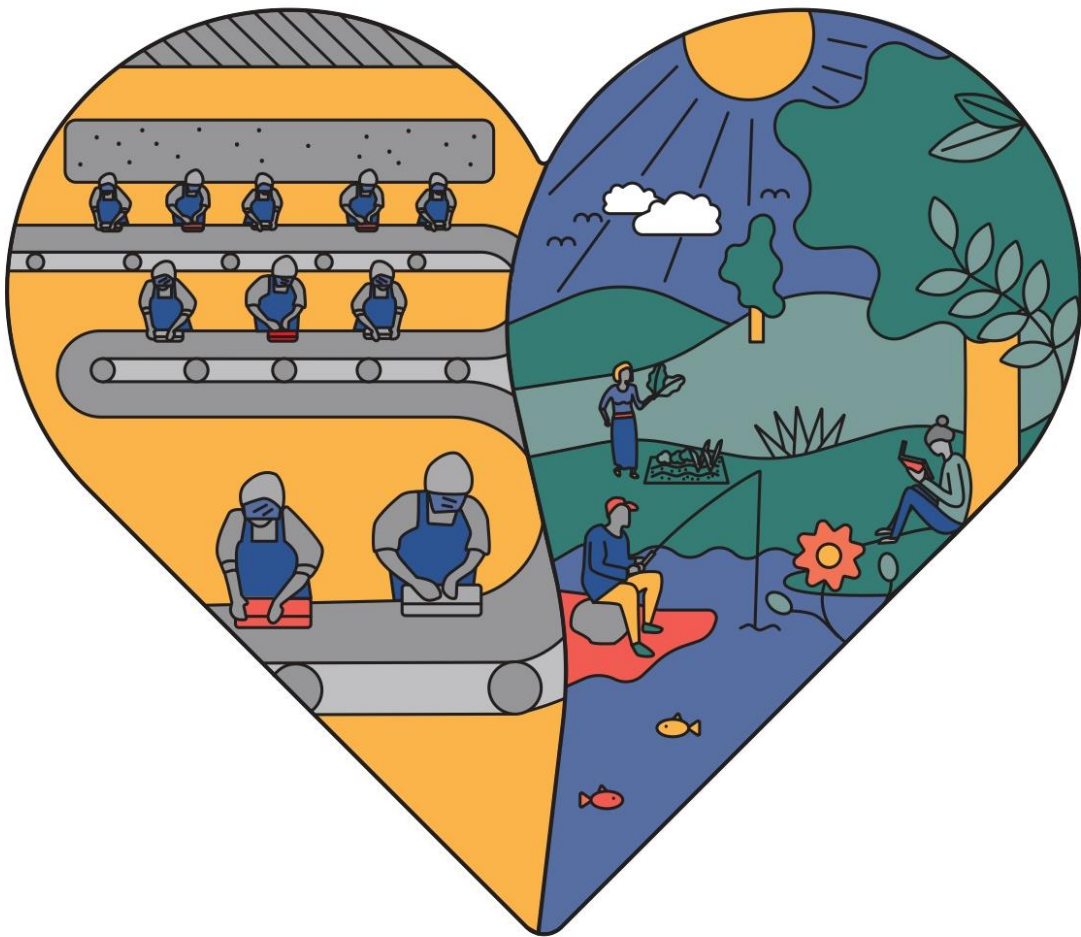


THE CLIMATE JUSTICE
CHARTER ALTERNATIVES

ENJOY LIFE THROUGH
WORKING LESS



Enjoy Life through Working Less

Work for everyone as the means to survive and earn income is no longer possible.

Unemployment, low paying jobs and long working hours harm society. In a heating world, working hours must be reduced, at least to a four-day week. Decent, zero carbon climate jobs must be guaranteed and supported by collective, values-based and eco-centric approaches to production, consumption, financing and ways of living through the solidarity economy. Such an economy is based on needs and democratises economic power. Together with a universal basic income grant system (UBIG) complementing existing public goods, all workers can be protected in the transition required and society more generally will have a cushion. The UBIG will generally promote human cultural flourishing in a post work society.

South African context:

South Africa is experiencing a crisis of socioecological reproduction. A cost-of-living crisis has been exacerbated by geopolitical competition resulting in spikes in oil and food prices. Neoliberal reasoning has intensified surplus value extraction through the contraction of welfare regimes, deindustrialisation, precarious labour market regimes, and low unit-labour cost manufacturing in China and much of the Global South. This promotes universal commodification including the enhanced commodification of nature. The multiple crises we face today – climate shocks, ecological breakdown, hunger, water deprivation, wealth and income inequality, unemployment and accompanying social ills of gender-based violence and violent crime – decrease the ability of society’s vulnerable populations to reproduce their way of life whilst equally diminishing the regeneration of ecological systems.¹

The effects of these crises are also unevenly distributed. Post-apartheid South Africa’s globalised economy is a regime of class-based exclusion. 10 percent of income earners have 65 per cent of the household income, and 10 percent own about 71 percent of wealth. The pressures of capitalism are embedded in paid work. A poor and precarious African, Coloured, Indian and White working class (urban and rural), have and are the current shock absorbers of an economy serving the interests of a minority. In addition to this, it is often rural and working-class women who carry the greatest burden of these crises as the labour of social reproduction and care is often carried out by them.

According to StatsSA, the South African labour market is the largest contributor to income inequality as it remains highly racialized and gender biased (Statistics SA, 2020). Female workers typically earn 30% less than their male co-workers and Black Africans earn the lowest wages in comparison to other groups - R6 899 compared to Coloured/Indian citizens R9 339/R14 235 respectfully and White citizens who earn three times as much at R24 646 (Statistics SA, 2020). The ANC government’s policy of promoting a Black middle class has resulted in less of a marked focus on wealth redistribution and thus the inequalities have only deepened further since the democratic transition.² Precariatisation has also taken place in South Africa’s labour market with about 30 million earning wages below the upper bounded poverty line (R1417), meaning that many of those living in poverty come from wage-earning households.³

¹ Climate Justice Charter Movement, ‘#UBIG Policy Approach and Proposals’ (Climate Justice Charter Movement, February 2021).

² Hein Marais, *In the Balance: The Case for a Universal Basic Income in South Africa and Beyond* (Wits University Press, 2022).

³ Marais, *In the Balance: The Case for a Universal Basic Income in South Africa and Beyond*.

Inequality within the workforce is compounded by inequality between those inside and outside the workforce. Structural unemployment persists in South Africa. Its narrowly defined unemployment rate, as of 2022, is at 33.9% and the expanded unemployment rate is at 45.5%, making it amongst the highest in the world. Roughly 60% of unemployed South Africans are long term unemployed.⁴ There are now 12.4 million people unemployed, many of which are young people. In South Africa, securing formal employment is strongly linked to escaping poverty, whereas the loss of this form of employment often sends one into poverty.⁵ Unemployment coupled with low wages have become major drivers of poverty.

The quality of work is also an issue of concern. The current conditions of paid work in South Africa have undermined the quality of life for many people.⁶ Mental health pressures and burnout have increased. Gender inequality still remains a challenge. There are also environmental implications with working. Commutes to work add to carbon emissions, exacerbated by South Africa's lack of eco-mobility options. While South Africa contributes 1.49% of total global CO2 emissions, its per capita emissions are 9.18, even higher than China (5.83), Brazil (2.11) and India (1.38). Despite government commitments in UN multi-lateral processes to bring down carbon emissions, it is still the 12th highest emitter of carbon in the world and the highest in Africa, responsible for 40% of emissions. Work in South Africa contributes to the worsening climate crisis and climate extreme feedback loops such as floods, droughts, heatwaves and cyclones. The changes brought on by climate shocks will bring with them an unpredictability which will only serve to further weaken the efficacy of reactive social and economic policies. The ability of vulnerable communities to create the basic means of a dignified life for themselves will be diminished even further.

The conditions of the paid work in South Africa demonstrate that paid work is an unattainable basis for a dignified life.⁷ Despite this, South Africa has still experienced period of growth in its economy. It has done this without the contributions of 40% of the working-age population, and by paying a sizable portion of employed workers wages so low that they require state assistance in the form of subsidies and support from their families to survive.⁸ According to Marais, this suggests that South Africa, on some level, can already be considered a post-work society.

However, the country's social and economic policies continue to centre around the notion that wage work is the foundation for material wellbeing and social inclusion, even though it has been unavailable for many people. The majority of working adults generate livelihoods by balancing a number of short-term employment opportunities and this has occurred continuously for decades with very little change in this pattern. This calls into question the primacy and central role of wage work in social and economic policies and necessitates a rethinking of work to address the crisis of socio-ecological production that South Africa faces.

Instead of the exclusionary and precarious post-work society that de facto exists today and perpetuates inequality and environmental unsustainability, a reality of enjoying life through working less envisions a post-work society that centres human flourishing and eco-centric principles. This policy framework rethinks work to reduce and reorganise it, and introduces complimentary policies that place the needs and inclusion of people at the heart of work-related social and economic policies.

⁴ Marais, *In the Balance: The Case for a Universal Basic Income in South Africa and Beyond*.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Frank Pega et al., 'Global, Regional, and National Burdens of Ischemic Heart Disease and Stroke Attributable to Exposure to Long Working Hours for 194 Countries, 2000–2016: A Systematic Analysis from the WHO/ILO Joint Estimates of the Work-Related Burden of Disease and Injury', *Environment International* 154 (1 September 2021): 106595, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envint.2021.106595>. Inés Berniell and Jan Bietenbeck, 'The Effect of Working Hours on Health', *Economics & Human Biology* 39 (1 December 2020): 100901, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ehb.2020.100901>.

⁷ Marais, *In the Balance: The Case for a Universal Basic Income in South Africa and Beyond*.

⁸ Ibid.

The future of work:

Work and working time has been fiercely contested and taken many different forms throughout history through influences from technological development, social struggle, and changing cultural values.⁹

One account of the workweek argues that the current working time is a reduced version of its past counterpart in a history where primitive societies lived in a constant struggle for subsistence against a harsh Nature. This has served the argument that capitalism has reduced struggle and working hours. However, anthropological studies have found that the work to leisure ratios were less disproportionate than those above accounts, and that there was more time for leisure and sleeping in a more slow-paced and relaxed work life. The combined time spent on subsistence and reproductive activities – hunting and gathering, production and maintenance of tools and housing, domestic tasks, and childcare – fell in the range of current work week times in most industrialised societies. Work as an activity worthy of remuneration was absent from pre-industrial societies. Cultural views in various pre-industrial societies, particularly those of primitive societies and pastoral nomadic communities tended towards viewing work as a curse rather than virtue, and some of these views were embedded in cosmologies of abundance. Additionally, the reaction to changes and improvements in technology were of work-saving rather than product expanding.¹⁰

The competing accounts of the history of work are provided to denaturalise working time and the workweek and demonstrate that a four-day work week is a feasible concept that is subject to political will and cultural values. The four-day week is not a new phenomenon. Theorists and politicians anticipating reduced working time as work productivity increased.¹¹ In the political and theoretical conversations of reduced working time, there are two main visions: **Liberation from work** and **liberation through work**.¹²

- Liberation from work focuses on expanding leisure time for creativity, self-production, and engagement with the community and public life. In doing so, one of its end goals is the displacement of work from the centre of social projects and envisions an “end of work” through the automation of hard, menial, unpleasant tasks. Ideas can be traced back to Aristotle’s work, and present utopian folk traditions that go back as far as the 12th century.¹³
- Liberation through work focuses on transforming work into meaningful, creative, and pleasurable activities by reducing the division of labour, diversifying tasks, and organising work collectively through associated producers.¹⁴

From an ecological economics perspective these visions of work, based on ecological and technological limits, raise important points for consideration. The issue with pursuing liberation from work is that material and energy requirements may make it ecologically unfeasible, and current norms and values around work may see it as undesirable.¹⁵ For liberation through work, the contention is that “not all work can realistically be transformed into attractive and pleasurable activities...a significant portion of work will remain tedious, alienating, or unpleasant, yet fundamental for societal reproduction”.¹⁶ The argument in ecological economics is that some work is intrinsic to the human condition because of its

⁹ Erik Gomez-Baggethun, ‘Rethinking Work for a Just and Sustainable Future’, *Ecological Economics* 200 (1 October 2022): 107506, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2022.107506>.

¹⁰ Gomez-Baggethun, ‘Rethinking Work for a Just and Sustainable Future’.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ See Lafargue (1883/2020), Bellamy (1888/2013), Russell (1935), Arendt (1958/1998), Gorz (1988), and Frayne (2015).

¹⁴ See Fourier (1901), Marx (1844), Morris (1980; 2002), and Foster (2017).

¹⁵ Gomez-Baggethun, ‘Rethinking Work for a Just and Sustainable Future’.

¹⁶ Ibid.

role in securing societal reproduction.¹⁷ However, it is also unsustainable to maintain the current nature of work. Given this view, sufficiency and fair distribution should be regarded as the central organising principles for the future of work, which translates to “the egalitarian distribution of minimal necessary work [for social production]”¹⁸. After this, “individuals having contributed their fair share shall decide freely whether they search for meaning, purpose, and self-realization through work, leisure, or both”.¹⁹ On the one hand, this reduces the risk of reproducing the cult of work that is present in work-centred societies, because it gives individuals the agency to decide how to make use of their time. On the other hand, the notion of “necessary work” may be in tension with an unconditional basic income, as the distribution of collective responsibilities required in the former can conflict with the emphasis on individual agency and rights afforded in the latter.²⁰

Ultimately, these broad visions of the future of work, and the key considerations they raise, should factor into the South African vision of enjoying life through working less. The current conditions of South Africa demonstrate the need for a paradigm shift away from a work-centred society and a strategy based on the vision of liberation from work that takes leisure seriously as a policy. The potential tensions that these strategies may have with “necessary work” and UBI can be addressed if these strategies are supported by collective, values-based and eco-centric approaches to production, consumption, financing and ways of living through the solidarity economy. This can be achieved through using the four-day week, UBI, and climate jobs in ways that unleash each other’s potentials and work as a coherent set of policies.

Reducing work for socioecological transformation: The case for a 4-day work week

The four-day week operationalises liberation from work. A reduced work week is a reduction of the total number of working hours in a week. In current popular understandings, it means a reduction of the work week from five days to four days, without a reduction in remuneration. The social benefits include less stress on employees and more time for activities outside work.²¹ This can reduce burnout and improve physical and mental health. More time for is available for the self, the family, and the community. In some cases, it has been economically beneficial as there are no drops in productivity and, if accompanied by increased hiring, creates the additional benefit of reducing unemployment. A reduced workweek also contributes to decarbonising the workplace by reducing the amount of energy spent on commuting.²² Environmental effects also occur in households and communities as people dedicate more time to low carbon household activities.²³

The COVID 19 pandemic and rising work stress and burnout have shifted cultural expectations around work. In the US, the media have called it ‘The Great Resignation’, whereby growing dissatisfaction and

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Erik Gómez-Baggethun, ‘Work and Needs in a Finite Planet: Reflections from Ecological Economics’, in *The Barcelona School of Ecological Economics and Political Ecology: A Companion in Honour of Joan Martinez-Alier*, ed. Sergio Villamayor-Tomas and Roldan Muradian (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2023), 357–66, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-22566-6_31.

¹⁹ Gomez-Baggethun, ‘Rethinking Work for a Just and Sustainable Future’

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ JB Schor et al., ‘The Four Day Week—Assessing Global Trials of Reduced Work Time with No Reduction in Pay’, *Auckland, NZ*, 2022.

²² Kyle W Knight, Eugene A Rosa, and Juliet B Schor, ‘Could Working Less Reduce Pressures on the Environment? A Cross-National Panel Analysis of OECD Countries, 1970–2007’, *Global Environmental Change* 23, no. 4 (2013): 691–700. Jared B Fitzgerald, Juliet B Schor, and Andrew K Jorgenson, ‘Working Hours and Carbon Dioxide Emissions in the United States, 2007–2013’, *Social Forces* 96, no. 4 (2018): 1851–74.

²³ Anders Fremstad, Mark Paul, and Anthony Underwood, ‘Work Hours and CO2 Emissions: Evidence from US Households’, *Review of Political Economy* 31, no. 1 (2019): 42–59.

changing ambitions in work marked an exit of 25 million people from their current jobs.²⁴ In China, the *Tang Ping* (Lying Flat) movement developed in response to societal pressures around overworking. Digitalisation and technological improvements in communication technologies have been argued to encroach in leisure time and the performance of unpaid tasks that were previously compensated for.²⁵ The dissatisfaction of a work-centred life, growing income inequalities, and increasing need for greater climate action to address ongoing environmental destruction have generated momentum for reducing work. This supports the policy of a four-day week and is evident in the growing number of places that have implemented some kind of reduced working time policy or explored its feasibility in pilot projects.

The idea has faced pushback with claims that reductions in working time would not be feasible, owing to the need to support welfare states and aging populations.²⁶ Disruptions in the labour market driven by automation and outsourcing have created supporters of more work through state-lead job creation. A business case of reduced market competition has also been used to challenge the four-day week. Recently, sustainability considerations have also been cited against the reduction of working time on the basis that declines in fossil-fuel supported productivity would require an increase in work to offset this. However, these arguments see the four-day week in isolation. Many of these concerns can be addressed with complementary governance strategies that emphasise socio-ecological values and solidarity economies. This would see four-day work week working in tandem with other policies to produce the institutional convergence needed to realise a deep just transition. Related to the above pushback, UBI offers an overall cushioning for society which accounts for potential disruptions related to automation and sustainability, and addresses the income concerns fuelling calls for job creation. Financing through the paying of ecological debt, food sovereignty, the water commons, and holistic care can provide support under welfare states.

Some of the concerns should be challenged for the ways they contribute to reinforcing the primacy of work and work conditions that feed the socio-ecological crisis. Gomez-Baggethun explores the lack of faith in the feasibility of major work time reductions in Western capitalist societies in a time of unprecedented work-saving tech and finds that cultural values and beliefs regarding work are a stronger barrier for work-time reductions rather than technical and economic viability.²⁷ This can be traced back to the hegemonic vision of industrial capitalism, which has propped up, and is supported by, a work-centred belief system.²⁸ The sustainability and business cases that oppose a reduced work week are premised on maintaining current unsustainable levels of production and consumption in aid of hegemonic capitalism, which strategies related to Zero Waste and Simple Living challenge and address.

Even without using complementary systemic alternatives to address the challenges to implementing a four-day week, the policy has gained popularity in various parts of the world and continues to find traction (see table below). However, the current campaigns around the four-day week are usually promoted as workplace improvement strategies which overlooks the leisure growing potentials of this strategy.²⁹ The results of pilot projects have generally been positive in relation to its impacts on the workplace, health, and social relationships. The impacts of the policy on gender equality and the climate are more modest and sometimes inconclusive, owing to the short-term nature of the projects and limited data, respectively.

²⁴ Noreen Malone, 'The Age of Anti-Ambition', *The New York Times*, 15 February 2022, sec. Magazine, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/15/magazine/anti-ambition-age.html>.

²⁵ Gomez-Baggethun, 'Rethinking Work for a Just and Sustainable Future'.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Claus Offe and P Van Parijs, 'A Non-Productivist Design for Social Policies', *Basic Income: An Anthology of Contemporary Research*, Chichester: Wiley, 2013, 275–82.

²⁹ A.J. Veal, 'The 4-Day Work-Week: The New Leisure Society?', *Leisure Studies* 42, no. 2 (4 March 2023): 172–87, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2022.2094997>.

Reduced Working Time Around the World (Pilot programs):

Cases	Impacts				
	Workplace	Health	Social relationships (including impacts on gender equality)	Environment	Long-term impacts
<p>Iceland (2015-2019)³⁰ Public sector initiative: (Reykjavik City Council and Icelandic national government)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ~2500 people participating, 1% of the population (largest trial at the time). • Implemented in workplaces, schools, social service providers and hospitals. • Reduced working week of 35-36 hours with no reduction in pay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved work-life balance • Stable or higher productivity alongside revenue neutrality. • Increased satisfaction with work hours (less inclined than control group to work an additional part-time job and less inclined to refuse to work overtime). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases in “wellbeing” (work satisfaction, motivation from others, feeling well at work) in offices, schools, and outdoor jobs but no increase or decrease in other workplaces. • Less stress • More physical energy • Increase in positive feelings at work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less work-family conflict. • Increased time with family. • Increased balance in work-household responsibilities. <p>Gender equality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased male participation in heterosexual relationships in home duties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not within scope of study. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 86% of Iceland’s working population are on contracts that either have shorter working hours or give them the right to do so. • Work week reductions of 35-65 minutes a week. • Government hired more staff where reduced hours were not possible (healthcare).
<p>Sweden³¹ (2005-2006) Public sector initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6-hour work day, same pay. • Public organisations in social services, technology, care, and telecall, but study only covers social services sector. • 204 social workers, managers and social work assistants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants in the experiment group signed legal documents agreeing not to engage in other paid work outside of office hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced stress. • Positive impacts on memory difficulties, negative emotions, sleepiness. • Increased restorative sleep. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less work intrusion on private life. • No change in coworker support with reduced hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not within scope of the study: Main aim was to examine effects of reduced working hours on stress. 	

³⁰ Guðmundur D. Haraldsson and Jack Kellam, ‘Going Public: Iceland’s Journey to a Shorter Working Week’ (Alda and Autonomy, June 2021), https://autonomy.work/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/ICELAND_4DW.pdf.

³¹ Peter Barck-Holst et al., ‘Reduced Working Hours and Stress in the Swedish Social Services: A Longitudinal Study’, *International Social Work* 60, no. 4 (1 July 2017): 897–913, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872815580045>.

<p>Finland³² (1996-1998) Ministry of Social Affairs and Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various approaches to reduce working week to 30 hours. • Wage reductions, partially compensated. • Municipal services and service work. • 1320 employees in 20 municipalities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased work efficiency. • Increased availability of services. • Increased employment of younger people. • Number of employees that registered increase in household income (relative to unemployment benefit) increased. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased job exhaustion. • Decreased feelings of burnout. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income of permanent employees were higher than new employees from the compensation for the hour reductions. • Feelings of inequality between permanent employees and newly hired employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not within scope of the study: Exploration of work-sharing strategy to address exhaustion of existing staff and unemployment of educated young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only small portion of long-term unemployed were able to be employed and keep their employment.
<p>4DW Global Pilot Coordinated Pilot (2022)³³ US (40%), Australia (21%), Ireland (18%), UK (12%), New Zealand (5%), Canada (2%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6-month trial. • 33 companies • 29/33 switched to a four day week. 4 companies had a 5 day week with reduced hours. • Not all reduced to 32 hours. • 27/33 companies completed surveys to capture their sentiments after the pilot. • Companies mainly from admin, IT, telecoms, professional services, and nonprofits. Some companies in healthcare, food, retail, construction, manufacturing. • Large number of small companies (10 or less). • Opt-in approach.³⁴ 	<p>Company perspectives: <i>0 = very negative, 10 = very positive</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avg rating for the trial: 9.0. • Overall impact on productivity: 7.7. • Overall impact on company performance: 7.6. <p>Employee perspectives: <i>0 = very negative, 10 = very positive</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avg experience: 9.1. • 96.9 percent want to continue. • Increased job satisfaction. • Slight increase in work intensity and pace of work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased work stress. • Decline in fatigue. • Decline in insomnia and general sleep problems. • Decline in burnout. • Improved mental health. • Improved physical health. • Decreased feelings of negative emotions (downhearted, lonely, tense) • Increased feelings of positive emotions (cheerful, interested). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased work-life balance. • Increased balance in work-care responsibilities. • Decreased work-life conflict. • Increased overall satisfaction with life. • Increased overall satisfaction with relationships. • Increased overall satisfaction with time available to “do the things you like doing”. Most time spent on leisure. <p>Gender equality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change in time spent on care work. • No change in household division of labour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased time spent commuting. • Decreased commuting by car. • Slight increase in pro-environmental behaviour (recycling, walking and cycling rather than driving) • No change in volunteering for environmental causes or sharing environmental information. 	<p>Long-term policy of reduced work week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 continuing. • 7 planning to continue. • 2 not yet sure. • None are leaning against or not planning on continuing.

³² Jouko Nätti and Timo Anttila, ‘Experiments of Reduced Working Hours in Finnish Municipalities’, *Journal of Human Resource Costing & Accounting* 4, no. 2 (1999): 45–61.

³³ 4 Day Week Global, ‘A Global Overview of the 4 Day Week’, February 2023.

<p>US, Canada, the UK and Ireland³⁵</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds on 4DW Global's Pilot (see above) to gain results over longer period of time. 12-month trial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued decrease in working hours to 32 hours. Employee experience score unchanged Decreased work intensity. Decreased job satisfaction.³⁶ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slight increase in burnout. Increased physical and mental health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved work-life balance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not listed 	
<p>US and Canada (2022/3)³⁷ (part of the 4DW Global Coordinated Pilot)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 41 companies 988 people Mainly professional services and marketing, the non-profit, and some in IT and construction. Some firms in this study were included in the 12 month report above. 	<p>Company perspectives: <i>0 = very negative, 10 = very positive</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avg rating for the trial: 8.7. Overall impact on productivity: 7.7. Overall impact on company performance: 7.7. <p>Employee perspectives: <i>0 = very negative, 10 = very positive</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avg experience: 9.1. 95 percent want to continue. Increased job satisfaction. <p>Slight increase in work intensity and pace of work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slight increase in burnout Decline in negative emotions, with Increased physical health. Increased mental health. Less fatigue and fewer sleep problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased satisfaction of their time. Increased overall life satisfaction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No 'travel rebound': a common concern among critics, that people will increase their carbon footprint by spending their extra free time travelling. Fewer people commuting by car. 	<p>Long-term policy of reduced work week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 89% of companies planning on continuing. 11% leaning towards continuing.
<p>UK (2022)³⁸ (part of the 4DW Global Coordinated Pilot)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 61 companies 2900 employees Marketing and advertising sectors, professional services, and non-profits, 	<p>Self-reported company perspectives: <i>0 = very negative, 10 = very positive</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avg rating for the trial: 8.3. Overall impact on productivity: 7.5. Overall impact on company performance: 7.5. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced burnout. Decreased stress. Increased mental health. Increased mental health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased satisfaction with their time. Increased ability to combine work with care responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slight increase in leisure travel. 	<p>Long-term policy of reduced work week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 92 percent continuing.

³⁵ 4 Day Week Global, 'The 4 Day Week: 12 Months on with New US and Canadian Research', July 2023.

³⁶ Ibid. Authors noted that, "This suggests the positive effects of a 4 day week on life satisfaction may be more deeply embedded in individuals' overall well-being than in job satisfaction alone".

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ 4 Day Week Global and Autonomy, 'The Results Are In: The UK's Four-Day Week Pilot', February 2023.

	<p>Self-reported employee perspectives: <i>0 = very negative, 10 = very positive</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avg experience: 9. • 90 percent want to continue. <p>Increase in pace of work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased feelings of negative emotions. • Reduced fatigue. • Reduced sleep difficulties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased ability to combine work with social life. <p>Gender equality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time men spent looking after children increased by more than double the increases by women. • Share of household work unchanged. 		
<p>Ireland (2022)³⁹ (part of the 4DW Global Coordinated Pilot)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 firms • 188 people • Administrative, IT and professional service sectors. 	<p>Self-reported company perspectives: <i>0 = very negative, 10 = very positive</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avg rating for the trial: 9.2. • Overall impact on productivity: 7.6. • Overall impact on company performance: 8.1. <p>Self-reported employee perspectives: <i>0 = very negative, 10 = very positive</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avg experience: 9.4. • 100 percent want to continue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced burnout. • Reduced negative emotions. • Reduction in feelings of anxiety. • Increased positive emotions. • No change in stress. • No change in overall mental and physical health (attributed to greater difficulty to measure relative to specific components). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased ability to combine work with care responsibilities. • Increased ability to combine work with social life. • Declined work-family conflicts. <p>Gender equality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change in share of time on childcare or housework. • No difference in how women spent their day off compared to men - no increase in care and household work by women. • Women had greater increases in overall life satisfaction than men. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased pro-environmental activities: recycling, buying eco-friendly products, walking and cycling over driving. • Increased pro-environmental education: encouraging others and educating oneself about the environment. • Increased environmental volunteering. 	<p>Long-term policy of reduced work week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75 percent continuing.

³⁹ Orla. M Kelly et al., ‘The Four Day Week: Assessing Global Trials of Reduced Work Time with No Reduction in Pay: Evidence from Ireland’ (University College Dublin, Press, 2022).

<p>Australasia (2022)⁴⁰ (part of the 4DW Global Coordinated Pilot) Australia (38%), New Zealand (35%), Europe (15%), US and Canada (12%).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26 companies and 758 people. • Professional services, marketing/advertising, and manufacturing. • Most firms had between 11-25 employees, only 12% of companies (3 companies) had 50+ employees. 	<p>Self-reported company perspectives: <i>0 = very negative, 10 = very positive</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avg rating for the trial: 8.2. • Overall impact on productivity: 7. • Overall impact on company performance: 6.8. <p>Self-reported employee perspectives: <i>0 = very negative, 10 = very positive</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avg experience: 9. • 96 percent want to continue. <p>Rates of absenteeism (sick/personal days taken) fell.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced burnout. • Reduced stress. • Decline in negative emotions. Increase in positive emotions. • Improvements in mental health, less anxiety. • Improvements in physical health. • Less fatigue and fewer sleep problems. 	<p>Deceased work-family conflict.</p> <p>Gender equality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slight increase in uptake of the share of housework and childcare by men in heterosexual relationships (27% and 17%, respectively), compared to women (15% and 11%, respectively). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time spent commuting fell by 36minutes per person per week. • No travel rebound. • 42% of employees did more environmentally friendly: recycling, buying ecofriendly items, walking and cycling rather than driving. 	<p>Long-term policy of reduced work week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 95 percent of the 20 companies who responded wish to continue.
<p>South Africa (2023) Ongoing (4 Day Week SA Coalition – part of 4DW Global)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28 firms (1 in Botswana). • Tax and finance services, marketing agencies, employment services companies, and IT software companies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Companies only manage around a 12% reduction in working time (compared to 20% threshold). • Reduced negative sentiment towards work. • Reduced staff attrition and turnover. • Lower staff absenteeism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced stress. • Reduced burnout. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased family conflict. 		<p>Long-term policy of reduced work week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 94 percent wish to continue.⁴¹

⁴⁰ 4 Day Week Global, 'Experimenting with a 4 Day Week in Australasia', May 2023.

⁴¹ *Four-Day Work Week Pilot in SA, 2023*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wRtXjt64vU>.

Other ongoing projects (less available disaggregated information about the impacts of the policies):

<p>Portugal⁴² (2023) (Ongoing) (Institute for Employment and Vocational Training and 4DW Global)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46 private companies • Professional, scientific and technical services, ICT firms, wholesale and retails trade form majority of the firms, • Large number of small companies (10 or less).
<p>Lithuania (2022)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public sector employees with children under the age of three. • 32 hour work weeks without reductions in pay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purported aims are to improve work and family life, reduce a gender pay gap, and increase public-sector competition against higher-paying private sector work.
<p>Spain (2021)^{43 44} Telecom firm, Telefonica</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4DW with 15% pay cut. • Offered voluntarily to 17 000 employees. • Only ~1% of uptake: economic uncertainty as main reason for refusal from employees.
<p>Spain (2022)⁴⁵ Government subsidised initiative.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce working week by at least half a day. • Small and medium sized industrial companies.

⁴² https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_3FDgp60Oz30tMJ8g1I3u-31ohR32lt/view

⁴³ ‘Telefonica to Offer Employees Four-Day Work Week, Widening Pilot Project | Reuters’, accessed 13 October 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/telefonica-offer-employees-four-day-work-week-widening-pilot-project-2022-06-08/>.

⁴⁴ ‘Telefónica’s Four-Day Working Week Falls Flat | Operations | TelcoTitans.Com’, accessed 13 October 2023, <https://www.telcotitans.com/telefonicawatch/telefonicas-four-day-working-week-falls-flat/5103.article>.

⁴⁵ ‘Spain to Test Cut in Work Hours to Boost Companies’ Productivity | Reuters’, accessed 13 October 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/spain-test-cut-work-hours-boost-companies-productivity-2022-12-16/>.

The four-day work week in South Africa:

Two pilot projects on the 4-day work week are being conducted in South Africa. Both projects are being facilitated by the 4 Day Week SA Coalition that is part of 4 Day Week Global. The pilot projects, which started in March 2023 and will continue for six months, use the 100-80-100 four-day approach. Employees get 100 percent of their pay for working 80 percent of their current hours at 100 percent productivity. The projects are pitched as a “business improvement strategy”⁴⁶, with a key focus on reorganising work to eliminate low and zero-productivity activities.⁴⁷ This framing suggests a reinforcement of the premise of paid work as access to social rights: “It’s about people working smarter, not harder, with the incentive of 20% more time to spend on things important to them”.⁴⁸ This does not focus on leisure as a policy for wellbeing, but as a strategy for workplace productivity and efficiency.

In terms of implementation, some companies in South Africa only managed to reduce their workweek by 12% or just under 20%. In contrast to the typical approach of reducing working time by taking Monday or Friday off, South African firms adopted a more flexible approach by restructuring working time through taking days off in the middle of the week, taking days off every two weeks, opting for half days off, or shortened office hours while working 5 times a week.⁴⁹ This suggests that the newly-gained time from the reduced working hours is regarded less as a time away from work to enjoy leisure activities, and is geared more towards introducing flexibility and ability to structure their days.⁵⁰ However, participating companies have highlighted the wellbeing and mental health imperative of implementing a four day work week alongside the productivity gains, drawing attention to better work/life balances, and maintaining a better work culture.⁵¹

The initial findings of the pilots included reduced stress and burnout; reduced negative sentiment towards work; lower instances of family conflicts at home; reduced staff attrition and turnover; and less sick days taken with lower staff absenteeism. However, companies were unable to cope with integrating reduced working time with multiple public holidays, as this increased workloads. This was the case for tax and financial firms and telecoms in the month of April, and they reverted to the five-day week.⁵²

In relation to time arrangements in South Africa, the introduction of a four-day work week will not change much of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) besides the change in the terms of employment per company, which is already done with the employee’s consent.⁵³ Other concerns relate to the potential for the four day work week to undermine wellbeing as people who are situated in a lower socioeconomic position may take up another job with their available time, thus increasing stress and workloads.⁵⁴ Entrepreneurship may also expand, leading to divergent consequences of either increasing overall employment or crowding out full-time entrepreneurs.⁵⁵ These considerations underline the need for UBI and climate jobs to play a role alongside the four-day week.

⁴⁶ <https://4dayweek.co.za/>

⁴⁷ Helen Delaney and Catherine Casey, ‘The Promise of a Four-Day Week? A Critical Appraisal of a Management-Led Initiative’, *Employee Relations: The International Journal* 44, no. 1 (2022): 176–90.

⁴⁸ <https://4dayweek.co.za/faqs/>

⁴⁹ ‘4-Day Workweek Pilot in South Africa Is Ending – Revealing Some Big Issues’, accessed 13 October 2023, <https://businesstech.co.za/news/business/711154/first-4-day-workweek-pilot-in-south-africa-is-coming-to-an-end-revealing-some-teething-issues/>.

⁵⁰ *Four-Day Work Week Pilot in SA*, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wRtXjt64vU>.

⁵¹ ‘28 SA Companies to Implement 4-Day Work Week on 1 March’, accessed 13 October 2023, <https://www.citizen.co.za/business/4-day-work-week-starts-in-sa/>.

⁵² *Four-Day Work Week Pilot in SA*, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wRtXjt64vU>.

⁵³ Tamia Retief, ‘The Pros and Cons of the Four-Day Work Week’, *Daily Maverick*, 18 January 2023, <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-01-18-the-pros-and-cons-of-the-four-day-work-week/>.

⁵⁴ Retief, ‘The Pros and Cons of the Four-Day Work Week’.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*.

Universal Basic Income (UBI) as a strategy for advancing deep just transformation:

The current crisis of socio-ecological reproduction has exposed the inability to secure socioeconomic security and wellbeing. These assumptions, which have underpinned social policies, are expressed in the current unemployment and grants system. Unemployment insurance is directly linked to paid employment and the primary social grants available are for those unable to sell their labour (due to age) and those unable to perform said labour (due to age or disability).⁵⁶ In the early phase of the COVID-19 lockdown in April 2020, the government's initial relief package sought to support households by expanding UIF payments, but saw nearly half of South Africa's workforce ineligible for these payments.⁵⁷ This meant approximately 6 million South Africans went without any form of direct assistance during the 2020 lockdown.⁵⁸ This requires more far-reaching, long-lasting interventions that reshape the distribution of resources and basic means needed for a dignified life⁵⁹.

A universal basic income transfer is a crucial systemic transformation to ensure society can survive. A Universal Basic Income Grant (UBIG) enables a post-work reality by supporting South Africa's transition away from centring wage work's role as a primary mean for attaining societal inclusion. The CJCM and #UBIGNOW Campaign has covered the importance of a UBIG in South Africa and drafted a separate policy framework for its implementation. Here, its contributions to enjoying life through working less are outlined.

UBI delinks access to social rights and inclusion from wage work and positions human flourishing as the core goal of work, not economic growth and productivity.⁶⁰ Its unconditionality promotes solidarity by building trust in people and affirming that every individual is included and entitled to the benefits of society.⁶¹ Means-tested cash transfer programs have been ineffective in reaching priority communities, do not offer recipients a dignified way of life because of associated stigmas, and can also be wasteful on resources and time-consuming to implement.⁶² The UBIG is connected to enjoying life through working less because it enables liberation from work and liberation through work.

UBI critics argue that a notably low basic income, would effectively subsidise low-wage employers to the detriment of minimum wage demands made by workers, whilst weakening worker organisation and increasing the coercive potential of employers and labour markets.⁶³ In the South African context a UBI could have a reverse effect by cushioning low-skilled workers from the usual labour market dynamics in which the threat of decreased wages are used as a "stick" to discourage workers from pursuing increases. A UBI, even at a low amount, would allow workers to reject low-paying work whilst increasing the pressure to raise the lowest wage that workers would take to perform a task.⁶⁴ An individual's ability to not sell their labour at the going rate would bolster their bargaining power and as a member of a collective. Should employers respond to these shifts with automation and layoffs, then the social argument for a UBI would only increase.⁶⁵

By providing people with unconditional means to meet their needs, it increases the agency of individuals to decide how to realise a dignified life, which encompasses how they choose to use their time and expend their labour. Work is not a necessary factor in the question of how individuals make and realise

⁵⁶ Hein Marais, *In the Balance: The Case for a Universal Basic Income in South Africa and Beyond* (Wits University Press, 2022).

⁵⁷ Marais, *In the Balance: The Case for a Universal Basic Income in South Africa and Beyond*.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Whitney, Rich. "How universal basic income can help build a solidarity economy." *Nonprofit Quarterly* (2021).

⁶² Whitney, 'How Universal Basic Income Can Help Build a Solidarity Economy'.

⁶³ Marais, *In the Balance: The Case for a Universal Basic Income in South Africa and Beyond*.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Marais, *In the Balance: The Case for a Universal Basic Income in South Africa and Beyond*.

meaning in their lives. This autonomy in relation to work can transform social relations. South Africans can spend more time on leisure activities, and increase their care work in their households, as the four-day work week pilot projects demonstrate. They can also dedicate time and energy to socially beneficial projects such as community food gardens or studying and learning new skills which are required in building a more just and egalitarian society. In the UBIG strategy, this agency is granted to all equally.⁶⁶ This builds democratic bargaining power and forms of mass power to bring about a shift in power relations and institutional hierarchies and drive the deep just transitions.

From an ecological perspective, UBI contributes to mitigating the socio-economic effects of closing ecologically harmful sectors such as extractive industries. Additionally, its amplification of the positive environmental benefits of the four-day week come from limiting the need for employees to seek additional work on their off days. Instead of using the newly-available time to seek additional employment to gain a liveable wage, it can be dedicated towards pro-environmental activities that extend to educating oneself about and giving to environmental causes instead of seeking additional employment. This was one of the consequences of the Ireland four-day week pilot project.⁶⁷

The UBIG proposal for South Africa

A UBIG can build on existing Covid relief measures at whatever level and can be adjusted over time. The Studies in Poverty and Inequality Institute's (SPII) analytical paper for the AIDC - titled "The Budget, Social Security and the Basic Income Grant Alternative Synopsis" - discusses the concept of a decent standard of living that can be provided by a BIG set at R7 500. The Black Sash has led a focused campaign for basic income support for all citizens aged 18-59.⁶⁸

The Institute for Economic Justice's (IEJ) paper describes the UBIG's goal as being universally applicable (with those earning above a certain level being taxed to "get back" the transfer). They delineate seven groups between the ages of 18-59 to create options for a phased implementation of a universal grant system. The groups are designation as working age members of society who often have families to support and receive the least amount of support from the state. A starting point and transition towards universal income can be set by covering one or a combination of the groups.

The recommended groupings are as follows:⁶⁹

- All. All people between the ages of 18-59. Not dependent on any other criteria.
- All, but with partial uptake (60% or 80% uptake). It is unlikely that the UBIG will be accessed by all even if available to them. This is because this group includes those with other forms of income who will likely not self-select for receipt of the grant. There may also be geographical disparities, administrative inefficiencies, and lack of procedural knowledge from potential recipients that reduce uptake of the grant. We therefore include groups at 60% and 80% of the total cohort (the rationale for these levels are discussed further below).
- Informal sector workers. Informal sector workers are given as a specific group due to their relatively higher precarity in the labour market, though active participants. The informal sector sees a higher share of women than the formal sector and is less regulated. Incomes are lower

⁶⁶ Whitney, 'How Universal Basic Income Can Help Build a Solidarity Economy'.

⁶⁷ Kelly et al., 'The Four Day Week: Assessing Global Trials of Reduced Work Time with No Reduction in Pay: Evidence from Ireland'.

⁶⁸ Climate Justice Charter Movement, '#UBIG Policy Approach and Proposals' (Climate Justice Charter Movement, February 2021).

⁶⁹ Institute for Economic Justice. 2021. Policy Brief: Introducing a Universal Basic Income Guarantee for South Africa - Towards income security for all.

than those in formal sector employment, and a UBIG would create larger benefits for these workers as a result.

- Unemployed. Unemployed people are included due to no labour market compensation. This is defined in the expanded sense (there is therefore an overlap with the Not Economically Active group which also includes discouraged work seekers and those with other reasons for not searching for employment).
- Not Economically Active (NEA). These are people outside of the labour market, which are not classified as unemployed. For example, unemployment figures would exclude those running households who are primarily involved in unpaid care work and who are without income. This also includes discouraged workers and those with other reasons for not searching for employment.

In terms of financing the UBIG programme, the IEJ has proposed the following principles to guide decision-making:⁷⁰

1. Recoup the UBIG from those with taxable income.
2. Tax those with middle, high and very high incomes on a sliding scale.
3. Tax wealth and income from wealth.
4. Limit tax breaks for those with higher incomes.
5. Cancel ineffective corporate tax breaks.
6. Tax environmentally damaging behaviour.
7. Reduce wasteful and irregular expenditure.
8. Reduce tax evasion.

Taking the recommendations of the IEJ and the #UBIGNOW campaign, modelling was conducted to examine the impacts and feasibility of a UBIG. 10 scenarios were generated: a Baseline Scenario, 3 Unemployed BIG scenarios, 3 Adult BIG scenarios, and 3 Universal BIG scenarios.⁷¹ According to the Baseline Scenario, high levels of poverty and unemployment would persist with a continued primacy of wage-work to access in social benefits, embedded in the current social security programmes. The impacts of a BIG would reduce poverty rates by 15 percent or more, reduce the poverty gap, and reduce income inequality.

Both the UBIG and four-day work week have progressive visions in their imperative to undermine the core principles of the value system associated with industrial capitalism – that of a reliance on paid work as a requirement for “social citizenship and inclusion”. UBIG reveals implicitly how structural factors decide the distribution of means and opportunities for social inclusion. It showcases and how value is created by society as a whole and argues, instead, that the entirety of said community should gain a “share of the total social product”. This reflection generated by UBIG can be used to enhance social justice issues, change how we as a society think about entitlement and distribution along with the four-day week, and challenge existing assumptions around claims we have on each other and the state. This has implications for governance and can reframe the role and duties of the state.

⁷⁰ Institute for Economic Justice. 2021. Policy Brief: Introducing a Universal Basic Income Guarantee for South Africa - Towards income security for all.

⁷¹ Asghar Adelzadeh, ‘Fiscally Neutral Basic Income Grant Scenarios: Economic and Development Impacts’ (Applied Development Research Solutions, May 2021).

Climate jobs

Decentring work in society through a four-day week and UBI generates a broader rethinking of work. Ecological considerations and the broader web-of-life should factor in this rethinking and should inform new and existing work. The result may be a vision that falls somewhere between liberation through work and liberation from work in the form of the “the egalitarian distribution of minimal necessary work”.⁷² This can be achieved through climate jobs, as they add to the institutional convergence towards centring the flourishing of all life as the core of work.

“Climate jobs are different to green jobs. Green jobs can encompass any and all environmentally friendly jobs, such as in conservation and cleaning up oil spills. Climate jobs are those that help to reduce the emission of GHGs and build the resilience of communities to withstand the impacts of climate change. Examples of climate jobs include those in developing renewable energy plants; in energy efficiency, especially in retrofitting buildings; in public transport that reduces the pollution from cars and trucks; and, significantly, in small-scale organic agriculture, which reduces emissions of GHG in agriculture”.⁷³

Climate jobs are necessary to address the current climate crisis and enhance a Rights of Nature approach to a just transition. The inclusive nature of climate jobs can “build bridges to workers outside of the ‘big three’ shifts in energy, transport and buildings”.⁷⁴ A Rights of Nature approach in climate jobs also highlights the asymmetries between the current levels of reward relative to the socioecological value of many jobs, and the boundaries of remunerative work. It draws attention to the need to re-assess the social, environmental, and economic value that different jobs produce or undermine by going beyond valuations of work according to profit incentives whose strategies, when applied to the environmental and climate crisis, have been detrimental to finding real solutions.⁷⁵ This results in the need to reduce work in some sectors and expand work in other in order to enjoy life. This latter point can address the more resistant members of a deep just transition who argue that there is a job vs environment dilemma to the climate crisis.⁷⁶ A climate jobs strategy sees the climate crisis as an opportunity for job creation rather than job reduction in a way that privileges worker interests over the financial sector’s interests.⁷⁷ Therefore, in the instances that people choose to find liberation through work, and worker unions demand job creation in transition policies, this preference can be explored in through climate jobs.

Working less in South Africa through a reduced work week is a key part of the rethinking of the entire economy to serve the needs of the country. It is a shift of the current paradigm of paid work which sees it as a central part of the economy and the main avenue to meet the social needs of individuals and communities. By contrast, a four-day work week, together with the potentials of UBIG and climate jobs, prioritises the needs of all the various life forms, including humans and nature, and supports a sustainable socio-ecological systems transformation.

⁷² Gomez-Baggethun, ‘Rethinking Work for a Just and Sustainable Future’.

⁷³ Brian Ashley, ‘Climate Jobs Two Minutes to Midnight’, in *The Climate Crisis: South African and Global Democratic Eco-Socialist Alternatives*, ed. Vishwas Satgar (Wits University Press, 2018).

⁷⁴ Andreas Ytterstad, ‘Climate Jobs Plans: A Mobilizing Strategy in Search of Agency’, in *The Palgrave Handbook of Environmental Labour Studies* (Springer, 2021), 249–70.

⁷⁵ Ashley, ‘Climate Jobs Two Minutes to Midnight’.

⁷⁶ Ytterstad, ‘Climate Jobs Plans: A Mobilizing Strategy in Search of Agency’.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

Policy Directions

This section provides an exploratory overview of questions and strategies to consider when applying a four-day work week in the South African labour market, in line with the vision of the Climate Justice Charter. This overview covers existing approaches to applying the four-day week and suggested transition strategies.

Four-day week models:

According to 4 Day Week Global, there have been four models to implementing a four-day work week, based on company priorities and operational requirements.⁷⁸

Fifth day stoppage	The company shuts down operations for one additional day per week.
	This is a popular choice in companies where staff collaboration is more important than five-day coverage.
Staggered	Staff take alternating days off.
	This was a popular choice for companies that prioritised five-day coverage of key functions. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Staff were divided into two teams with one half taking Monday off and the other half taking Friday off.
Decentralised	Different departments operate on different work patterns.
	This model was preferred by companies whose departments had highly contrasting functions and challenges. This can result in combined use of the fifth day stoppage and staggered models, or specific department-lead proposals for a reduced work week.
Annualised	Staff work a 32 hour average working week, calculated on the scale of a year.
	Preferred approach for work that is highlight seasonal. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Longer work weeks in the peak season were compensated with shorter work weeks in the off-peak season.

These models have sometimes been combined. The four-day week has also been discriminately applied during the pilot projects whereby it could be suspended based on performance. This can lead to an uneven situation where some staff or departments continued to work longer work weeks than others.

⁷⁸ Taken from: 4 Day Week Global and Autonomy, 'The Results Are In: The UK's Four-Day Week Pilot'.

This strategy should not be applied in the South African model, as it reinforces the logic of deservability that is tied to productivity. It can also undermine social cohesion in the workplace.

The South African experience did not always follow these usual models and applied a looser definition of a reduced work week. This included:

- Taking days off in the middle of the week
- Taking days off on a bi-weekly basis
- A five-day work week with reduced work hours or half days

It is unclear if these particularities were because the companies working on four-day weeks were a minority in their sector and had to adjust their operations, or if it reflected South Africa’s labour market dynamics. The feedback by some firms that reverted to the five-day week suggested that the work demands of the reduced hours during a period of numerous public holidays (April-May) made it difficult to maintain the four-day week. Other experts have questioned the sustainability of the 100:80:100 model in general, as the country does not work on a productivity-based model and is characterised by low levels of trust between employer and employees.⁷⁹ Given this, they argue that the workforce needs to transition to a productivity-based work approach to ensure the sustainability of the 100:80:100 model, or accept a remuneration reduction.⁸⁰ However, reductions of remuneration in current conditions will likely cut into the wellbeing impacts of a reduced work week, therefore, it has been proposed that reductions in remuneration should be minimised wherever possible.⁸¹

This highlights the necessity of further research on a sectoral approach to implementing a four-day week rather than relying on individual firm uptake, as this can increase the transaction costs of opting for the reduced hours. Experimenting with different models will also be necessary in sectors that have higher operational demands, such as the healthcare, emergency, and hospitality sectors. Future studies should also consider how UBI and more simple living may offset work demands and potential remuneration reductions when transitioning to a four-day work week.

Employee terms and conditions:

In addition to various models for implementing the workweek, there were also varied expectations around the fifth day:⁸²

Highly protected	The fifth day had a similar status to Saturday or Sunday and company seniors made a special effort to ensure working on the day would not be necessary.
Protected	Staff were expected to take their day off. However, managers required staff, through formal or informal arrangements – to pledge to be available for work in certain exceptional situations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Small-scale manufacturing firms in the UK adopted this approach to protect their company when productivity was pushed back as a result of a power outage.

⁷⁹ Aadil Patel Discusses the Four Day Work Week, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fObw0mqSEOs>.

⁸⁰ Aadil Patel Discusses the Four Day Work Week.

⁸¹ ‘The Shorter Working Week: A Radical And Pragmatic Proposal’ (London, January 2019).

⁸² 4 Day Week Global and Autonomy, ‘The Results Are In: The UK’s Four-Day Week Pilot’.

Weakly protected	<p>There was a potential for staff to be called into work on their scheduled day off, or for their schedules to be altered at short notice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This was the case in setups that worked on a conditional four-day week model or smaller firms
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Other existing employment terms and conditions would need to be adapted to for the four-day week:

- Annual and leave policy:⁸³
 - o Some companies kept the leave allowance whereas others adopted a pro-rata reduction of bookable leave days alongside the four-day week. The four-day week pilot by 4DW Global in the UK found that employees still enjoyed more days off than they would have had with the five-day model.⁸⁴
 - o Some companies honoured public holidays along with the day off, while other counted the public holiday as the four-day week.
- Part-time employees:⁸⁵
 - o Part-time staff received a pro rata working-time reduction.
 - o Part-time staff continued on their existing hours, and received a pro rata pay rise, to match the new pay rate of their full-time (four-day week) colleagues.
 - o Part-time staff were permitted to choose between the two options above.
 - o Part-time staff received a small increase in bookable annual leave.
 - o Part-time staff were excluded from/opted-out of the pilot

Building the 4-day week on working conditions in South Africa

Taking ecological considerations into account, an absolute reduction of the work week should be the target, as this decentres work in the organisation of society, and reduces carbon emissions generated from work. This outcome can only be achieved from sectoral-level shifts, as this would increase the costs related to operating for longer hours and thus discourage firms from seeking a competitive advantage through long work weeks.

Shifting to the four-day week should be a state-level intervention and not a company-lead approach as the latter can exacerbate inequalities in the labour-market by adding further segmentation between sectors where lower paying sectors may find it more difficult to implement the policy.⁸⁶ Company-lead policies that currently dominate have emphasised a productivity narrative which has resulted in the four day week becoming a performance management tool rather than a pro-social policy.⁸⁷ At the firm level, this had manifested in increased surveillance and measurements of productivity, suggesting that the freedom *from* work in the day off came at the expense of freedom *in* work.⁸⁸ This also lead employees to believe that the additional time off was a privilege and not a right or entitlement. The business strategy approach to the four-day week also lacked substantive collective participation in its implementation, which continues to individualise employee benefits and perpetuate power imbalances between

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Heejung Chung, 'A Social Policy Case for a Four-Day Week', *Journal of Social Policy* 51, no. 3 (2022): 551–66.

⁸⁷ Delaney and Casey, 'The Promise of a Four-Day Week? A Critical Appraisal of a Management-Led Initiative'.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

employees and employers.⁸⁹ State-lead intervention produces a stronger signal in favour of decentring work. This intervention can take the form of laws that restrict the maximum number of working hours. Implementing the four-day week requires a collective effort that is built on bargaining structures to support worker representation and leisure time as a right and not a privilege.⁹⁰ Transition strategies should involve health and safety occupational practitioners to prevent the shortened work week from developing into a working culture of austerity and stime saving.⁹¹

Some recommendations for implementing the four-day week that supports employee rights and the importance of leisure include:⁹²

- Including in employee contracts the right to shorter working hours if they so choose. To ease the transition, a probationary period of six months can be included that allows the worker to revert to their original hours.
- Including overtime as an option, should employees decide to work above the standard hours. The overtime rate should be substantially higher than the standard rate. This nudges businesses to reorientate their hyper productive work cultures and could generate more tax revenue that could be put towards supporting parental leave.⁹³
- A “raise” that can be taken in the form of time or money. This gives employees the freedom to choose between having their remuneration take the form of a reduced working week or a raise in annual income, both of which still amount to a raise in their hourly wage.
- Extend shared parental leave schemes so gender inequalities in care work would not be reinforced through leisure time.

During phase-in options, gains should be made on food sovereignty, and UBI to drive momentum towards reducing total working hours, as social goods could be secured through means other than the income gained from wage work. This increases security and decreases the demand for work, thus reducing the need for workers to seek out additional sources of revenue and directing attention to leisure, care, and community building. In order for to maximise the environmental benefits of the shorter work week, carbon-heavy forms of consumption should be taxed to incentivise their use.

Phase-in strategies:

Targeted populations: Potential phase-in options for the four-day week can target specific groups of the population, such as parents, as is the case in the current pilot in Lithuania. However, these phase-in options must be treated as transition strategies with the goal of reaching a four-day work week for all because their use as standalone policies can result in the stigmatisation of groups that take up the option undercutting workplace relationships,⁹⁴ leading to low uptake, and stalling overall momentum for the four-day work week.⁹⁵

Job-sharing: One of consequences of reducing the working hours of individuals is that it creates an opportunity to redistribute the total work hours across the population. This was the aim of the Finnish pilot, which attempted to address unemployment through job-sharing by reducing the work weeks of

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Helen Delaney and Catherine Casey, ‘The Promise of a Four-Day Week? A Critical Appraisal of a Management-Led Initiative’, *Employee Relations: The International Journal* 44, no. 1 (2022): 176–90.

⁹¹ ‘The Shorter Working Week: A Radical And Pragmatic Proposal’ (London, January 2019).

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ ‘The Shorter Working Week: A Radical And Pragmatic Proposal’.

⁹⁴ Michelle J Budig, Joya Misra, and Irene Boeckmann, ‘The Motherhood Penalty in Cross-National Perspective: The Importance of Work–Family Policies and Cultural Attitudes’, *Social Politics* 19, no. 2 (2012): 163–93.

⁹⁵ Chung, ‘A Social Policy Case for a Four-Day Week’.

current employees. In this pilot, employees took a reduced work week along with a reduction in their incomes, and the surplus hours were redistributed to new employees. France had also reduced their work week to 35 hours for similar purposes.⁹⁶ This mechanism appears to be a potential solution that could generate new jobs, on the one hand, and address the polarisation of work by alleviating the demand on the overworked population, on the other hand. This creates a link between the four-day week and addressing unemployment and its related effects on informal and precarious work in South Africa. However, the use of job-sharing raises some concerns.

First, the current popular 100:80:100 model of the four day-week that is being piloted in various countries allows employees to earn the same income with the 20 percent reduction in their work week, provided that productivity levels remain the same. This means that any attempt to combine the reduced work week based on this model with job-sharing requires that firms to carry the additional costs of new employees. Second, it assumes that the jobs that will be shared in job-sharing strategies are unproblematic. Finally, it detracts from the goal of shifting away from a work orientated society. In light of these considerations, job-sharing should be carefully considered and only deployed strategically so that it does not lose sight of the goal of reducing to total amount of work to the “egalitarian distribution of minimal necessary work [for social production]”.⁹⁷

Therefore, if job-sharing strategies were to be built on the reduced work week, it should not be as a blanket strategy aimed at addressing unemployment, but rather a strategy to redistribute working hours to address work polarisation. This underlines the importance of establishing the UBIG alongside the reduced work week as it provides an alternative to job-sharing for individuals to gain access to the means for a dignified life, reducing the need to generate *more* working hours. Job-sharing should only be applied in sectors where it would be more difficult to transition to a full four-day week, such as the healthcare and emergency sectors. In terms of the additional costs with job-sharing strategies, these may be offset with reduced overall costs to the healthcare system because workers are healthier, or offsetting recruitment costs with increased productivity.⁹⁸

Not all jobs should be considered in job-sharing strategies, as the socio-ecological value they bring to society may be net harms than benefits, such as jobs whose operations contribute high levels of carbon emissions.⁹⁹ In these cases, the absolute work hours should be reduced. Here, job-sharing strategies should be minimised, and the focus on addressing unemployment should be on climate job creation. This means that, alongside sectoral transitions to the four-day work week, there should also be a reevaluation of the remunerative work in South Africa that redefines the socio-ecological value of all work. This will enable a targeted approach to reducing and redistributing working hours that are more favourable for all life. Some proposals for a reduced work week have also recommended state support for job-sharing strategies such as a subsidy for employers.¹⁰⁰ More research is required to understand a targeted approach to job-sharing and how this would interact with the UBIG in South Africa.

⁹⁶ ‘The Shorter Working Week: A Radical And Pragmatic Proposal’.

⁹⁷ Gomez-Baggethun, ‘Rethinking Work for a Just and Sustainable Future’.

⁹⁸ ‘The Shorter Working Week: A Radical And Pragmatic Proposal’.

⁹⁹ Gomez-Baggethun, ‘Rethinking Work for a Just and Sustainable Future’.

¹⁰⁰ ‘The Shorter Working Week: A Radical And Pragmatic Proposal’.

Next steps:

The current momentum for the four-day week in South Africa has largely been company-driven, and the conversations around its broader implementation are still in their early stages. More research is needed on the impacts of the four-day week and how it can be implemented in South Africa's particular labour market dynamics. The state should play a bigger role in the conversation. This can include:¹⁰¹

- Establishing a network of unions, researchers, local government employees, and activists engaged in the four-day work week to shape the direction of the legislation and connect it to other strategies such as UBIG, climate jobs, and food sovereignty.
- Expand data collection to reporting on overwork and underwork to gain an understanding on sectors that require the most urgent attention, and where the roll out of a four-day week and can be implemented rapidly. Public sector-lead trials could be carried out in these areas.

For any comments on this policy, please email the Climate Justice Charter Movement at: cjcm@mweb.co.za

¹⁰¹ Ibid.