



Quick Facts

- Population: 2.7 million¹
 - Share of youth (15–24 years) in total population 21.1%¹
 - Total unemployment rate: 9.9%²
 - Youth unemployment rate 15–19 years: 6.6%²
 - Youth unemployment rate 20–24 years: 23.1%²
 - Youth labour force participation rate 15–19 years: 16%²
 - Youth labour force participation rate 20–24 years: 52.1%²
 - GDP 2011: US\$8.558 billion¹
 - GDP 2011: growth: 17%¹
- Major industries: mining, trade, real estate, transport and communication

Sources: (1) World Bank, 2011; (2) 2010 Labour Force Survey

Mongolia has ratified 15 ILO Conventions including the eight core conventions:
Conventions 87 and 98 on Freedom of Association and Collective Bargaining;
Conventions 29 and 105 on Elimination of Forced and Compulsory Labour;
Conventions 100 and 111 on Elimination of Discrimination in respect of Employment and Occupation; and
Conventions 138 and 182 on Abolition of Child Labour

More information is available at www.ilo.org, kilm.ilo.org and at the Asia-Pacific Youth Employment Network: www.apyouthnet.ilo.org

Although Mongolia's economic growth has accelerated, the country must ensure inclusive growth if it is to fulfill its human development needs. Youth, especially from rural areas, are particularly vulnerable and must be the main target of policies and



Youth unemployment: Young women and men account for 24.6 per cent of Mongolia's unemployed (2008–2009 Labour Force Survey). Thirteen per cent of young people are neither in the labour force nor in education. In 2007 more than 28 per cent of unemployed youth have been seeking work for more than one year and an additional 37 per cent for more than three years (UCW, 2009).

Rural youth are in a particularly precarious situation as they are disadvantaged in terms of access to quality education and employment opportunities. Young people in rural areas have wages 40 per cent lower than the rest of the population. Working in the livestock sector means an income lower by 40 to 140 per cent than in other sectors (ILO, 2008). Despite a lower rural youth unemployment rate than its urban equivalent, the youth long-term unemployment rate is much higher in rural than urban areas (ILO, 2012).

Labour Market

In 2011 Mongolia was the fastest growing economy in the world and is expected to grow even more rapidly in the coming decade due to the expansion of the mining sector. Much of this growth has not translated into productive employment opportunities and vulnerable groups, including youth, informal workers, herders and people with disabilities, have not adequately benefitted from economic growth.

There are large numbers of **working poor** and **poverty** remains a major concern. In 2011 almost 30 per cent of Mongolians lived below the national poverty line (Poverty Mapping 2011). Inequality has also increased: the GINI Index for Mongolia rose from 30.3 in 1998 to 36.5 in 2008 (World Bank, World Development Indicators). In 2008 57 per cent of the non-agricultural labour force was in the informal economy (2008–2009 Labour Force Survey).

Education and school-to-work transition: The transition from school to work is lengthy in Mongolia. There is an average time lag of two and a half year years between leaving school and entering the world of work for the first time. Youth in rural areas find employment more quickly than their counterparts in urban areas, suggesting labour entry problems are especially relevant in urban areas (UCW, 2009). Despite relatively high literacy rates, in 2006 3.3 per cent of the population aged 15 to 29 had never attended school (twice as many young men as women). More than 80 per cent of these uneducated youth were from rural areas (ILO, 2008). Higher education in Mongolia has expanded rapidly over the past few years with the gross enrolment rate of tertiary education rising from 36 per cent in 2002 to 51 per cent in 2009 (UNESCO, 2009a). According to UNESCO, higher education in Mongolia “is characterized by poor quality, mismatch between demand and supply, outmoded and irrelevant curricula and teaching methods, inadequate funding and poor governance and management practices” (UNESCO, 2009b). The school-to-work transition is also prolonged by a lack of adequate career guidance services.

The incidence of **entrepreneurship** is very low in Mongolia. Entrepreneurs account for less than 2 per cent of the labour force (UCW, 2009).

Non-wage labour performed within the household is by far the most important form of youth work. More than half of employed young people work with their families without monetary. Of the remaining working youth, 25 per cent work for wages and 21 per cent are self-employed (UCW, 2009).

Migration: In 2010 more than 100,000 Mongolians were studying, working or living abroad, most of them belonging to the age group 20–35 years. In 2002 the average age of emigrants was 31.3 years (ILO, 2008). Internal rural to urban labour migration has also increased: 67 per cent of the total population now live in urban areas (43.6 per cent in the capital Ulaanbaatar alone). In 2003, money transfers totaling US\$ 101.6 million were made by overseas workers, amounting to 21 per cent of imports (ILO, 2008).

Child Labour: In 2006 an estimated 36,000 children aged 7 to 14 years were in employment. About 90 per cent of the economically active 5 to 14 year olds worked in agriculture. Almost all children in employment work for their families as unpaid labour, with little variation by age, place of residence or sex. Very few economically active children (less than 1 per cent) work as paid employees in formal entities (UCW, 2009).

Gender: More boys and young men than girls and young women are in the labour force as they are more likely to drop out of school to help with family herding or seek other employment. In rural areas, school attendance for boys drops sharply after the age of 10 and remains lower than for girls at all levels. Young males are also more likely than females to be long-term unemployed (ILO, 2008).



Government Priorities

Inclusive and productive employment growth is a **national priority**.

Mongolia is strongly committed to the **Decent Work Agenda**. The country was one of the first to develop a Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP, 2006–2010, the new cycle 2012–2016 is currently being prepared). Mongolia’s support of the **Global Jobs Pact** resulted in it being one of the countries selected for ILO action in 2010–2011.

In 2001 Mongolia adopted the Employment Promotion Law, implemented through the **National Employment Programme (NEP)**. 2011 was declared the “Year of Employment” and a **State Policy on Decent Employment** has been developed.

In October 2011 the Government approved the “**National Programme for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) by 2016**”.

Investment in **skills and employability** are critical for Mongolia’s successful transformation from a natural resource-based to a human resource-based economy. Mongolia has gone through a **technical and vocational education and training (TVET) reform** process and several policy revisions have been made. A Law on Vocational Education and Training has been approved by the Parliament in 2009.

Policy and Programme Recommendations

- **Educational opportunities** should be accessible to the entire population, in particular the vulnerable group, that is, rural youth. The indirect and opportunity costs of education for poor households should be reduced.
- **Technical and vocational education and training (TVET)** must be accessible to disadvantaged youth and must meet labour market demands.
- Establish programmes and opportunities for young people to develop **work-related skills** and higher levels of employability through school-based and on-the-job training, dual apprenticeships and internship programmes.
- Create **livelihood opportunities** for rural youth through local economic development processes.
- Support entrepreneurial skills development/ **youth entrepreneurship** among youth through training programmes and access to sustainable financial services.
- Advocate for a **national policy** on youth employment and/or promote mainstreaming of youth issues into the National Employment Programme.
- Strengthen the capacity of the **social partners** and promote tripartite solutions to youth employment at the local level.
- Support youth employment and career centers in rural areas and build local labour market information capacity.
- Increase the capacity of public **employment service** authorities to monitor and analyze emerging and declining sectors and skills needs and continuously adapt the education and training system.
- Promote a closer collaboration between educational institutions and the private sector to address the **skills mismatch**.

The UN and Youth in Mongolia

Mongolia's United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2012–2016 includes a number of priorities and outcomes relating to youth employment. http://www.undp.mn/publications/UNDAF_ENG.pdf

The ILO recently concluded a project which aimed at strengthening the enabling environment for national action against the **worst forms of child labour** at the local level by removing and preventing at least 6,000 boys and girls at risk or engaged in the worst forms of child labour. http://www.ilo.org/beijing/what-we-do/projects/WCMS_141913/lang-en/index.htm

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has launched a project on **youth empowerment through civic education** (2012–2016, implemented by the Centre for Citizenship Education). The project's objective is to address the need for the youth of Mongolia to develop their democratic skills, especially in the areas of problem-solving and decision-making. <http://www.undp.mn/projects.html>

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Social Partners & Youth

The **social partners and youth organizations** play an active role in promoting youth employment.

The **Mongolian Employers' Federation (MONEF)** has developed a number of proposals to support youth employment including policy development, job placement services, business surveys, career counseling, and internship programmes.

In 2004 the **Confederation of Mongolian Trade Unions (CMTU)** adopted a policy document which was aimed at encouraging young people to join trade unions with specific provisions to include them in national employment programmes and to protect young migrants working abroad.

The **Mongolia Youth Federation (MYF)** has proposed a number of measures to support youth employment including the development of a national youth employment programme, a survey of job openings to identify training needs, and a closer cooperation between educational institutions.

References

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