

REPORT ON PAY AND WORKING CONDITIONS FOR DOMESTIC WORK IN SA 2019

Produced by SweepSouth

MAY 2019

Introduction:

2018/2019 has been a difficult period for domestic workers. All South Africans struggled with a stagnant economy and marginal growth. However, as is often the case, it is those at the bottom of the economic ladder who suffer the worst in troubled economic times.

According to Stats SA's Quarterly Labour Force Survey published in May of 2019, unemployment in South Africa stood at 27.6% overall. This was a slight increase from the last published figure of 27.1%. In that same report, Stats SA found that 15 000 fewer people were employed as domestic workers versus the previous quarter.

This loss of 15 000 domestic worker jobs follows 45 000 new domestic workers being added to the economy in the last quarter of 2018. The massive fluctuation shows the economic insecurity that workers in this sector live with as a daily fact of life.

More so, the sector still has to recover the tens of thousands of jobs which have been lost since the end of 2017, when 1 045 million people were employed as domestic workers, the highest number in recent years.

Knowing these basic facts about this key employment sector in the South African economy is undoubtedly important. However, these numbers do nothing to tell us about those working in this industry and the lives they live.

This is where the second annual SweepSouth Report on Pay and Working Conditions for Domestic Work in South Africa steps in. With this comprehensive report, SweepSouth, the online platform which connects domestic workers to homeowners, gives an in-depth look at the lived financial reality and conditions for domestic workers in South Africa.

To gain this insight into the factors influencing the lives of domestic workers, questions relating to pay and working conditions were posed to more than 1 300 domestic workers, some of whom use the SweepSouth platform to get domestic work jobs, as well as those who do not.

It represents a key voice which, due to its socio-economic status, is often overlooked in discussions that affect all aspects of their lives.

SURVEY OVERVIEW

The second annual SweepSouth Report on Pay and Working Conditions for Domestic Work in South Africa, drawn from the responses of more than 1 300 domestic workers, paints a stark picture of the lives of the women who clean our homes and offices.

With domestic work being a highly gendered profession, it is of no surprise that respondents to the survey were mostly women. But who is this woman?

On average, she is a single mother (71% of respondents) who is the main breadwinner in her household (79% of respondents). She usually supports four people including herself (23% of respondents) on an income of between R2 001 and R3 000 per month (22% of respondents) with no additional support from government grants (64% of respondents). Her home is most likely a standalone brick house (37% of respondents) or a flat (29% of respondents).

The highest educational qualification she has received is a matric or O-Level (55% of respondents) and she works between six and seven hours each day (43% of respondents). To get to work, she travels by taxi (47% of respondents) – a trip that takes her between one and two hours (47% of respondents). Fortunately, while traveling to work she does mostly feel safe (78% of

Sample questions from survey:

What is your average household income per month?

How many children or family members do you support financially?

How much do you spend on transport to and from work every month?

respondents), and at work she feels valued and respected by her employers (63% of respondents).

Looking towards her future, while she does have a funeral plan (58% of respondents), she does not have any kind of savings or pension plan (85% of respondents). If she does save, it is not much and she is likely only putting away between R101 and R200 per month (14% of respondents).

New legislation came into effect on 1 January 2019 setting the minimum wage at R20 per hour. However, one of the sectors which was excluded from this new minimum wage was domestic workers. There was an increase in the domestic worker minimum wage, with it being dependent on hours worked and location. The fact that the majority of respondents report that they earn between R2 001 and R3 000 per month means it is probable that most employers are complying with the minimum wage regulations.

While SweepSouth does not employ domestic workers, the online platform has created thousands of income opportunities for unemployed and underemployed domestic workers. In terms of income, SweepStars (domestic workers finding work opportunities through the SweepSouth app) get an average of 80% of the rate paid for their services, starting at a minimum of 65%. With the average rate charged for a SweepStar's services being R42 an hour, the average SweepStar, who is getting 80% of that, is earning far above the legislated minimum wage.

Additionally, SweepSouth supplies domestic workers who secure work through its platform with additional benefits that the majority of domestic workers (85% of respondents) do not receive, like accidental death and disability cover.

Time frame:

APRIL 23, 2019

MAY 10, 2019

COST OF LIVING

South Africa's economic climate is at its most precarious since the global recession of 2008, seriously affecting the cost-of-living for consumers. A series of steep fuel price increases, the weakening rand (which affects the fuel price, but also all imported goods) and the drought all had major impacts and the ripple effect on other living expenses has affected all South Africans, including domestic workers.

While the increase in the minimum wage for domestic workers was welcomed, it is clear that there is still a need for higher wages when examining the monthly expenses of survey respondents.

Compared with 2018, most basic expenses have remained more or less the same. A change to be noted is the inclusion of transport costs in the 2019 report to give us a clearer picture of the financial lives of respondents.

AVERAGE EXPENSES



TOTAL AVERAGE MONTHLY BASIC EXPENSES: **R3 147 PM**

DOMESTIC WORKER MONTHLY MINIMUM WAGE: **R2 699 PM (AS OF JAN 2019)**

PROFILE

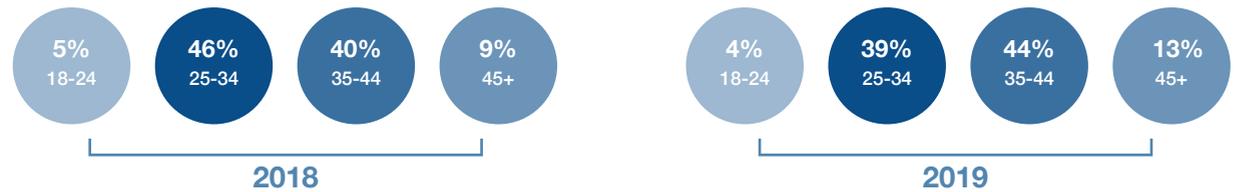
Like 2018, again most respondents to the 2019 survey are women. The oldest respondent was 62 years old and the youngest 20 years old. Most respondents hold a Matric or O-Level qualification, are single mothers and the main breadwinner in their households. If there are additional people in the household earning an income, it is typically only one other person

The household incomes typically support four people. In terms of the type of homes respondents live in, there is a relatively even split between flats, brick standalone houses and informal housing (shacks and hokkies). When it comes to fulltime employment, most report their last full-time job lasting five years.

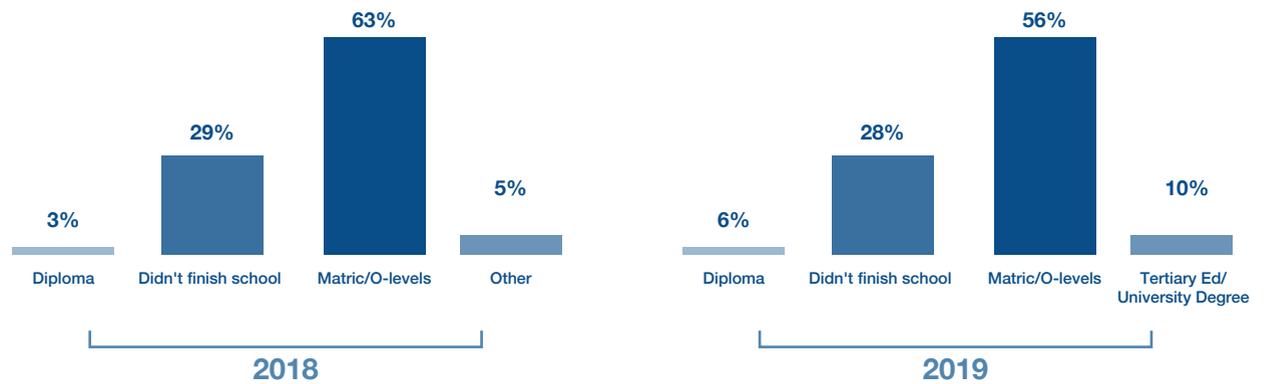
Region:



Age:



Education levels:



FINANCIAL WELL-BEING

Despite the majority of respondents earning above the minimum wage, the high cost of living coupled with their meagre level of savings shows that they are still struggling to plan for their financial futures. While planning for death is something most respondents have done, very few are able to afford medical aid and most have no pension plan.

While most respondents report participating in South Africa's R45 billion stokvel industry, this is still concerning. According to financial researchers, while stokvels can be a useful financial tool, their possible financial power is rarely fully leveraged or realised.

Have a funeral plan:



Have a medical aid:



Have a pension:



Participate in a stokvel:



Work Environment:

Suffered physical or verbal abuse from someone they worked for:



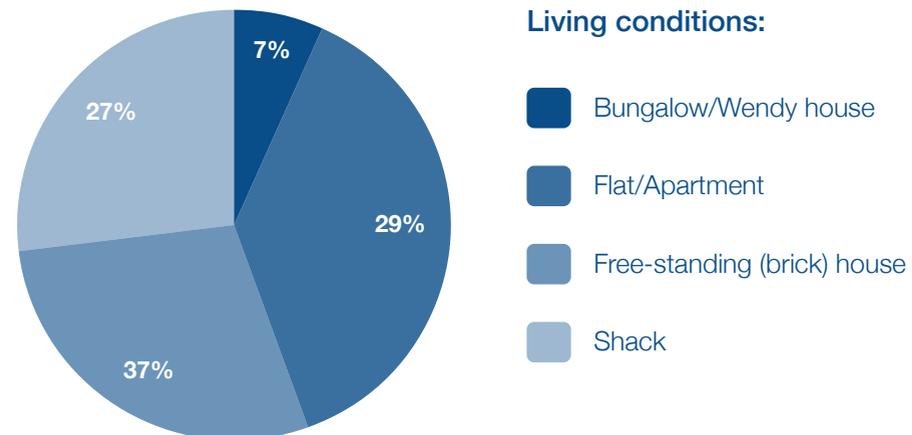
Feel valued and respected at work:



LIVING CONDITIONS

A closer look at the living conditions of domestic workers reveals that the greatest majority live in a free-standing (brick) house and average rental is R1 136 per month.

The number of workers polled who live in informal dwellings (27%) is still a concern because it affects security and health.



LIVING EXPENSES

51% of the respondents say they support up to 3 children or family members in their household, on average.



Main breadwinner in the family:



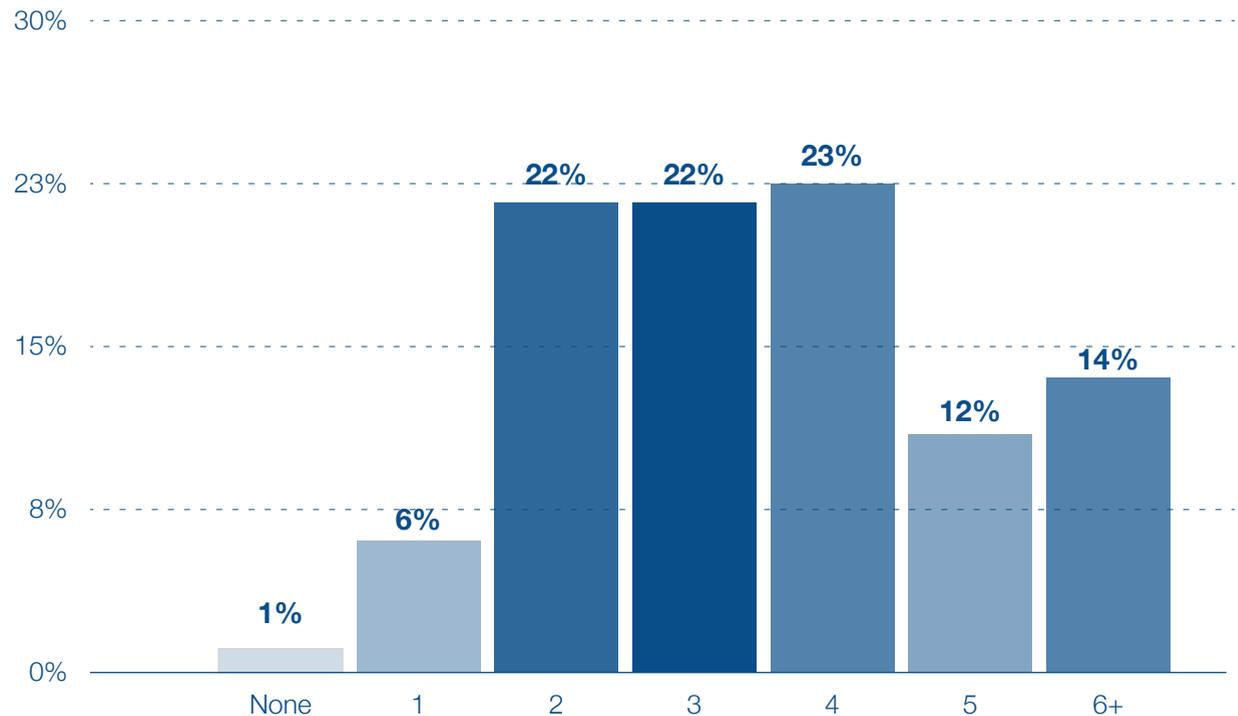
Single parent:



FINANCIAL DEPENDANTS

The average number of financial dependants of respondents is 3.6, with 14% of respondents having 6 or more dependants and only 1% having no financial dependants.

Number of family members supported financially by domestic worker:



- Family members supported when the worker is the main breadwinner: **3.6**
- Family members supported when the worker is not the main breadwinner: **1.7**

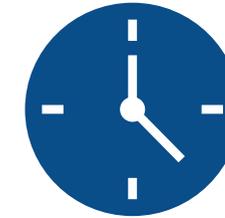
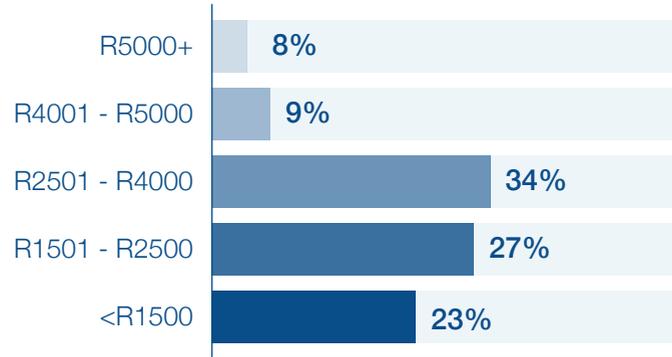
EARNINGS

The average income for domestic workers surveyed is between R2 000 and R3 000 per month, with the national minimum wage for domestic workers being R2 699 per month, according to the National Department of Labour.

On a minimum wage of R2 699, basic expenses cannot be covered. Therefore, it is imperative that the minimum wage be raised in order for domestic workers to be able to cover their basic living costs.

With only 49% of domestic workers currently being able to save anything at the end of the month, the majority who are able to do so save less than R200 per month (21% of respondents).

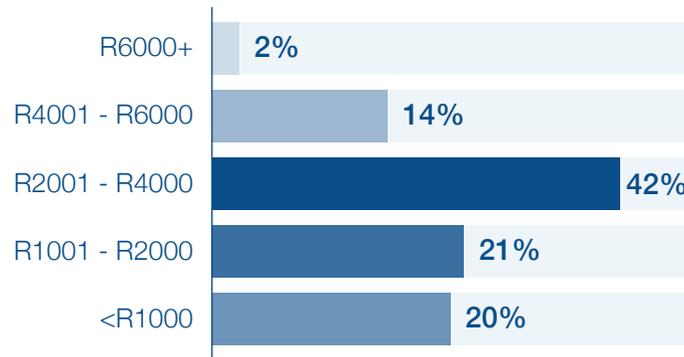
Average domestic worker combined household monthly income:



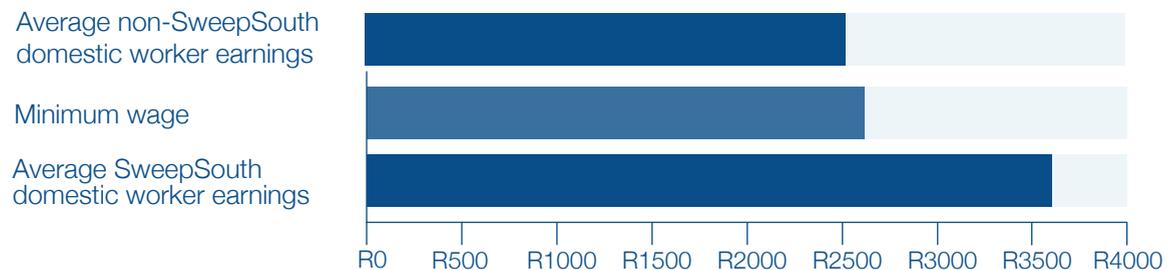
73%

Work more than 8 hours per day

Average surveyed worker monthly earnings:



Average domestic worker earnings compared with national minimum wage:

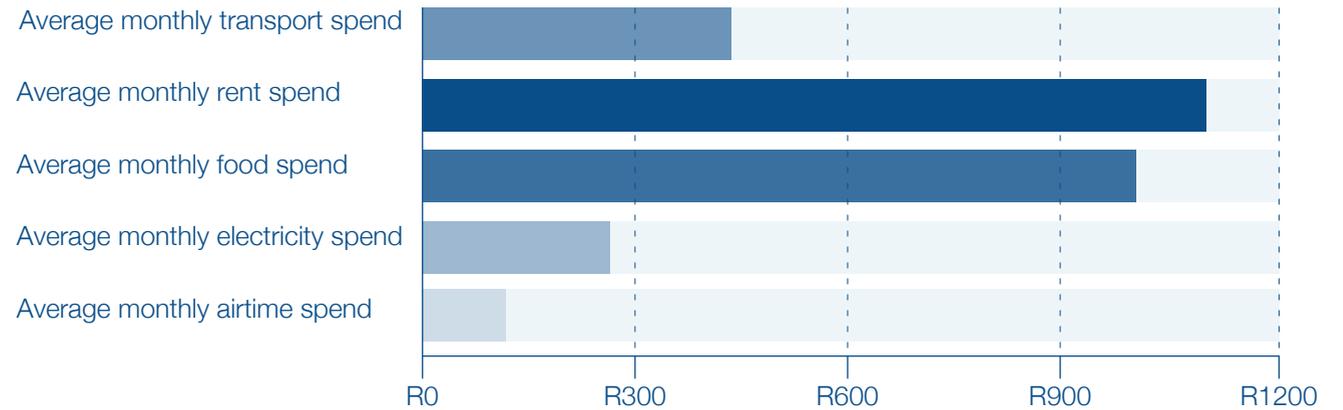


MONTHLY EXPENSES

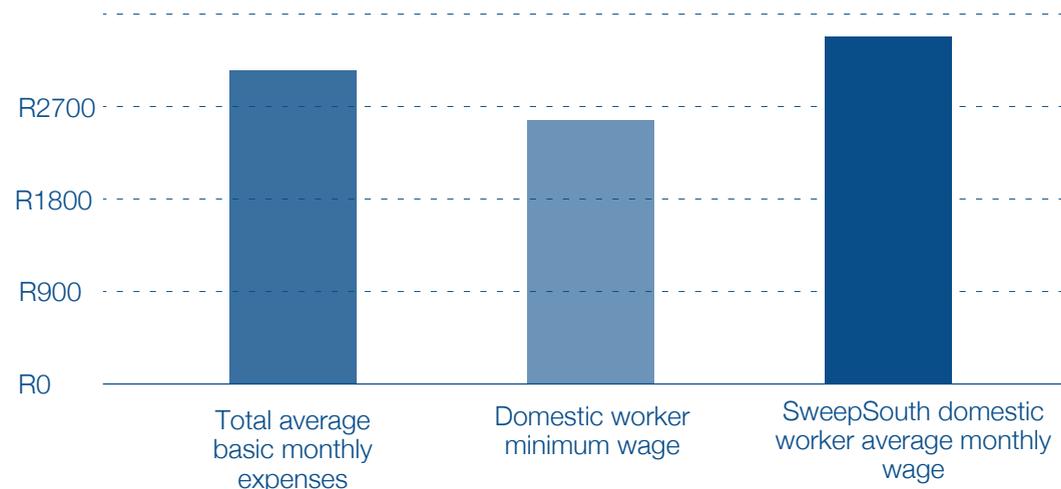
The cost of food, data, electricity, transport and airtime weighs heavily on monthly expenses of domestic workers. The constant rise in fuel prices, for example, affects all aspects of a domestic worker's monthly expenses, putting further pressure on their budgets and the need to earn more.

A quick calculation of total average expenses for rent (R1 136), electricity (R279), food (R1 100), airtime (R115) and transport (R455) shows that on a minimum wage of R2 699, it is imperative that the national minimum wage for domestic workers be raised further.

Average monthly expenses:



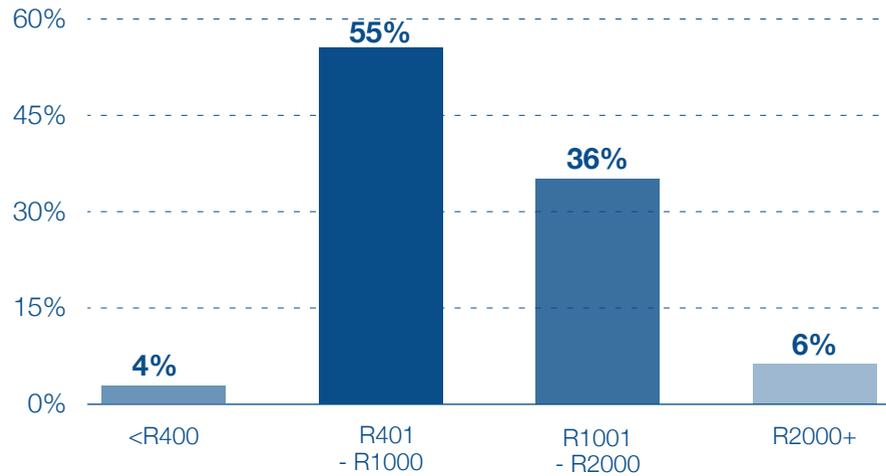
Minimum wage compared with expenses:



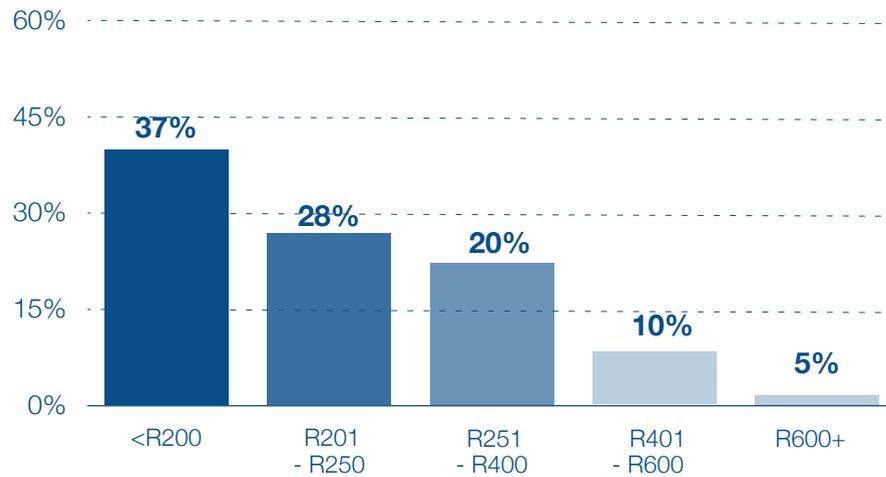
MONTHLY EXPENSES

A further breakdown of the monthly expenses by domestic workers surveyed.

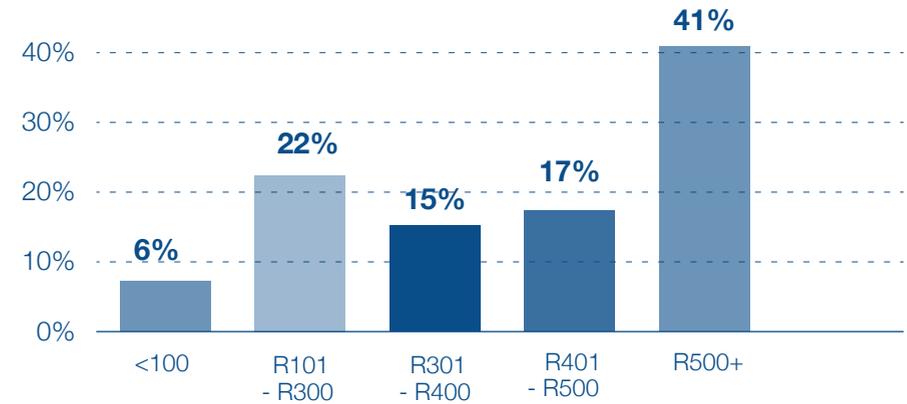
Food:



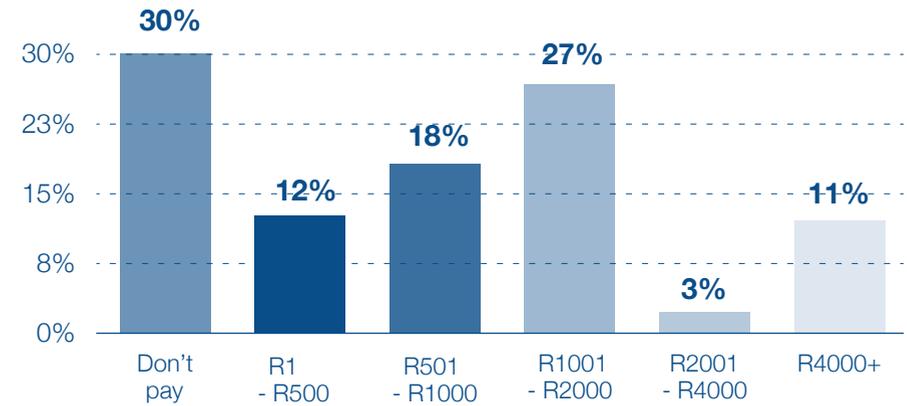
Electricity:



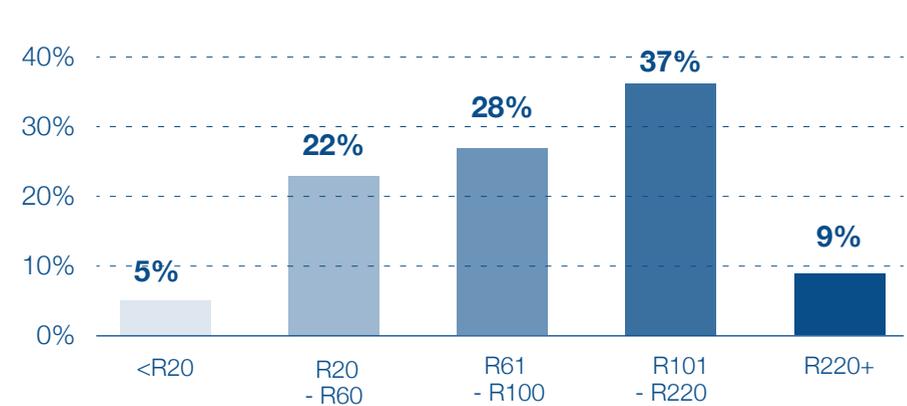
Transport:



Rent:



Airtime:



SURVEY CONCLUSION

2019 again sees most domestic workers reporting that they are earning above the minimum wage. However, the report also shows us that domestic workers are likely to be primary breadwinners and support up to four people. Their expenses are also in surplus of minimum wage, supporting the view that while a minimum wage is being achieved, a living wage is not, and it is imperative that employers, government and civil society are aware of this.