

STATE OF BLACK ECONOMICS REPORT

SOBER 2026

Black people are increasingly central to Canada's labour force and economic future—*yet opportunity is not keeping pace.*

EDUCATION

EMPLOYMENT

LEADERSHIP

ENTREPRENEURSHIP



WHAT'S NEW IN 2026

This year's report widens the lens—from who enters education and high-demand work to who advances, leads and builds businesses.

01 · EDUCATION

Who teaches—and who is seen?

Ontario's first systematic K-12 scan tests whether teachers reflect the communities they serve.

02 · TRANSPARENCY

Who measures progress?

A cross-country review examines race-based reporting across major colleges and universities.

03 · WORK

Who enters the growth sectors?

Representation in healthcare, skilled trades and ICT is linked to productivity and labour shortages.

04 · LEADERSHIP

Who makes the top?

New public-sector analysis, a snapshot of leading TSX firms and global comparisons.

THE EVIDENCE BASE



Systematic scans of Ontario boards, colleges, universities and the largest TSX-listed firms.



Disparities begin early but attainment is rising.

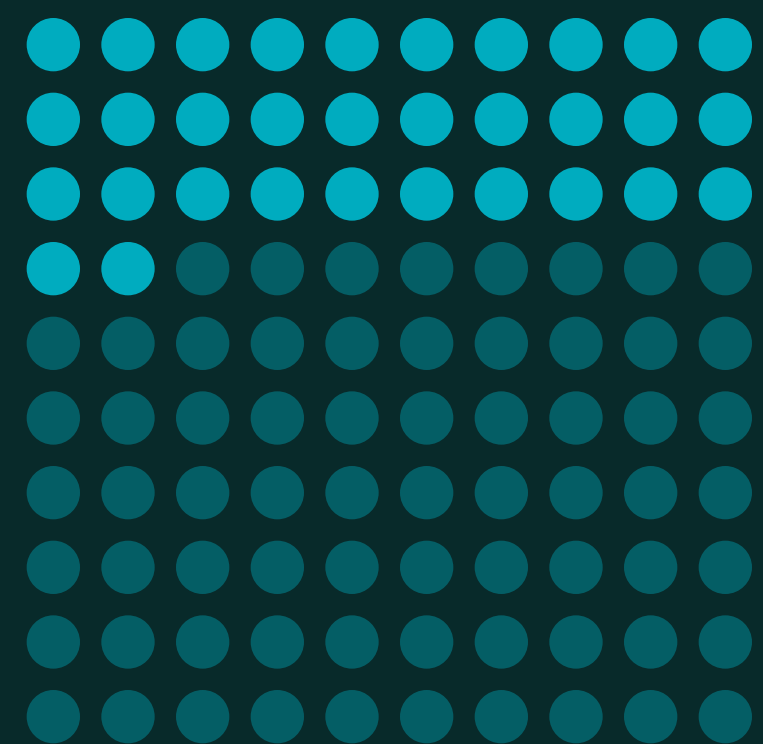
Across Ontario's largest boards, Black students are less likely to graduate and take longer to finish high school. Yet post-secondary attainment now approaches parity.



32%

hold a bachelor's degree or higher

Black Canadians aged 25–64 — now close to the overall rate.

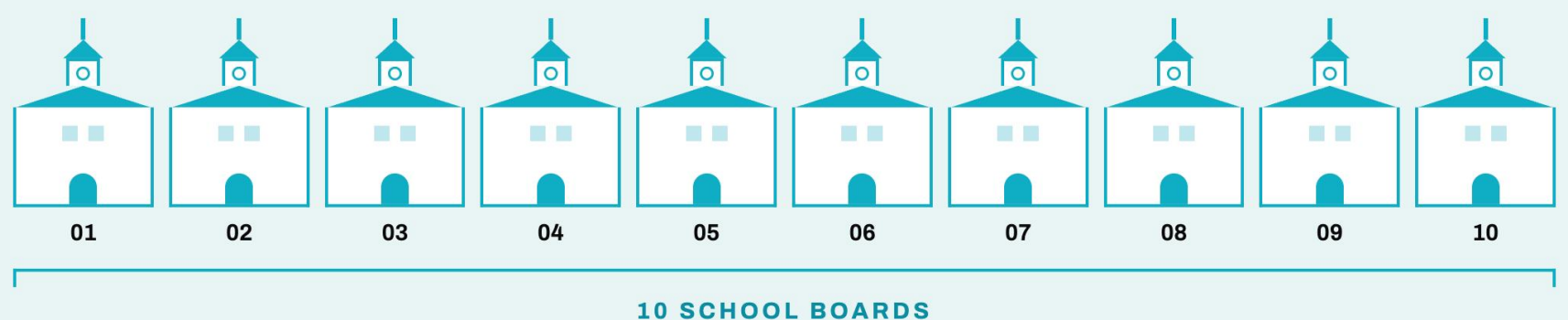


32 of every 100 Black adults aged 25–64.

A FIRST SYSTEMATIC VIEW

10

of Ontario's largest school boards scanned. Graduation gaps persist across them.



10 SCHOOL BOARDS

THE VISIBILITY GAP



Lowest reporting: public race-based transparency is weakest at the college stage.



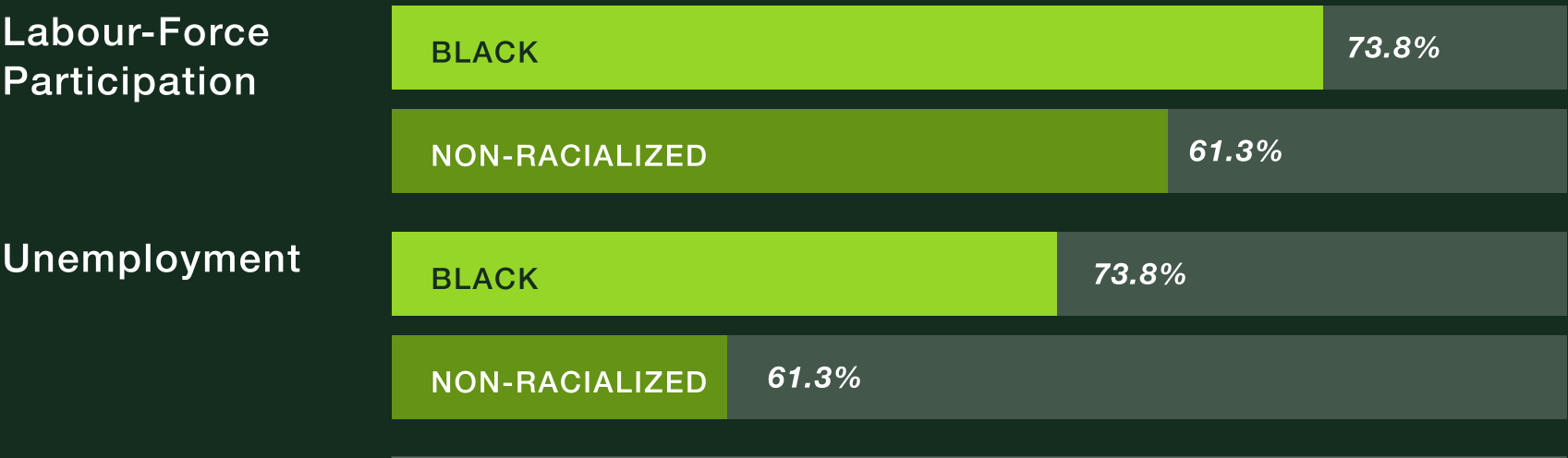
High participation, but unemployment stays nearly twice as high.

Black Canadians are more attached to the labour force than average, yet face higher unemployment, lower pay and widespread workplace discrimination.



THE PARTICIPATION PARADOX

More likely to be in the labour force — yet twice as likely to be unemployed.

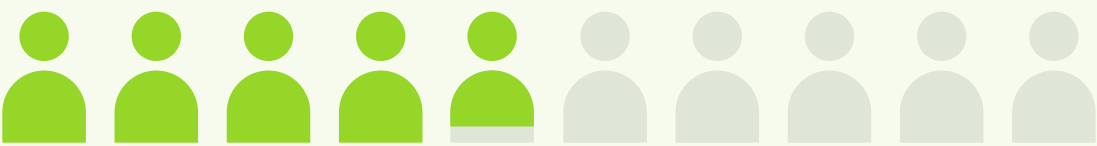


2x higher — the unemployment rate despite higher participation.

WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION

Nearly 1 in 2

Black workers report discrimination at work.



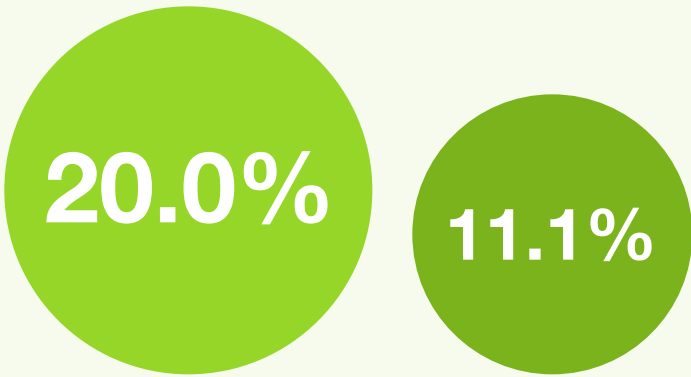
LOW PAY

More than twice as common



2.4x higher share earning below the low-pay threshold.

WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION



Black youth

Non-racialized

WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION



increase among Black workers

Others: +0.5 pts over the same period.

NEW IN 2026 · HIGH-DEMAND SECTORS

Strong in essential roles, under-represented in the higher-paid and supervisory ones.

Present in the work — missing from the leadership



Healthcare

STRONG

Concentrated in essential care roles.

LIMITED

Under-represented in higher-paid clinical leadership.



Skilled trades

STRONG

Well represented in labour-intensive roles.

LIMITED

Fewer in certified and supervisory trades.



ICT

STRONG

Present in fast-growing tech occupations.

LIMITED

Income gaps persist; few in software & management.



Representation is climbing at entry and climbing at the top.

Public-sector and corporate leadership are both improving, but senior roles still lag population share. Black women lead among Black directors; men dominate boards overall.



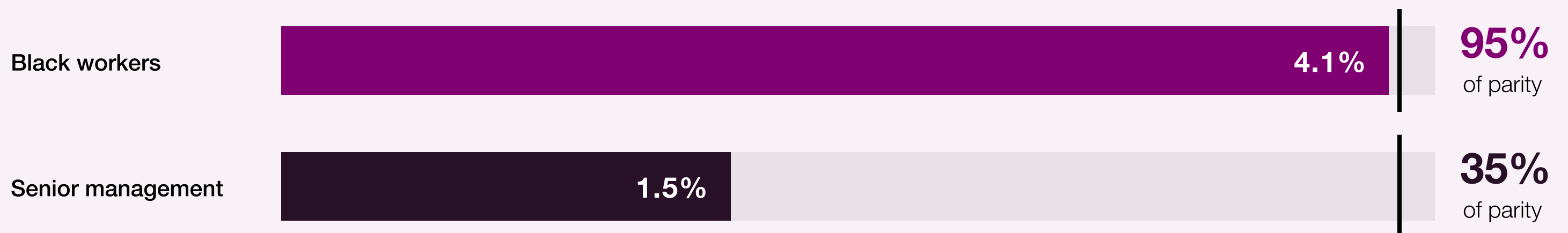
SENIOR PUBLIC-SECTOR LEADERSHIP

Representation more than doubled — but has not yet reached the workforce benchmark.



CORPORATE ROLES • PROGRESS TO PARITY

One role nears the line. Another remains far behind.



Population parity (4.3%) • largest 25 TSX-listed firms

WHO ADVANCES?

Black women lead among Black directors.

A counterpoint to boardrooms overall, where men continue to dominate.

THE LEADERSHIP GAP

Entry gains are not yet flowing upward.

The sharp drop at senior management reveals where the pipeline stalls.



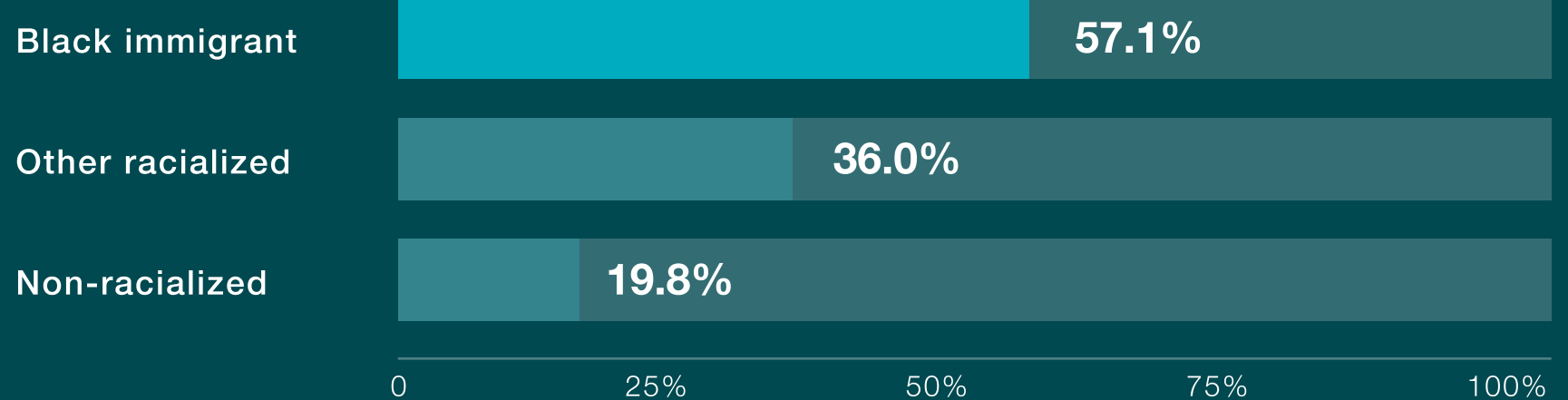
Rising self-employment and a gateway to global trade.

Black self-employment is growing even under economic pressure. Black immigrant entrepreneurs are outsized drivers of exports to their countries of origin.



EXPORTING TO COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

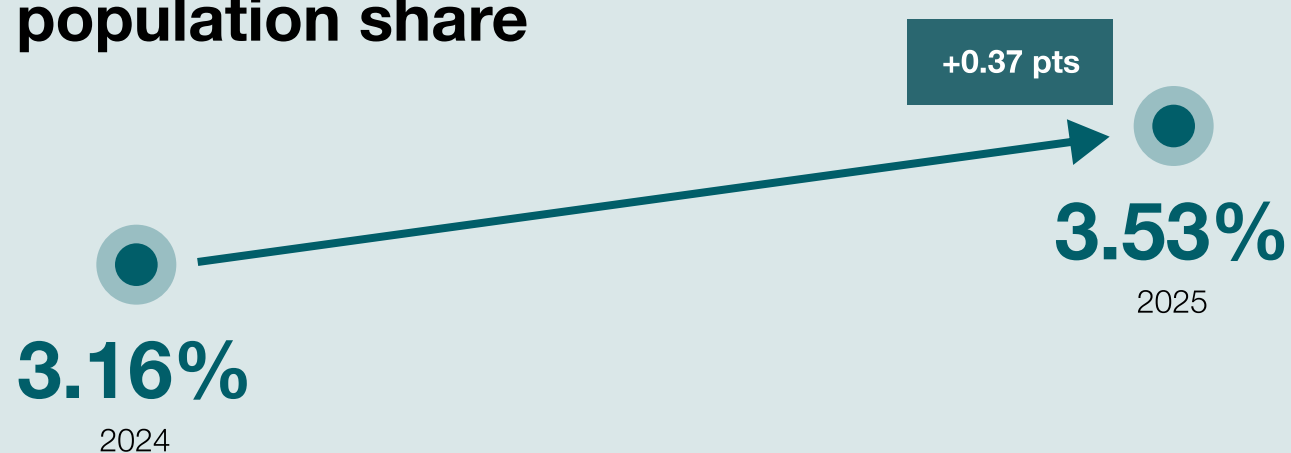
Black immigrant founders are the most likely to turn origin-country connections into trade.



+1.6 percentage points since 2017 — with 2 points still to close.

BLACK SELF-EMPLOYMENT · 2024–2025

Growing, but still below population share



BUSINESS OUTLOOK

Optimism is moving in the opposite direction.



Sharp decline in “very optimistic” responses among Black business owners.



More businesses

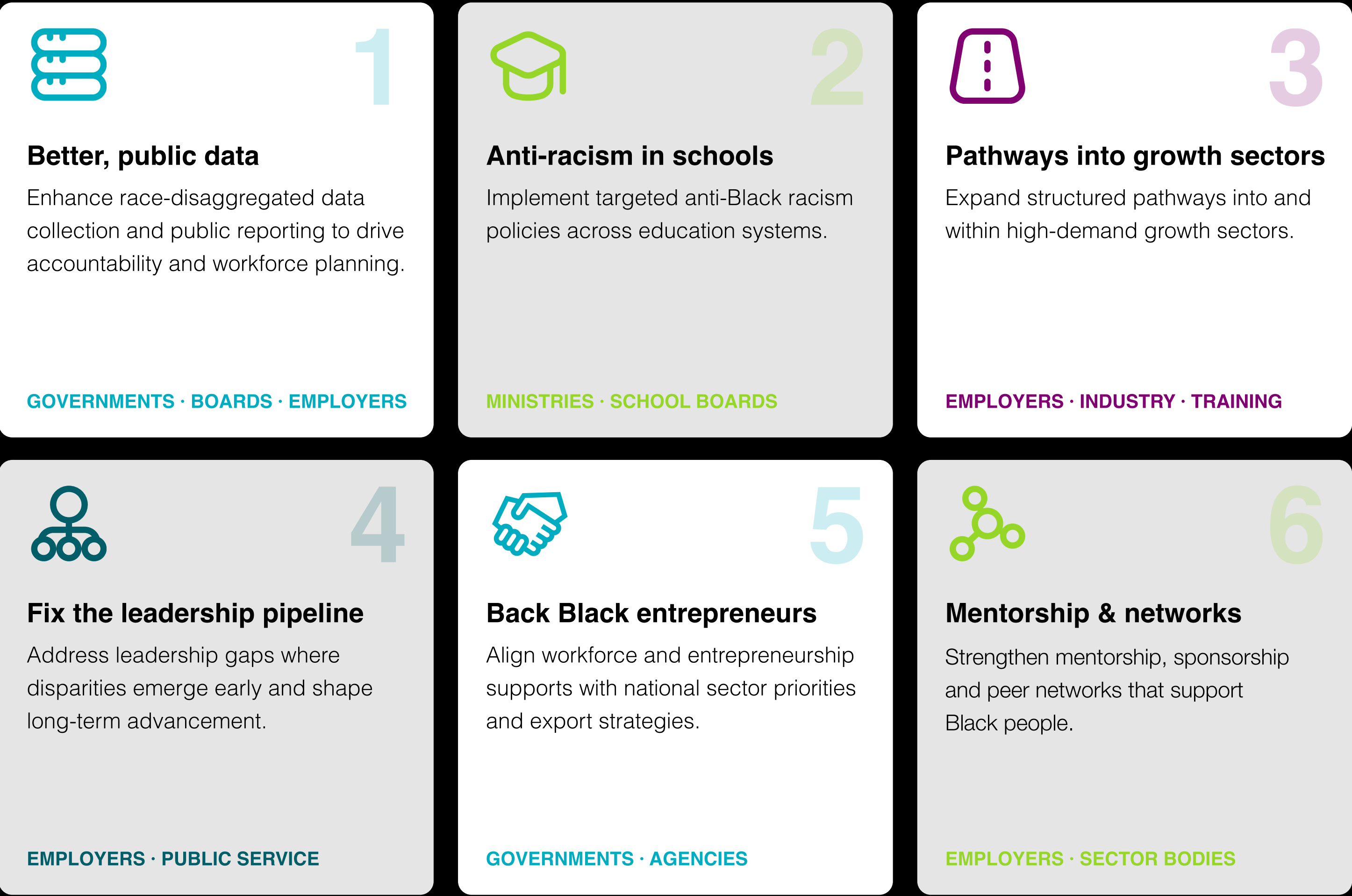
Self-employment continues to edge upward under difficult economic conditions.

More global reach

Origin-country knowledge and networks are translating into export activity.

Six levers. One shared outcome.

An inclusive economy is not produced by one institution. It requires coordinated action across governments, education, employers, industry and community networks.



Shared responsibility

When the six levers move together, participation can become genuine opportunity, and representation can become lasting economic power.