



## WAVE 5

National Income Dynamics  
Study (NIDS) – Coronavirus  
Rapid Mobile Survey (CRAM)

# The gendered effects of the COVID-19 crisis and ongoing lockdown in South Africa: Evidence from NIDS-CRAM Waves 1 - 5

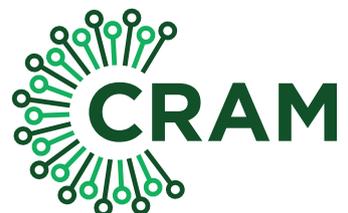
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**N.i.D.S.**  
NATIONAL INCOME DYNAMICS STUDY



CORONAVIRUS RAPID MOBILE SURVEY 2020

# The gendered effects of the COVID-19 crisis and ongoing lockdown in South Africa: Evidence from NIDS-CRAM Waves 1 - 5

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## Abstract

Globally, women have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 crisis. In line with this, research using earlier waves of the NIDS-CRAM survey found that women in South Africa were particularly hard hit. Relative to men, they were much more likely to lose their jobs during the initial strict lockdown phase, and their recovery was slower as the economy started to reopen (Casale and Posel 2020; Casale and Shepherd 2020; 2021a). Despite these uneven effects in the labour market, women were less likely than men to benefit from the COVID-specific government income support measures put in place to help cushion the blow to unemployed and furloughed workers. In addition to these gendered outcomes, there were also inequalities in the home. The time that women spend on childcare was found to be relatively more responsive to school closures and re-openings than the time men spend on childcare, with far more women than men citing childcare responsibilities as a constraint to their labour market activities (Casale and Shepherd 2020). In this final policy paper update, we track these uneven effects using the full five waves of the NIDS-CRAM survey, providing a comprehensive overview of how the first year of the pandemic has affected gender inequality in SA. We find that in March 2021, men's employment and working hours were back to pre-COVID levels, while women's employment and working hours remained below the February 2020 baseline figures. In addition to uneven effects in the labour market, inequalities in the time spent on childcare and in the income support for unemployed or furloughed workers persist. The evidence from the NIDS-CRAM survey over the last year therefore suggests that the pandemic has resulted in a rise in gender inequality in South Africa, undoing some of the gains of the previous two decades.

**Keywords:** gender, employment, childcare, COVID-19, lockdown, South Africa

# Executive Summary

In this report, all five waves of the NIDS-CRAM survey were used to track gender differences in labour market outcomes and unpaid care work in the home during South Africa's ongoing lockdown. The timing of the waves and the reference periods used in the surveys allowed us to compare outcomes across six time points: February 2020 (pre-COVID), April 2020 (L5 lockdown), June 2020 (L3 lockdown) October 2020 (L1 lockdown), January 2021 (adjusted L3 lockdown) and March 2021 (adjusted L1 lockdown).

The data suggest that women suffered a large and disproportionate effect in the labour market as a result of the initial very strict lockdown in April 2020, both in terms of net job losses and a reduction in hours worked. When lockdown regulations were progressively relaxed, there was a substantial recovery for both women and men in jobs and hours worked, although the recovery was slower for women. When lockdown regulations were tightened once more in response to the second wave of the pandemic, employment declined again, and at a faster rate for women. As at March 2021, when the country was in its least restrictive lockdown phase, women still remained behind men in terms of reaching their pre-COVID levels.

Compared to February 2020, women's employment in March 2021 was still down approximately 8%, while men's employment was back to pre-COVID levels, according to the NIDS-CRAM data. Among the employed, hours worked per week for women were down 6% on average in March 2021 (or 2 hours per week) compared to February 2020, while for men hours worked per week were back to pre-COVID times.

However, given the small sample sizes (and therefore large margins of error), it would be prudent not to place too much emphasis on the exact numbers. Nonetheless, one can say that while the recovery has been substantial for both men and women, it has been slower (and remains incomplete) for women.

An important finding is that even though women accounted for the majority of the unemployed (or those not working) throughout the period, as well as the majority of the net job losses recorded between any two time periods, they were under-represented in the COVID-specific government income support provided for unemployed and furloughed workers. In each month for which the data were collected, only around 35%-39% of either the UIF-TERS beneficiaries or the COVID-19 SRDG recipients were women.

That fewer women than men received the UIF-TERS is probably due to fewer women being (formally) employed and registered on the UIF system to begin with. However, fewer women received the SRDG because of the conditionality of the grant. The SRDG could not be held concurrently with another grant such as the CSG, which meant that unemployed women were penalised if they were also the main caregiver to a child. This gender bias in the design of the policy became a source of great contention following the government's decision to suspend the top-ups to the CSG in October 2020 after 6 months, while extending the SRDG for a further 6 months until April 2021. Going forward, if the SRDG is reintroduced either in a temporary or more permanent form, the conditionality of the grant will need to be revisited urgently.

The NIDS-CRAM data also allowed us to track how time spent on childcare in the home changed as a result of the various lockdown levels and school closures. The first wave of the data showed that the childcare burden among those living with children increased substantially between February and April 2020, when almost all externally provided childcare was suspended, and that women were affected more. As schools and childcare facilities reopened, both men and women were able to cut back on childcare hours, with women reducing childcare work by relatively more. In other words, while both men's and women's time spent on childcare responds to school closures and reopenings, women's time spent on childcare responds relatively more.

This is a stark reminder of how important childcare availability is for women and how the burden of school closures falls disproportionately on their shoulders. As the data collected in Wave 2 showed, this has implications for their labour market prospects, with twice as many women as men reporting that childcare responsibilities in June 2020 (when most schools and ECD centres were closed) affected their ability to work or search for work.

Finally, it is important to note that at the time of writing (end June 2021), South Africa had entered its third wave of the pandemic and tighter lockdown restrictions had been progressively re-imposed from 31 May 2021 (with South Africa currently in an adjusted Level 4 lockdown from 28 June 2021). Schools once again had closed early for the holidays (from 30 June 2021). This time, however, no government income support measures have been announced, despite the fact that lockdown restrictions will almost certainly have a further effect on employment, particularly for those in the tourism and hospitality industry. This is deeply worrying in the face of already widespread hunger and food insecurity which, as our Wave 5 data show, is affecting women and their households relatively more.

## 1. Introduction

Women have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 crisis. As studies from a range of countries have shown, women were more likely than men to lose their jobs or to work fewer hours during the first wave of lockdowns (Adams-Prassl et al 2020; Andrew et al 2020; Collins et al 2020; Deshpande 2020; IWPR 2020a; 2020b; Kristal and Yaish 2020). A key reason for this is that women and men are concentrated in different parts of the economy, and many of the hardest-hit sectors have also been those that typically employ large numbers of women (Alon et al 2020; Joyce and Xu 2020). Another likely reason is that women have borne the brunt of the crisis in childcare that has occurred as a result of school closures, further limiting their ability to engage in paid work, or to work as many hours as before (Alon et al 2020; Cattan et al 2020; Hupkau and Petrongolo 2020). In almost all the studies that have collected data on time spent on childcare during lockdowns, women were found to take on a greater share of the additional care work (Adams-Prassl et al 2020; Andrew et al 2020; Ilkkaracan and Memis 2020; Sevilla and Smith 2020).

Research using Wave 1 of the National Income Dynamics Study - Coronavirus Rapid Mobile Survey (NIDS-CRAM) found that women in South Africa were particularly hard hit by the crisis and the initial lockdown (Casale and Posel 2020). Not only were they much more likely than men to lose their jobs and to work fewer hours during the very strict Level 5 lockdown in April 2020 compared to the pre-crisis period, they were also more likely to take on additional childcare as a result of school closures. Analysis of subsequent waves of NIDS-CRAM (Casale and Shepherd 2020; 2021a) found that despite substantial recovery in the labour market as lockdown levels became less restrictive, women remained behind men in terms of reaching their pre-COVID employment levels. Further, analysis of childcare responsibilities found that changes in the hours women spend on care work closely track the closure and re-opening of schools, highlighting the important role that school plays in freeing up women's time.

In this fifth and final policy paper update, we track gendered outcomes in the labour market and in unpaid care work in the home using all five waves of the NIDS-CRAM survey, with a particular interest in the results produced by the recently-released fifth wave. Wave 5 collected information on outcomes in March 2021, by which point South Africa's second wave of the pandemic had passed and the lockdown had been relaxed to 'adjusted Level 1' (in place from 1 March 2021 to 30 May 2021). During the 'adjusted Level 1' lockdown, almost all economic activity was once again allowed, although health guidelines and various maximum capacity restrictions on gatherings had to be upheld. In addition, all grades were back at school, although children may not have been attending every day or every week (see Box 1 for more detail on how restrictions changed across the five waves of NIDS-CRAM).

We proceed in the following manner. In the next section we describe the NIDS-CRAM data. In Section 3, we present descriptive changes in labour market outcomes that occurred between February 2020 and March 2021. More specifically, we examine net job losses/gains, changes in hours worked and earnings among the employed, and UIF-TERS or COVID-19 SRDG take-up. In Section 4, we track time spent on childcare over the five waves of data, disaggregating unpaid work patterns further by household composition and labour market status. In the concluding section, we summarise our main results and offer some final reflections.

## 2. Data description

NIDS-CRAM is a rapid assessment telephone survey that aimed to track the socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 crisis during the first year of South Africa's ongoing lockdown. Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) was employed, with interviews approximately 20 minutes on average, and conducted in the preferred language of the respondent. In Wave 1, the questionnaire was translated into 10 of the 11 official South African languages (Ndebele was excluded), and in Waves 2 to 5, into all 11 official languages.

While a number of rapid online or telephone surveys have been conducted in South Africa since the crisis began, the benefit of NIDS-CRAM is that it attempted to collect information on a nationally

representative sample of adults, to the extent possible under the circumstances. This was achieved by using a sub-sample of individuals from the National Income Dynamics Survey (NIDS), a pre-existing nationally representative longitudinal survey last conducted in 2017.<sup>1</sup> To be more precise, therefore, the NIDS-CRAM sample is representative of individuals who were 15 years and older in NIDS in 2017, when weighted appropriately.

The interviews for the first wave were conducted between 7 May and 27 June 2020 among a sample of 7 073 adults aged 18 years and older. In Wave 2, 5 676 of these individuals were successfully re-interviewed between 13 July and 13 August 2020, leading to a response rate of 80.2%. Wave 3 interviews were conducted between 2 November and 13 December 2020. In Wave 3, 5 046 (or 71.3%) of the original 7 073 respondents were successfully re-interviewed. Due to this expected attrition, the sample was replenished in Wave 3 with a top-up sample, resulting in an additional 1 084 successful interviews. The total sample size for Wave 3 was, therefore, 6 130 individuals. In Wave 4, successful interviews were conducted between 2 February and 10 March 2021 among a sample of 5 629 individuals out of a potential 8 157 (a response rate of 69%). The final wave, Wave 5, was conducted between 6 April 2021 and 11 May 2021, among a sample of 5 862 individuals (a response rate of 71.9%).<sup>2</sup> Box 1 describes the lockdown regulations that were in place for each wave of data collection.

All data presented in this paper are weighted using the updated weights provided with the Wave 5 data. In addition to accounting for non-response and attrition, these weights are now rescaled to the NIDS Wave 5 population totals, resulting in more consistent population estimates across the waves. Standard errors are corrected for survey design features, namely clustering and stratification. For more detail on the NIDS-CRAM survey design and weighting approach, see Ingle et al (2021).

### **Box 1. How did lockdown regulations change between the NIDS-CRAM Waves?**

**WAVE 1:** Wave 1 focused on measuring employment outcomes for February 2020 (or pre-COVID) and April 2020. April was the first full month of South Africa's strictest lockdown phase – Level 5 (L5). During this lockdown level, which was in place from 27 March to 30 April 2020, almost all activity was suspended except for the production of essential goods and services (mainly in the food, medical, and security sectors), and workers were encouraged to work from home if feasible.

All schools, ECD centres and childcare facilities were closed, and domestic workers/childminders were not allowed to go to work (although some living with their employers may have continued to work).

**WAVE 2:** Wave 2 focused on measuring employment outcomes for June 2020, when South Africa was in a less restrictive lockdown phase - Level 3 (which ran from 1 June to 17 August 2020). While there was very little difference in the level of economic activity allowed under L5 and L4, the move to L3 meant that many businesses were allowed to reopen for the first time since 27 March 2020. Instead of specifying which sectors could operate, as had previously been the case, the government transitioned to listing which sectors could not reopen under L3. These restrictions included personal care services (if social distancing was not possible); all on-site consumption of food and alcohol in restaurants and bars (until alcohol was banned for the second time from 13 July, after which it was not available for purchase at all); hotels/accommodation for leisure; international and domestic air travel except for essential work; conferences, events and gatherings; entertainment venues; and fitness centres.

On the childcare side, in addition to domestic workers/childminders being allowed to return to work, Grades 7 and 12 were allowed back to school at the beginning of June. Childcare work in households with children may have lessened somewhat, however ECD centres and most school grades remained closed in June.

**WAVE 3:** Wave 3 measured employment outcomes for the month of October 2020, when South Africa was in Level 1 lockdown (in operation from 21 September to 28 December 2020). By this stage almost all economic activity was once again allowed, although COVID-related health guidelines still needed

1 For more information about NIDS, visit <http://www.nids.uct.ac.za/>. NIDS as well as the special NIDS-CRAM survey is conducted by the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) at the University of Cape Town.

2 For access to the data, as well as all technical and policy reports, visit <https://cramsurvey.org/>.

to be followed. Certain recreational business such as gyms, restaurants, bars and cinemas were not allowed to exceed 50% of their usual capacity, with restrictions on the maximum numbers of people allowed at indoor and outdoor gatherings. A limited curfew was in place from midnight to 4am, alcohol was once again available for on-site consumption in licensed establishments, and the sale of alcohol at retail outlets was allowed from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Another important change was the reintroduction of international travel for business and leisure in October.

During July and August the government had planned for a phased reopening of the remaining school grades. However, given the rising number of infections recorded during the winter months in South Africa, a decision was made to close schools for four weeks from 27 July - 24 August 2020 for all grades except 7 and 12 (which were to have only a one-week and two-week break respectively). Most grades returned on 24 August, with the remaining ones phased in on 31 August. A one-week holiday was scheduled for 23 October - 2 November to break the third and fourth terms, with the school year ending on 15 December 2020. Therefore, during the October reference period captured in Wave 3 of NIDS-CRAM, all school-going children would have been allowed back to school. The government was much slower to announce plans for the reopening of ECD centres and other daycare facilities. Eventually after a High Court Judgement on 6 July 2020, they were allowed to reopen, but subject to the regulations set out by the Department of Social Development. There is great concern, however, that given the substantial financial and administrative costs associated with reopening, many such centres will remain closed (see Wills et al 2020, 2021 for an extensive treatment).

**WAVE 4:** Wave 4 measured employment outcomes for January 2021, when South Africa was placed on an 'adjusted Level 3 lockdown', in operation from 29 December 2020 to 28 February 2021. Rates of infection had already started to increase by the beginning of December 2020 as South Africa headed into the second wave of the pandemic (a more severe wave than the first, fuelled by the emergence of the faster-spreading Beta variant). The government introduced various ad hoc restrictions, mostly on crowd size and operational capacity, during the course of December (with additional region-specific restrictions imposed in hotspot areas such as the closure of beaches and an earlier curfew). But on the 29 December 2020, the whole country moved to the adjusted L3 lockdown. The curfew was extended from 9pm to 6am, with all restaurants and entertainment areas closing at 8pm; bars, clubs, public parks and swimming pools were closed to the public; the sale of alcohol for both off-site and on-site consumption was banned; social, faith-based, and political gatherings were prohibited; more stringent regulations around funerals were reintroduced; maximum capacity restrictions for restaurants and other entertainment venues were implemented (with a maximum of 50 indoors and 100 outdoors if health protocols could be adhered to), and businesses were expected to use only 50% of their floor space to maintain social distancing.

The reopening of schools for the year was meant to take place on 27 January 2021. However, due to the second wave, it was delayed to 15 February 2021 for public schools, with private schools allowed to reopen on 1 February 2021.

**WAVE 5:** Wave 5 measured employment outcomes for March 2021, when South Africa moved to the less restrictive 'adjusted Level 1 lockdown' following the end of the second wave of the pandemic. Adjusted Level 1 lockdown was in place from 1 March 2021 to 30 May 2021. Except for nightclubs, all businesses could operate; a less restrictive curfew was in place again from midnight to 4am, with establishments closing at 11pm; normal trading hours for alcohol (both on- and off-site) resumed, and maximum capacity restrictions for gatherings and establishments were relaxed (with a maximum of 100 people indoors and 250 people outdoors if health protocols can be adhered to).

Public schools reopened for all grades on 15 February 2021, with the first term ending on 23 April 2021. Therefore all schools were open during the W5 reference month of March 2021. However, evidence suggests that platooning remains a common practice in some schools, where grades attend on alternate days or weeks to accommodate social distancing in the classroom (Shepherd et al 2021).

### 3. Labour market outcomes

In this section, we describe the labour market outcomes for men and women at six time points using the five waves of the NIDS-CRAM data as cross-sections (weighted appropriately)<sup>3</sup>:

**February 2020:** the baseline/pre-COVID estimate (from W1)

**April 2020:** the first full month of Level 5 lockdown (also from W1)

**June 2020:** the first full month of Level 3 lockdown (from W2)

**October 2020:** the first full month of Level 1 lockdown (from W3)

**January 2021:** the first full month of 'adjusted' Level 3 lockdown or L3.2 (from W4)

**March 2021:** the first full month of 'adjusted' Level 1 lockdown or L1.2 (from W5)

*Table A.1* in the Appendix presents the total employment numbers and rates, the mean hours worked per week, mean and median monthly real earnings, and the percentages reporting zero hours and zero earnings in these six months by gender. For ease of viewing, *Figures 1-3* below present the levels of employment, hours worked and earnings for the six time points, as well as the percentage changes between the waves.<sup>4</sup>

#### Employment

*Table A.1* and *Figure 1* show that, compared to pre-COVID times (abbreviated to Business As Usual (BAU) in the graph), women experienced much greater job losses than men in both absolute and relative terms during the first strict lockdown phase in April 2020 (see Casale and Posel 2020 for details).<sup>5</sup> In total, among adults aged 18 years and older, about 2.9 million jobs were lost in that first phase, just under 2 million (or two-thirds) of which were accounted for by women.

The data from the remaining time points show how employment is affected by the various lockdown regulations. Between April 2020 and October 2020, as South Africa moved from Level 5 to Level 1 lockdown, there was a substantial jobs recovery. However, net employment declined again in January 2021 as the second wave of the pandemic precipitated a move to a stricter lockdown – called 'adjusted Level 3'. Once the second wave passed, and the lockdown was relaxed to 'adjusted Level 1' in March 2021, jobs picked up again.

However, despite the substantial recovery for both men and women, the data from NIDS-CRAM suggest the pace has been slower for women. In March 2021, women's employment remained 8.4% below its pre-COVID level, while men's employment appeared to be back at pre-COVID levels (*Figure 1a*). Stated in terms of employment-to-population ratios, among those 18 years and older, women's employment rate was 46% in February 2020 and 43.8% in March 2021, while for men the employment rates in February 2020 and March 2021 were 59.3% and 60.2% respectively (*Figure 1b*).

Given the small sample sizes (and therefore large margins of error), some of the confidence intervals are overlapping, and it would be prudent not to place too much emphasis on the exact numbers. But the results are certainly suggestive of an uneven recovery for men and women.

In a previous NIDS-CRAM policy paper (Casale and Shepherd 2021b), we estimated the probability of retaining employment or gaining new employment in April 2020, as the first initial shock to the labour market was felt, and again in January 2021, almost a year later. We also estimated the probability of staying employed across the first four waves. An interesting finding from this study was that the presence of school-aged children in the household reduced the probability of employment

<sup>3</sup> Note that the figures in this paper will be marginally different from those presented for the same months in the previous policy papers by Casale and Posel (2020) and Casale and Shepherd (2020; 2021a; b). This is because updated weights for the earlier waves have subsequently been released and these are used in this policy paper.

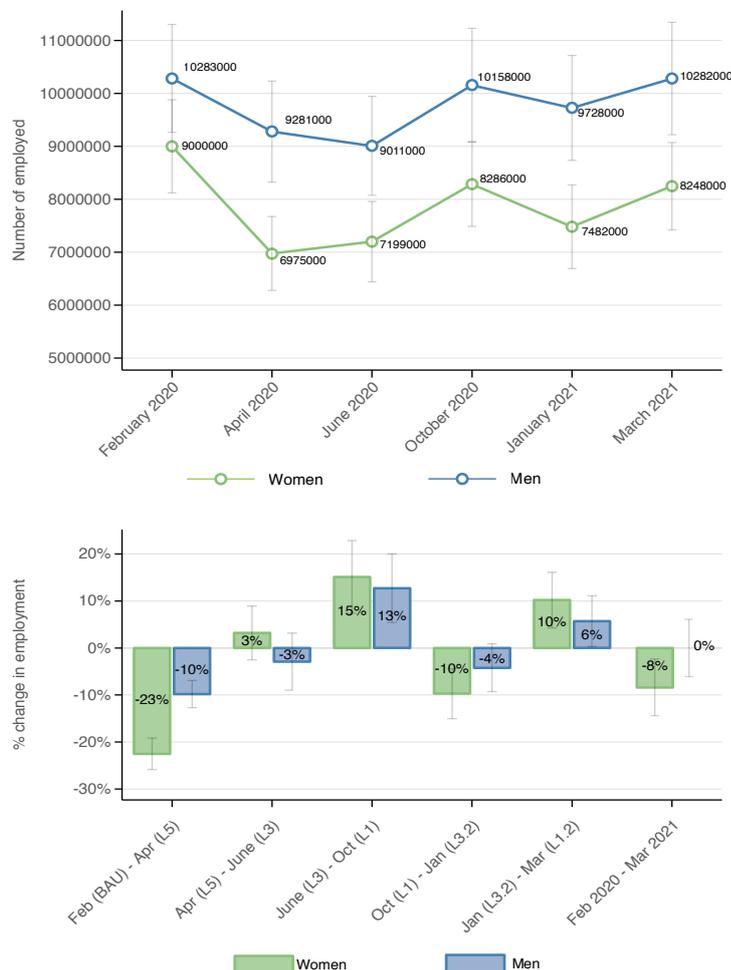
<sup>4</sup> All the information presented in this paper is based on the unbalanced panel (weighted appropriately) to be able to produce the most reliable estimates at the cross-section.

<sup>5</sup> In keeping with ILO definitions, a person is defined as employed in the survey if they had worked in "any kind of job", had done "work for any profit or pay, even if just for an hour or a small amount", had been engaged in "any kind of business such as selling things - big or small - even if only for one hour", or if they had a job/activity that they would return to in the next 4 weeks.

among women, but no relationship was found for men. This is consistent with our findings in the next section of the paper which suggest school closures have affected women more than men.

However, even after controlling for the typical individual (age and education), regional (urban/rural and province) and household-level variables (marriage, children, pensioners in the household) in the regressions, we found that women were less likely to have retained or gained employment either initially or by January 2021, and less likely to have remained employed over the whole period, compared to men. The fact that a large female penalty persists after controlling for these variables, suggests that a significant factor in who lost and who gained jobs over the period is likely the type of job men and women initially held, and the type of job that became available over the period. Women were more likely to be in sectors that were hardest hit by the crisis, and perhaps also less likely to be able to take up the new opportunities available. Although we were unable to show this with the NIDS-CRAM data, even within sectors, women might be in more precarious employment relationships than men, making it easier for employers to reduce their employment when lockdown restrictions are imposed.

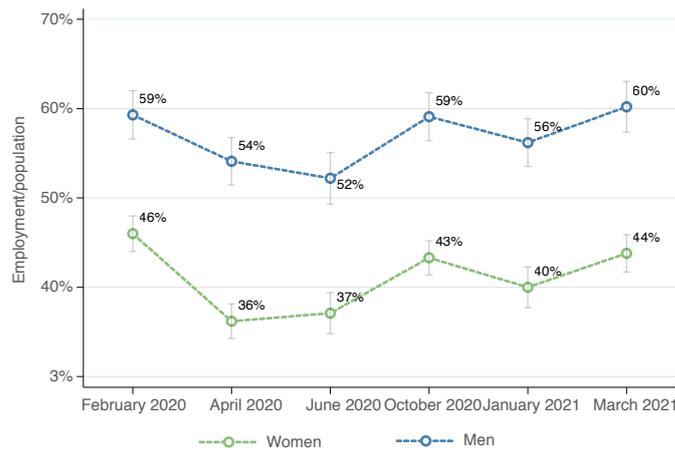
**Figure 1a: Levels of employment, and percentage changes between time points, February 2020 to March 2021**



**Source:** NIDS-CRAM, Waves 1, 2 and 3 (2020) and Wave 4 and Wave 5 (2021)

**Notes:** The sample is all employed adults 18 years or older. The unbalanced panel is used and data are weighted appropriately. 90 percent confidence intervals are shown. BAU = business as usual, L5 = lockdown level 5, L3 = lockdown level 3, L1 = lockdown level 1, L3.2 = lockdown adjusted level 3, L1.2 = lockdown adjusted level 1.

**Figure 1b: Employment-to-population ratios, February 2020 to March 2021**



**Source:** NIDS-CRAM, Waves 1, 2 and 3 (2020) and Wave 4 and Wave 5 (2021)

**Notes:** The sample is all employed adults 18 years or older. The unbalanced panel is used and data are weighted appropriately. 90 percent confidence intervals are shown.

## Hours worked

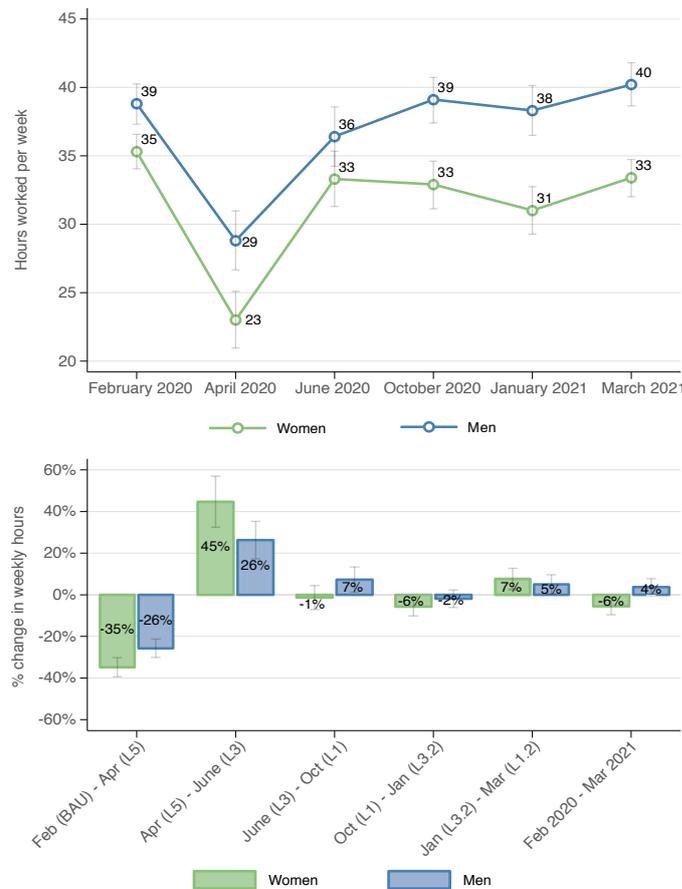
Restricting to those who had employment at each time point (i.e. using the data as repeated cross-sections again), the remaining rows of *Table A.1* show information on hours worked and earnings.

The data in *Table A.1* and *Figure 2* show that, in addition to experiencing greater job losses than men as a result of the initial lockdown, employed women also saw much bigger declines in mean hours worked in April 2020, as the 'hard' lockdown was imposed. Between February and April 2020, mean hours worked per week among the employed fell by 35% for women (from 35.3 to 23 hours) and by 26% for men (from 38.8 to 28.8 hours). Part of this was being driven by the large increases in the number of people who reported having a job (or a job to return to) but working zero hours. This group of workers – who we might term 'furloughed' – constituted 36% of employed women and 26% of employed men in April 2020 (see *Table A.1*).

As the economy started reopening, mean hours worked among the employed recovered substantially, although with a small dip again in January 2021 when the stricter lockdown ('adjusted Level 3') was imposed during the second wave of the pandemic. However, while the average hours worked per week by men appear to have recovered completely by March 2021, and may even exceed pre-COVID levels (mean hours worked per week were 40.2 for men in March 2021 compared to 38.8 in February 2020), women's hours remain below pre-COVID levels. At 33.4 hours a week, the mean hours worked by employed women in March 2021 are about 2 hours lower than the February 2021 figure of 35.3 (*Figure 2*).

The percentage of the employed who reported working zero hours (who we referred to as 'furloughed' workers in April 2020) was back down to pre-COVID times by March 2021, i.e. around 6-7% for women and 3-4% for men. This suggests that people either lost their jobs altogether or if they managed to remain employed, they were back at work. For women, however, they were back at work, but working fewer hours on average compared to pre-COVID times. As stated above in relation to employment levels, a reduction in hours worked could also be related to women's childcare constraints or to the type of work women do, which makes them more vulnerable to cutbacks in hours. Further analysis of this issue in a multivariate context is warranted.

**Figure 2. Average hours worked per week, and percentage changes between time points, February 2020 to March 2021**



**Source:** NIDS-CRAM, Waves 1, 2 and 3 (2020) and Wave 4 and Wave 5 (2021)

**Notes:** The sample is all employed adults 18 years or older. The unbalanced panel is used and data are weighted appropriately. 90 percent confidence intervals are shown. BAU = business as usual, L5 = lockdown level 5, L3 = lockdown level 3, L1 = lockdown level 1, L3.2 = lockdown adjusted level 3, L1.2 = lockdown adjusted level 1.

## Earnings

Mean earnings among the employed have fluctuated quite considerably over the first year of the pandemic. The change in mean monthly real earnings has generally been in the opposite direction to the change in employment (*Figure 3a*). This is probably because job losses hit harder at the lower end of the earnings distribution (Casale and Posel 2020)<sup>6</sup>, so that those who retained employment are a more select sample of higher-earning individuals. For example, there was a large increase in mean monthly earnings among the employed at the start of the pandemic when job losses were particularly large, with mean monthly earnings falling again by October 2020 in line with the jobs' recovery.

After the first year of the pandemic, mean monthly (real) earnings among the employed appear to have settled again at values quite close to their pre-pandemic levels. Women's mean monthly earnings in March 2021 were down about 5% compared to February 2020, while men's were down roughly 3%. However, the standard errors are large and overlapping, so one cannot attach too much weight to these differences.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Casale and Posel (2020) showed that a greater percentage of Africans, low-income earners, and those without a post-matric education lost their jobs between February and April 2020, and that the percentages were higher for women than men in all categories.

<sup>7</sup> Another important qualification is that the earnings data in February are not directly comparable to the other months because the methods of questioning differed. More detailed questions on earnings by period of pay (daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly) were asked for all the months except for February 2020, due to time constraints in Wave 1. Comparisons with February should therefore be viewed with some caution.

**Figure 3a. Average monthly earnings (real), and percentage changes between time points, February 2020 to March 2021**



**Source:** NIDS-CRAM, Waves 1, 2 and 3 (2020) and Wave 4 and Wave 5 (2021)

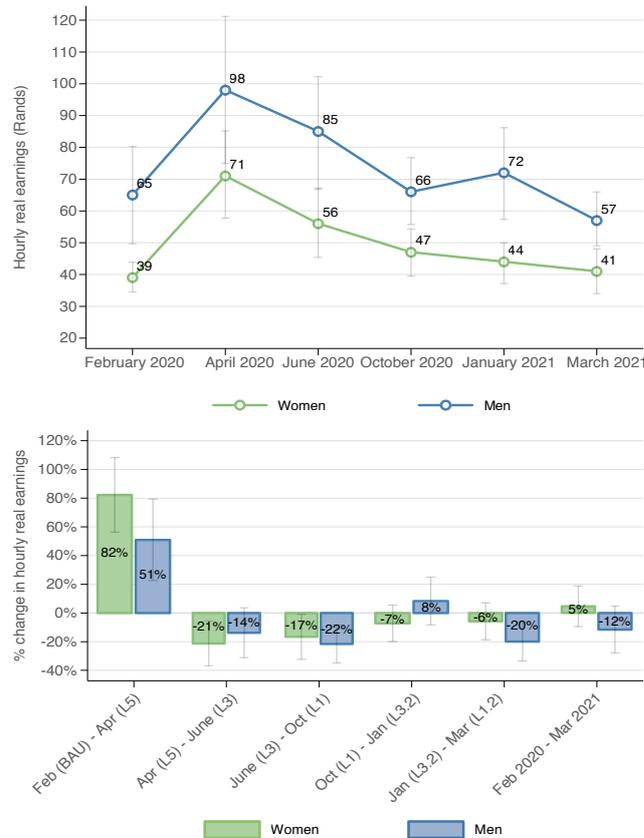
**Notes:** The sample is all employed adults 18 years or older. Real monthly earnings in April, June and October 2020 and January and March 2021 are computed through deflating to February Rands. The unbalanced panel is used and data are weighted appropriately. 90 percent confidence intervals are shown. BAU = business as usual, L5 = lockdown level 5, L3 = lockdown level 3, L1 = lockdown level 1, L3.2 = lockdown adjusted level 3, L1.2 = lockdown adjusted level 1.

In *Figure 3b*, we show mean hourly (real) earnings among the employed who reported working non-zero hours in the month (what we refer to as the ‘active’ employed here). What this figure shows is that in March 2021, mean hourly earnings were not significantly different from their pre-pandemic levels. If anything, women’s mean hourly earnings increased marginally. What this suggests is that the small decline in women’s mean monthly earnings noted above are not being driven by declines in mean hourly earnings. Rather, they are likely being driven by the reduction in mean monthly working hours among employed women shown in *Figure 2* above.<sup>8</sup> This finding aligns with the results presented in Hill and Köhler (2020), who conducted a far more detailed analysis of changes in the gender wage gap between February and June 2020.

It is important to note, though, that the observations made here are based on small sample sizes and are purely of a descriptive (i.e. associational) nature. A more robust causal analysis will require extensive multivariate empirical work, and corroboration from larger-sample national data when they become available.

<sup>8</sup> It would be interesting to analyse in future work whether this finding holds up in a panel-type analysis. In other words, among those who remained employed, did their work hours and earnings change in the ways we identify here, or is some of what we find here when analysing the cross-sections being driven by the changing composition of the workforce and the jobs available.

**Figure 3b. Average hourly earnings (real), and percentage changes between time points – ‘actively’ employed only**



**Source:** NIDS-CRAM, Waves 1, 2 and 3 (2020) and Wave 4 and Wave 5 (2021)

**Notes:** The sample is all employed adults 18 years or older who reported non-zero working hours. Real monthly earnings in April, June and October 2020 and January 2021 are computed through deflating to February Rands. The unbalanced panel is used and data are weighted appropriately. 90 percent confidence intervals are shown. BAU = business as usual, L5 = lockdown level 5, L3 = lockdown level 3, L1 = lockdown level 1, L3.2 = lockdown adjusted level 3, L1.2 = lockdown adjusted level 1.

## Income support for the unemployed and ‘furloughed’

As shown in previous work (Casale and Posel 2020; Casale and Shepherd 2020; 2021a) and above, the NIDS-CRAM data suggest that women have been over-represented among those who lost their jobs or who experienced reduced hours during the ongoing lockdown. However, they have been under-represented in income support for the unemployed and ‘furloughed’ workers (those with employment, but unable to work because of lockdown restrictions).

The Unemployment Insurance Fund – Temporary Employer/Employee Relief Scheme (UIF-TERS) was introduced in April 2020 as a temporary relief scheme to support employers and employees unable to work because of business interruptions and lockdown restrictions. This scheme ran alongside the standard UIF scheme and was aimed at staving off mass retrenchments by allowing employers to temporarily claim benefits on behalf of their workers from the period starting 27 March 2020 (when the first lockdown was imposed) to 15 March 2021. Although the scheme was plagued by various administrative glitches and took some time to start paying out, government reports suggest that by end March 2021, payment had been made to 267 000 employers and to 5.4 million individual employees totaling R58.7 billion.

In *Table 1* we show the numbers of women and men who reported receiving UIF-TERS payments in June 2020, October 2020, March 2021 and January 2021. As we would expect, the number of UIF-TERS beneficiaries fell after June 2020 for both men and women, tracking the recovery in the job market. What is notable though, is that a majority of the beneficiaries in each month are men. The share of UIF-TERS recipients in any one month who are women ranges from 34.5% to 39.5% over the period.

One of the reasons for this is that women are less likely than men to be (formally) employed and registered on the UIF system in the first place (based on Statistics South Africa's Quarterly Labour Force Survey). In fact, the share of women who received ordinary UIF payments in any one month is similarly low – ranging from 30% to 45.3% over the period (also shown in *Table 1*).

The under-representation of women in UIF support is particularly stark when one compares these values to women's share of the broadly unemployed, which ranges from 57.3% to 60% over the period, or women's share in the net job losses compared to pre-COVID times, ranging from 57% in June 2020 to almost 100% in March 2021 (*Table 1*).

**Table 1. UIF/UIF-TERS, June and October 2020 and January and March 2021 beneficiaries**

UIF/UIF-TERS amongst labour force (employed and broad unemployed):	Women	Men
Received UIF-TERS in <b>JUNE 2020</b>	782 714	1 198 041
	(119 359)	(164 711)
Received UIF in <b>JUNE 2020</b>	271 792	339 706
	(56 088)	(76 259)
Share of UIF-TERS recipients in June 2020 women <sup>a</sup>	<b>39.5%</b>	
Share of UIF recipients in June 2020 women	<b>44.5%</b>	
Share of labour force in June 2020 women	47.0%	
Share of employed in June 2020 women	44.4%	
Share of "not working" in June 2020 women	59.6%	
Share of broad unemployed in June 2020 women	57.3%	
Share of net job losses February to June 2020 women	58.6%	
Received UIF-TERS in <b>OCTOBER 2020</b>	534 127	916 469
	(83 660)	(153 593)
Received UIF in <b>OCTOBER 2020</b>	149 475	222 398
	(31 384)	(58 511)
Share of UIF-TERS recipients in October 2020 women	<b>36.8%</b>	
Share of UIF recipients in October 2020 women	<b>40.2%</b>	
Share of labour force in October 2020 women	47.4%	
Share of employed in October 2020 women	44.9%	
Share of "not working" in October 2020 women	60.6%	
Share of broad unemployed in October 2020 women	60.0%	
Share of net job losses February to October 2020 women	85.1%	
Received UIF-TERS in <b>JANUARY 2021</b>	232 631	441 592
	(52 566)	(102 356)
Received UIF in <b>JANUARY 2021</b>	136 230	164 669
	(42 662)	(60 214)
Share of UIF-TERS recipients in January 2021 women	<b>34.5%</b>	

**Table 1 continued. UIF/UIF-TERS, June and October 2020 and January and March 2021 beneficiaries**

UIF/UIF-TERS amongst labour force (employed and broad unemployed):	Women	Men
Share of UIF recipients in January 2021 women	45.3%	
Share of labour force in January 2021 women	46.0%	
Share of employed in January 2021 women	43.5%	
Share of “not working” in January 2021 women	59.8%	
Share of broad unemployed in January 2021 women	58.0%	
Share of net job losses February 2020 to January 2021 women	73.2%	
Received UIF-TERS in <b>MARCH 2021</b>	351 972 (76 434)	619 520 (116 813)
Received UIF in <b>MARCH 2021</b>	83 336 (19 694)	194 452 (65 803)
Share of UIF-TERS recipients in March 2021 women	36.2%	
Share of UIF recipients in March 2021 women	30.0%	
Share of labour force in March 2021 women	46.8%	
Share of employed in March 2021 women	44.5%	
Share of “not working” in March 2021 women	60.8%	
Share of broad unemployed in March 2021 women	58.9%	
Share of net job losses February 2020 to March 2021 women	99.8%	

**Source:** NIDS-CRAM, Wave 2 and Wave 3 (2020) and Wave 4 and Wave 5 (2021)

**Notes:** The sample is all adults 18 years or older. “Not working” includes unemployed and not economically active (NEA). Data are weighted appropriately. Standard errors are in parentheses.

<sup>a</sup> The way to interpret these shares is as follows: Of all UIF-TERS recipients in June 2020, 39.5% were women (the remaining 60.5% were men), etc.

In *Table 2*, we show a similar ‘bias’ or under-representation of women in the disbursement of the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant (SRDG) for R350 a month. This special grant was announced in May 2020 and was targeted at the unemployed of working-age who were not claiming from the UIF system or receiving any other social grant. Pay-outs were very slow initially as the system battled to process all the new applicants. But by June 2020 our data suggest around 2.5 million of the NIDS-CRAM respondents had been paid out, 37.6% (or 922 522) of whom were women.<sup>9</sup> By January 2021 this figure had increased to around 5.4 million, but women still remained under-represented among the beneficiaries, with only 35.7% (or 1 909 754) of the recipients being women. Similar figures were reported for March 2021.

The data in *Table 2* show that the gendered access to the grant is not being driven by very large differences in success rates among male and female applicants. There was no significant difference between men and women in the percentage of applicants who were successful in June and October 2020. Although the gender gap in success rates widened in January and March 2021, the difference was still only around 8 percentage points. Rather, fewer women were applying in the first place, despite them being over-represented among the unemployed and among the ‘not working’ (i.e. the unemployed and NEA), as was shown in *Table 1*. This is likely due to working-age women not being able to hold the grant concurrently with the Child Support Grant (CSG). This would deter women, who make up the majority of CSG recipients, from applying.

<sup>9</sup> These figures are very close to those reported by SASSA in their monthly grant report to Nedlac on 30 June 2020. According to that report, as at 27 June 2020, a total of 2 712 963 successful applicants had been paid, 35% of whom were women (951 972 women and 1 760 991 men).

As Spaull, Casale and Posel (2020)<sup>10</sup> write, this eligibility criterion penalises unemployed women for also caring for their children. The CSG of R445 in 2020 (R460 in 2021), while paid out to the caregiver, is to support the child, and on its own is not even sufficient to raise one child above the 2020 food poverty line of R585 in South Africa. The top-up to the CSG of R500 a month per caregiver, rather than per child, in place from June to October 2020,<sup>11</sup> would not be sufficient to raise an (unemployed) mother with one child above the food poverty line, let alone a mother with more than one child (the typical household in South Africa has between 2 and 3 children). The dangers of tying women's access to social protection to their caregiving role became all the more evident in October 2020 when the CSG (and other grant) top-ups came to an end after 6 months, while the SRDG was extended by another six months to April 2021.

**Table 2. COVID-19 SRDG beneficiaries, June 2020 to March 2021**

	Women	Men
<b>COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant (SRDG) in JUNE 2020</b>		
Application unsuccessful/pending	3 037 376 (255 320)	4 288 775** (349 392)
Application successful	2 004 492 (201 540)	2 493 187 (299 977)
% applicants successful	39.8% (2.41)	36.8% (2.8)
Numbers reporting having received the SRDG in June	922 522 (125 177)	1 533 690* (195 952)
Share of applicants women <sup>a</sup>	42.6%	
Share of successful applicants women	44.6%	
Share of COVID-19 SRDG recipients in June women	<b>37.6%</b>	
<b>COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant (SRDG) in OCTOBER 2020</b>		
Application unsuccessful/pending	2 717 453 (241 280)	3 530 685 (313 778)
Application successful	2 556 169 (223 556)	3 905 184** (315 313)
% applicants successful	48.5% (2.5)	52.5% (2.3)
Numbers reporting having received the SRDG in October	2 121 842 (198 712)	3 592 539** (314 108)
Share of applicants women	41.5%	
Share of successful applicants women	39.6%	
Share of COVID-19 SRDG recipients in October women	<b>37.1%</b>	

10 See Spaull, Casale and Posel (17 July 2020) for further commentary: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-07-17-COVID-19-women-are-bearing-more-costs-and-receiving-fewer-benefits/>

11 In May 2020, the CSG was topped up by R300 per child, but between June and October 2020, the grant top-up was disbursed per caregiver and was raised to R500. All other grants were topped up by R250 for 6 months from May to October 2020.

**Table 2 continued. COVID-19 SRDG beneficiaries, June 2020 to March 2021**

	Women	Men
<b>COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant (SRDG) in JANUARY 2021</b>		
Application unsuccessful/pending	2 386 087	2 918 233
	(222 331)	(246 167)
Application successful	2 309 108	3 886 740**
	(218 557)	(324 582)
% applicants successful	49.2%	57.1%*
	(2.6)	(2.3)
Numbers reporting having received the SRDG in January	1 909 754	3 443 327**
	(200 536)	(296 494)
Share of applicants women	40.8%	
Share of successful applicants women	37.3%	
Share of COVID-19 SRDG recipients in January women	<b>35.7%</b>	
<b>COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant (SRDG) in MARCH 2021</b>		
Application unsuccessful/pending	2 399 580	2 936 958
	(231 055)	(252 824)
Application successful	2 230 715	3 881 650**
	(194 129)	(317 557)
% applicants successful	48.2%	56.9%*
	(2.9)	(2.3)
Numbers reporting having received the SRDG in March	1 760 115	3 120 150**
	(171 284)	(309 337)
Share of applicants women	40.4%	
Share of successful applicants women	36.5%	
Share of COVID-19 SRDG recipients in March women	<b>36.1%</b>	

**Source:** NIDS-CRAM, Waves 2 and 3 (2020) and Wave 4 and Wave 5 (2021)

**Notes:** The sample is all adults 18 years or older. Data are weighted appropriately. Standard errors are in parentheses.

\* Gender differences are significant at the 90 percent confidence level.

\*\* Gender differences are significant at the 95 percent confidence level.

<sup>a</sup> The way to interpret these shares is as follows: Of all SRDG applicants in June, for example, 37.6% were women (the remaining 62.4% were men); etc.

## 4. School closures and childcare constraints

In this section, we analyse how the various lockdown levels and school closures affected childcare responsibilities in the home. The data from the first wave of NIDS-CRAM showed that in April 2020, under Level 5 lockdown, when almost all externally-provided childcare was suspended and domestic workers were unable to go to work, the childcare burden in households increased substantially, and women took on more of this additional unpaid care work than men (Casale and Posel 2020). This is unsurprising given that women in South Africa are much more likely to live with children than men are, and that even where women and men do live with children, women spend a larger number of hours on childcare than men (Budlender et al 2011; Hatch and Posel 2018; Moore 2020; Posel and Grapsa 2017; Rubiano-Matulevich and Viollaz 2019; Statistics South Africa 2013; 2019).

### Living arrangements

The data in *Table 3* show that, across all five waves, women were consistently more likely to live with children than men. Roughly 75% of women and 60% of men reported living with at least one child aged 0 to 17 years at the time of the interviews, and about half of women and just over one-third of men reported living with at least one child aged 0 to 6 years specifically. The majority of both women and men living with children (around 90%) reported that at least one of these children was attending Grades R-12 pre-lockdown, suggesting that most households with children would have experienced a considerable increase in childcare work as a result of school closures.

In Waves 2-5 (but not in Wave 1 due to time constraints), individuals living with children aged 0 to 6 years were also asked if any of these children were in an Early Childhood Development (ECD) centre or preschool prior to the lockdown. In the region of 40% of men and women living with young children said at least one of these children had been attending an ECD centre/preschool before the crisis. When asked who was looking after these young children now at home, the data suggest women were much more likely to bear the brunt of ECD/preschool closures. Across waves 2-5, around two-thirds of women said they were looking after these children themselves. For men, the comparable figures ranged from 14%-25% across the waves (*Table 3*).

**Table 3. Percentage of adults living with at least one child at the time of the interview**

	Women	Men
<b>Wave 1</b>		
% living with at least one child 0-17	74.1%	60.8%**
	(1.4)	(1.6)
% living with at least one child 0-6	51.5%	37.2%**
	(1.5)	(1.5)
% living with at least one child 0-17 attending school pre-lockdown <sup>a</sup>	88.2%	88.2%
	(1.0)	(1.3)
<b>Wave 2</b>		
% living with at least one child 0-17	74.7%	59.3%**
	(1.6)	(1.8)
% living with at least one child 0-6	52.1%	35.7%**
	(1.7)	(1.7)
% living with at least one child 0-17 attending school pre-lockdown <sup>a</sup>	86.4%	87.4%
	(1.2)	(1.3)
% living with at least one child 0-6 attending an ECD centre/ preschool pre-lockdown <sup>b</sup>	37.5%	37.8%
	(2.0)	(2.5)
% reporting child 0-6 to have attended an ECD centre/ preschool in the past 7 days <sup>c</sup>	13.7%	11.7%
	(1.9)	(2.3)
% looking after these children 0-6 home from an ECD centre/ preschool themselves <sup>c</sup>	67.6%	24.9%**
	(3.4)	(4.8)
<b>Wave 3</b>		
% living with at least one child 0-17	75.3%	60.5%**
	(1.5)	(1.6)
% living with at least one child 0-6	54.2%	38.2%**
	(1.7)	(1.5)
% living with at least one child 0-17 attending school pre-lockdown <sup>a</sup>	90.4%	89.8%
	(0.9)	(1.3)
% living with at least one child 0-6 attending an ECD centre/ preschool pre-lockdown <sup>b</sup>	39.2%	38.1%
	(1.8)	(2.2)
% reporting child 0-6 to have attended an ECD centre/ preschool in the past 7 days <sup>c</sup>	45.1%	54.0%
	(2.6)	(3.9)
% looking after these children 0-6 home from an ECD centre/ preschool themselves <sup>c</sup>	65.0%	16.6%**
	(4.3)	(3.7)

**Table 3 continued. Percentage of adults living with at least one child at the time of the interview**

	Women	Men
<b>Wave 4</b>		
% living with at least one child 0-17	75.0%	59.4%**
	(1.5)	(2.0)
% living with at least one child 0-6	52.0%	37.6%**
	(1.8)	(1.7)
% living with at least one child 0-17 attending school pre-lockdown <sup>a</sup>	91.3%	89.1%
	(0.9)	(1.4)
% living with at least one child 0-6 attending an ECD centre/ preschool pre-lockdown <sup>b</sup>	40.4%	37.9%
	(2.4)	(2.4)
% reporting child 0-6 to have attended an ECD centre/ preschool in the past 7 days <sup>c</sup>	20.6%	23.6%
	(2.1)	(3.6)
% looking after these children 0-6 home from an ECD centre/ preschool themselves <sup>c,d</sup>	62.0%	13.6%**
	(3.0)	(2.8)
<b>Wave 5</b>		
% living with at least one child 0-17	73.7%	58.2%**
	(1.5)	(1.9)
% living with at least one child 0-6	51.7%	38.3%**
	(1.7)	(1.9)
% living with at least one child 0-17 attending school pre-lockdown <sup>a</sup>	91.5%	89.1%
	(0.8)	(1.4)
% living with at least one child 0-6 attending an ECD centre/ preschool pre-lockdown <sup>b</sup>	45.6%	46.6%
	(2.2)	(2.5)
% reporting child 0-6 to have attended an ECD centre/ preschool in the past 7 days <sup>c</sup>	55.6%	64.1%
	(2.4)	(3.4)
% looking after these children 0-6 home from an ECD centre/ preschool themselves <sup>c,d</sup>	65.7%	24.0%**
	(4.4)	(5.3)

**Source:** NIDS-CRAM, Waves 1, 2 and 3 (2020) and Wave 4 and Wave 5 (2021)

**Notes:** The sample is all adults 18 years or older. The unbalanced panel is used and data are weighted appropriately. Standard errors are in parentheses.

\* Gender differences are significant at the 90 percent confidence level.

\*\* Gender differences are significant at the 95 percent confidence level.

<sup>a</sup> Conditional on living with children aged 0-17

<sup>b</sup> Conditional on living with children aged 0-6

<sup>c</sup> Conditional on living with children aged 0-6 who were in an ECD centre/preschool pre-lockdown

<sup>d</sup> In Waves 4 and 5, questions allowed for us to distinguish between those who shared responsibility for childcare with others. This proportion captures those respondents who stated that they alone were responsible for childcare.

## Time spent on childcare

The gender gap in care work during the lockdown is further highlighted in the time use data collected in the NIDS-CRAM survey. In Wave 1, individuals living with children were asked if they had spent “more time than usual looking after children” during the April 2020 lockdown. The clear majority of men and women living with children said they were, and the rate was higher for women than for men as expected (73% versus 66%). When asked how much additional time was spent per day on childcare (nearly an hour, 1-2 hours, 3-4 hours, or over 4 hours more), 80% of women and 65% of men living with children reported that they spent over 4 hours more per day on childcare (upper panel of *Table 4*). Given that there would have been between 15 and 16 million children home from school or an ECD centre in April—for anywhere between 5 and 9 extra hours a day (Casale and Posel 2020)—these high numbers are not surprising.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 4. Changes in time spent on childcare among adults living with children in Waves 1-5**

	Women	Men
<b>Wave 1 – Among adults living with children:</b>		
% reporting spending more hours <b>in April</b> (compared to pre-lockdown)	73.2%	66.1%**
	(1.2)	(1.8)
% reporting over 4 more hours a day (conditional on spending more time on childcare in April)	79.5%	65.0%**
	(1.3)	(2.2)
<b>Wave 2 – Among adults living with children:</b>		
% reporting spending more hours <b>in June</b> (compared to April)	5.7%	5.5%
	(0.8)	(1.0)
Average increase	4.3	4.1
% reporting spending fewer hours <b>in June</b> (compared to April)	13.5%	18.5%*
	(1.1)	(1.6)
Average decrease	5.1	5.8
% reporting spending same hours <b>in June</b> (compared to April)	80.7%	76.0%
	(1.3)	(1.8)
<b>Wave 3 – Among adults living with children:</b>		
% reporting spending more hours <b>in October</b> (compared to June)	18.8%	31.8%**
	(1.3)	(2.4)
Average increase	4.6	4.3
% reporting spending fewer hours <b>in October</b> (compared to June)	67.2%	48.0%**
	(1.8)	(2.7)
Average decrease	7.7 (0.21)	7.3 (0.35)
% reporting spending same hours <b>in October</b> (compared to June)	14.0%	20.2%*
	(1.5)	(2.2)

<sup>12</sup> Similarly, in the UK, Sevilla and Smith (2020) found that in households with children, parents were doing the equivalent of an extra 40 hours a week on childcare during the early lockdown period, almost a full workweek’s worth of extra care.

**Table 4 continued. Changes in time spent on childcare among adults living with children in Waves 1-5**

	Women	Men
<b>Wave 4 – Among adults living with children:</b>		
% reporting spending more hours in January (compared to October)	51.1% (2.1)	38.0%** (2.0)
Average increase	5.6	5.0
% reporting spending fewer hours in January (compared to October)	32.5% (1.7)	35.7% (2.4)
Average decrease	4.6	4.7
% reporting spending same hours in January (compared to October)	16.4% (1.4)	26.2%** (2.3)
<b>Wave 5 – Among adults living with children:</b>		
% reporting spending more hours in March (compared to January)	34.7% (1.4)	36.1% (2.2)
Average increase	5.1	4.4
% reporting spending fewer hours in March (compared to January)	44.4% (1.4)	37.0% (2.1)
Average decrease	5.3	4.9
% reporting spending same hours in March (compared to January)	20.9% (1.3)	26.9% (2.3)

**Source:** NIDS-CRAM, Waves 1, 2 and 3 (2020) and Wave 4 and Wave 5 (2021)

**Notes:** The sample is all adults 18 years or older living with children aged 0-17. The unbalanced panel is used and data are weighted appropriately. Standard errors are in parentheses.

\* Gender differences are significant at the 90 percent confidence level.

\*\* Gender differences are significant at the 95 percent confidence level.

In Waves 2-5, individuals living with children were asked for the actual number of hours they were spending on childcare in a typical weekday in April, June and October 2020 and January and March 2021.<sup>13</sup> From these responses, we can calculate the percentages of men and women (living with children) spending more, less, or the same hours on childcare per day between any two of the reference months (*Table 4*). The changes highlight how the progressive reopening (and then closure) of childcare facilities affected men and women differently.

As South Africa moved from L5 lockdown in April to L3 lockdown in June 2020, large parts of the economy reopened for work, but childcare facilities did not reopen at the same pace (see Box 1). Only Grades 7 and 12 were allowed back in June, affecting at most 2 million children,<sup>14</sup> and domestic/

13 Specifically, in Wave 2, individuals were asked “Think about a typical weekday, Monday-Friday during April’s level 5 lockdown, when schools and childcare facilities were closed. How many hours a day did you spend looking after children?” and “Now think about a typical weekday, Monday-Friday during June’s Level 3 lockdown. How many hours a day did you spend looking after children?” In Waves 3-5, individuals were asked “Now think about a typical weekday, Monday-Friday during [reference month]. How many hours a day did you spend looking after children of any age?”

14 See data from the Department of Basic Education which shows that in 2019, there were just over a million learners in Grade 7 and about 640 000 in Grade 12: <https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Reports/School%20Realities%202019%20Final%20.pdf?ver=2020-02-07-101051-330>

childcare workers in private households could return to work in June (although many did not)<sup>15</sup>. We would therefore expect to see a decrease, albeit not very large, in hours spent on childcare in June. Indeed, from the figures in *Table 4*, we see that only 14% of women versus 19% of men said they spent fewer hours on childcare in June compared to April 2020. The majority said they spent the same amount of time on childcare, and around 6% (of men and women) said they were spending more hours on childcare in June.

With the move from L3 lockdown in June 2020 to L1 lockdown in October 2020, we see a much greater change in childcare hours. Not only were restrictions around economic activity relaxed even further, but there was a staggered reopening of school grades during the course of July and August 2020 such that by the end of August 2020, all children were expected to be back at school (see Box 1). Of course, there may have been some who did not return at all, or if they did, they attended school on alternate weeks or days<sup>16</sup>. By this stage ECD centres were also allowed to reopen, although given the burdensome regulations around reopening, many would have remained closed (Wills et al 2020; 2021)<sup>17</sup>. Nonetheless, we see roughly 67% of women and 48% of men living with children reporting that they spent fewer hours on childcare in October 2020 compared to June 2020 (*Table 4*).

This gender difference in the reduction in childcare hours highlights how women were particularly affected by the school and ECD centre closures, as the reopening of these facilities (even if they were not back to running at full capacity) appears to have allowed women to cut back on childcare hours by more than men. This is consistent with women having reported taking on more of the additional childcare work during the strict lockdown phase in April 2020 when all schools and childcare facilities were first closed.

This is once again highlighted in the Wave 4 results. *Table 4* shows that in January 2021, when all schools were closed once again, initially due to the Christmas holidays and then in the final week because the reopening of schools was postponed to mid-February (Box 1), women's childcare hours increased by more than men's. Among those living with children, just over half of women and 38% of men reported that their childcare hours went up in January 2021 compared to October 2020. That they did not go up by as much as during the strictest lockdown phase probably has to do with a number of factors: parents are used to having their children home over the long summer break in December and January, and so would have factored that into their plans; ECD centres were allowed to continue operating (although many young children were not back yet in January 2021; see Wills and Kika-Mistry 2021); and domestic workers and carers were not prevented from working as was the case during the hard lockdown.

In the final wave, which captures childcare in March 2021 when schools were once again open, 44% of women living with children and 37% of men living with children reported spending fewer hours on childcare compared to January 2021. *Figure 4* (upper frame), which shows mean number of hours spent on childcare over the period April 2020 to March 2021, suggests that childcare hours in March 2021 had more or less reverted to levels reported in October 2021 for men (4.3 vs 4.2 hours), while they were somewhat higher for women (6.3 vs 5.6 hours)<sup>18</sup>. Unfortunately, while we do know that time spent on childcare has fallen dramatically since the peak of the hard lockdown period in April 2020, we cannot say how the hours in March 2021, our final data point, compare to pre-COVID times, as this information was not collected in Wave 1.

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15 A relatively small percentage of South African households employ domestic workers, however. In NIDS-CRAM Wave 2, only 4.8% of respondents (4.0% for women and 5.6% for men) reported employing a domestic worker/childminder in June, higher than the April figure of 3.3% (2.5% for women and 4.2% for men), but still down from 7.8% in February (7.3% for women and 8.4% for men) (Casale and Shepherd 2020).

16 Unfortunately, we could not collect this level of detail about school attendance in the NIDS-CRAM data, but we do know from our data that the majority (in excess of 94%) of caregivers reported that children had returned in some capacity by the Wave 3 interviews (Mohohlwane et al 2021). Gr1-Gr12 bi-weekly attendance in April 2021 as measured by NIDS-CRAM Wave 5 is estimated to be roughly 93-95% (Shepherd and Mohohlwane 2021).

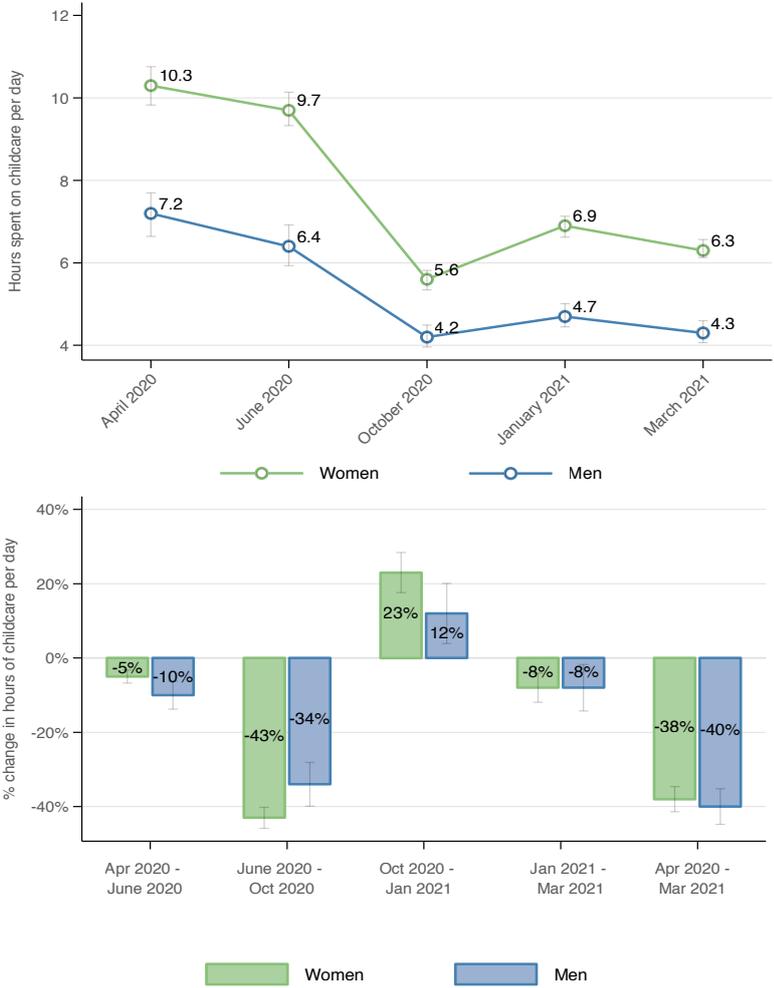
17 Wills et al (2021) estimate that only 31% of children aged 0-6 years were attending an ECD centre using the Wave 3 NIDS-CRAM data, down from about 42% pre-COVID. One of the main reasons cited for children not returning was that the centre had not reopened (with inability to afford fees another important factor).

18 Collecting information on time use in a one-shot question that relies on recall over the phone of course is not ideal (in typical time use surveys, individuals are asked to keep a time diary and to respond in half-hour slots). It is possible therefore that respondents either over- or under-stated the hours they spent on childcare. Assuming women and men have similar reporting biases over time, it is probably best to focus more on the percentage changes in hours over time and the differences between women and men, rather than placing too much weight on the actual hours reported.

Nonetheless, what our data do show is that, among those living with children, both men’s and women’s time spent on childcare responds to school closures and re-openings. However, women’s time responds more. In other words, when schools close women taken on relatively more childcare compared to men, and when they reopen, women benefit relatively more.

Our final wave shows that when schools are open, women living with children spend on average 2 extra hours a day on childcare than men living with children do. *Table A.2* in the Appendix, which disaggregates hours spent on childcare by marital and employment status, further shows that a gender gap in childcare hours persists regardless of whether or not men and women are married or employed. It is also worth noting that the gender gap in childcare hours would be much larger if we factored in that women are far more likely to live with children than men are (in other words, if we did not condition on living with children as we do in this section). Again, we do not know if the gender gap has increased or decreased compared to pre-COVID times, as information on the actual number of hours spent on childcare in February 2020 is not available<sup>19</sup>.

**Figure 4. Change in hours spent on childcare between April 2020 and January 2021, conditional on living with children**



**Source:** NIDS-CRAM, Waves 1, 2 and 3 (2020) and Wave 4 and Wave 5 (2021)

**Notes:** The sample is all adults 18 years or older living with children aged 0-17. Daily hours spent in time care have been capped at 16. Data are weighted. Standard errors are in parentheses. 90% confidence intervals are shown.

<sup>19</sup> Because NIDS-CRAM is not a household survey, we also cannot analyse the within-couple or within-household distribution of childcare. Ideally one would be able to explore what happens to childcare responsibilities within a couple when say both partners are employed. Andrew et al (2020) analysed the time use of dual-parent families with children during the April-May lockdown in England and found mothers disproportionately affected. Even among mothers and fathers who had paid employment, women were spending more hours on childcare than men, and they experienced a greater reduction in uninterrupted work hours than men. In a related study also on the UK, Sevilla and Smith (2020) found that although women within couples were doing the bulk of the additional childcare hours during lockdown, the gender childcare gap for the extra post-lockdown hours was slightly smaller than the gap pre-lockdown, driven largely by fathers who were working from home or had been furloughed or lost their job engaging in more childcare. However, neither of these studies analysed childcare responsibilities as the economy started to reopen.

However, what is clear is that women take on a larger share of the additional childcare associated with lockdowns and school closures. This has implications for their labour market outcomes, which was evident from data collected in Wave 2, where adults living with children were asked directly about the potential negative effects of childcare. Specifically, respondents who reported spending non-zero hours on childcare in June were asked “Did looking after children during lockdown in June cause any of the following: Prevented you going to work, or made work very difficult? Prevented you working the same number of hours as before lockdown? Prevented you searching for work? Negatively affected your health or wellbeing?”

As shown in *Table 6*, a slightly larger percentage of women than men living with children said that childcare during the June 2020 lockdown affected their ability to work, work the same number of hours as before lockdown, or search for work.<sup>20</sup> In contrast, a slightly larger percentage of men said it affected their health or wellbeing. However, because women are more likely to live with children and to report non-zero hours of childcare, this translates into much larger absolute numbers of women than men affected by childcare, across all the categories. For example, roughly twice as many women than men (3.2 million women versus 1.6 million men) said that looking after children in June prevented them from going to work or made work very difficult, with similar results for the other two labour-related categories.

**Table 6. Self-reported effects of looking after children in June 2020**

	Women	Men	Women	Men
Prevented you going to work, or made work very difficult?	30.9%	27.9%	3 232 631	1 592 232**
	(1.9)	(2.6)	(310 270)	(179 392)
Prevented you working the same number of hours as before lockdown?	30.8%	30.2%	3 204 141	1 721 036**
	(1.7)	(2.7)	(276 136)	(188 300)
Prevented you searching for work?	29.0%	29.2%	3 054 402	1 649 459**
	(1.6)	(2.6)	(267 477)	(191 503)
-Reported any of the three options above	49.9	48.3	5 221 659	2 736 237**
	(2.0)	(3.0)	(449 549)	(253 525)
Negatively affected your health or wellbeing?	30.9%	35.5%	3 286 935	2 047 157**
	(1.6)	(2.7)	(257 945)	(207 208)

**Source:** NIDS-CRAM, Wave 2 (2020)

**Notes:** The sample is all adults 18 years or older living with children aged 0-17 and who reported non-zero hours on childcare in June. Data are weighted. Standard errors are in parentheses. \* Gender differences are significant at the 90 percent confidence level. \*\* Gender differences are significant at the 95 percent confidence level.

<sup>20</sup> Restricting to the employed for the first two response options, we find that the percentages negatively affected are higher for women (41%, statistically significant at the 5% level) and marginally higher for men (36-38%, not significantly different from the full sample statistic of 30%). This represents an increase in the gender gap from 0.6-3 percentage points to 5 percentage points. Similarly, restricting the third response option to the broad unemployed, percentages are higher for women (32.0%), although this does not represent a statistically significant change (the percentage for men remains similar to that shown in *Table 6* at 28%).

## 5. Conclusion

In this report, all five waves of the NIDS-CRAM survey were used to track gender differences in labour market outcomes and unpaid care work in the home during South Africa's ongoing lockdown. The timing of the waves and the reference periods used in the surveys allowed us to compare outcomes across six time points: February 2020 (pre-COVID), April 2020 (L5 lockdown), June 2020 (L3 lockdown) October 2020 (L1 lockdown), January 2021 (adjusted L3 lockdown) and March 2021 (adjusted L1 lockdown).

The data suggest that women suffered a large and disproportionate effect in the labour market as a result of the initial very strict lockdown in April 2020, both in terms of net job losses and a reduction in hours worked. When lockdown regulations were progressively relaxed, there was a substantial recovery for both women and men in jobs and hours worked, although the recovery was slower for women. When lockdown regulations were tightened once more in response to the second wave of the pandemic, employment declined again, and at a faster rate for women. As at March 2021, when the country was in its least restrictive lockdown phase, women still remained behind men in terms of reaching their pre-COVID levels.

Compared to February 2020, women's employment in March 2021 was still down approximately 8%, while men's employment was back to pre-COVID levels, according to the NIDS-CRAM data. Among the employed, hours worked per week for women were down 6% on average in March 2021 (or 2 hours per week) compared to February 2020, while for men hours worked per week were back to pre-COVID times.

However, given the small sample sizes (and therefore large margins of error), it would be prudent not to place too much emphasis on the exact numbers. Nonetheless, one can say that while the recovery has been substantial for both men and women, it has been slower (and remains incomplete) for women.

An important finding is that even though women accounted for the majority of the unemployed (or those not working) throughout the period, as well as the majority of the net job losses recorded between any two time periods, they were under-represented in the COVID-specific government income support provided for unemployed and furloughed workers. In each month for which the data were collected, only around 35%-39% of either the UIF-TERS beneficiaries or the COVID-19 SRDG recipients were women.

That fewer women than men received the UIF-TERS is probably due to fewer women being (formally) employed and registered on the UIF system to begin with. However, fewer women received the SRDG because of the conditionality of the grant. The SRDG could not be held concurrently with another grant such as the CSG, which meant that unemployed women were penalised if they were also the main caregiver to a child. This gender bias in the design of the policy became a source of great contention following the government's decision to suspend the top-ups to the CSG in October 2020 after 6 months, while extending the SRDG for a further 6 months until April 2021.

The NIDS-CRAM data also allowed us to track how time spent on childcare in the home changed as a result of the various lockdown levels and school closures. The first wave of the data showed that the childcare burden among those living with children increased substantially between February and April 2020, when almost all externally provided childcare was suspended, and that women were affected more. As schools and childcare facilities reopened, both men and women were able to cut back on childcare hours, with women reducing childcare work by relatively more. In other words, while both men's and women's time spent on childcare responds to school closures and reopenings, women's time spent on childcare responds relatively more.

This is a stark reminder of how important childcare availability is for women and how the burden of school closures falls disproportionately on their shoulders. As the data collected in Wave 2 showed, this has implications for their labour market prospects, with twice as many women as men reporting that childcare responsibilities in June 2020 (when most schools and ECD centres were closed) affected their ability to work or search for work.

## Some final reflections

After a year of tracking the pandemic, where do we find ourselves, and what key lessons can we take away from the past year? According to our data, while there has been a strong recovery in the job market, this recovery has been uneven. Women have not yet caught up to pre-COVID levels of employment and work hours, while men appear to be back at pre-COVID levels. The COVID-19 crisis has therefore undone some of the gains in employment women have made over the last two decades in South Africa and increased gender inequality in the labour market (Mosomi, 2019; Posel and Casale 2019).

In earlier work (Casale and Shepherd 2021b), we exploited the panel nature of the first four waves of the NIDS-CRAM survey and analysed some of the employment transitions for women in a multivariate context. We found that the large female penalty in either retaining or gaining employment could not be explained away completely by controlling for region, individual and household-level variables, at least not those captured in the data.<sup>21</sup> This suggests that an important factor in who lost and who gained jobs over the period is likely the type of job men and women initially held and the type of job that became available over the period. Women were more likely to be in sectors that were hardest hit by the crisis, and perhaps also less likely to be able to take up the new opportunities available. Furthermore, if women are in more precarious employment relationships than men, it would also be easier for employers to reduce their employment or hours worked when lockdown restrictions are imposed. This highlights the inequality that stems from job segregation by gender, and that policy to open up opportunities for women in typically 'male' sectors and in more stable employment needs to be centre-stage.

While it is not possible to determine with our data whether men and women living with children are still performing more childcare compared to pre-COVID times, it is highly likely that they are, given that after a year of the pandemic, schools and ECD centres are not necessarily operating at full capacity (Wills and Kika-Mistry 2021; Mohohlwane et al 2021). What is clear, though, is that the major share of the childcare burden falls to women in South Africa, because they are far more likely to live with children than men are, and because even when living with children, men spend less time on childcare than women (a gap that persists regardless of marital or employment status). This too has implications for women's ability to work or take up new employment, as our data showed. Any serious attempts to close gender gaps in the labour market will require addressing this inequality in childcare responsibilities.

Many have made the point this past year that understanding who is affected more by the pandemic is key to designing appropriate policy responses (United Nations 2020; Wenham et al 2020). An important lesson learnt from the South African case is that designing and evaluating policy with a gendered lens is equally important. The partial exclusion of women from accessing the SRDG because of their caregiving role (and receipt of the CSG) was a very clear example of the pitfalls of ignoring gendered roles in society. Going forward, if the SRDG is reintroduced either in a temporary or more permanent form, the conditionality of the grant will need to be revisited urgently.

At the time of writing (end June 2021), however, all COVID-specific government income support measures had been discontinued. The top-ups to the pre-existing grants were paid out for six months only (from May to October 2020), the UIF-TERS scheme for furloughed workers ended on 15 March 2021, and in April 2021 the SRDG payouts came to an end after 12 months (from May 2020 to April 2021).

Unfortunately, South Africa had also entered its third wave of the pandemic. Tighter lockdown restrictions had been progressively re-imposed from 31 May 2021, with South Africa in an adjusted Level 4 lockdown from 28 June 2021. Schools once again had closed early for the holidays (from 30 June 2021). To date though, no new government income support measures have been announced, despite the fact that the new lockdown restrictions will almost certainly have a further effect on employment, particularly for those in the tourism and hospitality industry, and will in all likelihood

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<sup>21</sup> Although the household-level characteristics we could control for using our data could not explain away the female penalty, as noted in Section 3 above, there were some interesting gendered findings that emerged. Women living with children of school-going age were more likely to lose employment and less likely to gain employment relative to women not living with children of school-going age, while for men there was no negative effect.

affect women more (if past evidence is anything to go by).

The lack of any additional income support when the recovery in the job market is not complete and the pandemic is still raging is deeply worrying. The data presented in Appendix *Table A.3* show that there is widespread food insecurity and hunger, and that the gender gap in these measures appears to have widened over time. By the final wave of data collection, 39% of women reported that their household had run out of money to buy food in March 2021, compared to 31% of men. And 17% of women living with children reported a child in the household had gone hungry in the 7 days prior to the interview, compared to 11% of men living with children. These figures can only have worsened given more recent developments.

Over the medium to longer-term, appropriate policies will need to be put in place to grow employment, and to help women regain jobs. Key among these measures should be the adequate social provision of childcare, given that women are primarily responsible for caring for children in South Africa, and as the experiences of the past year have shown, are most affected by school and ECD closures. However, until the job market is fully recovered and is able to absorb more of the unemployed, income support should be provided to help minimise the devastating effects of food insecurity and hunger. These are long-standing issues in the South African research and policy arena, but this crisis has brought them to the fore and made their resolution all the more urgent.

## Appendix tables

**Table A.1. Employment, hours worked, and earnings in February, April, June, and October 2020 and January and March 2021, adults 18 and older**

	Women	Men	All
<b>FEBRUARY 2020</b>			
Number of adults (18 and over)	19 550 905	17 350 661	36 901 567
	(1 046 374)	(915 825)	(1 818 576)
Number of adults (18 and over) employed	8 999 873	10 283 193	19 283 065
	(532 062)	(616 636)	(1 015 143)
% of adults (18 and over) employed	46.0%	59.3%**	52.3%
	(1.2)	(1.7)	(1.0)
<i>If employed:</i>			
Mean hours worked per week	35.3	38.8	37.2
	(0.6)	(0.7)	(0.5)
% reporting zero hours	6.0%	4.4%	5.1%
	(1.0)	(0.9)	(0.7)
Real mean monthly earnings (Rands)	5 721	9 150**	7 539
	(360)	(795)	(493)
Real median monthly earnings (Rands)	3 000	4 200**	3 500
	(250)	(225)	(200)
Real hourly earnings (Rands)	39.21	64.99**	53.14
	(2.39)	(7.81)	(4.57)
% reporting zero earnings	7.1%	4.2%	5.5%
	(1.1)	(0.9)	(0.7)
<b>APRIL 2020</b>			
Number of adults (18 and over)	19 283 972	17 169 201	36 453 173
	(1 021 069)	(907 854)	(1 788 884)
Number of adults (18 and over) employed	6 975 040	9 280 501**	16 255 541
	(422 864)	(576 744)	(875 672)
% of adults (18 and over) employed	36.2%	54.1%**	44.6%
	(1.2)	(1.6)	(1.0)
<i>If employed:</i>			
Mean hours worked per week	23.0	28.8**	26.4
	(1.1)	(1.1)	(0.8)

	Women	Men	All
% reporting zero hours	35.7%	26.2%**	30.2%
	(2.2)	(2.0)	(1.5)
Real mean monthly earnings (Rands)	6 727	9 772**	8 476
	(441)	(715)	(485)
Real median monthly earnings (Rands)	3 884	4 983*	4 425
	(293)	(388)	(199)
Real hourly earnings (Rands)	71.47	98.06	87.65
	(7.00)	(11.78)	(7.92)
% reporting zero earnings	13.2%	12.2%	12.6%
	(1.4)	(1.4)	(1.0)
<b>JUNE 2020</b>			
Number of adults (18 and over)	19 381 322	17 276 492	36 657 814
	(1 068 633)	(929 296)	(1 807 551)
Number of adults (18 and over) employed	7 198 551	9 010 810*	16 209 361
	(456 383)	(559 865)	(864 393)
% of adults (18 and over) employed	37.1%	52.2%**	44.2%
	(1.4)	(1.8)	(1.2)
<i>If employed:</i>			
Mean hours worked per week	33.3	36.4	35.0
	(1.0)	(1.1)	(0.8)
% reporting zero hours	12.1%	10.4%	11.2%
	(1.3)	(1.6)	(1.0)
Real mean monthly earnings (Rands)	6 409	10 660**	8 746
	(521)	(939)	(601)
Real median monthly earnings (Rands)	3 464	4 948**	4 285
	(210)	(393)	(138)
Real hourly earnings (Rands)	56.31	84.53*	71.96
	(5.58)	(9.04)	(5.71)
% reporting zero earnings	6.9%	8.2%	7.7%
	(1.2)	(1.5)	(1.0)
<b>OCTOBER 2020</b>			
Number of adults (18 and over)	19 116 490	17 192 991	36 309 481
	(1 012 777)	(948 334)	(1 799 252)

	Women	Men	All
Number of adults (18 and over) employed	8 286 127 (478 889)	10 158 123 (646 972)	18 444 250 (1 000 987)
% of adults (18 and over) employed	43.3% (1.2)	59.1%** (1.6)	50.8% (1.1)
<i>If employed:</i>			
Mean hours worked per week	32.9 (0.9)	39.1** (0.9)	36.4 (0.7)
% reporting zero hours	5.9% (1.0)	3.7% (0.7)	4.6% (0.6)
Real mean monthly earnings (Rands)	5 257 (390)	9 340** (648)	7 489 (440)
Real median monthly earnings (Rands)	2 951 (221)	4 919** (312)	3 935 (207)
Real hourly earnings (Rands)	46.94 (3.79)	66.26** (5.36)	57.88 (3.57)
% reporting zero earnings	5.6% (0.9)	3.3% (0.8)	4.4% (0.6)
<b>JANUARY 2021</b>			
Number of adults (18 and over)	18 722 538 (1 012 116)	17 297 243 (977 028)	36 019 781 (1 803 615)
Number of adults (18 and over) employed	7 481 897 (473 549)	9 728 225* (593 950)	17 210 122 (905 903)
% of adults (18 and over) employed	40.0% (1.4)	56.2%** (1.6)	47.8% (1.1)
<i>If employed:</i>			
Mean hours worked per week	31.0 (0.9)	38.3** (0.9)	35.1 (0.7)
% reporting zero hours	11.7% (1.6)	6.5%* (1.1)	8.7% (1.0)
Real mean monthly earnings (Rands)	4 888 (286)	10 118** (731)	7 866 (470)
Real median monthly earnings (Rands)	2 947 (122)	4 861** (497)	3 889 (132)

	Women	Men	All
Real hourly earnings (Rands)	43.57	71.75**	60.04
	(3.29)	(7.36)	(4.71)
% reporting zero earnings	7.6%	4.9%	6.0%
	(1.4)	(1.0)	(0.9)
<b>MARCH 2021</b>			
Number of adults (18 and over)	18 821 475	17 090 323	35 911 799
	(988 121)	(929 073)	(1 748 769)
Number of adults (18 and over) employed	8 248 219	10 281 774	18 529 993
	(494 835)	(638 802)	(988 840)
% of adults (18 and over) employed	43.8%	60.2%**	51.6%
	(1.3)	(1.7)	(1.2)
<i>If employed:</i>			
Mean hours worked per week	33.4	40.2**	37.2
	(0.7)	(0.8)	(0.6)
% reporting zero hours	6.5%	3.0%*	4.5%
	(1.1)	(0.7)	(0.7)
Real mean monthly earnings (Rands)	5417	8 869**	7340
	(442)	(614)	(428)
Real median monthly earnings (Rands)	2 878	4 796**	3 837
	(209)	(338)	(199)
Real hourly earnings (Rands)	41.02	57.50**	50.33
	(3.57)	(4.31)	(3.14)
% reporting zero earnings	4.9%	2.7%	3.7%
	(1.0)	(0.6)	(0.6)

**Source:** NIDS-CRAM, Wave 1, Wave 2 and Wave 3 (2020), and Wave 4 and Wave 5 (2021)

**Notes:** The sample is all adults 18 years or older. Real monthly earnings in April, June and October 2020 and January and March 2021 are computed through deflating to February 2020 Rands. The unbalanced panel is used and data are weighted appropriately. Standard errors are in parentheses.

\* Gender differences are significant at the 90 percent confidence level.

\*\* Gender differences are significant at the 95 percent confidence level.

**Table A.2. Mean hours spent per day on childcare in April, June and October 2020 and January 2021, conditional on living with children**

	Women	Men	Difference (W-M)
<b>APRIL 2020</b>			
All adults living with children	10.3 (0.28)	7.2** (0.31)	3.1** (0.46)
Adults employed in April	9.7 (0.51)	7.0** (0.46)	2.7** (0.73)
Adults NOT employed in April	10.6 (0.25)	7.5** (0.43)	3.2** (0.53)
Married adults	10.3 (0.37)	8.3* (0.42)	2.0** (0.52)
Unmarried adults	10.3 (0.29)	5.9** (0.47)	4.5** (0.60)
<b>JUNE 2020</b>			
All adults living with children	9.7 (0.25)	6.4** (0.30)	3.3** (0.40)
Adults employed in June	8.3 (0.48)	5.7** (0.44)	2.6** (0.60)
Adults NOT employed in June	10.5 (0.23)	7.1** (0.39)	3.4** (0.48)
Married adults	9.8 (0.36)	7.2** (0.42)	2.6** (0.47)
Unmarried adults	9.7 (0.26)	5.4** (0.47)	4.3** (0.56)
<b>OCTOBER 2020</b>			
All adults living with children	5.6 (0.14)	4.2** (0.16)	1.4** (0.19)
Adults employed in October	5.1 (0.18)	4.0** (0.2)	1.1** (0.27)
Adults NOT employed in October	6.0 (0.18)	4.6** (0.27)	1.4** (0.29)
Married adults	5.8 (0.21)	4.7** (0.22)	1.1** (0.30)
Unmarried adults	5.4 (0.17)	3.6** (0.23)	1.8** (0.27)

JANUARY 2021			
All adults living with children	6.9 (0.15)	4.7** (0.17)	2.1** (0.23)
Adults employed in January	6.4 (0.21)	4.6** (0.23)	1.9** (0.31)
Adults NOT employed in January	7.2 (0.20)	4.9** (0.28)	2.2** (0.34)
Married adults	7.1 (0.24)	5.3** (0.22)	1.8** (0.33)
Unmarried adults	6.7 (0.17)	4.0** (0.24)	2.7** (0.30)
MARCH 2021			
All adults living with children	6.3 (0.13)	4.3** (0.16)	2.0** (0.20)
Adults employed in March	6.0 (0.19)	3.9** (0.19)	2.1** (0.25)
Adults NOT employed in March	6.5 (0.17)	4.9** (0.24)	1.6** (0.29)
Married adults	6.5 (0.20)	4.8** (0.21)	1.7** (0.28)
Unmarried adults	6.2 (0.16)	3.7** (0.22)	2.6** (0.27)

**Source:** NIDS-CRAM, Waves 1, 2 and 3 (2020) and Wave 4 and Wave 5 (2021)

**Notes:** The sample is all adults 18 years or older living with children aged 0-17. Data are weighted. Standard errors are in parentheses.

\* Gender differences are significant at the 90 percent confidence level.

\*\* Gender differences are significant at the 95 percent confidence level.

**Table A.3. Food security and hunger in April, June and October 2020 and January and March 2021**

	Women	Men
<b>APRIL 2020</b>		
Household ran out of money to buy food		
All households	48.8 (1.3)	44.1 (1.8)
Households with children	50.7 (1.4)	47.6 (2.1)
Member of the household went hungry in last 7 days		
All households	22.0 (1.1)	22.2 (1.2)
Households with children	23.4 (1.3)	23.3 (1.6)
A child (<18) in the household went hungry in last 7 days <sup>a</sup>	16.9 (1.2)	15.1 (1.2)
<b>JUNE 2020</b>		
Household ran out of money to buy food		
All households	38.6 (1.7)	34.7 (1.7)
Households with children	41.2 (1.8)	36.6 (2.1)
Member of the household went hungry in last 7 days		
All households	16.2 (1.3)	15.5 (1.2)
Households with children	17.6 (1.5)	15.8 (1.5)
A child (<18) in the household went hungry in last 7 days <sup>a</sup>	12.8 (1.2)	11.1 (1.1)
<b>OCTOBER 2020</b>		
Household ran out of money to buy food		
All households	42.3 (1.5)	38.1 (1.6)
Households with children	46.1 (1.6)	38.9** (1.8)

Member of the household went hungry in last 7 days		
All households	19.7 (1.2)	16.9 (1.2)
Households with children	21.8 (1.4)	16.0* (1.5)
A child (<18) in the household went hungry in last 7 days <sup>a</sup>	17.5 (1.2)	12.6** (1.2)
<b>JANUARY 2021</b>		
Household ran out of money to buy food		
All households	42.4 (1.8)	34.4** (1.6)
Households with children	47.0 (2.1)	37.4** (1.9)
Member of the household went hungry in last 7 days		
All households	18.3 (1.3)	14.9 (1.2)
Households with children	20.5 (1.6)	18.1 (1.6)
A child (<18) in the household went hungry in last 7 days <sup>a</sup>	14.9 (1.1)	12.8 (1.4)
<b>MARCH 2021</b>		
Household ran out of money to buy food		
All households	38.9 (1.5)	31.4** (1.5)
Households with children	41.8 (1.6)	33.8** (1.7)
Member of the household went hungry in last 7 days		
All households	18.2 (1.2)	13.9* (1.1)
Households with children	21.4 (1.5)	13.5** (1.3)
A child (<18) in the household went hungry in last 7 days <sup>a</sup>	16.5 (1.4)	11.1** (1.3)

**Source:** NIDS-CRAM, Waves 1, 2 and 3 (2020) and Wave 4 and Wave 5 (2021)

**Notes:** Data are weighted. Standard errors are in parentheses.

\* Gender differences are significant at the 90 percent confidence level.

<sup>a</sup> Conditional on living with at least one child <18 in the household

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