A Just Transition: For Whom?

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Introduction

- The concept of a just transition is a labour–orientated concept.
- The International Labour Organization (ILO) has expanded their understanding of a just transition
- Low-carbon initiatives offer significant environmental and economic benefits
- An unfair transition is inherently unsustainable (Wang & Lo, 2021)
The Global South and a Just Transition

- Northern perspectives often dominate social research and international policies (Connell, 2007)
- Since the concept of a Just Transition emerged in the North (the United States during the 1980s), a critical stance towards this concept is vital
- There is no one-size fits all approach
- The Paris Agreement has recognised the importance of understanding local and regional dynamics in communities dependent on fossil fuel extraction and usage
- For the Global South matters such as an informal labour force, land rights and natural resources should be considered
South Africa and the Just Transition movement

- South Africa is the biggest polluter in Africa and one of the top 15 greenhouse gas (GHG) emitters globally (USAID, 2023)
- In SA’s move towards a green(er) economy, the impact of job losses could be devastating
- In addressing the challenges that the Global South faced, a vast amount of literature exists around suggested principles to address some of these challenges (see Konstant et al., 2021; Gunningham & Sinclair, 2017; Abeysiriwardhana et al., 2021; UNDP, 2020; ILO, 2015).
- Socio-economic contexts differ therefore adjustment of principles and actions are vital
Principles for a societal just transition

- Visioning and effective communication
- Inclusive planning
- Collaborating with social partners
- Addressing inequalities
- Targeted social investment
Principle 1: Visioning and effective communication

- Long-term vision with interim milestones and targets
  - Gradual refinement of milestones and KPI's
- Inclusive dialogue with various stakeholders
  - National, regional and local government
  - Workers and worker's organisations
  - Contractors and suppliers
  - Communities
  - Partners
- Transparency
  - Just Transition Communication Strategy
  - Regular sustainability reporting
Principle 2: Inclusive planning

- Use Social Impact Assessment and Analysis to:
  - Consider long-term societal impacts
  - Consider vulnerable groups
    - Previously disadvantaged communities, minorities, women, the elderly, people with disabilities, and youth
- Skills audits, policy review
- Align transitioning objectives with social management plans and safeguards
Principle 3: Collaborating with social partners

- Regular social dialogue with worker’s organisations to
  - Forecast skills needs
  - Address worker rights
  - Improve working conditions
- Invest in training and reskilling
- Advance notice of change
  - Clear communication
  - Personal finance training
  - Reinvestment opportunities
Principle 4: Addressing inequalities

- Design effective adaptation and mitigation strategies
  - Undertake Vulnerability Assessments
  - Promote inclusive dialogue through meaningful participation
- Relationship building
  - Regular community engagement
Principle 5: Targeted social investment

- Avoid white elephant infrastructure projects
- View communities as partners
- Assess current assets, resources and abilities
- Obtain community buy-in
- Self-sustainable projects
JUST TRANSITION

WHAT EVERYBODY SEES

Just Transition

24/7

BUT THERE IS MORE

MENU
JOB LOSSES
UNCERTAINTY
LIVELIHOODS
LAND RIGHTS
ENERGY
SECURITY
POVERTY
HUNGER

SUPPLY CHAIN
DISPLACEMENT
RETRENCHMENT
INSTABILITY
GEOGRAPHICS
IDENTITY
SPIRITUALITY
MENTAL HEALTH
Let’s continue the conversation!
Post questions and comments in the IAIA24 app.

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