



**Unemployment and sustainable  
livelihoods: Just transition  
approaches in the face of inequality**

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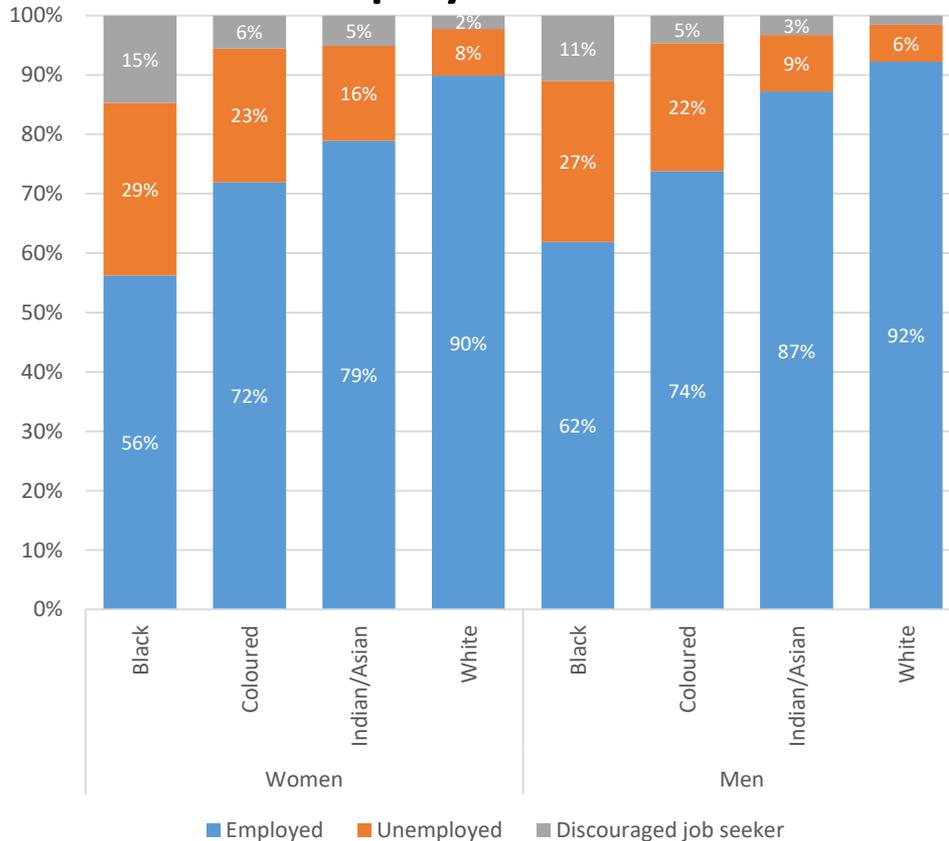
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# Context

- The transition is already here, and its justness is linked to how inclusive it is in the context of SA's inequality
- Need to protect workers who stand to lose jobs as part of the transition from fossil fuels
- However, biophysical (& therefore economic) impacts will be felt by everyone regardless of job access
  - Need to, as part of the just transition, also protect the unemployed and poor households who cannot address impacts on their own
  - For this, need to understand who those who need help are, i.e. age, skills and resources
- Various studies have explored sectoral/value chain employment impacts
- Focus here is on the unemployed and poor households
- Makes the case for building resilience among these groups as part of the just transition

# Who is left behind: Individuals

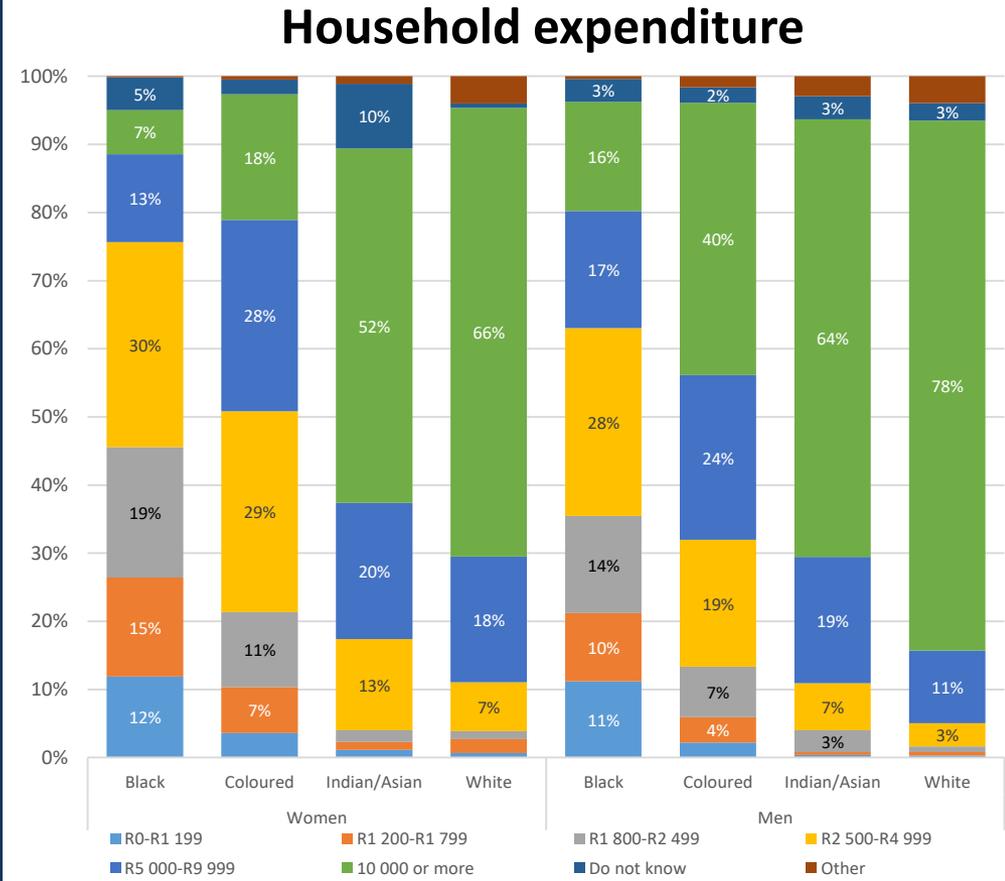
## Employment status



- SA employment is lowest among Black women and men
  - Unemployment for these two groups highest among 20 – 39 year olds
  - Black women in particular are more likely to not have previous work experience, followed by Indian/Asian women
  - Otherwise, most unemployed women would have worked in trade
  - White men most likely to have been in manufacturing, while black and coloured men more likely to have been in construction
- Majority of the unemployed in Gauteng, followed by KZN and EC

# Who is left behind: Households

- To understand household resources, used expenditure; source of income; dwelling ownership and value
- Most of those in Black women headed HH have expenditure  $\leq$  R5000 compared to  $\geq$ R10 000 for majority of those in white men headed HH
- Black women headed households least likely compared to other groups to have a salary/wages (40% compared to 63% for white men headed HH)
- Black and coloured women headed HH more likely than other groups to depend on state grants
- Majority of Black women headed HH fully own their homes, but have the lowest property values ( $\leq$ R500k) compared to low full ownership for white men HH whose property values likely to be above R1 million



# So what?

- Need to think about how to make just transition inclusive
- Simply focusing on those who stand to lose jobs is not enough
- Climate change will affect all South Africans, but resilience depends on resources
- Unemployed people least likely to have resources to build resilience, especially Black women and Black women headed HH
- How can we build resilience for these affected groups as part of the just transition?

# Proposed interventions

- Climate resilient housing & public infrastructure
  - Housing is an important part of resilience, but poor households often have unsafe houses they can't afford to climate-proof
  - Through DHS the state can fund climate resilient housing using existing budgets for low-income housing & informal settlement formalization
  - DPWI can be used to climate-proof public buildings and other infrastructure including roads etc.
  - As part of employment creation, the state can use extensive incentives programmes to drive local manufacturing of the necessary technologies
  - Some technologies are made locally, but commercialization is a problem
- Low-carbon public transport
  - Public transport is also integral
  - P-BT VC focused on proposals for taxis and private vehicles
  - Here looking at building rail infrastructure
    - Not only helps reduce emissions, but has potential to support local rolling stock manufacturing and create jobs
- Other low carbon technologies
  - Necessary to roll-out other technologies that help build resilience
  - Water efficient devices, solar energy systems etc.
  - Roll-out of smart agriculture devices particularly important, can be rolled out through existing agriculture support programmes

# Proposed interventions

- Investment in community services
  - These include services like education and healthcare for example
  - Quality education is important for levelling access to economic opportunities
  - Climate change has negative health impacts
    - COVID-19 has shown how easily healthcare systems can be overwhelmed if not properly resourced and managed
    - Public health facilities must be improved and equipped to deal with possibility of rising healthcare needs due to climate change
    - However, assisting households to climate-proof homes and other building with materials that adapt to changing temperatures would also lessen the health impact
- Redistribution of investments
  - Concentration of investments and economic opportunities in Gauteng deprives other provinces of necessary investments
  - Also means Gauteng has a disproportionately larger population that needs help
  - Redistribution of private and public investments to other provinces would create economic opportunities in those provinces

# Conclusions

- Inequality in South Africa is racialized and gendered
- This means certain groups can't build resilience on their own
- The state can, through existing programmes, support the unemployed and poor households to build resilience while using those interventions to also create jobs and build a stronger economy
- Success of the just transition depends on its level of inclusivity, but will also be measured by ability to build resilience for poor households at the margins of the economy
- That said, the just transition is not a fix-all bandage, thus can't address inequality without other state interventions



**Re a leboha!**