

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND MIGRATION



COUNTRY BRIEF: BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



Youth labour market overview

Young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) aged 15 to 24 represent 16 per cent of the 3.8 million population of the countryⁱ. In Bosnia and Herzegovina the overall unemployment rate in 2012 reached 28 per cent, while the youth unemployment rate (15-24 years of age) more than double the overall unemployment, at 63.1 per centⁱⁱ.

The total youth population in the labour force is 121 000, that is 10.7 per cent of the overall population. 29.4 per cent of youth are active on the labour market, while the percentage of active young men is almost double their female counterparts. Both the youth employment and unemployment rate indicate a more favourable labour market situation for young men compared to young women (14.1 compared to 7.5 per cent). Thus, male youth unemployment rate is 62.6 per cent compared to 64 per cent registered among young women.

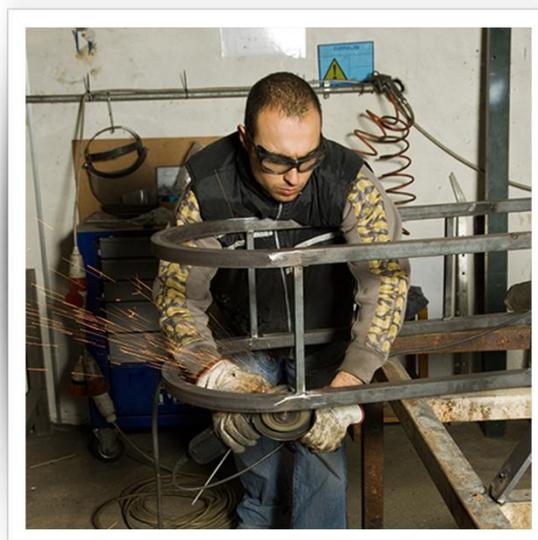
Based on their previous negative experiences, young people assess their chances to obtain employment in BiH as highly unfavourable. One in four young people holds employment which is unrelated to their field of study, and youth with vocational education have a particularly hard time finding work. According to estimations, young people in general are more likely to find work in the informal labour market, doing menial jobs in poor working conditions, and with almost no security. Many youth have a contract for an undetermined (54%) or determined (18%) period of time and their wage is only partially declared.

Also, the less educated and low skilled workers are more likely to be employed informally than higher skilled and better educated workers. Furthermore, a low skilled worker is more likely to remain informally employed for a longer period. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, most informal employment is held by youth in the 15 to 24 age group.

Informal employment in this group is more than 30% higher than in older age groupsⁱⁱⁱ. For example, work in the informal market is particularly prevalent in the Federation of BiH, where 24% of youth have no contracts with employers, while 17% of them lack contracts in the Republika Srpska^{iv}.

3 per cent of the overall population in BiH is enrolled in a higher education programme, that is, 102 357 students in 2012 in total. The number of females, 55.1 per cent, surpasses that of male students, 44.9 per cent. The total university enrolment rate is 3 per cent, but the ratio of those who actually graduate within the prescribed time was 10 per cent in 2008^v

In BiH, people who have attained a master's or doctoral degree are employed mainly in the education sector, followed closely by the health and social welfare sectors. Masters holders are to a great extent also employed in public administration and defence, wholesale and retail, and real estate sectors. People with a doctoral degree also tend to be employed in public administration and defence, and real estate sectors.





On the other hand, while young people are mainly employed in the manufacturing, and wholesale and retail sectors, other sectors such as real estate, construction, education and health are also significant employers of people aged 19 to 29. Female participation is lower in almost all sectors with the exceptions of health, welfare and education which are dominated by women. However, the participation of men and women is almost equal in the wholesale and retail sectorⁱⁱ.

There is an indication of a skills gap as the education system is still not sufficiently aligned to the needs of the labour market. In addition, most streams are exclusively theoretical in approach, hence not providing youth with opportunity to gain practical experience during their formal education. This situation prolongs the transition from school to work for youth in a context where job creation is not capable of absorbing the new labour market entrants. This leads to long unemployment spells and high levels of informality. It appears there is also a lack of training, internship and job placement programs which could support youth in this transition^{iv}.

Main features of youth migration

The economy of BiH is showing signs of recovery; the industrial production and exports are increasing. Growth is expected to pick up almost 1 percentage point during 2014, although unemployment shall remain

very high^{vi}. It is important to once again underline that the current economic trends in Bosnia and Herzegovina are having a particularly negative impact on the country's youth. Many young people who complete vocational or tertiary education in BH are not able to find a job in a relevant profession, while many others turn to low quality jobs in the informal – or shadow – economy. Less than half of all employed people below the age of 29 manage to find work in a field in which they were educated – leading to a high

Box 1. Addressing youth employment and migration through retention measures

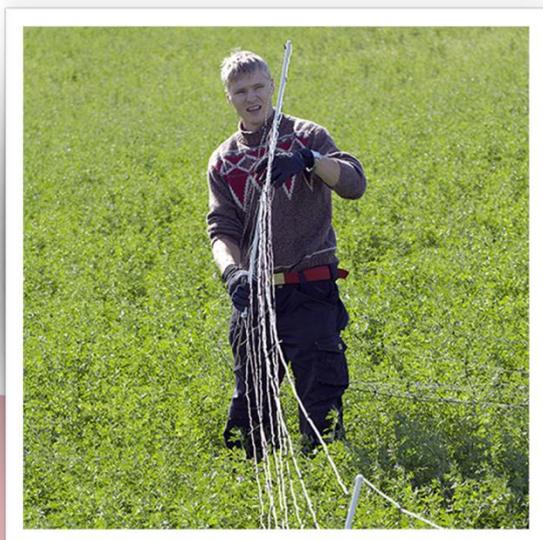
The MDG-F supported a Joint UN Programme in BiH named Youth Employability and Retention, which was finalized in the spring of 2013. Support was provided to develop the statistics on migration and particularly so on youth migration, as well as to establish mechanisms for monitoring of migration flows. Institutional capacity has been developed to reduce illegal migration accompanied by an information campaign (using youth friendly social media, such as Facebook) to warn about the dangers of illegal migration. The overall aim of the project was to maximize the internal and external migration potential as an employment seeking option.

rate of youth migration out of the country^{vii}. According to the World Bank, the net migration of BiH was 10 000 between 2008-2010.

The high rate of migration is under increased scrutiny in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although access to youth data regarding migration is difficult, the MDG-F Joint Programme for Youth Employability and Retention (YERP) worked to equip the BiH Statistical Agencies with tools in order to create migration statistics including youth migration statistics. Those results were issued through an information system for exchange and dissemination of data for migration compatible with EUROSTAT standards (Box 1).

The top 10 destination countries for BiH nationals are, in descending order, Croatia, Germany, Serbia, Austria, USA, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Italy and Canada^{viii}.

In terms of internal migration, young people aged 15 to 29 who are migrating to other areas in the country represent 0.3 per cent of the overall population, but 2 per cent of the



youth population^{ix}.

Youth in BiH find themselves in a worrisome position, enhanced by the economic situation

which, albeit improving, is still dire. This is leading to an exodus of young people effectively causing a brain drain. A massive exodus was experienced at the turn of the Millennium, between 1996 and 2002, Around 100,000 left the country, affecting the mind-set of the later generations. In 2006, 73% of young people were ready to leave BiH either in pursuit of education or temporary employment, marriage or permanent settlement in a foreign country.

Policies, programmes and institutional framework

The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina has adopted the 2012-2015 Strategy and Action Plan in the Field of Migration and Asylum, prepared by the Ministry of Security which has been entrusted to govern migration management in BiH. The implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan is intended to support the EU integration process in reaching the required migration management standards (mainly related to illegal migration and asylum seekers), alongside the adoption of an Integrated Border Management system (Box 2).

The development of the Strategy and Action Plan was sustained by the Support to Migration Management Systems Project financed by the Swiss Government within the framework of the Migration Partnership established between Switzerland and Bosnia in 2009. The goals of this partnership are to promote voluntary return and sustainable integration, strengthen the capacities of migration management and international cooperation in migration politics and prevent irregular migration and migration pressure through social and structural aid and information campaigns.

The YERP has provided the initial steps and know-how for public institutions and various levels of government to support regular migration for young people and discouraging irregular migration. Through a parallel project

implemented by IOM, it is particularly encouraging that the newest Migration and Asylum Strategy now includes a goal dedicated specifically to linking migration and development, in addition to actions strengthening border controls. This includes circular and temporary labour migration and return of skills and experience. The new strategy foresees the formation of a permanent body that will monitor the strategy, comprised of representatives of institutions who have formed part of the YERP's migration-related activities.

As a means of counteracting brain drain, the IOM is supporting the return of qualified refugees from BiH to participate in the reconstruction and development of BiH through the Temporary Return of Qualified Nationals Project.

In addition to this, the IOM is also supporting

BiH in providing assistance in the voluntary return of migrants stranded in BiH and the voluntary return of refugees in vulnerable situation. This organization is also implementing counter trafficking and reintegration and resettlement projects.

Special projects were carried out by the YERP to help young people who have returned to BiH from Diaspora or are considering returning to BiH, reintegrate the local labour market more easily and/or start their own businesses. An online survey carried out by the YERP in 2011^x identified obstacles faced by young people who wish to or who have already returned to BiH. The survey results were used to create a practical guide aimed at young people^{xi} who want to return to their country of origin.

Furthermore, institutional and systems capacities to reduce irregular migration and

Box 2. Main institutions involved in the management of migration

The Ministry of Security has the mandate to manage the issue of migration in BiH. Several departments have been established to govern this complex field: Department for Immigration, Department for Asylum, Department for International Cooperation and European Integration as well as the Border Police and the Office for Foreigner's Affairs. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Human Rights and Refugees and Civilian Affairs have also been consulted in the process of developing the Strategy and Action Plan as well as other relevant state institutions. In the past ten years, three new laws have been adopted regulating this field.

The Strategy and Action Plan envisages a number of activities ranging from the development of visa policies, development of methodologies for data collection and dissemination to inter-institutional and international cooperation and coordination, efficient border control, provision of legal protection to asylum seekers on the territory of BiH, the establishment of reliable mechanisms for the re-admission of foreigners in their country of origin and the development of specific measures that will align migration with the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The 2012-2015 Strategy and Action Plan in the Field of Migration and Asylum does not recognize youth as a target category nor are any specific measures envisaged for this population.

introduce circular migration schemes are being strengthened through the implementation of a pilot project with a “triple-win” result. This pilot project was organised by GIZ, the German Federal Employment Agency (CIM), and the Agency for Work and Employment of BiH. IOM provided support to the project through training on migration and cultural orientation for participants, covering the costs of transport and work visas, and undertaking research on the lessons learned through implementation and on feedback received by participants and employers in Germany. Based on this pilot project, an agreement on the employment of healthcare workers was signed between the German Federal Employment Agency and the Agency for Work and Employment of BiH.

Support has recently been secured from UNFPA in order to improve and integrate the available statistical data on migration and streamline it into the Statistics Agency of BiH while assuring its compliance with EUROSTAT standards.

ⁱ UNDESA: World Population Prospects 2012

ⁱⁱ Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BHAS): Labour Force Survey 2012

ⁱⁱⁱ Mihes, Cristina et al. A comparative overview of informal employment in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova and Montenegro, Budapest: ILO, 2010

^{iv} Unpublished: National report on youth migration – Bosnia and Herzegovina, pg 5.

^v Young people need a youth policy: Analysis of the Position of Young People and the Youth Sector in BiH 2008

^{vi} IMF, Press release: Statement by the IMF Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, 21/9/2013 [consulted 21 Sep 2013]

^{vii} The World Bank: Improving Opportunities for Young People in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Feb 14, 2013 [consulted 21 Sep 2013]

^{viii} UNDESA. Trends in international migrant stock: Migrants by destination and origin (2012) <http://esa.un.org/MigOrigin/>

^{ix} Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Internal migration in Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2012

^x MDG-F 2011. The Youth Employability and Retention Programme: To BiH or not to BiH? A report on the return of young Diaspora to the BiH labour market

^{xi} CISO Bosnia and Herzegovina : Handbook for young returnees from the diaspora



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