

ZAMBIA

The ILO Work4Youth project worked with IPSOS Zambia to implement two rounds of the School-to-work transition survey (SWTS) in late 2012 and 2014. The results of the first survey were published in F. Chigunta, N. Chisup and S. Elder, *Labour market transitions of young women and men in Zambia*, Work4Youth Publication Series No. 6 (Geneva, ILO). The objective of this country note is to offer a general summary of youth labour market trends in Zambia based on the SWTS. Youth is defined as 15–29.

Main findings of the ILO SWTS

Human capital and mismatch

- Almost all Zambian youth have had some schooling but still more than one-third (38.1 per cent) had either no education or left school at an early age before completion in 2014. Young women were more likely to remain without an education than young men. The main reason for leaving school early (both sexes) is economic (inability to pay school fees or need to earn an income).
- SWTS results showed a strong correlation between the levels of education and a young person's labour market transition: the higher the educational attainment, the more likely a young person was to complete his or her labour market transition to stable and/or satisfactory employment.
- A significant share of employed youth in Zambia was undereducated for the job they were doing (38.4 per cent in 2014) and another 16.0 per cent of working youth was overeducated for their job in the same year.
- Mismatch is also evident in the youth's aspirations for employment: an overwhelming majority of the youth (81.5 per cent), especially those in rural areas (85.4 per cent), indicated that they would like to work in the government/public sector.

Underutilization of the youth labour potential remains a top concern

- The youth labour underutilization rate in Zambia was high at 70.2 per cent in 2014 although this represents an improvement from the 78.9 per cent share in 2012. The share of underutilized labour potential consisted of 39.3 per cent of the youth population in irregular employment (either in self-employment or paid employment with contract duration less than 12 months), 23.4 per cent unemployed and 7.4 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 youth unemployment rate in Zambia (strict definition) was high at 15.3 per cent (14.2 per cent for young men and 16.6 per cent for young women).¹ The rate decreased slightly between 2012 and 2014.
- The length of unemployment among youth tends to be long. More than two in five (42.8 per cent) unemployed youth had been looking for work for longer than one year in 2014.
- The share of youth neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETs) in Zambia was high at 25.5 per cent (in comparison to other SWTS sub-Saharan African countries), but it did decrease slightly from the 28.3 per cent in 2012. The share among young women was higher than young men (at 29.8 and 20.9 per cent, respectively), and is explained primarily by the higher share of young female inactive non-students.

Low quality jobs remain a strong hindrance to the country's productive transformation

- More than half (55.5 per cent) of young Zambians were employed in 2014, with some working from a very young age; 6.3 per cent of young adolescents aged 15–17 were out of school and working.
- Nearly six in ten (56.3 per cent) youth remained in vulnerable employment as own-account workers (24.0 per cent) or unpaid family worker (32.3 per cent). At the same time, more than two in three (67.5 per cent) youth in paid employment were engaged without a written contract.
- Unlike many other sub-Saharan African countries, more youth are employed in the services sector in Zambia than the agricultural sector. The distribution of employment by broad sector in 2014 was 51.8 per cent in services, 33.8 per cent in agriculture (up from 25.9 per cent in 2012) and 14.4 per cent in industry.
- Informal employment affected more than nine in ten (93.0 per cent) young workers in Zambia. This represented a very slight improvement from 2012 (94.7 per cent).
- Over one-third (38.4 per cent) of employed youth worked less than 20 hours during the reference week. Short working hours reflect the lack of regular jobs and the precariousness of the occasional young worker in the country. A significant share (18.4 per cent) of young people employed part time stated they would like to work more hours.

Selection of data tables

Table 1. Youth population by educational status and sex, 2012 and 2014 (%)

Educational status	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014
Never attended school	2.8	9.4	2.0	8.4	3.7	10.3
Dropped-out before graduation or completion of school	30.0	28.7	25.6	26.0	34.2	31.2
Currently attending school	40.4	34.8	43.9	36.2	36.9	33.5
Education completed	26.8	27.1	28.5	29.4	25.2	25.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

¹ 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 2. Key youth labour market indicators – traditional distribution by sex, 2012 and 2014 (%)

	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014
Employed	43.5	55.5	49.0	61.7	38.1	49.9
Unemployed	9.4	10.1	9.6	10.2	9.1	9.9
Inactive	47.2	34.4	41.4	28.1	52.8	40.2
Total youth population	100	100	100	100	100	100
Youth labour force participation rate	52.8	65.6	58.6	71.9	47.22	59.8
Youth unemployment rate (strict definition)	17.7	15.3	16.4	14.2	19.2	16.6

Table 3. Key youth labour market indicators – alternative distribution by sex, 2012 and 2014 (%)

	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014
In regular employment	14.2	15.7	17.2	18.4	11.3	13.1
In irregular employment	27.8	39.3	30.3	42.4	25.4	36.5
Unemployed (broad)	26.7	23.4	25.0	20.6	28.4	25.9
Inactive students	21.0	13.7	21.0	12.3	20.9	15.0
Inactive non-students	8.9	7.4	5.0	5.4	12.6	9.2
Total youth population	100	100	100	100	100	100
Youth labour force participation rate	70.2	78.9	74.0	82.3	66.5	75.8
Youth unemployment rate (broad definition)	38.0	29.6	33.8	25.0	42.7	34.1
Youth labour underutilization rate	63.4	70.1	60.2	68.4	66.4	71.6

Table 4. Youth neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETs) by composition and sex, 2012 and 2014 (%)

Sex	2012			2014		
	NEET rate	of which:		NEET rate	of which:	
		Inactive non-students	Unemployed non-students		Inactive non-students	Unemployed non-students
Total	28.3	20.3	7.9	25.5	16.8	8.7
Male	22.1	14.3	7.8	20.9	12.6	8.3
Female	34.2	26.2	8.0	29.8	20.6	9.1

Table 5. Employed youth by status in employment and sex, 2012 and 2014 (%)

Status	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014
Wage and salaried workers (employees)	39.0	32.1	42.1	38.3	35.2	25.2
Employers	6.1	7.8	7.8	7.9	3.9	7.7
Own-account workers	24.7	24.0	22.6	19.2	27.3	29.4
Contributing (unpaid) family workers	26.8	32.3	24.3	30.7	29.8	34.2
Members of producers' cooperatives	0.4	2.3	0.1	3.0	0.8	1.5
Not classifiable by status	3.0	1.4	3.0	0.8	3.0	2.0
Total employed youth	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 6. Distribution of youth employment by sector, aggregate and 1-digit level, and sex, 2012 and 2014 (%)

Sector (ISIC)	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014
Agriculture	25.9	33.8	27.1	35.7	24.4	31.7
Industry	9.7	14.4	14.0	20.1	4.1	7.9
Services	64.5	51.8	59.0	44.3	71.3	60.5
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	25.9	33.8	27.1	35.7	24.4	31.7
Mining	0.3	1.2	0.6	1.2	0.0	1.1
Manufacturing	3.8	4.0	5.8	4.7	1.3	3.2
Electricity, gas, steam	0.3	1.4	0.5	1.5	0.0	1.2
Water supply	1.3	0.2	0.8	0.3	1.8	0.1
Construction	4.0	7.6	6.3	12.4	1.0	2.3
Wholesale and retail trade	28.7	9.5	24.2	8.9	34.4	10.2
Transport	2.6	1.6	4.6	2.7	0.1	0.4
Accommodation	2.6	4.1	2.1	2.2	3.2	6.1
Information and communications	0.6	1.2	0.9	1.5	0.3	0.8
Financial activities	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.4
Real estate	0	0.5	0	0.6	0	0.4
Professional scientific activities	1.5	0.5	2.2	0.6	0.8	0.4
Administrative and support activities	2.4	0.7	2.9	0.4	1.7	1.0
Public administration	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.4
Education	2.6	2.6	2.0	2.3	3.2	3.0
Health and social work	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4
Arts and entertainment	1.9	1.2	2.9	1.6	0.6	0.7
Other services	6.5	19.3	4.8	15.0	8.6	24.2
Private households	13.2	8.3	10.6	6.2	16.4	10.6
Activities of extraterritorial organizations	0	0.4	0	0.2	0	0.5

Note: A potential coding error is evident in the 2014 dataset, whereby a share of young workers coded in "other services" are likely to belong to the category "wholesale and retail trade".

Table 7. Young wage and salaried workers by type of contract, area of residence and sex, 2012 and 2014 (%)

Type/duration of contract	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014
Written agreement	24.8	29.5	22.6	28.3	28.2	31.6
Oral agreement	75.2	67.5	77.4	68.2	71.8	66.2
Unlimited duration	55.5	51.3	51.4	46.9	61.6	58.9
Limited duration	44.5	45.7	48.6	49.7	38.4	39.0
– Less than 12 months	31.8	33.6	35.2	39.2	26.8	24.0
– 12 months to less than 36 months	8.5	7.8	9.9	7.5	6.4	8.5
– 36 months or more	4.2	4.3	3.5	3.0	5.1	6.5
Total young wage and salaried workers	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 8. Youth informal employment by composition and sex, 2012 and 2014 (%)

	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014
Youth informal employment rate	94.7	93.0	94.0	92.7	95.6	93.4
<i>Of which:</i>						
– Informal employment outside the informal sector	16.0	20.1	16.2	24.5	15.8	15.1
– Employment in the informal sector	78.7	73.9	77.7	69.1	79.8	79.2

Table 9. Employed youth by overeducation, undereducation or matching qualifications and sex, 2012 and 2014 (%)

Qualifications mismatch	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014
Undereducated	18.9	38.4	19.4	42.3	18.4	34.8
Overeducated	25.6	16.0	24.2	18.7	27.3	13.3
Matching qualifications	55.4	45.6	56.4	51.9	54.3	51.9
Total employed youth	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 10. Youth unemployment rates by level of completed educational attainment and sex, 2012 and 2014 (%)

Educational attainment	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014
Less than primary (including no schooling)	13.4	4.1	18.0	11.2	11.2	-
Primary	11.3	14.9	7.6	10.1	14.4	18.6
Secondary vocational	20.2	24.9	16.7	-	25.2	58.3
Secondary general	24.3	19.4	23.2	16.6	25.5	22.9
Post-secondary vocational	22.4	18.9	20.2	12.2	25.7	24.0
University and postgraduate studies	19.7	39.8	23.2	39.8	14.7	39.8

Table 11. Unemployed youth by duration of job search and sex, 2012 and 2014 (%)

Duration of job search	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014
Less than a week	4.9	7.3	3.6	10.1	6.2	4.6
1 week to less than 1 month	18.5	12.9	22.6	12.4	14.2	13.4
1 month to less than 3 months	15.6	14.6	18.6	15.2	12.6	14.1
3 months to less than 6 months	10.8	9.4	11.5	9.6	10.1	9.3
6 months to less than 1 year	9.0	13.0	8.3	16.0	9.7	10.1
More than a year	41.2	42.8	35.4	36.7	47.2	48.5
Total unemployed youth	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 12. Youth population by stages and subcategories of transition and sex, 2012 and 2014 (%)

Stage of transition	Total		Male		Female	
	2012	2014	2012	2014	2012	2014
Transition completed	9.8	11.4	10.8	11.9	8.9	11.0
Transited to stable employment	4.2	5.8	4.9	6.7	3.6	5.0
Transited to satisfactory temporary employment	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.5
Transited to satisfactory self-employment	4.9	5.1	5.1	4.6	4.8	5.5
In transition	66.8	73.9	66.4	74.8	67.3	73.0
Unemployed (broad definition)	19.4	18.2	17.1	15.5	21.6	20.5
In non-satisfactory temporary employment	7.0	6.8	7.7	9.5	6.3	4.2
In non-satisfactory self-employment	14.5	21.2	15.4	21.0	13.7	21.3
Active students	19.4	21.1	22.9	23.8	16.0	18.5
Inactive non-students with aim to work in the future	6.5	6.7	3.2	5.0	9.6	8.4
Transition not yet started	23.3	14.4	22.8	12.7	23.9	15.9
Inactive students	20.9	13.7	21.0	12.3	20.9	15.0
Inactive non-students with no plans to work in the future	2.4	0.6	1.8	0.4	3.0	0.9
Total youth population	100	100	100	100	100	100

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