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## THE AGRARIAN RURAL HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY | BASELINE SURVEY

1 743 Households • 7 000 household members in 12 local municipalities  
across the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo and Western Cape





100 years after the 1913 Land Act and nearly 20 years into democracy, rural realities have not improved. Skewed land ownership patterns and insecure tenure compound high levels of poverty and unemployment prevalent in rural areas. The rural-urban divide and the gap between rich and poor are growing. We call on rural communities, social movements and civil society organizations to unite and push for just and equitable land reform and agrarian transformation.

## INCOME

### Household Income

The majority of rural households live below the poverty line: Average monthly household income is R2 606. Median monthly household income is R 1 860.

### Sources of Income

Wages are the main source of income for 6 out of 10 households, and grants for 1 in 3 households

## EMPLOYMENT

1 in 4 members in a household identified themselves as farmers BUT only 2% earned their main income from agriculture.

1 in 4 members in a household were unemployed. Unemployment was higher for women (28%) than men (19%).

Other types of Employment:

- 26% Farm Workers
- 18% Employed off farm
- 6% Own business/self employed

## FOOD

Hunger is prevalent among rural households: 1 in 3 experience hunger. These households are more reliant on agricultural production

### Sources of Food

- Supermarkets are the main source of food
- Only 10-20% of households, buy their food at local/informal markets.
- 1 in 4 households rely on their own maize and fruit.

## Producers versus Consumers

• Households with crops and livestock use these mainly for own consumption.

• The few households that sell do so mostly at local and informal markets.

• So the food that rural households buy at supermarkets, is NOT procured from food producing rural households.

## LAND ACCESS

Farming is constrained by access to land:

- 8 of 10 households have some land for cropping
- 1 in 3 households have access to land for grazing
- BUT
- The large majority has 1 hectare or less.

## CROPS

- Over half of households grow vegetables, maize, or dry beans
- Few households grow traditional crops or fruit & nuts

## LIVESTOCK

As in the past, when land is limited people invest in livestock:

- 1 in 2 households have livestock
- 1 in 3 households keep chickens and/or cattle
- 1 in 5 households keep goats, pigs or sheep

High mortality rates suggest need for support in health and disease management

## WATER

• Households draw water from rivers, streams or dams to water their crops and livestock

• Respondents generally do not pay for water (85%).

## LEVELS OF ORGANIZATION AND SUPPORT

• 2 in 3 HH belong to an organization, and of these HH 50% are members of a farmer's association

• People on church land are the least organized, followed by farm workers/dwellers. This suggests strong patronage relationships

• Less than half of HH had received some agricultural support; of these HH 50% received training, and only 1 in 6 received extension support.

## EVICTIONS

• Tenure insecurity continues: 1 in 10 farm worker/dweller households having been and /or being threatened with eviction

• Farm evictions are big contributor to growth of informal settlements

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## OUR DEMANDS

1. Promote farming as a component of diverse rural livelihoods

2. Focus development support on the rural poor, vulnerable women and children

3. Create local food value chains centred around food producing households

4. Defend basic conditions of employment and advance the rights of farm workers/dwellers

5. Extend and secure access to land and other resources (including water and minerals)

6. Invest in alternative models for land reform (e.g. land rentals, bottom-up area-based planning)