 | 31.5 |
| Bridgetown | 1,629 | 4,298 | 37.9 | 1,289 | 4,315 | 29.9 |
| Colonarie | 1,725 | 4,498 | 38.4 | 1,461 | 4,458 | 32.8 |
| Georgetown | 1,877 | 4,552 | 41.2 | 1,685 | 4,719 | 35.7 |
| Sandy Bay | 702 | 1,619 | 43.4 | 583 | 1,706 | 34.2 |
| Layou | 1,544 | 4,088 | 37.8 | 1,298 | 4,144 | 31.3 |
| Barrouallie | 1,549 | 3,669 | 42.2 | 1,267 | 3,696 | 34.3 |
| Chateaubelair | 1,588 | 3,659 | 43.4 | 1,139 | 3,178 | 35.8 |
| Northern Grenadines | 1,335 | 4,160 | 32.1 | 955 | 3,326 | 28.7 |
| Southern Grenadines | 934 | 2,775 | 33.7 | 742 | 2,482 | 29.9 |
| Total | 26,925 | 72,272 | 37.3 | 22,382 | 72,720 | 30.8 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

²⁹ United Nations. (n.d.). Dependency ratio: Methodology sheet. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Retrieved from: https://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/natlinfo/indicators/methodology_sheets/demographics/dependency_ratio.pdf

At the national level, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines recorded a decline in the child dependency ratio from 37.3 in 2012 to 30.8 in 2023 (Table 10-4). This indicates that, for every 100 working-age persons, there were about 37 children in 2012, compared with about 31 in 2023. The reduction is consistent across almost all census divisions, with the sharpest decreases observed in Kingstown (35.2 to 27.3) and the Suburbs of Kingstown (38.4 to 32.3). These trends align with the overall decline in the child population, as reflected in earlier sections, and suggest declining fertility levels combined with the demographic transition toward an aging population.

Regional differences remain important to note. In 2023, the highest child dependency ratios were recorded in Georgetown (35.7 percent) and Chateaubelair (35.8 percent), while the lowest were observed in the Northern Grenadines (28.7 percent) and Kingstown (27.3 percent) (Table 10-4 and Map 7). This implies that rural and more remote communities continued to record relatively higher dependency burdens, while urban areas experienced the combined effects of fertility declines and population aging.

Closely related to this indicator, the ratio of children per 100 employed persons also fell sharply, from 66.0 in 2012 to 48.2 in 2023, as shown in Table 10-5. This suggests that although the number of employed persons increased from 40,821 in 2012 to 46,480 in 2023, the pool of children under 15 declined significantly, reducing the economic dependency per employed person. The steepest declines were observed in divisions such as Barrouallie (85.7 to 57.8 percent) and Colonarie (80.4 to 55.5 percent), while sizeable reductions were also recorded in Kingstown (57.3 to 39.8 percent) and Calliaqua (56.4 to 43.3 percent).

Table 10-5 Ratio of Children to Every 100 Persons Employed, 2012 & 2023

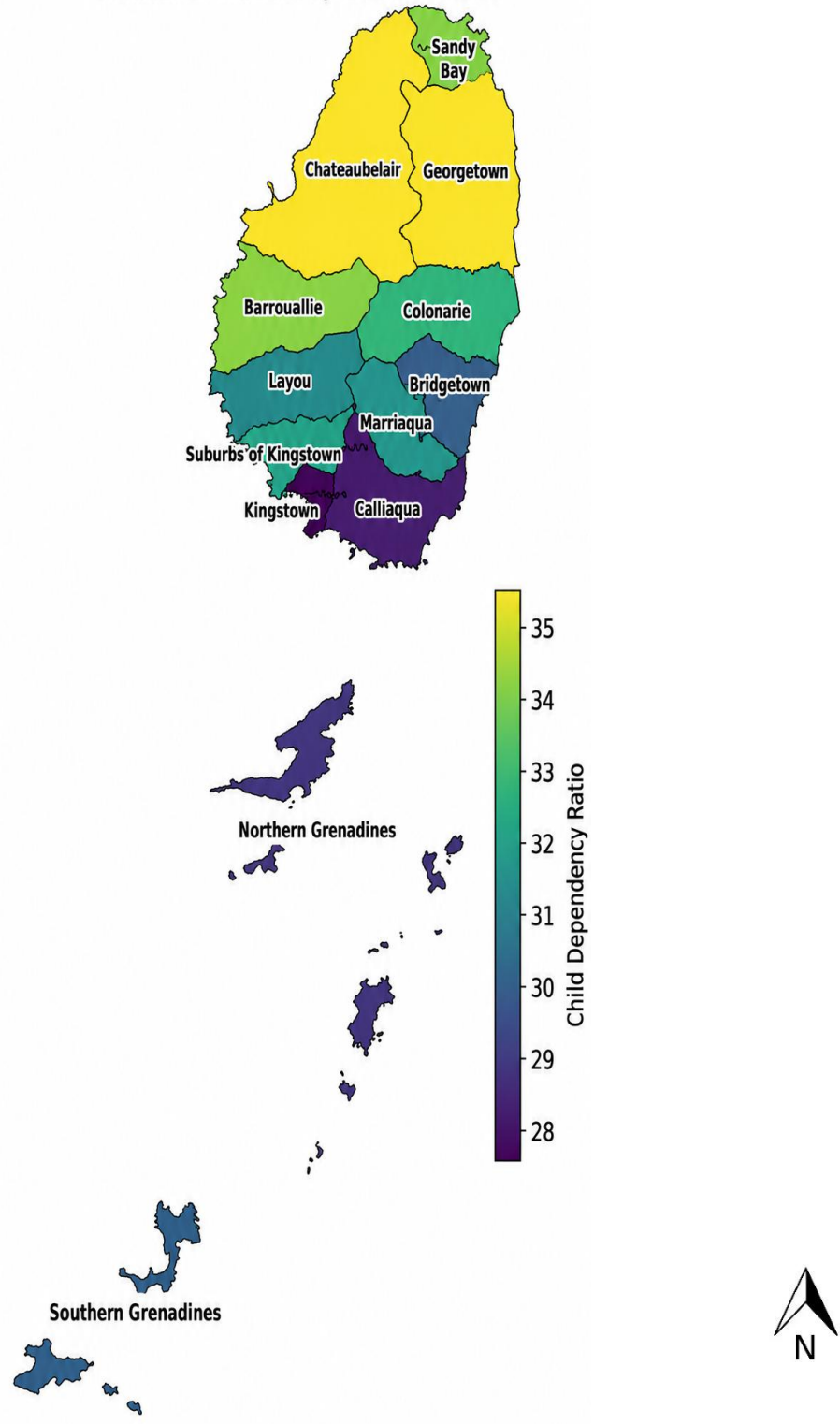
| Census Division | 2012 | | | 2023 | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| | 0 - 14 years | Employed Persons | Children to 100 Persons Employed | 0 - 14 years | Employed Persons | Children to 100 Persons Employed |
| Kingstown | 2,990 | 5,219 | 57.3 | 1,933 | 4,855 | 39.8 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 3,575 | 5,155 | 69.4 | 3,461 | 7,168 | 48.3 |
| Calliaqua | 5,501 | 9,762 | 56.4 | 5,023 | 11,606 | 43.3 |
| Marriaqua | 1,976 | 2,954 | 66.9 | 1,546 | 3,301 | 46.8 |
| Bridgetown | 1,629 | 2,307 | 70.6 | 1,289 | 2,714 | 47.5 |
| Colonarie | 1,725 | 2,146 | 80.4 | 1,461 | 2,631 | 55.5 |
| Georgetown | 1,877 | 2,291 | 81.9 | 1,685 | 2,429 | 69.4 |
| Sandy Bay | 702 | 861 | 81.5 | 583 | 877 | 66.5 |
| Layou | 1,544 | 2,172 | 71.1 | 1,298 | 2,640 | 49.2 |
| Barrouallie | 1,549 | 1,808 | 85.7 | 1,267 | 2,193 | 57.8 |
| Chateaubelair | 1,588 | 1,740 | 91.3 | 1,139 | 1,603 | 71.1 |
| Northern Grenadines | 1,335 | 2,470 | 54.1 | 955 | 2,475 | 38.6 |
| Southern Grenadines | 934 | 1,936 | 48.2 | 742 | 1,988 | 37.3 |
| Total | 26,925 | 40,821 | 66.0 | 22,382 | 46,480 | 48.2 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The decline in the child dependency ratio signals reduced pressure on the working-age population, offering short-term economic benefits. However, it also points to an aging population ahead, requiring

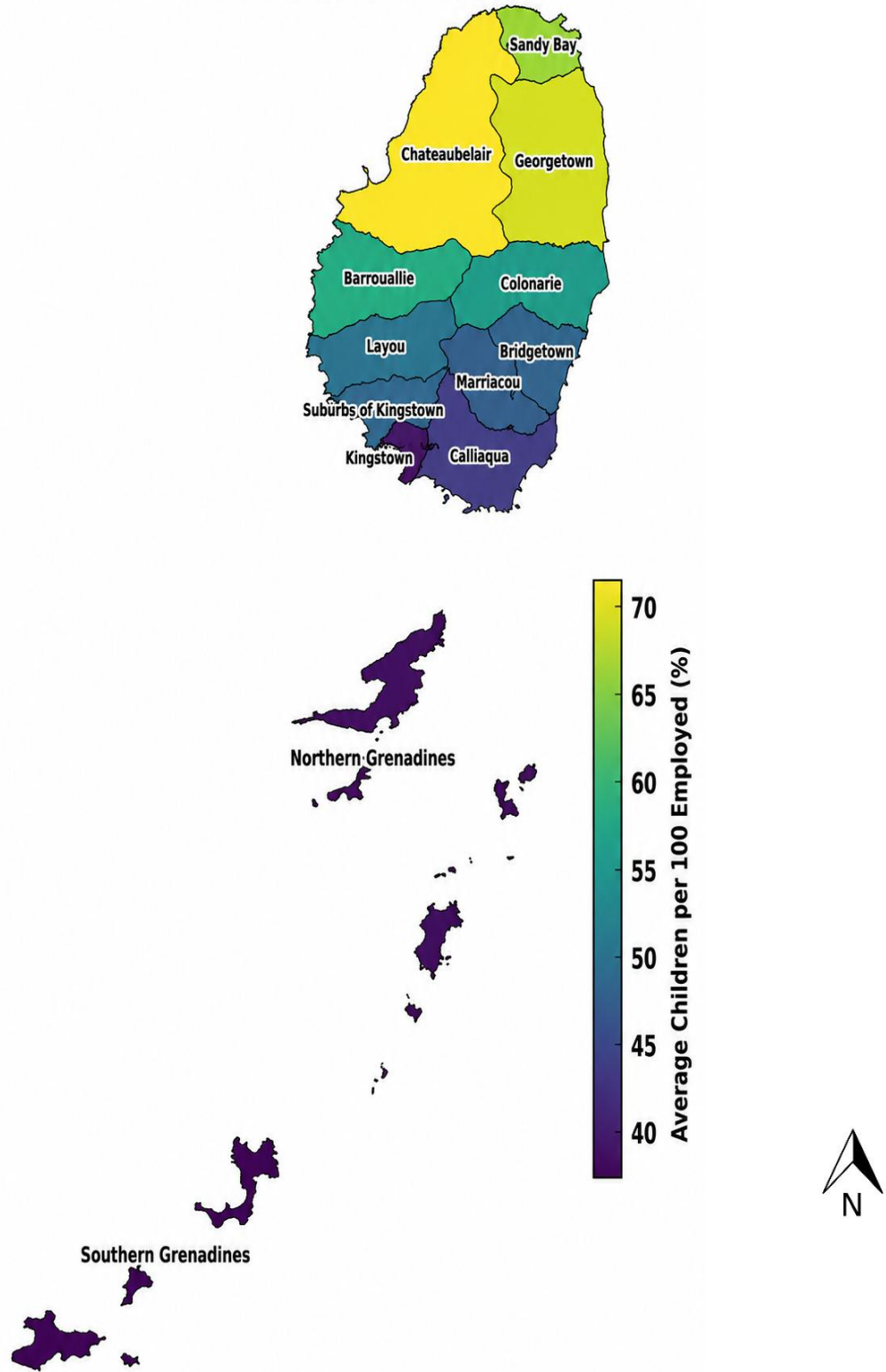
policies that balance current gains with future support needs. In this regard, sustained investment in education, health, and youth development will be critical to ensure long-term demographic resilience.

Map 7 Child Dependency Ratio by Census Division, 2023
St. Vincent & the Grenadines — Child Dependency Ratio
Continuous Gradient by Census Division



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Map 8 Average Children per 100 Employed by Census Divisions, 2023
St. Vincent & the Grenadines – Average Children per 100 Employed (%)
 Continuous Gradient by Census Division



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

10.5 Conclusion

The analysis of the child population in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines between 2012 and 2023 reveals a clear demographic transition, marked by declining child populations across all census divisions. The sharpest reductions were observed among the youngest cohort (ages 0-4), reflecting sustained declines in fertility. While boys continued to represent a slightly larger share of the child population, the sex distribution remained relatively balanced over time. These shifts highlight both the effects of past fertility trends and the emerging reality of smaller child cohorts entering the population structure.

Despite the decline in child numbers, indicators of well-being such as school attendance improved during the intercensal period. The proportion of children enrolled in school rose, particularly at the early childhood level, underscoring advances in access and participation. However, the small proportion of children not attending school, particularly among those aged 3-4, signals areas where further policy focus is required.

The steady decline in the child dependency ratio and the ratio of children per 100 employed persons suggests reduced economic pressure on the working-age population in the short term. Yet, this trend also foreshadows an ageing society that will require careful planning to sustain economic growth, social protection, and intergenerational support. This chapter therefore underscores the importance of continued investment in children's health, education, and development, even as their numbers decline, to secure both present and future demographic resilience.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER 10 CHILDREN



Balanced Gender Distribution:

Children 0-14 years totaled 22,382, split almost equally between males (50.6%) and females (49.4%)



Age Structure:

The largest group was 10-14 years (8,557), followed by 5-9 years (8,216) and 0-4 years (5,609)



Geographic Concentration:

Calliaqua (5,023) and Suburbs of Kingstown (3,461) had the largest child populations, accounting for about 38% of all children



High School Attendance:

Among ages 3-14, 18,330 children (95.4%) attended school, while 835 (4.3%) did not.



Child Dependency:

National child dependency ratio stood at 30.8, or about 31 children per 100 working-age adults



Employment-Based Ratio:

There were 48.2 children per 100 employed persons nationally, highest in Chateaubelair (71.1) and Georgetown (69.4)

Chapter 11. Youth



11.1 Introduction

Youth is widely recognized as a transitional phase between childhood and adulthood, marked by significant physical, psychological, social, and economic changes. The United Nations defines youth as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 years, acknowledging, however, that the term “youth” may vary depending on national contexts (United Nations, n.d.)³⁰. This life stage is often characterized by the pursuit of education, entry into the labour force, and the beginning of family formation, all of which influence broader patterns of national development.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the 2023 Population and Housing Census identified 15,266 persons within this cohort, equal to 14.0 percent of the total population, continuing the decline observed since 2001 and 2012. This downward trend reflects sustained reductions in fertility and the gradual aging of the population. Although smaller in absolute numbers, the youth population remains central to national development. With a near-balanced sex composition (51.4 percent male and 48.6 percent female), this group represents the future labour force and a key driver of social and economic transformation. The following sections examine their demographic profile, educational participation, marital and union status, and economic activity to provide insights into both opportunities and emerging challenges.

11.2 Sub-Population of Youth

The youth population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has contracted significantly over the last two decades, reflecting a combination of demographic transition, fertility decline, and structural aging. In 2001, there were 21,313 youths aged 15-24 years, accounting for 19.7 percent of the total population. By 2012, this number fell to 18,519 (17.0 percent), and by 2023 further to 15,266 (14.0 percent) (Table 11-1; Figure 11.1). Overall, this represents a decline of 6,047 youths, or 28.4 percent, since 2001. The sharp reduction demonstrates the cumulative effect of falling birth cohorts in the past two decades, suggesting that the country is moving into a more advanced stage of demographic transition, with implications for labour supply and population aging.

The sex distribution of the youth population remained relatively stable over time. In 2001, the share was almost evenly split at 50.7 percent male and 49.3 percent female. A similar pattern was observed in 2012 (50.8 percent male, 49.2 percent female) and in 2023 (51.4 percent male, 48.6 percent female) (Table 11-1). This stable distribution indicates that shifts in fertility, mortality, and migration have had minimal impact on the relative proportions of young males and females.

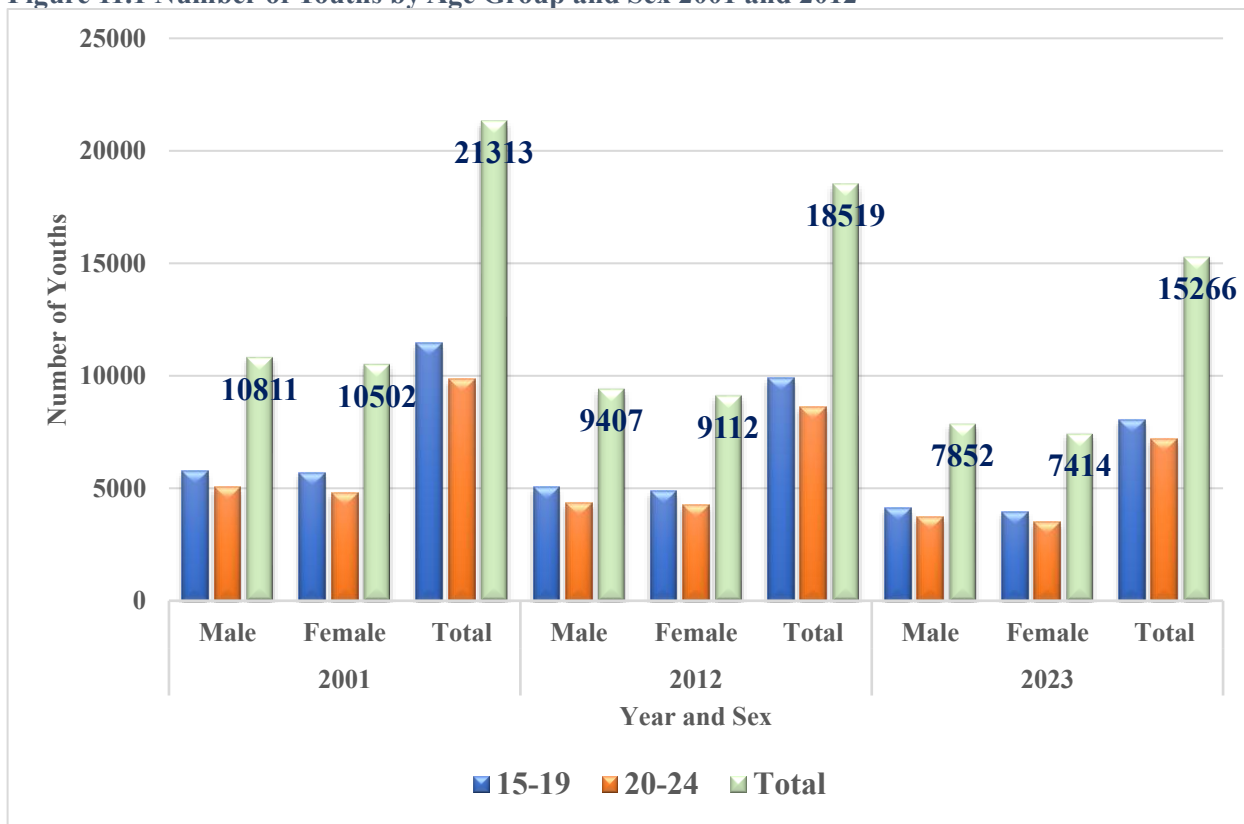
³⁰ United Nations. (n.d.). *Youth*. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/youth>

Table 11-1 Number of Youths by Age Group and Sex, 2012 & 2023

| Age Group | Sex | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Male | percent | Female | percent | Total | percent |
| 2012 | | | | | | |
| 15-19 | 5,053 | 51.0 | 4,859 | 49.0 | 9,912 | 100.0 |
| 20-24 | 4,354 | 50.6 | 4,253 | 49.4 | 8,607 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9,407 | 50.8 | 9,112 | 49.2 | 18,519 | 100.0 |
| 2023 | | | | | | |
| 15-19 | 4,121 | 51.2 | 3,928 | 48.8 | 8,049 | 100.0 |
| 20-24 | 3,731 | 51.7 | 3,486 | 48.3 | 7,217 | 100.0 |
| Total | 7,852 | 51.4 | 7,414 | 48.6 | 15,266 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Figure 11.1 Number of Youths by Age Group and Sex 2001 and 2012



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Age breakdowns within the youth population show modest but notable changes. In 2012, the younger subgroup (15-19 years) comprised 53.5 percent of all youths, compared with 46.5 percent for the 20-24 category. By 2023, the share of persons aged 15-19 years declined slightly to 52.7 percent, while the 20-24 group increased to 47.3 percent (Table 11-1). This pattern indicates that the youth cohort is gradually shifting toward older ages, as smaller birth cohorts replace larger ones at the younger end of the spectrum.

If low fertility continues, future censuses may record more 20-24 year olds than 15-19 year olds, signaling a narrowing youth base.

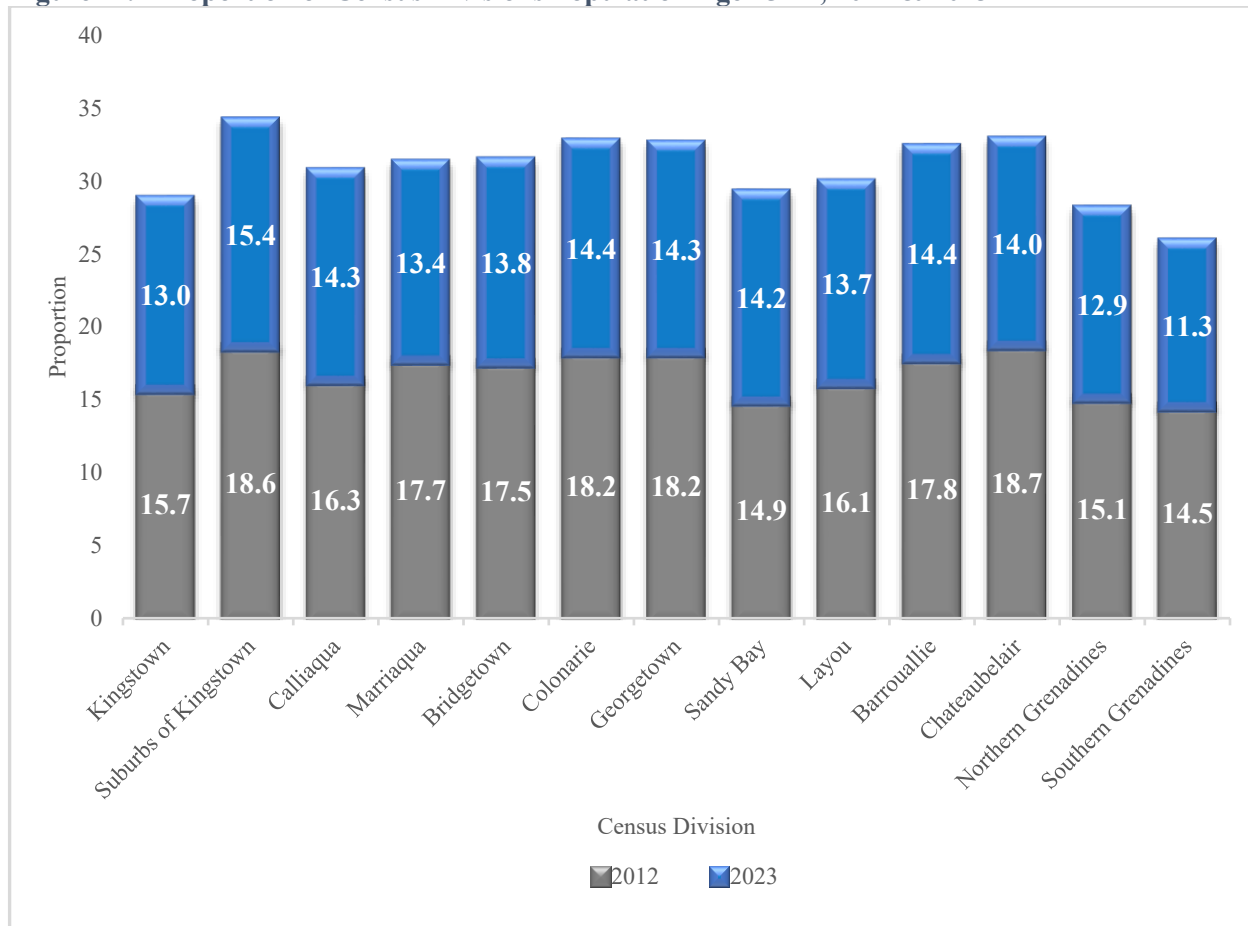
Table 11-2 Number of Youths by Age Groups and Census Divisions, 2012 & 2023

| Census Division | Age Group | | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| | 15-19 | Percent | 20-24 | Percent | Total | Percent |
| 2012 | | | | | | |
| Kingstown | 1,060 | 53.1 | 936 | 46.9 | 1,996 | 100.0 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 1,358 | 53.1 | 1,201 | 46.9 | 2,559 | 100.0 |
| Calliaqua | 2,077 | 53.2 | 1,826 | 46.8 | 3,903 | 100.0 |
| Marriaqua | 738 | 53.6 | 639 | 46.4 | 1,377 | 100.0 |
| Bridgetown | 664 | 57.8 | 485 | 42.2 | 1,149 | 100.0 |
| Colonarie | 657 | 52.7 | 590 | 47.3 | 1,247 | 100.0 |
| Georgetown | 690 | 54.0 | 593 | 46.0 | 1,283 | 100.0 |
| Sandy Bay | 223 | 58.1 | 161 | 41.9 | 384 | 100.0 |
| Layou | 553 | 54.2 | 467 | 45.8 | 1,020 | 100.0 |
| Barrouallie | 558 | 55.7 | 443 | 44.3 | 1,001 | 100.0 |
| Chateaubelair | 584 | 54.1 | 495 | 45.9 | 1,079 | 100.0 |
| Northern Grenadines | 490 | 52.6 | 442 | 47.4 | 932 | 100.0 |
| Southern Grenadines | 260 | 44.1 | 329 | 55.9 | 589 | 100.0 |
| Total | 9,912 | 53.5 | 8,607 | 46.5 | 18,519 | 100.0 |
| 2023 | | | | | | |
| Kingstown | 744 | 53.6 | 644 | 46.4 | 1,388 | 100.0 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 1,297 | 53.5 | 1,126 | 46.5 | 2,423 | 100.0 |
| Calliaqua | 1,951 | 51.4 | 1,843 | 48.6 | 3,794 | 100.0 |
| Marriaqua | 530 | 53.6 | 459 | 46.4 | 989 | 100.0 |
| Bridgetown | 470 | 53.0 | 417 | 47.0 | 887 | 100.0 |
| Colonarie | 507 | 52.3 | 463 | 47.7 | 970 | 100.0 |
| Georgetown | 524 | 51.5 | 494 | 48.5 | 1,018 | 100.0 |
| Sandy Bay | 182 | 50.1 | 181 | 49.9 | 363 | 100.0 |
| Layou | 445 | 51.1 | 425 | 48.9 | 870 | 100.0 |
| Barrouallie | 467 | 57.6 | 344 | 42.4 | 811 | 100.0 |
| Chateaubelair | 367 | 53.4 | 320 | 46.6 | 687 | 100.0 |
| Northern Grenadines | 365 | 55.4 | 294 | 44.6 | 659 | 100.0 |
| Southern Grenadines | 200 | 49.1 | 207 | 50.9 | 407 | 100.0 |
| Total | 8,049 | 52.7 | 7,217 | 47.3 | 15,266 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Spatial distribution reveals striking contrasts across census divisions. In both 2012 and 2023, the largest concentrations of youths were in urban and peri-urban centres. In 2012, Calliaqua (3,903 youths), the Suburbs of Kingstown (2,559), and Kingstown (1,996) together accounted for 45.7 percent of the youth population. By 2023, although absolute numbers had declined, these areas remained dominant, with Calliaqua (3,794), the Suburbs of Kingstown (2,423), and Kingstown (1,388) collectively accounting for 49.8 percent (Table 11-2). Conversely, rural divisions such as Sandy Bay (384 in 2012; 363 in 2023), Chateaubelair (1,079 to 687), and the Southern Grenadines (589 to 407) consistently recorded the smallest counts.

Figure 11.2 Proportion of Census Divisions Population Age 15-24, 2012 & 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

At the household level, youth density has also fallen. In 2001, there were on average 0.7 youths per household, meaning roughly three households for every two youths. This ratio declined to 0.5 in 2012 and further to 0.4 in 2023 (Table 11-3). The reduction reflects both the contraction of the youth population and an increase in the number of households. Rural divisions such as Chateaubelair and Georgetown typically reported higher youth-to-household ratios, reflecting larger household sizes and a possible stronger reliance on extended family structures. Urban areas, by contrast, such as Kingstown and the Suburbs of Kingstown, showed lower ratios consistent with smaller household sizes, delayed family formation, and higher levels of out-migration.

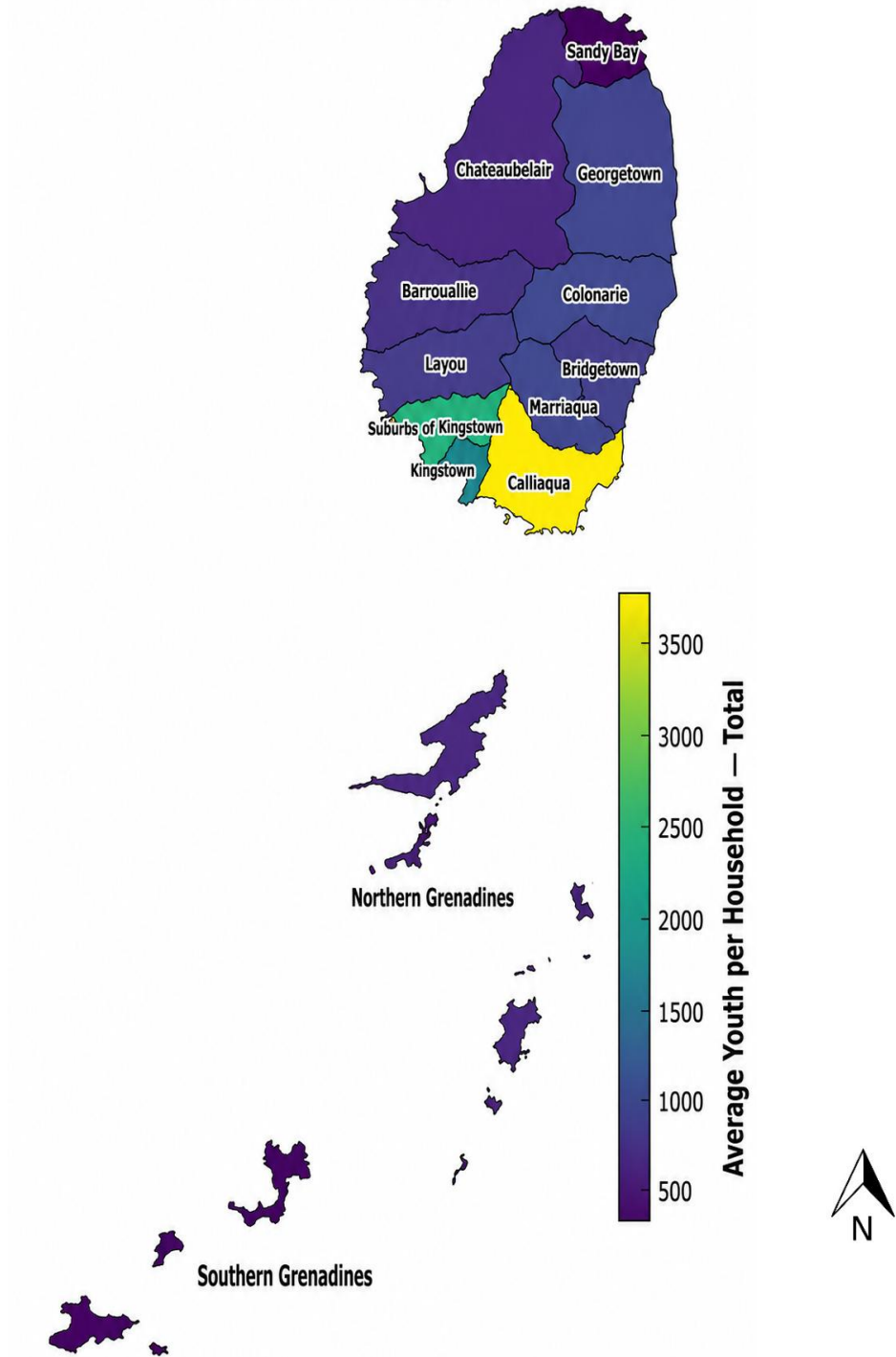
Table 11-3 Ratio of Youths and Households by Census Divisions, 2012 & 2023

| Census Division | Number of Youths | Number of Households | Average Youth Per Household | Average Household Per Youth |
|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2012 | | | | |
| Kingstown | 1,996 | 4,278 | 0.47 | 2.14 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 2,559 | 4,385 | 0.58 | 1.71 |
| Calliaqua | 3,903 | 8,655 | 0.45 | 2.22 |
| Marriaqua | 1,377 | 2,436 | 0.57 | 1.77 |
| Bridgetown | 1,149 | 2,085 | 0.55 | 1.81 |
| Colonarie | 1,247 | 2,174 | 0.57 | 1.74 |
| Georgetown | 1,283 | 2,188 | 0.59 | 1.71 |
| Sandy Bay | 384 | 662 | 0.58 | 1.72 |
| Layou | 1,020 | 2,178 | 0.47 | 2.14 |
| Barrouallie | 1,001 | 1,806 | 0.55 | 1.80 |
| Chateaubelair | 1,079 | 1,669 | 0.65 | 1.55 |
| Northern Grenadines | 932 | 2,673 | 0.35 | 2.87 |
| Southern Grenadines | 589 | 1,640 | 0.36 | 2.78 |
| Total | 18,519 | 36,829 | 0.50 | 1.99 |
| 2023 | | | | |
| Kingstown | 1,388 | 4,021 | 0.35 | 2.90 |
| Suburbs of Kingstown | 2,423 | 5,250 | 0.46 | 2.17 |
| Calliaqua | 3,794 | 9,877 | 0.38 | 2.60 |
| Marriaqua | 989 | 2,669 | 0.37 | 2.70 |
| Bridgetown | 887 | 2,281 | 0.39 | 2.57 |
| Colonarie | 970 | 2,296 | 0.42 | 2.37 |
| Georgetown | 1,018 | 2,436 | 0.42 | 2.39 |
| Sandy Bay | 363 | 738 | 0.49 | 2.03 |
| Layou | 870 | 2,386 | 0.36 | 2.74 |
| Barrouallie | 811 | 1,986 | 0.41 | 2.45 |
| Chateaubelair | 687 | 1,580 | 0.43 | 2.30 |
| Northern Grenadines | 659 | 1,833 | 0.36 | 2.78 |
| Southern Grenadines | 407 | 1,616 | 0.25 | 3.97 |
| Total | 15,266 | 38,969 | 0.40 | 2.55 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The contraction of the youth population carries important demographic consequences. Since 2001, the loss of more than 6,000 youths has reduced the flow of new entrants into the labour force, narrowing the country's demographic base. While smaller cohorts may temporarily ease household dependency, they also place greater pressure on a shrinking working-age population to support an aging population. The concentration of youth in urban centers and steady declines in rural areas further highlight spatial imbalances that contribute to the weakening of smaller communities and the reshaping of the national demographic structure.

Map 9 Average Youth Per Household by Census Division, 2023
St. Vincent & the Grenadines — Average Youth per Household (Total)
Continuous Gradient by Census Division



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

11.3 School Attendance and Educational Attainment

School attendance and completion are central to youth development, strongly associated with health, psychosocial well-being, and long-term life outcomes (Kearney, Childs, & Burke, 2022)³¹. Education is also recognized globally as a cornerstone of sustainable development and poverty reduction, with international frameworks such as the Millennium Development Goals and the World Programme of Action for Youth identifying it as a critical driver of equity and opportunity (UNDESA/UNESCO, 2013)³². Against this backdrop, census data provide an important measure of how effectively youth are engaging in education and transitioning across levels of attainment.

Table 11-4 Number of Youths by Sex, Age Groups and School Attendance, 2012 & 2023

| Sex & Age Group | Yes (Full & Part Time) | No | Don't Know / Not Stated | Total |
|---------------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| 2012 | | | | |
| Male 15-19 | 2,956 | 1,942 | 155 | 5,053 |
| Male 20-24 | 317 | 3,906 | 131 | 4,354 |
| Male Total | 3,273 | 5,848 | 286 | 9,407 |
| Female 15-19 | 2,913 | 1,818 | 128 | 4,859 |
| Female 20-24 | 563 | 3,582 | 108 | 4,253 |
| Female Total | 3,476 | 5,400 | 236 | 9,112 |
| Both 15-19 | 5,869 | 3,760 | 283 | 9,912 |
| Both 20-24 | 880 | 7,488 | 239 | 8,607 |
| Both Total | 6,749 | 11,248 | 522 | 18,519 |
| 2023 | | | | |
| Male 15-19 | 2,618 | 1,497 | 6 | 4,121 |
| Male 20-24 | 214 | 3,509 | 8 | 3,731 |
| Male Total | 2,832 | 5,006 | 14 | 7,852 |
| Female 15-19 | 2,652 | 1,270 | 6 | 3,928 |
| Female 20-24 | 517 | 2,960 | 9 | 3,486 |
| Female Total | 3,169 | 4,230 | 15 | 7,414 |
| Both 15-19 | 5,270 | 2,767 | 12 | 8,049 |
| Both 20-24 | 731 | 6,469 | 17 | 7,217 |
| Both Total | 6,001 | 9,236 | 29 | 15,266 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

As shown in Table 11-4, 6,749 youths were enrolled in school in 2012, compared with 6,001 in 2023. While this represents a decline of nearly 750 students, the contraction reflects the shrinking youth

³¹ Kearney, C. A., Childs, J., & Burke, S. (2022). Social forces, social justice, and school attendance problems in youth. *Contemporary School Psychology*, 27(1), 136–151

³² UNDESA/UNESCO. (2013). *Youth and education*. United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-education.pdf>

population rather than a decline in participation. In proportional terms, school attendance increased from 36.4 percent of youths in 2012 to 39.3 percent in 2023.

Age remains the primary determinant of school attendance. In 2012, 59.2 percent of youths aged 15-19 years were enrolled in school, compared with 10.2 percent among those aged 20-24 (Table 11-4). By 2023, the same pattern persisted: 65.5 percent of 15-19-year-olds were enrolled (5,270 of 8,049), while only 10.1 percent of 20-24-year-olds were in school (731 of 7,217) (Table 11-4; Figure 11.4). These figures confirm that schooling is concentrated in late adolescence, with a sharp drop-off as youths enter early adulthood.

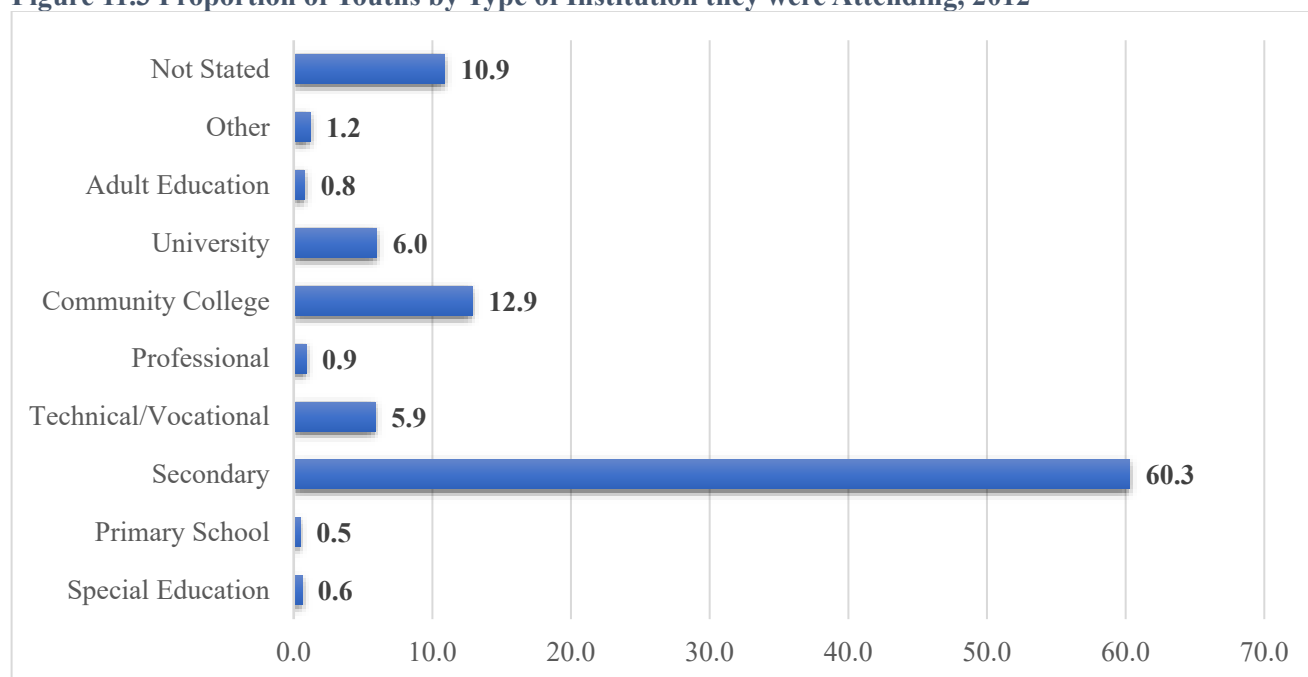
Table 11-5 Youth Population Attending School by Sex, Age Group and Type of Institution, 2012 & 2023

| Age Group & Sex | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| Type of Educational Institution Attending | Male | | | Female | | | Both | | |
| | 15-19 | 20-24 | Total | 15-19 | 20-24 | Total | 15-19 | 20-24 | Total |
| 2012 | | | | | | | | | |
| Special Education | 21 | 6 | 27 | 9 | 4 | 13 | 30 | 10 | 40 |
| Primary School | 17 | 0 | 17 | 14 | 0 | 14 | 31 | 0 | 31 |
| Secondary | 2,133 | 0 | 2,133 | 1,938 | 0 | 1,938 | 4,071 | 0 | 4,071 |
| Technical/ Vocational | 163 | 37 | 200 | 157 | 41 | 198 | 320 | 78 | 398 |
| Professional | 0 | 12 | 12 | 13 | 33 | 46 | 13 | 45 | 58 |
| Community College | 268 | 55 | 323 | 454 | 95 | 549 | 722 | 150 | 872 |
| University | 14 | 113 | 127 | 26 | 254 | 280 | 40 | 367 | 407 |
| Adult Education | 5 | 8 | 13 | 11 | 30 | 41 | 16 | 38 | 54 |
| Other | 13 | 19 | 32 | 15 | 36 | 51 | 28 | 55 | 83 |
| Not Stated | 321 | 68 | 389 | 277 | 69 | 346 | 598 | 137 | 735 |
| Total | 2,955 | 3,273 | 6,228 | 2,914 | 562 | 3,476 | 5,869 | 880 | 6,749 |
| 2023 | | | | | | | | | |
| Primary School | 11 | 1 | 12 | 14 | 4 | 18 | 25 | 5 | 30 |
| Special Education | 18 | 3 | 21 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 24 | 4 | 28 |
| Post Primary (Non-Secondary Tech/Voc) | 86 | 6 | 92 | 63 | 5 | 68 | 149 | 11 | 160 |
| Secondary (General) | 1,847 | 7 | 1,854 | 1,679 | 4 | 1,683 | 3,526 | 11 | 3,537 |
| Home Schooling (Secondary) | 5 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 0 | 7 |
| Post Secondary (A Level) | 390 | 39 | 429 | 564 | 57 | 621 | 954 | 96 | 1,050 |
| Post Secondary (Professional Tech/Voc) | 194 | 26 | 220 | 200 | 63 | 263 | 394 | 89 | 483 |
| Post Secondary (UWI/Other) | 35 | 88 | 123 | 56 | 259 | 315 | 91 | 347 | 438 |
| Adult Education | 15 | 1 | 16 | 21 | 14 | 35 | 36 | 15 | 51 |
| Online/ Distance Learning | 4 | 26 | 30 | 13 | 76 | 89 | 17 | 102 | 119 |
| Other (Specify) | 12 | 12 | 24 | 31 | 34 | 65 | 43 | 46 | 89 |
| Not Stated | 1 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 |
| Total | 2,618 | 214 | 2,832 | 2,652 | 517 | 3,169 | 5,270 | 731 | 6,001 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Furthermore, sex differentials were relatively small in adolescence but became more pronounced in early adulthood. In 2023, 63.5 percent of males aged 15-19 (2,618 of 4,121) were enrolled, compared with 67.5 percent of females (2,652 of 3,928). Among those aged 20-24, however, the difference was sharper: only 5.7 percent of males (214 of 3,731) remained in school, versus 14.8 percent of females (517 of 3,486) (Table 11-4). This pattern underscores a persistent trend in which women extend their participation into post-secondary and tertiary education, while men exit education earlier. Globally, many young women continue to face barriers to higher education due to affordability, infrastructure, and gender norms (UNDESA/UNESCO, 2013), making the persistence of Vincentian women in post-secondary schooling an important divergence from broader patterns.

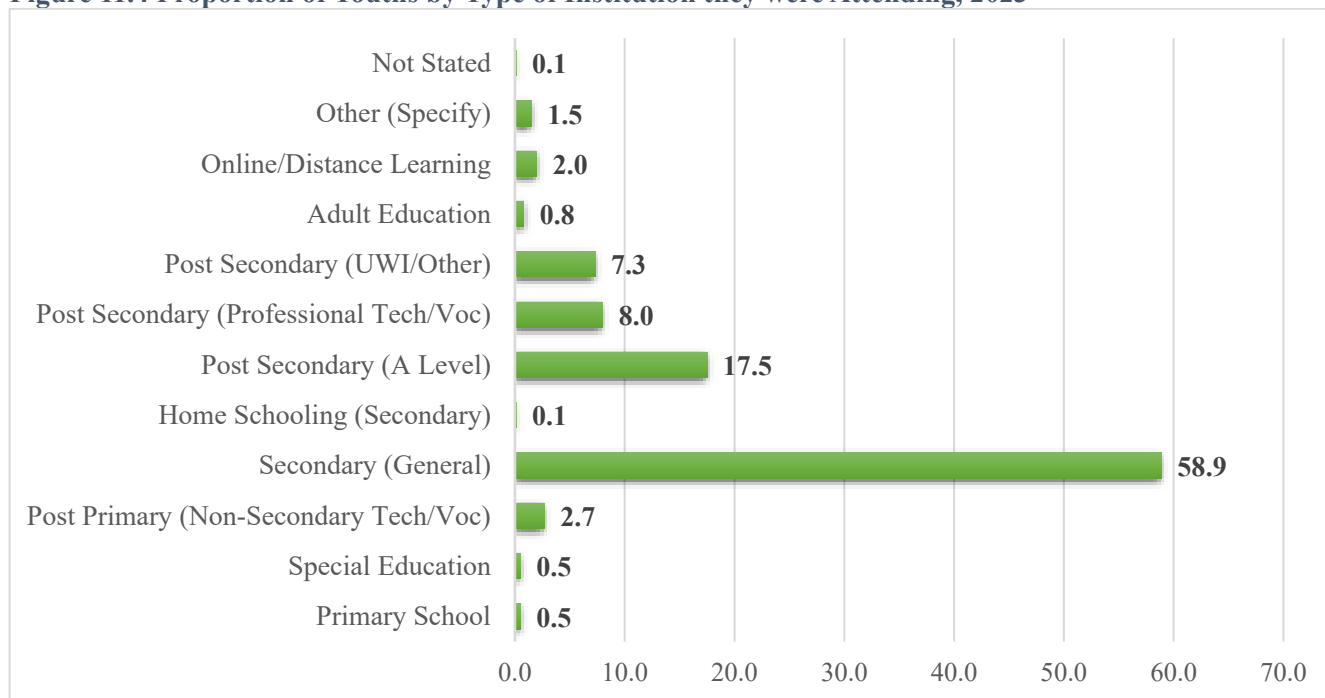
Figure 11.3 Proportion of Youths by Type of Institution they were Attending, 2012



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

The distribution of enrolment across institutions highlights both continuity and diversification. In 2012, secondary schools accounted for 60.3 percent of enrolment, followed by community college (12.9 percent), not stated (10.9 percent), university (6.0 percent), and technical/vocational institutions (5.9 percent) (Table 11-5; Figure 11.3). By 2023, secondary schools remained dominant at 58.9 percent, but participation in post-secondary programmes expanded. Post Secondary (A Level) accounted for 17.5 percent of enrolment, while Post Secondary (Professional Tech/Voc) and Post Secondary (UWI/other) represented 8.0 percent and 7.3 percent, respectively. Online/distance learning also emerged as a new feature, accounting for 2.0 percent, while adult education accounted for 0.8 percent and other institutions for 1.5 percent (Table 11-5; Figure 11.4). These shifts indicate both institutional diversification and new modalities of access.

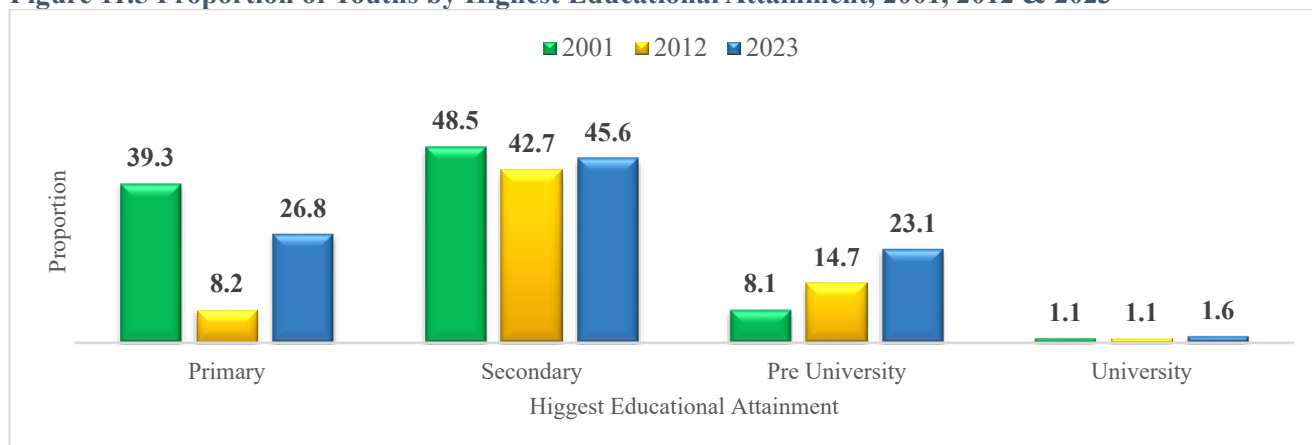
Figure 11.4 Proportion of Youths by Type of Institution they were Attending, 2023



Source: *Population and Housing Census 2023*

Attainment outcomes reflect a generational transformation. As shown in Figure 11.5, the share of youths whose highest education was primary fell sharply, from 39.3 percent in 2001 to 8.2 percent in 2012 and 26.8 percent in 2023. Secondary attainment remained the modal outcome, accounting for 45.6 percent of youths in 2023, while pre-university qualifications rose from 14.7 percent in 2012 to 23.1 percent in 2023. University-level attainment remained relatively low, rising from 1.1 percent in 2012 to 1.6 percent in 2023 (Figure 11.5; Table 11-6).

Figure 11.5 Proportion of Youths by Highest Educational Attainment, 2001, 2012 & 2023



Source: *2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023*

Table 11-6 Number of Youths by Sex, Age Group and Highest Educational Level Attained, 2012 & 2023

| Highest Educational Level Attained | Age Group & Sex | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| | Male | | | Female | | | Both | | |
| | 15-19 | 20-24 | Total | 15-19 | 20-24 | Total | 15-19 | 20-24 | Total |
| | 2012 | | | | | | | | |
| Primary | 212 | 876 | 1,088 | 96 | 334 | 430 | 308 | 1,210 | 1,518 |
| Secondary | 1,885 | 2,280 | 4,165 | 1,603 | 2,140 | 3,743 | 3,488 | 4,420 | 7,908 |
| Pre-University | 290 | 732 | 1,022 | 528 | 1,170 | 1,698 | 818 | 1,902 | 2,720 |
| University | 0 | 66 | 66 | 1 | 132 | 133 | 1 | 198 | 199 |
| Other | 20 | 62 | 82 | 7 | 32 | 39 | 27 | 94 | 121 |
| Not Stated | 2,644 | 336 | 2,980 | 2,621 | 444 | 3,065 | 5,265 | 780 | 6,045 |
| None | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| Total | 5,054 | 4,353 | 9,407 | 4,858 | 4,254 | 9,112 | 9,912 | 8,607 | 18,519 |
| | 2023 | | | | | | | | |
| Daycare/Nursery | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Pre-school | 24 | 9 | 33 | 8 | 3 | 11 | 32 | 12 | 44 |
| Pre-primary (Infant) or Primary Lower / Junior Secondary (Forms 1-3) / Senior Primary | 1,790 | 569 | 2,359 | 1,461 | 271 | 1,732 | 3,251 | 840 | 4,091 |
| Upper Secondary (Forms 4 & 5) | 382 | 327 | 709 | 224 | 117 | 341 | 606 | 444 | 1,050 |
| Post Secondary, non-tertiary (diploma or associate degree) | 1,458 | 1,590 | 3,048 | 1,568 | 1,292 | 2,860 | 3,026 | 2,882 | 5,908 |
| Tertiary level - Bachelor's Degree | 357 | 1,040 | 1,397 | 571 | 1,561 | 2,132 | 928 | 2,601 | 3,529 |
| Tertiary level - Master's Degree | 11 | 57 | 68 | 19 | 137 | 146 | 20 | 194 | 214 |
| Doctorate level programmes | - | 7 | 7 | - | 17 | 17 | - | 24 | 24 |
| None | 2 | 1 | 3 | - | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Other (specify) | 57 | 35 | 92 | 57 | 16 | 73 | 114 | 51 | 165 |
| Not Stated | 22 | 50 | 72 | 23 | 43 | 66 | 45 | 93 | 138 |
| Total | 4,121 | 3,731 | 7,852 | 3,928 | 3,486 | 7,414 | 8,049 | 7,217 | 15,266 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 11-7 Number of Youths by Sex, Age Group and Highest Certificate Attained, 2012 & 2023

| Age Group & Sex | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Highest Examination Passed | Male | | | Female | | | Total | | |
| | 15-19 | 20-24 | Total | 15-19 | 20-24 | Total | 15-19 | 20-24 | Total |
| 2012 | | | | | | | | | |
| School Leaving Certificate | 72 | 66 | 138 | 53 | 31 | 84 | 125 | 97 | 222 |
| Cambridge School Certificate | 11 | 4 | 15 | 13 | 24 | 37 | 24 | 28 | 52 |
| GCE O'Levels or CXC Gen | 855 | 1,228 | 2,083 | 1,280 | 1,459 | 2,739 | 2,135 | 2,687 | 4,822 |
| High School Certificate | 92 | 100 | 192 | 110 | 110 | 220 | 202 | 210 | 412 |
| GCE A'Levels / CAPE | 108 | 334 | 442 | 212 | 584 | 796 | 320 | 918 | 1,238 |
| College Certificate/Diploma | 89 | 341 | 430 | 151 | 538 | 694 | 245 | 879 | 1,124 |
| Associate Degree | 26 | 37 | 63 | 51 | 89 | 140 | 77 | 126 | 203 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 0 | 52 | 52 | 2 | 97 | 99 | 2 | 149 | 151 |
| Post Graduate Diploma/Certificate | 0 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 10 | 2 | 12 | 14 |
| Professional Certificate | 12 | 32 | 44 | 8 | 30 | 38 | 20 | 62 | 82 |
| Higher Degree (Masters) | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 7 | 7 |
| Other (Specify) | 97 | 35 | 132 | 98 | 31 | 129 | 195 | 66 | 261 |
| None | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| Not Stated | 3,176 | 1,925 | 5,101 | 2,411 | 1,119 | 3,530 | 5,587 | 3,044 | 8,631 |
| Total | 5,054 | 4,353 | 9,407 | 4,858 | 4,254 | 9,112 | 9,912 | 8,607 | 18,519 |
| 2023 | | | | | | | | | |
| Common Entrance | 239 | 434 | 673 | 205 | 216 | 421 | 444 | 650 | 1,094 |
| CPEA | 2,052 | 423 | 2,475 | 1,677 | 200 | 1,877 | 3,729 | 623 | 4,352 |
| School Leaving Certificate | 14 | 22 | 36 | 9 | 3 | 12 | 23 | 25 | 48 |
| Cambridge School Certificate | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| CXC Basic | 189 | 237 | 426 | 214 | 203 | 417 | 403 | 440 | 843 |
| CCSLC | 19 | 21 | 40 | 15 | 16 | 31 | 34 | 37 | 71 |
| GCE 'O' Levels, CXC General, CSEC | 1,037 | 1,200 | 2,237 | 1,153 | 1,007 | 2,160 | 2,190 | 2,207 | 4,397 |
| High School Certificate | 29 | 16 | 45 | 16 | 23 | 39 | 45 | 39 | 84 |
| GCE 'A' Levels, CAPE | 130 | 309 | 439 | 143 | 480 | 623 | 273 | 789 | 1,062 |
| Associate Degree | 130 | 508 | 638 | 259 | 843 | 1,102 | 389 | 1,351 | 1,740 |
| College Certificate | 39 | 131 | 170 | 68 | 173 | 241 | 107 | 304 | 411 |
| College Diploma | 9 | 53 | 62 | 16 | 59 | 75 | 25 | 112 | 137 |
| Professional Certificate e.g. RSA, City and Guilds | 1 | 22 | 23 | 1 | 21 | 22 | 2 | 43 | 45 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 8 | 46 | 54 | 1 | 105 | 106 | 9 | 151 | 160 |
| Post Graduate Certificate | 0 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 9 | 11 |
| Post Graduate Diploma | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Higher Degree (Master's) | 0 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 11 | 11 | 0 | 16 | 16 |
| Higher Degree (Doctoral) | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 5 |
| Other (Specify) | 20 | 19 | 39 | 8 | 9 | 17 | 28 | 28 | 56 |
| None | 116 | 222 | 338 | 68 | 66 | 134 | 184 | 288 | 472 |
| Not Stated | 88 | 58 | 146 | 71 | 36 | 107 | 159 | 94 | 253 |
| Total | 4,121 | 3,731 | 7,852 | 3,928 | 3,486 | 7,414 | 8,049 | 7,217 | 15,266 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

At higher levels, growth is visible but modest. In 2023, 214 youths held bachelor's degrees, 24 held master's degrees, and 6 reported doctoral qualifications (Table 11-6). More significant was the increase in post-secondary diplomas (3,529) and associate degrees (1,740), suggesting that more young people are pursuing intermediate and tertiary-level qualifications aligned with technical and professional training (Table 11-7).

Certification trends support these findings. In 2012, most youths reported CXC/GCE O Levels (4,822) or CAPE/A Levels (1,238) as their highest certificates (Table 11-7). By 2023, GCE O' Levels, CXC General, CSEC remained dominant (4,397), but there was strong growth in associate degrees (from 203 to 1,740) and steady gains in bachelor's degrees (from 151 to 160). The Caribbean Primary Exit Assessment (CPEA), introduced to replace the Common Entrance examination, was also widely reported in 2023, with 4,352 youths certified (Table 11-7). These changes highlight both policy reforms and structural diversification of the education system.

Overall, the data demonstrate steady improvement in the education profile of youths in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. While the absolute number of students declined with demographic contraction, fewer now leave school with only primary education, and more are advancing into pre-university, post-secondary, and tertiary-level education. Female youths consistently show higher persistence than males, particularly beyond compulsory schooling. From a demographic perspective, these trends indicate a qualitative improvement in human capital, though they coexist with global challenges of disengagement and exclusion, affecting more than 225 million youth worldwide (UNDESA/UNESCO, 2013).

11.4 Marital Status

Marriage among youths in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines remains rare, reflecting the extended transition to adulthood typical of the Caribbean and many other regions. As shown in Table 11-8, the overwhelming majority of youths were single or never married in both census years 92.1 percent in 2012 (17,063 persons) and a nearly identical 98.8 percent in 2023 (15,082 persons). This consistency highlights a strong preference for delaying formal marriage during adolescence and early adulthood.

The number of married youths declined substantially, from 1,435 in 2012 to 90 in 2023, with the proportion falling from 7.7 percent to less than 1 percent of the youth population. This sharp contraction suggests that formal marriage has become even less common among young Vincentians, aligning with broader Caribbean trends of postponed or foregone marriage. Divorce, while uncommon, rose from 6 cases in 2012 to 41 in 2023. Small numbers of widowed and legally separated youths were also recorded in both years.

The decline in marriage among youths reflects both cultural and structural dynamics, greater prioritization of education, economic constraints, and the growing preference for less formal arrangements such as cohabitation or visiting partnerships, discussed further in the following section.

Table 11-8 Number of Youths by Sex, Age Group and Marital Status, 2012 & 2023

| Marital Status | Age Group and Sex | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| | Male | | | Female | | | Both | | |
| | 15-19 | 20-24 | Total | 15-19 | 20-24 | Total | 15-19 | 20-24 | Total |
| | 2012 | | | | | | | | |
| Single / Never Married | 5,017 | 3,996 | 9,013 | 4,625 | 3,425 | 8,050 | 9,642 | 7,421 | 17,063 |
| Married | 34 | 351 | 385 | 230 | 820 | 1,050 | 264 | 1,171 | 1,435 |
| Divorced | 0 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Widowed | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Legally Separated | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Not Stated | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Total | 5,053 | 4,354 | 9,407 | 4,859 | 4,253 | 9,112 | 9,912 | 8,607 | 18,519 |
| | 2023 | | | | | | | | |
| Single / Never Married | 4,096 | 3,669 | 7,765 | 3,909 | 3,408 | 7,317 | 8,005 | 7,077 | 15,082 |
| Married | 2 | 33 | 35 | 5 | 50 | 55 | 7 | 83 | 90 |
| Divorced | 10 | 13 | 23 | 7 | 11 | 18 | 17 | 24 | 41 |
| Widowed | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Legally Separated | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Not Stated | 12 | 14 | 26 | 4 | 15 | 19 | 16 | 29 | 45 |
| Total | 4,121 | 3,731 | 7,852 | 3,928 | 3,486 | 7,414 | 8,049 | 7,217 | 15,266 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

11.5 Union Status

Union status data provide a broader view of relationship patterns beyond legal marriage. In 2012, about 11,682 youths (63.1 percent) reported never having had a spouse or common-law partner, while another 2,505 (13.5 percent) were not in a union at the time of the census (Table 11-9). Together, these categories accounted for 14,187 youths, or 76.6 percent of the youth population.

By 2023, the absolute number of youths in these categories declined to 12,043, reflecting the contraction of the overall youth population. However, in proportional terms, this group expanded to 78.9 percent of all youths (6,668 who had never had a partner and 5,375 who were not in a union). This increase indicates that a larger share of young Vincentians delayed or avoided union formation, even as the total number of youths shrank.

At the same time, participation in unions declined across categories. Visiting partnerships dropped from 2,396 youths (12.9 percent) in 2012 to 1,350 (8.8 percent) in 2023, while common-law unions decreased from 1,209 (6.5 percent) to 657 (4.3 percent). Formal marriage remained rare, with only 65 youths living with a spouse in 2023, down from 194 in 2012 (Table 11-9).

Sex and age differences were also evident. In 2012, females aged 20-24 were more likely than males to be in unions, but by 2023, both sexes saw declines, with women still entering unions earlier but at lower rates than before. These shifts suggest that singlehood is not only more common but also more prolonged, as young people extend schooling and postpone household formation.

Table 11-9 Number of Youths by Sex, Age Group and Union Status, 2012 & 2023

| Union Status | Age Group and Sex | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| | Male | | | Female | | | Both | | |
| | 15-19 | 20-24 | Total | 15-19 | 20-24 | Total | 15-19 | 20-24 | Total |
| 2012 | | | | | | | | | |
| Never had a Spouse or Common-Law Partner | 3,871 | 2,522 | 6,393 | 3,412 | 1,877 | 5,289 | 7,283 | 4,399 | 11,682 |
| Married and Living with Spouse | 5 | 54 | 59 | 8 | 127 | 135 | 13 | 181 | 194 |
| Common-Law Union | 26 | 286 | 312 | 222 | 675 | 897 | 248 | 961 | 1,209 |
| Visiting Partner | 258 | 778 | 1,036 | 410 | 950 | 1,360 | 668 | 1,728 | 2,396 |
| Not in a Union | 692 | 602 | 1,294 | 663 | 548 | 1,211 | 1,355 | 1,150 | 2,505 |
| Not Stated | 201 | 112 | 313 | 144 | 76 | 220 | 345 | 188 | 533 |
| Total | 5,053 | 4,354 | 9,407 | 4,859 | 4,253 | 9,112 | 9,912 | 8,607 | 18,519 |
| 2023 | | | | | | | | | |
| Never had a Spouse or Common-Law Partner | 2,261 | 1,327 | 3,588 | 1,987 | 1,093 | 3,080 | 4,248 | 2,420 | 6,668 |
| Married and Living with Spouse | 1 | 24 | 25 | 1 | 39 | 40 | 2 | 63 | 65 |
| Married and not Living with Spouse | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 6 | 6 |
| Common-Law Union | 32 | 165 | 197 | 94 | 366 | 460 | 126 | 531 | 657 |
| Visiting Partner | 110 | 526 | 636 | 166 | 548 | 714 | 276 | 1,074 | 1,350 |
| Not in a Union | 1,442 | 1,355 | 2,797 | 1,444 | 1,134 | 2,578 | 2,886 | 2,489 | 5,375 |
| Not Stated | 275 | 334 | 609 | 236 | 300 | 536 | 511 | 634 | 1,145 |
| Total | 4,121 | 3,731 | 7,852 | 3,928 | 3,486 | 7,414 | 8,049 | 7,217 | 15,266 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

11.6 Economic Activity and the Youth

Youth economic activity reflects the transition from school to work and from dependence to economic self-reliance. Data from Tables 11-10 and 11-11 show that between 2012 and 2023, youths in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines experienced modest gains in employment, persistent unemployment, and shifting roles between schooling and domestic responsibilities.

Employment rose slightly, particularly among young adults. For males aged 20-24, the share employed increased from 55.3 percent in 2012 to 60.8 percent in 2023, while for females it rose from 40.0 percent to 52.0 percent. Among 15-19 year olds, employment remained limited, increasing from 9.6 percent in 2012 to 12.7 percent in 2023 (Table 11-11). These patterns highlight the gradual incorporation of youths into the labour force, with the bulk of participation occurring after age 20.

Unemployment, however, remained a significant concern. In 2012, 14.4 percent of youths were reported as looking for work; by 2023, this had risen to 11.9 percent if looking for work alone, or 17.0 percent if those wanting work and available are combined with those actively seeking work (Table 11-11). Among 20-24 year olds, 17.9 percent of males and 15.1 percent of females were actively seeking work in 2023, suggesting continued barriers to securing stable employment despite improvements in education.

School attendance continued to dominate adolescence but declined sharply in early adulthood. In 2012, 66.4 percent of 15-19 year olds were enrolled in school, compared with 69.2 percent in 2023. By contrast, only 9.8 percent of 20-24 year olds were in school in 2012, down slightly from 10.1 percent in 2023 if defined as enrolled, or effectively unchanged in broad terms (Table 11-11). These figures confirm the concentration of schooling in late adolescence, with a steep decline as youths transition into tertiary education and employment.

Gender patterns remained distinct, particularly in domestic roles. In 2012, 15.2 percent of young women reported home duties as their main activity, but this share dropped to 7.1 percent in 2023, reflecting declining emphasis on traditional domestic responsibilities and greater female engagement in education and work. Male reporting of home duties remained minimal in both years, at around 5.4 percent in 2012 and 3.8 percent in 2023 for youths overall (Table 11-11).

Overall, the findings point to a slower but more complex transition from school to work. While employment opportunities expanded modestly, unemployment remained elevated, and many youths continued to struggle to convert educational attainment into secure labour market participation. At the same time, schooling remained dominant in adolescence, while gendered expectations around home duties continued to recede, particularly for young women. These trends underscore both progress and persistent vulnerabilities in the economic lives of Vincentian youths.

Table 11-10 Number of Youths by Sex, Age Group and Main Economic Activity, 2012

| Age Group and Sex | Main Activity in Last 12 Months | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|------------|---------------|
| | Had a job and worked | Had a job but did not work | Looked for work | Wanted work and available | Did Home Duties | Attended School/ Student | Retired, did not work | Disabled, unable to work | Other (Specify) | Not stated | Total |
| 2012 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-19 | 595 | 1 | 536 | 132 | 270 | 3,266 | 8 | 39 | 56 | 150 | 5,053 |
| 20-24 | 2,406 | 25 | 924 | 211 | 239 | 332 | 3 | 50 | 56 | 108 | 4,354 |
| Total | 3,001 | 26 | 1,460 | 343 | 509 | 3,598 | 11 | 89 | 112 | 258 | 9,407 |
| Female | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-19 | 358 | 6 | 409 | 98 | 482 | 3,315 | 8 | 22 | 28 | 133 | 4,859 |
| 20-24 | 1,701 | 16 | 799 | 167 | 898 | 526 | 4 | 34 | 36 | 72 | 4,253 |
| Total | 2,059 | 22 | 1,208 | 265 | 1,380 | 3,841 | 12 | 56 | 64 | 205 | 9,112 |
| Both | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-19 | 953 | 7 | 945 | 230 | 752 | 6,581 | 16 | 61 | 84 | 283 | 9,912 |
| 20-24 | 4,107 | 41 | 1,723 | 378 | 1,137 | 858 | 7 | 84 | 92 | 180 | 8,607 |
| Total | 5,060 | 48 | 2,668 | 608 | 1,889 | 7,439 | 23 | 145 | 176 | 463 | 18,519 |
| 2023 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-19 | 574 | 12 | 351 | 142 | 112 | 2,788 | 10 | 27 | 93 | 12 | 4,121 |
| 20-24 | 2,267 | 32 | 666 | 273 | 120 | 222 | - | 57 | 86 | 8 | 3,731 |
| Total | 2,841 | 44 | 1,017 | 415 | 232 | 3,010 | 10 | 84 | 179 | 20 | 7,852 |
| Female | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-19 | 451 | 6 | 277 | 131 | 190 | 2,783 | 2 | 13 | 65 | 10 | 3,928 |
| 20-24 | 1,814 | 38 | 526 | 232 | 336 | 417 | 5 | 31 | 68 | 19 | 3,486 |
| Total | 2,265 | 44 | 803 | 363 | 526 | 3,200 | 7 | 44 | 133 | 29 | 7,414 |
| Both | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-19 | 1,025 | 18 | 628 | 273 | 302 | 5,571 | 12 | 40 | 158 | 22 | 8,049 |
| 20-24 | 4,081 | 70 | 1,192 | 505 | 456 | 639 | 5 | 88 | 154 | 27 | 7,217 |
| Total | 5,106 | 88 | 1,820 | 778 | 758 | 6,210 | 17 | 128 | 312 | 49 | 15,266 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 11-11 Percentage Distribution of Youths by Sex, Age and Economic Activity, 2012 & 2023

| Age Group and Sex | Main Activity in Last 12 Months | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|------------|--------------|
| | Had a job and worked | Had a job but did not work | Looked for work | Wanted work and available | Did Home Duties | Attended School/ Student | Retired, did not work | Disabled, unable to work | Other (Specify) | Not stated | Total |
| 2012 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-19 | 11.8 | 0.0 | 10.6 | 2.6 | 5.4 | 64.7 | 0.2 | 0.8 | 1.1 | 3.0 | 100.0 |
| 20-24 | 55.3 | 0.6 | 21.2 | 4.9 | 5.5 | 7.6 | 0.1 | 1.1 | 1.3 | 2.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 31.9 | 0.3 | 15.5 | 3.7 | 5.4 | 38.3 | 0.1 | 0.9 | 1.2 | 2.8 | 100.0 |
| Female | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-19 | 7.4 | 0.1 | 8.4 | 2.0 | 9.9 | 68.2 | 0.2 | 0.5 | 0.6 | 2.7 | 100.0 |
| 20-24 | 40.0 | 0.4 | 18.8 | 3.9 | 21.1 | 12.4 | 0.1 | 0.8 | 0.9 | 1.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 22.6 | 0.2 | 13.3 | 2.9 | 15.2 | 42.2 | 0.1 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 2.3 | 100.0 |
| Both | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-19 | 9.6 | 0.1 | 9.5 | 2.3 | 7.6 | 66.4 | 0.2 | 0.6 | 0.9 | 2.9 | 100.0 |
| 20-24 | 47.7 | 0.5 | 20.0 | 4.4 | 13.2 | 10.0 | 0.1 | 1.0 | 1.1 | 2.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 27.3 | 0.3 | 14.4 | 3.3 | 10.2 | 40.2 | 0.1 | 0.8 | 1.0 | 2.5 | 100.0 |
| 2023 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-19 | 13.9 | 0.3 | 8.5 | 3.4 | 2.7 | 67.7 | 0.2 | 0.7 | 2.3 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| 20-24 | 60.8 | 0.9 | 17.9 | 7.3 | 3.2 | 6.0 | 0.0 | 1.5 | 2.3 | 0.2 | 100.0 |
| Total | 36.2 | 0.6 | 13.0 | 5.3 | 3.0 | 38.3 | 0.1 | 1.1 | 2.3 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| Female | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-19 | 11.5 | 0.2 | 7.1 | 3.3 | 4.8 | 70.9 | 0.1 | 0.3 | 1.7 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| 20-24 | 52.0 | 1.1 | 15.1 | 6.7 | 9.6 | 12.0 | 0.1 | 0.9 | 2.0 | 0.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 30.6 | 0.6 | 10.8 | 4.9 | 7.1 | 43.2 | 0.1 | 0.6 | 1.8 | 0.4 | 100.0 |
| Both | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-19 | 12.7 | 0.2 | 7.8 | 3.4 | 3.8 | 69.2 | 0.1 | 0.5 | 2.0 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| 20-24 | 56.5 | 1.0 | 16.5 | 7.0 | 6.3 | 8.9 | 0.1 | 1.2 | 2.1 | 0.4 | 100.0 |
| Total | 33.4 | 0.6 | 11.9 | 5.1 | 5.0 | 40.7 | 0.1 | 0.8 | 2.0 | 0.3 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

11.7 Conclusion

The proportion of the population aged 15-24 years continued its decline across the intercensal period, falling from 19.7 percent in 2001 to 14.0 percent in 2023, consistent with sustained fertility reduction and demographic ageing. As a result, the average number of youths per household also decreased, reflecting both smaller birth cohorts and household expansion.

School participation remained concentrated among those aged 15-19 years, with 65.5 percent of this group enrolled in 2023. Compared with earlier periods, a larger share of youths advanced to higher levels of education, particularly post-secondary, pre-university, and tertiary studies. Female youths demonstrated greater persistence beyond compulsory schooling, underscoring widening gender differences in educational attainment.

At the same time, the transition to adult roles slowed. Marriage and union formation declined sharply, with nearly four in five youths reporting either no spouse/common-law partner or not being in a union in 2023. Labour force participation improved modestly, especially among youths aged 20-24 years, though unemployment persisted at elevated levels. Overall, youths in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines were fewer in number but increasingly characterized by prolonged schooling, delayed family formation, and later entry into stable employment.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER 11

YOUTH



Size & sex:

Youths total 15,266; males 51.4%, females 48.6%. The 15–19 cohort is slightly larger (8,049; 52.7%) than 20–24 (7,217; 47.3%)



Divisional Concentration:

Largest concentrations are Calliaqua (3,794); smallest are Sandy Bay (363) and Southern Grenadines (407)



School participation:

65.5% of youths aged 15-19 were in school (5,270 of 8,049); By ages 20-24, only 10.1% remained enrolled (731 of 7,217)



Education attained:

Upper Secondary (5,908) was the largest category, followed by Pre-primary/Primary (4,091) and Post-secondary non-tertiary (3,529)



Qualifications:

Holders of CSEC/GCE O-Level: 4,397; CAPE: 1,062;
Associate degree: 1,740; Bachelor's: 160



Work status:

Overall, 33.4% had a job (5,106), 11.9% looked for work and 5.1% wanted work (not working)

Chapter 12. May 2026 The Elderly



12.1 Introduction

Population aging has become one of the most significant demographic changes of the 21st century, with implications for labour markets, health care, social protection, and intergenerational support. The Caribbean, including Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, is experiencing this transformation more rapidly than in previous decades, owing to sustained declines in fertility, longer survival, and the contraction of younger cohorts. According to regional estimates, the proportion of persons aged 60 years and over in Latin America and the Caribbean has more than doubled since 1950 and is projected to reach nearly one-quarter of the total population by 2050 (ECLAC, 2024)³³. These shifts mirror a global trend in which older adults are becoming a growing segment of national populations, reshaping family and community structures.

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, this trend is clearly visible. While the youth population has contracted since 2001, the elderly population has expanded steadily, accounting for a larger share of the total population with each successive census. This reflects the advanced stage of the demographic transition in the country, where declining fertility has reduced the inflow of younger cohorts, while declines in mortality and improvements in life expectancy have extended survival into advanced ages. The result is a population that is gradually aging, with an increasing proportion of older persons who are increasingly shaping the country's demographic and socio-economic profile.

12.2 The Elderly Population

The elderly population (aged 60 years and over) in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has grown steadily over the past two decades, reflecting sustained fertility decline and improvements in life expectancy. In 2001, there were 10,499 elderly persons, representing 12.9 percent of the total population. By 2012, this figure had increased to 13,811 persons (12.7 percent), and by 2023 it had risen sharply to 20,210 persons (18.6 percent) (Tables 12-1 & 12-2). This progression highlights the acceleration of population aging, with the elderly population expanding by 31.5 percent between 2001 and 2012, and by a further 46.3 percent between 2012 and 2023.

Growth has been particularly striking in the younger elderly cohorts (60-69 years), who benefited most directly from past gains in survival. Between 2012 and 2023, the 60-64 age group expanded from 3,821 to 6,548 persons, a 71.4 percent increase, while the 65-69 group rose from 2,841 to 5,189 persons (82.6 percent increase) (Table 12-2). More moderate increases were recorded among persons aged 70-74 (34.8 percent) and 75-79 (18.6 percent), while the 80 years and over group grew only slightly, from 2,635 to 2,710 (2.8 percent) (Table 12-2). These patterns indicate that successive birth cohorts are now entering older ages in larger numbers, consistent with the demographic transition.

³³ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). (2024). *Demographic Observatory: Population prospects and rapid demographic changes in the first quarter of the twenty-first century in Latin America and the Caribbean (LC/PUB.2024/22-P)*. United Nations.

Table 12-1 Elderly Population (Age 60+) by Age Group and Sex, 2001 & 2012

| Age Group | 2001 | | | 2012 | | | Percentage Change (2001-2012) | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| 60-64 | 1,313 | 1,433 | 2,746 | 1,970 | 1,851 | 3,821 | 50.0 | 29.2 | 39.1 |
| 65-69 | 1,222 | 1,333 | 2,555 | 1,457 | 1,384 | 2,841 | 19.2 | 3.8 | 11.2 |
| 70-74 | 892 | 1,062 | 1,954 | 1,282 | 1,254 | 2,536 | 43.7 | 18.1 | 29.8 |
| 75-79 | 639 | 878 | 1,517 | 964 | 1,014 | 1,978 | 50.9 | 15.5 | 30.4 |
| 80+ | 649 | 1,078 | 1,727 | 1,142 | 1,493 | 2,635 | 76.00 | 38.5 | 52.6 |
| Total | 4,715 | 5,784 | 10,499 | 6,815 | 6,996 | 13,811 | 44.5 | 21.0 | 31.5 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

Table 12-2 Elderly Population (Age 60+) by Age Group and Sex, 2012 & 2023

| Age Group | 2012 | | | 2023 | | | Percentage Change (2012-2023) | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| 60-64 | 1,970 | 1,851 | 3,821 | 3,465 | 3,083 | 6,548 | 75.9 | 66.6 | 71.4 |
| 65-69 | 1,457 | 1,384 | 2,841 | 2,706 | 2,483 | 5,189 | 85.7 | 79.4 | 82.6 |
| 70-74 | 1,282 | 1,254 | 2,536 | 1,705 | 1,713 | 3,418 | 33.0 | 36.6 | 34.8 |
| 75-79 | 964 | 1,014 | 1,978 | 1,154 | 1,191 | 2,345 | 19.7 | 17.5 | 18.6 |
| 80+ | 1,142 | 1,493 | 2,635 | 1,114 | 1,596 | 2,710 | -2.5 | 6.9 | 2.8 |
| Total | 6,815 | 6,996 | 13,811 | 10,144 | 10,066 | 20,210 | 48.8 | 43.9 | 46.3 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Sex differentials remain an important feature of the elderly population, but the pattern changed by 2023. Males slightly outnumbered females overall, with 10,144 elderly men compared with 10,066 elderly women. However, women continued to outnumber men in the older elderly age groups, particularly those 70 years and over. Among those aged 80 years and over, women numbered 1,596, compared with 1,114 men (Table 12-2). This pattern suggests that although male survival improved at the younger elderly ages, women retained a survival advantage at the oldest ages.

12.3 Union Status of the Elderly

Patterns of union status among the elderly population reflect both long-term marital trajectories and the dynamics of aging. In 2012, the largest shares of elderly persons were either married and living with a spouse (37.6 percent) or not in a union (37.3 percent), together accounting for nearly three-quarters of all elderly individuals (Table 12-3). A smaller proportion (12.4 percent) reported never having had a spouse or common-law partner, while 7.2 percent were in common-law unions and 3.4 percent in visiting partnerships. These figures suggest that while formal marriage remained the dominant arrangement, a significant share of the elderly population was living outside unions by this period.

By 2023, these trends shifted markedly, with the proportion of the elderly not in a union rising to 41.4 percent (8,373 persons), surpassing those married and living with a spouse (33.2 percent, or 6,709

persons). At the same time, the share of those who never had a spouse or partner declined to just 5.8 percent (Table 12-3).

Table 12-3 Total and Percentage Elderly Population by Union Status and Sex, 2012 & 2023

| Union Status | Sex | | | | | |
|--|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|-------------|
| | Male | percent | Female | percent | Total | percent |
| 2012 | | | | | | |
| Never had a Spouse or Common-Law Partner | 700 | 10.3 | 1,015 | 14.5 | 1,715 | 12.4 |
| Married and Living with Spouse | 3,068 | 45 | 2,119 | 30.3 | 5,187 | 37.6 |
| Common-law Union | 652 | 9.6 | 337 | 4.8 | 989 | 7.2 |
| Visiting Partner | 300 | 4.4 | 164 | 2.3 | 464 | 3.4 |
| Not in a Union | 1,908 | 28 | 3,237 | 46.3 | 5,145 | 37.3 |
| Not Stated | 187 | 2.7 | 124 | 1.8 | 311 | 2.3 |
| Total | 6,815 | 100 | 6,996 | 100 | 13,811 | 100 |
| 2023 | | | | | | |
| Never had a spouse or common-law partner | 624 | 6.2 | 540 | 5.4 | 1,164 | 5.8 |
| Married and living with spouse | 3,871 | 38.2 | 2,838 | 28.2 | 6,709 | 33.2 |
| Married and not living with spouse | 562 | 5.5 | 421 | 4.2 | 983 | 4.9 |
| Common-law | 831 | 8.2 | 453 | 4.5 | 1,284 | 6.4 |
| Visiting partner | 358 | 3.5 | 146 | 1.5 | 504 | 2.5 |
| Not in a union | 3,237 | 31.9 | 5,136 | 51 | 8,373 | 41.4 |
| Not Stated | 661 | 6.5 | 532 | 5.3 | 1,193 | 5.9 |
| Total | 10,144 | 100 | 10,066 | 100 | 20,210 | 100 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 12-4 Total Elderly Population by Age Group and Union Status, 2012 & 2023

| Age Group | Never had a spouse or common-law partner | Married and living with spouse | Married and not living with spouse | Common-law | Visiting partner | Not in a union | Not Stated | Total |
|--------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| 2012 | | | | | | | | |
| 60–64 | 458 | 1,668 | - | 383 | 167 | 1,074 | 71 | 3,821 |
| 65–69 | 325 | 1,267 | - | 209 | 100 | 888 | 52 | 2,841 |
| 70–74 | 313 | 1,021 | - | 161 | 63 | 906 | 72 | 2,536 |
| 75–79 | 263 | 649 | - | 114 | 58 | 855 | 39 | 1,978 |
| 80+ | 356 | 582 | - | 122 | 76 | 1,422 | 77 | 2,635 |
| Total | 1,715 | 5,187 | - | 989 | 464 | 5,145 | 311 | 13,811 |
| 2023 | | | | | | | | |
| 60–64 | 409 | 2,248 | 333 | 606 | 287 | 2,210 | 455 | 6,548 |
| 65–69 | 343 | 1,859 | 288 | 350 | 135 | 1,930 | 284 | 5,189 |
| 70–74 | 172 | 1,226 | 171 | 188 | 56 | 1,424 | 181 | 3,418 |
| 75–79 | 117 | 854 | 94 | 71 | 20 | 1,080 | 109 | 2,345 |
| 80+ | 123 | 522 | 97 | 69 | 6 | 1,729 | 164 | 2,710 |
| Total | 1,164 | 6,709 | 983 | 1,284 | 504 | 8,373 | 1,193 | 20,210 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The growth in singlehood is especially visible across older cohorts: among those aged 80+, nearly two-thirds (63.8 percent) reported not being in a union in 2023, compared with 54.0 percent in 2012 (Table 12-5). These shifts highlight the combined effects of widowhood, separation, and changing partnership norms, with advancing age strongly associated with non-union living.

Age and sex differentials reinforce this pattern. In 2012, elderly men were more likely than women to be married and living with a spouse (45.0 percent compared with 30.3 percent), while women were more likely to be outside unions (46.3 percent compared with 28.0 percent for men). In 2023, the pattern persisted: 38.2 percent of elderly men were still married, compared with 28.2 percent of women; 51.0 percent of elderly women reported not being in a union, compared with 31.9 percent of men (Table 12-3). These disparities reflect the combined influence of female longevity and male mortality at older ages.

Table 12-5 Percentage Elderly by Age Group and Union Status, 2012 & 2023

| Age Group | Never had a spouse or common-law partner | Married and living with spouse | Married and not living with spouse | Common-law | Visiting partner | Not in a union | Not Stated | Total |
|--------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------|------------------|----------------|------------|--------------|
| 2012 | | | | | | | | |
| 60–64 | 12.0 | 43.7 | - | 10.0 | 4.4 | 28.1 | 1.9 | 100.0 |
| 65–69 | 11.4 | 44.6 | - | 7.4 | 3.5 | 31.3 | 1.8 | 100.0 |
| 70–74 | 12.3 | 40.3 | - | 6.3 | 2.5 | 35.7 | 2.8 | 100.0 |
| 75–79 | 13.3 | 32.8 | - | 5.8 | 2.9 | 43.2 | 2.0 | 100.0 |
| 80+ | 13.5 | 22.1 | - | 4.6 | 2.9 | 54.0 | 2.9 | 100.0 |
| Total | 12.4 | 37.6 | - | 7.2 | 3.4 | 37.3 | 2.3 | 100.0 |
| 2023 | | | | | | | | |
| 60–64 | 6.2 | 34.3 | 5.1 | 9.3 | 4.4 | 33.8 | 6.9 | 100.0 |
| 65–69 | 6.6 | 35.8 | 5.6 | 6.7 | 2.6 | 37.2 | 5.5 | 100.0 |
| 70–74 | 5.0 | 35.9 | 5.0 | 5.5 | 1.6 | 41.7 | 5.3 | 100.0 |
| 75–79 | 5.0 | 36.4 | 4.0 | 3.0 | 0.9 | 46.1 | 4.6 | 100.0 |
| 80+ | 4.5 | 19.3 | 3.6 | 2.5 | 0.2 | 63.8 | 6.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 5.8 | 33.2 | 4.9 | 6.4 | 2.5 | 41.4 | 5.9 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Overall, the data underscore a clear aging trend in union status. While marriage remained an important part of later-life trajectories, its prevalence diminished with age, particularly among women, while widowhood and non-union living became increasingly common.

12.4 Marital Status of the Elderly Population

Patterns of marital status among the elderly population (aged 60 and over) in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reveal significant shifts between 2012 and 2023. As shown in Table 12-6, marriage remained the most common status, but its prevalence declined sharply from 48.7 percent in 2012 to 38.5 percent in 2023. At the same time, the share of the elderly who were single or never married rose markedly,

increasing from 27.8 percent to 40.0 percent. This reversal suggests changing social trajectories, with fewer individuals entering or remaining in formal unions in later life, consistent with broader demographic transitions in family formation and stability.

Widowhood continues to be an important feature of aging, reflecting the demographic reality of higher female longevity. In 2012, 16.9 percent of the elderly were widowed, rising in absolute numbers to 3,108 persons by 2023, though the overall proportion declined slightly to 15.4 percent (Table 12-6). Women continue to dominate this category, in 2023, nearly 22.3 percent of elderly females were widowed compared with just 8.5 percent of males, underscoring the persistent gender gap in survivorship. Divorce and legal separation remain relatively minor statuses but have shown small increases; divorced elderly grew from 4.3 percent to 4.4 percent, while those legally separated represented just above 1 percent in both censuses.

Table 12-6 Total and Percentage Elderly Population by Marital Status and Sex, 2012 & 2023

| Marital Status | Sex | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Male | Percent | Female | Percent | Total | Percent |
| 2012 | | | | | | |
| Single/Never Married | 1,627 | 23.9 | 2,211 | 31.6 | 3,838 | 27.8 |
| Married | 4,069 | 59.7 | 2,660 | 38.0 | 6,729 | 48.7 |
| Divorced | 334 | 4.9 | 256 | 3.7 | 590 | 4.3 |
| Widowed | 603 | 8.9 | 1,727 | 24.7 | 2,330 | 16.9 |
| Legally Separated | 109 | 1.6 | 86 | 1.2 | 195 | 1.4 |
| Not Stated | 64 | 0.9 | 49 | 0.7 | 113 | 0.8 |
| Don't Know | 9 | 0.1 | 7 | 0.1 | 16 | 0.1 |
| Total | 6,815 | 100.0 | 6,996 | 100.0 | 13,811 | 100.0 |
| 2023 | | | | | | |
| Single /Never Married | 4,185 | 41.3 | 3,895 | 38.7 | 8,080 | 40.0 |
| Married | 4,472 | 44.1 | 3,314 | 32.9 | 7,786 | 38.5 |
| Divorced | 442 | 4.4 | 451 | 4.5 | 893 | 4.4 |
| Widowed | 860 | 8.5 | 2,248 | 22.3 | 3,108 | 15.4 |
| Legally Separated | 133 | 1.3 | 89 | 0.9 | 222 | 1.1 |
| Not Stated | 52 | 0.5 | 69 | 0.7 | 121 | 0.6 |
| Total | 10,144 | 100.0 | 10,066 | 100.0 | 20,210 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Age-specific patterns further clarify these dynamics. As shown in Table 12-8, the prevalence of marriage declined steadily with age in 2023, falling from 39.8 percent among those aged 60-64 to 23.3 percent among those aged 80 and over. By contrast, widowhood rose sharply with age, affecting 39.4 percent of the 80+ cohort, compared with only 6.2 percent of those aged 60-64. The share who was single or never married was highest among those aged 60-64 (48.1 percent), highlighting the growing demographic weight of persons reaching later life without ever marrying.

Table 12-7 Total Elderly Population by Age Group and Marital Status, 2012 & 2023

| Age Group | Single/ Never Married | Married | Divorced | Widowed | Legally Separated | Not Stated | Don't Know | Total |
|--------------|-----------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 2012 | | | | | | | | |
| 60–64 | 1,063 | 2,203 | 186 | 264 | 75 | 28 | 2 | 3,820 |
| 65–69 | 717 | 1,587 | 146 | 327 | 46 | 15 | 3 | 2,840 |
| 70–74 | 678 | 1,288 | 110 | 404 | 28 | 25 | 3 | 2,537 |
| 75–79 | 550 | 855 | 80 | 452 | 19 | 18 | 4 | 1,978 |
| 80+ | 830 | 796 | 68 | 883 | 27 | 27 | 4 | 2,636 |
| Total | 3,838 | 6,729 | 590 | 2,330 | 195 | 113 | 16 | 13,811 |
| 2023 | | | | | | | | |
| 60–64 | 3,150 | 2,603 | 257 | 409 | 80 | 49 | - | 6,548 |
| 65–69 | 2,141 | 2,174 | 259 | 520 | 78 | 17 | - | 5,189 |
| 70–74 | 1,198 | 1,421 | 185 | 562 | 32 | 20 | - | 3,418 |
| 75–79 | 711 | 956 | 101 | 550 | 19 | 8 | - | 2,345 |
| 80+ | 880 | 632 | 91 | 1,067 | 13 | 27 | - | 2,710 |
| Total | 8,080 | 7,786 | 893 | 3,108 | 222 | 121 | - | 20,210 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 12-8 Percentage Elderly by Age Group and Marital Status, 2012 & 2023

| Age Group | Single/ Never Married | Married | Divorced | Widowed | Legally Separated | Not Stated | Total |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------|
| 2012 | | | | | | | |
| 60–64 | 27.8 | 57.7 | 4.8 | 6.9 | 2.0 | 0.7 | 100.0 |
| 65–69 | 25.3 | 55.9 | 5.1 | 11.5 | 1.6 | 0.5 | 100.0 |
| 70–74 | 26.8 | 50.8 | 4.3 | 15.9 | 1.1 | 1.0 | 100.0 |
| 75–79 | 27.9 | 43.2 | 4.0 | 22.9 | 1.0 | 0.9 | 100.0 |
| 80+ | 31.5 | 30.2 | 2.6 | 33.5 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 27.8 | 48.7 | 4.3 | 16.9 | 1.4 | 0.8 | 100.0 |
| 2023 | | | | | | | |
| 60–64 | 48.1 | 39.8 | 3.9 | 6.2 | 1.2 | 0.7 | 100.0 |
| 65–69 | 41.3 | 41.9 | 5.0 | 10.0 | 1.5 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| 70–74 | 35.0 | 41.6 | 5.4 | 16.4 | 0.9 | 0.6 | 100.0 |
| 75–79 | 30.3 | 40.8 | 4.3 | 23.5 | 0.8 | 0.3 | 100.0 |
| 80+ | 32.5 | 23.3 | 3.4 | 39.4 | 0.5 | 1.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 40.0 | 38.5 | 4.4 | 15.4 | 1.1 | 0.6 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Together, these findings suggest that the marital profile of the elderly population is being reshaped by longer life expectancy, shifts in union formation, and evolving social norms. Declines in marriage and increases in singlehood among the elderly reflect both delayed or foregone unions earlier in life and the cumulative effects of demographic ageing. At the same time, widowhood remains a central marker of

later life, particularly for women, reinforcing the gendered dimension of aging and family support systems in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

12.5 Economic Activity and Source of Livelihood

The sources of livelihood for the elderly population reveal both continuity and transformation over the intercensal period. In 2012, employment accounted for nearly one-quarter (23.4 percent) of elderly support, highlighting the persistence of older persons in the labor force even after reaching retirement age (Table 12-9). Local pensions (20.9 percent) and overseas pensions (10.3 percent) provided a foundation of formal support, while remittances from relatives abroad (11.3 percent) and assistance from local family and friends (24.8 percent) underscore the reliance on informal and transnational networks. Public assistance (12.3 percent) further underscores the state's role as a safety net for the most vulnerable (Table 12-9).

Table 12-9 Source of Livelihood of Elderly Population Age 60 and Over, 2012

| Source of Livelihood | Count | Percent (percent) |
|--|-------|-------------------|
| Disability Benefits | 47 | 0.3 |
| Employment | 3,230 | 23.4 |
| Investments | 247 | 1.8 |
| Public Assistance | 1,696 | 12.3 |
| Pension (Local) | 2,891 | 20.9 |
| Pension (Overseas) | 1,429 | 10.3 |
| Savings or Interest on Savings | 460 | 3.3 |
| Subsistence Farming | 865 | 6.3 |
| Support From Friends or Relatives (Local - Cash or Kind) | 3,419 | 24.8 |
| Support From Friends or Relatives (Overseas - Cash or Kind) | 1,562 | 11.3 |
| Other | 613 | 4.4 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report

By 2023, the distribution of livelihood sources had shifted considerably, as shown in Table 12-10. Pensions (local and overseas combined) became the dominant source of support, with over 5,900 beneficiaries, reflecting both the expansion of pension coverage and the growing reliance of the elderly on formal retirement schemes. Employment remained significant, with 4,006 elderly persons still engaged in the labor market, highlighting delayed retirement or continued economic necessity. Support from children (1,883 persons), remittances, and social security benefits (1,192 persons) show that family and institutional transfers remain vital pillars of elderly well-being. The growth in absolute numbers across nearly all categories reflects both population aging and the diversification of support systems. Importantly, while formal pensions and employment have expanded, the continued significance of intergenerational and overseas transfers illustrates the persistence of family-based and transnational safety nets in Vincentian society.

Table 12-10 Source of Livelihood of Elderly Population Age 60 and Over, 2023

| Source of Livelihood | Count | Percent (percent) ³⁴ |
|--|-------|---------------------------------|
| Pension (Local) | 4544 | 22.5 |
| Pension (Overseas) | 1415 | 5.7 |
| Investment | 343 | 1.7 |
| Remittances (Overseas – Cash/Kind) | 282 | 1.4 |
| Savings/Interest on Savings | 1376 | 6.8 |
| Employment | 4006 | 19.8 |
| Disability Benefits | 92 | 0.5 |
| Unemployment Benefits | 89 | 0.4 |
| Social Security Benefits (NIS) | 1192 | 5.9 |
| Other Public Assistance | 1307 | 6.5 |
| Support from Friends/Relatives (Local - Cash/Kind) | 877 | 4.3 |
| Support from Friends/Relatives (Overseas - Cash/Kind) | 590 | 2.9 |
| Spouse/Partner Support (Cash/Kind) | 655 | 3.2 |
| Children Support (Cash/Kind) | 1883 | 9.3 |
| Parent(s) Support (Cash/Kind) | 24 | 0.1 |
| Guardian(s) Support (Cash/Kind) | 14 | 0.1 |
| Farming (Backyard, Garden etc.) | 685 | 3.4 |
| Other (Specify) | 192 | 1.0 |
| Not Stated | 526 | 2.6 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

12.6 Chronic Illness

The incidence of chronic illness among the elderly reflects the demographic and epidemiological transition associated with aging populations. In 2012, hypertension (5,396 cases) and diabetes (3,328 cases) were the dominant conditions, together accounting for the majority of chronic morbidity (Table 12-11). By 2023, these conditions had risen sharply to 7,512 and 4,698, respectively, representing an intensification of non-communicable disease (NCD) prevalence. Arthritis remained widespread but declined slightly from 3,083 to 2,861, while heart disease increased modestly from 488 to 599. These patterns suggest a dual burden: early-onset conditions such as diabetes and hypertension peaking in the younger elderly, and degenerative conditions such as arthritis persisting into advanced ages.

Age-specific percentages in Table 12-11 should be interpreted carefully. They show the distribution of cases by age group within each illness, not the prevalence of illness within each age group. In 2023, for example, persons aged 65-69 accounted for 24.9 percent of diabetes cases and 24.2 percent of hypertension cases, while persons aged 80 years and over accounted for 24.4 percent of arthritis cases and 22.5 percent of heart disease cases. This indicates that chronic illness spans the elderly age spectrum, though certain conditions are more concentrated among older adults.

Additional conditions documented in 2023 further highlight the complexity of elderly morbidity (Table 12-12). Glaucoma (532 cases) and cancer (263 cases) were significant contributors to health burdens,

³⁴ Note: Percentages are calculated using the total elderly population aged 60 years and over (20,210) as the denominator. Percentages may not sum to 100 because multiple sources of livelihood may be reported.

while kidney disease (258) and asthma (384) added to the growing profile of NCDs. Although smaller in magnitude, illnesses such as sickle cell anemia (68) and lupus (13) underscore the diversity of chronic conditions within the elderly population. Importantly, just over 40 percent (8,866 persons) reported no chronic illness, but this share declines steeply with advancing age, illustrating the cumulative toll of aging on health.

Table 12-11 Elderly Reporting Chronic Illnesses by Type of Illness and Age Group, 2012 & 2023

| Age Group | Type of Chronic Illness | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Diabetes | Percent | Hypertension | Percent | Arthritis | Percent | Heart Disease | Percent |
| 2012 | | | | | | | | |
| 60–64 | 789 | 23.7 | 1,246 | 23.1 | 582 | 18.9 | 93 | 19.1 |
| 65–69 | 718 | 21.6 | 1,126 | 20.9 | 602 | 19.5 | 98 | 20.1 |
| 70–74 | 670 | 20.1 | 1,059 | 19.6 | 590 | 19.1 | 81 | 16.6 |
| 75–79 | 514 | 15.4 | 912 | 16.9 | 557 | 18.1 | 93 | 19.1 |
| 80+ | 637 | 19.1 | 1,053 | 19.5 | 752 | 24.4 | 123 | 25.2 |
| Total | 3,328 | 100.0 | 5,396 | 100.0 | 3,083 | 100.0 | 488 | 100.0 |
| 2023 | | | | | | | | |
| 60–64 | 1,084 | 23.1 | 1,762 | 23.5 | 542 | 18.9 | 101 | 16.9 |
| 65–69 | 1,170 | 24.9 | 1,819 | 24.2 | 646 | 22.6 | 136 | 22.7 |
| 70–74 | 856 | 18.2 | 1,436 | 19.1 | 510 | 17.8 | 123 | 20.5 |
| 75–79 | 709 | 15.1 | 1,083 | 14.4 | 467 | 16.3 | 104 | 17.4 |
| 80+ | 879 | 18.7 | 1,412 | 18.8 | 696 | 24.4 | 135 | 22.5 |
| Total | 4,698 | 100.0 | 7,512 | 100.0 | 2,861 | 100.0 | 599 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 12-12 Elderly Reporting Chronic Illnesses by Other Types of Illness and Age Group, 2023

| Age Group | Other Types of Chronic Illness | | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------|------------|--------------------|------------|------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| | Kidney Disease | Asthma | Sickle Cell Anemia | Glaucoma | Cancer | Lupus | Other | None |
| 60-64 | 50 | 142 | 20 | 52 | 51 | 7 | 268 | 3,672 |
| 65-69 | 66 | 108 | 23 | 100 | 70 | 4 | 249 | 2,421 |
| 70-74 | 49 | 49 | 13 | 129 | 50 | 0 | 201 | 1,342 |
| 75-79 | 47 | 21 | 4 | 90 | 42 | 2 | 195 | 727 |
| 80-84 | 29 | 34 | 6 | 64 | 27 | 0 | 102 | 345 |
| 85-89 | 12 | 20 | 0 | 60 | 13 | 0 | 64 | 222 |
| 90 and over | 5 | 10 | 2 | 37 | 10 | 0 | 35 | 137 |
| Total | 258 | 384 | 68 | 532 | 263 | 13 | 1,114 | 8,866 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Overall, the combined evidence underscores that population aging in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is increasingly accompanied by heightened exposure to chronic illness. The growing prevalence of

diabetes, hypertension, and glaucoma in particular illustrates the demographic shift toward an older population living longer but with greater morbidity.

12.7 Conclusion

The elderly population of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has grown rapidly over the past two decades, rising from 12.9 percent of the total population in 2001 to 18.5 percent in 2023. This expansion has been driven largely by fertility decline and increased survival, with the most significant growth occurring among the younger elderly cohorts (60-69 years). While women continue to outnumber men at the oldest ages because of their survival advantage, the gender gap has narrowed over time as male longevity has improved.

Union and marital patterns highlight the evolving social dynamics of aging. The share of elderly persons outside unions has increased, particularly among women, while the proportion married has declined. Widowhood remains a defining characteristic of later life, yet the rise in the number of single and never-married elderly persons suggests broader life-course changes in which more individuals are reaching old age without long-term partnerships. These patterns point to shifting family structures and underscore the importance of intergenerational and community support networks.

Economic and health dimensions further shape the aging experience. In 2023, local pensions and employment were the leading sources of livelihood, supported by children's transfers, savings, public assistance, and overseas pensions. At the same time, the elderly faced a growing burden of chronic illness, particularly hypertension, diabetes, arthritis, and glaucoma, although a substantial share still reported no chronic illness. Together, these trends reflect both the progress of demographic transition and the need for stronger health care systems, social protection, and eldercare services to ensure that longevity is accompanied by well-being and security in later life.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER 12

THE ELDERLY



Size & structure:

Elderly total 20,210 (male 10,144, female 10,066). The largest band is 60–64 (6,548; 32%); ages 80+ number 2,710 (13%)



Longevity tilt:

Women outnumber men from 70+ onward



Union status overall :

Not in a union is the largest category (8,373; 41%), followed by married & living with spouse (6,709; 33%)



Advanced age vulnerability:

Among the 80+ elderly, 39.4% were widowed, and 63.8% were not in a union.



Leading reported chronic conditions:

Hypertension (7,512) and diabetes (4,698) dominated, followed by arthritis (2,861), heart disease (599), and glaucoma (532)



Top livelihood sources (most important):

Local pension (4,544) and employment (4,006) led, followed by children's support (1,883) and savings/interest (1,376)

Chapter 13. Disability



13.1 Introduction

Disability is increasingly recognized as a critical dimension of demographic analysis, reflecting both health outcomes and the extent to which societies are inclusive in providing equal opportunities for all individuals. According to the Washington Group on Disability Statistics, disability is understood as difficulties in basic functional domains such as seeing, hearing, walking, cognition, self-care, and communication, which may limit participation in social and economic life (Washington Group on Disability Statistics, n.d.)³⁵. This conceptual framework emphasizes that disability is not only a medical condition but also an interaction between functional difficulties and the environment.

The 2023 Population and Housing Census of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines adopted this approach to measure disability among persons aged five years and older. The census data provide insights into both the prevalence and severity of disability and the types of functional difficulties most commonly reported. By disaggregating these results by sex and age, the data highlight the demographic and social patterns underlying disability in the population.

Understanding disability prevalence and characteristics is central to national development planning, particularly as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines seeks to advance commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Goal 10, which focuses on reducing inequalities, explicitly calls for the empowerment and inclusion of persons with disabilities. The census results, therefore, not only quantify disability but also provide evidence for shaping policies and programs aimed at ensuring equal access to education, health, employment, and community participation for all citizens.

13.2 Disability Prevalence by Age and Sex

The 2023 Population and Housing Census recorded 4,437 persons aged five years and over living with a disability in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, representing approximately 4.3 percent of the population in this age group (Table 13-1). The data reveal distinct patterns by age and sex.

As shown in Table 13-1, males accounted for 2,112 persons with disabilities, while females accounted for a slightly higher 2,325. This near balance indicates that disability affects both sexes in broadly similar proportions, although the slightly higher female count is consistent with wider global patterns in which women often experience greater longevity and thus higher exposure to age-related disability.

Age-specific prevalence rises steadily with age. Among children aged 5-14 years, 247 cases were recorded. The number then increased to 376 among persons aged 15-29 years and 511 among those aged 30-44 years, before rising more sharply to 1,231 among persons aged 45-64 years. The highest number was recorded among persons aged 65 years and over, where 2,072 persons reported living with a disability (Table 13-1). This pattern indicates that disability is comparatively less common at younger ages but becomes increasingly prevalent in later life, reflecting biological aging and cumulative exposure to health risks.

³⁵ Washington Group on Disability Statistics. (n.d.). *Definition of disability*. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/about/definition-of-disability/>

Table 13-1 Persons Five Years of Age and Over with or Without Disabilities by Age Group and Sex, 2023^{36,37}

| Broad Age Group | Male | | Female | | Total | |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| | Without Disability | With Disability | Without Disability | With Disability | Without Disability | With Disability |
| 5-14 | 8,390 | 139 | 8,136 | 108 | 16,526 | 247 |
| 15-29 | 11,220 | 209 | 11,084 | 167 | 22,304 | 376 |
| 30-44 | 10,660 | 251 | 11,272 | 260 | 21,932 | 511 |
| 45-64 | 13,814 | 588 | 12,552 | 643 | 26,366 | 1,231 |
| 65 and over | 5,754 | 925 | 5,836 | 1,147 | 11,590 | 2,072 |
| Total | 49,838 | 2,112 | 48,880 | 2,325 | 98,718 | 4,437 |

Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Note: Disability status in this table is based on the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS) and applies to persons aged 5 years and over. Persons are classified as with disability if they reported “a lot of difficulty” or “cannot do at all” in at least one of the six functional domains: seeing, hearing, walking or climbing steps, remembering or concentrating, self-care, and communication. Persons reporting only “no difficulty” or “some difficulty” across all six domains are classified as without disability.

Overall, the age profile shows that disability becomes more common as age advances, with the burden concentrated most heavily among older adults.

13.3 Types and Severity of Disability³⁸

The results shown in Table 13-2 are based on a different analytical method from that used for the binary classification of with/without disability presented in Table 13-1. While Table 13-1 applies the Washington Group standard threshold for identifying persons at greater risk of participation restriction, Table 13-2 classifies all persons aged 5 years and over according to the highest level of difficulty reported across the six Washington Group domains. These measures are therefore related, but not numerically equivalent, and should not be compared directly.

Using this severity-based approach, the 2023 Census shows that most persons aged 5 years and over reported no difficulty, with 87,235 individuals (84.6 percent) in this category (Table 13-2). However, 11,505 persons (11.2 percent) were classified as having mild difficulty, followed by 2,740 (2.7 percent) with moderate difficulty, and 862 (0.8 percent) with severe difficulty. Women were more likely than men to report mild and moderate difficulties, accounting for 59.4 percent of all mild cases and 54.0 percent of moderate cases. In contrast, men accounted for just over half (51.9 percent) of severe cases. These findings point to slight gender differences in the reporting and experience of disability severity.

³⁶ Source: Washington Group on Disability Statistics. WG Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS). Available at: <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-short-set-on-functioning-wg-ss/>

³⁷ Source: Washington Group on Disability Statistics. WG Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS Enhanced). Available at <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/question-sets/wg-short-set-on-functioning-enhanced-wg-ss-enhanced/>

³⁸ Tables 13-1, 13-2, and 13-3 are complementary but not directly comparable. Table 13-1 uses the Washington Group binary disability threshold, while Tables 13-2 and 13-3 present a more granular profile of severity and type of functional difficulty.

Table 13-2 Persons Five Years of Age and Over by Degree of Disability and Sex , 2023³⁹

| Degree of Disability | Male | | Female | | Total | |
|----------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|
| | Count | percent | Count | percent | Count | percent |
| None | 45,181 | 51.8 | 42,054 | 48.2 | 87,235 | 100.0 |
| Mild | 4,671 | 40.6 | 6,834 | 59.4 | 11,505 | 100.0 |
| Moderate | 1,260 | 46.0 | 1,480 | 54.0 | 2,740 | 100.0 |
| Severe | 447 | 51.9 | 415 | 48.1 | 862 | 100.0 |
| Not Stated | 391 | 48.1 | 422 | 51.9 | 813 | 100.0 |
| Total | 51,950 | 50.4 | 51,205 | 49.6 | 103,155 | 100.0 |

Source: *Population and Housing Census 2023*

Note: The categories in this table reflect a severity-based analytical grouping using the highest level of difficulty reported across the six Washington Group domains and are not directly comparable with the binary with/without disability classification shown in Table 13-1.

An examination of specific functional domains (Table 13-3) shows that difficulties related to seeing, walking, and remembering or concentrating dominate the overall disability profile. Difficulty seeing was the most prevalent functional difficulty, affecting 7,757 persons in total: 2,864 reported some difficulty, 906 reported a lot of difficulty, and 222 reported they could not see at all. Difficulty walking was also common, affecting 5,105 persons with some difficulty, 1,676 with a lot of difficulty, and 427 who could not walk at all. Difficulties with remembering or concentrating affected 3,948 persons, including 3,295 with some difficulty, 564 with a lot of difficulty, and 89 who could not remember at all.

Other forms of functional difficulty were less widespread but remained important for daily living. Hearing difficulties affected 1,829 persons, with some difficulty (1,829), a lot of difficulty (248), and 76 who reported they could not hear at all. Self-care difficulties affected 1,389 persons: 436 had some difficulty, 324 had a lot of difficulty, and 324 could not perform self-care at all. Communication difficulties affected 1,414 persons, of whom 417 had some difficulty, 133 had a lot of difficulty, and 133 could not communicate at all (Table 13-3).

³⁹ Source: Washington Group on Disability Statistics. (2023). *The Washington Group Short Set on Functioning: Question Specifications*. <https://www.washingtongroup-disability.com/implementation/implementation-guidelines/>

Table 13-3 Persons Five Years and Over by Type of Disability, Degree of Disability and Sex, 2023⁴⁰

| Type and Degree of Disability | Male | Female | Total |
|---|-------------|---------------|----------------|
| Difficulty Seeing: No - No difficulty | 48,161 | 45,288 | 93,449 |
| Difficulty Seeing: Yes - some difficulty | 2,864 | 4,893 | 7,757 |
| Difficulty Seeing: Yes - lots of difficulty | 399 | 507 | 906 |
| Difficulty Seeing: Cannot see at all | 129 | 93 | 222 |
| Difficulty Hearing: No - No difficulty | 50,483 | 49,694 | 100,177 |
| Difficulty Hearing: Yes - some difficulty | 894 | 935 | 1,829 |
| Difficulty Hearing: Yes - lots of difficulty | 131 | 117 | 248 |
| Difficulty Hearing: Cannot hear at all | 43 | 33 | 76 |
| Difficulty Walking: No - No difficulty | 48,767 | 46,354 | 95,121 |
| Difficulty Walking: Yes - some difficulty | 1,868 | 3,237 | 5,105 |
| Difficulty Walking: Yes - lots of difficulty | 709 | 967 | 1,676 |
| Difficulty Walking: Cannot walk at all | 208 | 219 | 427 |
| Difficulty remembering or concentrating: No - No difficulty | 49,748 | 48,626 | 98,374 |
| Difficulty remembering or concentrating: Yes - some difficulty | 1,473 | 1,822 | 3,295 |
| Difficulty remembering or concentrating: Yes - lots of difficulty | 281 | 283 | 564 |
| Difficulty remembering or concentrating: Cannot remember at all | 44 | 45 | 89 |
| Difficulty with Self Care: No - No difficulty | 50,535 | 49,645 | 100,180 |
| Difficulty with Self Care: Yes - some difficulty | 655 | 734 | 1,389 |
| Difficulty with Self Care: Yes - lots of difficulty | 210 | 226 | 436 |
| Difficulty with Self Care: Cannot care at all | 151 | 173 | 324 |
| Difficulty Communicating or speaking: No - No difficulty | 50,453 | 49,911 | 100,364 |
| Difficulty Communicating or speaking: Yes - some difficulty | 789 | 625 | 1,414 |
| Difficulty Communicating or speaking: Yes - lots of difficulty | 242 | 175 | 417 |
| Difficulty Communicating or speaking: Cannot speak at all | 67 | 66 | 133 |

Source: *Population and Housing Census 2023*

Note: This table presents reported difficulty across the six functional domains of the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS): seeing, hearing, walking or climbing steps, remembering or concentrating, self-care, and communication. The response categories are no difficulty, some difficulty, a lot of difficulty, and cannot do at all. Figures should not be summed across domains, since one person may report difficulty in more than one domain.

Together, these patterns highlight the diverse nature of disability in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, spanning sensory, physical, cognitive, self-care, and communication challenges. While mild and moderate difficulties are more common, the presence of severe and profound cases underscores the need for inclusive health, education, and social support systems that can address varying levels of functional limitation within the population.

⁴⁰ Source: Washington Group on Disability Statistics. (2022). The Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS).

13.4 Conclusion

The 2023 Population and Housing Census highlights that disability, while affecting a relatively small share of the population, is unevenly distributed across age, sex, and type of difficulty. Disability status, as measured using the Washington Group standard threshold, increases with age and is most concentrated among persons aged 65 years and over. At the same time, the severity and functional-domain tables show that limitations related to vision, mobility, and cognition are the most common, while women are more likely to report mild and moderate difficulties and men are slightly more represented among severe cases.

The data also reveal that most reported difficulties fall within the none or mild categories, suggesting opportunities for earlier intervention through accessible health care, rehabilitation services, and inclusive education and employment policies. More severe limitations, though less common, still affect a significant number of persons and underline the need for comprehensive support systems to ensure full participation and well-being.

Overall, the census findings emphasize that disability is both a social and demographic issue, shaping household dynamics, access to services, and economic participation. Addressing these challenges is critical to advancing Sustainable Development Goal 10. By integrating disability data into policy and planning, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines can work toward a more inclusive society that recognizes and supports the needs of all its citizens, especially persons with disabilities.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER 13

DISABILITY



Overall prevalence:

About 4,437 persons (4.3%) over age five reported a disability, with slightly more females (2,325) than males (2,112)



Age & Disability:

Disability rises sharply with age: only 1.5% of children 0–14 have a disability, compared to 15.2% of those 65+ (2,072 cases)



Degree of disability:

While 85% (87,235 persons) reported no difficulty, about 11% had mild difficulty, 2.7% moderate, and 0.8% severe



Vision impairments:

Difficulty seeing is the most common type: 7,757 reported some difficulty; 906 lots of difficulty & 222 cannot see at all



Mobility challenges:

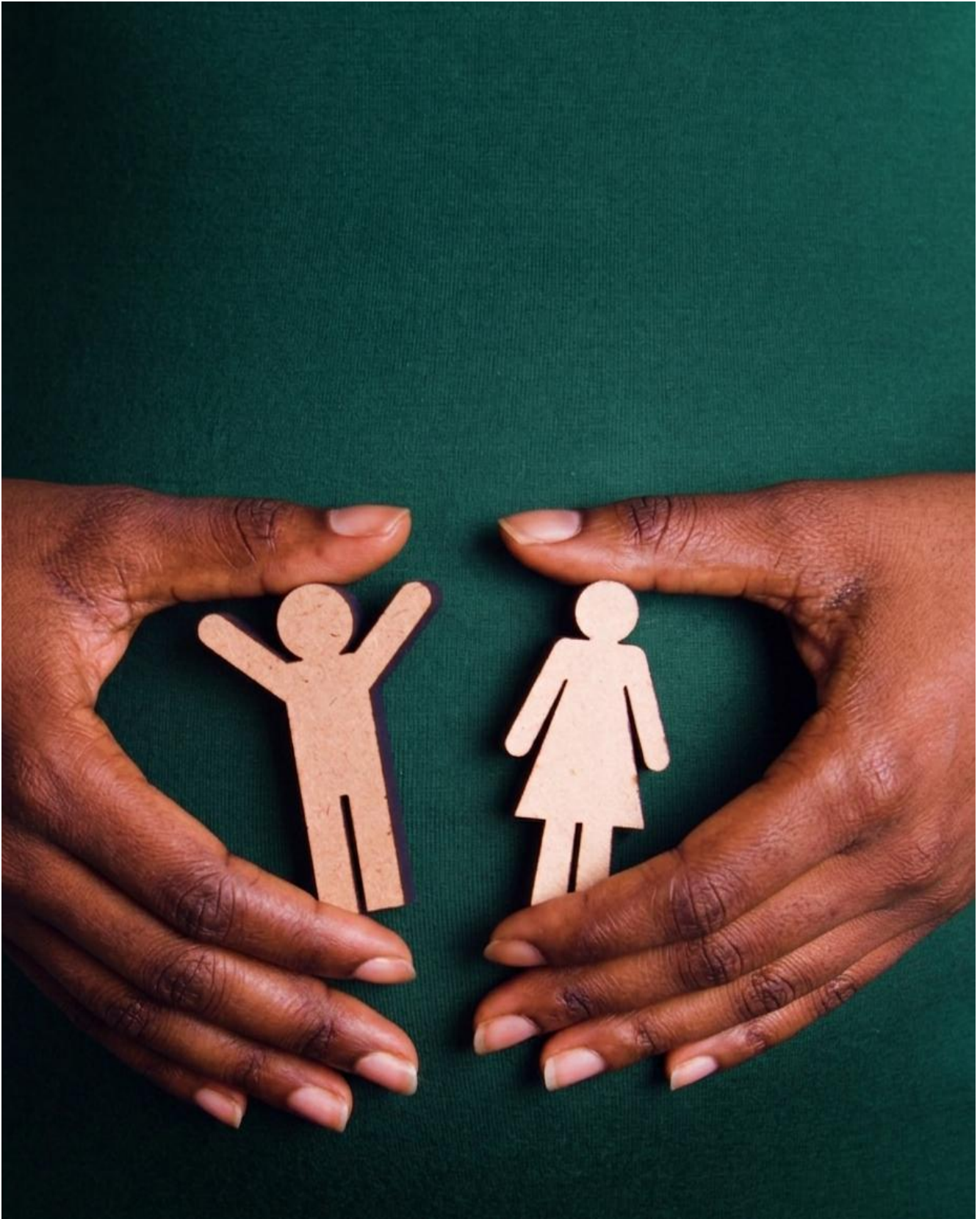
Difficulty Walking is the second most common disability: 5,105 persons reported with some difficulty & 1,676 lots of difficulty



Cognitive and concentration issues:

A total of 3,948 persons reported some difficulty remembering or concentrating and 564 with lots of difficulty

Chapter 14. Gender and Development Issues



14.1 Introduction

Gender and development issues remain a central priority in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' national development framework. The Government, through the Ministry of National Mobilization, Social Development, Family, Gender Affairs, and Persons with Disabilities, has emphasized that equal access to social, cultural, spiritual, educational, economic, and political opportunities is essential for fostering inclusive growth. The Gender Affairs Division plays a pivotal role in advancing this mandate, guided by its mission to ensure equality of opportunity, its vision of a fully integrated approach to gender equity and mainstreaming, and its goal of embedding a gender perspective into all aspects of national development⁴¹.

Over the years, this commitment has translated into targeted initiatives to eliminate gender-based disparities and promote empowerment across all spheres of life. Such efforts align with global and regional frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize gender equality as both a fundamental right and a requirement for sustainable progress.

This chapter presents an overview of gender and development issues as revealed in the 2023 Population and Housing Census. It highlights disparities and progress in union status, health outcomes, educational attainment, and labour force participation. The analysis underscores the extent to which gender dynamics continue to shape demographic and socio-economic patterns in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and points to areas where policy interventions remain critical for achieving equity and empowerment.

14.2 Demographic, Health, and Gender Issues

Union status patterns among household heads in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reflect clear gender differences. As shown in Table 14-1, men were far more likely than women to be household heads who were married and living with a spouse. In 2012, men accounted for 86.9 percent of household heads in this category, compared with 13.1 percent for women. By 2023, men continued to dominate this category (84.1 percent), although the female share increased slightly to 15.9 percent.

Conversely, women were consistently overrepresented among household heads who were not in a union. In 2012, 58.6 percent of household heads outside unions were women, compared with 41.4 percent men. By 2023, women still dominated this category, accounting for 58.0 percent. This imbalance points to the gendered realities of separation, divorce, and widowhood, with women more frequently assuming household headship in the absence of a marital or common-law partner (Table 14-1).

⁴¹ Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. (n.d.). *Gender Affairs*. In Ministry of National Mobilisation, Social Development, Gender Affairs and Persons with Disabilities. Retrieved September 20, 2025, from <https://mobilization.gov.vc/mobilization/index.php/gender-affairs>

Table 14-1 Union Status of Households Heads by Sex, 2012 & 2023

| Union Status | Percentage | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| | Male | Female | Total |
| 2012 | | | |
| Never had a Spouse or Common Law Partner | 53.1 | 46.9 | 100.0 |
| Married and Living with Spouse | 86.9 | 13.1 | 100.0 |
| Common Law Union | 67.9 | 32.1 | 100.0 |
| Visiting Partner | 53.4 | 46.6 | 100.0 |
| Not in Union | 41.4 | 58.6 | 100.0 |
| Not Stated | 59.1 | 40.9 | 100.0 |
| Total | 60.7 | 39.3 | 100.0 |
| 2023 | | | |
| Never had a spouse or common-law partner | 56.3 | 43.7 | 100.0 |
| Married and living with spouse | 84.1 | 15.9 | 100.0 |
| Married and not living with spouse | 51.3 | 48.7 | 100.0 |
| Common-law | 63.8 | 36.2 | 100.0 |
| Visiting partner | 52.9 | 47.1 | 100.0 |
| Not in a union | 42.0 | 58.0 | 100.0 |
| Not Stated | 50.8 | 49.2 | 100.0 |
| Total | 57.2 | 42.8 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Other union types also reveal gendered patterns. According to Table 14-1, men were more likely to head households in common-law unions (63.8 percent) and visiting partnerships (52.9 percent) in 2023, while women were less represented in these arrangements. These patterns suggest that union status, household structure, and gender roles remain deeply intertwined, with men continuing to dominate household headship in formal and semi-formal unions, while women more often head households in “not in a union” contexts.

14.3 Health and Gender Issues

Patterns of chronic illness in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines demonstrate clear gender differences, with females reporting higher levels of morbidity than males. The 2023 census shows that hypertension was the most widespread condition, affecting 12,239 persons, of whom nearly two-thirds were women. Diabetes followed, with 7,039 reported cases, again concentrated among females. Asthma (4,683 cases) and arthritis/rheumatism (3,891 cases) also revealed a similar pattern, while heart disease (955 cases) affected more women than men (Table 9-2 in Chapter 9: Health). These data underscore the higher reported burden of chronic illness among females.

Despite this higher prevalence of illness, females continue to live longer than males, a paradox that has persisted across census cycles. While biological and social factors may contribute, a key explanation lies in health-seeking behavior, as women are generally more proactive in accessing health care facilities and monitoring their health status compared with men.

The persistence of higher female morbidity may also reflect differences in reporting practices. Men are often less likely to disclose or recognize health problems, often due to limited health knowledge or reluctance to disclose conditions that may affect their employment. Women, in contrast, are more likely to seek medical attention and report health concerns. This behaviour contributes to earlier detection and management of chronic conditions, but also results in higher recorded morbidity. Notably, certain illnesses such as lupus remain overwhelmingly female-dominated, whereas kidney disease, cancer, and glaucoma showed smaller gender gaps.

14.4 Education and Gender Issues

Educational attainment in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines continues to show marked gender differences, particularly at the upper levels of the education system. While males remain more visible at the lower stages of schooling, females have consistently advanced into higher levels, with stronger representation in post-secondary and tertiary qualifications.

Table 14-2 Highest Education Attained by Population 15 Years and Over by Sex, 2012 & 2023

| Highest Education Attained | Sex | | | | | |
|---|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Male | Percent | Female | Percent | Total | Percent |
| 2012 | | | | | | |
| Pre Primary | 7 | 0.0 | 13 | 0.0 | 20 | 0.0 |
| Primary (1-7 Years) | 20,066 | 47.9 | 15,881 | 39.3 | 35,947 | 43.7 |
| Secondary | 11,740 | 28.0 | 12,772 | 31.6 | 24,512 | 29.8 |
| Pre-University/Post-Secondary/ College | 3,344 | 8.0 | 4,651 | 11.5 | 7,995 | 9.7 |
| University | 1,678 | 4.0 | 2,252 | 5.6 | 3,930 | 4.8 |
| Other | 316 | 0.8 | 216 | 0.5 | 532 | 0.6 |
| Don't Know or Not Stated | 4,734 | 11.3 | 4,593 | 11.4 | 9,327 | 11.3 |
| Total | 41,885 | 100.0 | 40,378 | 100.0 | 82,263 | 100.0 |
| 2023 | | | | | | |
| Daycare/Nursery | 8 | 0.0 | 1 | 0.0 | 9 | 0.0 |
| Pre-school | 188 | 0.4 | 145 | 0.3 | 333 | 0.4 |
| Pre-primary (Infant) or Primary | 14,305 | 33.6 | 10,392 | 24.7 | 24,697 | 29.2 |
| Lower/Junior Secondary (Forms 1-3)/ Senior Primary | 7,064 | 16.6 | 6,112 | 14.5 | 13,176 | 15.6 |
| Upper Secondary (Forms 4 & 5) | 10,899 | 25.6 | 12,000 | 28.5 | 22,899 | 27.0 |
| Post Secondary, non-tertiary (Diploma/Associate Degree) | 4,921 | 11.6 | 7,399 | 17.6 | 12,320 | 14.6 |
| Tertiary level - Bachelor's Degree | 1,496 | 3.5 | 2,666 | 6.3 | 4,162 | 4.9 |
| Tertiary level - Master's Degree | 645 | 1.5 | 995 | 2.4 | 1,640 | 1.9 |
| Doctorate level programmes | 124 | 0.3 | 121 | 0.3 | 245 | 0.3 |
| None | 1,420 | 3.3 | 1,011 | 2.4 | 2,431 | 2.9 |
| Other (specify) | 412 | 1.0 | 439 | 1.0 | 851 | 1.0 |
| Not Stated | 1,085 | 2.5 | 817 | 1.9 | 1,902 | 2.2 |
| Total | 42,567 | 100.0 | 42,098 | 100.0 | 84,665 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

As shown in Table 14-2, in 2023, males accounted for a larger share of the population with pre-primary (infant) or primary education (33.6 percent compared with 24.7 percent for females) and lower/junior secondary or senior primary education (16.6 percent versus 14.5 percent). However, females outnumbered males at the higher levels. Women accounted for 60.1 percent of persons with post-secondary non-tertiary qualifications, 64.1 percent of those with bachelor’s degrees, and 60.7 percent of those with master’s degrees (Table 14-2). This confirms that women have made stronger gains in higher education, even as men remain more concentrated at lower educational levels.

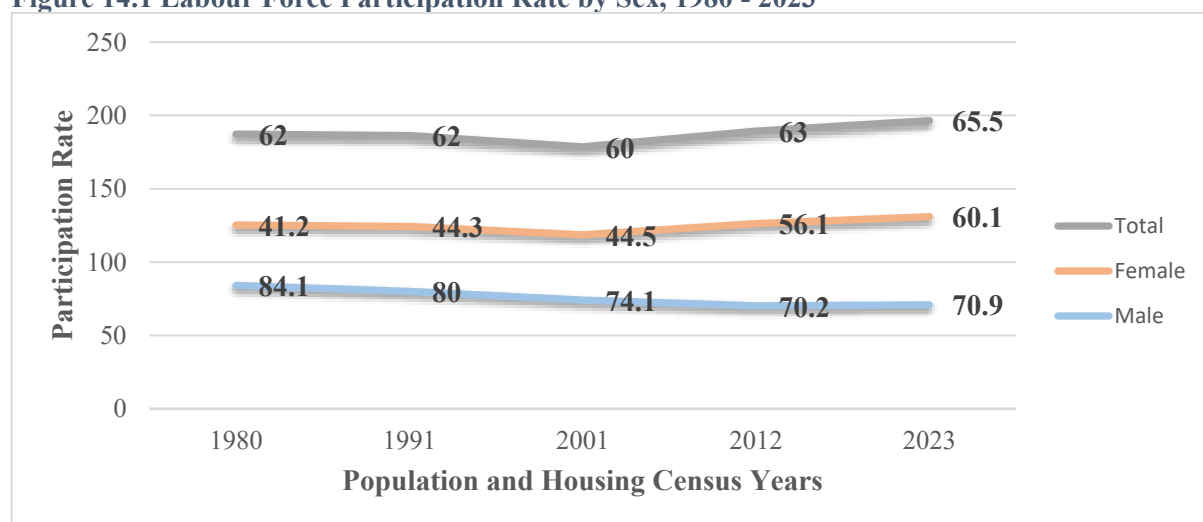
Despite women forming a slightly smaller share of the overall adult population, they are more likely than men to pursue and complete higher education. The data show that females are increasingly represented among persons with advanced qualifications, including post-secondary diplomas, bachelor’s degrees, and master’s degrees. These patterns point to a steady feminization of higher education, with implications for labour market roles, household decision-making, and social mobility.

At the same time, the more limited progression of males beyond the lower levels of schooling raises concerns about long-term outcomes. While women have increasingly capitalized on opportunities in post-secondary and tertiary education, men remain disproportionately concentrated at the primary and lower secondary levels. This imbalance risks reinforcing future disparities in employment prospects and economic mobility. As such, improving male progression into higher levels of education remains critical to achieving more balanced gender and development outcomes in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (Table 14-2).

14.5 Labour Force Participation and Gender Issues

Labour force participation in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reflects persistent gender disparities, although shifts over the past four decades highlight gradual change. Figure 14.1 and Table 14-3 illustrate the evolution of participation rates between 1980 and 2023.

Figure 14.1 Labour Force Participation Rate by Sex, 1980 - 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

While overall labour force participation increased from 62.0 percent in 1980 to 65.5 percent in 2023, the gap between males and females persisted, though it narrowed. Male participation declined from 84.1 percent in 1980 to 70.9 percent in 2023, while female participation rose significantly from 41.2 percent to 60.1 percent over the same period (Figure 14.1; Table 14-3). These trends suggest that women are increasingly integrated into the labour market, reflecting broader social and economic changes, including improved access to education and shifting gender norms. However, men’s declining participation may indicate challenges related to underemployment, disengagement, or migration.

Table 14-3 also highlights differences in employment and unemployment rates across census years. Unemployment declined from 23.5 percent in 1980 to 17.8 percent in 2023, but gender disparities remained evident, with females recording a higher unemployment rate (19.7 percent) than males (16.2 percent) in 2023. Employment rates mirrored these differences, with men (83.8 percent) still more likely to be employed than women (80.3 percent) (Table 14-3). These patterns indicate that increased female participation has not yet translated into equal labour market outcomes.

Table 14-3 Employment Status by Sex, 1980 - 2023

| Year | Unemployment Rate | | | Employment Rate | | |
|------|-------------------|--------|-------------|-----------------|--------|-------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| 1980 | 23.0 | 24.5 | 23.5 | 77.0 | 75.5 | 76.5 |
| 1991 | 18.4 | 22.1 | 19.8 | 81.6 | 77.9 | 80.2 |
| 2001 | 22.5 | 18.3 | 20.9 | 77.6 | 81.7 | 79.1 |
| 2012 | 19.4 | 24.3 | 21.5 | 80.6 | 75.7 | 78.5 |
| 2023 | 16.2 | 19.7 | 17.8 | 83.8 | 80.3 | 82.2 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Table 14-4 Employment Status by Sex, 2001, 2012 & 2023

| Status in Employment | 2001 | | 2012 | | 2023 | |
|--|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| Paid employee, Government | 50.8 | 49.2 | 44.0 | 56.0 | 38.9 | 61.1 |
| Paid employee, Statutory | 70.3 | 29.7 | 63.6 | 36.4 | 57.2 | 42.8 |
| Paid employee, Private Business | 62.2 | 37.8 | 61.4 | 38.6 | 58.2 | 41.8 |
| Paid employee, Private Home | - | - | - | - | 48.5 | 51.5 |
| Self-Employed with paid employees | 75.3 | 24.7 | 69.1 | 30.9 | 71.1 | 28.9 |
| Self-Employed without employees | 66.8 | 33.2 | 67.9 | 32.1 | 67.2 | 32.8 |
| Apprentice | 78.1 | 21.9 | 70.3 | 29.7 | 70.9 | 29.1 |
| Unpaid Family Worker | 54.6 | 45.4 | 44.4 | 55.6 | 55.4 | 44.6 |
| Volunteer worker | - | - | - | - | 60.5 | 39.5 |
| Other (Specify) | - | - | - | - | 70.6 | 29.4 |
| Don't know | - | - | - | - | 65.4 | 34.6 |
| Not Stated | - | - | - | - | 69.4 | 30.6 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Note: The additional categories appearing in 2023 (e.g., Paid employee, Private Home; Volunteer worker; Other; Don't know; Not stated) reflect refinements to the census questionnaire and coding of labour-force responses. These were introduced to capture forms of employment or reporting that were either negligible, less visible, or not separately classified in earlier censuses (2001, 2012).

Employment status by sex further reveals the gendered structure of the labour market. According to Table 14-4, women were more concentrated in paid government employment, accounting for 61.1 percent of workers in that category in 2023, and also slightly outnumbered men in private-home employment (51.5 percent female versus 48.5 percent male). Men, by contrast, were more likely to be self-employed with paid employees (71.1 percent male versus 28.9 percent female), self-employed without employees (67.2 percent male versus 32.8 percent female), and apprentices (70.9 percent male versus 29.1 percent female). These patterns suggest that women remain more concentrated in formal wage employment, particularly in public administration and domestic service, while men are more heavily represented in entrepreneurial and technical occupations (Table 14-4).

Table 14-5 Employed Population by Major Occupation Group, 2001, 2012 & 2023

| Major Occupation Groups | 2001 | | | 2012 | | | 2023 | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female | Total |
| Armed Forces Occupations | - | - | - | - | - | - | 8 | 1 | 9 |
| Managers | 1,104 | 1,076 | 2,180 | 968 | 661 | 1,629 | 1,099 | 1,077 | 2,176 |
| Professionals | 1,611 | 1,920 | 3,531 | 1,553 | 2,991 | 4,544 | 1,718 | 3,797 | 5,515 |
| Technicians and associate professionals | 896 | 866 | 1,761 | 1,436 | 1,470 | 2,906 | 1,989 | 2,115 | 4,104 |
| Clerical support workers | 726 | 2,594 | 3,320 | 606 | 1,905 | 2,511 | 903 | 2,434 | 3,337 |
| Service and sales workers | 2,621 | 2,581 | 5,202 | 4,442 | 6,188 | 10,630 | 4,639 | 6,989 | 11,628 |
| Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers | 3,315 | 674 | 3,989 | 4,230 | 880 | 5,110 | 3,480 | 758 | 4,238 |
| Craft and related trades workers | 4,390 | 446 | 4,836 | 4,995 | 472 | 5,467 | 5,111 | 642 | 5,753 |
| Plant and machine operators, and assemblers | 2,280 | 182 | 2,462 | 1,928 | 110 | 2,038 | 2,033 | 114 | 2,147 |
| Elementary occupations | 4,232 | 3,061 | 7,293 | 2,346 | 2,220 | 5,466 | 4,360 | 2,403 | 6,763 |
| Not Stated | 668 | 345 | 1,013 | 286 | 234 | 520 | 435 | 365 | 800 |
| Total | 21,843 | 13,745 | 35,587 | 23,690 | 17,131 | 40,821 | 25,775 | 20,695 | 46,470 |

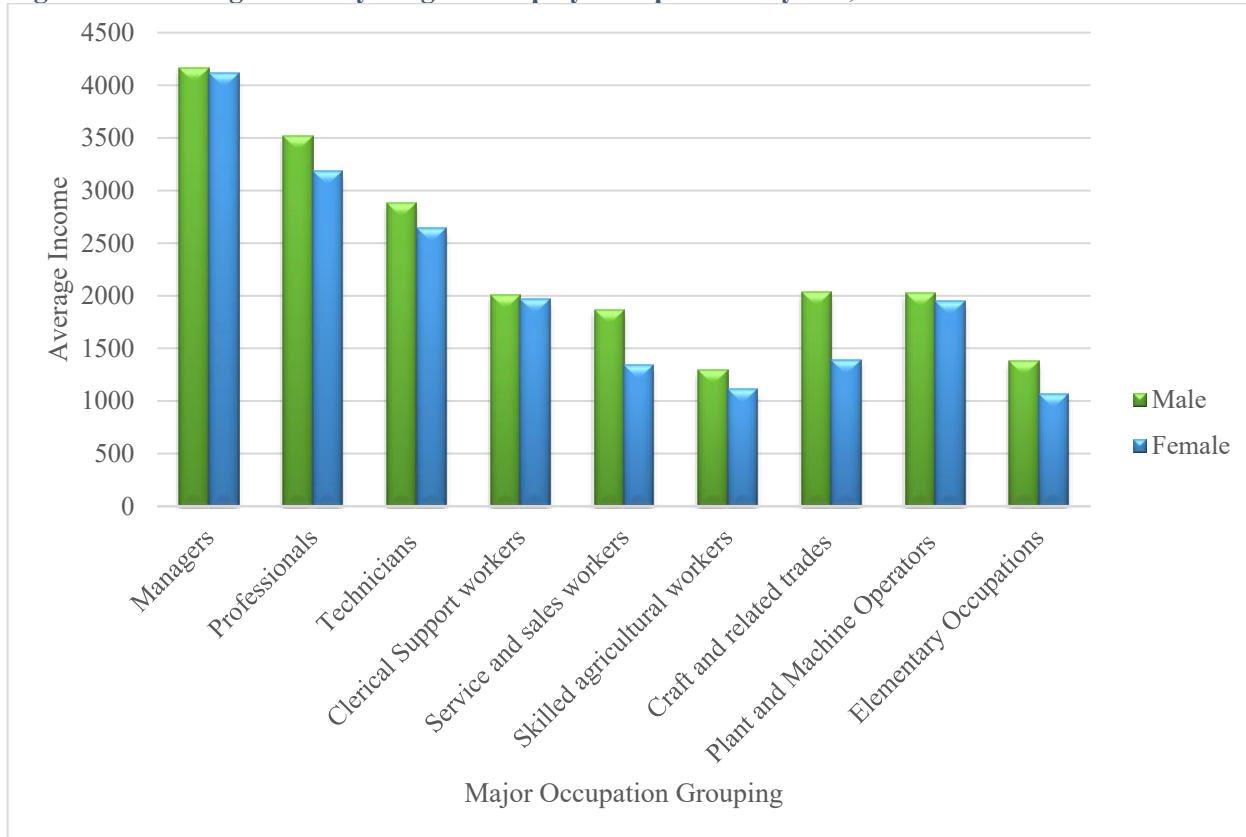
Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Differences by occupation reinforce this segmentation. As shown in Table 14-5, women in 2023 were concentrated in professional occupations, accounting for 3,797 of the 5,515 persons employed in that category, and in clerical support work, where they represented 2,434 of 3,337 workers. They also outnumbered men in service and sales occupations, with 6,989 women compared with 4,639 men. Men, on the other hand, remained dominant in skilled agricultural, forestry, and fishery work (3,480 of 4,238), craft and related trades (5,111 of 5,753), and plant and machine operation (2,033 of 2,147) (Table 14-5). These disparities highlight how occupational choices and opportunities remain strongly gendered, influenced by educational attainment and cultural expectations.

Earnings data, presented in Figure 14.2, further reveal gendered inequalities in the labour market. While men and women had similar earnings at the managerial level, wage gaps widened in most other occupational groups. Male professionals earned more, on average, than female professionals, and the difference was even more pronounced among service and sales workers, skilled agricultural workers, craft and related trades workers, and elementary occupations. These wage gaps persisted despite women's stronger presence in higher levels of education, suggesting that structural barriers, occupational

segregation, and the undervaluation of female-dominated jobs continue to shape gender wage inequality (Figure 14.2).

Figure 14.2 Average Monthly Wage of Employed Population by Sex, 2023



Source: Population and Housing Census 2023

Educational attainment provides additional insight into labour market dynamics. Table 14-6 shows that the educational profile of the employed population shifted upward between 2012 and 2023. In 2012, employment was concentrated among persons with primary education (43.1 percent) and secondary education (32.9 percent). By 2023, the share of employed persons with only pre-primary/primary education had fallen to 24.7 percent, while upper secondary qualifications rose to 29.0 percent and post-secondary non-tertiary qualifications to 17.9 percent. Women were more strongly represented at the higher levels of employed educational attainment, accounting for 58.2 percent of employed persons with post-secondary non-tertiary qualifications, 64.3 percent of those with bachelor’s degrees, and 64.3 percent of those with master’s degrees (Table 14-6). These patterns indicate that women have made stronger gains in the higher educational tiers of the employed population, while men remain more concentrated in lower-attainment groups.

Table 14-6 Employed Population by Highest Education Attained, 2012 & 2023

| Highest Level of Education Attained | Sex | | | | | |
|---|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Male | Percent | Female | Percent | Both | Percent |
| 2012 | | | | | | |
| Pre Primary | 3 | 0.0 | 3 | 0.0 | 6 | 0.0 |
| Primary (1 – 7 Years) | 11,987 | 50.6 | 5,625 | 32.8 | 17,612 | 43.1 |
| Secondary | 7,239 | 30.6 | 6,202 | 36.2 | 13,441 | 32.9 |
| Pre-University/Post-Secondary/College | 2,333 | 9.8 | 2,897 | 16.9 | 5,230 | 12.8 |
| University | 1,303 | 5.5 | 1,729 | 10.1 | 3,032 | 7.4 |
| Other | 160 | 0.7 | 63 | 0.4 | 223 | 0.5 |
| Don't Know or Not Stated | 665 | 2.8 | 612 | 3.6 | 1,277 | 3.1 |
| Total | 23,690 | 100.0 | 17,131 | 100.0 | 40,821 | 100.0 |
| 2023 | | | | | | |
| Daycare/Nursery | 2 | 0.0 | - | 0.0 | 2 | 0.0 |
| Pre-school | 80 | 0.3 | 45 | 0.2 | 125 | 0.3 |
| Pre-primary (Infant) or Primary | 7,970 | 30.9 | 3,488 | 16.9 | 11,458 | 24.7 |
| Lower / Junior Secondary (Forms 1-3) / Senior Primary | 4,214 | 16.3 | 2,357 | 11.4 | 6,571 | 14.1 |
| Upper Secondary (Forms 4 & 5) | 7,039 | 27.3 | 6,434 | 31.1 | 13,473 | 29.0 |
| Post Secondary, non-tertiary (diploma or associate degree) | 3,480 | 13.5 | 4,840 | 23.4 | 8,320 | 17.9 |
| Tertiary level - Bachelor's Degree | 1,108 | 4.3 | 1,996 | 9.6 | 3,104 | 6.7 |
| Tertiary level - Master's Degree | 425 | 1.6 | 766 | 3.7 | 1,191 | 2.6 |
| Doctorate-level programs | 89 | 0.3 | 83 | 0.4 | 172 | 0.4 |
| None | 706 | 2.7 | 272 | 1.3 | 978 | 2.1 |
| Other (specify) | 198 | 0.8 | 213 | 1.0 | 411 | 0.9 |
| Not Stated | 464 | 1.8 | 201 | 1.0 | 665 | 1.4 |
| Total | 25,775 | 100.0 | 20,695 | 100.0 | 46,470 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

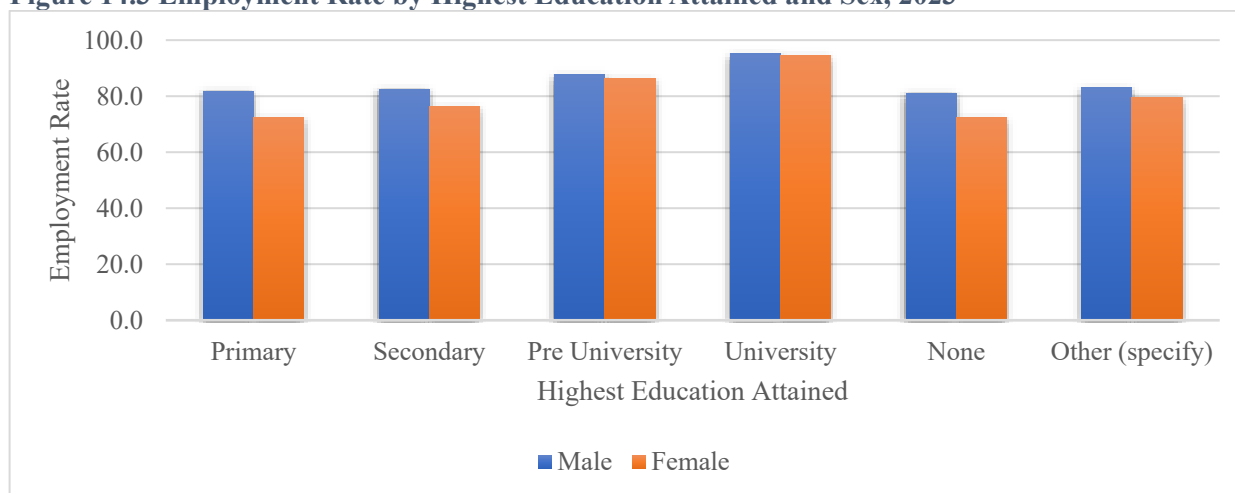
A contrasting pattern emerges among the unemployed. As shown in Table 14-7, in 2023, the largest shares of unemployed persons were concentrated among those with upper secondary education (32.7 percent) and pre-primary/primary education (30.5 percent). Gender disparities were particularly evident at the higher levels. Women accounted for 61.2 percent of unemployed persons with post-secondary non-tertiary qualifications (776 of 1,268), 74.4 percent of those with bachelor’s degrees (125 of 168), and 60.9 percent of those with master’s degrees (39 of 64) (Table 14-7). Alternatively, men continued to dominate the unemployed at the primary and junior secondary levels, where limited schooling restricts labour market entry. This indicates that while women are attaining higher levels of education, they may face greater barriers to translating these qualifications into employment, while men’s vulnerability stems more from low educational achievement.

Table 14-7 Unemployed Population by Highest Level of Education Attained, 2012 & 2023

| Highest Level of Education Attained | Sex | | | | | |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | Male | Percent | Female | Percent | Both | Percent |
| 2012 | | | | | | |
| Pre Primary | - | 0.0 | 2 | 0.0 | 2 | 0.0 |
| Primary (1 – 7 Years) | 2,747 | 48.3 | 1,756 | 31.9 | 4,503 | 40.2 |
| Secondary | 2,258 | 39.7 | 2,658 | 48.3 | 4,916 | 43.9 |
| Pre-University/Post-Secondary/College | 399 | 7.0 | 752 | 13.7 | 1,151 | 10.3 |
| University | 68 | 1.2 | 102 | 1.9 | 170 | 1.5 |
| Other | 37 | 0.6 | 33 | 0.6 | 70 | 0.6 |
| Don't Know or Not Stated | 184 | 3.2 | 197 | 3.6 | 381 | 3.4 |
| Total | 5,693 | 100.0 | 5,500 | 100.0 | 11,193 | 100.0 |
| 2023 | | | | | | |
| Daycare/Nursery | 1 | 0.0 | - | 0.0 | 1 | 0.0 |
| Pre-school | 17 | 0.3 | 13 | 0.3 | 30 | 0.3 |
| Pre-primary (Infant) or Primary | 1,756 | 35.2 | 1,322 | 26.0 | 3,078 | 30.5 |
| Lower / Junior Secondary (Forms 1-3) / Senior Primary | 885 | 17.7 | 802 | 15.8 | 1,687 | 16.7 |
| Upper Secondary (Forms 4 & 5) | 1,503 | 30.1 | 1,796 | 35.3 | 3,299 | 32.7 |
| Post Secondary, non-tertiary (diploma or associate degree) | 492 | 9.9 | 776 | 15.2 | 1,268 | 12.6 |
| Tertiary level - Bachelor's Degree | 43 | 0.9 | 125 | 2.5 | 168 | 1.7 |
| Tertiary level - Master's Degree | 25 | 0.5 | 39 | 0.8 | 64 | 0.6 |
| Doctorate-level programs | 5 | 0.1 | 5 | 0.1 | 10 | 0.1 |
| None | 165 | 3.3 | 105 | 2.1 | 270 | 2.7 |
| Other (specify) | 39 | 0.8 | 55 | 1.1 | 94 | 0.9 |
| Not Stated | 59 | 1.2 | 54 | 1.1 | 113 | 1.1 |
| Total | 4,990 | 100.0 | 5,092 | 100.0 | 10,082 | 100.0 |

Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

Figure 14.3 Employment Rate by Highest Education Attained and Sex, 2023



Source: 2012 Population and Housing Census Report; Population and Housing Census 2023

The Vincentian labour market shows a dual dynamic. Women have advanced in education, labour force participation, and professional employment, but continue to experience higher unemployment and lower wages in many occupations. Men, by contrast, remain dominant in agriculture, trades, and self-employment, yet are increasingly constrained by lower educational attainment and declining labour force participation. These contrasting patterns highlight the need for policies that support both women's economic advancement and stronger male retention and progression in education and training (Tables 14-3 to 14-7; Figures 14.1 to 14.3).

14.6 Conclusion

The analysis of gender and development issues in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines highlights both areas of progress and persistent disparities. Over the past decade, women have advanced significantly in education, health awareness, and participation in the formal labor market. They are now more visible in higher levels of education, government employment, and professional occupations, reflecting a gradual shift away from traditional gender roles. At the same time, women remain disproportionately represented among those outside of unions and continue to bear a heavier burden of chronic illness, underscoring the dual nature of empowerment and vulnerability in their demographic profile.

Men, on the other hand, continue to dominate agricultural, craft, and trade-related employment but face increasing challenges linked to educational underachievement and declining labour force participation. Their stronger presence in lower levels of schooling and concentration in manual and self-employment sectors contrast sharply with women's rising share of post-secondary and tertiary qualifications. This divergence not only widens gender gaps in employment outcomes but also signals the risk of long-term imbalances in human capital development.

Taken together, these contrasting trajectories highlight a dual challenge: sustaining women's progress toward equity and empowerment while addressing men's vulnerabilities in education and employment. Closing these gaps will be vital for ensuring balanced gender and development outcomes in the years ahead.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS - CHAPTER 14

GENDER & DEVELOPMENT ISSUES



Union Status:

Men headed most married-and-living-with-spouse households (84.1%), while women lead most non-union households (58.0%)



Health disparities:

Women bear a heavier burden of chronic illness, accounting for 64.8% of hypertension and 63.1% of diabetes cases



Education gap reversal:

Women surpassed men in higher education, accounting for 64.1% of bachelor's degree holders and 60.7% of master's degree holders



Labour force participation:

Female participation rose to 60.1%, narrowing the gap with men (70.9%) but not closing it



Gender and Unemployment:

Women face higher unemployment (19.7%) than men (16.2%), showing barriers in turning educational gains into jobs.



Sectoral employment differences:

Women are more concentrated in services, sales, and clerical jobs, while men dominate agriculture & craft related work

Appendix 1: Description of Major Census Division

For census purposes, Saint Vincent is divided into 11 divisions and the Grenadines into 2 divisions. The descriptions of these divisions were extracted from the 2012 Population and Housing Census (PHC).

| Census Division | Description |
|--|---|
| Division 1 Kingstown | This division comprises all lands, parcels, and buildings within the following boundary: beginning at the point where the Sion Hill/Arnos Vale Crown Lands boundary meets the sea, proceeding along this boundary to the Windward Highway; then running northerly along the Windward Highway to a point on Ronald Llewellyn’s boundary; from there, in a straight line to the junction at the Hunte/David Seales boundary with the Dorsetshire Hill road. The boundary continues along the Dorsetshire Hill road to its meeting point with the Leonard Phillips/Thomas Mascoll boundary, then extends in a straight line to Gibson Corner. From Gibson Corner, it follows the Leeward Highway northward to its intersection with the St. George/St. Andrew Parish boundary, and finally runs along this parish boundary to the sea. |
| Division 2 Suburbs of Kingstown | This division comprises the area outside the Town Boundary beginning at Cooper’s Ridge, north of Clare Valley, continuing to “Plantation,” and then following Rilland Gutter, which crosses the Leeward Highway at the deep bend culvert just below the Rilland Hill Standpipe, up to its head and onward to Agout Ridge. From there, the boundary runs along the spur to Mt. St. Andrew, then continues along Fenton Ridge, Green Hill, and Orange Grove to the point where Dorsetshire Hill meets the Leonard Phillips/Thomas Mascoll boundary at Millar’s Gate. It then follows the Town Boundary to the sea at Ross Castle and runs along the coastline back to the starting point. |
| Division 3 Calliaqua | This division starts at Mt. St. Andrew; the boundary extends northward along the Main Ridge and continues over Ponsonby Ridge to the “Kennedy Trail.” It follows this trail past Eyry Ridge to its junction with the Vigie Highway, then proceeds along the Vigie Highway to the road leading to Akers. From there, it runs along this road to Crick’s Corner, then follows the deep gully (Cologne) between Calder and Akers to the Argyle Dam. The boundary continues along the gully north of New (Rescue) Village to the deep bend and culvert on the Windward Highway near the ninth mile pillar (Breadfruit Gutter), and descends through this gutter to the sea. |
| Division 4 Marriaqua | This division comprises the entire natural basin from Ponsonby Ridge, continuing along the Main Ridge to Grand Bonhome, then to Petit |

| | |
|--|---|
| | Bonhome and onward along the ridge to Maroon Hill. From there, the boundary follows the ridge forming the northern limits of Hopewell, Sayers, and Argyle Estates, extending to the Escape R.C. Church and then to the sea. |
| Division 5 Bridgetown | This division begins at Petit Bonhome, the boundary runs along a spur to the head of the Julie Gutter, follows the Julie Gutter to its junction with the Union River, and continues along the Union River to the sea. |
| Division 6 Colonarie | This division starts at Grand Bonhome, the boundary follows the Main Ridge to Hill 3404, then extends along the eastern spur and the northern boundary of Mt. William Estate to Byrea Ridge on the Windward Highway. From there, it follows the stream down to the sea. |
| Division 7 Georgetown | The boundary runs along the Morne Garu Range to the point nearest the head of the Karo River, then follows the course of the Karo River to the sea. |
| Division 8 Sandy Bay | This division is located along the Main Ridge through Hills 3421, 3150, 2405, 1474 and 185 of the 1889 Admiralty Chart to the Rocky Promontory opposite Booby Rock. |
| Division 9 Layout | This division begins at Bambaroo Point, the boundary runs along the ridge north of Ruthland Vale Estate, continues through Happy Hill to the Main Ridge, and then follows the Main Ridge southward to Mt. St. Andrew. |
| Division 10 Barrouallie | The boundary follows the northern boundary of Cumberland Estate, then continues along the spur north of Spring Village to Mount 3404, and from there runs south along the Morne Garu Range. |
| Division 11 Chateaubelair | This division comprises the remaining north-western portion of the island, extending to the rocky promontory opposite Booby Rock. |
| Division 12 Northern Grenadines | This division comprises of Bequia, Battawia, Balliceaux, Mustique, Petit Mustique and Savan - that chain of island extending from Bequia to Savan Rock. |
| Division 13 Southern Grenadines | This division comprises of Canouan, Mayreau, Union Island and Petit Canouan to Petit St. Vincent. |

Appendix 2: Concepts and Definitions

Visitation Record

A log of the Enumeration Summary, which includes information about each building, dwelling unit and household visited in a specific enumeration district.

Total Population

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines 2012 Population and Housing Census counted the country's de jure and de facto population. This means that the census counted the total number of persons who were usual residents in the country during the enumeration period (de jure population), as well as all persons who were present in the country on census night (de facto population). In this preliminary report, the total population refers to the de jure population, which includes:

- a) Persons living in private dwellings (households),
- b) Persons living in non-private dwellings, group dwellings, and institutions,
- c) Persons with no fixed place of abode (e.g., Homeless),
- d) Persons at work (e.g., Vincentian workers on cruise ships), on vacation, at school, or seeking medical treatment outside of St. Vincent and the Grenadines for less than six (6) months.

Household/Non-Institutional Population

The household population includes all persons who reside in private dwellings in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. It is important to note that a member of the household is not necessarily a relative of the main family. A boarder or a domestic employee, for example, who sleeps most nights (4 nights or more) per week and shares at least one of the daily meals at the house where they work, is also included as a member of that household. The concept of the household and family is not the same. It is possible to encounter more than one family constituting a single household once they live together for most nights of the week and share at least one meal.

Census Division (CD)

The largest geographic areas into which St. Vincent and the Grenadines is divided for the purpose of the census administration.

Enumeration District (ED)

This is the smallest geographical area into which each Census Division is subdivided to facilitate data collection. Each area should be just large enough for one (1) Enumerator to canvas within a reasonable time.

Household

One or more persons living together (i.e., sleeping most nights of a week; 4 to 7 days) and sharing at least one daily meal. Members of a household do not have to be related.

Institution

Living quarters in which the occupants live collectively for disciplinary, health, educational, religious, or other purposes. The institutional population comprises persons who are not members of households. These include those in university dorms, religious institutions, prisons, and so forth.

Head of Household

A “marker” for a household, its type, and structure. It is usually defined as the principal wage earner or provider for a multi-person household or, alternatively, as the person in whose name the housing unit is rented or owned. Persons living alone are also designated as heads of households. In principle, the number of households is equal to the number of household heads

Sex Ratio

This is the ratio of males to females within the population.

Age Dependency Ratio

A ratio in which the numerator represents the total number of people not of working age (too young or too old to work and therefore “dependent” on those who do), and the denominator represents the population of working age; often multiplied by 100, which yields the number of dependents per 100 persons of working age.

Dependency Ratio

The ratio of the number of persons in a given “dependent” age group of interest to the number in a different age group considered to contain those persons providing support to those dependent (e.g., the number of persons less than 15 years of age divided by the number aged 15 to 64).

Appendix 3: Population and Housing Census Questionnaire

The questionnaire for the 2023 Population and Housing Census can be accessed via the following link:
<https://designer.mysurvey.solutions/q/details/693274ac-157a-47c3-b4d0-b42b21b07902>

Generated by edwinstcather, Sep 04, 2025 16:57
Questionnaire owned by edwinstcather, Mar 31, 2025 09:29
Last modified by edwinstcather, Apr 01, 2025 13:35

Shared with:
bretneyanthony (never edited)
rdegazon (never edited)

Sections: 6, Sub-sections: 29,
Questions: 278.
Questions with enabling conditions:
154
Questions with validation
conditions:28
Rosters: 5
Variables: 0



SVG PHC 2023_Final

SURVEY IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE DESCRIPTION

COVER

No sub-sections, No rosters, Questions: 2.

HOUSING IDENTIFIER

No sub-sections, No rosters, Questions: 9.

HOUSEHOLD

Sub-sections: 11, Rosters: 3, Questions: 89.

AGRICULTURE

Sub-sections: 1, No rosters, Questions: 15, Static texts: 1.

PERSONS

Sub-sections: 13, Rosters: 2, Questions: 139, Static texts: 3.

RECORD OF VISITS

Sub-sections: 4, No rosters, Questions: 24.

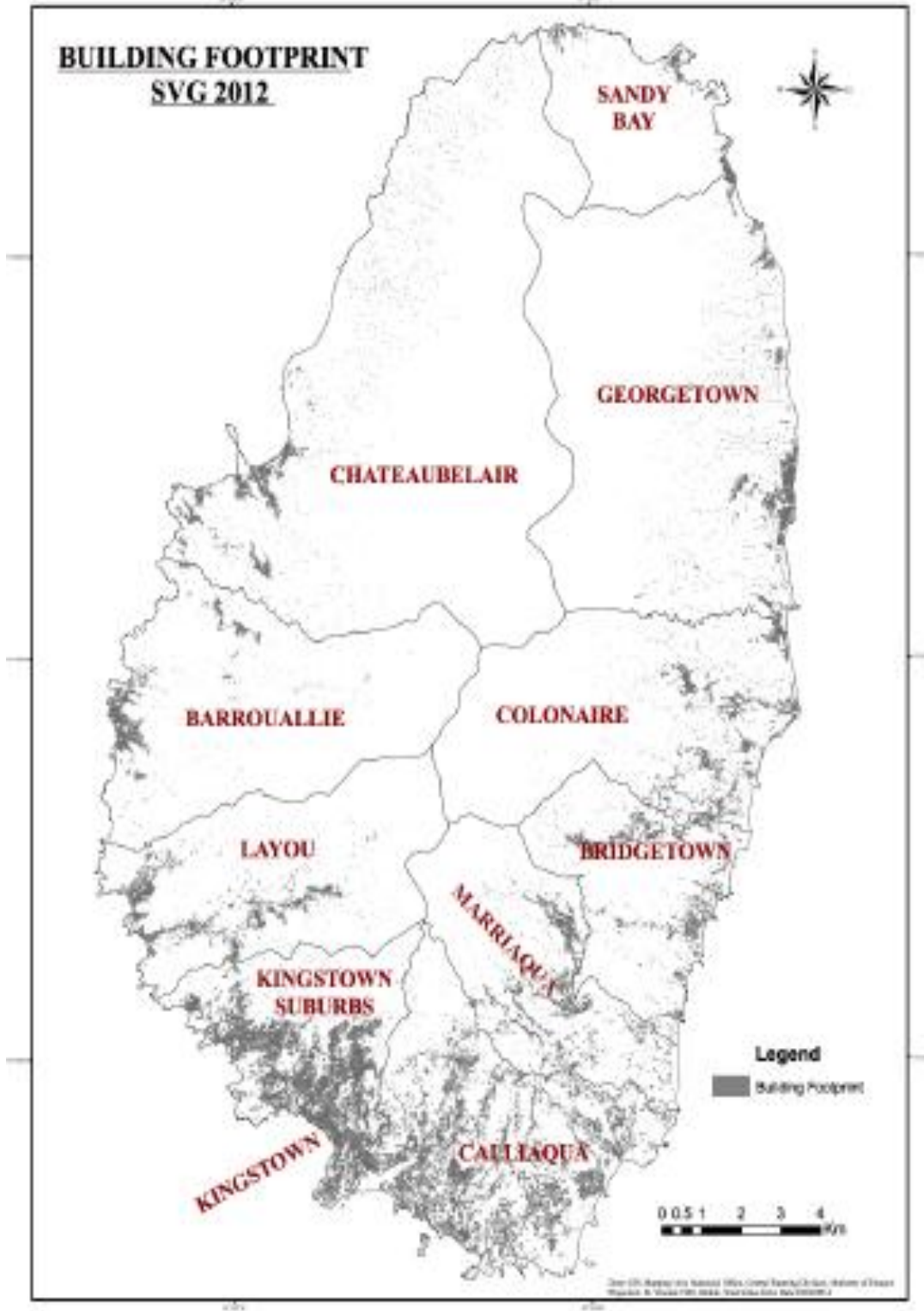
APPENDIX A — INSTRUCTIONS

APPENDIX B — CATEGORIES

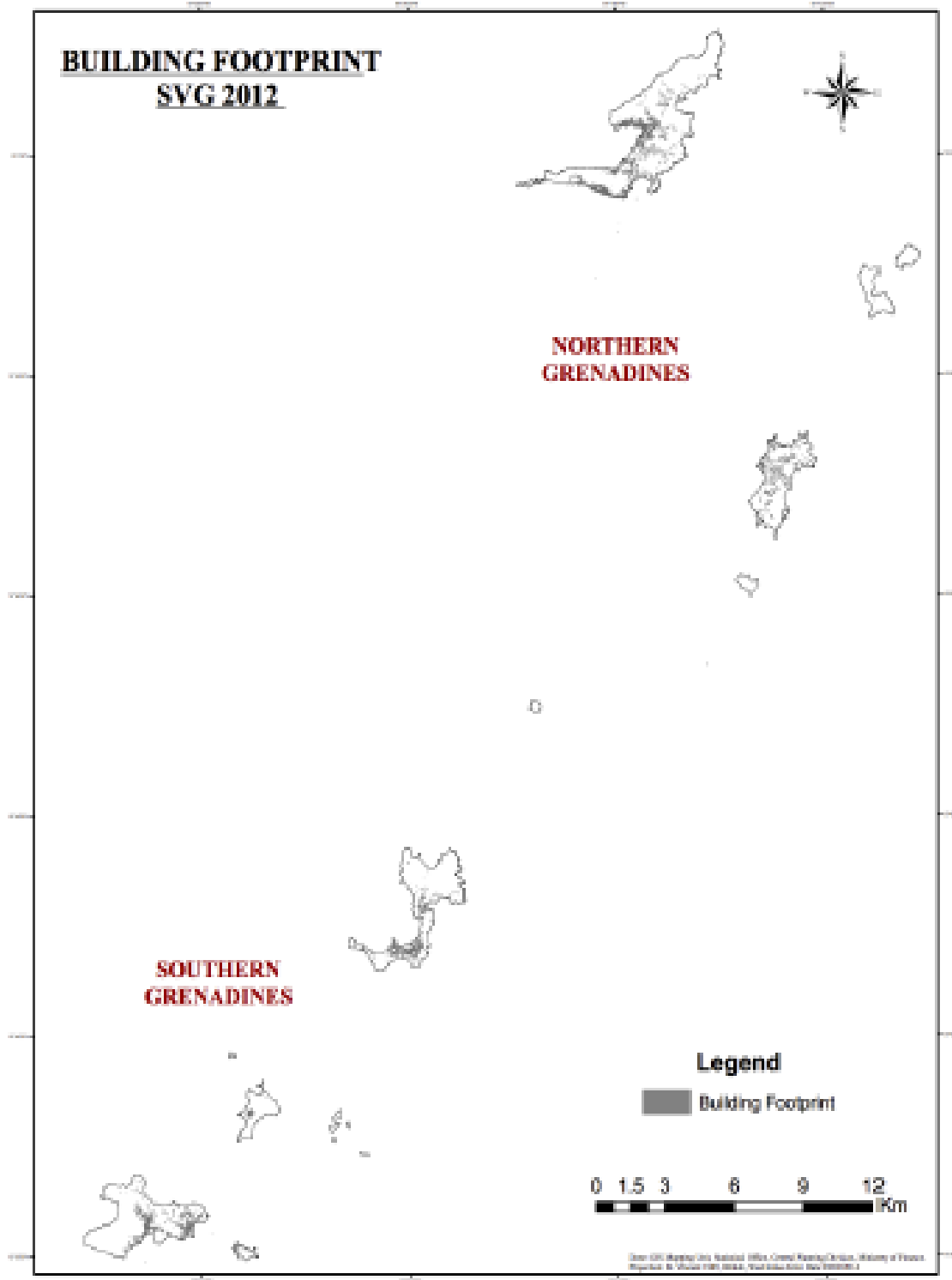
LEGEND

Appendix 4: Maps

Map 10 Building Footprint SVG 2012

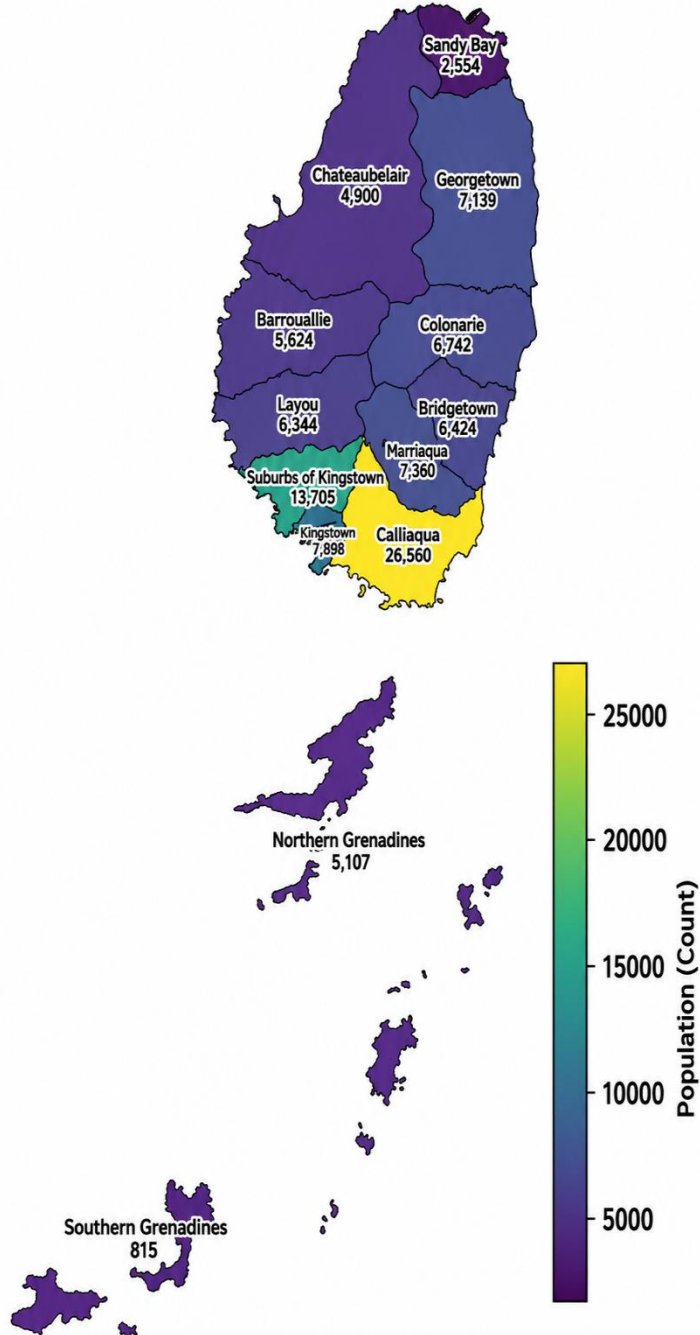


Map 11 Building Footprint SVG - Grenadines 2012



Map 12 SVG Population by Census Division

St. Vincent & the Grenadines — Population by Census Division
Continuous Gradient with Division Names & Counts



Map 13 SVG Population Density by Census Division

St. Vincent & the Grenadines — Population Density by Census Division
Lightest Brown Gradient with Division Names & Densities

