



Quick Facts



- Population: 29.24 million (2012)²
- Share of youth (15-24 years old) in total population: 26.8% (2012)²
- Total unemployment rate: 3.1% (2012)²
- Youth unemployment rate: 10.2% (2012)²
- Youth labour force participation rate: 39.7% (2012)¹
- GDP in 2012: US\$303.5 billion¹
- GDP growth in 2012: 5.6%¹
- Major industries: Agriculture, Petroleum production and refining, light manufacturing and Mining¹

Malaysia has ratified 17 ILO Conventions including these six ILO Core Conventions:

- Forced Labour Convention (No. 29)
- Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (No. 98)
- Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100)
- Abolition of Forced Labour Convention (No. 105)
- Minimum Age Convention (No. 138)
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182)

Sources: (1) World Bank; (2) ILO

Approximately 20 per cent of total labour force population were youth aged between 15 and 24 in 2012, but young people were the most disadvantaged in securing employment in Malaysia. ([Department of Statistics, 2012](#)) Unemployment rates of youth aged 15-19 years old and aged 20-24 years old were 15.5 per cent and 8.8 per cent in 2012 respectively, which was significantly higher than the total unemployment rate of 3.0 per cent. ([Department of Statistics, 2012](#)) Also, young people were mostly employed as non-skilled workers such as sales workers or clerical support workers. The Government of Malaysia recognizes that youth employment is hindered by educational and skills mismatches, hence the Ministry of Human Resources is adopting new technical and vocational education programmes, including Technical Education Pathways to encourage and equip youth with employable skills. ([UNICEF, 2013](#))

Young Women

Even though almost twice as many girls participated in upper secondary and post-secondary education, many young Malaysian women find difficulties in securing employment. ([UNICEF, 2013](#)) The unemployment rate of young women aged 20-24 years old (9.9 per cent) was slightly higher than that of young men (8.1 per cent). ([Department of Statistics, 2012](#)) More than half of young women work in wholesale and retail trade, manufacturing, and hospitality sectors. ([Department of Statistics, 2012](#))

Rural Youth

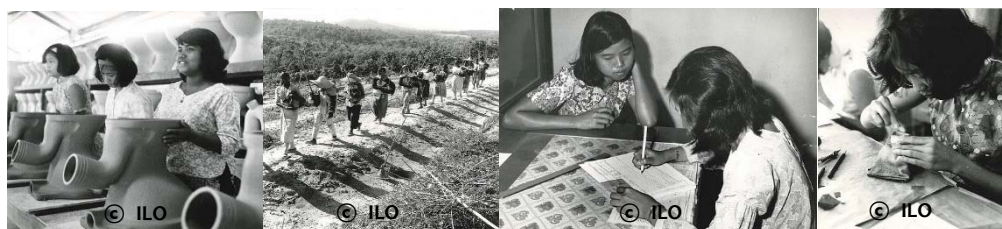
The unemployment rate of rural youth (15.1 per cent for 15-19 and 9.9 per cent for 20-24) is almost the same as that of urban youth (15.8 per cent for 15-19 and 8.3 per cent for 20-24). ([Department of Statistics, 2012](#)) However, more than 30 per cent of rural youth are engaged in agriculture sector as own-account workers and unpaid family workers, their quality of employment is lower than that of urban youth. ([Department of Statistics, 2012](#))

Internal and External Labour Migration

Between 1992 and 2010, many young people in rural areas moved to urban areas to find more decent employment and this increased the number of unemployed graduates in urban areas significantly. ([Department of Statistics, 2011](#)) In Malaysia, only 10 per cent of migration is to find employment abroad so external migration is much less common in Malaysia compared to other South East Asian countries. ([Department of Statistics, 2012](#))

Child Labour

It is illegal for children under the age of 14 to work in Malaysia except working for their own family businesses. However, there are 15,000 children in Malaysia who are born to illegal immigrants and they often engaged in the worst forms of child labour such as begging and prostitution, as their rights are not protected by the law. ([Humanium](#))



Education and Skills Development

Almost 96 per cent of children enrolled in primary school in 2009, but almost 17,000 young people did not continue secondary education in Malaysia. (UNICEF, 2011) From 2005 to 2009, the dropout rates of secondary education in rural areas was higher at 16.7 per cent than that in urban areas at 10.1 per cent because schools were located far away and more rural youth engaged in helping families in their own farms. (UNICEF, 2011)

Government Priorities

Under the 10th Malaysian Plan, the Department of Skills Development targets to mainstream skills training through Technical, Vocational Education and Training programme and RM 3.7 billion of 2013 national budget was allocated to train students to become skilled workers. (UNICEF, 2013) The Government of Malaysia adopted a few youth employment support policies such as National Dual Training System, Human Resources Development Fund, Skills Development Fund and Graduate Scheme.

The UN and Youth in Malaysia

16 United Nations' and other international organizations are working to support the economic, social and cultural development of Malaysia. The [United Nations Country Team](#) works closely with the Government of Malaysia to support empowerment of women, men and children, especially poorest and most vulnerable including youth.

The ILO in Malaysia

The ILO aims to tackle youth employment by improving rights at work, promoting sustainable enterprise growth and decent job creation and extending social protection. The ILO worked on Facilitating and Supporting the Design of an Unemployment Insurance System in Malaysia.

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 Malaysia.

- Finalizing a national youth employment policy and designing provincial youth employment action plans based on each provinces' needs and industrial background.
- Providing the quality of skills development training for the youth, especially for the rural youth where their labour productivity is significantly low
- Building employment services centers for youth and strengthen the existing organizations' capacities to increase the chances of employment of young people.
- 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
- Supporting the establishment of youth employment committees to encourage young people to participate in developing a national policy and National Employment Programmes



References

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More information is available at www.ilo.org



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