



INVEST BETTER
with **BRENTHURST**
BUILDING WEALTH SINCE 2004

IN THIS ISSUE

South African women face a significant retirement gap due to lower earnings, career interruptions, caregiving responsibilities and cautious investment choices.

The article highlights the importance of investing early, protecting retirement savings and taking ownership of financial planning.

INVESTING WITH SA'S

LEADING BOUTIQUE WEALTH MANAGER

WINNER 2020 & 2017 | RUNNER-UP 2023 & 2018
TOP 3 2022 & 2021 | TOP 4 2025 & 2019

RANKED AMONGST THE TOP WEALTH MANAGERS FOR 9 CONSECUTIVE YEARS

JHB (HQ)	+27 (0) 11 799 8100
JHB (SANDTON)	+27 (0) 10 035 1391
PTA	+27 (0) 12 347 8240
CAPE TOWN	+27 (0) 21 418 1236
BELLVILLE	+27 (0) 21 914 9646
CLAREMONT	+27 (0) 21 100 3901
STELLENBOSCH	+27 (0) 21 882 8706
PAARL (VAL DE VIE)	+27 (0) 21 100 3901
GEORGE	+27 (0) 44 050 6057
MAURITIUS	+ 230 5843 5215

WOMEN, INVESTMENTS AND RETIREMENT PLANNING: WHERE ARE WE FALLING BEHIND?

SUZEAN HAUMANN | CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER®, BWM TYGER VALLEY

South African women are saving, but the numbers show that we still reach retirement with less.

For many women, financial planning is not deliberately ignored – it is simply postponed.

There is always something more urgent: school fees, children, ageing parents, a bond payment, medical expenses or the day-to-day cost of running a household. Retirement feels distant, while today's responsibilities are immediate.

But postponement has a cost.

South African data increasingly shows that women face a combination of lower earnings, weaker participation in the labour market, career interruptions, greater family responsibilities and different investment behaviour. The result is a significant retirement gap.

And perhaps the most important finding is this: the problem is not simply that women do not save. In many cases, women demonstrate a strong willingness to save. The challenge is turning that saving behaviour into sufficient long-term invested wealth.

THE STARTING POINT: WOMEN HAVE LESS OPPORTUNITY TO ACCUMULATE WEALTH

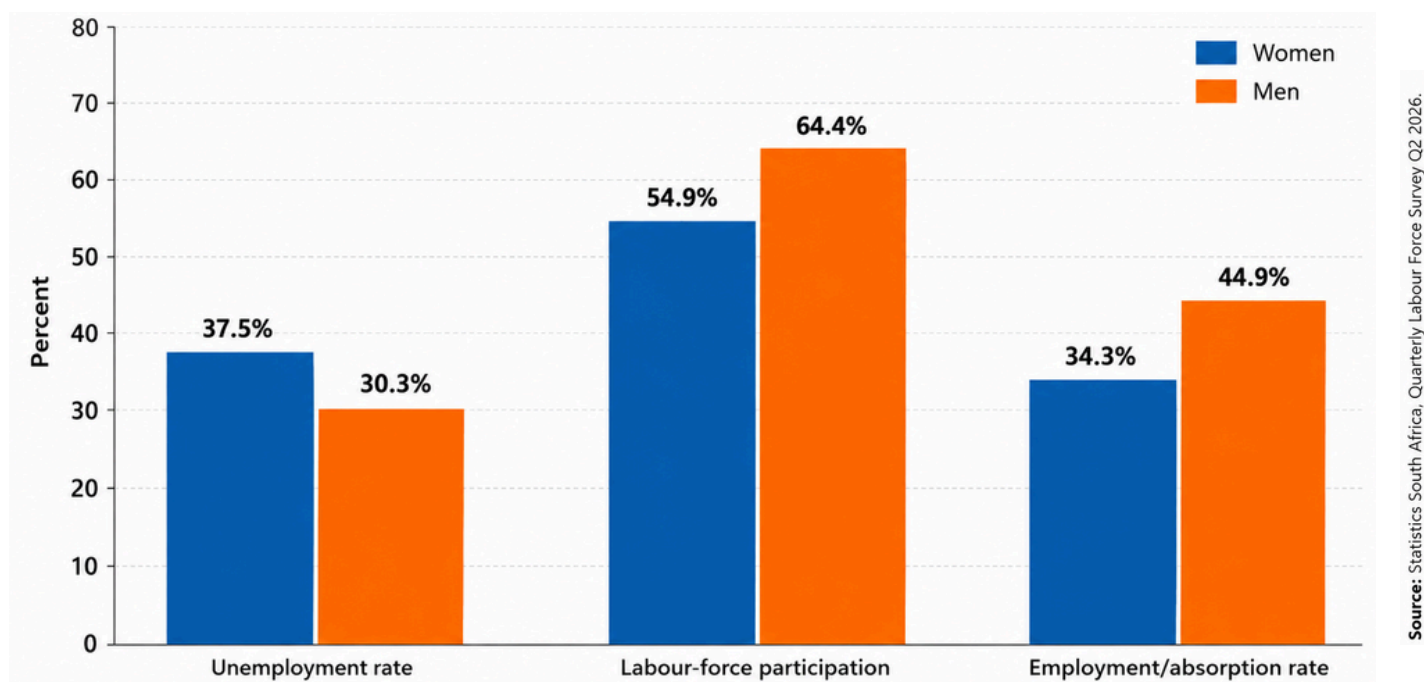
Before we even consider investment choices, there is a fundamental problem: women generally have fewer rands available to invest.

The latest Statistics South Africa Quarterly Labour Force Survey for Q2 2026 shows a significant gender divide.

The official unemployment rate for women was 37.5%, compared with 30.3% for men. Only 54.9% of working-age women participated in the labour force, compared with 64.4% of men. And the actual employment or absorption rate was just 34.3% for women, versus 44.9% for men.

In other words, even before we start discussing retirement funds, unit trusts, tax-free savings accounts or offshore investments, women are already starting from a weaker income base.

SOUTH AFRICA: WOMEN REMAIN AT A LABOUR-MARKET DISADVANTAGE (Q2 2026)



The disparity continues once women are employed. Stats SA reports that only 7.1% of employed women were in managerial occupations in Q2 2026, compared with 10.0% of employed men. Women were more heavily represented in clerical, sales and service and domestic occupations.

Lower earnings today inevitably translates into lower retirement contributions tomorrow.

WOMEN SAVE, BUT MEN ARE MORE LIKELY TO INVEST

This is where the picture becomes particularly interesting.

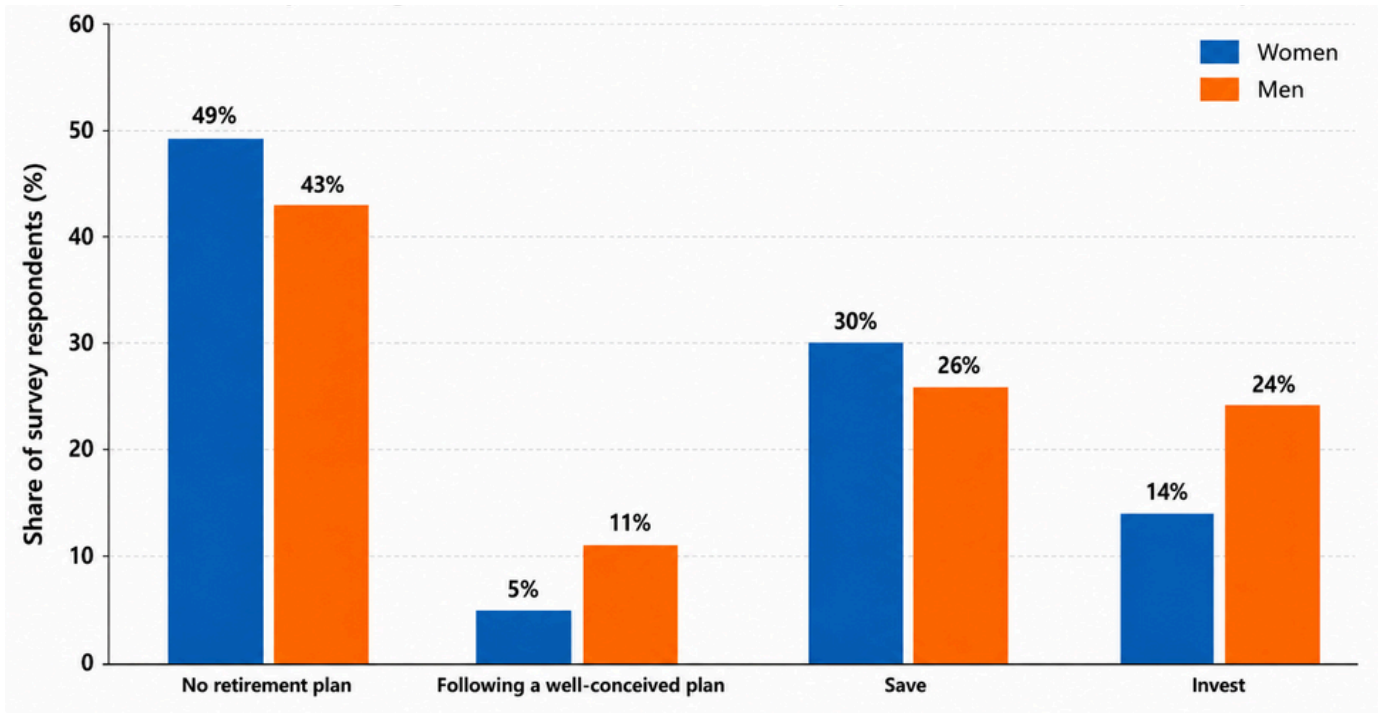
The 10X Retirement Reality Report 2023/2024 found that 49% of women surveyed had no retirement plan, compared with 43% of men. Only 5% of women said they were diligently following a well-conceived retirement plan, compared with 11% of men.

Yet women were actually more likely to describe themselves as savers.

Thirty percent of women said they saved, compared with 26% of men.

When the question changed from saving to investing, however, the position reversed dramatically: 24% OF MEN INVESTED COMPARED WITH ONLY 14% OF WOMEN.

**RETIREMENT PLANNING:
WOMEN SAVE, BUT ARE LESS LIKELY TO INVEST OR FOLLOW A ROBUST PLAN**



This distinction matters. Saving and investing are not the same thing.

Money kept in cash, transactional accounts or short-term savings products is important for emergencies and short-term goals. But retirement can be a 30-, 40- or even 50-year investment journey. Over such periods, investors generally need exposure to growth assets to give their capital the opportunity to outpace inflation.

Being too cautious can, therefore, create a different form of risk: the risk of not growing your money sufficiently.

THE RETIREMENT GAP IS ALREADY MEASURABLE

Discovery Corporate and Employee Benefits analysed member behaviour, earnings and investment choices across its umbrella funds in July 2025.

The findings were striking.

Women had 21% less in pension and provident fund savings balances than men. Discovery's data also found an average earnings gap: women earned approximately 76 cents for every R1 earned by men in the population analysed.

But lower salaries were only part of the story.

WOMEN WERE:

1.3

times more likely to withdraw money from their retirement savings pot

80%

more likely to use such withdrawals for school fees

25%

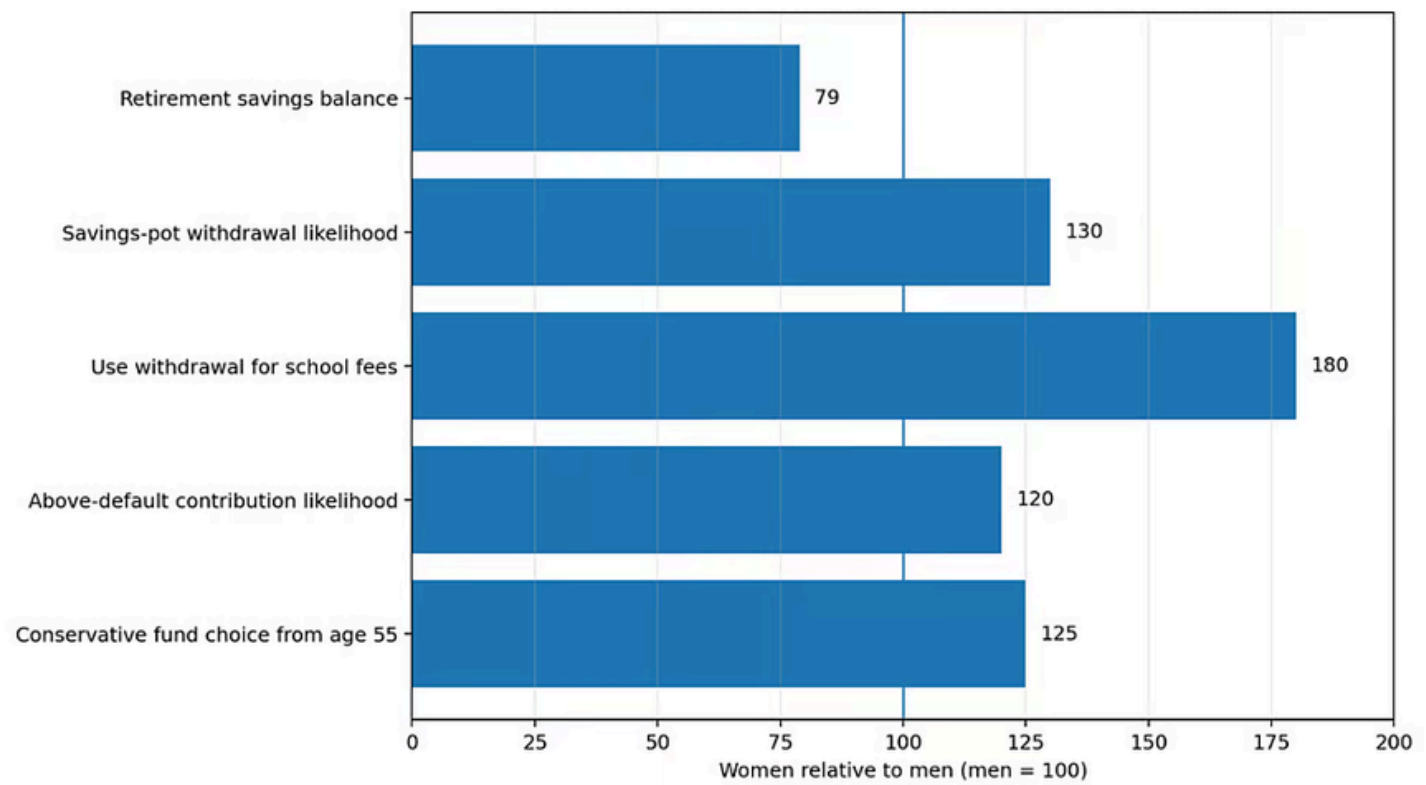
more likely, from age 55 years, to invest in more conservatively-managed balanced funds; yet

1.2

times more likely to contribute more than their employer's default retirement contribution

That last statistic is particularly important.
Women are not necessarily less committed to retirement. In fact, many are trying harder.

THE RETIREMENT PARADOX: STRONGER SAVING INTENT, BUT WORSE OUTCOMES



Source: Discovery Corporate & Employee Benefits, July 2025 umbrella-fund analysis. Index converts reported relative differences to men=100.

The problem is that greater financial pressure throughout a woman's working life can continually interrupt the compounding process.
We contribute - and then life requires the money elsewhere.

THE HIDDEN RETIREMENT COST OF CAREGIVING

Financial planning does not happen in isolation from family life.

Discovery's analysis points to the significant caregiving burden faced by women. Citing Stats SA household data, it notes that 43.4% of children lived only with their mothers, compared with 3.9% living only with their fathers.

The financial consequences can appear in several ways.

A woman may temporarily leave the workforce after having children. She may choose a more flexible, but lower-paying position. She may take time off to care for a parent. She may prioritise school fees over an additional retirement contribution. None of these decisions appears catastrophic in isolation.

The problem is cumulative. Every period without contributions is also a period without investment growth and without compound growth on that investment growth.

SO WHERE ARE WOMEN FALLING BEHIND?

It cannot be attributed to a single factor.

The gap is created by a series of relatively small disadvantages that compound over decades: earning less, spending fewer years in uninterrupted employment, carrying more family expenses, leaving money in savings rather than growth investments, withdrawing retirement capital during periods of financial pressure and becoming too conservative too early.

Then, at retirement, women often need that smaller pool of capital to provide an income for longer.

That is why retirement planning for women cannot simply be: "save what is left at the end of the month." There may never be much left.

Retirement needs to become one of the expenses we deliberately fund.

CLOSING THE GAP

A practical financial strategy should start with a few simple priorities:



KNOW YOUR NUMBER.

Understand what you currently have, how much you are contributing and what income that is likely to provide during retirement.



SEPARATE EMERGENCY MONEY FROM RETIREMENT MONEY.

Building an accessible emergency reserve can reduce the temptation to raid long-term investments when life happens.



INVEST, DON'T ONLY SAVE.

Match the investment strategy to the time horizon rather than allowing fear of short-term market movements to undermine long-term growth.



PRESERVE RETIREMENT SAVINGS WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

Changing jobs should not automatically mean cashing in a retirement fund.



INCREASE CONTRIBUTIONS WHEN INCOME INCREASES.

A portion of every salary increase, bonus or promotion can be redirected towards the future before lifestyle expenses expand.



PLAN FOR CAREER INTERRUPTIONS.

Maternity leave, caregiving or part-time work should be incorporated into the financial plan rather than treated as unexpected events.



REVIEW THE PLAN REGULARLY.

Retirement planning is not a once-off calculation. Income, family responsibilities, markets and legislation change.



TAKE OWNERSHIP OF YOUR OWN FINANCIAL POSITION.

Even in a marriage or long-term partnership, each person should understand the household's investments, retirement funds, debts, insurance and estate plan.

The South African numbers show that women are participating, contributing and saving. But they also show that we are still entering retirement with less wealth and greater longevity risk.

The answer is not simply to tell women to “save more”.

It is to plan earlier, invest appropriately, protect long-term capital and make informed financial decisions throughout every stage of life.

Knowing where you stand financially is not something to fear. It is the starting point for changing where you are going. Your future self deserves to be one of your financial priorities today.

SUZEAN HAUMANN | CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER®, BWM TYGER VALLEY

Phone: +27 (0) 21 914 9646 **Email:** suzean@brenthurstwealth.co.za

CONTACT ANY OF OUR HIGHLY QUALIFIED FINANCIAL ADVISORS AT OUR NINE OFFICES COUNTRYWIDE TO DISCUSS YOUR INVESTMENT STRATEGY

EMAIL US: invest@brenthurstwealth.co.za

BRENTHURST OFFICES

Johannesburg	+27 (0) 11 799 8100	Claremont	+27 (0) 21 100 3901
Sandton	+27 (0) 10 035 1391	Stellenbosch	+27 (0) 21 882 8706
Pretoria	+27 (0) 12 347 8240	Val de Vie Estate	+27 (0) 21 100 3901
CPT Granger Bay	+27 (0) 21 418 1236	Southern Paarl	+27 (0) 21 141 4774
George	+27 (0) 44 050 6057	Mauritius North	+230 260 1738
Bellville	+27 (0) 21 914 9646	Mauritius South	+230 484 2175

SATELLITE OFFICES

LIMPOPO:	Ruan Breed +27 82 551 3299
FREE STATE:	Iniel Van Zyl +27 72 298 3212
NORTH WEST:	Maria Smit +27 79 696 6860
MPUMALANGA:	Marise Reinach +27 72 795 3604
KWAZULU-NATAL:	Arin Ruttenberg +27 84 582 8581

Brenthurst Wealth Management is an authorised financial services provider (Reg No: 2004/012998/07) FSP No.7833. This e-mail and any file attachments transmitted with it are intended solely for the addressee(s) and may be legally privileged and/or confidential. If you have received this e-mail in error please destroy it. If you are not the addressee you may not disclose, copy, distribute or take any action based on the contents hereof. Any unauthorised use or disclosure is prohibited and may be unlawful. The view and opinions expressed in this e-mail message may not necessarily be those of the management of Brenthurst Wealth Management (Pty) Limited.