

3.2. Employment

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Labour force participation rates vary among sources. Out of an estimated population of 237 million⁹³⁴ (of which approximately 105 million are children and adolescents aged 0-17⁹³⁵), labour force participation rate was estimated by ILO at 80.7 % for females and 84.4 % for males in 2024,⁹³⁶ with over 3.5 million Nigerians entering the job market every year.⁹³⁷ In the lower-middle income bracket, the rates were 40.9 % for females and 76.5 % for males.⁹³⁸ Nigeria's NBS indicated that the 2024 labour participation rate was 'nearly the same' for both females (79.9 %) and males (79.1 %).⁹³⁹ The same source indicated that 85.6 % of workers are self-employed and 14.4 % are employees, with females representing 88.3 % of those self-employed and males, 82.2 %.⁹⁴⁰ Employment is predominantly informal,⁹⁴¹ with estimates of about 93 % of people being informally employed in the country as of 2024.⁹⁴² For more information see [3.2.1 Informal employment](#). According to WEF, the 2025 part-time employment rate among those who are employed is 2.03 %.⁹⁴³

The rapid population growth is creating an 'immense pressure for job creation'.⁹⁴⁴ Most of the labour force is 'lower middle income' and primarily agrarian.⁹⁴⁵ Employment is divided by sector as follows: services (47.8 %), agriculture (34.3 %), and industry (17.9 %).⁹⁴⁶ Nigeria's NBS household survey indicated that 71.6 % of Nigerian households are engaged in agriculture, being more predominant in male-headed households (75.7 %) than female-headed (57.1 %).⁹⁴⁷ The same source indicated that most cultivated crops use household labour (96.8 %), signalling a 'strong household production structure'.⁹⁴⁸ Nigeria's NBS indicated that 3.7 % of the working-age population was in subsistence agriculture.⁹⁴⁹ The International Labour Organization (ILO) indicated that the concentration of employment in agriculture and commerce makes the economy less productive and hinders its ability to diversify.⁹⁵⁰ Additionally, according to Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, BMZ), the government's focus on the extractive sector creates relatively fewer jobs, and sectors such as construction, digital industry, and agriculture, which could generate more employment, receive less support.⁹⁵¹

About 10 % of the labour force is enrolled in the Contributory Pension Scheme.⁹⁵² In an effort to increase pension enrolment in the population, the government introduced a micro pension plan in 2019; enrolment rates, however, are low, with about 84 000 people enrolled as of November 2022.⁹⁵³ A 2024 report by Jobberman Nigeria, a Nigerian employment agency, based on a survey of 2 684 employers and 5 622 employees in several regions including Lagos and Abuja, indicated that labour laws often do not protect workers because their workplaces are unregistered, and that many workers are practically unprotected by labour regulations because the laws are not adapted to current working conditions.⁹⁵⁴

In July 2024, the minimum wage was increased from 30 000 [16.78 Euros] to 70 000 Naira [39.15 Euros] per month after labour unions threatened with further strikes due to the rising cost of living.⁹⁵⁵ The increase in the minimum wage, however, benefitted 4.1 % of Nigerians (3.2 % in the private sector and 0.9 % in the public sector).⁹⁵⁶ Additionally, the purchasing power in Nigeria has depleted over the years due to inflation, which constantly overcomes employment income.⁹⁵⁷

Sources indicated that Nigeria has a shortage of skilled and educated labour,⁹⁵⁸ and that vocational schools teach ‘only few’ of the skills relevant for the labour market.⁹⁵⁹ In 2019, the government launched the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy (NDEPS) to develop Nigeria’s digital economy and diversify away from its dependence on oil and gas,⁹⁶⁰ by providing training to over one million Nigerians.⁹⁶¹ The NDEPS and other plans implemented by foreign companies such as Microsoft and Google, however, are ‘insufficient’ given the rising demand for training.⁹⁶²

Nigeria’s NBS household survey indicated that approximately seven out of ten nonfarm enterprises are engaged in the retail area, including food, beverages, and tobacco (37.1 %), sales of other products (31.8 %), and restaurants (12.6 %), and that only 13.1 % of nonfarm enterprises were registered.⁹⁶³ The same source indicated that the most common obstacles to starting a nonfarm enterprise were problems with electricity supply (19.7 %), inability to obtain funding (19.3 %), and transportation problems (17 %).⁹⁶⁴

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Population figures are based on estimates and projections from World Population Prospects 2024 and Model-based Estimates and Projections of Family Planning Indicators 2024 (UNFPA, Population Division). See UNFPA, State of the World Population Report 2025 ‘The Real Fertility Crisis: The pursuit of reproductive agency in a changing world’, 16 June 2025, [url](#), pp. 139, 142

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The Jobberman report defined ‘informality’ as ‘all economic activities (excluding illicit activities) by workers and economic units that are in law or practice not covered or insufficiently covered by formal institutional arrangements. Conventional views use the term ‘informal sector’ to describe a group of industries and occupations characterised by the absence of, or noncompliance to, regulatory frameworks that make jobs, enterprises and workers visible to the state’. Jobberman, Nigeria’s informal sector: A Pathway to Sustainable Economic Transitions for Young People, 2024, [url](#), p. 22

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