A Selection of Labour Force Survey Results

Winter, the Year 1403[1] ((21 December 2024- 20 March 2025)

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[1]. It is the Iranian year which usually begins on the day of 21 March of Gregorian calendar. To find the corresponding year of Gregorian calendar, add 621 or 622 (depending on the time of the year) to a solar Hijri year. For example, the corresponding year of the year 1403 in Gregorian calendar is (20 March 2024-20 March 2025).
Iranian seasons and their equivalent in Gregorian calendar
Spring (21 March-21 June)
Summer (22 June - 22 September)
Autumn (23 September -21 December)
Winter (21 December - 20 March)

Introduction

The pair of concepts of employment and unemployment are so fundamental to national economies that any increase in the employment rate, which signifies a decrease in unemployment, is considered an indicator of national development. The unemployment rate is used to evaluate the national economic conditions. The information on the nation's market is gathered through the "Household Employment and Unemployment Characteristics Survey (HEUCS)" as of the year 1376. However, in order to enhance the quality of the HEUCS and align it with international concepts, particularly those of the ILO, the survey plan was revised to implement the current plan called the "Labour Force Survey". The "Labour Force Survey" was first conducted in the year 1384 and has since been regularly conducted in the middle month of every season.

The "Labour Force Survey" is conducted to obtain information on the composition and current condition of the labour force, as well as its changes. This objective is achieved through the estimation of "seasonal and annual labour force indicators at both national and provincial levels", "the estimation of the annual number of the labour force at both national and provincial levels", "the estimation of seasonal and annual changes in labour force indicators at both national and provincial levels", and "the estimation of annual changes in labour force indicators at provincial levels".

The population covered in this survey includes people who, according to the definition, are members of private or collective settled households in rural or urban areas. Therefore, members of private unsettled households and institutional households are not included in this survey. The method used for conducting this survey is a two-stage classified clustering method. In addition to estimating current levels, changes are also estimated. Therefore, rotation sampling is used. Rotation sampling can provide the best estimate of current levels and changes by fixing some sample units between two quarters of the survey and changing the remaining units. With respect to the aim of the survey, the selected rotation pattern for this survey is a "2-2-2" pattern. This means that during the Master Sample period, each sample household is enumerated four times. Accordingly, that sample household is in the sample for two successive quarters and then excluded from the sample. Note that the optimal implementation of rotational sampling requires using a master sample. The master sample refers to the sample that can be used to select sub-samples to satisfy the needs of several surveys or rounds of a survey. In continuous surveys, utilizing a master sample enhances cost-effectiveness and allows for improved control of field operations and sampling overlap across various survey rounds. The sampling frame for the first stage, starting in spring, the year 1397, is the fourth master sample from household surveys based on the results of the 2016 National Population and Housing Census. The master sample includes the sampling units (clusters) of the first stage. Each cluster contains one block/village, part of a large block/village, or in some cases a combination of some small blocks/villages which were created from the 2016 National Population and Housing Census. With respect to the changes in population and housing units in urban areas and in order to prepare an appropriate and updated frame in urban areas, some households were listed within the master sample clusters in the winter of the year 1402, but due to minor changes in population and housing units in rural areas, no listing was made in rural areas.

To conduct the Labour Force Survey for each quarter in the year 1403, 60,648 households were enumerated in both urban and rural areas. After releasing the preliminary results of this survey, the SCI disseminates the detailed results at annual and quarterly intervals. Users, researchers, and planners can access the results of this survey for the Winter of the year 1403, and download them in Excel format from www.amar.ir in the Month of Ordibehesht of the year 1404.

This survey's target population includes private and collective settled households in urban and rural areas.

Data for this survey were collected through face-to-face interviews. The enumerator interviewed the most informed member of each household to complete the household questionnaire. Additionally, the enumerator interviewed every household member aged 10 and over to complete the individual questionnaire.

It is important to note that the definitions and concepts used in the Labour Force Survey were developed and implemented following the resolution of the 13th International Conference of Labour Statistics (ICLS13).

It should be noted that since the spring of 1397, the confidence interval for the unemployment rate indicator has been set at 95 percent in the release of the survey results. This statistical methodology means that if multiple samples are taken from the target population using the same sampling method, a confidence interval can be calculated for the actual unemployment rate based on each sample. It is expected that 95% of these confidence intervals will contain the true unemployment rate.

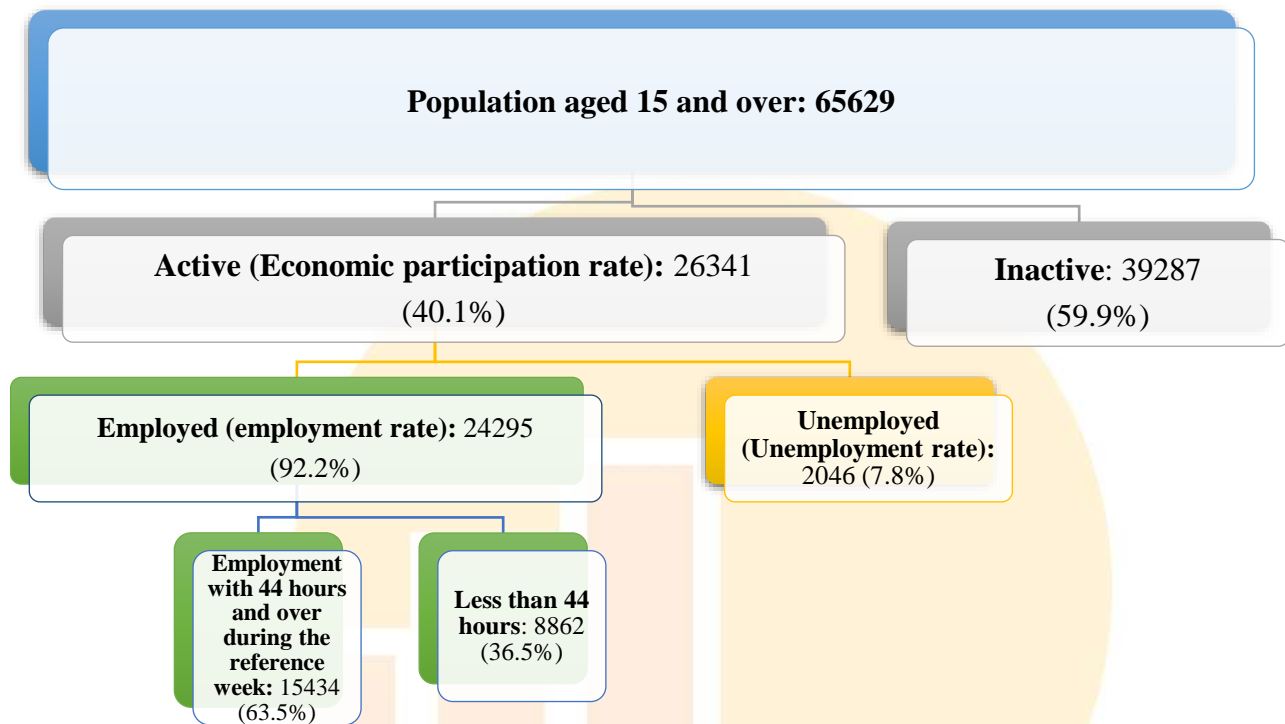It is important to note that, based on recent studies and social transformations in working-age entry patterns across various countries, a minimum age of 15 has been established for evaluating key labor market indicators. In light of similar developments in our country, major labor market indicators have been calculated and reported based on the population aged 15 and older since the spring of the year 1398.

Findings

This report summarizes the results of a winter survey conducted in the year 1403, focusing on key indicators of the labour market and its changes compared to the same season last year (winter, the year 1402). The findings are presented in Table 1. Additionally, Table 2 provides a breakdown of the major labour market indicators by province.

Figure 1. Major Indicators of Labour Market in Winter, The Year 1403 (the figures are at thousand persons)

A review of the economic participation rate for the population aged 15 and over (activity rate) reveals that 40.1% of the working-age population (15 years and over) is economically active; that is, they are either employed or unemployed. Additionally, the results indicate that the economic participation rate is lower for women compared to men and for urban areas in contrast to rural areas.

The analysis of the trend in changes to the national economic participation rate shows that this indicator has decreased by 0.7 percent compared to the same season last year (winter of the year 1402). Furthermore, the review of the employment rate for the population aged 15 and over indicates that 37.0 percent of the working-age population (15 years and over) is employed. This indicator is higher for men and rural areas compared to women and urban areas.

TABLE 1. MAJOR LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS AND THEIR CHANGES BY SEX, URBAN AND RURAL AREAS; WINTER, THE YEAR 1403 COMPARED TO THE WINTER, THE YEAR 1402

(number person-rate, share and ratio: percent)

Labour force indicators		Total country			Male			Female		
		Winter, the year 1403	Winter, the year 1402	Changes	Winter, the year 1403	Winter, the year 1402	Changes	Winter, the year 1403	Winter, the year 1402	Changes
Population aged 15 and over[1]	Number	65628506	64837175	791331	32755636	32371515	384121	32872870	32465660	407210
Economic participation rate of population aged 15 and over	Rate	40.1	40.8	0.7-	67.3	68.0	-0.7	13.1	13.8	-0.7
	Number	26341239	26462540	121301-	22032700	21996833	35867	4308539	4465707	-157168
Economically inactive population aged 15 and over	Number	39287267	38374635	912632	10722936	10374682	348254	28564331	27999953	564378
Employment rate of population aged 15 and over	Ratio	37.0	37.3	0.3-	62.9	63.1	-0.2	11.3	11.6	-0.3
	Number	24295433	24193586	101847	20597133	20424934	172199	3698300	3768652	-70352
Unemployment of population aged 15 and over	Rate	7.8	8.6	0.8-	6.5	7.1	-0.6	14.2	15.6	-1.4
	Number	2045806	2268954	-223148	1435567	1571899	-136332	610239	697055	-86816
Unemployment of population aged 15-24	Rate	21.0	22.5	1.5-	18.1	19.5	-1.4	34.0	36.4	-2.4
	Number	541800	559869	18069-	380391	399195	-18804	161409	160674	735
Unemployment of population aged 18-35	Rate	14.8	15.7	0.9-	12.1	12.7	-0.6	25.2	27.1	-1.9
	Number	1355602	1519338	-163736	883486	972389	-88903	472117	546949	-74832
Unemployment of the population aged 15 and over graduated from higher education institutes	Rate	10.7	11.6	-0.9	7.6	7.7	-0.1	17.7	20.2	-2.5
	Number	795513	884884	-89371	387060	400257	-13197	408452	484627	-76175
Employment in agriculture sector	Share	12.7	12.9	-0.2	13.2	13.2	0.0	10.0	10.9	-0.9
	Number	3096061	3110174	-14113	2726146	2700313	25833	369915	409861	-39946
Employment in manufacturing sector	Share	33.5	33.5	0.0	35.3	35.0	0.3	23.5	25.2	-1.7
	Number	8144018	8093531	50487	7276586	7143133	133453	867433	950398	-82965
Employment in services sector	Share	53.7	53.6	0.1	51.4	51.8	-0.4	66.5	63.9	2.6
	Number	13051619	12979603	72016	10591500	10572237	19263	2460119	2407366	52753
Underemployment	Share	7.7	8.6	-0.9	8.4	9.4	-1.0	4.3	4.1	0.2
	Number	1879990	2082048	-202058	1720285	1926098	-205813	159704	155950	3754
The share of the unemployed (aged 15 and over) higher education graduates out of the total unemployed population	Share	38.9	39.0	-0.1	27.0	25.5	1.5	66.9	69.5	-2.6
The share of the employed (aged 15 and over) higher education graduates out of the total employed population	Share	27.3	27.8	-0.5	23.0	23.5	-0.5	51.3	50.9	0.4

TABLE 1. MAJOR LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS AND THEIR CHANGES BY SEX, URBAN AND RURAL AREAS; WINTER, THE YEAR 1403 COMPARED TO THE WINTER, THE YEAR 1402
(continued)   (number person, rate, share and ratio: percent)

Labour force indicators		Urban areas			Rural areas		
		Winter, the year 1403	Winter, the year 1402	Changes	Winter, the year 1403	Winter, the year 1402	Changes
Population aged 15 and over[1]	Number	51229134	50404305	824829	14399371	14432870	-33499
Economic participation rate of population aged 15 and over	Rate	39.9	40.6	-0.7	41.1	41.5	-0.4
	Number	20426551	20467633	-41082	5914688	5994906	-80218
Economically inactive population aged 15 and over	Number	30802583	29936672	865911	8484684	8437964	46720
Employment rate of population aged 15 and over	Ratio	36.7	36.9	-0.2	38.2	38.6	-0.4
	Number	18790473	18622297	168176	5504959	5571289	66330-
Unemployment of population aged 15 and over	Rate	8.0	9.0	-1.0	6.9	7.1	-0.2
	Number	1636078	1845336	-209258	409728	423617	-13889
Unemployment of population aged 15-24	Rate	21.6	23.7	-2.1	19.4	19.1	0.3
	Number	414662	437322	-22660	127138	122547	4591
Unemployment of population aged 18-35	Rate	15.2	16.4	-1.2	13.2	13.1	0.1
	Number	1104853	1255432	-150579	250749	263906	-13157
Unemployment of the population aged 15 and over graduated from higher education institutes	Rate	10.3	11.3	-1.0	15.1	15.9	-0.8
	Number	703578	790838	-87260	91934	94046	-2112
Employment in agriculture sector	Share	5.1	5.0	0.1	38.7	39.2	-0.5
	Number	963101	925523	37578	2132959	2184650	-51691
Employment in manufacturing sector	Share	34.3	34.1	0.2	30.9	31.4	-0.5
	Number	6444330	6346575	97755	1699688	1746957	-47269
Employment in services sector	Share	60.6	60.9	-0.3	30.4	29.4	1.0
	Number	11379307	11339921	39386	1672312	1639682	32630
Underemployment	Share	6.2	7.0	-0.8	12.9	14.1	-1.2
	Number	1168243	1297149	-128906	711747	784898	-73151
The share of the unemployed (aged 15 and over) higher education graduates out of the total unemployed population	Share	43.0	42.9	0.1	22.4	22.2	0.2
The share of the employed (aged 15 and over) higher education graduates out of the total employed population	Share	32.6	33.4	-0.8	9.4	8.9	0.5

- The difference between the total number of employees and the total number of employees in the three sectors is due to the unreported major sectors of economic activity.
- The difference is due to rounding.
1. The target population of the labour force survey is individuals of working age from private settled and collective households in urban and rural areas.

A review of employment in major economic sectors indicates that the services sector holds the biggest share of employment with 53.7% of the total, followed by the manufacturing sector with 33.5% and the agriculture sector with 12.7%. In the winter of the year 1403, the contribution of the employed people to the service and agriculture sectors increased by 0.1% and decreased by 0.2%, respectively, and the contribution of the employed people to the manufacturing sector has remained unchanged in comparison with the last corresponding season (winter, the year 1402).

A review of the unemployment rate among the population aged 15 and over indicates that 7.8% of the economically active population is unemployed. Furthermore, based on a 95% confidence interval, the total national unemployment rate ranges between 7.4% and 8.1%, with a point estimate of 7.8%.

This means that, with a 95% confidence interval, this range reflects the true national unemployment rate. The results show that the unemployment rate is higher for women and in urban areas compared to men and rural areas. An analysis of the trend in this indicator at the national level reveals a 0.8% decrease compared to the same season last year (winter of the year 1402).

The unemployment rate for youths aged 15-24 shows that 21.0 percent of the economically active population in this age group is unemployed. This rate is higher among women and in urban areas compared to men and rural areas. Additionally, an analysis of the trend in the national unemployment rate for youths aged 15-24 reveals a decline of 1.5 percent compared to the same period last year.

The unemployment rate among youths aged 18 to 35 indicates that 14.8 percent of the active population in this age group is unemployed. This rate is higher for women and in urban areas than for men and rural areas. A review of the trends among youths aged 18 to 35 shows that this rate has fallen by 0.9 percent compared to the last corresponding season (winter of the year 1402).
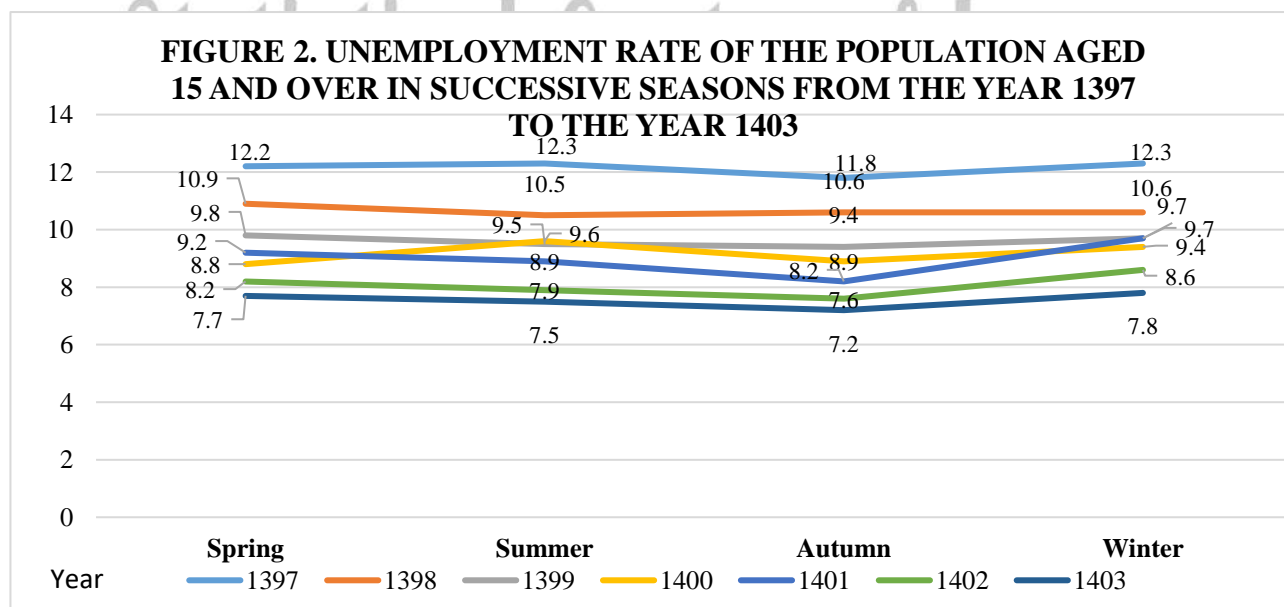
A review of the unemployment rate among individuals aged 15 and over who have graduated from higher education indicates that 10.7 percent of the active population in this group is unemployed. This rate is higher for women and in rural areas compared to men and urban areas. Furthermore, an analysis of trends shows that this unemployment rate decreased by 0.9% in the winter of the year 1403 compared to the last corresponding season (winter of the year 1402).

The underemployment share indicates that 7.7% of the employed population aged 15 and over was underemployed. This rate is higher for men and in rural areas than for women and urban areas. In the winter of the year 1403, the underemployment share experienced a 0.9% decrease compared to the last corresponding season (winter of the year 1402).

The study of the employed share aged 15 and over, with usual working hours of 49 hours and over, shows that 37.5% of the employed typically work 49 hours or more per week. This indicator, which is one of the measures of decent work, demonstrates that a significant portion of the employed workforce works beyond the standard hours. This indicator experienced a 0.7% increase compared to the last corresponding season (winter of the year 1402).

In the winter of the year 1403, the share of unemployed higher education graduates out of the total unemployed population was 38.9 percent. This indicator is higher for women and urban areas than for men and rural areas. A review of the changes shows that this indicator experienced a 0.1 percent decrease compared to the last corresponding season (winter of the year 1402).

In the winter of the year 1403, the share of employed higher education graduates out of the total employed population was 27.3 percent. This indicator is also higher for women and urban areas than for men and rural areas. A review of the changes shows that this indicator decreased by 0.5 percent over the last corresponding season (winter of the year 1402).

FIGURE 2. UNEMPLOYMENT RATE OF THE POPULATION AGED 15 AND OVER IN SUCCESSIVE SEASONS FROM THE YEAR 1397 TO THE YEAR 1403

Table 2 shows some major labour market indicators for the population aged 15 and over in the winter, the year 1403 compared to the last corresponding season (winter of the year 1402).

TABLE 2- SOME MAJOR LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS FOR THE POPULATION AGED 15 AND OVER IN THE WINTER, THE YEAR 1403 COMPARED TO LAST CORRESPONDING SEASON (WINTER, THE YEAR 1402) (percent)

Province	Economic participation rate		Employment ratio		Unemployment rate		
					Winter, the year 1403		
	Winter, the year 1403	Winter, the year 1402	Winter, the year 1403	Winter, the year 1402	Point-to-point estimation	The confidence interval (95%)	Winter, the year 1402
Total country	40.1	40.8	37.0	37.3	7.8	(7.4-8.1)	8.6
East Azarbayejan	41.2	41.9	38.1	38.8	7.5	(6.0-9.0)	7.4
West Azarbayejan	38.0	40.5	34.5	37.4	9.1	(6.8-11.4)	7.6
Ardebil	44.7	47.1	38.8	41.0	13.1	(10.1-16.2)	12.9
Esfahan	39.5	42.1	35.5	37.9	10.0	(8.1-11.9)	9.9
Alborz	37.8	40.5	34.8	37.1	8.0	(6.2-9.9)	8.3
Ilam	31.0	31.4	29.1	29.4	6.1	(4.5-7.6)	6.4
Bushehr	40.5	41.8	37.8	39.2	6.7	(5.1-8.4)	6.1
Tehran	39.9	40.4	38.5	37.8	3.4	(2.5-4.4)	6.3
Chaharmahal & Bakhtiyari	43.8	41.5	39.5	37.7	9.7	(7.3-12.0)	9.3
South Khorasan	38.1	39.6	36.4	37.6	4.6	(3.2-6.0)	5.0
Khorasan-e-Razavi	42.3	42.4	39.9	39.7	5.6	(4.4-6.8)	6.2
North Khorasan	45.5	46.8	41.8	41.9	8.0	(6.5-9.4)	10.5
Khuzestan	39.9	40.7	35.0	36.0	12.3	(10.4-14.3)	11.7
Zanjan	48.0	50.5	43.6	45.8	9.2	(7.3-11.0)	9.2
Semnan	37.9	38.0	35.9	35.6	5.4	(3.9-6.9)	6.4
Sistan & Baluchestan	35.5	35.2	31.9	31.3	9.9	(7.6-12.3)	10.9
Fars	37.5	36.6	34.6	33.7	7.7	(6.3-9.1)	7.9
Qazvin	41.3	41.4	38.6	39.4	6.5	(4.8-8.1)	4.7
Qom	38.6	39.7	35.4	36.3	8.2	(6.6-9.9)	8.6
Kordestan	41.5	40.8	35.9	34.9	13.7	(11.2-16.1)	14.3
Kerman	40.2	39.9	37.0	35.9	8.0	(6.2-9.8)	10.0
Kermanshah	41.9	41.2	35.6	34.1	15.2	(12.1-18.2)	17.4
Kohgiluyeh & Boyerahmad	31.8	31.9	29.6	29.4	7.0	(5.2-8.8)	7.9
Golestan	39.1	39.0	34.8	34.9	11.2	(8.9-13.6)	10.7
Gilan	43.5	44.3	39.7	41.0	8.8	(6.5-11.1)	7.4
Lorestan	41.2	41.8	36.7	36.7	11.0	(9.2-12.9)	12.3
Mazandaran	43.8	43.1	41.2	40.0	5.9	(4.4-7.5)	7.1
Markazi	35.7	36.1	33.3	32.8	6.8	(5.0-8.5)	9.1
Hormozgan	42.2	41.0	38.9	36.8	7.7	(5.7-9.7)	10.4
Hamedan	38.4	41.6	34.4	37.7	10.6	(8.3-12.9)	9.5
Yazd	39.7	44.4	38.0	41.1	4.3	(3.3-5.3)	7.6

Definitions and concepts

The Statistical Centre of Iran employs new international definitions and concepts based on the ICLS 1982[1] for measuring employment and unemployment in the Labour Force Survey.

Work: This key term is used to determine the status of the economic activity of the people. The term "work" refers to the group of economic activities (mentally or physically) which are done for earning income (cash or in-kind) and its objective is to produce goods or services. Generally, the people who work are divided into two groups: self-employed, who work for themselves, and wage and salary earners, who earn money for the work they do.

Statistical period (Reference week): Refers to the second or third calendar week (Saturday to Friday) of the middle month of each season.

Employed: All people aged 15 or over who, according to the definition of work, have worked for at least one hour during the reference week or have temporarily left their job for one reason or another, are reckoned as employed. Persons who, without receiving any remuneration, work for a member of their household that is a relative (unpaid family workers); trainees who perform an activity in relation to the activity of the institute for apprenticeships during the training period, namely, they directly contribute to the production of goods or services, their activity is considered "work"; students who have worked during the reference week, according to the definition of work; and all people who are serving as a permanent and temporary cadre in the armed forces (armed forces, cadre personnel, soldiers, commissioned officers, non-commissioned officers of the military forces and the police) are considered employed.

Unemployed: The unemployed are all people aged 15 or over who have the following three criteria together:

1. have no job during the reference week (not engaged in a wage/salary job or self-employment),

2. have been seeking job during the reference week and the preceding three weeks (have taken specific steps to seek paid employment or self-employment),

3. are available to work during the reference week or the following week (available for a wage/salary employment or self-employment). All people who, because of expecting to start a job in future or return to their former job, have not been seeking a job, but have had no job and have been available to work - are also considered unemployed.

Labour force (active population): is the sum of persons in employment plus persons in unemployment.

Underemployment: The underemployed people are all employed people who have been present in or temporarily absent from the workplace and have worked less than 44 hours during the reference week due to economic reasons such as work recession, not finding a job with more hours, or non-work season, but have been willing and ready to do more work in the reference week.

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[1] ILO, Thirteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (Geneva, 1982).

Indicators

Economic participation rate (Economic activity rate)

The ratio of the active population (employed & unemployed) to the working age population multiplied by 100.

$$\text{Economic participation rate} = \frac{\text{Economically active population aged 15 and over}}{\text{Population aged 15 and over}} \times 100$$

Employment ratio: The ratio of the employed population to the total population at working age, multiplied by 100.

$$\text{Employment ratio} = \frac{\text{Employed population aged 15 and over}}{\text{Population aged 15 and over}} \times 100$$

Unemployment rate

The ratio of the unemployed population to the active population (employed & unemployed) multiplied by 100.

$$\text{Unemployment rate} = \frac{\text{Unemployed population aged 15 and over}}{\text{Active population aged 15 and over}} \times 100$$

Employment rate

The ratio of the employed population to the active population (employed & unemployed) multiplied by 100.

$$\text{Employment rate} = \frac{\text{Employed population aged 15 and over}}{\text{Active population aged 15 and over}} \times 100 = 100 - \text{unemployment rate}$$

Unemployment rate of the population aged 15-24

The ratio of the unemployed population aged 15-24 to the economically active population aged 15-24 multiplied by 100.

$$\text{Unemployment rate aged 15-24} = \frac{\text{Unemployed population aged 15-24}}{\text{Economically active population aged 15-24}} \times 100$$

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Unemployment rate of the population aged 18-35

The ratio of the unemployed population aged 18-35 to the economically active population aged 18-35 multiplied by 100.

$$\text{Unemployment rate aged 18-35} = \frac{\text{Unemployed population aged 18-35}}{\text{Economically active population aged 18-35}} \times 100$$

Unemployment rate of higher education graduates

The ratio of unemployed higher education graduates to active higher education graduates multiplied by 100.

$$\text{Unemployment rate of higher education graduates} = \frac{\text{Unemployed higher education graduates}}{\text{Economically active higher education graduates}} \times 100$$

Share of unemployed higher education graduates aged 15 and over

The ratio of unemployed higher education graduates to the total unemployed population aged 15 and over multiplied by 100.

$$\text{Share of unemployed higher education graduates aged 15 and over} = \frac{\text{Unemployed higher education graduates aged 15 and over}}{\text{Unemployed population aged 15 and over}} \times 100$$

Share of employed higher education graduates aged 15 and over

The ratio of employed higher education graduates to the total employed population aged 15 and over multiplied by 100.

$$\text{Share of employed higher education graduates aged 15 and over} = \frac{\text{Employed higher education graduates aged 15 and over}}{\text{Total employed population aged 15 and over}} \times 100$$

Underemployment share of population aged 15 and over

The ratio of the underemployed population aged 15 and over to the employed population aged 15 and over multiplied by 100.

$$\text{Underemployment share of population aged 15 and over} = \frac{\text{Underemployed population aged 15 and over}}{\text{Employed population aged 15 and over}} \times 100$$