

KYRGYZSTAN

The ILO Work4Youth project worked with the National Statistical Commission of Kyrgyzstan to implement the School-to-work transition survey (SWTS) in 2013 (July–September). The results of the survey were highlighted in the regional synthesis report, S. Elder et al. (2015): *Labour market transitions of young women and men in Eastern Europe and Central Asia*, Work4Youth Publication Series No. 28 (Geneva, ILO). The objective of this country note is to offer a general summary of youth labour market trends in Kyrgyzstan based on the SWTS. Youth is defined as 15–29.

Main findings of the ILO SWTS

Human capital and mismatch

- Nearly all surveyed youth had attended school or a training programme at some point in their lives in Kyrgyzstan as of 2013 (only 0.6 per cent of youth never attended any school). More than half of the youth population had completed school (54 per cent) while 41.1 per cent was still attending school in 2013. Young women in Kyrgyzstan have equal opportunities to young men in terms of access to education.
- SWTS results show a correlation between the levels of education and a young person's labour market transition: a young person with tertiary education was able to complete the transition from school to a stable/satisfactory job in half the time needed by a young person with secondary education (7.6 and 15.1 months, respectively).
- The majority of employed youth in Kyrgyzstan were adequately educated for the job they were doing (72.7 per cent with qualifications matching those expected for the occupation). It was also common to find youth classified as overqualified for their job (11.4 per cent), and more common yet to find young people who were deemed undereducated for their positions (15.9 per cent).
- Two-thirds (65.1 per cent) of current students in Kyrgyzstan showed a preference for future work in the government/public sector. While the attraction of public sector employment is understandable given concerns with job security, the ability of the sector to absorb a significant number of young workers is limited.

Underutilization of the youth labour potential remains a top concern

- The youth labour underutilization rate in Kyrgyzstan was relatively high at 55.3 per cent in 2013. The share of underutilized labour potential consists of 38.7 per cent of the youth population in irregular employment (either in self-employment or paid employment with contract of less than 12 months), 4.3 per cent unemployed and 12.3 per cent inactive non-students.

The ILO **School-to-work transitions surveys (SWTS)** are implemented as an outcome of the Work4Youth (W4Y) project, a partnership between the ILO and The MasterCard Foundation. The project has a budget of US\$14.6 million and will run for five years to mid-2016. Its aim is to “promote decent work opportunities for young men and women through knowledge and action”. The immediate objective of the partnership is to produce more and better labour market information specific to youth in developing countries, focusing in particular on transition paths to the labour market.

See the website www.ilo.org/w4y for more information.

- The more disadvantaged youth when it comes to finding work are those with university degrees; the unemployment rate of a young university graduate was 9.3 per cent, while that of a young person with secondary vocational training was only 4.2 per cent, and that of a general secondary graduate 2.6 per cent.
- The duration of unemployment for young people was not very long, on average. Most unemployed youth (70.5 per cent) found work in less than three months, and 28.3 per cent were able to find work in less than a month.
- The share of youth neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETs) in Kyrgyzstan stood at 15.3 per cent in 2013. The share among young women was triple that of young men in 2013 (at 22.7 and 7.5 per cent, respectively), and is explained primarily by the obligation of many young women to remain outside of the labour force to tend to family responsibilities.

Employment rates for youth are above regional levels yet the quality of work remains a concern

- More than half (58.3 per cent) of the youth in Kyrgyzstan was employed in 2013. Young men are generally more likely to work than young women (employment ratios at 67.1 and 50.2 per cent, respectively).
- Most young workers remain in the position of unpaid family workers (41.9 per cent), especially women (52 per cent). An almost equal number find paid employment (40.1 per cent), however, 45.1 per cent of youth in paid employment were engaged without a written contract and 17.2 per cent had a contract of duration less than one year.
- The agriculture sector absorbs the largest portion of Kyrgyzstan's young workers (39.4 per cent of young male workers and 55.1 per cent of young female workers), followed closely by services (33.2 per cent of young male workers and 34.7 per cent of young female workers) and industry (27.2 and 10 per cent, respectively).
- Informal employment affects four in five young workers in Kyrgyzstan (79.5 per cent).
- Around one-fifth (21.1 per cent) of employed youth worked less than 20 hours during the reference week in 2013, while 13.1 per cent worked excessively long hours (more than 50 hours per week).

Selection of data tables

Table 1. Youth population by educational status, 2013 (%)

	Total	Male	Female
Never attended school	0.6	0.8	0.5
Dropped out before graduation or completion of school	4.3	3.9	4.7
Currently attending school	41.1	41.0	41.1
Education completed	54.0	54.3	53.7
Total	100	100	100

Table 2. Key youth labour market indicators – traditional distribution, 2013 (%)

	Total	Male	Female
Employed	58.3	67.1	50.2
Unemployed (strict definition)	2.4	2.7	2.1
Inactive	39.3	30.1	47.7
Total	100	100	100
Youth labour force participation rate	60.7	69.9	52.3
Youth unemployment rate (strict definition)	4.0	3.9	4.1

Note: The "strict" definition of unemployment refers to persons without work, available to work and actively engaged in a job search. The "broad" definition excludes the job search criteria. The youth unemployment rate is the number of unemployed persons divided by the youth labour force (employed plus unemployed).

Table 3. Key youth labour market indicators – alternative distribution, 2013 (%)

	Total	Male	Female
In regular employment	19.6	25.4	14.3
In irregular employment	38.7	41.8	35.9
Unemployed (broad definition)	4.3	4.5	4.1
Inactive students	25.1	24.1	26.1
Inactive non-students	12.3	4.3	19.5
Total	100	100	100
Youth labour force participation rate (broad definition)	62.6	71.7	54.3
Youth unemployment rate (broad definition)	4.3	4.5	4.1
Youth labour underutilization rate	55.3	50.5	59.6

Table 4. Distribution of NEET youth by composition, 2013 (%)

Sex	NEET rate	of which:	
		Inactive non-students	Unemployed non-students
Total	15.4	13.5	1.9
Male	7.5	5.4	2.1
Female	22.7	20.9	1.8

Table 5. Distribution of youth employment by sector at the 1-digit level, 2013 (%)

Sector	Total	Male	Female
Agriculture	46.5	39.4	55.1
Industry	19.4	27.2	10.0
Services	33.9	33.2	34.7
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	46.5	39.4	55.1
Mining	0.5	0.7	0.3
Manufacturing	8.1	7.8	8.5
Electricity, gas, steam	0.3	0.4	0.2
Water supply	0.1	0.1	0.2
Construction	10.4	18.2	0.8
Wholesale and retail trade	13.5	15.0	11.7
Transport	2.7	4.0	1.1
Accommodation	3.4	2.1	4.9
Information and communications	2.1	2.2	2.0
Financial activities	1.2	1.1	1.4
Professional scientific activities	0.4	0.6	0.1
Administrative and support activities	0.7	1.0	0.3
Public administration	2.7	3.6	1.6
Education	3.4	1.4	5.7
Health and social work	2.0	0.7	3.5
Arts and entertainment	0.3	0.3	0.2
Other services	0.9	0.6	1.3
Private households	0.7	0.7	0.7

Table 6. Employed youth by status in employment, 2013 (%)

Status in employment	Total	Male	Female
Wage and salaried workers (employees)	40.1	45.8	33.1
Employers	0.4	0.5	0.3
Own-account workers	13.3	15.7	10.4
Members of producers' cooperatives	3.9	3.6	4.2
Contributing (unpaid) family workers	41.9	33.6	52.0
Not classifiable	0.4	0.7	0.0
Total	100	100	100

Table 7. Young wage and salaried workers by type of contract, 2013 (%)

Type of contract	Total	Male	Female
Written agreement	54.9	47.9	66.6
Oral agreement	45.1	52.1	33.4
Unlimited duration	80.4	79.4	82.0
Limited duration	19.6	20.6	18.0
– Less than 12 months	17.2	18.5	15.1
– 12 months to less than 36 months	2.1	2.0	2.2
– 36 months or more	0.3	0.1	0.7
Total	100	100	100

Table 8. Youth informal employment by composition, 2013 (%)

	Total	Male	Female
Youth formal employment rate	20.5	21.5	19.4
Youth informal employment rate	79.5	78.5	80.6
<i>Of which:</i>			
– Informal employment outside the informal sector (share in informal employment)	28.3	33.4	22.3
– Employment in the informal sector (share in informal employment)	71.7	66.6	77.7
Total	100	100	100

Table 9. Employed youth by overeducation, undereducation or matching qualifications, 2013 (%)

Qualifications match	Total	Male	Female
Undereducated	15.9	14.5	17.6
Overeducated	11.4	13.0	9.4
Matching qualifications	72.7	72.5	73.0
Total	100	100	100

Table 10. Youth unemployment rates by level of completed educational attainment, 2013 (%)

Educational attainment	Total	Male	Female
Primary	1.1	0.9	1.4
Secondary vocational	4.2	1.7	12.6
Secondary general	2.6	2.2	3.1
Post-secondary vocational	7.4	6.6	8.0
University and postgraduate studies	9.3	10.3	8.2

Table 11. Unemployed youth by duration of job search, 2013 (%)

Duration of job search	Total	Male	Female
Less than a week	5.0	5.3	4.5
1 week to less than 1 month	23.3	16.5	31.2
1 month to less than 3 months	42.2	49.0	34.2
3 months to less than 6 months	8.8	7.2	10.7
6 months to less than 1 year	5.4	5.1	5.7
More than a year	15.3	16.8	13.6
Total	100	100	100

Table 12. Youth by stages and subcategories of transition, 2013 (%)

Stage of transitions	Total	Male	Female
Total transited	28.6	33.4	24.2
Transited to stable employment	14.5	18.0	11.2
Transited to satisfactory temporary employment	2.7	4.3	1.3
Transited to satisfactory self-employment	11.4	11.1	11.7
In transition	44.1	41.6	46.3
Unemployed (broad definition)	3.2	3.2	3.1
In non-satisfactory temporary employment	2.8	4.6	1.3
In non-satisfactory self-employment	12.1	13.5	10.8
Active students	15.9	16.9	15.0
Inactive non-students with aim to work in the future	10.1	3.4	16.2
Transition not yet started	27.3	25.0	29.5
Inactive students	25.1	24.1	26.1
Inactive non-students with no plans to work in the future	2.2	0.9	3.4
Total	100	100	100

Note: Unless other specified, the categories exclude current students.