

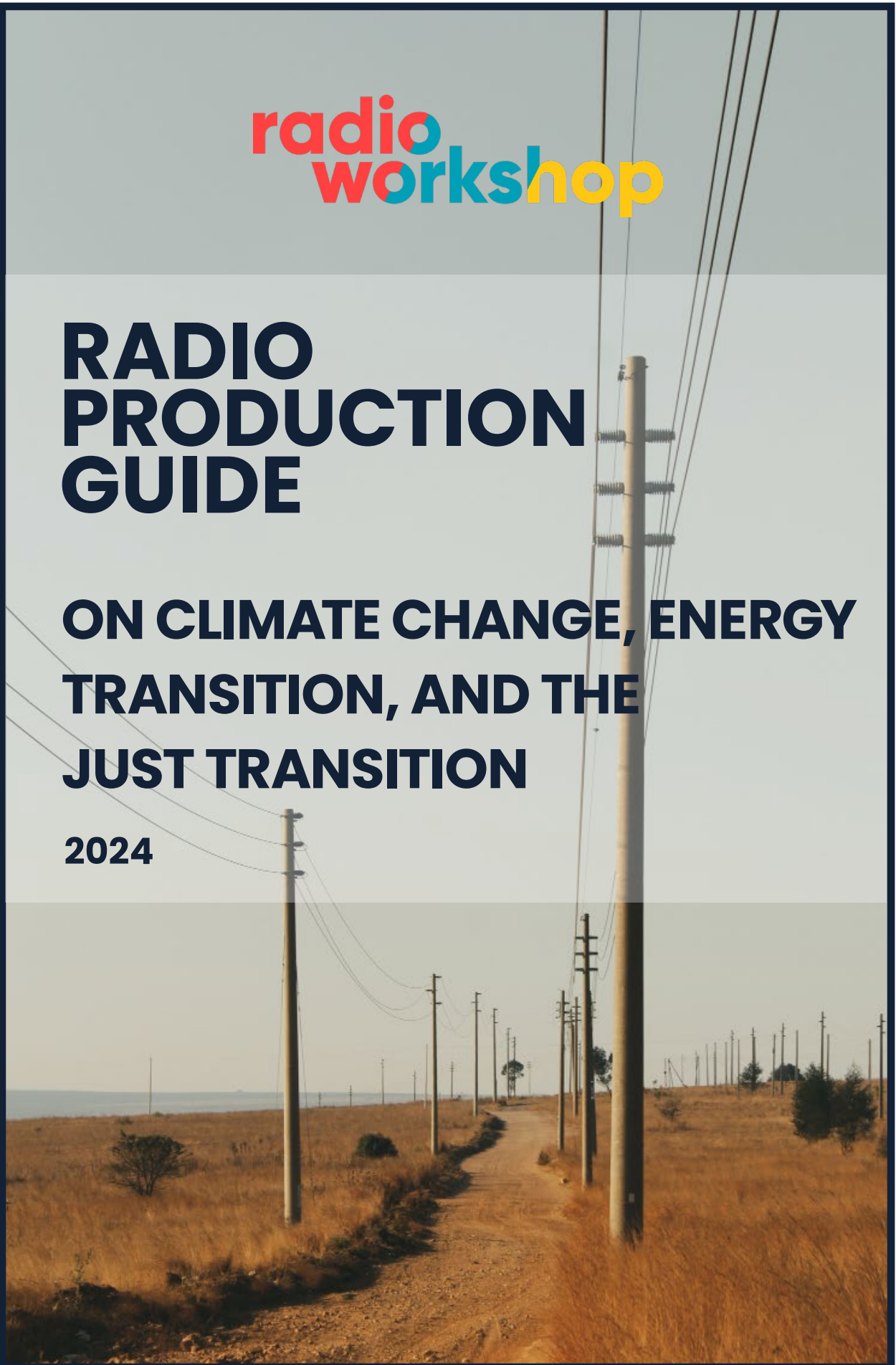
The logo for Radio Workshop, with 'radio' in red and blue, and 'workshop' in blue and yellow.

radio
workshop

RADIO PRODUCTION GUIDE

**ON CLIMATE CHANGE, ENERGY
TRANSITION, AND THE
JUST TRANSITION**

2024



"Electric post, Witbank, South Africa", Unspalsh, Auston Mtabane, 2021



Nick Nice, Unsplash, 2018

INTRODUCTION

Climate change has made it vital that countries like South Africa transition from fossil fuels like coal to green or renewable energy. Emalahleni is ground zero for South Africa's energy transition. With hundreds of coal mines and 12 of the country's 15 coal fired power stations concentrated in Mpumalanga province and employing up to 80% of the local workforce, coal has been the lifeblood of local communities. How do communities make the transition while preparing for a climate disrupted world?

If you think about the biggest issues facing your family and your community, what comes to mind? Your top concerns may be things like food and housing; access to energy, water, public services and healthcare; feeling safe and secure in your neighborhood.

What do all these things have to do with climate change? A LOT, it turns out. Climate change may seem like a distant idea, but in reality it is already affecting people and communities across South Africa and around the world in terms of everything mentioned above, and much more.

Droughts, floods, fires, crop losses, extreme weather, disease outbreaks, sea level rise, crime and political instability – these and other climate change impacts already are and increasingly will affect peoples' jobs and livelihoods, health and homes, security and service delivery in communities, the cost of living, quality of life and other things people care about and depend upon.



Maybe you know something about climate change, but aren't quite sure why it matters so much? You are not alone! This guide is to help you explore important issues and questions, so you can help people in your community understand the changes that are coming and how to prepare for them.

Putting it simply, climate change is happening now because we are polluting the atmosphere with fossil fuels, causing changes to global weather patterns. This affects the delicate balance of life on our planet, which is sustained through a web of complex relationships between land, sea, air and

many diverse living beings. We need a healthy planet to produce everything our lives depend on: clean water, air, plants and fungi, food and a stable climate. However, pollution from fossil fuels is trapping too much heat from the sun in the atmosphere, causing disruptions to the environment which are upsetting the delicate balance that sustains life on Earth.

This is a big challenge because our global economy runs on fossil fuels. That needs to change, but it won't be easy. We all depend on the fossil fuel economy. Whether we are a bus driver, a textile worker or a coal mine worker, our jobs, our trips to the supermarket and countless other daily activities connect us to those same fossil fuels that are destroying our planet and future – so how do we shift this?

Just Energy Transition is a concept to help people and industries adopt cleaner energy sources and technologies, and build a new Green Economy that is fairer and more inclusive. There is a lot of debate in government, industry and communities about what this means and how to bring it about. South Africa faces particular challenges because its economy is so fossil energy intensive. Other challenges such as high inequality, unemployment and poverty are also shaping the dynamics of South Africa's energy transition. What is the scope of a just transition? What are possibilities and what are its limitations? Once you begin to consider things like the historic injustices contributing to widespread poverty and vulnerability, and the rights of future generations, the question of a just transition becomes very complex.



We know that transition is coming – if we don't act on climate change, things may get so bad that we will not have a liveable future at all. The question is how to reduce the pain of transition, especially for those most directly affected by it, while making it as fair and inclusive as possible? How can transition help to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, while making some things better in our communities and lives?

Strong community voices and actions are essential to shaping South Africa's Just Energy Transition. Important questions to consider are: what are the costs of not taking action? How will this affect jobs, food and energy security, the economy, the cost of living, etc? What opportunities do communities have to benefit from positive climate action? What are the rights and responsibilities of people, communities, governments, the private sector, etc in navigating a just transition? How do communities exercise their voice in decision-making?



For more information please see the links below:



[Just Transition Fact Sheet and Radio Guide](#)
[Climate Change Radio Production Guide](#)

DEFINITIONS

Justice: South Africa's Framework for a Just Transition calls for distributive justice, procedural justice and restorative justice. This means that no group should be unfairly burdened by the transition; that everyone who is affected must have a voice in the process of transition; and that injustices of the past and present must be addressed through the process where possible. For example, communities and workers who lose their livelihoods in the transition are entitled to support so they can recover their livelihoods. But their needs must also be addressed in a way that balances the needs and rights of many other groups. This is where scope is important: A narrower understanding of Just Transition may focus on workers whose jobs are directly affected by the transition; while a broader concept may attempt to address deeper systemic issues such as poverty, unemployment and inequality as part of a Just Transition while also attempting to balance the diverse rights and needs of the young and the old, people with different skills and education levels, men, women and children, and so forth.

Vulnerability: People around the world are increasingly vulnerable to losing their food, health, shelter and livelihoods from the impacts of climate change. South Africa's extreme levels of inequality make some more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change than others. Climate change raises different kinds of shocks and vulnerabilities for different people and communities. People with education, job skills and savings will find it easier to move to another community or find a job in a new field. Some will risk losing their livelihoods, while others' incomes will be more secure. The young and the old, men and women, urban and rural dwellers, migrants and locals, for example, will all experience different kinds and levels of risks and vulnerabilities due to different aspects of climate change.

Resilience is the ability to cope with change. Resilience involves being able to bounce back from a shock, or make positive changes in response to new realities. Most people and communities are not well prepared for the impacts of climate change that are coming. From our infrastructure to the structure of our economies and the social protections available to people, we need to find ways of helping people and communities become more resilient to climate change. This means protecting people from the worst impacts of climate change and ensuring they have ways of coping with unforeseen shocks and challenges when they do hit.

Agency is the ability to make decisions about your life. Your actions matter more than you might think. How we respond to climate change will influence the future. That is why it is so important to have **informed conversations** about climate change in the community now. As people in the community develop and articulate a clear vision of the futures they want, they develop the tools to make these visions a reality.

Intergenerational justice: Think about the world your children or grandchildren or great-great grandchildren might live in. The longer governments and communities wait to take action to reduce fossil fuel emissions and adapt to low-carbon lifestyles, the worse the impacts of climate change will be and the harder it will be to respond to them. If we adopt resilient, low-carbon thriving lifestyles now, our children and grandchildren will inherit those positive adaptations we make, as well as a healthier planet to live on. If we delay taking action and let problems get worse, the future inherited by our children and grandchildren will hold harder problems to navigate and fewer possibilities for thriving.

Adaptation means making changes to adjust to a changing environment. Adapting to climate change involves making changes to our **economy, infrastructure, transportation and lifestyles** so that we are more resilient to shocks such as droughts and flooding, natural disasters, pandemics and disease outbreaks, health problems from extreme heat, polluted air and water, and infrastructure failure. Adaptations might include putting **social protection measures** in place, for example, or rehabilitating or reforesting land to make people safer from natural disasters.

Mitigation means taking action to slow the pace of climate change. This means reducing emissions from burning fossil fuels, including oil, gas and coal.

Regeneration means restoring land and ecosystems that have lost their ecological function. Regenerative practices can help with both adaptation and mitigation of climate change. Decades of mining, power generation and industry in Mpumalanga has destroyed land and polluted air and water. Rehabilitation of mining land is an urgent priority with the potential to provide (short-term, limited) employment as part of a just transition.

GET THE FACTS/BUST THE MYTHS

MYTH

FACT

The transition is easy and there is a simple way to do it

Transitioning from a fossil fuel dependent to a more decarbonised economy is complex and involves many layers, such as the social, economic, and context-specific implications. There is no simple solution or quick-fix answer, such as a magical change from coal to green technology. There are many possible ways to make such a transition more just, but this will need to involve the voices of all, including a strong civil society.

Just transition is being applied in situations around the world. In Poland, for example, 75 percent of jobs in the coal mining sector were lost in less than two decades. By working collaboratively, unions and the government were able to introduce a Mining Social Package that included retraining and financial support that helped miners transition into other industries. This response also prevented social unrest due to the layoffs.

Technology will solve everything

Although advancements in technology have allowed for many amazing things, the public perception of the capabilities of technology is often grossly exaggerated. The implementation of advanced technology requires more highly skilled and educated labour. This is a big challenge in South Africa as only 7% of adults have some form of tertiary education as of 2018, and the percentage of those that have their education in technical fields is even lower. ([OECD](#))

We can keep the status quo

A business-as-usual scenario, in the long term, is not realistic for the following reasons. The cost of coal-fired power has risen, and cheap (accessible) coal reserves are depleting. Coal-dependent communities face major health risks as air and water become polluted. Lastly, as the world transitions towards a decarbonised economy, the international demand for coal will decrease, resulting in a major blow to coal-dependent communities. Possible evidence of a decrease in demand is the 29-year low in coal exports South Africa experienced in 2022. ([Market screener](#))

