

TOTAL AND SAUDI UNEMPLOYMENT RATES REMAIN UNCHANGED AT 6.6% AND 11.3% RESPECTIVELY IN Q3 2021

Based on estimates of the General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT) Labor Force Survey, the unemployment rate of Saudi Arabia's working age population (all residents, 15+ years) was 6.6% in the third quarter of 2021, unchanged from Q2/2021, but 1.9 pp lower than a year ago in Q3/2020. The participation rate was 61.2% in Q3/2021, up slightly by 0.4 pp from 60.8% in the previous quarter. Saudi unemployment rate was unchanged at 11.3%, and Saudi participation rate was 49.8%, up slightly by 0.4 pp from the previous quarter.

SAUDI FEMALE PARTICIPATION RATE INCREASES TO 34.1%

Among Saudi females, comparing Q3/2021 results to the previous quarter, the labor force participation rate rose to 34.1%, up 1.7 pp, and the unemployment rate edged down 0.4 pp to 21.9%.

Among Saudi males, in Q3/2021 compared to the previous quarter, the participation rate was 65.0% down 0.7 pp, and the unemployment rate edged down 0.2 pp to 5.9%.

OVERALL LABOR MARKET INDICATORS VARY BY GENDER

In the third quarter of 2021, marked differences were observed in principal labor market indicators among males and females (15 years and over). Female participation rate was 35.9%, up 2.1 pp from Q2/2021. Concurrent with more females entering the labor force, the female employment-to-population ratio increased to 29.7%, up 1.7 pp from the Q2/2021, while the female unemployment rate remained unchanged at 17.1% in Q3/2021.

Among males, the participation rate was 78.3% in Q3/2021, down slightly by 0.9 pp from the previous quarter and the unemployment rate was 3.3%, also down slightly by 0.2 pp from the previous quarter.

Among Saudis, participation rates of females were about half those of males (34.1% versus 65.0%). Likewise, employment-to-population ratios of females were roughly half those of males. The unemployment rate of Saudi females was higher than that of Saudi males (21.9% vs 5.9%).

LABOR FORCE INDICATORS OF SAUDIS DIFFER FOR PRINCIPAL AGE GROUPS

The core working-age group (25 to 54 years) is the largest of the three age groups. Almost 70% of persons 15 years and over belong to this group, and they account for 85% of labor force participants. Because of its relative size this age group dominates the pattern in labor force indicators.

Table1. Principal main indicators, Q3 2020, Q2 2021 and Q3 2021

	2020 Q3			2021 Q2			2021 Q3		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Unemployment Rate									
Total	4.4	24.6	8.5	3.5	17.1	6.6	3.3	17.1	6.6
Saudi	7.9	30.2	14.9	6.1	22.3	11.3	5.9	21.9	11.3
Non-Saudi	1.9	9.1	2.7	1.8	6.3	2.4	1.5	7.4	2.4
Employment-to-Population Ratio									
Total	75.9	22.6	54.4	76.4	28.0	56.8	75.7	29.7	57.1
Saudi	60.8	21.8	41.7	61.8	25.2	43.8	61.2	26.7	44.2
Non-Saudi	90.6	24.5	71.9	90.7	34.8	74.9	90.0	37.1	75.0
Participation Rate									
Total	79.4	30.0	59.5	79.2	33.8	60.8	78.3	35.9	61.2
Saudi	66.0	31.3	49.0	65.7	32.4	49.4	65.0	34.1	49.8
Non-Saudi	92.4	26.9	73.8	92.3	37.2	76.7	91.4	40.1	76.9

* All statistics for 15 years and above.

Source: estimated data from LFS - General Authority for Statistics (GASTAT). [Tables](#)

Among Saudis in Q3/2021, both female youth (15 to 24 years) and core working-age females had an unemployment rate of 22.8%, whereas male youth had a higher unemployment rate than the core working-age males. (14.9% vs 4.8%)

Youth participation in the labor force was less than half that of the core working-age (34.1% vs 85.7% for Saudi males, and 14.6% vs 48.1% for Saudi females).

Among Saudis 55 years and over, unemployment rates were very low. Virtually all persons active in the labor force in this group were employed, with very few persons without a job and looking for work.

Employment-to-population ratios were considerably lower for persons 55 years and over than for the core working-age (11.2% versus 37.1% for females and 37.0% versus 81.6% for males).

Figure 1 . Youth Population (15 to 24 Years) (Q3 2021)

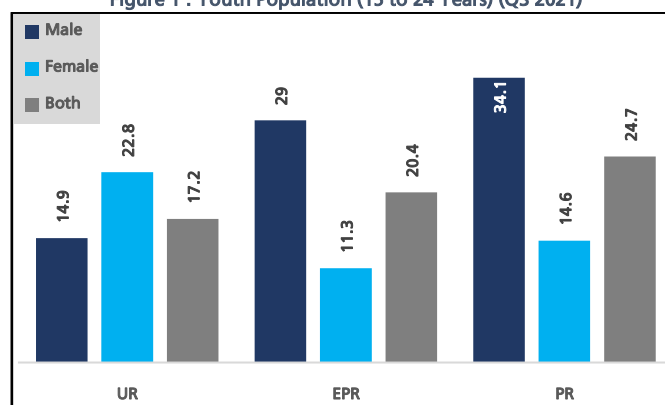


Figure 2 . Core Working Age Population (25 Years to 54) (Q3 2021)

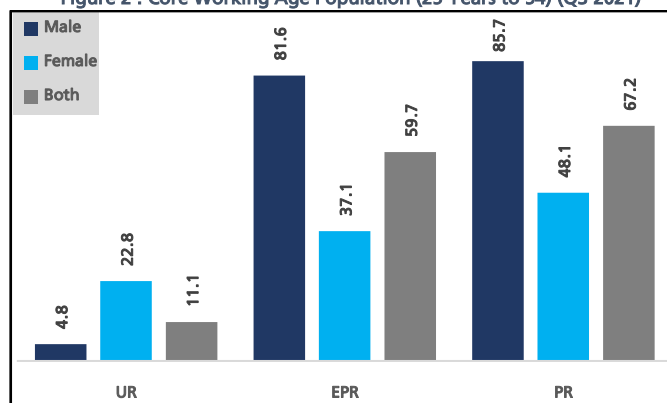
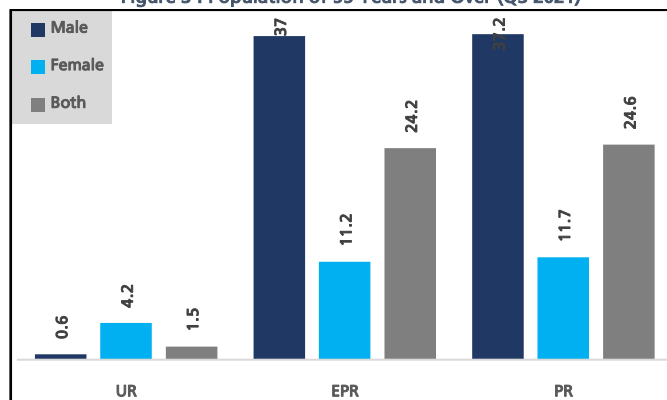


Figure 3 . Population of 55 Years and Over (Q3 2021)



LIMITED MOBILITY OF SAUDI UNEMPLOYED

Among Saudi unemployed, 93.7% indicated they would accept a job in the private sector. Within the group of Saudi unemployed, 62.1% of females and 44.9% of males would only accept a commuting time of one hour or less, and 24.2% of females and 10.4% of males would only accept six working hours or less per day.



NOTES TO USERS

A. NEW AGE GROUPS

Beginning with this release, GASTAT will report Labor Force Survey for the following principal age groups:

- **Youth** - 15 to 24 years,
- **Core working-age** - 25 to 54 years, and
- **Persons 55 years and over.**

B. THE EMPLOYMENT-TO-POPULATION RATIO

In this release, a new labor market indicator is being introduced - the employment-to-population ratio. The employment-to-population ratio is an important indicator of the ability of the economy to create jobs. It is one of the leading indicators of performance of the economy.

An increasing employment-to-population ratio means that job growth is outpacing growth of the population. A declining ratio means either that the economy is losing jobs, or that job growth is weak and not keeping pace with population growth.

C. DISSEMINATION OF LFS DATA VIA THE STATISTICAL DATABASE PLATFORM

The Statistical Database Platform is a unified portal to publish all statistical data produced by GASTAT. It provides access to an extensive set of LFS time series from Q2/2016.

<https://database.stats.gov.sa/beta/dashboard/landing>

D. COMPARISON OF LABOR FORCE SURVEY AND ADMINISTRATIVE DATA EMPLOYMENT ESTIMATES

GASTAT releases Administrative Data based estimates of employment, compiled by the Ministry of Human Resource and Social Development. Prior to 2021, these estimates were released together with release of LFS results. Since the first quarter of 2021, they have been available as a separate release without a reduction in scope. There are conceptual and coverage differences between the AD and the LFS-based estimates. In terms of coverage, the LFS covers the entire population except for institutional populations. There are also differences in the reference periods.

The scope of the LFS is wider than the one covered by administrative records, the absolute numbers of the two different sources are not identical.

The Administrative Data based Labor Market Statistics can be accessed at the following link: <https://www.stats.gov.sa/en/814>.

Methodology

The Labor Force Survey is a household survey with a sample of around 53,360 households per quarter. LFS estimates are subject to response and sampling variability. The LFS is the source of the following labor market indicators:

Unemployment rate: unemployed persons as a percentage of the labor force (employed and unemployed persons).

Employment-to-Population ratio: employed persons as a percentage of working-age population (15 years and over).

Labor Force Participation rate: persons in the labor force as a percentage of the working-age population.

Unemployed: persons (15 years and over) who were:

- without a job in the week preceding the interview,
- actively looking for work during the four weeks preceding the interview,
- available to work and start a job in the week preceding the interview or the next two weeks.

In addition to applying the standards of the International Labor Organization, GASTAT uses the standards of the Labor Market Policies Committee by cross-validating LFS information against administrative records. [Methodology](#).