A JUST ENERY TRANSITION

PROJECT 90 BY 2030

Addressing historical damages to people and land or entrenching spatial inequalities?

South Africa relies heavily on coal, which is the most carbon-intensive energy source. Its dependency on the resource that has made South Africa one of the largest carbon emitters in the world. Half of the nation's greenhouse gas emissions derive from the electricity sector.

THE JUST ENERGY TRANSITION FRAMEWORK

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the world needs to transition from fossil fuels, such as coal, to renewable energy. This must be facilitated this in a just manner, also referred to as a just energy transition. The Presidential Climate Commission (PCC) defines this as "achieving a quality life for all South Africans, in the context of increasing the ability to the adverse impacts of climate, fostering climate resilience and reaching net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050." This definition relies on three types of justice: **distributive justice, procedural justice** and **restorative justice.**

PROCEDURAL JUSTICE - NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

This supports: participation and collaboration; co-developing an understanding of what a transition should look like; and individual and community-based projects for the transition.

DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE - GIVE SOUTH AFRICANS EQUAL OPORTUNITIES

This supports: A fair share of risks and opportunities from the transition; protection of impacted workers and communities from being the most negatively impacted; learning new skills for new sustainable industries; encouraging context-specific projects; and accountability for those who have caused harm.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE - ADDRESSING HISTORICAL DAMAGES TO PEOPLE AND LAND

This supports: identifying damage; acknowledging the harm caused; accountability for those who caused the damage; community ownership; land redistribution; ending energy poverty; and upholding the constitutional right to a healthy environment.

- Restorative justice stems from "restoring what once was".
- It focuses on centering those who experience the injustices.
- It tries to avoid new injustices.

LOOKING AT TWO IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE:

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AND LAND INJUSTICES

Restorative justice was promised to displaced communities who were stripped of their land under apartheid. **Land reform** intended to restore what once was, but the debate is at an impasse - **6853 land claims are still unresolved.**

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AND ELECTRICTY INJUSTICES

Also promised was the provision of energy to those who have previously been excluded from energy access. The apartheid regime allocated not just land, but also energy along racial lines. Renewable energy could help restore equal access.

DO THESE ELEMENTS ALIGN OR CLASH?

THE SPATIALITY OF RENEWABLE ENERGY

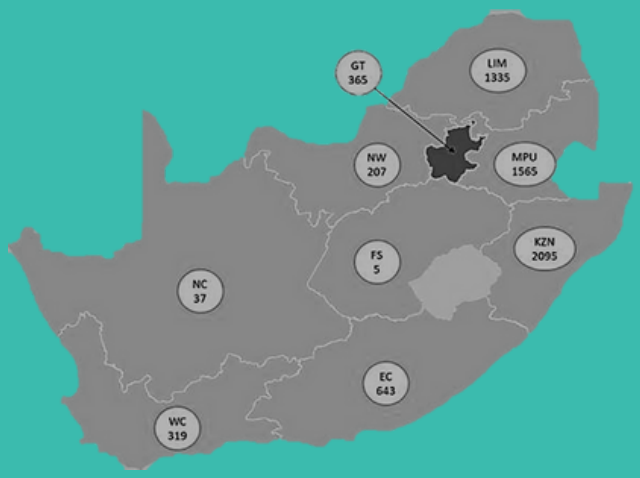
The possible clash between the elements of restorative justice becomes clear when the spatiality of renewable energy generation is considered. Renewable energy projects, such as wind and solar farms, are **land-intensive**, meaning they require large areas of land per unit of generated power. It is expected that competition for land will increase due to the introduction of large-scale renewable energy projects.

- **Does renewable energy hinder the achievement of restorative justice, as land reform becomes more complicated?**
- **Does renewable energy enable the achievement of restorative justice by providing energy to previously excluded communities?**
- **What injustices are addressed when speaking of achieving restorative justice?**

MERGING MAPS – LAND CLAIMS AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

We need to avoid the solidification and entrenchment of spatial inequalities and injustices!
To explore possible clashes between initiatives aimed at restorative justice, two maps are considered: a map of outstanding land claims and a map of renewable energy projects. Do renewable energy projects coincide with unresolved land claims? If so, how is restorative justice achieved?

MAP LAND CLAIMS PER PROVINCE



MAP RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS

A TRULY JUST ENERGY TRANSITION

What does a truely just transition mean? The following questions need to be addressed to formulate a comprehensive understanding of the issue:

- What does restorative justice mean in contemporary South Africa?
- What is the significance of land in restoring what once was?
- What is the significance of electricty in restoring what once was?
- How can the solidification and entrenchment of spatial inequalities and injustices be avoided? How should the spatiality of renewable energy be accounted for?
- If the realization of renewable energ does not contribute to healing the people and the land, how can the energy transition be truely just?

PROJECT 90 BY 2030

Inspire.
Mobilise.
A low-carbon generation.

Project 90 by 2030 is a social and environmental justice organisation inspiring and mobilising South African society towards a sustainably developed and equitable low-carbon future.