



## Quick Facts

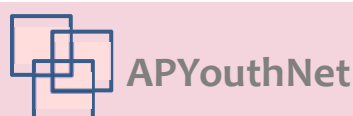


- Population: 154.7 million (2012)<sup>1</sup>
- Share of youth (15-24 years old) in total population: 28.9% (2012)<sup>2</sup>
- Total unemployment rate: 4.3% (2005)<sup>2</sup>
- Youth unemployment rate: 7.5% (2010)<sup>3</sup>
- Youth labour force participation rate: 72.8% (2012)<sup>2</sup>
- GDP in 2012: US\$115.6 billion<sup>1</sup>
- GDP growth in 2012: 6.3%<sup>1</sup>
- Major industries: Agriculture, Fisheries and Textile Industry<sup>1</sup>

### Bangladesh has ratified 33 ILO Conventions including these seven ILO Core Conventions:

- Forced Labour Convention (No. 29)
- Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention (No. 87)
- Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (No. 98)
- Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100)
- Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (No. 105)
- Discrimination (employment and occupation) (No. 111)
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182)

Sources: (1) [World Bank](#); (2) [ILO](#); (3) Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics



Bangladesh has achieved rapid economic growth of 6 per cent annually, and the number of people living below the poverty line has decreased by 26 per cent over the decade. ([World Bank](#)) However, the economic outlook is not as promising as statistics appear to present that Bangladesh lacks skilled workers and is prone to natural disasters such as floods and cyclones. Since more than half of Bangladesh population is below 24 years old, the youth population could become a growth driver for its sustainable economic growth in the future. ([Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2010](#)) The Government of Bangladesh recognizes this potential and aims to correspond to the needs of education and training for young people.

### Youth Unemployment and Underemployment

In Bangladesh, youth is defined as people aged between 15 and 29 years old. Approximately 53 per cent of youth population was in the labour force and 7.5 per cent of them was unemployed in 2010. ([Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2010](#)) Youth unemployment rate was higher in urban area (9.9 per cent) than that in rural area (6.7 per cent). Only 17 per cent of youths found paid employment whereas almost 40 per cent of young people were unpaid family workers in 2010. ([Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2010](#)) Most young people work in the informal economy, especially in agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors (51.5 per cent), which are linked with lower wages, poor working conditions and limited career prospects. ([Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2010](#))

### Young Women

Young women in Bangladesh face gender bias in employment. 76.2 per cent of young women were unpaid family workers, and only 11.4 per cent of them were paid employees. ([Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2010](#)) Because of cultural barriers, Bangladesh women tend to work within the family and this limits their employment choices. 71.1 per cent of young women work in the agriculture industry whereas 20 per cent were in production and transport industries, and 3.8 per cent were in service sectors. ([Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2010](#))

### Internal and External Labour Migration

Overseas working is very important to Bangladesh economy, and 6.8 million Bangladesh workers work abroad, primarily in the Middle East. ([Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2010](#)) Rural youths (13.7 per cent) are generally more involved actively in external migration compared to urban youth (8.3 per cent) as there are less decent job opportunities in their own communities. Because of the lack of information sessions and trainings on migration for youths, it is estimated that almost 500,000 Bangladesh women trafficked to India and Pakistan over an unspecified period. ([ADB, 2004](#))

### Child Labour

2.3 per cent of children aged 6-14 years did not attend school but worked as child labourers. ([Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2009](#)) In both urban and rural areas, boys (2.9 per cent) were more likely to work than girls (1.7 per cent). Children living in urban slum areas had higher chances of working as 6.5 per cent whereas rural children had the least chances as approximately 2 per cent. 46 per cent of 7-14 years old children worked in agriculture and 36 per cent in services; and 16 per cent were in manufacturing industry. ([UCW, 2011](#))

## Education and Skills Development

Young people have generally benefited from more formal education compared to older age groups but still face difficulty in continuing with higher education. Gross tertiary education enrolment ratio in 2011 were 11 per cent for female and 16 per cent for male in 2010. ([UNESCO](#))

Only 5.1 per cent of total population had received any form of technical and vocational training by 2010. ([Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2010](#)) Young men (6.9 per cent) had more chances to attain vocational training opportunities than young women (3.2 per cent) and urban youth (8 per cent) had higher chances than rural youth (4 per cent) in 2010. ([Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2010](#)) However, employers pointed out that the number of skilled workforce which had attained TVET is still limited.

### Government Priorities

The Government of Bangladesh launched a [national youth policy in 2003](#) but it is currently under revision to accommodate more views of young people. The new national youth policy aims to empower youths to participate actively in national development and better prepare them in employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. The Government targets to increase practical education and skills development trainings for securing decent work opportunities and self-employment to tackle the youth unemployment issues.

### The UN and Youth in Bangladesh

22 United Nations (UN) agencies and international organizations work on the economic, social and cultural development of Bangladesh under the [United Nations Development Assistance Framework](#) and UNFPA and ILO actively runs projects on youth employment.

### The ILO in Bangladesh

The ILO recognizes decent work challenges in Bangladesh and aims to promote new job opportunities for young people as well as to encourage skills development and protect their rights at work. ILO currently runs [six projects](#) in Bangladesh with a total budget of US\$19,433,398 including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Reform in Bangladesh project and Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh project.

### Policy and Programme Recommendations

As part of the [United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Youth](#) and the following activities can be conducted to support youth employment in Bangladesh.

- Developing a reliable labour market data and information system on youth employment.
- Building employment services and centers for youth.
- Strengthening the capacity of the social partners and promoting tripartite solutions for youth employment at the local level.
- Providing entrepreneurship skills development programmes to promote youth entrepreneurship.
- Providing information sessions and trainings on migration for youths and supporting the creation a legal migration system to prevent exploitation of the Bangladesh workers abroad.



## References

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More information is available at [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org)



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