

2021

# PAY & WORKING CONDITIONS FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS ACROSS AFRICA

Produced by **SweepSouth**





# Executive Summary

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## Luke Kannemeyer

SweepSouth Chief Operating Officer

The fourth annual **SweepSouth Report on Pay and Working Conditions for Domestic Workers Across Africa** gives us a descriptive overview of the current living conditions of the women and men who take care of our homes and office spaces. This year, **SweepSouth took it a step further and expanded its reach across Africa**, adding additional African countries to the report to create an even bigger picture of the domestic worker industry. With collective data from Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa, a vast comparison across countries is given to describe the lives of domestic workers and their current working conditions.

Drawn from 7000 responses, the majority of South African domestic workers partaking in the survey were females between the age of 25 and 44 (79%). We've also seen a slight increase in the number of male respondents in the same age bracket, compared to our 2020 SweepSouth Domestic Worker Annual Report. On average a domestic worker in South Africa can be described as a single caregiver who sacrifices variable-cost items like food to stretch their earnings. If female, she also battles to take care of her mental health, while providing for her family. This year, SweepSouth collaborated with a **mental health specialist to delve deeper into this topic.**

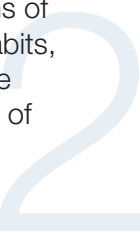
When it comes to Kenya and Nigeria the respondents were younger but showcased similar living conditions to those in South Africa. The household size is the same, with most domestic workers reporting that they are the main breadwinner in their household.

Both Kenya and South Africa show a deficit when comparing earnings to basic costs. This means that workers in these regions will be forced to take on debt or reduce spending costs on vital items to make ends meet every month. Nigerian respondents could cover their basic costs, driven by the significantly lower expenditure on food and rent compared to South Africa.

Through the 2021 report, we view the current living conditions and situation of domestic workers after a year of COVID-19 while demonstrating the urgency of change and intervention needed to improve the industry for the better. The impact of COVID-19 on the **livelihoods of domestic workers has been significant**, with Kenya and Nigeria showing that about 2 in 5 domestic workers lost their job due to the pandemic vs 1 in 5 in South Africa. According to our latest survey, almost half of the households in South Africa and Nigeria have additional sources of income.

Another fascinating response captured from the survey was the vaccine hesitancy and concern across all the countries. **South Africa showed the greatest hesitancy despite many experiencing the loss of someone they know to COVID-19 and comprehensive knowledge of COVID-19** shown in our 2020 annual survey. Non-South African respondents were 12 percentage points less likely to want to be vaccinated.

For more fascinating insight and information into the living conditions of domestic workers, and questions about financial security, saving habits, living costs and earnings across South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria we encourage you to delve into this year's SweepSouth Annual Report of Domestic Workers.



# Introduction

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One year later, after our 2020 SweepSouth Domestic Worker Annual Report, a deadly third wave of COVID-19 infections is sweeping across the African continent. While many African nations were initially praised for their quick response to the pandemic, the resulting economic fallout had a devastating effect on the livelihoods of many workers. While glimmers of hope have started to emerge with the rollout of vaccines across the world, Africa has lagged behind. This threatens the prospect of an economic bounce-back benefitting domestic workers, who are among the worst affected. This is particularly relevant considering their reliance on the income of their employer, and their frequent exploitation. This is also likely to put a roadblock on recent progress to improve work conditions, pay and protection for domestic workers.

On top of that, our annual report indicates expenses skyrocketing as the number of sole breadwinners increased by 13%, and the number of domestic workers with 6 or more dependents increased by 43%. This places pressure on food spending, opening up domestic workers and their families to severe risk of malnutrition. We also saw over half of the domestic workers opening up about how their mental health had been affected, compounded by a spiraling debt crisis. Despite these pressures, the number one thing our respondents asked for was to be able to return to work.

This comes back to the burning question, whether after a year of Covid, have they been able to do so? Are they earning an income once more? Did pay and earnings recover? Are the lives of domestic workers improving? This is where the Fourth SweepSouth Domestic Worker Annual Report seeks to shed light.

For the first time, we have been able to gather data from across Sub-Saharan Africa with the inclusion of Nigeria and Kenya in addition to South Africa. SweepSouth is Africa's leading online platform for connecting domestic workers to homeowners. Core to SweepSouth's mission is promoting the improvement of working conditions within the domestic work sector.

Our 2020 report focussed on the early impact of the pandemic on the livelihoods and health of domestic workers. In this year's report, we reflect on the impact of the pandemic a year later. We look at the usual indicators of pay and working conditions and compare these across the three countries surveyed. We also dive deeper into particular aspects highlighted in last year's report like declining mental health and spiraling debt and also take a look at the socio-economic cost of the pandemic, and the attitude towards the vaccine rollout.

## **Data Capturing Methods For The Report**

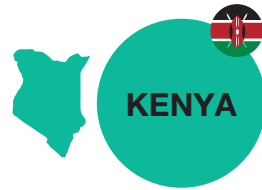
The 2021 SweepSouth Domestic Worker Survey was circulated by SMS and WhatsApp to domestic workers in Kenya and South Africa, some on the platform and some not. Our Nigerian survey was circulated through online targeting. The survey was sent to around 25 000 domestic workers in South Africa and the data was reverse-billed meaning that respondents did not require mobile data to complete the survey to promote wider access. The Kenyan survey was circulated to close to 600 domestic workers. The survey was completed online which would generally require the respondent to have access to a smartphone.

We received almost 7000 responses in South Africa. Close to 100 responses were collected in Kenya and Nigeria, but an important caveat to note is that the small sample size and requirement of a smartphone will mean that this provides a view of a relatively premium segment of the market. The analysis was restricted to respondents who worked as domestic workers in the last year (since May 2020). This makes our survey the largest and most detailed of its kind in Africa and offers the most comprehensive view to date of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on domestic workers across sub-Saharan Africa. Study time frame (4 May to 25 May 2021)

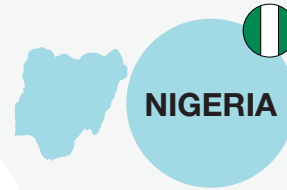
# Study Demographics



**SOUTH AFRICA**



**KENYA**



**NIGERIA**

**Median Age**

**39**

**29**

**32**

**Sample Size**

**>4000**

**~90**

**~50**

**% Male**

**5%**

**31%**

**0%**

**Nationality**

**41% SA  
55% Zim  
3% Other**

**100%  
Kenyan**

**100%  
Nigerian**



**SA regions  
breakdown**

**55%  
Gauteng**

**39%  
Western  
Cape**

**5%  
Kwa-Zulu  
Natal**

During our 2021 Domestic Worker Report, the majority of South African respondents to the survey were females between the age of 25 and 44 (79%); a consistent finding compared to previous years. We've also seen a slight increase in the number of male respondents in the same age bracket, compared to our 2020 SweepSouth Domestic Worker Annual Report. This year, there has also been a remarkable **increase in the number of Zimbabwean respondents**, which can be explained by the increase in respondents from Gauteng, many of whom are non-South African.

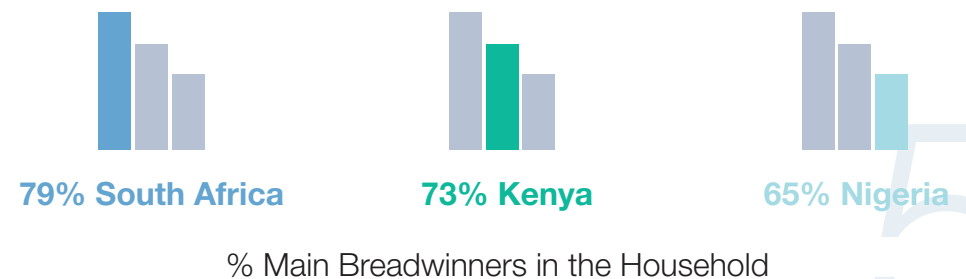
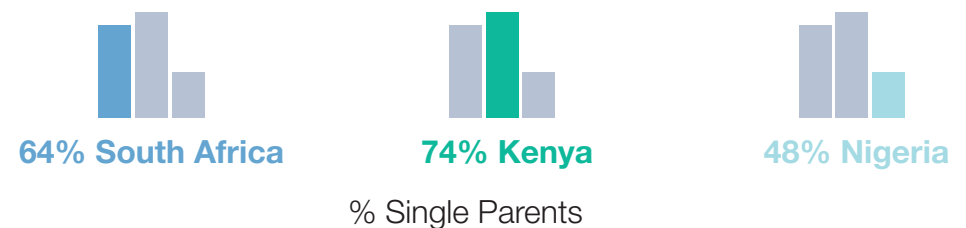
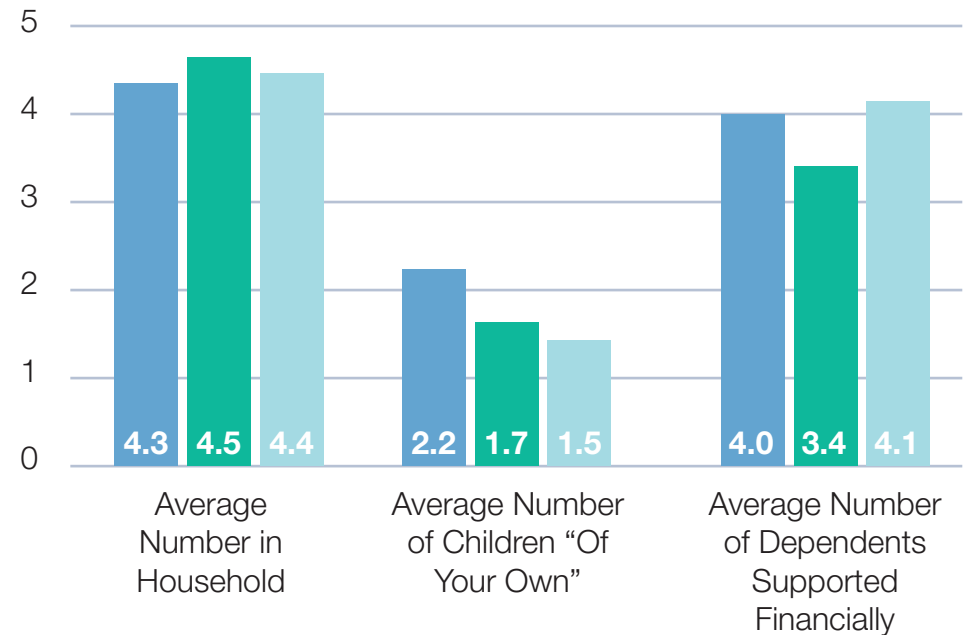
Interestingly, the respondents from Kenya and Nigeria were all nationals from their respective countries and significantly younger than their South African counterparts. More than a third of respondents from Kenya were male, which is unsurprising given that male domestic workers are more common in East Africa.

# Family Dynamics

In South Africa, we have seen the average number of financial dependents and main breadwinners decrease to 2019 levels.

**This is an encouraging sign of economic recovery.** We have also seen a decrease in the number of single parents, however, this may be explained by the question in this year's survey being rephrased to refer to 'single caregiver' households rather than 'single parents'. Across South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria, the household size was similar, with most domestic workers reporting that they are the main breadwinner in their household.

South Africans are likely to have more children of their own. This may be explained by the younger age of our Kenyan and Nigerian cohorts. Kenyan respondents reported a lower number of financial dependents, but the highest number of single-caregiver households. In contrast, Nigeria showed a similar number of financial dependents to South Africa but the lowest number of main breadwinners and single caregiver households.



# Employment Overview



The impact of COVID-19 on the **livelihoods of domestic workers has been significant**, with Kenya and Nigeria showing that about 2 in 5 domestic workers lost their job due to the pandemic vs 1 in 5 in South Africa. According to our latest survey, almost half of the households in South Africa and Nigeria have additional sources of income.

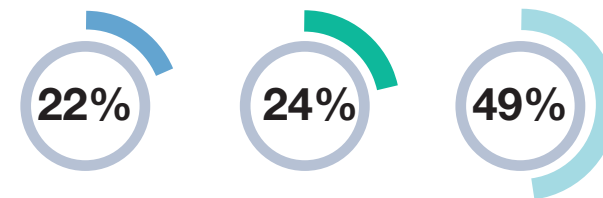
While almost all Kenyan and the vast majority of South African domestic workers reported that cleaning is their primary role, Nigerian domestic workers showed an even split between cleaning, cooking, and child-care with 1 in 2 reporting one of these additional responsibilities as part of their primary role. Kenya showed a much greater share of domestic workers whose roles include gardening, but this closely correlates in both South Africa and Kenya with the number of male respondents.



% Whose primary role includes cleaning



% Whose primary role includes child-care



% Whose primary role includes gardening



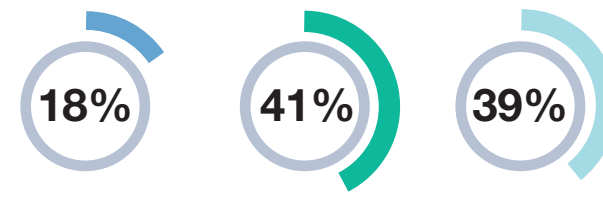
% Whose primary role includes elderly care



% Whose primary role includes cooking



% Who lost jobs due to COVID-19



% With additional sources of income



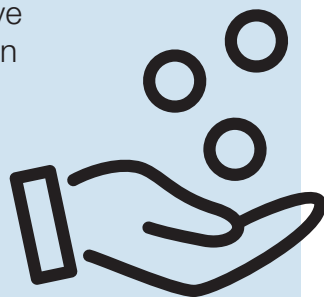


# Domestic Worker Earnings

**SweepStar average earnings have increased slightly** since our 2020 report, but have not yet recovered to 2019 levels. Domestic workers, who are not on the SweepSouth platform saw a decrease in their average earnings from last year, which falls below the minimum wage increase as of 1 March 2021. This may be as a result of increased income pressure on employers, as well as lower-paid domestic workers returning to work.

According to recent data, domestic worker earnings still fall far below a living wage. While SweepSouth has advocated for an improvement in pay for domestic workers across the board, we have been met by the challenge of a slow economy and a lack of willingness and/or the ability to pay more. This has meant that attempts to raise minimum pricing have often led to a decrease in average earnings. However, we have been more successful with introducing various additional ways for customers to voluntarily contribute more to their SweepStars.

The increases in the minimum wage for domestic workers over the past few years have contributed to an upward pressure in earnings. Continued increases matched with better enforcement hold the potential for significant improvement in domestic worker earnings in the years to come.



South Africa median earnings <sup>1</sup> ZAR/month	From COVID-19 2020 report	From 2019
SweepStars (currently a SweepStar)		
R3 470	R3 359	~R3 600
Not a SweepStar (currently working as a domestic worker)		
R2 730	R2 814	~R2 400
Not a SweepStar (ever, currently working as domestic worker)		
R2 614	-	-
Not a SweepStar (was a SweepStar, currently working as a domestic worker)		
R2 916	-	-
Minimum wage (R19.09 an hour, assume 160 hrs a month)		
R3 054	R2 740	R2 699

**Notes:** <sup>1</sup>Respondents asked for average 2021 monthly earnings from domestic work (including tips, transport money and any additional pay from employer)

# Domestic Worker Earnings

Domestic workers are among the lowest earners in most nations and often get minimal protection from legislation related to other workers. Kenya enforces a minimum wage for domestic workers but the respondents to our survey reported average earnings below this threshold, suggesting that better enforcement is needed.

In Nigeria, domestic worker wages are unregulated. In 2019, the national minimum wage in Nigeria was raised from NGN 18 000 to NGN 30 000. Based on the respondents to our survey, domestic workers in Nigeria also fall significantly below the latest legislated minimum wage for other workers.

## Median earnings<sup>1</sup> per month

Local Currency

**KSH 8,522**

**NGN 19,500**

ZAR Conversion

**R1,108**  
(1 KSH = 0.13 ZAR)

**R644**  
(1 NGN = 0.033 ZAR)

Minimum Wage

**KSH 13,573**

ZAR Conversion

**R1,764**  
(1 KSH = 0.13 ZAR)

**Domestic workers  
excluded from  
national minimum  
wage act**

**Notes:** <sup>1</sup>Respondents asked for average 2021 monthly earnings from domestic work (including tips, transport money and any additional pay from employer)

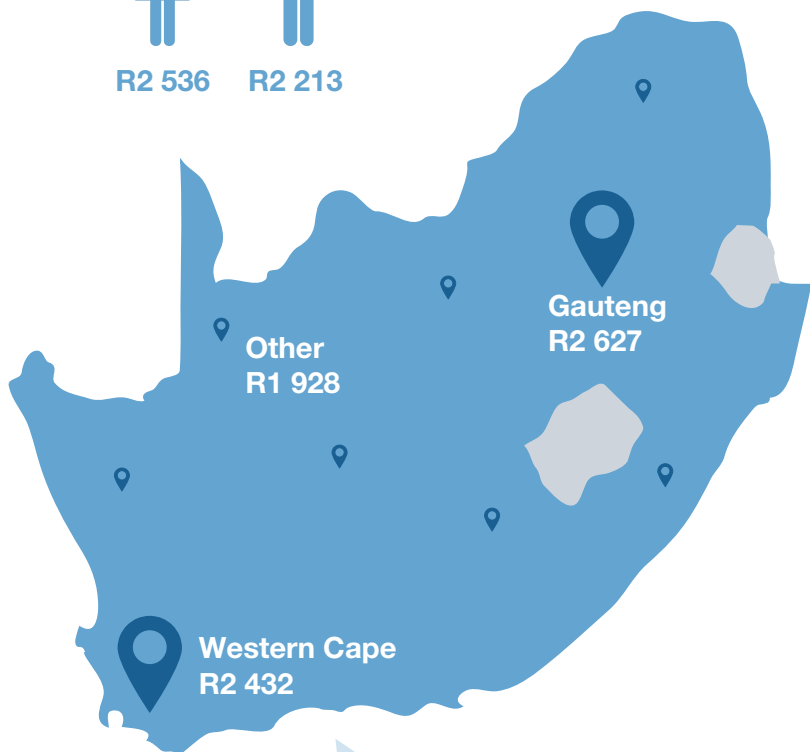
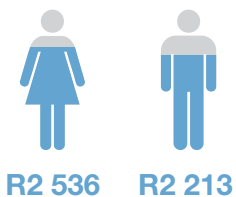




# Earnings Breakdown

**Notes:** <sup>1</sup>Respondents asked for average 2021 monthly earnings from domestic work (including tips, transport money and any additional pay from employer)

## Median domestic work earnings<sup>1</sup>



Earnings 8% higher in Gauteng vs Western Cape, and 27% higher than other provinces.

## Median domestic worker earnings<sup>1</sup>, included as primary role



Cleaning  
R2 507



Gardening  
R2 135



Child-Care  
R2 737



Elderly Care  
R2 618



Cooking  
R2 616

“ Child care is the most lucrative role, while gardening earns the lowest. This is consistent with male respondents reporting lower earnings. ”

## Median domestic worker earnings<sup>1</sup>, indicated number of primary roles



“ Most domestic workers have a single primary role, but the more primary roles they have, the greater their earnings. ”



# Cost of Living

The data shows that costs have decreased considerably in 2021, primarily driven by lower food costs and lower housing costs. This is likely caused by a reduction in the number of financial dependents in each household, and the ability of school children to receive meals at school once again.

However, it is important to note that the data shows a reduction in costs for the respondent themselves, which indicates that additional household members returning to work could help alleviate the burden (but not reduce overall living costs). Even more urgent is the fact that domestic workers and their households are sacrificing variable-cost items like food to stretch their earnings.

**Nutritional deprivation can have serious effects** on an individual's well-being and can have a long-term impact.

How much do you spend MONTHLY	Previous report 2019	Previous report 2020	2021	2021 vs 2020
Food	R1 100	R1667	R965	42% Decline
Data/airtime	R115	R74	R82	11% Increase
Rent or bond	R1 136	R1 525	R1 054	31% Decline
Transport	R445	R486	R481	1% Decline
Electricity	R279	R371	R308	17% Decline
<b>TOTAL excl. school fees</b>	<b>R3 075</b>	<b>R4 123</b>	<b>R2 890</b>	<b>30% Decline</b>
Monthly school fees	R62	R102	R136	33% Increase
<b>TOTAL incl. school fees</b>	<b>R3 137</b>	<b>R4 225</b>	<b>R3 026</b>	<b>28% Decline</b>

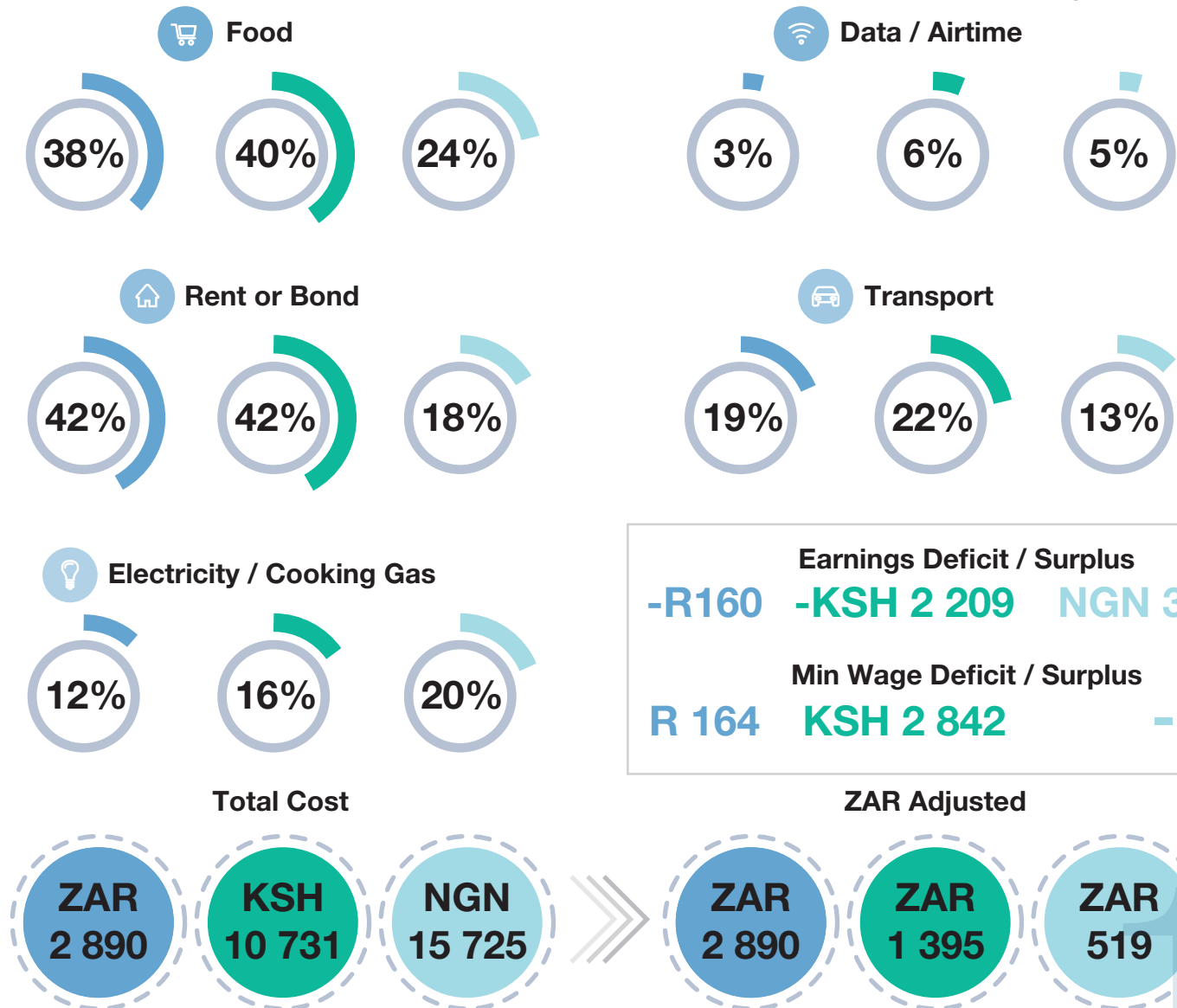


# Cost of Living

While SweepStars can generally cover their basic expenses, the same is not true for other South African domestic workers. Both Kenya and South Africa show a deficit when comparing earnings to basic costs. This means that workers in these regions will be forced to take on debt or reduce spending costs on vital items to make ends meet every month. Nigerian respondents could cover their basic costs, driven by the significantly lower expenditure on food and rent compared to South Africa. This is consistent with a larger portion of Nigerian respondents being 'live-in' workers, but it's also important to note that workers with the ability to access the survey in Nigeria are likely a premium segment of the market, and not indicative of the market as a whole.

It is very encouraging to see that the minimum wage in South Africa has caught up with covering basic costs. Similarly, the Kenyan minimum wage appears sufficient to cover basic costs, but the earnings deficit shows a need for greater enforcement.

## Median monthly costs as a % of median surveyed domestic work earnings

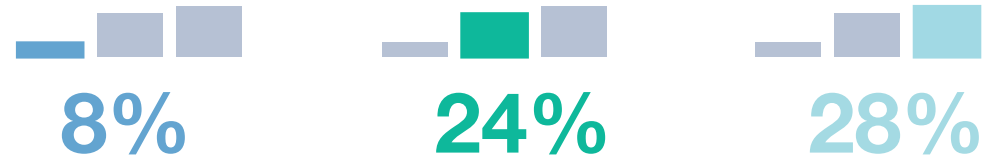


# Saving Habits & Financial Security

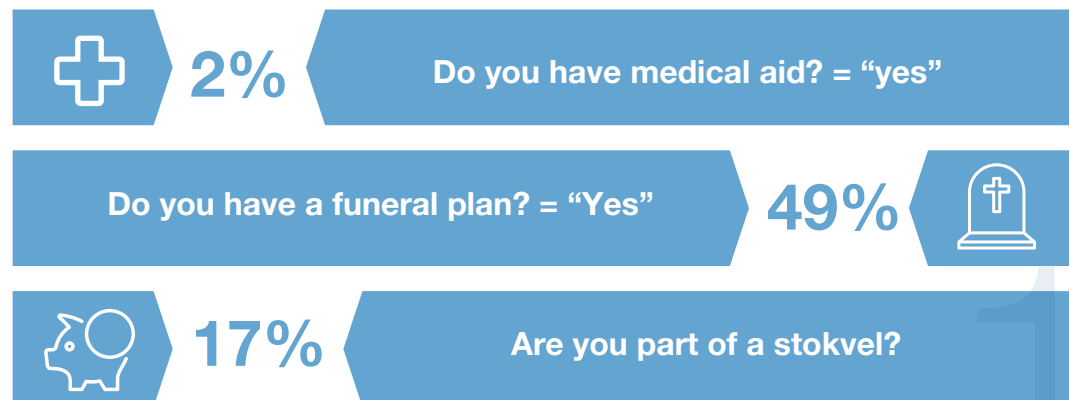
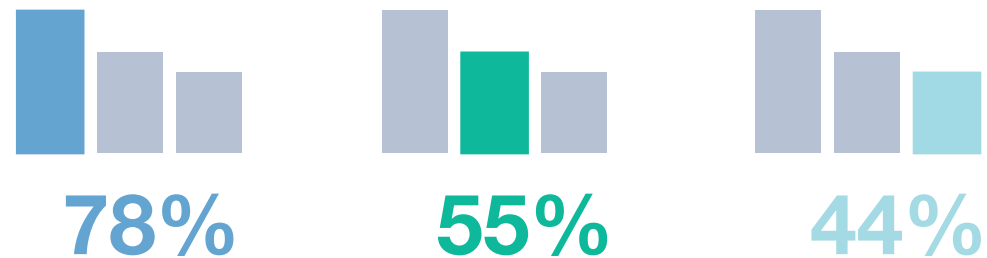
According to our data, almost 1 in 5 domestic workers in South Africa participate in a stokvel (rotating savings), however less than 1 in 10 reported having any personal savings or pension. This may be because respondents viewed savings as a longer-term exercise. The low savings rate is worrisome as this leaves households vulnerable to any financial shocks. In Kenya and Nigeria, 1 in 4 domestic workers reported having savings or a pension, which is concerning given the limited social security options available in both countries. Kenyan respondents participated in a SACCO (Kenyan equivalent of a stokvel) at roughly the same rate (15%) as South Africans (17%).

In South Africa, very few respondents reported having private medical aid or medical insurance and are therefore reliant upon government-provided healthcare for taking care of their physical and mental health, unless they can spare enough money in their budget to pay out of pocket for private healthcare.

## Have savings/pension?



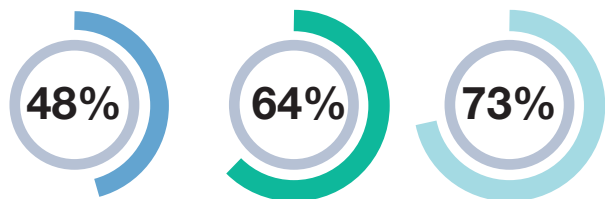
## Don't make enough money to be able to save.



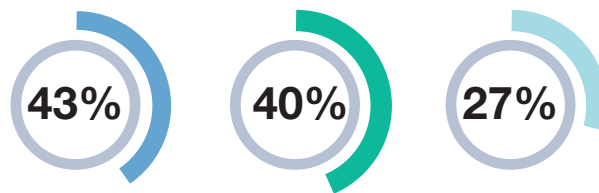
# Debt Levels & Repayment



Are you in debt = "Yes"



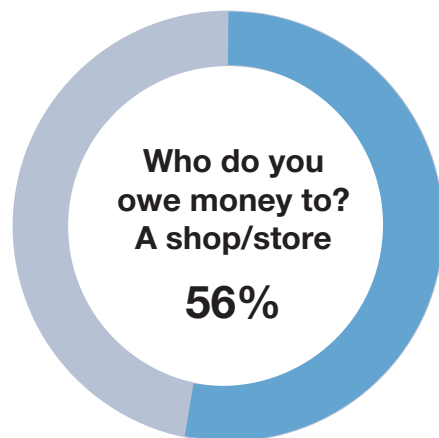
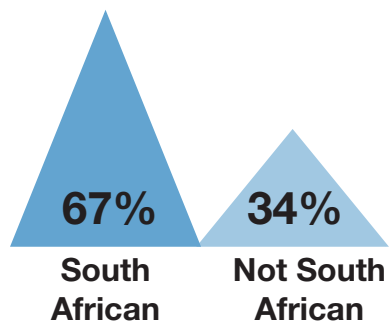
Feel hopeless about when they will be able to pay back their debt.



In all countries surveyed, debt levels were concerning. South African nationals showed similar levels of indebtedness to Kenyan and Nigerian respondents. This is likely due to a reduced ability for foreigners to access credit in South Africa. Despite their high level of indebtedness, about 1 in 4 Nigerians felt that their repayment situation was 'hopeless', compared to almost 1 in 2 in South Africa and Kenya.

SA Only

Are you in debt = "Yes"



Median owed debt amount (out of those who have debt)

**R3702**

More than half of South African respondents owe money to a shop or store, which shows the high level of easy credit and predatory lending practices in South Africa.

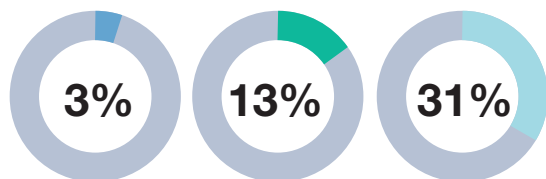
# Work Days & Commute Time



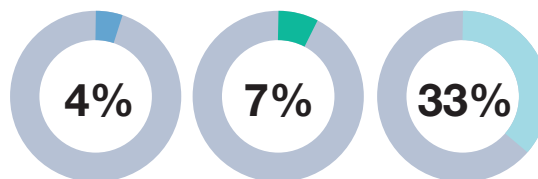
Median number of days worked



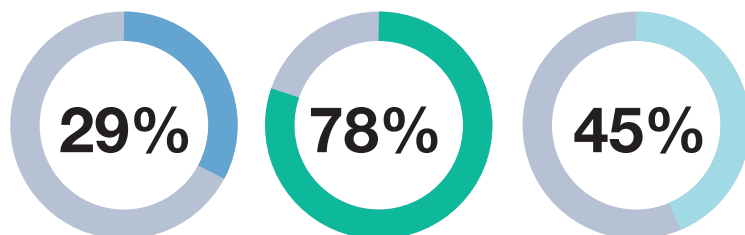
Work more than 10 hours a day



Work 7 days a week

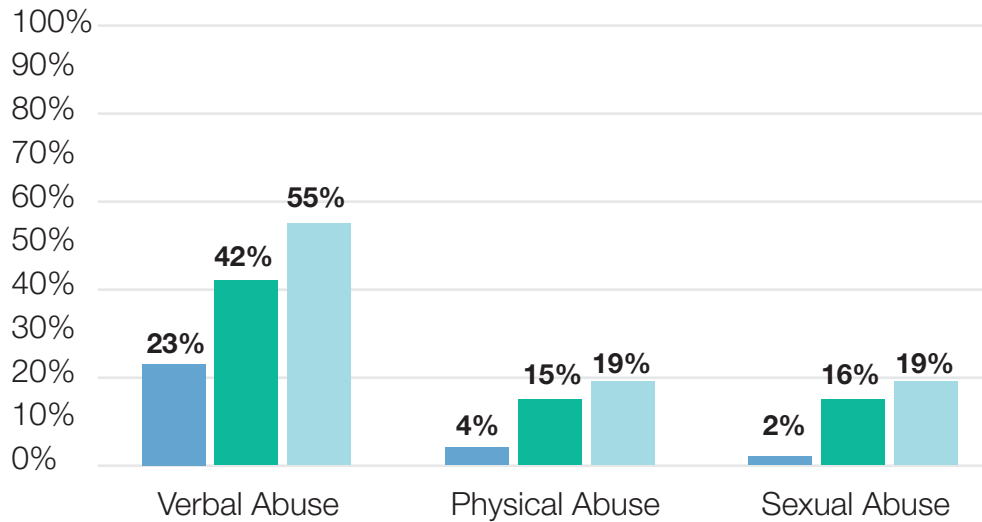


If travel to work, spend more than 1 hour travelling in 1 direction



The evidence collected shows a clear correlation between better employment protections for domestic workers and the work conditions for domestic workers. South Africa introduced extensive protections specific to domestic workers in 2002 and has ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 189 (C189), which lays down specific basic rights and principles that aim at achieving decent work for domestic workers. Kenya followed suit in 2007 by enacting better legislation to protect domestic workers but has not ratified ILO C189. While Nigeria does have legislation recognising paid domestic work, regulations are not as extensive as those in South Africa or Kenya.

# Abuse in the Workplace



Potentially because protected by better laws, SA domestic workers least likely to have experienced abuse in the workplace

### SA Only

#### % Responded "Yes", experienced...from an employer/client?

Abuse Type	SA nationality	Not SA nationality
Verbal Abuse	23.0%	25.1%
Physical Abuse	4.1%	7.7%
Sexual Abuse	1.7%	1.0%

Men more likely to have experienced verbal or physical abuse

Foreigners more likely to have experienced verbal or physical abuse

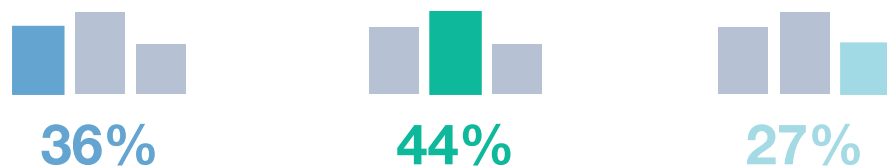
#### SA Nationality vs Not SA Nationality

Abuse Type	SA nationality	Not SA nationality
Verbal Abuse	21.3%	24.3%
Physical Abuse	3.6%	4.8%
Sexual Abuse	1.8%	1.7%

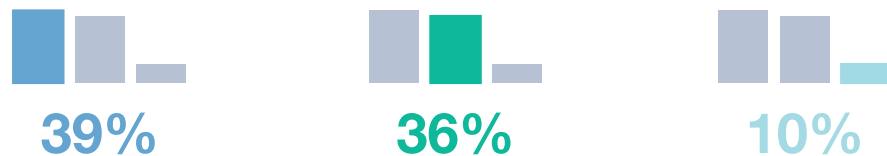
# Impact of COVID-19 & Vaccination



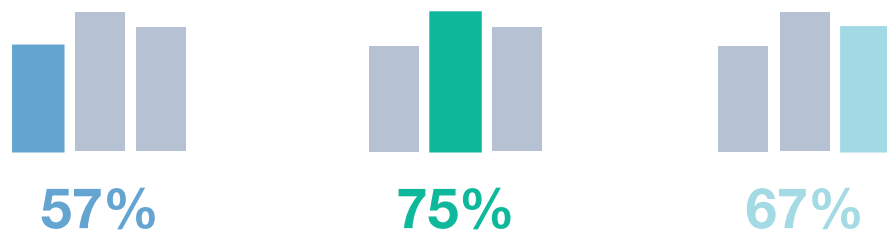
## Got tested for COVID-19 at some point



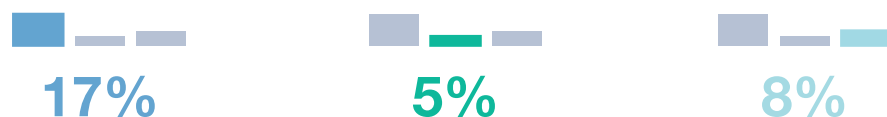
## Knows someone personally who passed from COVID-19



## Answered "Yes" or already vaccinated when asked if would want a vaccine



## Answered "No" when asked if would want a vaccine



Vaccine hesitancy is a concern across all the countries surveyed, with **South Africa showing the greatest hesitancy despite many experiencing the loss of someone they know to COVID-19** and comprehensive knowledge of COVID-19 shown in our 2020 annual survey. The ability to overcome the pandemic is largely predicated on the success of vaccination rollout efforts, so extensive effort should be made to combat misinformation and provide better vaccination education.

No significant differences were observed between male and female respondents regarding their experience of COVID-19 and vaccination hesitancy. The only significant difference was observed in South Africa, where non-South African respondents were 12 percentage points less likely to want to be vaccinated.





# Mental Health



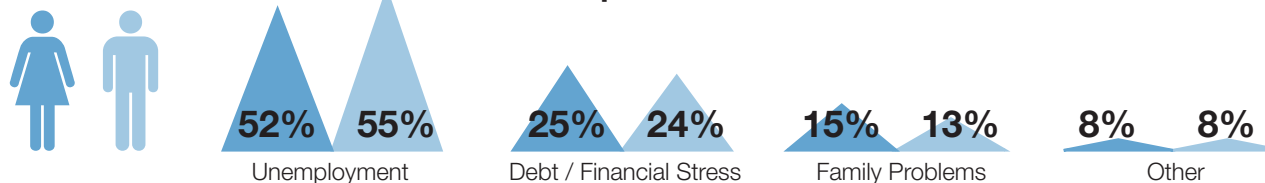
In our 2020 report, an alarming proportion of respondents reported that the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns harmed their mental health. In this year's report, we collaborated **with a mental health specialist to delve deeper into this topic.**

Among our respondents, 1 in 5 had their mental health negatively affected in the last year. The largest aggravator was unemployment and the largest source of 'comfort' or support was through church attendance or spending time with their religious community. The ability to access support through religious communities and family friends has been heavily impacted by lockdown regulations.

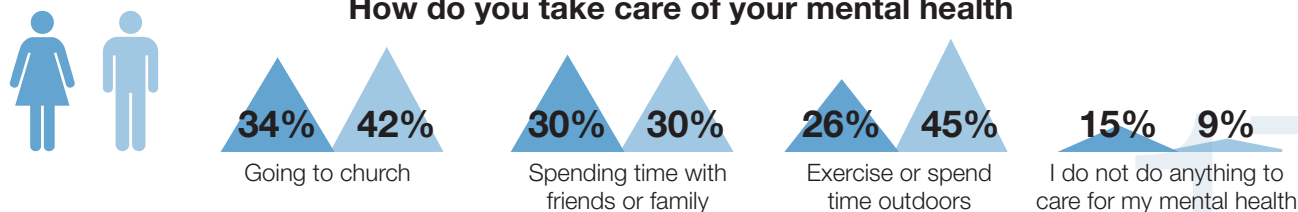
Another disturbing result is the inability of many women to care for their mental health. While men most frequently used exercise and time outdoors to care for their mental health, this was much less prevalent among women. This is likely impacted by the lack of safety in the communities where most domestic workers live and the fact that women typically have unpaid domestic responsibilities, such as caring for children and cooking, that they need to attend to when returning home from work.

	Female	Male
Has your mental health been negatively affected in the last year?	20.4%	20.6%
Of those who said mental health negatively affected, had mental health diagnosis	12.2%	10.8%
If had mental health diagnosis, diagnosis received = depression	72%	Sample size too small
If had mental health diagnosis, diagnosis received = anxiety	25%	

## "MOST" impact on mental health



## How do you take care of your mental health



**Notes:** The Mental Health section was not compulsory.

# Conclusion

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As we reflect on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us would have predicted that the worst would be behind us a year later. However, we continue to see job losses and economic hardship for domestic workers and even though some encouraging signs are evident in this year's report, the general outlook is still grim. As we enter the third wave, the protracted vaccine rollout and the threat of subsequent waves later in the year, there is still much cause for worry. We're not out of the woods yet.

When we conceived of this report, it was part of an effort to establish the status quo so we could measure the impact of civil society, government and the work of SweepSouth and other industry players working towards the improvement of domestic worker pay and conditions with each passing year. It has been tremendously difficult for us to see some trends stagnate and many reverse. Even some encouraging signs should be taken with a pinch of salt. Spending less does not mean that costs are necessarily decreasing, especially when this is at odds with inflation numbers. It strongly suggests a falling quality of life for domestic workers and their families.

Over the next year, we need to be careful how we measure our economic recovery. We need to separate the economic indicators which are influenced by the rich getting richer, and use indicators that translate into the increased quality of life of our most vulnerable citizens. This approach should allow us to not just restore the economy that was, but build a better, more inclusive future. This won't be an easy path to follow, but this last year has been a cause of substantial reflection for many of us about what truly matters in life and how precious time is. We cannot rely on others to make a change, when we are unwilling to do so ourselves.

## **So what are we doing to effect change at SweepSouth?**

- We have expanded our approach to not just working with individual domestic workers themselves, but have begun working with industry players to agree to a minimum set of work standards and benefits.
- We continue to take a data-driven approach to increase SweepStar earnings through raising minimum platform pricing, increasing the opportunities for customers to contribute more, and continuously encouraging them to do so.
- We have launched a rewards programme for SweepStars to leverage our relationships with other brands to help reduce their cost of living. Additionally, we are working on expanding this programme to domestic workers outside of the SweepSouth platform.

- We launched the SweepSouth Foundation, an ongoing initiative to raise funds for domestic workers and help better their lives.
- We continue to engage with governments across Africa to help inform regulations around platforms similar to ourselves, and to motivate for greater pay and social protection for platform workers, and domestic workers in particular.
- We continue to provide education to domestic workers, helping them leverage technology for their benefit and similarly, we use initiatives such as this report to educate the general public about the lived experiences of domestic workers.

## **So what can you as a domestic worker-employer do to effect change?**

- One of the most important things you can do is aim to pay your domestic worker a living wage. You can measure how you are doing in terms of pay by using tools like the Living Wage Calculator.
- Ensure you are treating your domestic worker in the same way you would like to be treated. Be sensitive to not just their physical health needs, but their mental health needs as well. Also recognising that many domestic workers are caregivers who shoulder the responsibilities and challenges this brings about.
- Results from other surveys show that domestic workers most appreciate gifts of food from their employer. Due to an inability to bulk buy, limited transport options and lack of refrigeration capacity, buying food is more expensive for your domestic worker than it is for you. So where you can, if buying the bulk pack is just a little more expensive, get extra and share it with your domestic worker. It will go a long way to easing the cost burden on their family and also help to improve nutrition.
- Change begins at home, and the minds you can most easily change are those of your family and friends. Discuss domestic worker pay with them. Share the insights in this report with them.
- Get involved in your community around campaigns to help more economically vulnerable communities. This can be through community outreach groups you are part of or at your children's school, perhaps work within your faith-based community to partner with a similar community in a disadvantaged area. Be an agent of change on social media, adding your voice to topics about domestic workers in your neighborhood Facebook or WhatsApp groups.

# Key Recommendations

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## 1. Enforcement of existing legislation

While South Africa and Kenya have minimum wage legislation protecting domestic workers, the report indicates that this is often not adhered to. Without better implementation and enforcement, domestic workers will not see much benefit. Work in private homes is difficult to regulate so we encourage the development of more creative solutions.

Governments should work with tech partners to make registration quick and easy for employers and employees. Once that is complete, governments should look at a set of incentives for compliance, such as tax incentives and easy sign-up stations at locations easily accessible to domestic workers and their employers.

## 2. Expansion and review of legal protections

Our Nigerian respondents reported earnings of around half the legislated minimum wage for other workers but are currently excluded from an enforced minimum wage. Protections go far beyond just minimum wage and, while South African and Kenya do have expanded protections for domestic workers, these are often poorly enforced and many workers are not registered.

We also see the need for protections to evolve with the nature of domestic work. Domestic work is often occasional and for many different employers. This often disqualifies domestic workers from legislation intended to protect them or introduces a complex administrative burden. Legislation needs to evolve beyond the basic assumption of one employee, one employer on a high repeat basis and seek to better match the nature of domestic work in order for workers to enjoy expanded protections.

## 3. Improved access to mental health

Consistent with last year's report, we can see the significant burden the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the mental health of domestic workers and their families. While access to quality mental health care has historically been difficult to access, the increase in disease burden over the last year will likely mean that very few will be able to access the care that they need.

Our results show how much domestic workers rely on their faith-based community and spending time with friends and family for mental health support. Lockdown regulations limited access to this significantly. We also see spending time outdoors or exercising as a significant avenue for men to care for their mental health, but not for women. Furthermore, many women reported that they could not care for their mental health at all.

Based on these results, we would recommend training programmes for religious leaders on how to provide care for the mental health of their congregation. Furthermore, we believe that safety has a significant impact on women accessing the outdoors to care for their mental health. Through a combined effort of community safety and recreation programmes, the creation of safe spaces for women to exercise and spend time outdoors should be a priority.

## 4. Vaccine education

In order to reach herd immunity for COVID-19, it is estimated that at least 70% of the population needs to be vaccinated. This will not be possible if vaccine hesitancy rates are as high as reported, particularly in South Africa. The best answer on how to end this pandemic and restore livelihoods is in the rapid and widespread vaccination of each country's population. We are already challenged through the disproportionate allocation of vaccines to developing economies and the logistics associated with their provision, we cannot add an unwilling population to that mix.

Governments need to work with faith-based communities, educational institutions and civil society to educate the populace as to the nature of the COVID-19 vaccine, its safety and its efficacy. This should be paired with education dispelling the myths around vaccination and impose strong penalties on those spreading false information.

# Contact Information

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