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**KWAZULU-NATAL**™  
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# Working with Young Women in Rural KwaZulu-Natal

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UKZN INSPIRING GREATNESS

# Broad Context

- “exploration”/“age of discovery,” colonialism, apartheid & anti-apartheid, democracy
- Distribution of wealth
- Rurality, Spatial apartheid
- Legislation & policy
  - Roman-Dutch + Customary Law
- Gender; Education; Labour/work/(un)employment
- “Culture”
- De-coloniality: What does this mean in/from the perspective of the global South?
- Theoretical framing: Feminist postcolonial theory/theories

# Context: Rural South Africa

- Second largest economy in Africa: mineral extraction, agriculture, finance & tourism
- Remains a **highly unequal** society: KwaZulu-Natal highest level of inequality of all nine provinces
- Rural areas:
  - largely populated by black South Africans
  - Desperately under-developed
  - High rates of unemployment, endemic poverty, food insecurity, migrant labour system (StatsSA 2017, 2018)
  - Among youth (15 to 24 years), **59.6 percent IN 2022**
- **Black African rural women** are one of the poorest population groups in South Africa

# Context: Work & Education

- **Very high** rates of youth unemployment
- Few accessible options for post-school education & training
- Labour market = race & gender-biased: women workers earn 30% less than men workers (Statistics South Africa, 2022)
- Education outcomes for youth in rural contexts = much lower than in urban contexts: Only **34% of rural youth** complete upper secondary education, as opposed to 55% of urban youth (UNESCO, 2022).
- Men in this context = more likely than women to complete their education, find employment in the formal economy (rural-urban migration), & earn a decent wage (Hunter 2010).
- Migrant Labour System continues to shape the gender, work & education landscape

# Context: Research Sites

- Two sites in central Drakensberg region
- **Stark contrast:** Black African population vs. white commercial farmers and tourist destination
- Co-researcher participants (CRPs):  
Young women 16-23, isiZulu-speaking, all unemployed, none studying full-time

**Young Stars  
Fighters (12)**

**Snemfundo  
Nokukhanya (6)**



**Emampemvini**



**Emangweni**