3.2. Employment

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Labour force participation rates vary among sources. Out of an estimated population of 237 million[934] (of which approximately 105 million are children and adolescents aged 0-17[935]), 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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