



The Gambia Labour Force Survey

Findings Report

GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS)



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FOREWORD

The Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS) is pleased to present the results of the Gambia Labour Force Survey 2026 (Q1). The survey was conducted by GBoS in collaboration with the Ministry of Trade, Regional Integration and Employment (MoTIE), with financial support from the Harmonizing and Improving Statistics in West Africa and Central Africa (HISWACA) Project. The HISWACA Project is a World Bank-funded regional initiative aimed at strengthening statistical systems across West and Central Africa.

The GLFS 2026 (Q1) is the fifth comprehensive labour force survey conducted in The Gambia. Its primary objective is to generate timely and reliable labour market and socio-economic data to support evidence-based policy formulation and inform national development planning processes.

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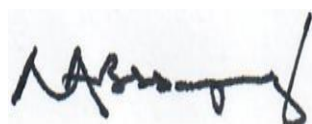
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Statistician-General

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CAPI	Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing
CI	Confidence Interval
EA	Enumeration Area
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GBoS	Gambia Bureau of Statistics
GLFS	Gambia Labour Force Survey
GRA	Gambia Revenue Authority
ICLS	International Conference of Labour Statisticians
ICSE-93	International Classification of Status in Employment (1993)
ICSE-18	International Classification of Status in Employment (2018)
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISCO-08	International Standard Classification of Occupations (2008)
ISIC Rev.4	International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (Revision 4)
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LGA	Local Government Area
LFPR	Labour Force Participation Rate

LU	Labour Underutilisation
LU1	Unemployment rate
LU2	Combined rate of time-related underemployment and unemployment
LU3	Combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force
LU4	Composite measure of labour underutilisation
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PLF	Potential Labour Force
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
Q1	Quarter 1
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SE	Standard Error
SNA	System of National Accounts
TRU	Time-Related Underemployment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

The 2026 Gambia Labour Force Survey GLFS 2026 (Q1) shows an improvement in labour market outcomes compared to GLFS 2025 (Q1). Labour force participation increased from 47.1 per cent to 54.5 per cent, while the employment-to-population ratio rose from 43.2 per cent to 51.1 per cent. Over the same period, the unemployment rate declined from 8.3 per cent to 6.2 per cent, and labour underutilisation (LU3) decreased from 26.7 per cent to 23.6 per cent. These changes indicate that the increase in labour supply was largely absorbed into employment. At the same time, employment remains characterised by high levels of informality and a predominance of independent work arrangements.

Labour Force Participation and Employment

Labour force participation increased for both males and females, from 53.8 per cent to 63.5 per cent for males and from 40.9 per cent to 46.3 per cent for females. Youth (15-35 years) participation also rose from 40.0 per cent to 48.3 per cent. Despite these improvements, differences between population groups remain, particularly between males and females.

Unemployment and Labour Underutilisation

The unemployment rate declined from 8.3 per cent in GLFS 2025 (Q1) to 6.2 per cent in GLFS 2026 (Q1). Youth unemployment (15-35 years) fell from 11.5 per cent to 8.7 per cent, while adult unemployment (36+ years) decreased from 4.4 per cent to 3.0 per cent. The share of long-term unemployment also declined from 28.3 per cent to 24.7 per cent. Labour underutilisation, measured by LU3, decreased from 26.7 per cent in 2025 (Q1) to 23.6 per cent in 2026 (Q1). Despite this improvement, broader labour underutilisation as measured by LU4 remained high in 2026 (Q1), particularly among women (42.1%), youth aged 15-35 years (38.4%), and own-use foodstuff producers (69.4%).

Job Quality: Informality and Underemployment

In GLFS 2026 (Q1), informal employment accounts for 85.8 per cent of total employment. This marks the first full implementation of the 21st ICLS resolution in The Gambia, which excludes establishment size and fixed location as criteria for formality. Consequently, informal employment estimates are not comparable with previous survey rounds.

Informality remains highest in agriculture (97.7%), construction (98.1%), wholesale and retail trade (91.5%), and accommodation and food services (93.6%), where it exceeds 90 per cent of employment in those sectors. Time-related underemployment rose slightly from 10.1 per cent to 11.1 per cent.

Status in Employment

Independent workers accounted for 58.5 per cent of total employment in GLFS 2026 (Q1), compared with 59.1 per cent in 2025 (Q1), while dependent workers increased slightly from 40.9 per cent to 41.5 per cent. By type of economic risk, workers in employment for profit increased from 64.4 per cent to 66.9 per cent, while workers in employment for pay declined from 31.0 per cent to 27.5 per cent.

Sectoral and Occupational Structure

Services remain the largest sector, accounting for 57.9 per cent of employment in GLFS 2026 (Q1), followed by industry (24.3%) and agriculture (17.8%). Industry increased its share from 20.7 per cent in GLFS 2025 (Q1), while services declined from 61.7 per cent. Women remain concentrated in services (68.8%) and agriculture (24.7%), while men are more evenly distributed across sectors. Women account for 29.5 per cent of managerial positions (SDG indicator 5.5.2).

Youth in the Labour Market

Youth unemployment (15-35 years) declined from 11.5 per cent to 8.7 per cent, while the proportion of youth (15-35 years) not in education, employment or training (NEET) decreased from 41.3 per cent to 33.7 per cent. In GLFS 2026 (Q1), dependent workers accounted for 52.1 per cent of employed youth, while independent workers accounted for 47.9 per cent. Informal employment among employed youth stood at 88.6 per cent.

Women in the Labour Market

Female labour force participation increased from 40.9 per cent to 46.3 per cent but remains below male participation (63.5%). Unemployment among females stands at 7.5 per cent compared to 5.2 per cent for males. Informal employment among women remains high at 88.7 per cent, and labour underutilisation (LU4) stands at 42.1 per cent.

Child Labour

Using the national child labour measure aligned with The Gambia's legal framework, 12.9 per cent of children aged 5-17 years were engaged in child labour in GLFS 2026 (Q1), representing approximately 108,087 children. Child labour prevalence increases with age and is substantially higher in rural areas (19.5%) than in urban areas (7.9%). Hazardous work affects 9.0 per cent of children aged 5-17 years.

For international reporting and trend comparison, the SDG 8.7.1 comparable estimate shows that child labour declined from 9.0 per cent in GLFS 2023 (Q1) (recalculated) to 7.4 per cent in GLFS 2026 (Q1).

Persons with Disabilities

Labour force participation among persons with disabilities increased from 20.1 per cent to 27.4 per cent, while the employment-to-population ratio rose from 19.4 per cent to 26.5 per cent. Labour underutilisation (LU4) declined from 36.9 per cent to 31.6 per cent, although participation remains substantially lower than for persons without disabilities (55.0%).

Own-Use Production and Agriculture

Own-use foodstuff production declined from 9.9 per cent to 8.4 per cent of the working-age population. Overall, 24.3 per cent of the working-age population engages in some form of own-use production work. Agricultural employment remains stable at 17.8 per cent of total employment and is predominantly informal (97.7%).

Migration

International migrants represent 6.0 per cent of the working-age population and have higher employment-to-population ratio than the native-born population (63.8% compared to 50.3%) in GLFS 2026 (Q1). Brikama and Kanifing are the main destinations for internal migrants, with family-related reasons accounting for most movements (77.7%).

Persons Outside the Labour Force

The share of the working-age population outside the labour force declined from 52.9 per cent to 45.5 per cent. Education (13.1% of total population) and personal or family-related reasons (39.7% of those outside the labour force) remain the main reasons for non-participation. Discouraged jobseekers increased slightly from 5.1 per cent to 5.4 per cent of the population aged 15 years and older.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL INDICATORS

Sustainable Development Goal Indicators – Gambia Labour Force Survey 2026 (Q1)

Goal	Indicator	Description	Male	Female	Total
5. Gender equality					
	5.5.2	Proportion of women in managerial positions	–	29.5	–
8. Decent work and economic growth					
	8.3.1	Proportion of informal employment in total employment	83.6	88.7	85.8
	8.5.2	Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	5.2	7.5	6.2
	8.6.1	Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training	29.5	34.8	32.2
	8.7.1	Proportion of children aged 5-17 years engaged in child labour	7.9	6.9	7.4
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure					
	9.2.2	Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment	–	–	9.6

Dash (-): means not applicable

CHAPTER 1. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

1.1 Introduction and Survey Objectives

1.1.1 Introduction

Labour Force Surveys (LFS) are designed to produce official national statistics on the labour force, employment and unemployment for monitoring and planning purposes. GLFS serves as the primary source of headline labour market indicators for short-term monitoring, as well as providing structural information on the number and characteristics of the employed, their jobs and working conditions, and the job search activities of those without work. They are a unique source of data on informal employment and are increasingly designed to produce statistics on unpaid forms of work and other related topics.

The 2026 Gambia Labour Force Survey - Quarter 1 (GLFS 2026 (Q1)) , similar to previous rounds, collected information on employment and unemployment to determine the socio-economic characteristics of the labour force in support of macroeconomic planning and employment policy formulation, implementation and monitoring. The data collected will inform programmes aimed at improving the welfare of the people of The Gambia.

1.1.2 Objectives

The broad objective of GLFS 2026 (Q1) is to generate comprehensive data on the state of the labour market. The survey provides information on access to the labour market, the socio-economic characteristics of the labour force, the characteristics of employment, and the extent of informality. These data support planning, policy implementation, and the monitoring and evaluation of Government programmes aimed at improving livelihoods, particularly for vulnerable groups.

Specifically, the survey aims to:

- measure the extent of labour underutilisation, including unemployment and underemployment, at national and sub-national levels;
- provide measures of both current and usual economic activities;
- estimate the size and distribution of employment in the informal sector;
- determine the geographical and sectoral distribution of employment;
- analyse the gender dimensions of employment and labour force participation;
- profile economic migrants and examine their distribution by sex and location;
- measure the prevalence and characteristics of own-use production work, including subsistence foodstuff production;
- estimate labour force participation rates and employment outcomes for persons with disabilities, youth (15-35 years), and women; and
- assess the extent of child labour and hazardous work among children aged 5-17 years.

1.1.3 Survey Instruments

The survey instruments for GLFS 2026 (Q1) consisted of listing forms, questionnaires, and instruction manuals for supervisors and enumerators. The questionnaires were developed by GBoS in collaboration with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the GLFS Technical Working Group.

The questionnaire comprised two parts: the **household questionnaire** and the **individual questionnaire**.

Household Questionnaire: Listed all usual members of the selected households. Basic demographic information was collected for each person listed, including age, sex, marital status, nationality, relationship to the head of the household, education, training, migration and functioning. Data on age were used to identify individuals eligible for the individual questionnaire.

Individual Questionnaire: Collected information from each eligible individual, including employment in the specified reference period, characteristics of the current main job or business activity, working time in employment, and job search activities. All usual household members aged 5 years and older were eligible for the individual questionnaire. Additional modules captured information on child labour (for children aged 5-17 years) and own-use production work.

1.1.4 Training

Training of field staff for GLFS 2026 (Q1) was conducted over 13 days, from 30 December 2025 to 13 January 2026, with breaks on 1 January 2026 (public holiday) and 4 January 2026 (Sunday).

The training was conducted in three phases:

Phase 1 - Concept and questionnaire familiarisation:

Trainees were taken through the household and individual questionnaires in English, covering key concepts, terminology, question flow and consistency checks.

Phase 2 - Local language translation:

The questionnaires were translated into the major local languages (Mandinka, Wolof and Fula), which are widely spoken by respondents. All trainees participated in the translation process to ensure a common interpretation of key terms across languages.

Phase 3 - CAPI training:

Trainees were introduced to Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI). Trainers projected the application and guided trainees through its use to ensure that all questions, skips and validation checks were correctly applied.

1.1.5 Data Collection

Main fieldwork (data collection) for GLFS 2026 (Q1) began on 23rd January 2026 for teams deployed in urban areas and on 24th January 2026 for teams deployed in rural areas. The 65 days allocated for the main fieldwork ended officially on 30th March 2026.

Data collection was carried out by 10 teams, each comprising one supervisor, four enumerators and one driver. Data from the household and individual questionnaires were directly entered into tablet computers using CSPro CAPI application. Collected data were transmitted from enumerators' tablets to the supervisor's tablet via Bluetooth, and the supervisor synchronised the data to the central office via internet connectivity on a regular basis.

1.2 Sampling Methodology

1.2.1 Overview of Sampling Strategy

The GLFS 2026 (Q1) is a nationally representative household survey conducted by the Gambia Bureau of Statistics. This survey was conducted to collect data on labour market activities from eligible individuals within selected households across the country. The primary objective of the GLFS 2026 (Q1) is to generate accurate, disaggregated, and comparable estimates of key labour force indicators at various levels, including national, urban/rural, and LGAs. These estimates are essential for economic analysis, policymaking, and research, ensuring that labour market decisions are based on accurate, up-to-date information.

The sampling methodology for the GLFS 2026 (Q1) employs a two-stage stratified design to ensure precision and representativeness. In the first stage, a stratified sample of enumeration areas (EAs) is selected from the 2024 census frame, with probability proportional to size (PPS), based on the number of households recorded in the EA. In the second stage, a fixed number of households is systematically selected within each sampled EA.

1.2.2 Sampling Frame

The sampling frame for the survey was derived from the 2024 Population and Housing Census. For purposes of surveys and censuses, the country is divided into eight LGAs: Banjul, Kanifing, Brikama, Mansakonko, Kerewan, Kuntaur, Janjanbureh, and Basse. Among these, the settlements in Banjul and Kanifing are exclusively urban. The urban and rural areas within each LGA except Banjul and Kanifing, which are exclusively urban, were delineated as separate primary sampling strata, resulting in a total of 14 strata. Each LGA is further subdivided into districts, which are then further divided into settlements. An EA may consist of a single settlement, a cluster of small settlements, or a segment of a larger settlement.

1.2.3 Sample Size and Allocation

To ensure robust statistical analysis and optimal sample design for the GLFS 2026 (Q1), it was essential to analyse the sampling errors, confidence intervals, and design effects associated with key estimates derived from the GLFS 2025 (Q1) data. These metrics are critical for evaluating the adequacy of sample size requirements and assessing the statistical efficiency of the sampling framework. The design effect, defined as the ratio of the variance of an estimate under the actual sample design to the variance under a simple random sample of equivalent size, serves as a key indicator of the relative efficiency of the sampling strategy. This measure is predominantly influenced by the clustering effect inherent in the design.

For this analysis, the NEET rate for youth (15-35 years), estimated at 41.3 per cent in GLFS 2025 (Q1), was selected as the primary indicator due to its high policy relevance for SDG indicator 8.6.1. Sample size calculations were conducted using the ILO Labour Force Survey (LFS) sample size calculation template, a standardized tool for such computations. The sample size was determined for each analytical domain as well as for the overall survey, resulting in a total requirement of 5,200 households.

Table 1.1 presents the allocation of Enumeration Areas (EAs) and households across LGAs and by place of residence (urban and rural). The decision to select 20 households per EA was informed by several considerations, including the design effect, budgetary constraints, and the time required for field teams to complete data collection within each EA. This approach resulted in the selection of 260 EAs for the survey, ensuring an appropriate balance between statistical precision and operational feasibility.

Table 1.1: Sample allocation of EAs and households by LGA and residence

2024 Census frame				2026 GLFS (Q1) Sample			
LGA	Urban EAs	Rural EAs	Total	Number of clusters	Urban EAs	Rural EAs	Sample size in number of households
Banjul	50	-	50	27	27	0	540
Kanifing	751	-	751	44	44	0	880
Brikama	1,585	715	2,300	44	29	15	880
Mansakonko	39	172	211	29	5	24	580
Kerewan	121	425	546	29	6	23	580
Kuntaur	16	234	250	29	2	27	580
Janjanbureh	51	275	326	29	5	24	580
Basse	143	359	502	29	8	21	580
The Gambia	2,756	2,180	4,936	260	126	134	5,200

“-” means Banjul and Kanifing LGAs are entirely urban areas, for this reason the values for rural are empty

1.2.4 Sample Selection Procedures

A stratified two-stage sampling approach was employed for the survey. In the first stage, EAs were systematically selected within each stratum using PPS. In the second stage, households were selected from the compiled listings through systematic random sampling. The methodologies applied at each sampling stage are detailed in the following sections.

1.2.5 First Stage Selection of EAs

During the initial sampling phase, the predetermined number of EAs for each stratum, as outlined in Table 1.1, was systematically selected using PPS from an ordered list of EAs within the sampling frame. The measure of size for each EA was derived from the total number of households recorded in The Gambia's 2024 Census frame. The following selection procedures were applied within each stratum:

1. Cumulate the measures of size (number of households) down the ordered list of EAs within the stratum. The final cumulated measure of size will be the total number of households in the frame for the stratum (M_h).
2. To obtain the sampling interval for stratum h (I_h), divide M_h by the total number of EAs to be selected in stratum h (n_h) specified in Table 1: $I_h = M_h/n_h$.
3. Select a random number (R_h) between 0 and I_h . The sample EAs in stratum h will be identified by the following selection numbers:

$$S_{hi} = R_h + [I_h \times (i - 1)], \text{ rounded up,}$$

where $i = 1, 2, \dots, n_h$

The i -th selected EA in the stratum is the one with a cumulated measure of size closest to S_{hi} that is greater than or equal to S_{hi} .

1.2.6 Listing of Households in Sample EAs

Prior to the GLFS 2026 (Q1) data collection, a household listing exercise was carried out in each EA. Supervisors verified the boundaries of each sample EA to ensure full coverage and accuracy in the enumeration process. The household counts obtained from the listing were cross-checked against the corresponding figures from the census frame. Any significant discrepancies were thoroughly investigated by the GIS team and resolved to maintain data integrity and alignment with the census framework. Following the completion of the household listing exercises and subsequent data cleaning, a total of 5,198 households were selected for the survey.

1.2.7 Selection of Sample Households within Each Sample EA

A random systematic sample of 20 households was selected from the household listing for each sample EA using the following procedures:

- 1) All the households are assigned a serial number from 1 to M'_{hi} , the total number of households listed in the EA.
- 2) To obtain the sampling interval for the selection of households within the sample EA (I_{hi}), divide M'_{hi} by 20, and maintain 2 decimal places.
- 3) Select a random number (R_{hi}) with 2 decimal places, between 0.01 and I_{hi} . The selected households within the sample EA will be identified by the following selection numbers:

$$S_{hij} = R_{hi} + [I_{hi} \times (j - 1)], \text{ rounded up to the next integer,}$$

where $j = 1, 2, 3, \dots, 20$

The j -th selected household is the one with a serial number equal to S_{hij} .

The listing information for all sample EAs were sent to GBoS for the selection of sample households.

1.2.8 Sample Probabilities and Sampling Weights

The data was subjected to a weighting process during the data management phase to account for the probability of selecting both an EA and a household within the EA. The final weights were standardized prior to their application to the dataset. This adjustment was necessary because the sampling design, as outlined earlier, is not self-weighting. Specifically, households were selected with unequal probabilities during the second stage of sampling. Consequently, an adjustment factor, or sampling weight, was incorporated into the tabulations to address variations in selection probabilities and the number of completed interviews within each EA. The necessary information for computing these weights was derived from the EA and household selection stages. A comprehensive spreadsheet containing all relevant sampling parameters and selection probabilities was developed to streamline the calculation of the design weights. These weights were subsequently adjusted to account for household non-response, resulting in the final sampling weights.

Furthermore, post-stratification weights were applied to align the sample population with the national population. This adjustment utilized the sex distribution and the population totals to ensure the sample accurately reflects the demographic structure of the country.

1.2.9 Post-Stratification Adjustment

To further improve the representativeness of the sample, post-stratification was performed using known population totals from the 2024 Population and Housing Census. The following variables were used for this adjustment:

- Sex (male, female)
- Residence (urban, rural)
- Local Government Area (LGA) – eight LGAs: Banjul, Kanifing, Brikama, Mansakonko, Kerewan, Kuntaur, Janjanbureh and Basse
- Age (18 five-year age bands from 0-4 to 85 years and older)

Each respondent was assigned to a post-stratum defined by the cross-classification of these variables. The ipfweight procedure in Stata was used to calibrate the individual weights so that the marginal distributions of the weighted survey data matched the census totals.

The calibration process was carried out separately for different population groups:

- **All persons (all_persons_wt):** Calibrated to a total population of 2,422,549 (urban: 1,465,836; rural: 956,713), using sex, residence, LGA and five-year age band.
- **Working-age persons aged 15 years and older (adult_wt):** Calibrated to a total adult population of 1,434,115 (urban: 917,144; rural: 516,971), using sex, residence, LGA and five-year age band.
- **Youth aged 15-35 years (youth_wt):** Calibrated to a total youth population of 919,078 (urban: 596,888; rural: 322,190), using sex, residence, LGA and five-year age band.
- **Children aged 5-17 years (child_weight):** Calibrated to a total child population of 835,194 (urban: 470,604; rural: 364,590), using sex, residence, LGA and age group (5-11, 12-14, 15-17).
- **Households (hh_wt):** Calibrated to a total of 297,704 households (urban: 204,740; rural: 92,964), using residence and LGA.

A household-level base weight was first derived from the sampling design. Individual non-response adjustments were then applied using response rates calculated from the survey data (working age response rate: 96.3%; child response rate: 98.9%). The iterative proportional fitting (raking) procedure adjusted the weights to ensure consistency with the census marginal totals. The resulting post-stratified weights

(all_persons_wt, adult_wt, youth_wt, child_weight and hh_wt) reflect both the sampling design and population benchmarks, improving the accuracy of estimates, especially for subpopulations.

1.2.10 Estimation of Sampling Errors

To evaluate the accuracy of the survey results, tables detailing sampling errors and confidence intervals for key estimates were generated. Sampling error reflects the discrepancy between an estimate and the value that would have been obtained from a full population census under identical conditions. These tables, included in the report's annex, provide precision measures for unemployment and employment estimates across various domains. For each estimate, the tables present the standard error, coefficient of variation (CV), 95% confidence interval, design effect (DEFF), and the number of observations. The variance estimator for a total, as implemented in STATA, the analytical tool used by GBoS, can be expressed as follows:

Variance Estimator for a Total

$$V(\hat{Y}) = \sum_{h=1}^L \left[(1-f_h) \times \frac{n_h}{n_h-1} \sum_{i=1}^{n_h} \left(\hat{Y}_{hi} - \frac{\hat{Y}_h}{n_h} \right)^2 \right],$$

where:

f_h = average first stage probability within stratum h; $(1-f_h)$ is the finite population correction (fpc) factor

$$\hat{Y}_{hi} = \sum_{j=1}^{m_h} W'_{hi} y_{hij}$$

y_{hij} = value of variable y for the j-th sample household in the i-th sample EA of stratum h

$$\hat{Y}_h = \sum_{i=1}^{n_h} \hat{Y}_{hi}$$

The variance estimator for a ratio used by Stata packages can be expressed as follows:

Variance Estimator for a Ratio

$$V(\hat{R}) = \frac{1}{\hat{X}^2} \left[V(\hat{Y}) + \hat{R}^2 V(\hat{X}) - 2 \hat{R} COV(\hat{X}, \hat{Y}) \right],$$

where:

$$COV(\hat{X}, \hat{Y}) = \sum_{h=1}^L \left[(1-f_h) \times \frac{n_h}{n_h-1} \sum_{i=1}^{n_h} \left(\hat{X}_{hi} - \frac{\hat{X}_h}{n_h} \right) \left(\hat{Y}_{hi} - \frac{\hat{Y}_h}{n_h} \right) \right]$$

$V(\hat{Y})$ and $V(\hat{X})$ are calculated according to the formula for the variance of a total.

1.2.11 Household and individual response rates

The GLFS 2026 (Q1) survey achieved high response rates across all levels. Among eligible households, 97.6 per cent completed the interview. Among eligible individuals aged 15 years and older, the response rate was 96.3 per cent, while for children aged 5-17 years the response rate was 98.9 per cent. These strong participation rates indicate robust data quality and minimal non-response bias, ensuring reliable labour market statistics.

Eligible households were defined using household result codes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 96 in hh11 from the household dataset. Vacant, destroyed and not found dwellings were excluded from the denominator. Individual response rates were computed among eligible individuals in completed households.

The individual response rates were used to compute non-response adjustment factors applied during weight calibration:

- Adult adjustment factor: $1 / 0.9626 = 1.0388$
- Child adjustment factor: $1 / 0.9888 = 1.0113$

Table 1.2: Results of the household and individual interviews

Category	Eligible	Completed	Response Rate (%)
Household	5,141	5,019	97.6
Individual (15+)	25,027	24,091	96.3
Children (5-17)	16,076	15,896	98.9

1.3 Concepts and Definitions

1.3.1 Household

A household consists of one person or a group of persons, whether or not related by blood or marriage, who live together, share living arrangements and meals, and recognise one person, male or female, as the head of the household.

1.3.2 Working Age Population

All individuals aged 15 years and older, who were usual residents in the country at the time of the survey.

1.3.3 Employed

The employed comprise all persons of working age who, during the reference week (last calendar week), performed at least one hour of work to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit, whether in cash or in kind. This includes:

- employed persons **at work**, i.e. who worked in a job for at least one hour during the preceding calendar week;
- employed persons **not at work** due to temporary absence from a job, or to working-time arrangements (such as shift work, flexible working hours, or compensatory leave for overtime).

1.3.4 Branch of Economic Activity

The branch of economic activity refers to the main activity of the establishment in which a person worked during the reference period. The branch of economic activity of a person does not depend on the specific duties or functions of the person's job, but rather on the characteristics of the economic unit in which the person works.

Data presented by branch of economic activity is based on the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), Rev.4). They can be grouped by broad sector of economy:

- Agriculture comprises activities in agriculture, forestry and fishing.
- Industry comprises mining and quarrying, manufacturing, construction and public utilities (electricity, gas and water).
- Services consist of wholesale and retail trade, restaurants and hotels, transport, storage and communications, finance, insurance, real estate and business services, and community, social and personal services.

1.3.5 Employment-to-Population Ratio

The employment-to-population ratio is defined as the proportion of the working-age population that is employed. The indicator provides information on the ability of an economy to create employment; for many countries the indicator is often more insightful than the unemployment rate.

1.3.6 Formal and Informal Economic Units

An economic unit has a formal status if it:

- is owned or controlled by the government; or
- is recognized as a separate legal entity from its owners; or
- keeps a complete set of accounts for tax purposes; or
- is registered with Registrar of Companies under the Ministry of Justice or Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA); or
- produces for the market and employs one or more persons to work as an employee with a formal job;

Economic units that do not fulfil any of the criteria above do not have formal status.

1.3.7 Methodological note on 21st ICLS implementation

The GLFS 2026 (Q1) fully implements the 21st International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) resolution concerning statistics on the informal economy. This resolution aligns with the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-18) for the classification of workers by status in employment. Consequently, establishment size (e.g., number of employees) and fixed location are not used as criteria for formality. Previous rounds (GLFS 2023 (Q1) and GLFS 2025 (Q1)) partially implemented the 21st ICLS but retained establishment size and fixed location as additional criteria. For GLFS 2026 (Q1), formality is determined solely by the criteria listed above.

Consequently, informal employment and informal sector estimates for 2026 are not comparable with those from previous rounds. This report presents 2026 informality estimates as a new baseline. All other labour market indicators (e.g., unemployment, labour force participation, employment-to-population) remain comparable across rounds.

Note on status in employment classification: *GLFS 2023 (Q1) used ICSE-93, while GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1) use ICSE-18. Status in employment comparisons between 2025 and 2026 are valid.*

1.3.8 Institutional Sector of Employment

Institutional sector of employment refers to the kind of economic unit in which the person is employed, as defined by its legal organisation, principal functions, behaviour and objectives.

The survey data distinguish three sectors of employment:

- **Public sector** refers to all government institutions or state-owned enterprises.
- **Private sector** includes market enterprises, as well as Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), non-profit institutions, international organizations and foreign embassies.
- **Household** refers to private households as employers of domestic workers.

1.3.9 Status in Employment (ICSE-18) Categories

The International Classification of Status in Employment 2018 (ICSE-18), adopted by the 20th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), classifies jobs according to the type of economic risk and authority that workers have in relation to their work arrangements. It provides a framework for distinguishing different forms of employment relationships, including employers, employees, own-account workers, dependent contractors, and contributing family workers.

The classification is particularly useful for analysing labour market vulnerability, informality, job security, and employment arrangements.

The main ICSE-18 categories used in this report are:

- **Employers in corporations:** Individuals who own and operate incorporated enterprises and hire employees.
- **Employers in household market enterprises:** Individuals who operate unincorporated household businesses and hire employees.
- **Owner-operators of corporations without employees:** Individuals who run incorporated enterprises on their own without hiring employees.
- **Own-account workers in household market enterprises without employees:** Individuals who operate unincorporated household businesses on their own, without hiring employees.
- **Dependent contractors:** Dependent contractors are workers who have contractual arrangements of a commercial nature, but not a contract of employment, to provide goods or services for or through another economic unit. They are not employees of that economic unit, but they are dependent on it for the organisation and execution of the work, income, or access to the market.
- **Permanent employees:** Workers with ongoing employment contracts that have no fixed end date.
- **Fixed-term employees:** Workers with employment contracts that specify a set end date.
- **Short-term and casual employees:** Workers with informal or temporary arrangements, often with irregular or unpredictable hours.
- **Paid apprentices, trainees and interns:** Individuals engaged in paid work primarily for training or skill development, often with structured learning components.
- **Contributing family workers:** Individuals who work in a market-oriented family business without receiving formal pay, typically assisting relatives and with limited authority.

1.3.10 Disability Status

The criteria for identifying a person with disability follows the Washington Group Short Set of functioning that assesses functional difficulties with six universal basic activities (functions): seeing, hearing, walking, self-care, cognition and communication. Respondents who answer “a lot of difficulty” or “cannot do it at all” to at least one of the six functioning questions are considered persons with disability.

1.3.11 International Migrants

International migrants are persons who usually reside in The Gambia and were born in another country. In this report, international migrant status is determined using the country of birth criterion. The resident population is classified into two groups: native-born persons (born in The Gambia) and foreign-born persons (born outside The Gambia). All foreign-born persons who usually reside in The Gambia are considered international migrants, regardless of their current citizenship. Chapter 15 also presents selected labour market indicators by citizenship status where relevant.

1.3.12 Resident International Migrant in the Labour Force

Resident international migrants in the labour force are persons who usually reside in The Gambia, were born in another country, and are classified as either employed or unemployed according to the labour force framework. In this report, the population of resident international migrants in the labour force is identified using the country of birth criterion and labour force status at the time of the survey.

1.3.13 Labour Force

The labour force is the sum of the number of persons of working age who are employed and the number of persons of working age who are unemployed.

1.3.14 Labour Force Participation Rate

The labour force participation rate is a measure of the proportion of a country’s working-age population that engages actively in the labour market, either by working or looking for work. The indicator informs on the size of the supply of labour available to engage in the production of goods and services, relative to the population at working age.

The labour force participation rate is calculated by expressing the number of persons in the labour force as a percentage of the working-age population.

1.3.15 Potential Labour Force

The potential labour force is defined as persons not employed who:

- want to work and looked for work but were not available, or
- did not look for work but were available. This group includes **discouraged job seekers**, who are not actively seeking work because they believe no suitable work is available.

1.3.16 Time-Related Underemployment

Persons in time-related underemployment comprise all persons in employment who satisfy the following three criteria during the reference period: a) are willing to work additional hours; b) are available to work additional hours, that is, are

ready to work additional hours during the last calendar week or within the next two weeks if given the opportunity; and c) worked less than 35 hours.

The indicator is a measure of labour underutilisation that provides information regarding the share of employed persons who are willing and available to increase their working time.

1.3.17 Labour Underutilization: Unemployed, Time-Related Underemployed (TRU), Potential Labour Force (PLF)

Labour underutilisation captures mismatches between labour supply and demand, reflecting the unmet need for employment. It extends beyond standard unemployment to include persons with insufficient working time or weak labour market attachment.

The ILO framework identifies four indicators to measure labour underutilisation (LU):

LU1: Unemployment

Persons of working age who:

- Did not work for pay or profit during the reference period,
- Actively sought work in the past four weeks, and
- Were available to work during the reference week or within the next two weeks.

$$\text{Formula: (Unemployed / Labour force) } \times 100$$

Long-term unemployment refers to spells of 12 months or more.

LU2: Combined Unemployment and Time-related Underemployment

- Captures persons who were employed but worked fewer than 35 hours during the reference week and were willing and available to work more paid hours (time-related underemployment).

$$\text{Formula: (Unemployed + TRU) / Labour force } \times 100$$

LU3: Combined Unemployment and Potential Labour Force

- Includes unemployed persons together with persons in the potential labour force, such as discouraged jobseekers and other persons available for work but not actively seeking employment.

$$\text{Formula: (Unemployed + PLF) / Extended labour force } \times 100$$

LU4: Composite Labour Underutilisation

- Encompasses all three groups: unemployed, time-related underemployed, and potential labour force.

$$\text{Formula: (Unemployed + TRU + PLF) / Extended labour force } \times 100$$

1.3.18 Occupation

Occupation refers to the type of work performed by an employed person, based on the tasks and duties carried out in the job, irrespective of the branch of economic activity or status in employment of that person. The classification of occupations in this report follows the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08).

1.3.19 Outside Labour Force

Persons outside the labour force are working-age persons who were neither employed nor seeking employment. There are different reasons for not participating in the labour force, such as caring for family members, retirement, sickness, disability, or attending school. Some may believe that no jobs are available, while others may simply not want to work.

1.3.20 Own-account Workers

Own-account workers are independent workers who operate an economic unit, alone or in partnership with others, and do not employ employees on a regular basis. The economic unit they operate may be incorporated or unincorporated.

1.3.21 Own-use Production Work (ILO, 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), 2013)

According to the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) resolution adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2013, own-use production work refers to the production of goods by individuals mainly for their own final use or for the use of their household. This includes activities such as growing food, fishing, hunting, gathering natural resources, processing food for storage, fetching water, collecting firewood, manufacturing household goods, and constructing own dwellings.

1.3.22 Own-use Producers of Foodstuff

Own-use producers of foodstuff are a subset of own-use production workers engaged specifically in the production of foodstuffs such as farming, fishing, hunting, or food processing for final use by the household, rather than for sale or barter. Note: Individuals engaged in own-use production are not considered employed, as their work is not done for pay or profit.

However, they are recognized as engaged in work under the category of own-use production of goods, as defined by the 19th ICLS.

1.3.23 Youth Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

The NEET rate measures the share of youth aged 15-35 years who are not in Education, Employment or Training as a percentage of the total youth population. It provides a measure of potential youth labour market entrants.

For measurement purposes, it is important not to double count youth who are simultaneously both in employment and education or training. The formula can be expressed as:

NEET rate = [Unemployed youth + Youth outside the labour force] - (Unemployed youth in education or training + Youth outside the labour force in education or training) / Youth x 100

1.3.24 Main Job

The main job is defined, as per the international standards, as the one in which the person usually works the most hours, even if they were absent from it in the reference week. If the hours of work are the same in each job, the main job/business is the one that generates the highest income.

1.3.25 Migrant (Life-time migrant)

- An individual whose place of birth (Local Government Area (LGA)) is different from their current place of residence (LGA) at the time of the survey. This excludes those born abroad.

1.3.26 Non-migrant

- An individual who either reported having always lived in the LGA of enumeration or whose place of birth is the same as their current LGA of residence.

1.3.27 Recent migrant

A recent migrant is a person who has resided in their current place of residence for less than five years. Depending on the context, the term may refer to either a recent internal migrant (a person who moved to their current Local Government Area within the last five years) or a recent international migrant (a person who arrived in The Gambia within the last five years).

1.3.28 Decent work

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines decent work as **productive work for women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity**. It reflects the quality of work beyond employment status alone and is central to inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Work is considered decent when it:

- provides a fair income;
- ensures job security and safe working conditions;
- guarantees equal opportunities and treatment for all;
- offers social protection for workers and their families;
- encourages personal development and social integration; and
- respects workers' rights to express concerns, organize, and participate in decisions affecting them.

This broader concept is integral to labour market diagnostics and underpins many Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators, particularly SDG 8 on "Decent Work and Economic Growth."

1.3.29 Predominantly Rural Local Government Areas

These are Local Government Areas (LGAs) in which the number of rural settlements are more than the number of urban settlements. The predominantly rural LGAs are Mansakonko, Kerewan, Kuntaur, Janjanbureh and Basse.

1.3.30 Youth

The National Youth Policy of The Gambia, aligned with the African Union definition, defines youth as persons aged 15-35 years.

1.3.31 Formal and Informal Employment

The classification of employment as formal or informal is based on the characteristics of both the job and the economic unit in which the work is performed.

Employers and independent (own-account) workers without employees are classified as being in formal employment if their enterprise meets at least one of the following conditions:

- Registered with the Registrar of Companies under the Ministry of Justice,
- Registered with the Gambia Revenue Authority (GRA),
- Maintains a complete set of accounts for tax purposes,

- Is incorporated, or
- Engages a formal employee (i.e., hires someone in formal employment).

Dependent contractors are classified as formal when the economic unit through which they operate is formally registered and/or they are covered by social insurance.

Employees are considered to be in formal employment if their employer provides at least one of the following employment benefits:

- social security contributions,
- access to health insurance, or
- entitlement to both paid sick leave and paid annual leave.

Contributing family workers are by default considered to be in informal employment, as there are currently no formal employment arrangements for such workers in The Gambia.

All workers who do not meet the criteria for formal employment as outlined above are classified as being in informal employment, regardless of the sector or type of economic unit.

Consistency with 21st ICLS: The classification rules above reflect full implementation of the 21st ICLS resolution concerning statistics on the informal economy, which aligns with the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-18). Under this framework, establishment size and fixed location are not considered as formality criteria. For employees, formal employment requires either social security contributions, or where social security is not provided, both paid sick leave and paid annual leave.

Users should note that GLFS 2023 (Q1) and GLFS 2025 (Q)1 applied a partial 21st ICLS implementation that retained establishment size (≥ 5 employees) and fixed location as additional formality criteria. For status in employment, GLFS 2023 (Q1) used ICSE-93, while GLFS 2025 Q1 and GLFS 2026 Q1 use ICSE-18.

As a result, informal employment and informal sector estimates for 2026 are not comparable with those from earlier rounds. Status in employment comparisons between 2025 and 2026 are valid, but comparisons involving 2023 are not recommended. A consistent time series is available upon request from the Gambia Bureau of Statistics.

CHAPTER 2. KEY LABOUR MARKET FINDINGS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents key labour market outcomes from the Gambia Labour Force Survey (GLFS) 2026 (Q1), with comparisons to GLFS 2025 (Q1). The analysis focuses on changes in labour force participation, employment, unemployment, and underemployment. Differences across sex, residence, and Local Government Areas (LGAs) are also examined.

The findings provide important evidence for monitoring labour market conditions and supporting the implementation of The Gambia's Recovery-Focused National Development Plan (RF-NDP) 2023-2027, particularly in relation to employment creation, labour underutilisation, youth employment, and inclusive economic growth. The indicators presented in this chapter are also aligned with relevant Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) and Agenda 2063 indicators, and international labour statistics standards recommended by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Note: Due to the full implementation of the 21st ICLS resolution in 2026 (which excludes establishment size and fixed location as formality criteria), informal employment estimates for 2026 are not comparable with 2025. Therefore, informality is not included in the comparisons presented in this chapter. See Chapter 5 for detailed 2026 informality analysis.

2.1.1 Key Labour Market Changes

Figure 2.1 presents key labour market indicators for GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). The results show increases in labour force participation and employment, alongside declines in unemployment and labour underutilisation.

Labour force participation increased from 47.1 per cent in GLFS 2025 (Q1) to 54.5 per cent in GLFS 2026 (Q1), while the employment-to-population ratio rose from 43.2 per cent to 51.1 per cent. Over the same period, the unemployment rate declined from 8.3 per cent to 6.2 per cent. Labour underutilisation (LU3) also declined, from 26.7 per cent to 23.6 per cent.

Figure 2.1 further shows that time-related underemployment rose slightly from 10.1 per cent to 11.1 per cent. Youth unemployment declined from 11.5 per cent to 8.7 per cent, while adult unemployment fell from 4.4 per cent to 3.0 per cent. Participation in own-use production of foodstuff decreased from 9.9 per cent to 8.4 per cent.

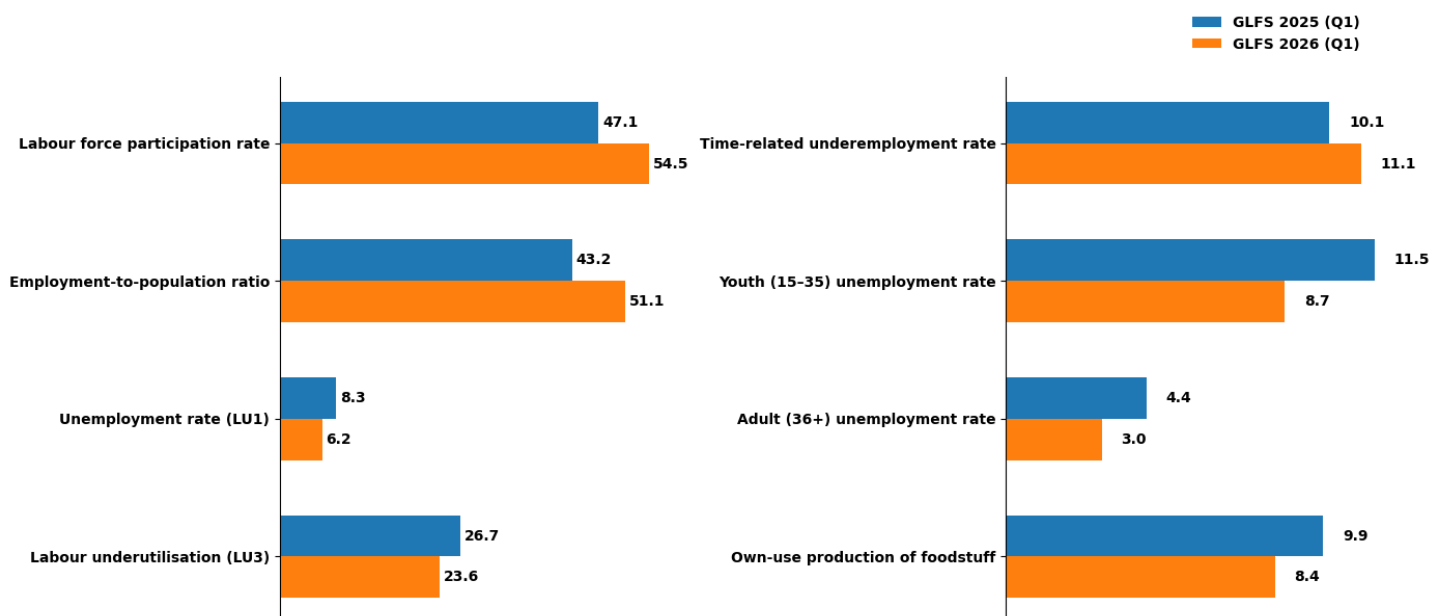


Figure 2.1: Key labour market indicators, GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

In GLFS 2026 (Q1), informal employment stands at 85.8 per cent of total employment. Due to the full implementation of the 21st ICLS in 2026, this estimate is not comparable with previous rounds and is therefore not shown in Figure 2.1. See Chapter 5 for detailed informality analysis.

Table 2.1 summarises changes in key labour market indicators between GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1).

The largest increases are observed in labour force participation (+7.4 percentage points) and the employment-to-population ratio (+7.9 percentage points), indicating that most new labour market entrants found employment. Over the same period, unemployment declined by 2.1 percentage points, while labour underutilisation (LU3) decreased by 3.1 percentage points, suggesting a reduction in overall labour market pressure.

At the same time, Table 2.1 shows changes in selected indicators of job quality. Time-related underemployment rose by 1.0 percentage point. (Informal employment is not comparable between 2025 and 2026 due to the full implementation of the 21st ICLS in 2026. See Chapter 5 for detailed 2026 informality analysis.)

Youth unemployment recorded a larger decline (2.8 percentage points) compared to that of adults (-1.4 percentage points), although levels remain higher among youth. In contrast, participation in own-use production of foodstuff declined by 1.5 percentage points over the same period.

Table 2.1: Key labour market indicators, %, GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	GLFS 2025 (Q1)	GLFS 2026 (Q1)	Change (pp)
Labour force participation rate	47.1	54.5	+7.4
Employment-to-population ratio	43.2	51.1	+7.9
Unemployment rate (LU1)	8.3	6.2	-2.1
Time-related underemployment rate	10.1	11.1	+1.0
Labour underutilisation (LU3)	26.7	23.6	-3.1
Youth (15-35) unemployment rate	11.5	8.7	-2.8
Adult (36+) unemployment rate	4.4	3.0	-1.4
Own-use production of foodstuff	9.9	8.4	-1.5

2.1.2 Labour Market Changes by Sex and Residence

Table 2.2 presents labour market indicators by sex and residence for GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1), highlighting differences in participation, employment, and job quality.

Labour force participation increased for both males and females, as well as in urban and rural areas. The increase was larger among males (from 53.8% to 63.5%) compared to females (from 40.9% to 46.3%), indicating a widening gender gap in participation. Across residence, participation increased in both urban (48.4% to 56.7%) and rural areas (45.0% to 50.6%), with higher levels observed in urban areas in 2026.

Employment-to-population ratios followed a similar pattern, increasing across all groups. The increase was more pronounced among males (49.8% to 60.2%) than females (37.2% to 42.8%), and in urban areas (44.1% to 52.9%) compared to rural areas (41.8% to 48.0%).

Unemployment declined across all groups. However, unemployment remains higher among females (7.5%) compared to males (5.2%) in 2026. Across residence, unemployment is higher in urban areas (6.8%) than in rural areas (5.1%).

In GLFS 2026 (Q1), informal employment remains higher among females (88.7%) and in rural areas (91.2%). (Estimates for 2025 are not comparable due to the full implementation of the 21st ICLS in 2026. See Chapter 5.) Time-related underemployment also increased, with higher levels observed among females (16.2%) and in rural areas (16.5%).

Labour underutilisation (LU3) declined across all groups but remains higher among females (30.9%) compared to males (16.8%), and in rural areas (30.9%) compared to urban areas (19.3%).

Youth unemployment declined across all groups, with larger reductions observed in rural areas. Adult unemployment also declined, with relatively small differences across sex and residence.

Table 2.2: Labour market changes by sex and residence, GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	GLFS 2025 (Q1)					GLFS 2026 (Q1)				
	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Total	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Total
Labour force participation rate	53.8	40.9	48.4	45.0	47.1	63.5	46.3	56.7	50.6	54.5
Employment-to-population ratio	49.8	37.2	44.1	41.8	43.2	60.2	42.8	52.9	48.0	51.1
Unemployment rate (LU1)	7.5	9.2	8.9	7.2	8.3	5.2	7.5	6.8	5.1	6.2
Time-related underemployment rate	6.8	14.2	7.9	13.8	10.1	7.2	16.2	8.4	16.5	11.1
Labour underutilisation (LU3)	19.1	34.3	21.7	33.8	26.7	16.8	30.9	19.3	30.9	23.6
Youth (15-35) unemployment rate	11.5	11.5	11.2	9.9	11.5	6.9	10.9	9.7	6.6	8.7
Adult (36+) unemployment rate	4.4	4.4	3.6	5.3	4.4	2.9	3.0	2.8	3.4	3.0
Own-use production of foodstuff	4.5	14.8	5.1	17.4	9.9	4.6	11.9	3.4	17.4	8.4

Figure 2.2 presents labour force participation rates by sex for GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). Participation increased for both males and females over the period.

The increase was higher among males, rising from 53.8 per cent to 63.5 per cent, compared to females, whose participation increased from 40.9 per cent to 46.3 per cent. As a result, the gender gap in labour force participation widened between the two survey rounds.

Despite the increase among females, participation remains substantially lower compared to males, indicating persistent differences in engagement in the labour market.

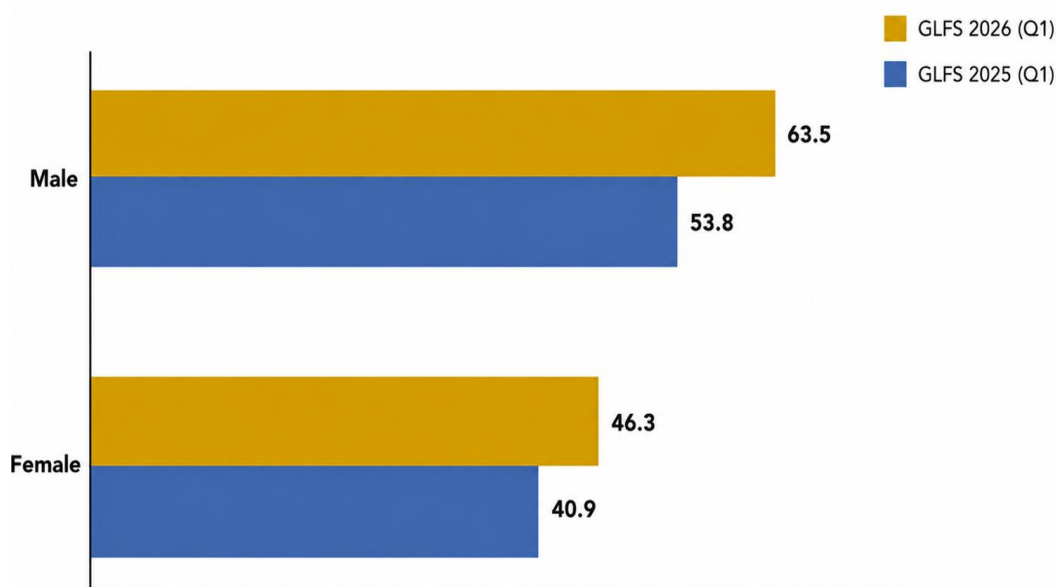


Figure 2.2: Labour force participation rate by sex, GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

2.1.3 Labour Market Changes by LGA

Figure 2.3 presents changes in labour force participation rates across Local Government Areas (LGAs) between GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). Participation increased in most LGAs, although the magnitude of change varies considerably.

The largest increases were recorded in Brikama (+12.7 percentage points), Banjul (+12.1 percentage points), and Mansakonko (+10.8 percentage points). Moderate increases are observed in Basse (+7.4 percentage points) and Janjanbureh (+4.7 percentage points), while smaller changes are recorded in Kuntaur (+3.2 percentage points) and Kanifing (+0.9 percentage points). Kerewan is the only LGA where labour force participation declined over the period, with a decrease of 6.3 percentage points.

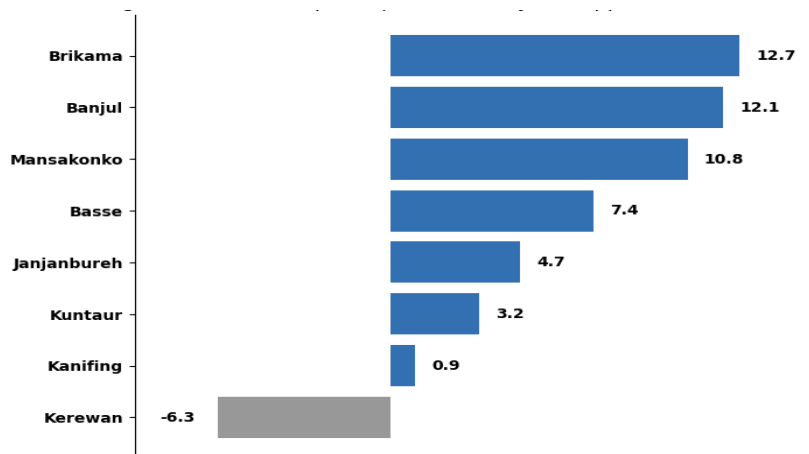


Figure 2.3: Change in labour force participation rate by LGA (percentage points), GLFS 2025 (Q1) to GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference. presents labour market indicators by LGA for GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1), highlighting differences in participation, employment, unemployment, and job quality across areas.

In GLFS 2026 (Q1), labour force participation rates are highest in Banjul (64.0%), Mansakonko (59.2%), and Brikama (59.0%), while lower levels are observed in Basse (36.4%) and Kuntaur (42.1%). Employment-to-population ratios follow a similar pattern, with higher levels in Banjul, Brikama, and Mansakonko, and lower levels in Basse.

Unemployment rates vary across LGAs. In GLFS 2026 (Q1), higher unemployment is observed in Banjul (12.5%) and Basse (10.7%), while lower rates are recorded in Janjanbureh (3.5%), Kerewan (4.2%), and Mansakonko (5.5%). Kuntaur, which recorded the highest unemployment rate in GLFS 2025 (Q1), shows a lower level in 2026.

Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference. further shows that In GLFS 2026 (Q1), informal employment exceeds 80 per cent across all LGAs, reaching above 90 per cent in Basse (93.2%), Kuntaur (92.0%), and Janjanbureh (91.8%). (Estimates for 2025 are not comparable due to the full implementation of the 21st ICLS in 2026. See Chapter 5.)

Time-related underemployment varies considerably across LGAs. In GLFS 2026 (Q1), higher levels are observed in Kuntaur (34.8%) and Janjanbureh (24.6%), while lower levels are recorded in Banjul (6.7%) and Kanifing (7.4%).

Labour underutilisation (LU3) also differs across LGAs, with higher levels observed in Kuntaur (45.7%) and Kerewan (36.5%), compared to lower levels in Brikama (18.0%) and Kanifing (19.4%).

Youth unemployment remains higher than adult unemployment across all LGAs. In GLFS 2026 (Q1), higher youth unemployment rates are observed in Banjul (17.8%), Kanifing (13.1%), and Basse (13.1%), while adult unemployment remains comparatively low across all areas.

Table 2.3 also shows that 8.4 per cent of the working-age population were engaged in own-use production of foodstuff in GLFS 2026 (Q1), compared with 9.9 per cent in GLFS 2025 (Q1). Participation in own-use production remains considerably higher among women (11.9%) than men (4.6%) and is substantially more common in rural areas (17.4%) than in urban areas (3.4%). While some own-use producers may also be engaged in employment, others rely primarily on subsistence-oriented production for household consumption. These findings highlight the continued importance of subsistence food production as a livelihood strategy, particularly among rural households and women.

Table 2.3: Labour Market Indicators by LGA, GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	Banjul	Kanifing	Brikama	Mansakonko	Kerewan	Kuntaur	Janjanbureh	Basse	Total
	GLFS 2025 (Q1)								
Labour force participation rate	51.9	55.3	46.3	48.4	55.9	38.9	49.5	29.0	47.1
Employment-to-population ratio	47.5	50.2	42.1	44.4	54.0	31.3	47.1	27.8	43.2
Unemployment rate (LU1)	8.5	9.1	9.1	8.4	3.5	19.6	4.9	4.2	8.3
Time-related underemployment rate	16.0	8.4	8.9	15.3	13.7	10.4	16.7	7.4	10.1
Composite LU3: Labour underutilisation	24.6	20.3	20.7	33.0	24.5	56.5	35.5	47.0	26.7
Youth (15–35) unemployment rate	13.9	12.7	13.0	11.9	4.1	24.5	5.9	5.3	11.5
Adult (36+) unemployment rate	2.9	4.5	4.3	4.9	2.8	13.5	3.6	3.0	4.4
Own-use production of foodstuff	3.4	2.6	6.5	22.1	12.1	31.1	29.0	14.2	9.9
	GLFS 2026 (Q1)								
Labour force participation rate	64.0	56.2	59.0	59.2	49.6	42.1	54.2	36.4	54.5
Employment-to-population ratio	56.0	51.4	55.9	55.9	47.5	39.1	52.3	32.5	51.1
Unemployment rate (LU1)	12.5	8.6	5.3	5.5	4.2	7.1	3.5	10.7	6.2
Time-related underemployment rate	6.7	7.4	9.1	14.6	11.1	34.8	24.6	13.3	11.1
Composite LU3: Labour underutilisation	21.0	19.4	18.0	30.8	36.5	45.7	28.7	31.4	23.6
Youth (15–35) unemployment rate	17.8	13.1	7.5	6.5	6.3	8.6	4.6	13.1	8.7
Adult (36+) unemployment rate	6.4	3.6	1.8	4.4	2.2	5.6	2.2	7.9	3.0
Own-use production of foodstuff	1.7	0.8	5.0	22.7	10.6	29.2	11.1	22.3	8.4

Figure 2.4 presents changes in unemployment rates (LU1) across LGAs between GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). Unemployment declined in most LGAs, although the magnitude of change varies.

The largest reductions are observed in Kuntaur (-12.5 percentage points), Brikama (-3.8 percentage points), and Mansakonko (-2.9 percentage points). Smaller declines are recorded in Janjanbureh (-1.4 percentage points) and Kanifing (-0.5 percentage points).

In contrast, unemployment increased in Kerewan (+0.7 percentage points), Banjul (+4.0 percentage points), and Basse (+6.5 percentage points), indicating divergent trends across LGAs.

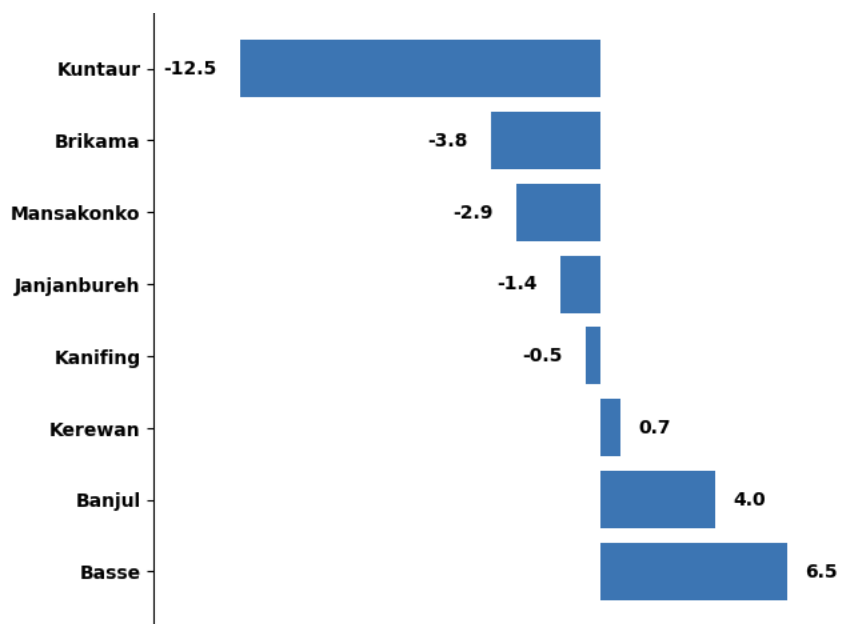


Figure 2.4: Change in unemployment rate (LU1) by LGA (percentage points), GLFS 2025 (Q1) to GLFS 2026 (Q1)

CHAPTER 3. WORKING AGE POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS AND LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the characteristics of the working-age population (15 years and older) and patterns of labour force participation using data from GLFS 2026 (Q1). It presents the distribution of the population by labour force status and analyses labour force participation rates by educational level, age group and sex.

3.1.1 Labour Force and Outside the Labour Force

Figure 3.1 presents the distribution of the population aged 15 years and older by labour force status for GLFS 2026 (Q1). The labour force (employed and unemployed) accounts for 54.5 per cent of the population (781,868 persons). The remaining 45.5 per cent (652,247 persons) are outside the labour force.

Among those outside the labour force, studying only accounts for 13.1 per cent of the total population, while subsistence agriculture accounts for 5.7 per cent. The remaining 26.7 per cent are classified as “other outside labour force”.

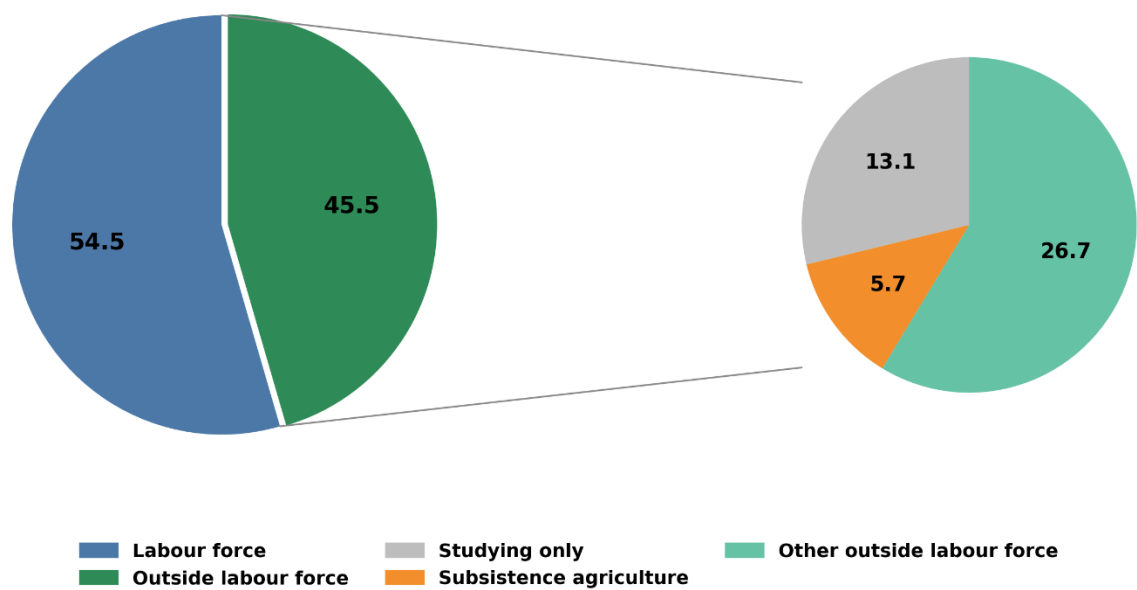


Figure 3.1: Characteristics of persons outside the labour force, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

3.1.2 Labour Force Participation Rate by Level of Education

Figure 3.2 presents labour force participation rates by level of education. Participation varies across levels of education. The highest participation rates are observed among persons with a diploma (70.2%) and those with higher education (66.8%). Vocational training (58.7%) and primary education (58.4%) are also above the national average (54.5%).

Participation rates for upper secondary (53.8%), no schooling (52.9%), and lower secondary (49.5%) are below the national average. The lowest participation rate is recorded among those with early childhood education (27.4%).

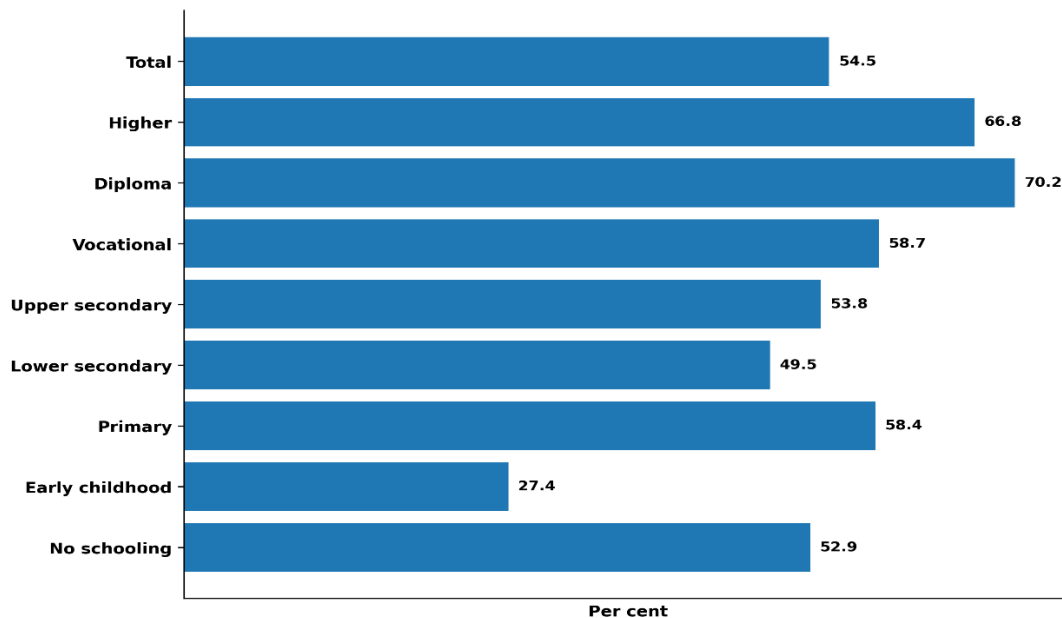


Figure 3.2: Labour force participation rate by level of education (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

3.1.3 Labour Force Participation by Level of Education and Age Group

Figure 3.3 presents labour force participation rates by education level for youth (15-35 years) and adults (36 years and older). Among youth, participation rates are highest for those with a diploma (64.3%) and higher education (60.5%), and lowest among those with early childhood education (24.2%) and lower secondary education (43.7%).

Among adults, participation rates are higher across all levels of education. The highest rates are observed among those with a diploma (82.6%), followed by vocational training (78.9%) and higher education (77.4%).

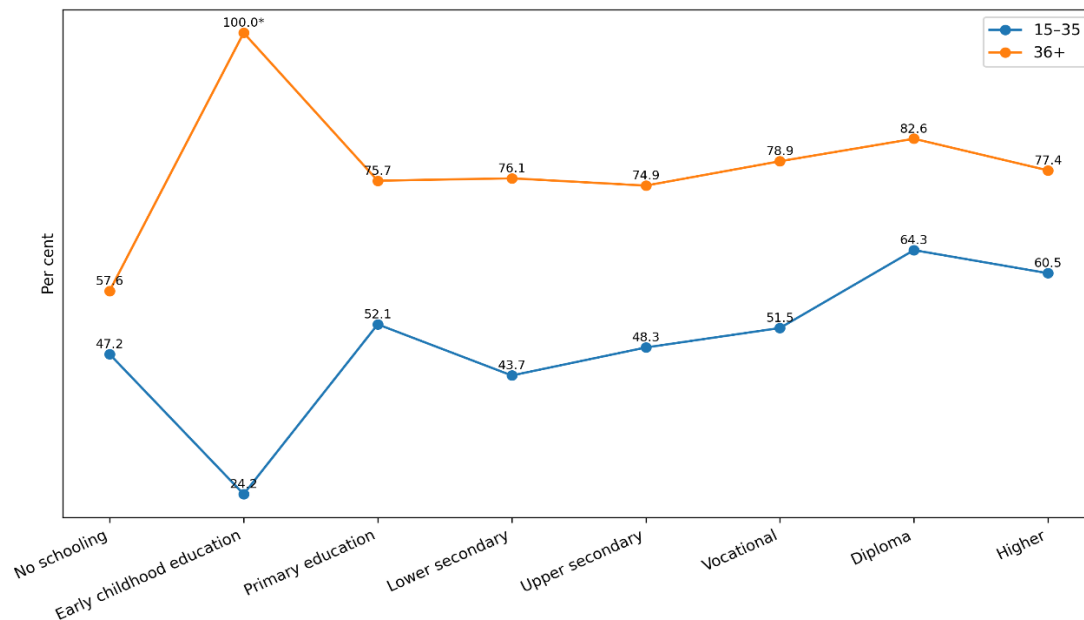


Figure 3.3: Labour force participation by level of education and age group (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

**The early childhood education category for adults (36+) is based on a single unweighted observation, making the estimate statistically unreliable.*

3.1.4 Labour Force Participation Rate by Sex and Age Group

Figure 3.4 presents labour force participation rates by sex and age group. Participation is lowest among the youngest age group (15-19 years), increases across ages 20-34, remains high through middle age, and declines after age 55.

Among males, participation increases from 28.4 per cent at ages 15-19 to 85.3 per cent at ages 45-49, before declining to 36.3 per cent at ages 65 and older. Among females, participation increases from 18.5 per cent at ages 15-19 to 67.2 per cent at ages 40-44, then declines to 21.6 per cent at ages 65 and older.

The gender gap in participation is largest among prime-age groups. For example, at ages 35-39, male participation (85.0%) exceeds female participation (60.2%) by 24.8 percentage points. The gap narrows at older ages but remains present across all age groups.

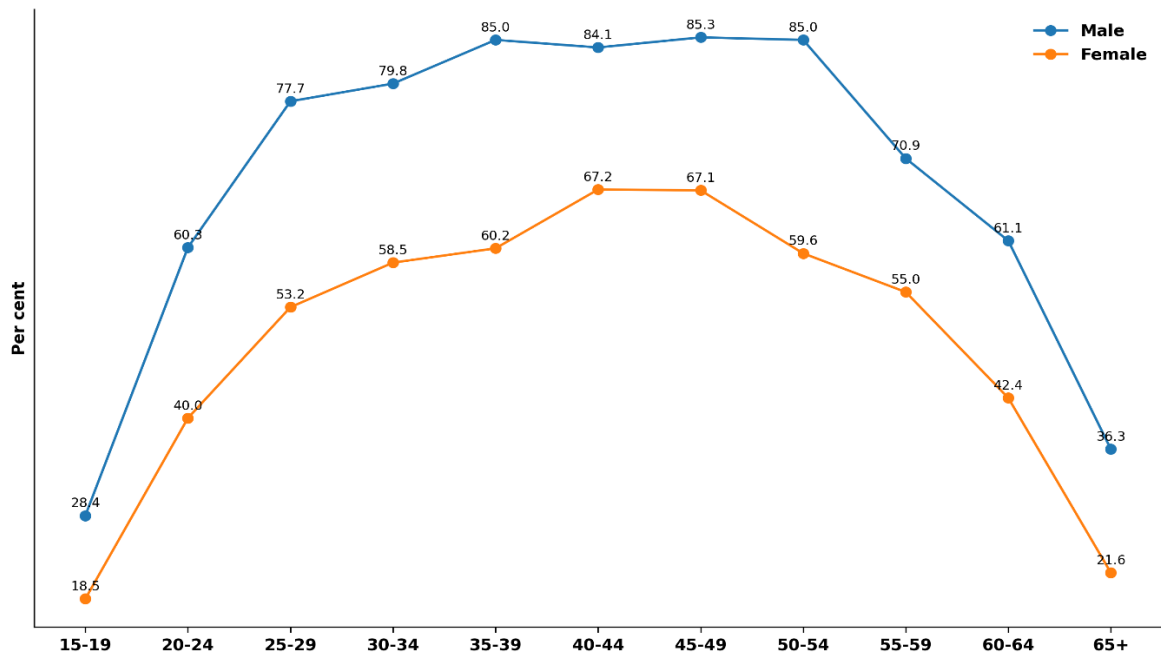


Figure 3.4: Labour force participation rate by sex and age group, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

CHAPTER 4. EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

4.1 Introduction

Status in employment, as defined by the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-18), reflects the underlying work relationships between workers and the economic units for which they work, based on type of authority and type of economic risk. This classification provides a basis for analysing the structure of employment.

This chapter examines the composition of employment at the main job using internationally recognised statistical classifications. Status in employment is analysed using ICSE-18, while employment is further examined by institutional sector, economic activity based on ISIC Rev.4, and occupation based on ISCO-08. The analysis compares GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1), highlighting key structural changes and differences by sex where relevant.

4.2 Status in Employment (ICSE-18)

4.2.1 Status in Employment - Main Job

Figure 4.1 presents the distribution of employed persons by status in employment (ICSE-18) using aggregated categories based on type of authority and type of economic risk. Independent workers (employers and independent workers without employees) account for the majority of employment in both periods, although their share declined slightly from 59.1 per cent in GLFS 2025 (Q1) to 58.5 per cent in GLFS 2026 (Q1). Dependent workers (dependent contractors and employees) increased correspondingly from 40.9 per cent to 41.5 per cent.

By type of economic risk, workers in employment for profit increased from 64.4 per cent to 66.9 per cent, while workers in employment for pay declined from 31.0 per cent to 27.5 per cent. Workers not classifiable by status remain a small share, increasing slightly from 4.6 per cent to 5.6 per cent.

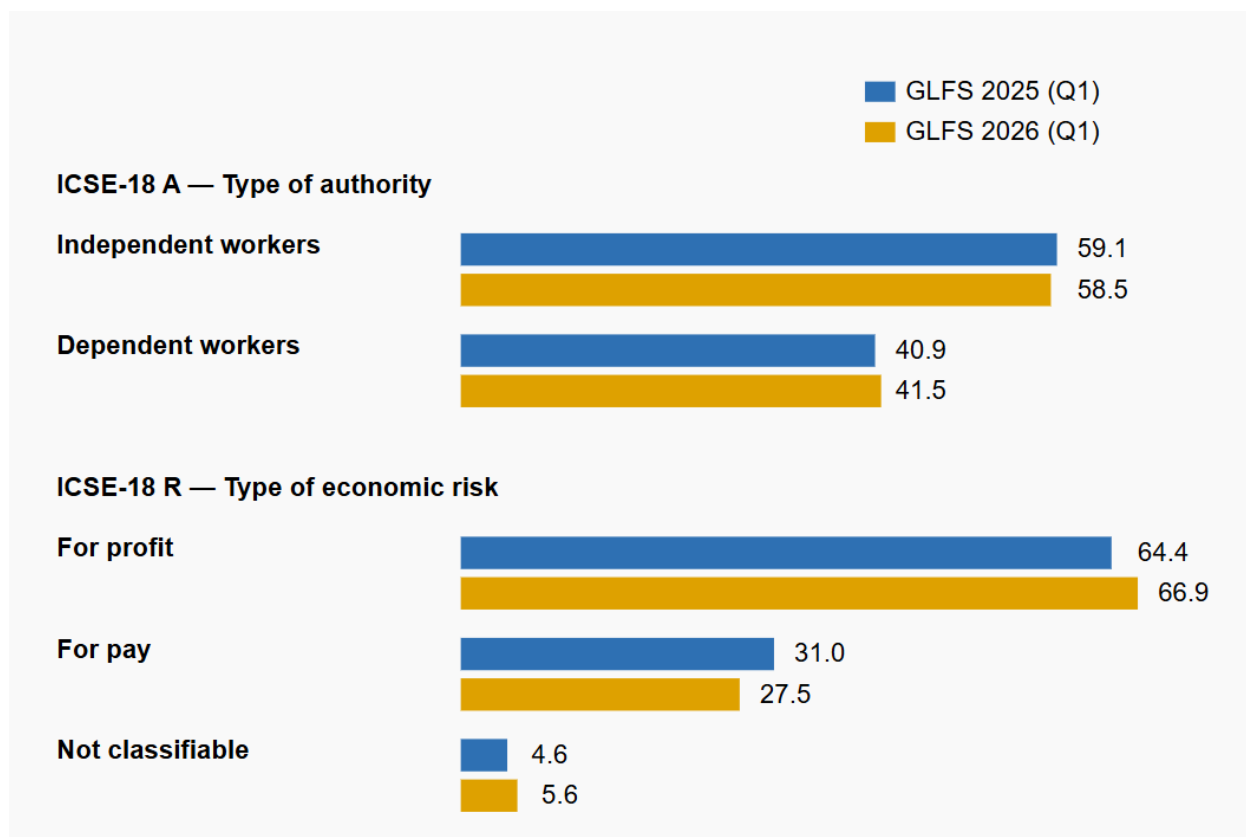


Figure 4.1: Status in employment (ICSE 18) - Main job (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

4.2.2 Detailed ICSE-18 Categories

Figure 4.2 presents the detailed ICSE 18 categories. In GLFS 2026 (Q1), independent workers without employees remain the largest category, accounting for 52.4 per cent of total employment. Employees account for 27.4 per cent, followed by dependent contractors at 8.5 per cent, employers at 6.1 per cent and contributing family workers at 5.7 per cent.

Between GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1), the share of employees declined from 30.9 per cent to 27.4 per cent, while dependent contractors increased from 6.5 per cent to 8.5 per cent and contributing family workers rose from 3.5 per cent to 5.7 per cent. These shifts indicate a gradual move away from employee-type arrangements towards other forms of dependent and family-based work.

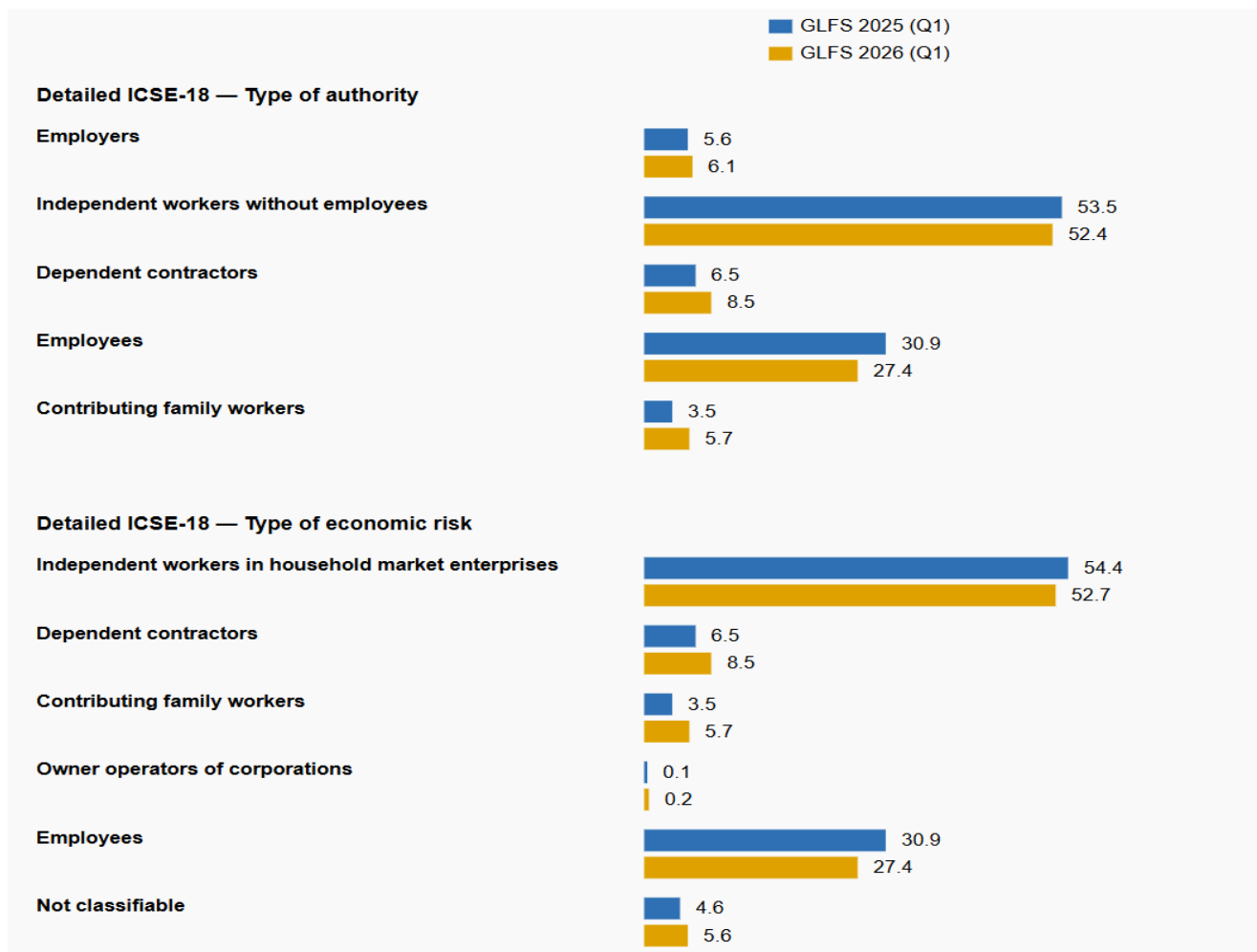


Figure 4.2: Detailed ICSE 18 categories - Main job (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

4.2.3 Detailed Categories of Employees

Figure 4.3 shows the distribution of employees by detailed employee category. Permanent employees remain the largest category, although their share declined from 21.9 per cent of total employment in GLFS 2025 (Q1) to 18.9 per cent in GLFS 2026 (Q1). Paid apprentices, trainees and interns increased from 3.0 per cent to 4.8 per cent. Fixed-term and short-term or casual employees each account for 0.8 per cent in GLFS 2026 (Q1).

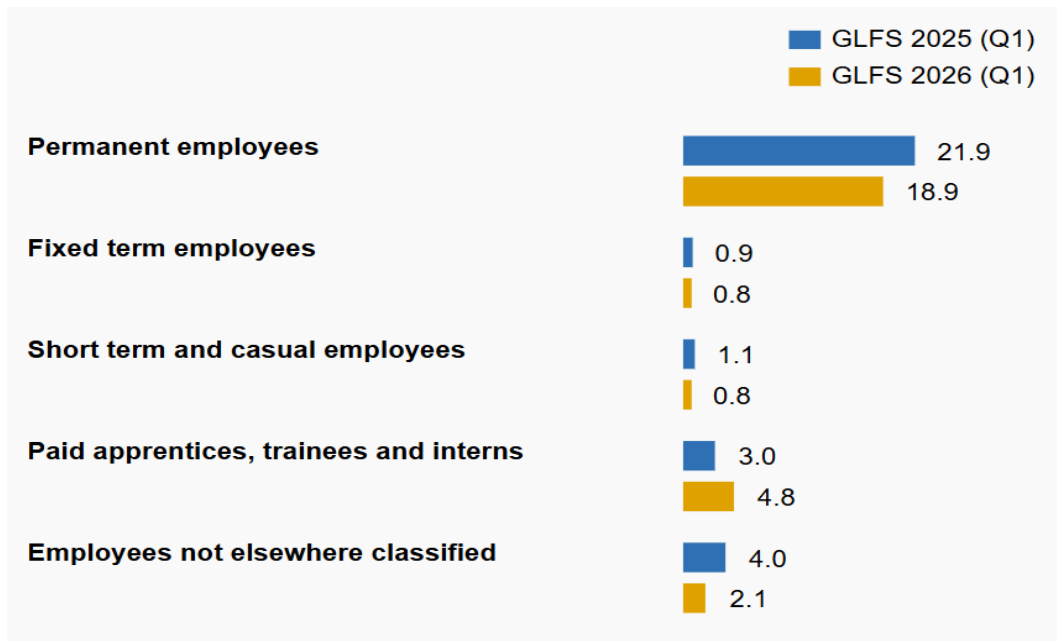


Figure 4.3: Detailed categories of employees (ICSE 18) (% of total employment), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

4.3 Institutional Sector

Figure 4.4 presents the distribution of employed persons by institutional sector. The private sector remains the dominant employer, accounting for 90.8 per cent of employment in GLFS 2026 (Q1), up from 88.8 per cent in GLFS 2025 (Q1). The public sector declined from 9.8 per cent to 8.3 per cent, while employment in the household sector remains minimal.

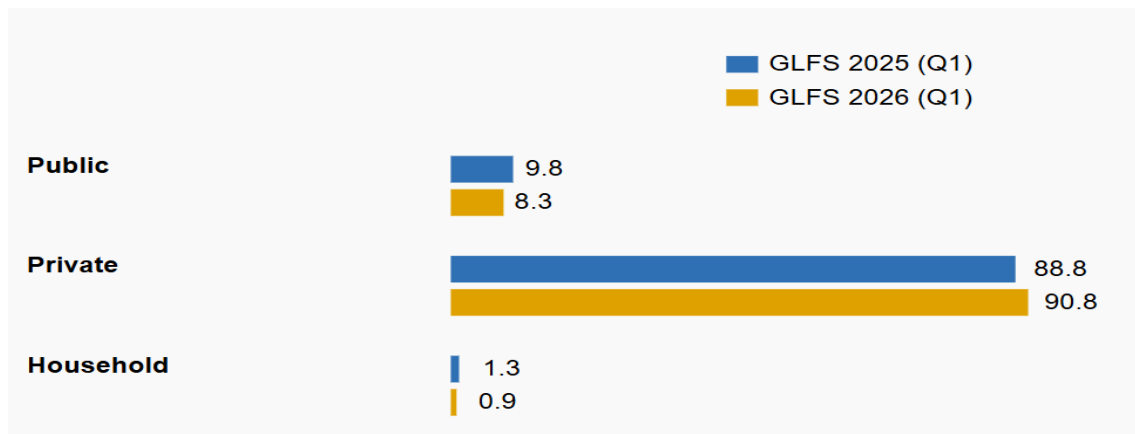


Figure 4.4: Institutional sector distribution of employment - Main job (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

4.4 Economic Activity, Main Job (ISIC)

4.4.1 Broad Branches of Economic Activity

Figure 4.5 shows the distribution of employment by broad economic sector. Services remain the largest sector, accounting for 57.9 per cent of total employment in GLFS 2026 (Q1), followed by industry at 24.3 per cent and agriculture at 17.8 per cent. Between GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1), the share of industry increased from 20.7 per cent to 24.3 per cent, while services declined from 61.7 per cent to 57.9 per cent. Agriculture remained broadly stable.

Women are concentrated in services, accounting for 68.8 per cent of employed women, and in agriculture at 24.7 per cent, with very limited participation in industry at 6.4 per cent. Men are more evenly distributed across services at 49.5 per cent, industry at 38.1 per cent and agriculture at 12.4 per cent.

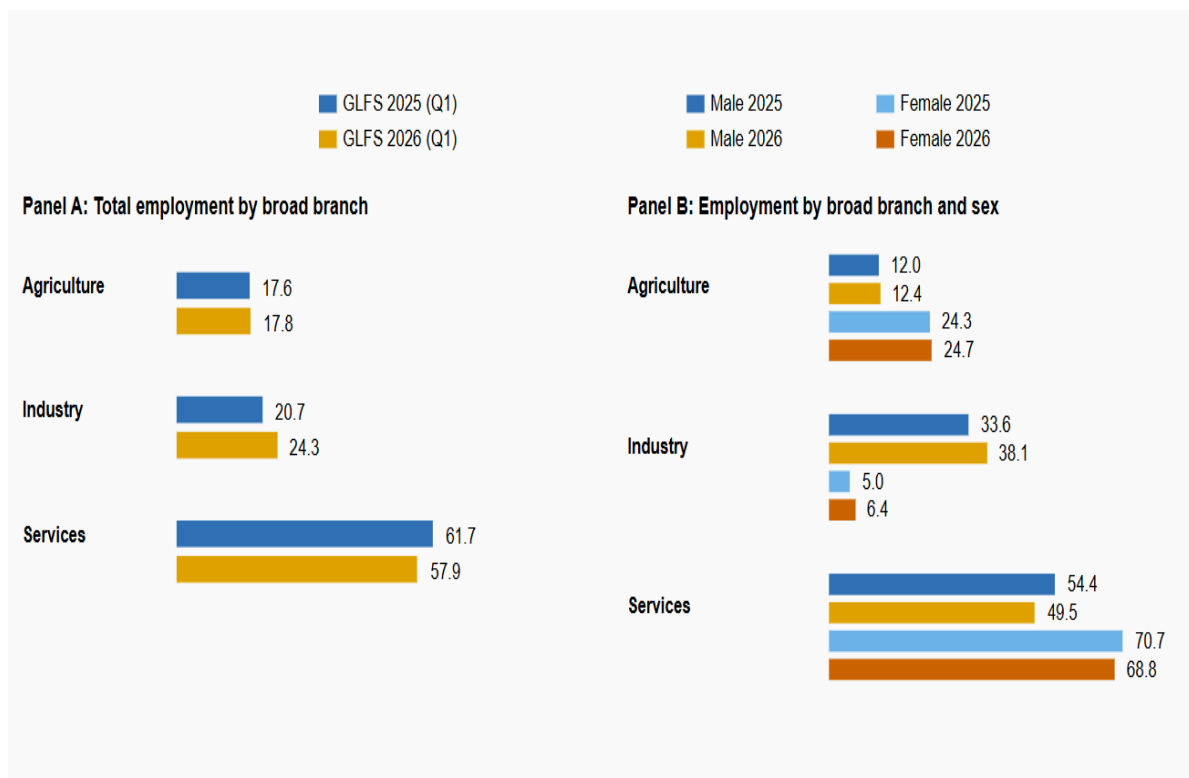


Figure 4.5: Share of employment by broad branch of economic activity and sex (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

4.4.2 Detailed Branches of Economic Activity (ISIC Rev.4)

Table 4.1 presents the distribution of employment by detailed economic activity. Wholesale and retail trade remains the largest sector, although its share declined from 30.6 per cent in GLFS 2025 (Q1) to 25.6 per cent in GLFS 2026 (Q1). Construction increased from 10.9 per cent to 13.8 per cent, while accommodation and food service activities rose from 4.5 per cent to 7.3 per cent. Agriculture, forestry and fishing remained broadly stable. Manufacturing increased slightly from 8.9 per cent to 9.6 per cent.

Table 4.1: Share of employment by branch of economic activity - Main job (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Economic activity (ISIC Rev.4)	GLFS 2025 (Q1)	GLFS 2026 (Q1)
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	17.6	17.8
Mining and quarrying	0.3	0.3
Manufacturing	8.9	9.6
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	0.3	0.3
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	0.3	0.3
Construction	10.9	13.8
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	30.6	25.6
Transportation and storage	6.5	7.2
Accommodation and food service activities	4.5	7.3
Information and communication	0.6	0.6
Financial and insurance activities	1.3	1.3
Real estate activities	0.3	0.4
Professional, scientific and technical activities	0.5	0.5
Administrative and support service activities	1.5	0.8
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	3.4	3.2
Education	6.3	4.9
Human health and social work activities	1.7	1.3
Arts, entertainment and recreation	0.7	0.6
Other service activities	2.4	2.6
Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own-use	1.3	1.6
Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies	0.1	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0

4.4.3 Occupation (ISCO-08)

Table 4.2 presents the distribution of employment by occupation. In GLFS 2026 (Q1), service and sales workers remain the largest occupational group, accounting for 33.7 per cent of total employment, followed by craft and related trades workers at 20.8 per cent and elementary occupations at 11.9 per cent. The share of managers declined from 2.8 per cent to 2.2 per cent, while craft and related trades workers increased from 17.1 per cent to 20.8 per cent.

Women are concentrated in service and sales occupations at 52.1 per cent of employed women and in skilled agricultural activities at 19.2 per cent. Men are more likely to work as craft and related trades workers at 33.8 per cent, plant and machine operators at 12.0 per cent and service and sales workers at 19.5 per cent. Women hold a very small share of managerial positions at 1.6 per cent, compared to 2.6 per cent of men.

Table 4.2: Occupation (ISCO 08) in main job by sex (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Occupation (ISCO-08) - Main job	GLFS 2025 (Q1)			GLFS 2026 (Q1)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Managers	3.5	1.8	2.8	2.6	1.6	2.2
Professionals	8.2	6.1	7.2	5.8	6.0	5.9
Technicians and Associate Professionals	4.5	1.9	3.3	4.6	2.3	3.6
Clerical Support Workers	0.9	1.3	1.0	1.2	1.6	1.4
Service and Sales Workers	22.0	51.6	35.3	19.5	52.1	33.7
Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers	10.1	21.4	15.2	8.3	19.2	13.0
Craft and Related Trades Workers	27.9	3.8	17.1	33.8	4.2	20.8
Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	10.9	0.5	6.2	12.0	0.7	7.0
Elementary Occupations	11.4	11.4	11.4	11.7	12.2	11.9
Armed Forces Occupations	0.6	0.1	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Between GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1), the structure of employment in The Gambia shows gradual shifts. The share of employees declined, while dependent contractors and contributing family workers increased. The private sector expanded its role as the main employer, while the public sector contracted. Services remain the largest sector, although industry gained ground.

CHAPTER 5. INFORMALITY AND WORKING TIME

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines two key dimensions of employment quality: informality and working time. Informal employment is measured in line with international statistical standards, combining status in employment with the presence or absence of formal arrangements such as social protection and registration. The analysis covers informal employment by economic activity, occupation, sex, residence and type of production unit. It also examines usual and actual weekly working hours to assess working time patterns and potential gaps between expected and realised hours.

The GLFS 2026 (Q1) is the first round to fully implement the 21st ICLS resolution (excluding establishment size and fixed location as formality criteria). Therefore, this chapter presents only 2026 estimates for all informality-related indicators. Previous rounds are not comparable. Future rounds will use the same methodology, enabling trend analysis from 2026 onward. Working time comparisons between 2025 and 2026 remain valid as their definition did not change.

5.2 Informal Employment by Economic Activity

5.2.1 Distribution of Informal Employment by Branch of Economic Activity

Table 5.1 shows that construction has the highest informal employment rate at 98.1 per cent, followed by agriculture, forestry and fishing at 97.7 per cent, accommodation and food service activities at 93.6 per cent, and wholesale and retail trade at 91.5 per cent.

Public administration and defence has the lowest informal employment rate at 7.4 per cent, reflecting the predominance of formal employment in this sector. Education at 40.5 per cent and human health and social work activities at 37.3 per cent also have relatively low informality rates.

Table 5.1: Distribution of informal employment by branch of economic activity, main job, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	Persons in informal employment	Persons in formal employment	Total	Persons in informal employment	Persons in formal employment	Total
	Count			Per cent		
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	127,357	3,022	130,379	97.7	2.3	100.0
Mining and quarrying	2,099	21	2,120	99.0	1.0	100.0
Manufacturing	66,136	4,206	70,341	94.0	6.0	100.0
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	864	1,401	2,265	38.1	61.9	100.0
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	1,685	717	2,401	70.2	29.8	100.0
Construction	98,935	1,963	100,898	98.1	1.9	100.0

Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	172,840	16,098	188,938	91.5	8.5	100.0
Transportation and storage	39,909	12,896	52,805	75.6	24.4	100.0
Accommodation and food service activities	50,071	3,450	53,520	93.6	6.4	100.0
Information and communication	2,012	2,073	4,086	49.3	50.7	100.0
Financial and insurance activities	4,923	4,545	9,468	52.0	48.0	100.0
Real estate activities	2,133	653	2,785	76.6	23.4	100.0
Professional, scientific and technical activities	2,132	1,557	3,688	57.8	42.2	100.0
Administrative and support service activities	4,521	1,236	5,757	78.5	21.5	100.0
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	1,721	21,663	23,384	7.4	92.6	100.0
Education	14,405	21,194	35,599	40.5	59.5	100.0
Human health and social work activities	3,437	5,789	9,227	37.3	62.7	100.0
Arts, entertainment and recreation	3,737	408	4,144	90.2	9.8	100.0
Other service activities	18,525	770	19,295	96.0	4.0	100.0
Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own-use	12,044	-	12,044	100.0	-	100.0
Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies	71	148	219	32.4	67.6	100.0
Total	629,555	103,809	733,364	85.8	14.2	100.0

Note: “–” reflects values that round to zero due to very small sample sizes.

5.2.2 Informal Employment in Agriculture and Non-Agriculture

Figure 5.1 shows informal employment rates in agriculture and non-agriculture for GLFS 2026 (Q1). Agriculture exhibits higher levels of informality, with 97.7 per cent of agricultural workers in informal employment, compared to 83.3 per cent in non-agriculture.

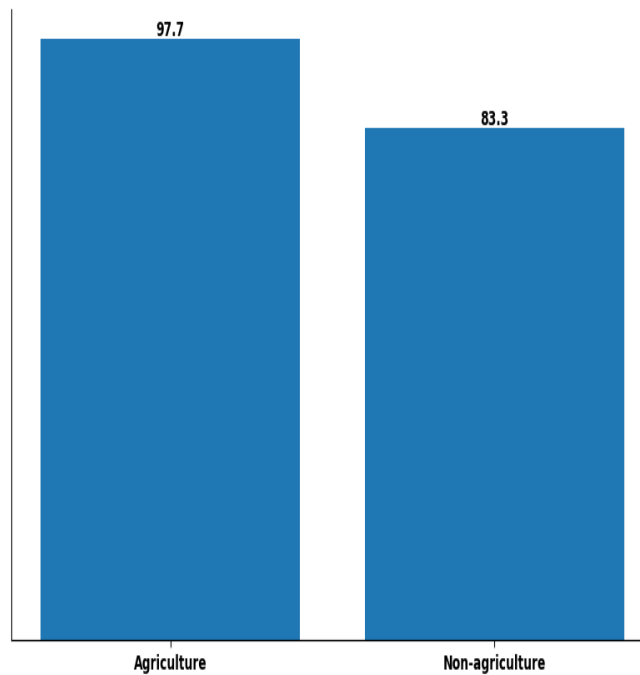


Figure 5.1: Informal employment in agriculture and non-agriculture sectors, main job (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

5.3 Employment by Type of Production Unit

Figure 5.2 shows that the informal sector is the largest employer, accounting for 75.9 per cent of total employment. The formal sector accounts for 22.3 per cent, while the household sector accounts for 1.8 per cent. The household sector primarily comprises paid domestic workers employed by private households, reflecting the relatively small role of household employers in overall employment.

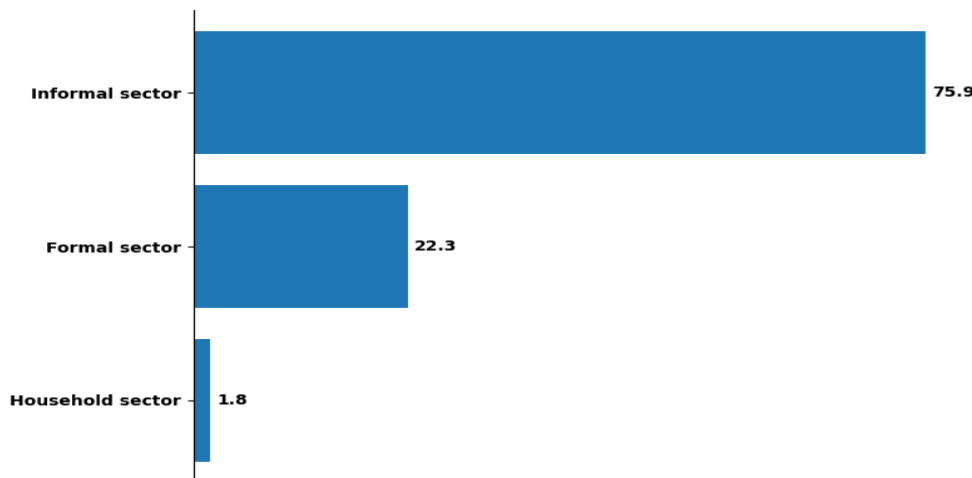


Figure 5.2: Distribution of employed persons by type of production unit, main job (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

5.4 Informal Employment by Sex and Residence

Figure 5.3 shows informal employment by sex and residence. Women have higher informality rates than men, while rural workers face higher informality than urban workers. In GLFS 2026 (Q1), 88.7 per cent of women and 83.6 per cent of men were in informal employment, while 91.2 per cent of rural workers and 83.1 per cent of urban workers were informal.

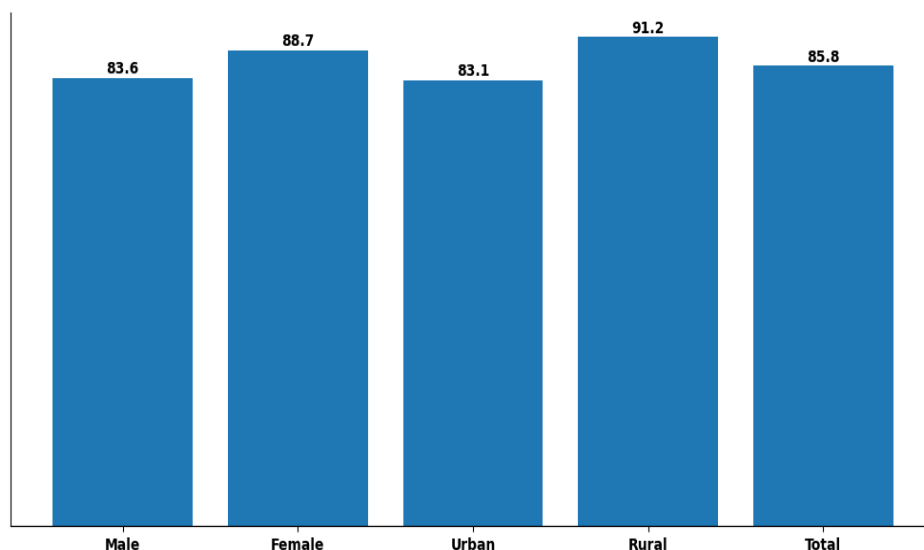


Figure 5.3: Informal employment by sex and residence, main job (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

5.5 Informal Employment by Occupation

Figure 5.4 presents informal employment rates by occupation. Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers have the highest informality rate at 99.2 per cent, followed by craft and related trades workers at 95.9 per cent, elementary occupations at 94.2 per cent, and service and sales workers at 90.2 per cent. Managers at 31.3 per cent and professionals at 38.3 per cent have the lowest informality rates. Armed forces occupations are almost entirely formal.

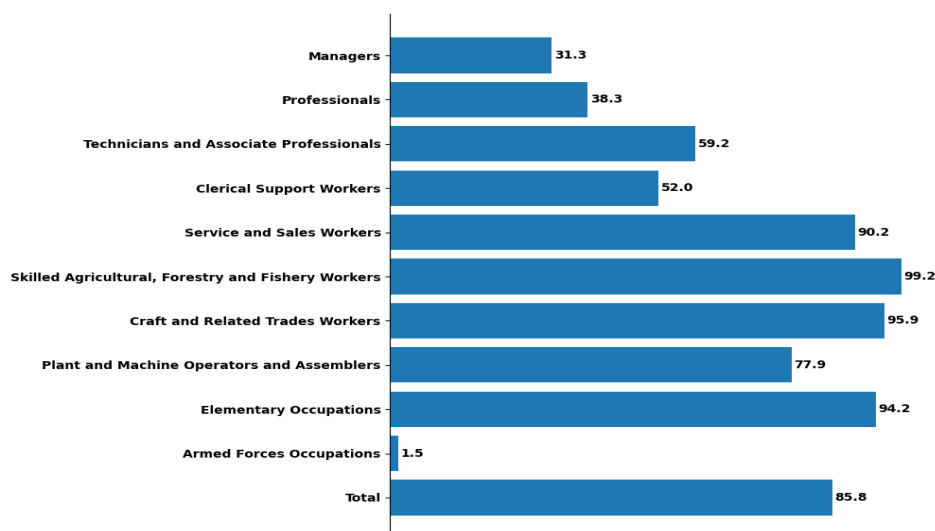


Figure 5.4: Informal employment by occupation, main job (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

5.5.1 Informal Employment by Status in Employment

Figure 5.5 shows informal employment rates by status in employment based on a simplified ICSE-18 classification by type of authority. Informality is highest among dependent contractors and contributing family workers, both at 100.0 per cent. Own-account workers also exhibit very high informality at 94.1 per cent. Employers have an informality rate of 82.5 per cent, indicating that a substantial share of enterprises operate outside formal arrangements. Employees record the lowest informality rate at 63.5 per cent, suggesting relatively greater access to formal employment conditions compared to other groups. Overall, informal employment accounts for 85.8 per cent of total employment.

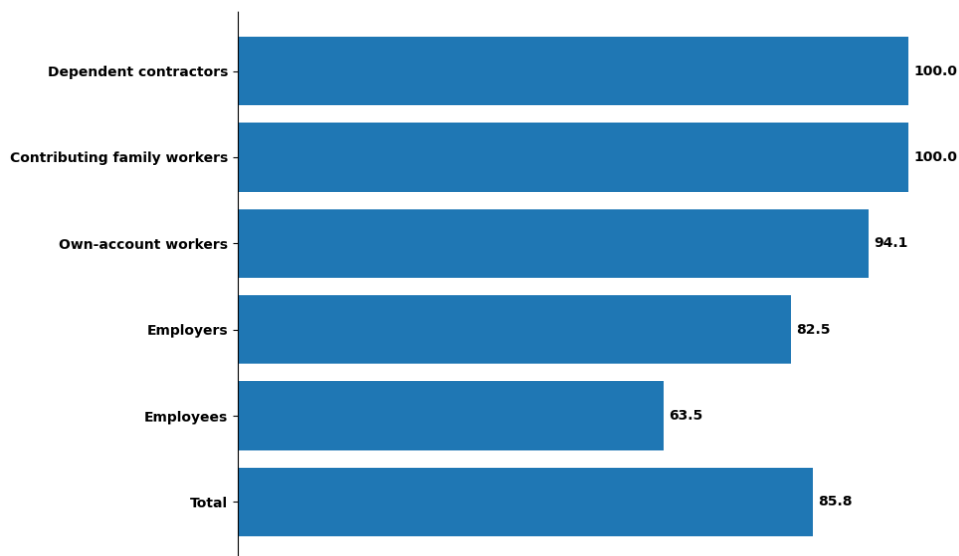


Figure 5.5: Informal employment by status in employment, by type of authority (ICSE-18 simplified), main job (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

5.5.2 Informal Employment by Level of Education

Figure 5.6 presents informal employment rates by level of education. There is a clear inverse relationship between education and informality. Among persons with no schooling or only primary education, informal employment exceeds 94.0 per cent. The informality rate declines steadily with each successive level of education, falling to 83.8 per cent for upper secondary, 72.5 per cent for vocational certificate, 46.0 per cent for diploma, and 37.0 per cent for higher education. This pattern indicates that higher educational attainment significantly improves access to formal employment.

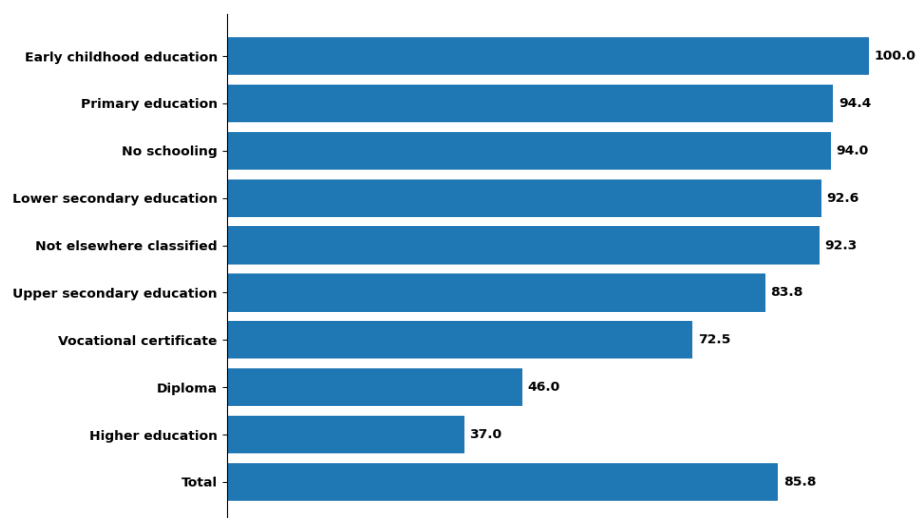


Figure 5.6: Informal employment by level of education (%), main job (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

5.5.3 Informal Employment by LGA

Figure 5.7 presents informal employment rates by LGA. Informality is lowest in Banjul (78.4%) and Kanifing (81.7%), the two entirely urban LGAs. In other LGAs, which comprise both urban and rural areas, informality exceeds 88.0 per cent, reaching the highest levels in Basse (93.2%), Kuntaur (92.0%), and Janjanbureh (91.8%). This pattern reflects the greater concentration of formal employment opportunities in predominantly urban settings, particularly in public administration, financial services, and larger private enterprises.



Figure 5.7: Informal employment by LGA (%), main job (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

5.6 Working Time in Employment

5.6.1 Average Usual and Actual Weekly Working Hours

Figure 5.8 shows average usual and actual weekly working hours by job type. In GLFS 2026 (Q1), average usual working hours in the main job were 44.0 hours per week, compared to 36.6 actual hours worked, indicating a gap of 7.4 hours. For secondary jobs, usual hours averaged 21.1 hours and actual hours 16.2 hours. Across all jobs, usual hours averaged 44.4 hours and actual hours 37.0 hours. Between GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1), both usual and actual working hours declined modestly.

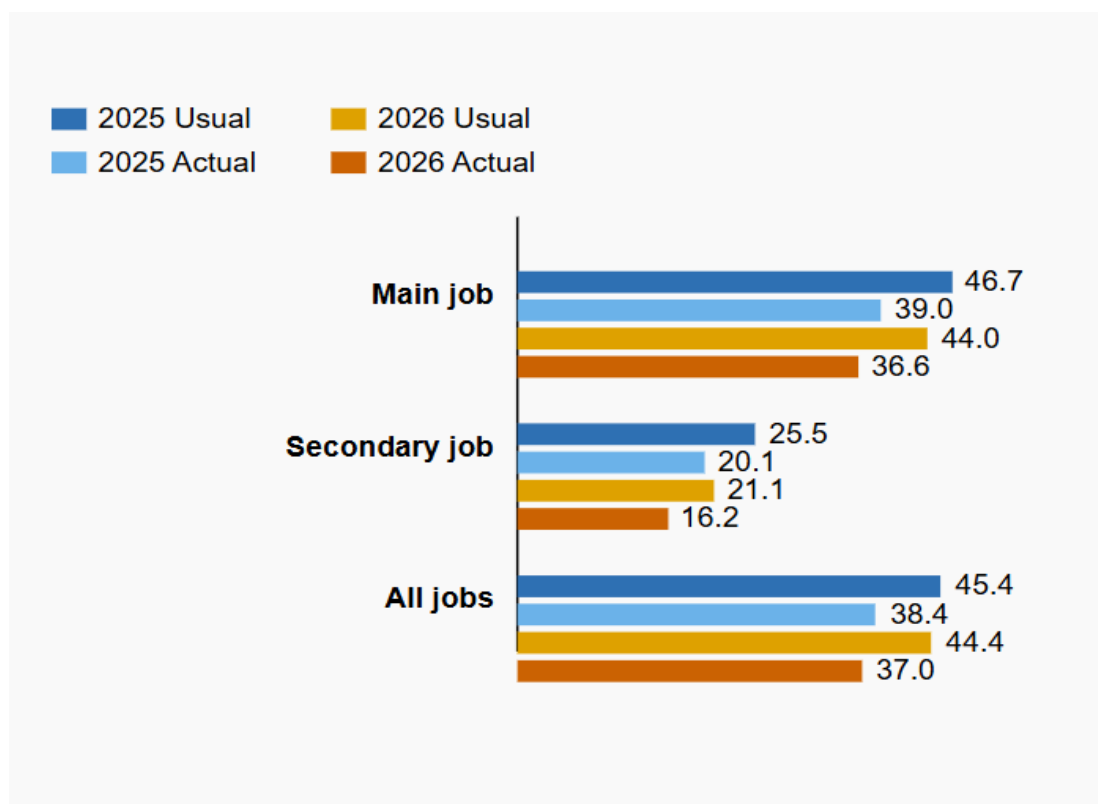


Figure 5.8: Average usual and actual weekly working hours by job type, GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

5.6.2 Distribution of Usual and Actual Weekly Working Hours

Figure 5.9 presents the distribution of working hours. The largest share of workers usually works 49 hours or more per week at 39.2 per cent, followed by those working 40 to 48 hours at 20.2 per cent. In terms of actual hours, 30.7 per cent worked 49 hours or more, while 19.1 per cent worked 40 to 48 hours.

A notable share worked 15 to 29 hours in the reference week at 20.6 per cent, compared to 16.2 per cent who usually work those hours, indicating the presence of hours shortfalls.

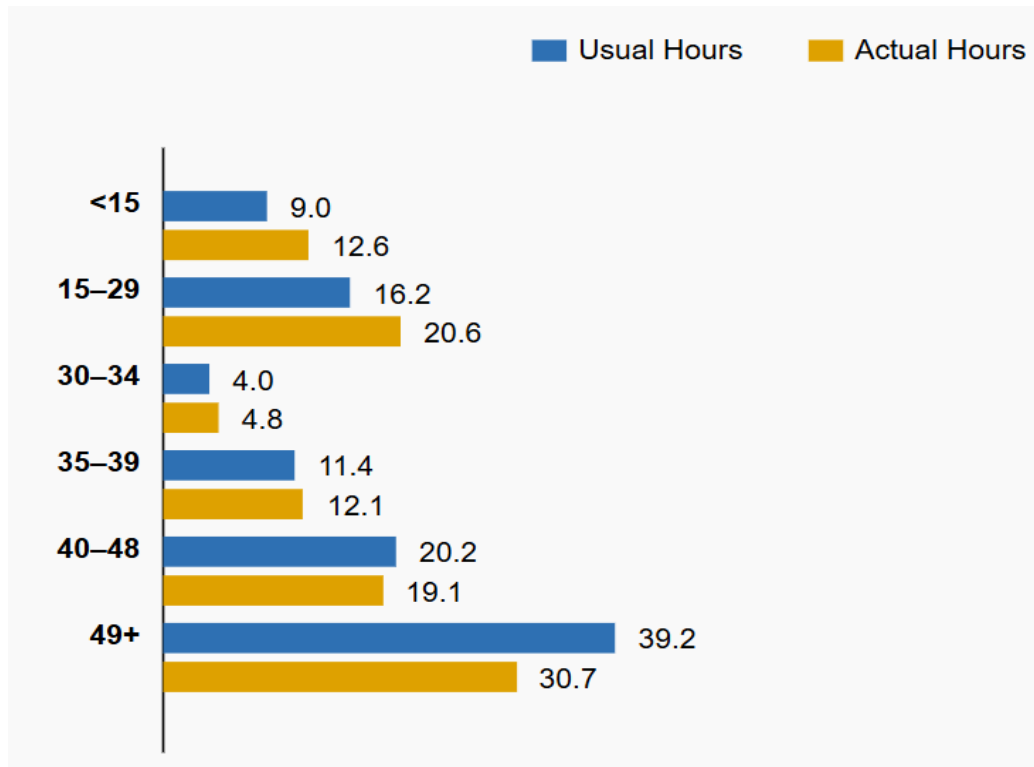


Figure 5.9: Distribution of usual and actual weekly working hours, main job (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

5.6.3 Usual Weekly Working Hours by Sex and Residence

Figure 5.10 shows usual weekly working hours by sex and residence. Men are more likely to work long hours than women, while women are more likely to work shorter hours, particularly in the 15 to 29 hour band. Among rural men, 47.4 per cent usually work 49 hours or more per week, compared to 21.3 per cent of rural women. Among urban men, 53.2 per cent work 49 hours or more, compared to 24.8 per cent of urban women.

Average usual weekly working hours declined modestly over the same period. However, a large share of workers continues to work long hours. The gap between usual and actual hours indicates the presence of hours shortfalls, consistent with time-related underemployment patterns.

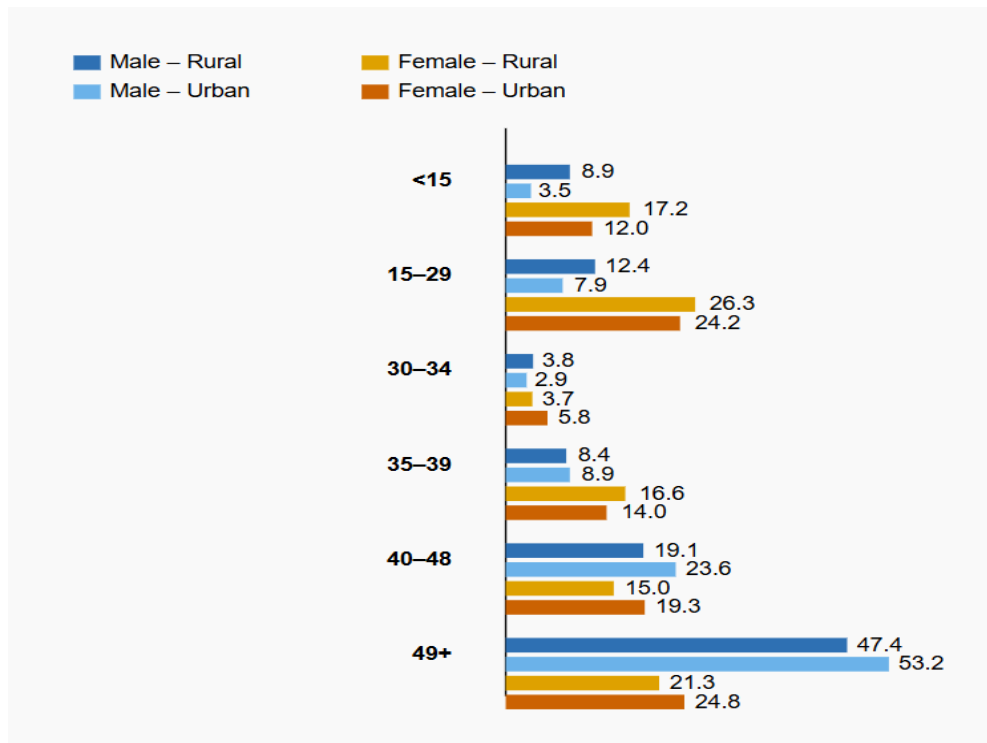


Figure 5.10: Employed population by usual weekly working hours, sex and residence, main job (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Average usual weekly working hours declined modestly between GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1), from 45.4 to 44.4 hours. However, a large share of workers (39.2%) usually works 49 hours or more per week. Men work longer hours than women, and urban workers work longer hours than rural workers. The gap between usual and actual hours (7.4 hours for the main job) suggests widespread hours shortfalls, consistent with the time-related underemployment figures reported previously.

Note: Estimates for detailed occupations and economic activities with small sample sizes should be interpreted with caution. Confidence intervals for informal employment rates are available upon request.

CHAPTER 6. EMPLOYMENT-RELATED INCOME

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings on employment-related income from the 2026 Gambia Labour Force Survey Quarter 1 (GLFS 2026 (Q1)). Employment-related income consists of payments, in cash, in kind or in services, received by individuals, for themselves or on behalf of family members, as a result of their current or former involvement in paid employment or self-employment activities undertaken for pay or profit. It excludes income derived from other sources such as property income, social assistance, remittances, transfers and other receipts not related to employment (ICLS, 2023, para. 5).

In GLFS 2026 (Q1), the measurement of employment-related income is limited to income received from current employment activities. Consistent with the framework adopted by the 21st International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS, 2023), this chapter distinguishes between:

- **Income from employment for pay:** cash wages/salaries, benefits in kind, profit-related pay, and employment-related benefits received by employees, paid apprentices/interns, and workers helping a family member who works for someone else.
- **Income from employment for profit:** net profit or mixed income from unincorporated enterprises, plus the value of products taken from the business for household own-use, received by own-account workers, employers, and contributing family workers in household enterprises.

Employment-related income, as defined by the 2023 ILO resolution, includes both earnings from paid employment (cash wages, benefits in kind, etc.) and income from employment for profit (net business profit, own-use production, etc.). Accordingly, this chapter presents combined indicators for all employed persons, which provide a measure of average economic well-being across the labour force as well as separate analyses for employees and self-employed workers where structural comparisons are needed. This distinction is important because self-employment income is often more variable and closely linked to business performance, while employee income primarily reflects wages, salaries and employer-provided benefits.

The analysis covers working-age employed persons, with income expressed in Gambian Dalasi (GMD) per month. All means presented are survey-weighted to account for the complex sample design. Medians and percentiles are provided to show income distribution, as employment-related income is typically right-skewed.

6.2 National Average Employment-Related Income

Figure 6.1 presents the mean and median monthly earnings or income by employment type, together with 95 per cent confidence intervals for the mean estimates. The results show disparities in earnings between employees and self-employed or profit-based workers.

Employees recorded the highest average monthly employment-related income, at GMD 9,455, with a median of GMD 6,500. Self-employed or profit workers, in contrast, reported a considerably lower average of GMD 4,609 and a median of just GMD 1,750. Across all workers combined, mean monthly earnings or income stood at GMD 6,238, with a median of GMD 3,000.

For each employment category, the median falls well below the mean. This pattern indicates positively skewed earnings distributions, where a relatively small share of high earners pulls the average upward. The gap between mean and median

is especially pronounced among self-employed and profit workers, pointing to wide variation in their earnings and a concentration of workers at the lower end of the income scale.

The confidence intervals around the mean estimates are relatively narrow, suggesting reasonably precise estimates despite differences in unweighted sample sizes across employment categories. Taken together, the findings in Figure 1 show two key patterns: paid employment carries a clear earnings advantage, and earnings are distributed unequally across employment types.

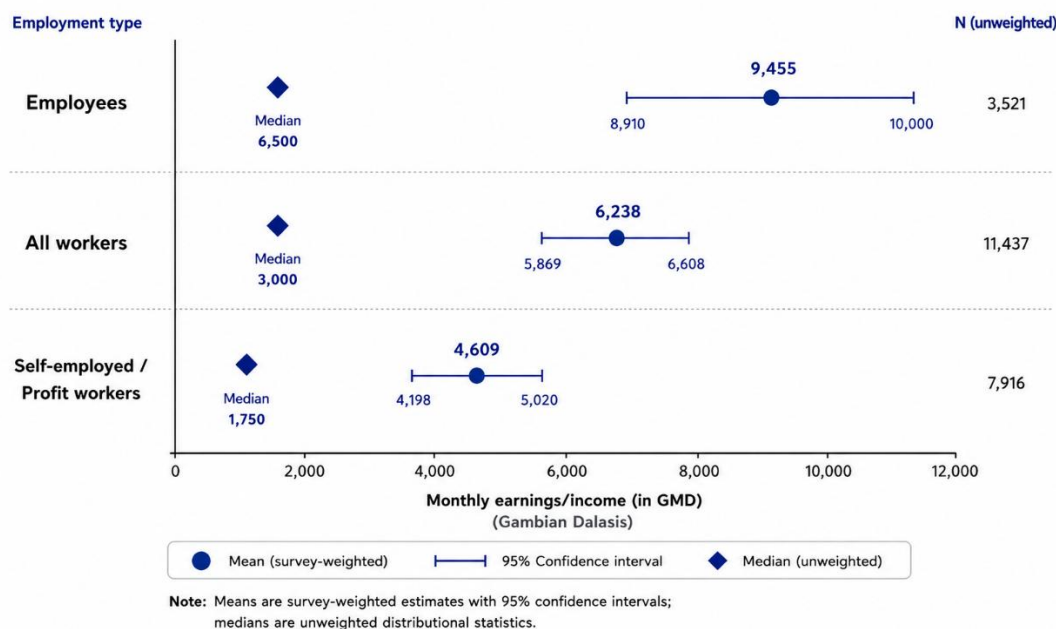


Figure 6.1: Mean Monthly Employment-Related Income by Employment Type (GMD)

6.3 Employee earnings profile

Figure 6.2 presents monthly earnings among employees by sex, residence and LGA. Compared to the overall employment-related income results presented earlier in the chapter, the differences observed among employees are smaller. This means that a portion of national income inequality is linked to employment structure, specifically self-employment and informal work, rather than to wage differences within employee jobs.

Among employees, male workers recorded a mean monthly income of GMD 10,058, while female workers recorded GMD 8,031. The difference is GMD 2,027. Median earnings show a similar pattern: GMD 7,500 for male employees versus GMD 5,000 for female employees. The gender gap remains, but it is smaller than the gap observed for overall employment-related income. This suggests that women's concentration in lower-paying self-employment and informal activities contributes to national gender income disparities.

Urban employees earned more than rural employees on average. Mean monthly earnings were GMD 9,965 for urban employees and GMD 8,143 for rural employees. The difference is GMD 1,822. The urban-rural difference among employees is narrower than the gap observed for overall labour income. This reflects differences in employment composition: rural workers are more concentrated in agriculture and informal self-employment.

At the LGA level, Kanifing recorded the highest average employee earnings (GMD 10,026), followed by Banjul (GMD 9,759), Brikama (GMD 9,564), Mansa Konko (GMD 9,509), and Kerewan (GMD 9,500). Janjanbureh recorded the lowest average (GMD 7,466). The differences between LGAs are smaller among employees than in the overall labour income analysis. This means that LGA disparities are driven more by unequal access to wage employment opportunities than by large wage differences within employee jobs.

Overall, wage employment provides more stable and compressed income outcomes compared to the wider labour market, where self-employment and informal activities account for much of the observed inequality in employment-related income.

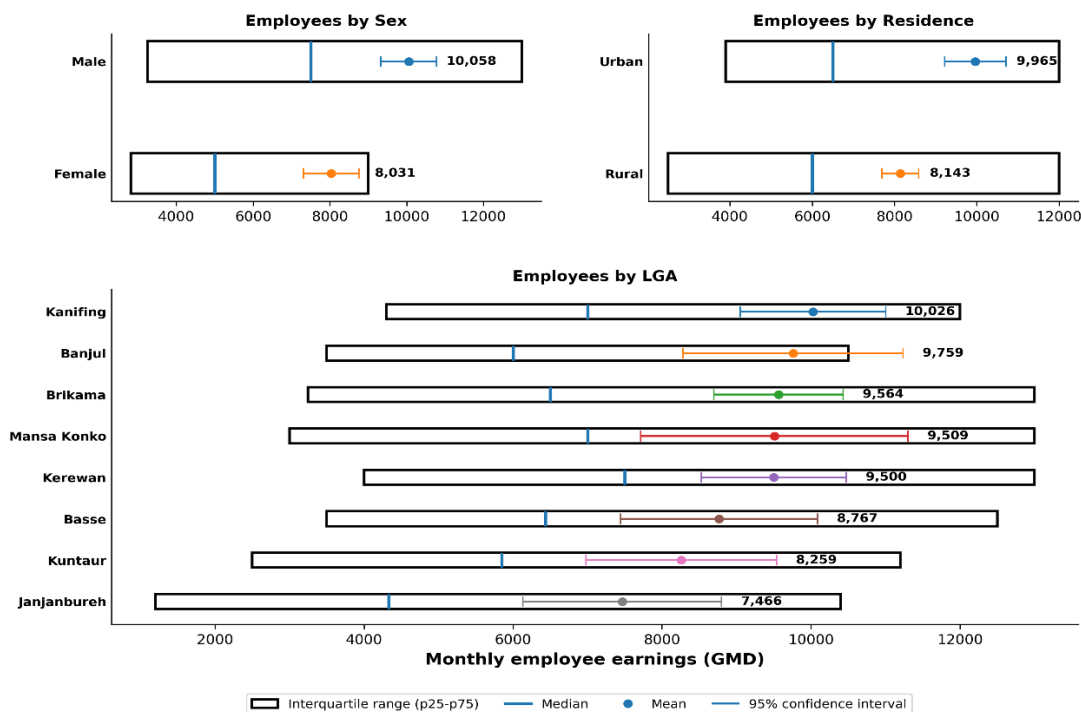
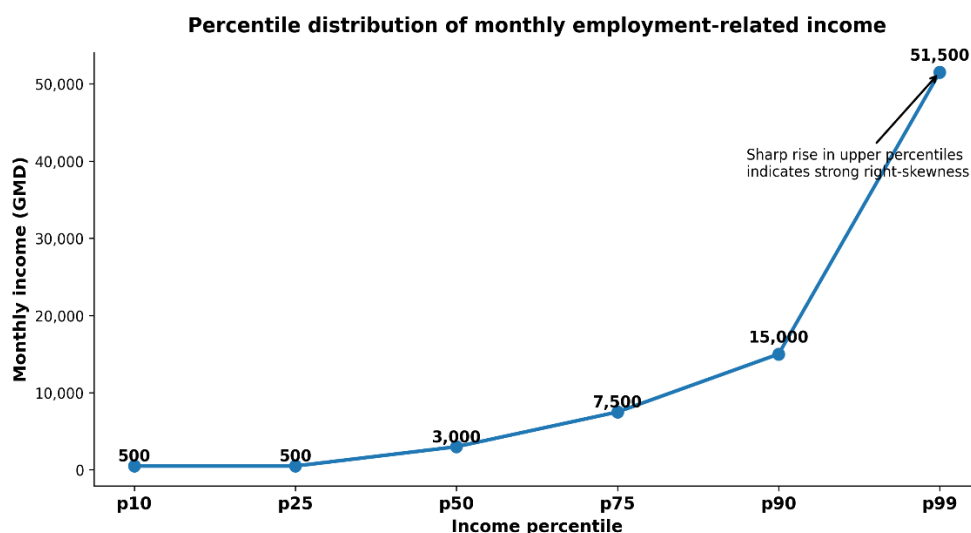


Figure 6.2: Employee monthly earnings by sex, residence and LGA (GMD)

6.4 Distribution of Employment-Related Income

Figure 6.3 illustrates the distribution of monthly employment-related income among all workers. The results show a highly unequal income distribution, with a large concentration of workers at lower income levels and a relatively small share of high earners. While half of workers earned GMD 3,000 or less per month, the top 10 per cent earned more than GMD 15,000, and the top 1 per cent earned above GMD 51,500 per month. The substantial gap between the median and upper percentiles highlights the strongly right-skewed nature of employment-related income in The Gambia.



Source: GLFS 2026 (Q1). Percentiles based on monthly employment-related income among all workers.

Figure 6.3: Percentile distribution of monthly employment-related income among all workers (GMD)

6.5 Income by Sex

Figure 6.4 shows clear gender disparities in monthly employment-related income in The Gambia. Male workers recorded a mean monthly income of GMD 8,099, more than double the corresponding mean for female workers (GMD 3,875). The median income also differs sharply: half of male workers earned more than GMD 5,000 per month compared to only GMD 1,700 among female workers.

The distribution further shows that women are concentrated in lower income brackets. The middle 50 per cent of female workers earn between GMD 200 and GMD 4,500 per month, while the corresponding range for men is considerably higher, from GMD 1,000 to GMD 10,500. For both sexes, the mean exceeds the median, indicating a right-skewed income distribution where a relatively small number of high earners raise the overall average.

These findings point to persistent gender inequalities in earnings within the labour market. Such disparities likely reflect differences in access to better-paying jobs, concentration in informal and low-productivity activities, occupational segregation, and unequal economic opportunities for women.

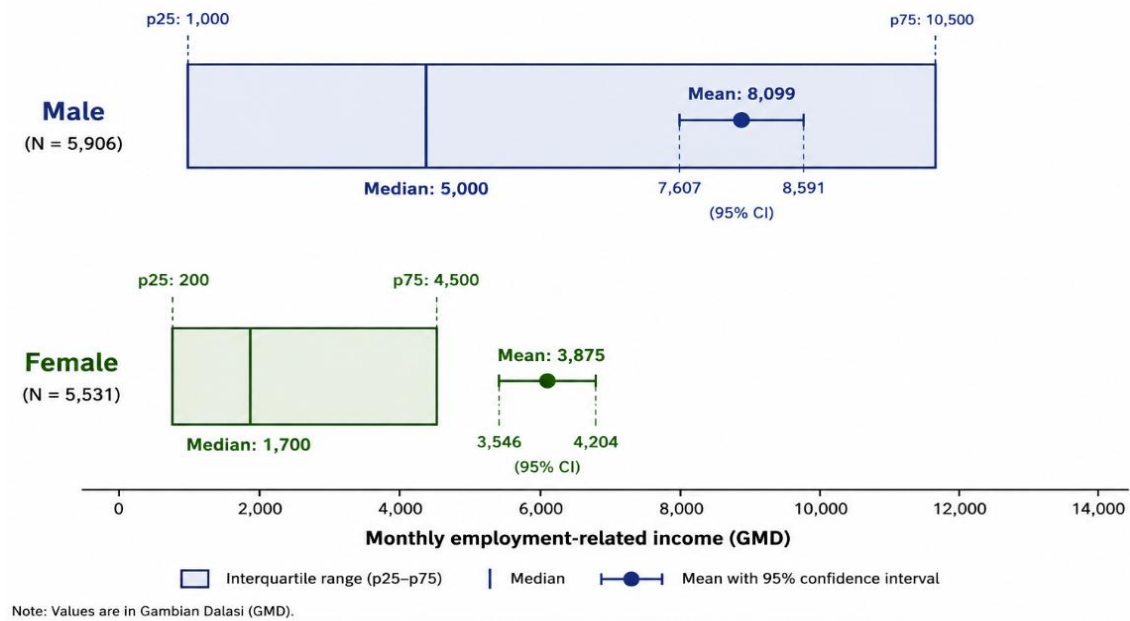


Figure 6.4: Distribution of monthly employment-related income by sex

6.6 Income by Residence

Figure 6.5 shows clear differences in monthly employment-related income between urban and rural workers in The Gambia. Urban workers recorded a higher mean monthly income (GMD 6,920) than rural workers (GMD 4,947). Median income levels also differed substantially, with half of urban workers earning more than GMD 3,500 per month compared to GMD 2,400 among rural workers.

The distribution further indicates that workers in rural areas are concentrated at lower income levels. The middle 50 per cent of rural workers earned between GMD 400 and GMD 6,500 per month, while the corresponding range for urban workers was higher, from GMD 500 to GMD 8,500. For both urban and rural areas, the mean exceeds the median, indicating positively skewed income distributions driven by a smaller share of higher-income earners.

Overall, the findings highlight persistent spatial inequalities in employment-related income. Higher earnings in urban areas likely reflect greater access to formal employment, wage employment, commerce, and higher-productivity service-sector activities, while rural workers remain more concentrated in lower-paying agricultural and informal economic activities.

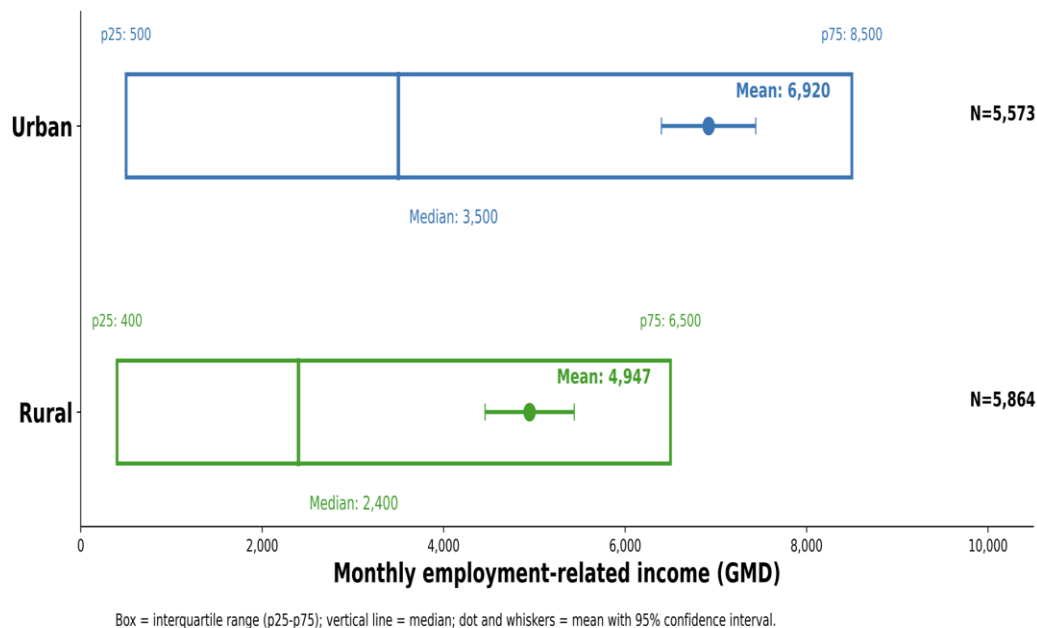


Figure 6.5: Monthly employment-related income by residence (GMD)

6.7 Employment Related-Income by LGA

Figure 6.6 shows LGA differences in mean monthly employment-related income across LGAs. Kanifing recorded the highest mean monthly income at GMD 7,285, followed by Mansa Konko (GMD 6,656), Banjul (GMD 6,469), and Brikama (GMD 6,362). Janjanbureh recorded the lowest mean monthly income at GMD 4,765, while Basse (GMD 5,016) and Kerewan (GMD 5,251) also remained below the national average.

Higher incomes are concentrated in urbanised LGAs such as Kanifing, Banjul and Brikama, where formal employment, public administration, commerce, and service-sector activities are more prevalent. Mansa Konko, a less urbanised LGA, recorded the second-highest average income, a finding that warrants further investigation. Lower average incomes in Janjanbureh, Basse, and Kerewan are consistent with a greater concentration of workers in agriculture and lower-productivity informal activities.

Although income levels differ across LGAs, the confidence intervals overlap considerably for several LGAs. Kanifing, Mansa Konko, Banjul and Brikama all show overlapping intervals, meaning the apparent ranking among these four LGAs is not statistically significant. At the lower end, Kerewan, Basse and Janjanbureh also have overlapping confidence intervals, indicating that differences among them are not reliably distinguishable. Only the gap between the higher-income group (Kanifing through Brikama) and the lower-income group (Janjanbureh, Basse and Kerewan) is clearly non-overlapping.

Nevertheless, the overall pattern points to persistent spatial inequalities in employment-related income. This finding underscores the need for balanced regional economic development, improved access to productive employment opportunities, and targeted investment in lower-income LGAs.

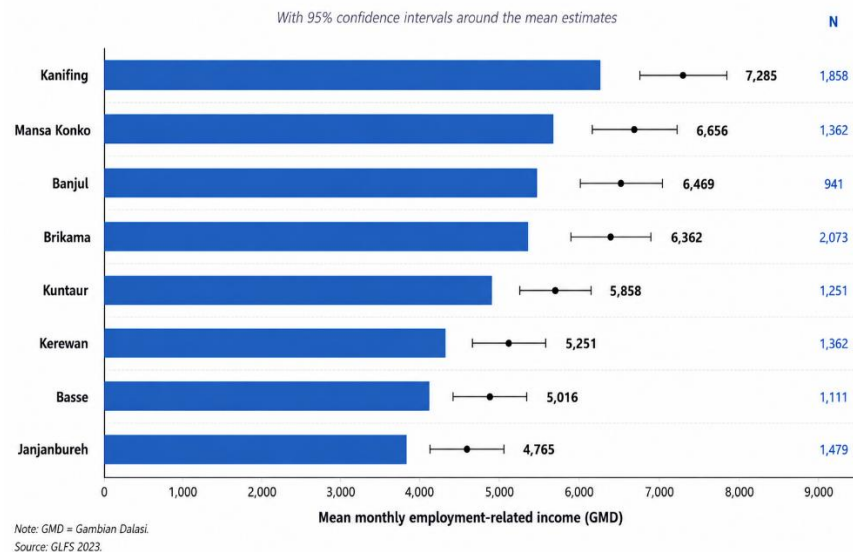


Figure 6.6: Mean monthly employment-related income by LGA (GMD)

6.8 Income Differentials Between Formal and Informal Employment

Figure 6.7 shows high income differences between workers in formal and informal employment. Workers in formal employment recorded a mean monthly income of GMD 12,753, compared to GMD 5,262 among workers in informal employment. The median income further highlights this disparity, with half of formally employed workers earning more than GMD 10,000 per month, while the median income among informal workers is only GMD 2,500.

The distribution also shows that informal workers are concentrated at much lower income levels. The middle 50 per cent of workers in informal employment earn between GMD 300 and GMD 6,000 per month, compared to a substantially higher range of GMD 5,000 to GMD 15,500 among formally employed workers. For both groups, the mean exceeds the median, indicating positively skewed income distributions driven by a smaller share of higher-income earners.

Overall, the findings highlight the strong association between informality and lower earnings. Given that the vast majority of workers are in informal employment, the results underscore the importance of policies aimed at improving productivity, earnings, social protection coverage, and working conditions within informal employment. Consistent with the 21st ICLS (2023) framework, the results also reinforce that informal employment is job-based and may occur within formal, informal, or household-sector economic units.

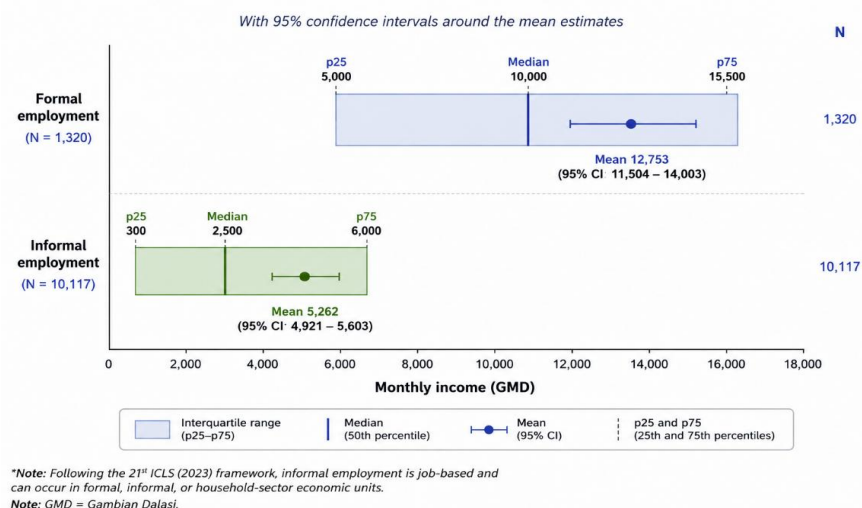


Figure 6.7: Monthly Income by Formal and Informal Employment (GMD)

6.9 Income by Economic Sector

Figure 6.8 shows substantial differences in monthly employment-related income across sectors of economic activity. Workers in non-market services recorded the highest mean monthly income (GMD 9,356), followed closely by construction (GMD 8,881) and mining and utilities (GMD 7,444). In contrast, workers in agriculture recorded the lowest mean monthly income at GMD 3,353, less than half the level observed in non-market services.

The results also show important differences in the distribution of income across sectors. Median income levels are considerably lower than the corresponding means in most sectors, indicating positively skewed income distributions driven by a relatively smaller number of high-income earners. Agriculture stands out as the lowest-paying sector, with a median monthly income of only GMD 900, reflecting the concentration of workers in low-productivity and vulnerable forms of employment.

Although mining and utilities recorded relatively high average earnings, the wider confidence intervals reflect greater uncertainty due to the smaller number of workers in the sector. Market services, which account for the largest share of workers among the sectors shown, recorded moderate average earnings (GMD 5,940), while manufacturing remained below the national average.

Overall, the findings highlight strong sectoral inequalities in earnings within the labour market. Higher incomes are concentrated in sectors associated with formal employment, public services, infrastructure, and higher productivity activities, while agriculture and parts of manufacturing continue to be characterised by relatively low earnings. The results underscore the importance of productivity enhancement, skills development, and structural transformation policies aimed at improving income opportunities in lower-paying sectors, particularly agriculture.

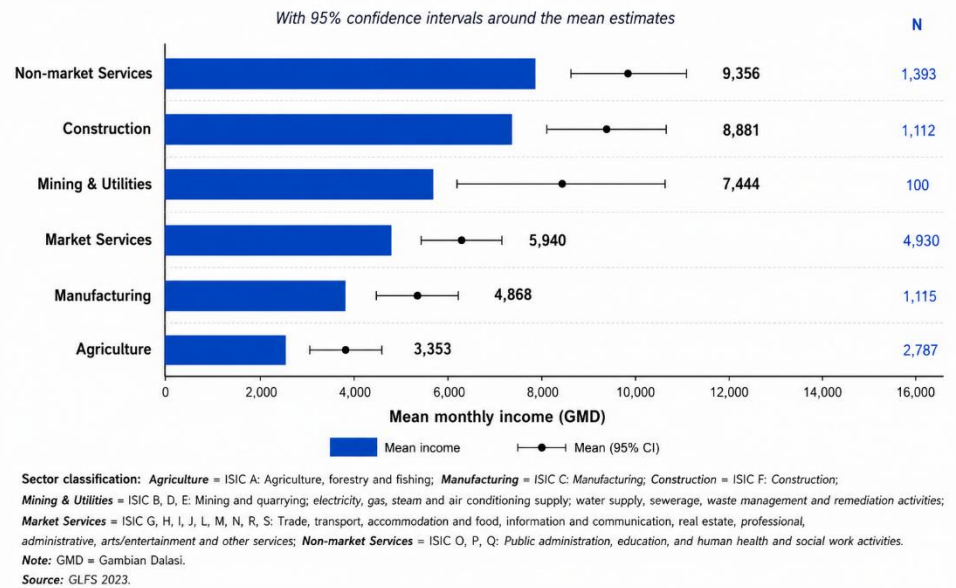


Figure 6.8: Mean monthly employment-related income by economic sector (GMD), with 95% confidence intervals

6.10 Income by Institutional Sector (Employees Only)

Figure 6.9 shows substantial differences in monthly earnings among employees across institutional sectors. Public sector employees recorded the highest mean monthly income at GMD 15,095, considerably higher than both private sector employees (GMD 7,942) and household-sector employees (GMD 4,331). Median earnings show a similar pattern, indicating that the observed differences are not driven solely by a small number of high earners. The results suggest that public sector employment continues to provide relatively higher and more stable earnings compared to private and household-sector employment.

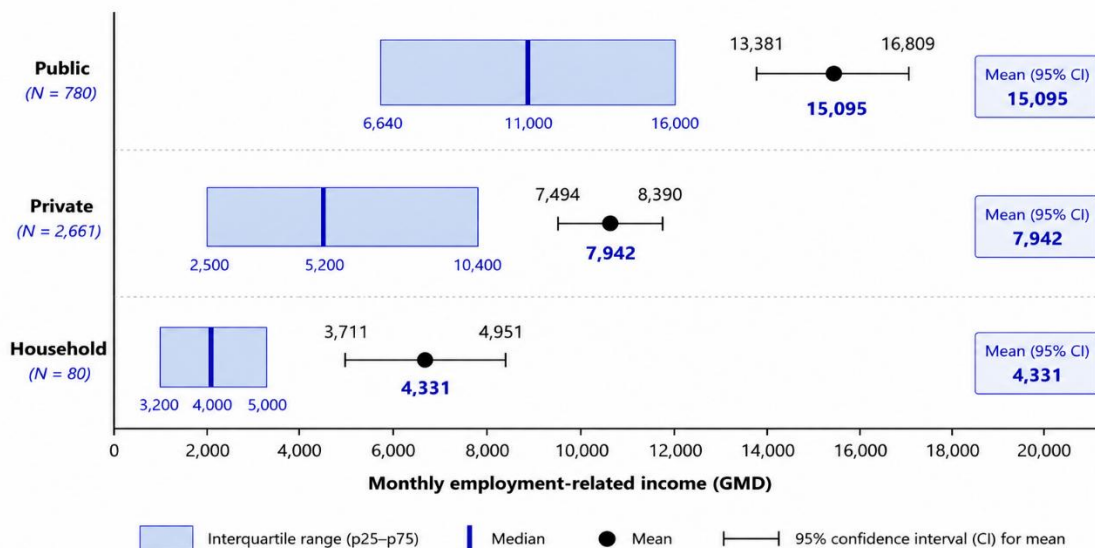


Figure 6.9: Employee monthly income by institutional sector (GMD)

6.11 Hourly Wages (Employees Only)

Figure 6.10 shows a highly uneven distribution of hourly wages among employees in The Gambia. The mean hourly wage was GMD 67.41 per hour, while the median hourly wage was substantially lower at GMD 42.25, indicating a positively skewed distribution driven by a smaller number of high-wage earners.

The middle 50 per cent of employees earned between GMD 22.22 and GMD 79.55 per hour, showing considerable variation in hourly earnings across workers. At the lower end of the distribution, some employees earned extremely low hourly wages, with the minimum recorded value close to zero, while the maximum hourly wage exceeded GMD 500 per hour.

Overall, the results highlight substantial inequality in hourly earnings among employees. The gap between the median and the upper end of the distribution suggests that a relatively small share of employees receive significantly higher wages, while a large proportion remain concentrated in lower-paying jobs.

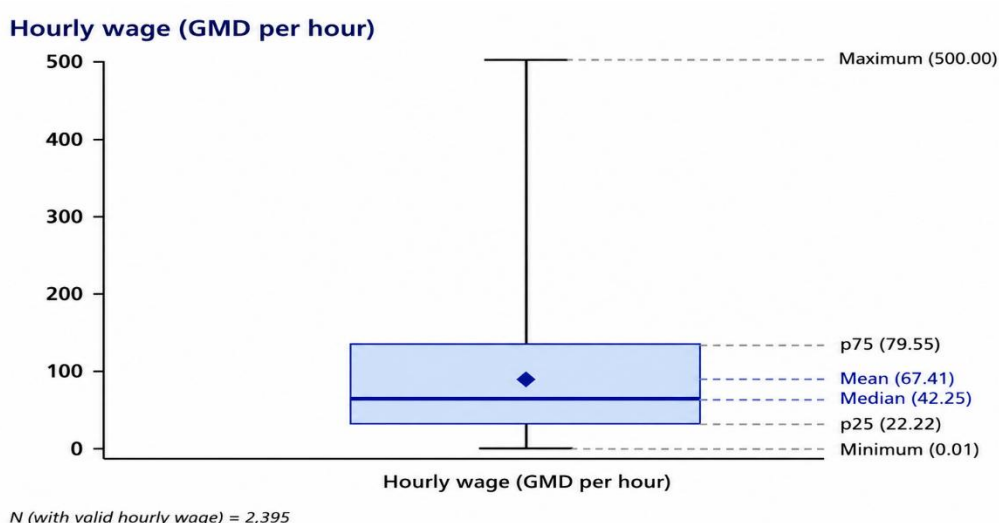


Figure 6.10: Standardized hourly wage distribution for employees (GMD per hour)

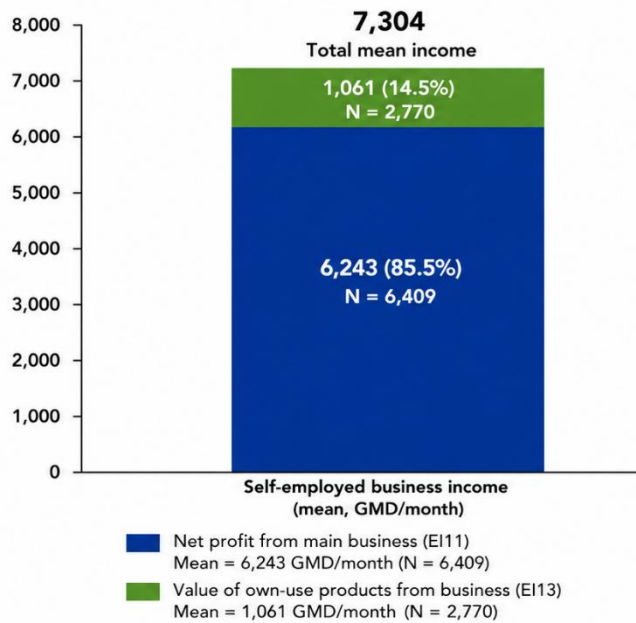
6.12 Self-Employed Business Income Components

Figure 6.11 shows that the income of self-employed workers is derived overwhelmingly from net profit generated by their main business activities. Average monthly net profit from the main business amounted to GMD 6,243, accounting for the overwhelming majority of self-employment income. In comparison, the estimated value of products produced for own household use contributed an additional average of GMD 1,061 per month.

The results also highlight important features of self-employment that are often hidden in standard income measures. A small number of self-employed workers (24 cases) reported business losses, and these negative outcomes were preserved in the analysis rather than being excluded. In addition, 721 contributing family workers reported no direct monetary income from the business, reflecting the unpaid nature of much family work within household enterprises.

Overall, the findings indicate that self-employment income in The Gambia is highly dependent on small-scale business profits, while own-use production contributes a smaller but still meaningful component of total business income for some workers. The presence of losses and unpaid contributing family workers also highlights the economic vulnerability and irregular nature of many self-employment activities.

Mean monthly income (GMD)



Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.



Figure 6.11: Components of self-employed business income (GMD per month)

Overall, the results highlight substantial inequalities in employment-related income across different groups within the Gambian labour market. Although the national mean monthly income was estimated at GMD 6,238, the median income was considerably lower at GMD 3,000, indicating that a relatively small share of higher-income earners raises the overall average. Significant disparities were observed by sex, residence, employment status, formality, sector, and institutional sector.

Men earned more than twice as much as women on average, urban workers earned substantially more than rural workers, and workers in formal employment earned more than twice the income of workers in informal employment. Among employees, public sector workers earned considerably more than private sector and household-sector employees. Employees also recorded substantially higher average earnings than self-employed workers, while hourly wage results showed considerable inequality in wage distribution.

The findings further reveal the vulnerability of many self-employed workers, including the presence of business losses and large numbers of contributing family workers without direct income. At the same time, only a relatively small share of employees received employment-related benefits, pointing to limited social protection coverage within the labour market.

Overall, the results underscore the importance of policies aimed at improving labour productivity, expanding access to decent and formal employment opportunities, strengthening earnings and working conditions in lower-paying sectors, reducing gender disparities, and extending social protection coverage, particularly for workers in informal and vulnerable forms of employment.

6.13 Methodological Notes

1. **Income concept:** Employment-related income includes cash income, benefits in kind, business profit, own-use business products, and secondary employment income, following the 21st ICLS (2023) framework.
2. **Payment period conversion:**
 - Weekly payments: multiplied by 52/12
 - Two-week payments: multiplied by 26/12
 - One-day payments: multiplied by 26 working days per month
 - Piece-rate/one-time payments: treated as reported payment episode
3. **Losses:** Business losses are preserved per ILO paragraph 34 (24 cases identified).
4. **Winsorisation:** Means are reported using winsorised values at the 99th percentile (upper tail only) to reduce the influence of extreme outliers while preserving losses.
5. **Survey weights:** All means are survey-weighted to account for the complex sample design. Medians and percentile statistics are unweighted distributional estimates.
6. **Informal employment:** Classified following the 21st ICLS (2023) matrix, considering both the unit of production (formal/informal sector) and the nature of the job.
7. **Confidence intervals:** All confidence intervals are at the 95 per cent level and account for the complex survey design using linearized standard errors.

6.14 Limitations

1. **Other payment periods:** 72 cases with "other" payment period (EI3=96) require manual review and are not included in income standardization.
2. **Benefits valuation:** EI7 (value of benefits in kind) is treated as a monthly value based on the observed distribution. Users should verify this assumption.
3. **Piece-rate workers:** Hourly wages cannot be calculated for piece-rate workers as EI4 (days worked) is skipped in the questionnaire.
4. **Contributing family workers:** 721 contributing family workers have no directly attributable monetary income and are assigned zero income.
5. **Seasonal workers:** Monthly income estimates for seasonal and casual workers may be overstated as they assume continuity of work.
6. **Unweighted percentiles:** Medians and percentiles presented are unweighted. For design-corrected percentiles, bootstrap methods would be required.

6.15 References

- ILO (2023). Resolution to amend the 16th ICLS Resolution concerning the measurement of employment-related income. 21st International Conference of Labour Statisticians.
- ILO (2018). Resolution concerning statistics on work relationships. 20th ICLS.
- ILO (2013). Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilisation. 19th ICLS.
- ILO (2023). Resolution concerning statistics on the informal economy. 21st ICLS.
- Gambia Bureau of Statistics (2026). Gambia Labour Force Survey 2026: Questionnaire and Methodological Report.

CHAPTER 7. LABOUR UNDERUTILISATION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter examines labour underutilisation in The Gambia using data from GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). Labour underutilisation measures the gap between labour supply and demand, capturing not only unemployment but also time-related underemployment and the potential labour force. The analysis covers four indicators (LU1 to LU4) by sex, residence, age group, level of education, LGA and other key characteristics, as well as unemployment by age group, duration of unemployment, and the composition of labour underutilisation.

7.2 Labour Underutilisation by Sex

Figure 7.1 presents labour underutilisation indicators by sex for GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). Between the two survey rounds, all measures of underutilisation declined for both men and women, although women consistently experience higher levels of underutilisation than men.

In GLFS 2026 (Q1), the unemployment rate (LU1) was 5.2 per cent for men and 7.5 per cent for women. The composite measure LU4, which captures unemployment, time-related underemployment and the potential labour force, was 22.8 per cent for men and 42.1 per cent for women, nearly double that of men. The gender gap persists across all measures.

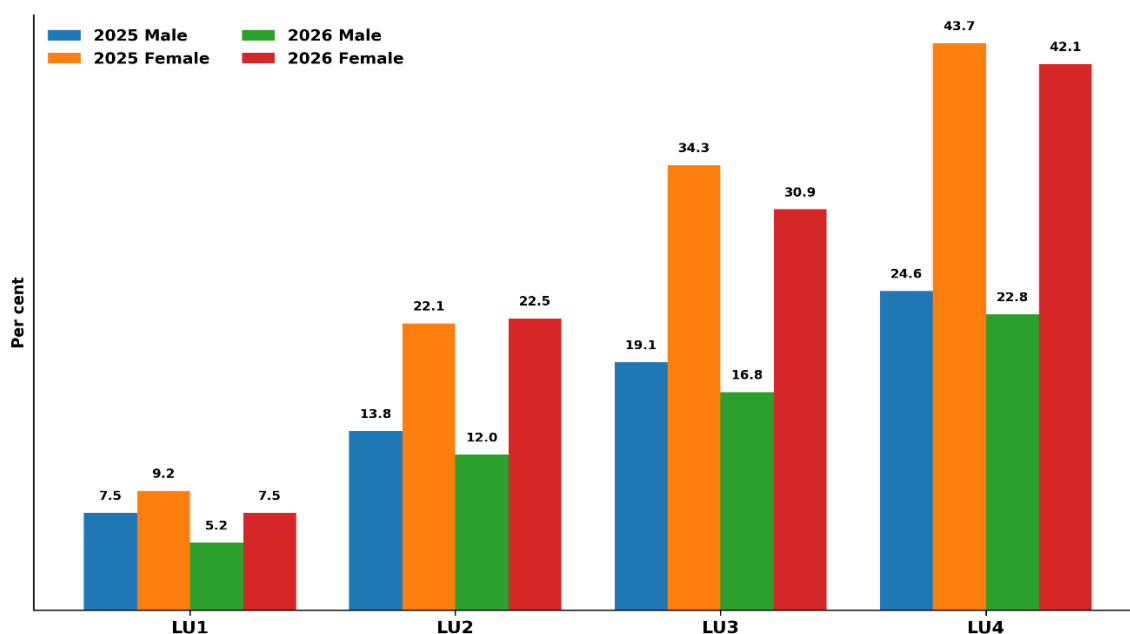


Figure 7.1: Labour underutilisation by sex (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

7.3 Labour Underutilisation by Residence

Figure 7.2 presents labour underutilisation indicators by residence. In both survey rounds, rural areas experience higher levels of underutilisation than urban areas, particularly for the broader measures (LU3 and LU4) that include the potential labour force.

In GLFS 2026 (Q1), the unemployment rate (LU1) was 6.8 per cent in urban areas and 5.1 per cent in rural areas, a reversal from 2025 when rural unemployment was lower. However, LU4 was substantially higher in rural areas (42.3%) than in

urban areas (26.0%), reflecting the large share of rural workers in time-related underemployment or the potential labour force.

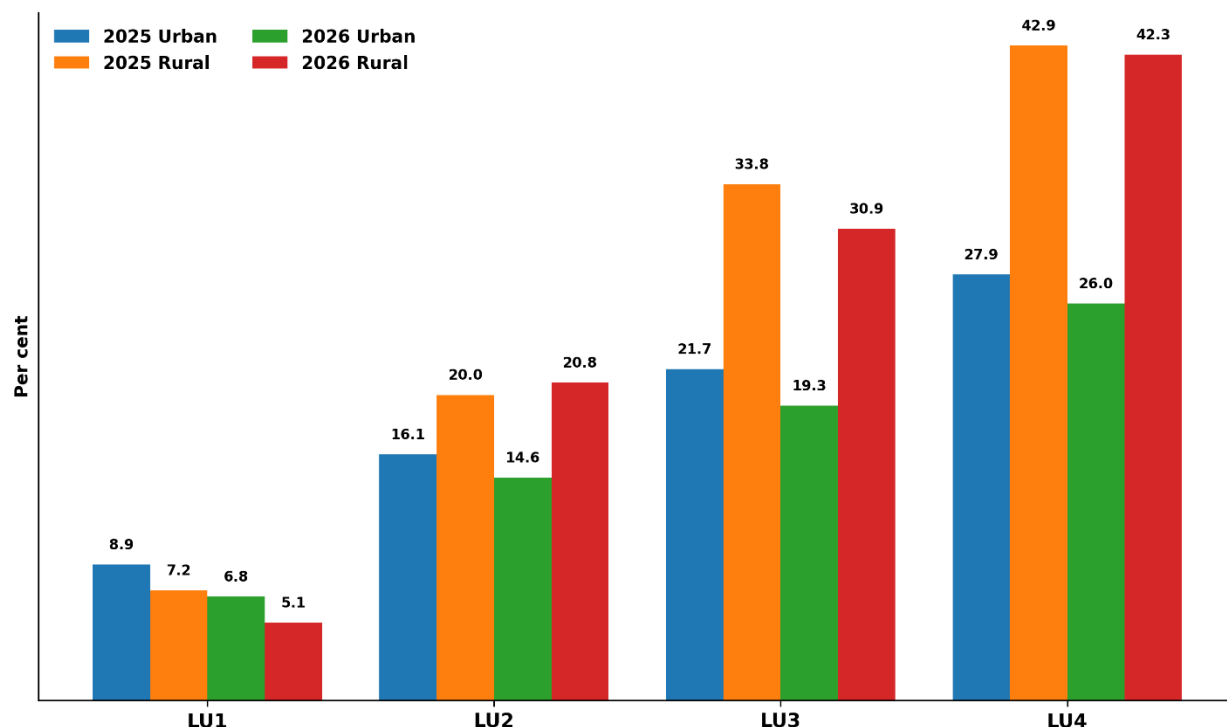


Figure 7.2: Labour underutilisation by residence (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

7.4 Labour Underutilisation by Age Group (LU4)

Figure 7.3 presents the composite labour underutilisation rate (LU4) by age group for GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). Underutilisation is highest among the youngest age groups and declines with age. In GLFS 2026 (Q1), LU4 was 50.1 per cent for those aged 15-19, falling to 21.8 per cent for those aged 50-54, before rising slightly among older age groups. The relatively high level of underutilisation among those aged 15-19 reflects their transition between education and the labour market, with many not yet fully engaged in employment or active job search.

Between the two rounds, LU4 declined for most age groups, particularly among those aged 25-29 (from 39.5% to 33.3%) and 35-39 (from 28.2% to 22.2%). The largest decline was observed among those aged 55-59 (from 24.5% to 21.2%). The smallest changes were recorded among the youngest (15-19) and oldest (65+) age groups.

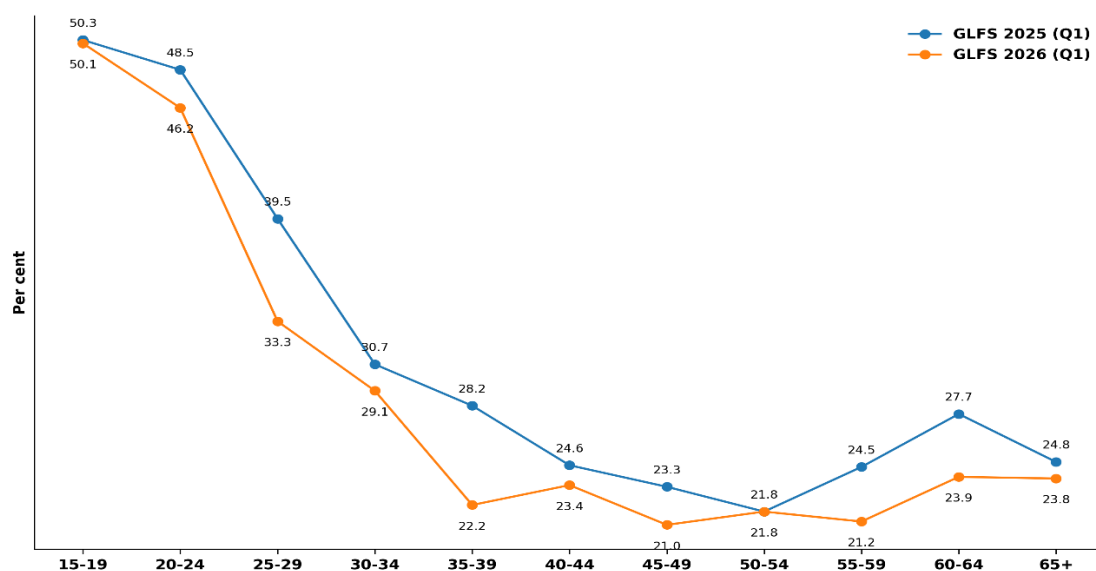


Figure 7.3: Total labour underutilisation (LU4) by age group (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

7.5 Labour Underutilisation by Level of Education (LU4)

Figure 7.4 presents the composite labour underutilisation rate (LU4) by level of education. In both survey rounds, persons with advanced education (diploma, higher) have substantially lower underutilisation than those with basic or intermediate education. In GLFS 2026 (Q1), LU4 was 23.4 per cent for those with advanced education, compared to 35.2 per cent for those with intermediate education and 31.8 per cent for those with less than basic education. The gap between basic and advanced education narrowed slightly between 2025 and 2026 but remains substantial.

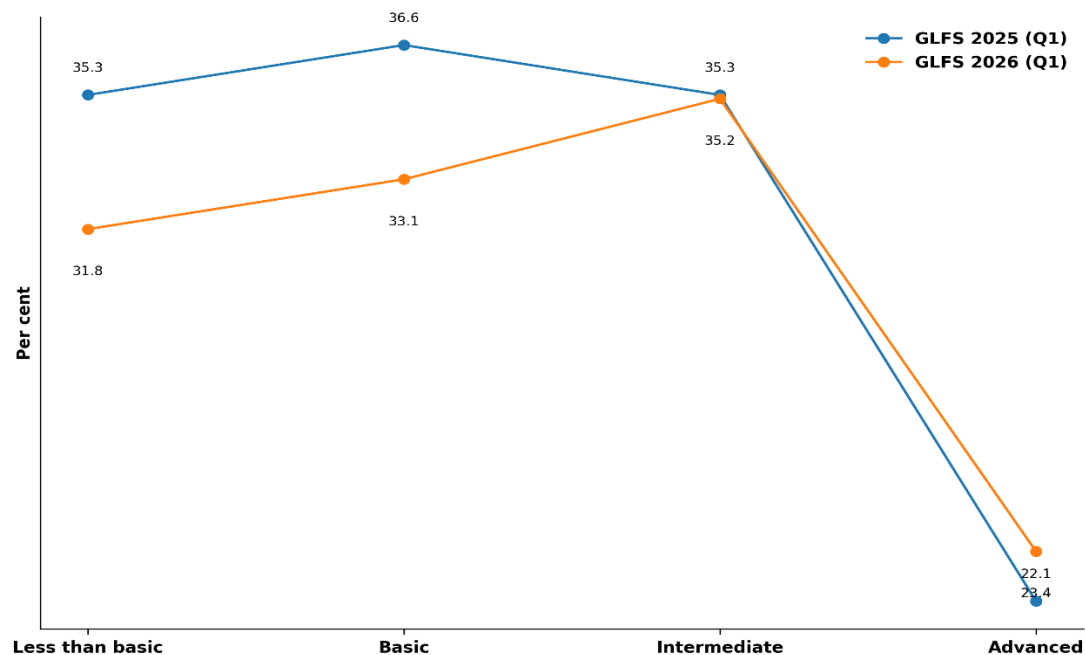


Figure 7.4: Labour underutilisation (LU4) by level of education (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

7.6 Unemployment Rate by Age Group

Figure 7.5 presents the unemployment rate (LU1) by age group for GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). In both rounds, unemployment is highest among youth and declines with age. In GLFS 2026 (Q1), the unemployment rate peaks at 13.4 per cent among those aged 20-24, followed by 10.5 per cent among those aged 15-19. Unemployment then declines steadily, falling below 5 per cent from age 30 onwards, and reaching 2.2 per cent for those aged 60-64 and 65+.

Between the two rounds, unemployment declined across all age groups. The largest declines were observed among those aged 25-29 (from 12.0% to 7.9%), 20-24 (from 15.7% to 13.4%) and 15-19 (from 13.0% to 10.5%). The smallest declines were recorded among older age groups, where unemployment was already low.

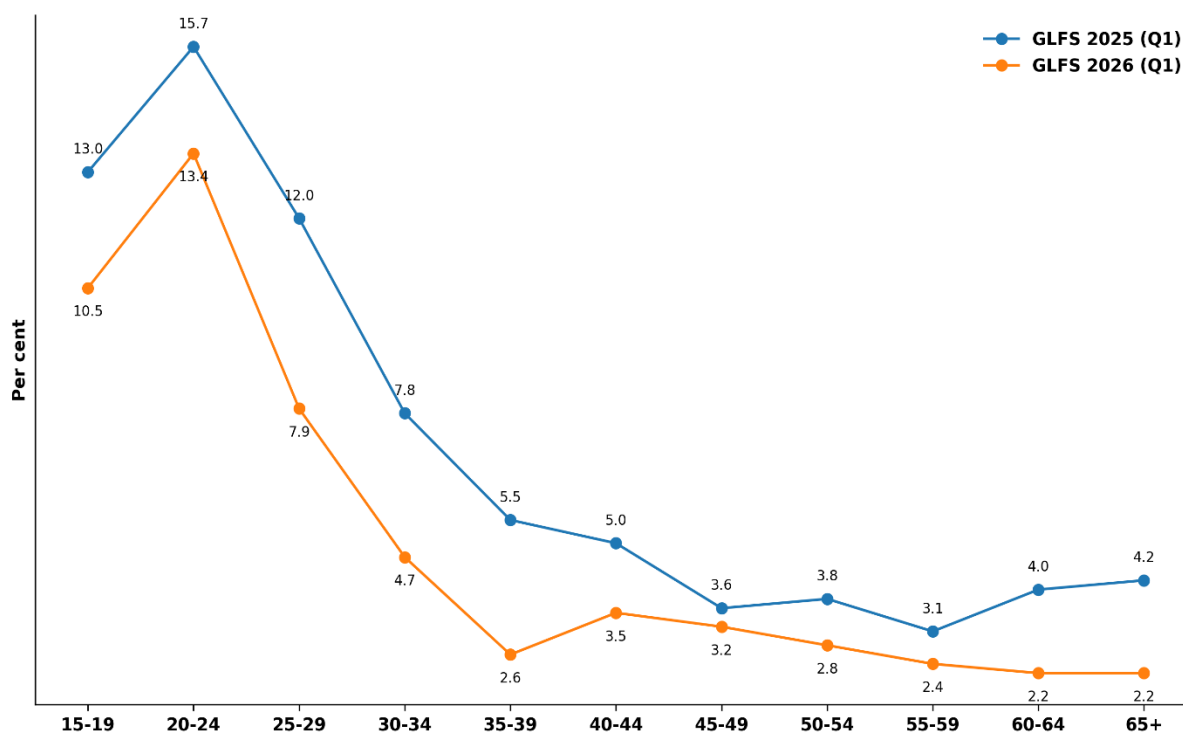


Figure 7.5: Unemployment rate by age group (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

7.7 Duration of Unemployment

Figure 7.6 presents the duration of unemployment among the unemployed for GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). In GLFS 2026 (Q1), 62.7 per cent of unemployed persons had been unemployed for less than 6 months, 12.6 per cent for 6 to less than 12 months, and 24.7 per cent for 12 months or more (long-term unemployment). Between the two rounds, the share of long-term unemployed declined (from 28.3% to 24.7%), while the share of those unemployed for less than 6 months increased (from 56.7% to 62.7%).

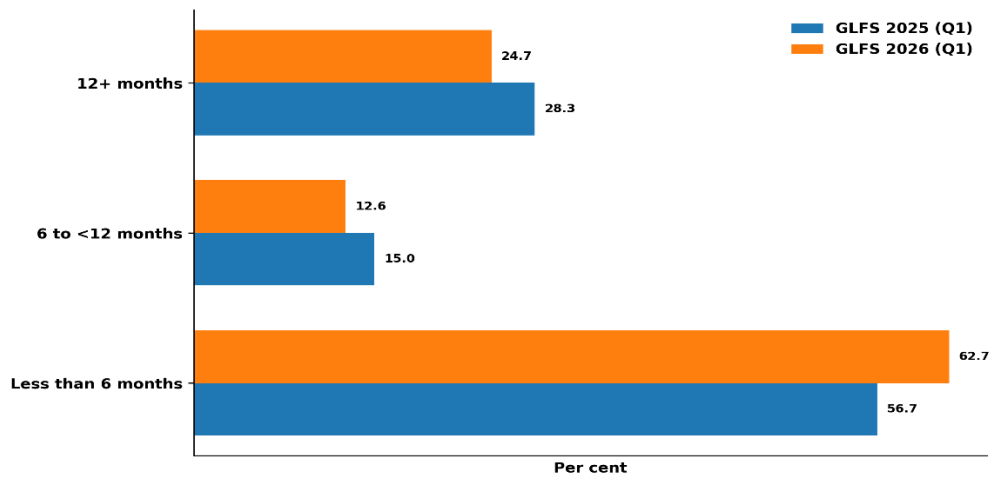


Figure 7.6: Duration of unemployment among the unemployed (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

7.8 Composition of Labour Underutilisation

Figure 7.7 presents the composition of labour underutilisation (the share of LU4 accounted for by each component) for GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). In GLFS 2026 (Q1), the potential labour force accounts for the largest share (57.8%), followed by time-related underemployment (26.5%) and unemployment (15.7%). Between the two rounds, the share of unemployment declined (from 19.3% to 15.7%), while the share of time-related underemployment increased (from 21.8% to 26.5%). The share of the potential labour force remained relatively stable (58.9% to 57.8%).



Figure 7.7: Composition of labour underutilisation (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

7.9 Composite Underutilisation by Key Characteristics (LU4)

Table 7.1 presents the composite labour underutilisation rate (LU4) by key characteristics for GLFS 2026 (Q1). In GLFS 2026 (Q1), LU4 is highest among foodstuff producers (69.4%), rural residents (42.3%), females (42.1%), and youth aged 15-35 (38.4%). LU4 is also relatively high among persons with disabilities (31.6%). LU4 is substantially lower among males (22.8%), adults aged 36 years and older (22.4%), and urban residents (26.0%).

Table 7.1: Composite underutilisation (LU4) by key characteristics (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	LU4 (%)
Male	22.8
Female	42.1
Urban	26.0
Rural	42.3
Youth (15-35)	38.4
Adult (36+)	22.4
Foodstuff Producer	69.4
Non-Producer	28.8
With Disability	31.6

Note: Estimates for persons with disabilities are based on a small, unweighted sample and should be interpreted with caution (see disability for details).

7.10 Labour Underutilisation (LU3) by Sex, Residence and LGA

Figure 7.8 presents LU3 (combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force) by sex and residence. In GLFS 2026 (Q1), LU3 was 16.8 per cent for men and 30.9 per cent for women; 19.3 per cent in urban areas and 30.9 per cent in rural areas. Between the two rounds, LU3 declined for all groups, with the largest decline observed among women (from 34.3% to 30.9%).

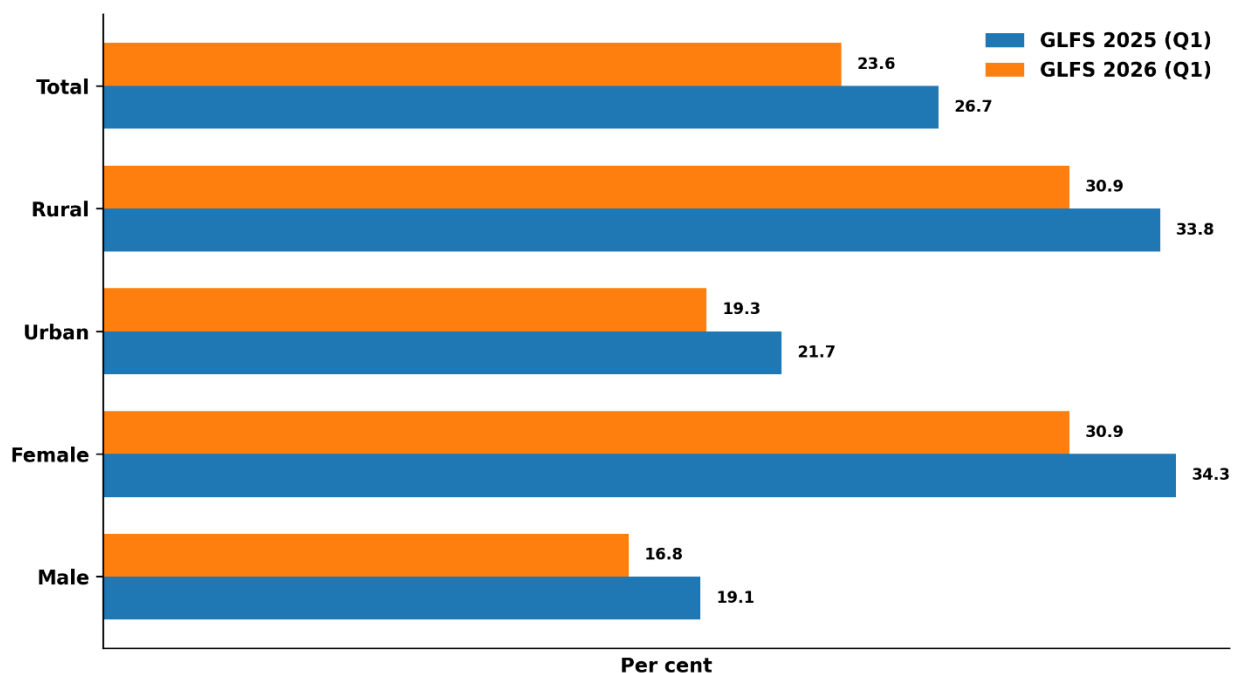


Figure 7.8: LU3 by sex and residence (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Figure 7.9 presents LU3 by Local Government Area (LGA) for GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). In GLFS 2026 (Q1), LU3 varies considerably across LGAs, ranging from 18.0 per cent in Brikama to 45.7 per cent in Kuntaur. Between the two rounds, LU3 declined in most LGAs, with the largest declines observed in Kuntaur (from 56.5% to 45.7%), Basse (from 47.0% to 31.5%) and Janjanbureh (from 35.5% to 28.7%). LU3 increased in Kerewan (from 24.5% to 36.5%).

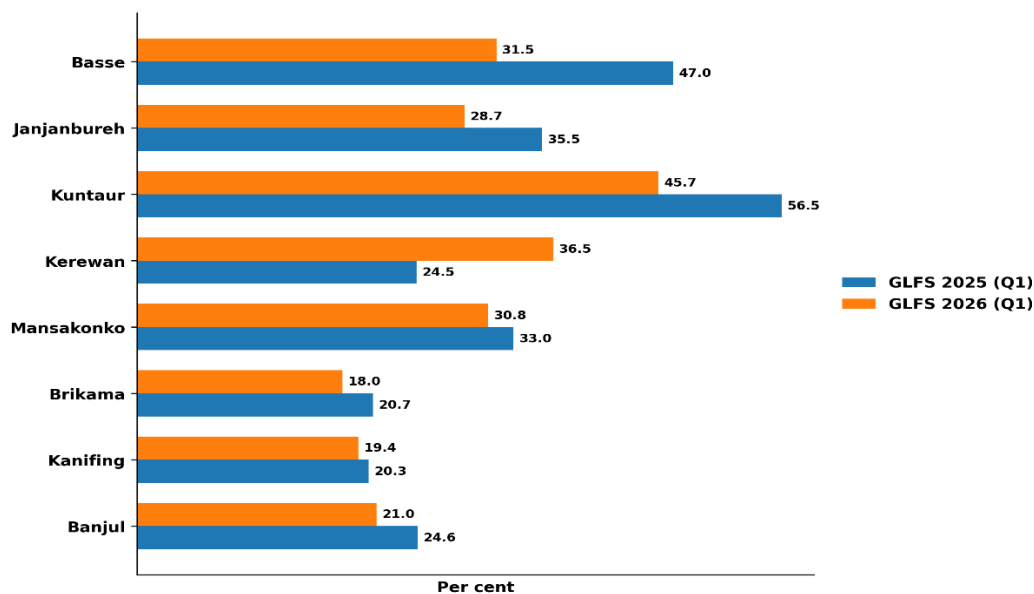


Figure 7.9: LU3 by LGA (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Between GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1), labour underutilisation declined across most measures and population groups. The unemployment rate (LU1) fell from 8.3 per cent to 6.2 per cent, while the composite measure LU4 declined

from 34.2 per cent to 32.1 per cent. Women, youth, rural residents and foodstuff producers continue to experience the highest levels of underutilisation.

The composition of underutilisation shifted, with unemployment accounting for a smaller share (from 19.3% to 15.7%) and time-related underemployment a larger share (from 21.8% to 26.5%). Long-term unemployment declined as a share of total unemployment (from 28.3% to 24.7%), while the share of those unemployed for less than 6 months increased (from 56.7% to 62.7%).

Underutilisation varies considerably across LGAs, with Kuntaur recording the highest level (LU3 at 45.7% in 2026) and Brikama the lowest (18.0%). The reduction in underutilisation in Kuntaur (from 56.5% to 45.7%) and Basse (from 47.0% to 31.5%) between 2025 and 2026 is notable, while the increase in Kerewan (from 24.5% to 36.5%) warrants further attention.

These findings point to persistent differences in labour underutilisation by sex, age, residence, foodstuff production status and LGA.

Note:

LU1 = Unemployment rate

LU2 = Combined rate of time-related underemployment and unemployment

LU3 = Combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force

LU4 = Composite measure of labour underutilisation

Estimates for LGAs with small sample sizes (e.g., Banjul) should be interpreted with caution. Estimates for persons with disabilities are based on a small, unweighted sample (see chapter on disability).

CHAPTER 8. PERSONS OUTSIDE THE LABOUR FORCE

8.1 Introduction

This chapter examines persons outside the labour force, those who are neither employed nor unemployed, using data from GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). It presents the distribution by sex, residence and Local Government Area (LGA), examines the main reasons for not seeking employment, and analyses the prevalence of discouraged jobseekers across population groups.

8.2 Share of Population Outside the Labour Force

8.2.1 Population Outside the Labour Force by Sex and Residence

Figure 8.1 shows the share of the population aged 15 years and older who were outside the labour force, by sex and residence. Between GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1), the share declined across all groups. Among men, it fell from 46.2 per cent to 36.5 per cent, while among women it declined from 59.1 per cent to 53.7 per cent.

The reduction was larger in urban areas (51.6% to 43.2%) than in rural areas (55.0% to 49.4%). Despite these improvements, women and rural residents remain more likely to be outside the labour force than men and urban residents.

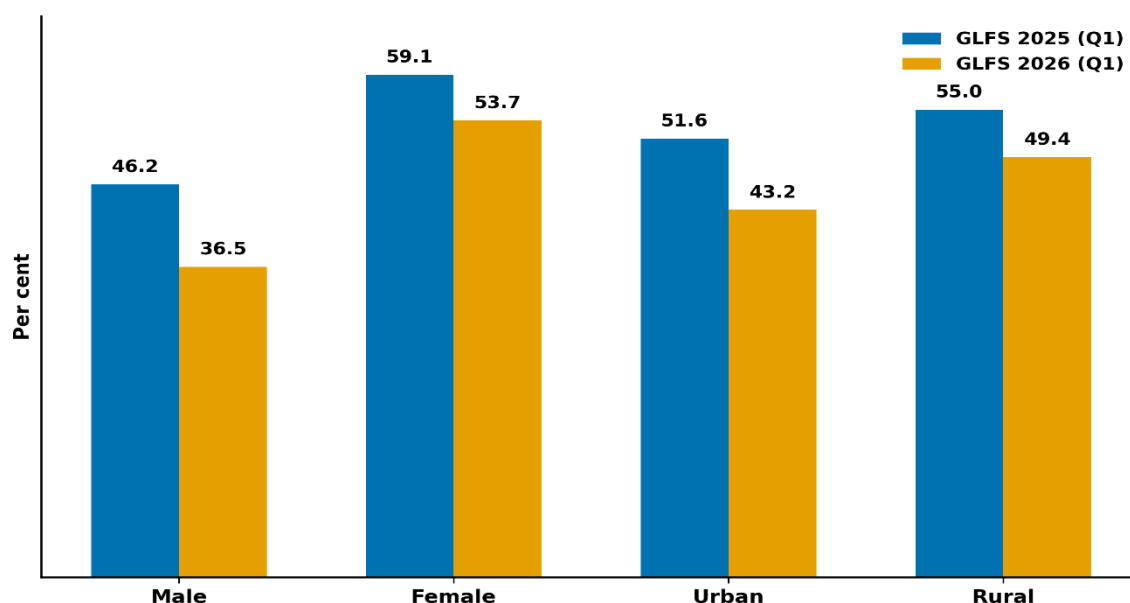


Figure 8.1: Share of population outside the labour force by sex and residence (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

8.2.2 Population Outside the Labour Force by LGA

Figure 8.2 presents the share of the population outside the labour force by LGA. The share declined in all LGAs between the two rounds, although the magnitude of change varies. The largest reductions were observed in Banjul, Brikama and Mansakonko, while declines were more modest in Basse and Kuntaur. Despite these reductions, Basse and Kuntaur continue to record the highest shares of persons outside the labour force.

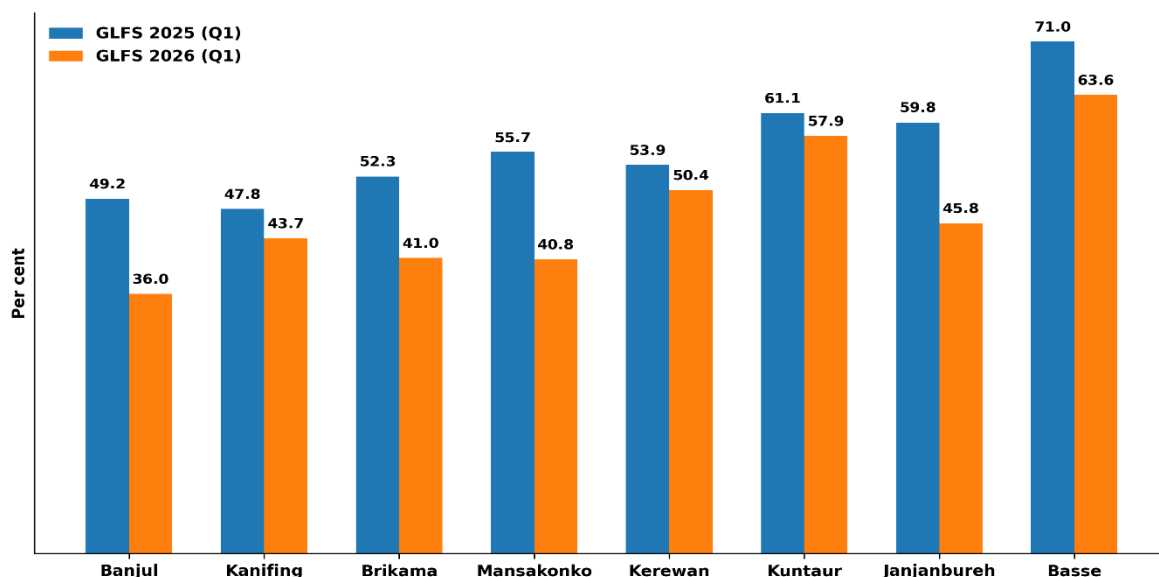


Figure 8.2: Share of population outside the labour force by LGA (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

8.3 Reasons for Not Seeking Employment

Figure 8.3 presents the main reasons reported by persons outside the labour force for not seeking employment, for GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). The most common reasons are labour market-related (e.g., believing no work is available, lacking qualifications) and personal or family-related (e.g., illness, disability, family responsibilities, old age). In 2026 (Q1), personal/family-related reasons accounted for 39.7 per cent of persons outside the labour force, followed by labour market-related reasons (36.5%) and entrepreneurial barriers (16.9%). The share citing personal/family-related reasons increased slightly between the two rounds (from 36.9% to 39.7%), while the share citing labour market-related reasons remained relatively stable. Voluntary non-participation remains very small (0.5% in 2026).

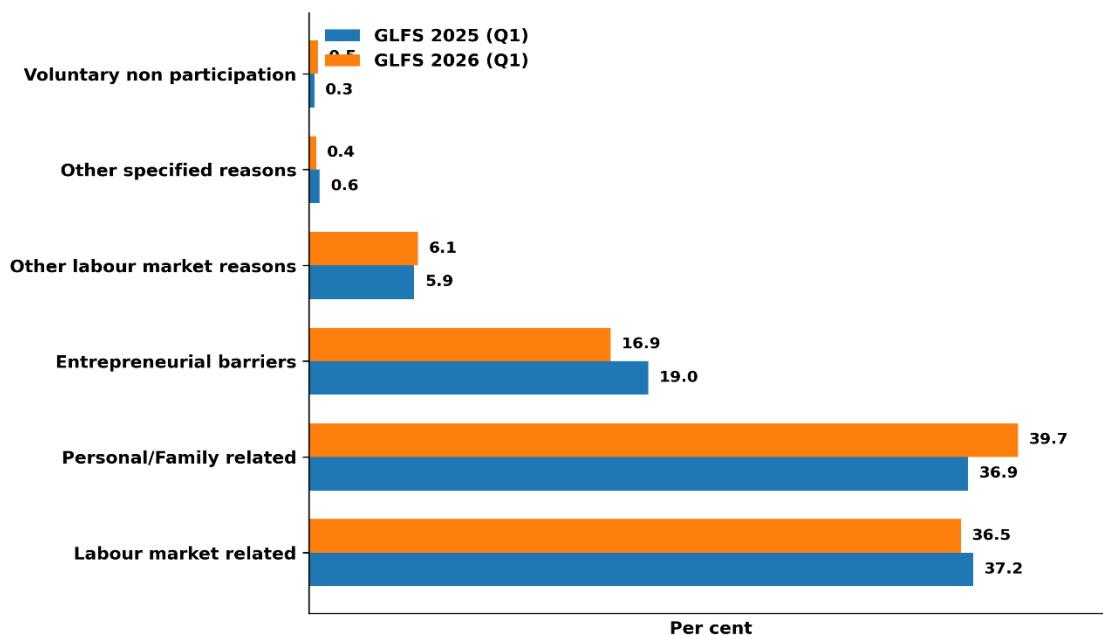


Figure 8.3: Reasons for not seeking employment among persons outside the labour force (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

8.4 Discouraged Jobseekers

Discouraged jobseekers are persons outside the labour force who want to work but are not seeking employment because they believe no work is available. This section examines the prevalence of discouraged jobseekers across different population groups.

8.4.1 Discouraged Jobseekers by Selected Characteristics

Figure 8.4 presents the share of discouraged jobseekers as a percentage of the population aged 15 years and older. The overall rate increased slightly from 5.1 per cent in 2025 (Q1) to 5.4 per cent in 2026 (Q1).

Discouragement is higher among women than men and substantially higher in rural areas than in urban areas. Youth (15-35 years) also show higher levels of discouragement than adults. Persons without disabilities have a slightly higher rate than persons with disabilities, although estimates for the latter are based on a small sample and should be interpreted with caution.

Foodstuff producers exhibit markedly higher levels of discouragement than non-producers, indicating weaker labour market attachment among subsistence producers.

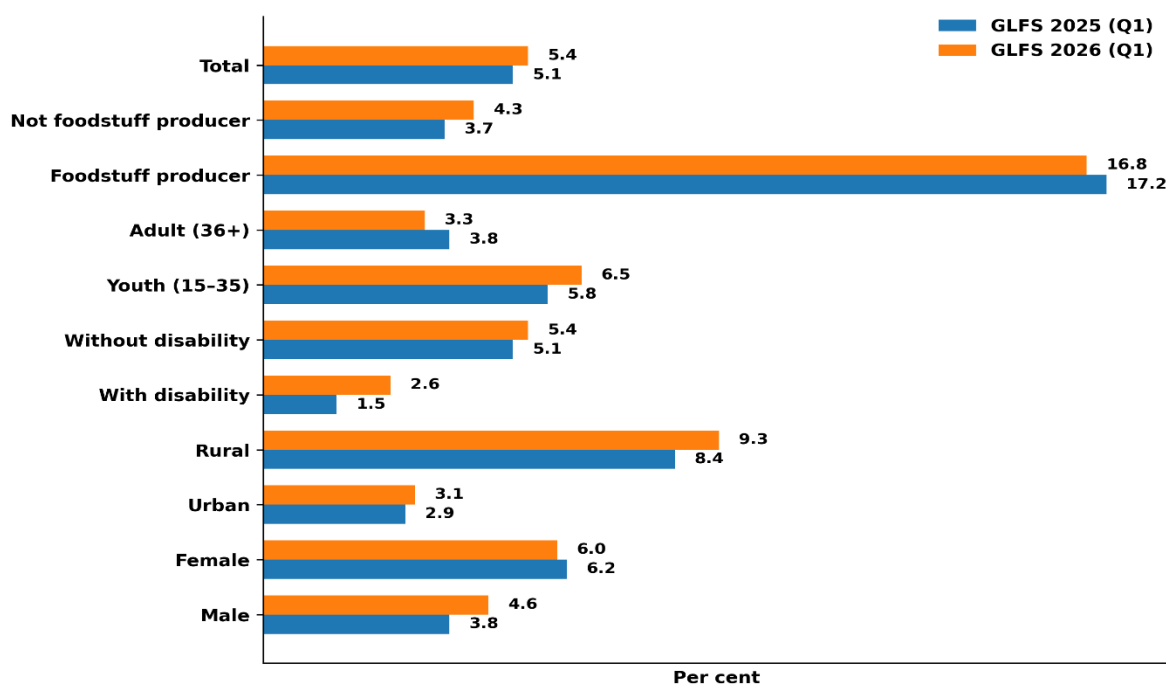


Figure 8.4: Share of discouraged jobseekers (% of population 15+), by selected characteristics, GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Note: Estimates for persons with disabilities are based on a small, unweighted sample and should be interpreted with caution (see the disability chapter for details).

8.4.2 Discouraged Jobseekers by LGA

Figure 8.5 shows the share of discouraged jobseekers by LGA. Levels of discouragement vary considerably across LGAs. Kuntaur records the highest rate in both years, increasing further in 2026 (Q1). Kerewan also shows a substantial increase.

In contrast, Banjul and Basse experienced notable declines, while changes in Mansakonko and Brikama were more modest. Kanifing and Janjanbureh recorded slight increases.

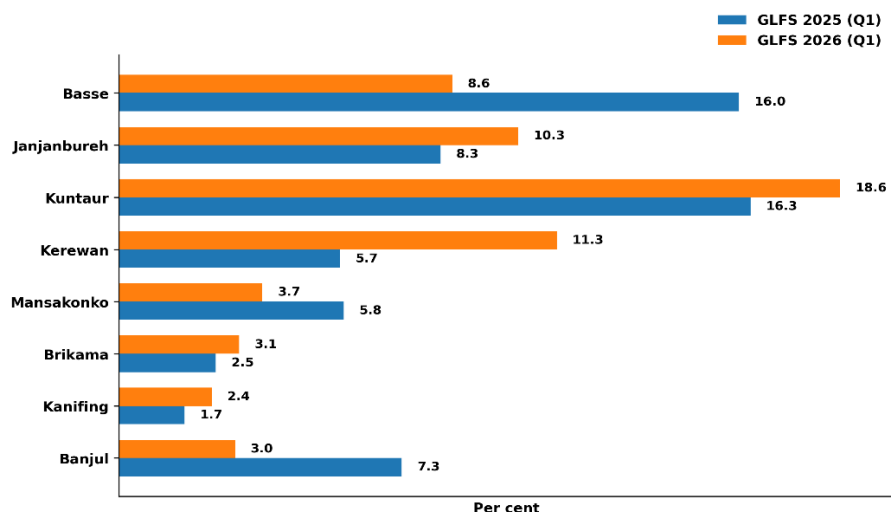


Figure 8.5: Share of discouraged jobseekers (% of population 15+), by LGA, GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Note: Estimates for discouraged jobseekers in several LGAs, particularly Banjul, Kanifing, Brikama, Mansakonko, Janjanbureh and Basse, have coefficients of variation ranging from 11 to 18 per cent and should be interpreted with caution. Similarly, estimates for small subgroups (e.g., persons with disabilities) are based on limited sample sizes and may be less reliable.

Between GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1), the share of the population outside the labour force declined across all sex, residence and LGA groups, reflecting increased labour market participation. However, women and rural residents remain more likely to be outside the labour force.

The main reasons for not seeking employment are personal or family-related factors and labour market constraints. Discouraged jobseekers account for 5.4 per cent of the population aged 15 years and older, with higher levels observed among women, rural residents, youth, and foodstuff producers.

These findings indicate that while participation has improved, structural barriers, particularly those related to household responsibilities and labour market conditions, continue to limit engagement in the labour market.

CHAPTER 9. GENDER ANALYSIS OF LABOUR MARKET

9.1 Introduction

This chapter examines labour market outcomes for women in The Gambia using data from GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1), with selected comparisons to GLFS 2023 (Q1) for the SDG indicator on managerial positions. The analysis covers labour force participation, employment, unemployment, labour underutilisation, sectoral and occupational segregation, formal employment, informality, and youth-specific challenges. Differences by sex, residence, and age are highlighted, with a focus on persistent gender gaps.

9.1.1 Labour Force Participation

Figure 9.1 presents labour force participation rates by sex and residence for 2025 (Q1) and 2026 (Q1). Participation increased for both men and women across all groups. However, women's participation remains lower than men's in every category.

Among women, the overall participation rate increased from 40.9 per cent in 2025 (Q1) to 46.3 per cent in 2026 (Q1). Urban women have consistently higher participation (48.9% in 2026) than rural women (41.8%). Youth women (15-35 years) also saw an increase, from 35.1 per cent to 41.0 per cent, but remain below their male counterparts (57.2% in 2026 (Q1)).

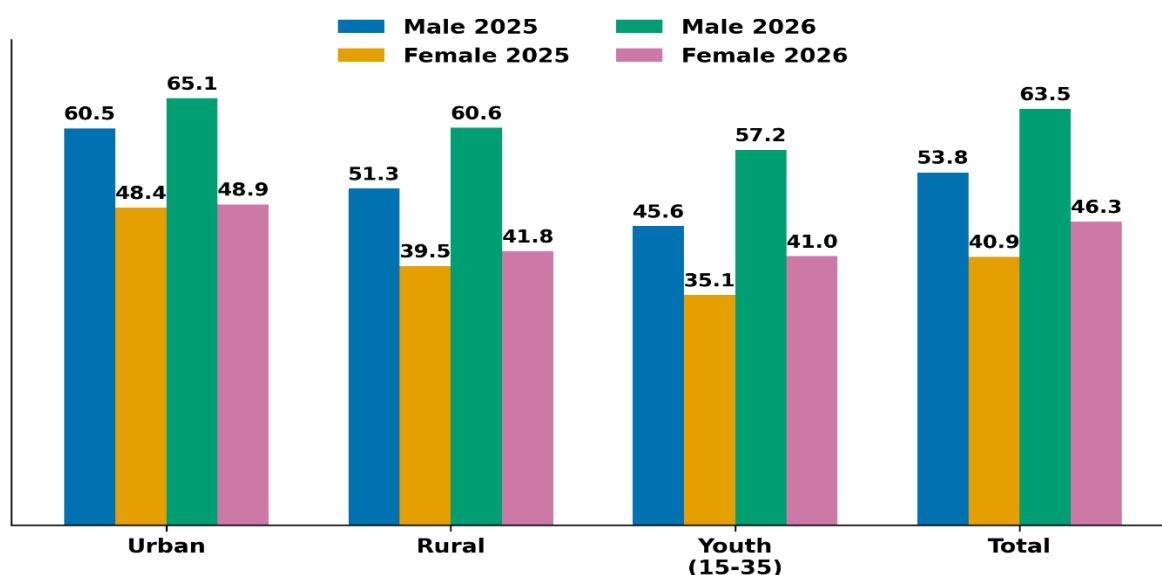


Figure 9.1: Labour force participation rate by sex and residence (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Figure 9.2 shows female labour force participation by residence for both years. Urban women consistently participate at higher rates than rural women, and the gap widened slightly between 2025 (Q1) and 2026 (Q1) (from 2.4 to 7.1 percentage points), although the increase in urban areas (41.9% to 48.9%) was more pronounced than in rural areas (39.5% to 41.8%).

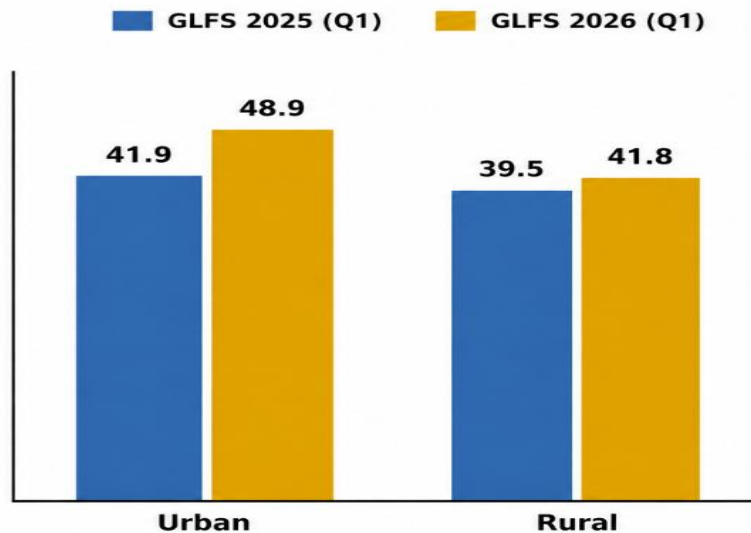


Figure 9.2: Female labour force participation rate by residence (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

9.1.2 Employment, Unemployment and Labour Underutilisation

Figure 9.3 presents key employment and labour underutilisation indicators by sex for 2026 (Q1). The employment to population ratio for women (42.8%) is substantially lower than for men (60.2%). The composite labour underutilisation measure (LU4), which captures unemployment, time-related underemployment and the potential labour force, is nearly twice as high for women (42.1%) as for men (22.8%). The unemployment rate also shows a gender gap: 7.5 per cent for women versus 5.2 per cent for men.

By residence, rural women face higher underutilisation (LU4: 42.3% compared to urban women's 26.0%) despite having a lower unemployment rate (5.1% and 6.8%), reflecting the large share of rural women in the potential labour force or time-related underemployment. Youth women (15-35) have an LU4 rate of 38.9 per cent, indicating that labour market challenges are particularly acute for younger women.

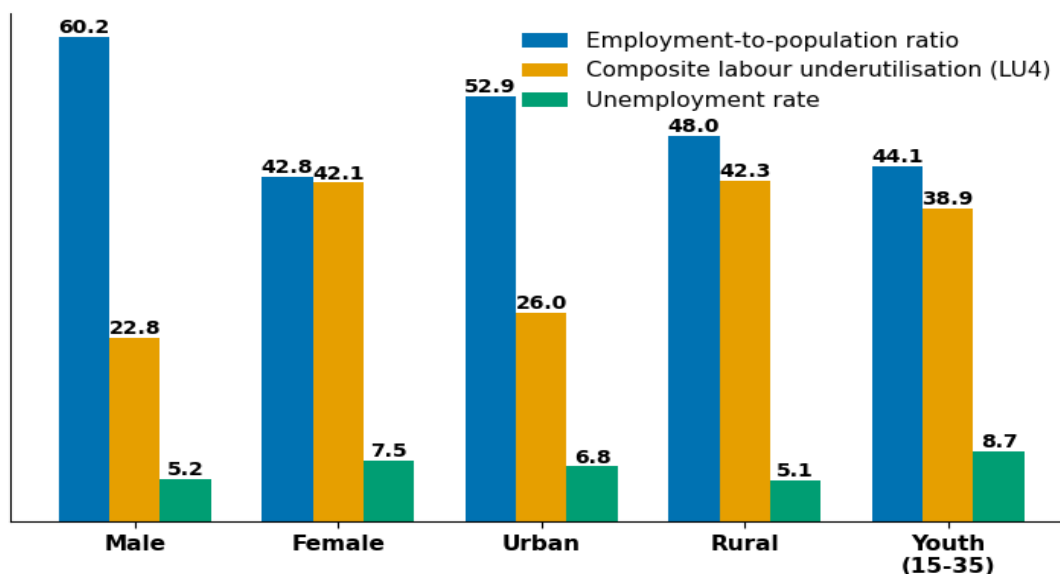


Figure 9.3: Employment and labour underutilisation indicators by sex, residence and youth status (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Note: LU4 includes unemployment, time-related underemployment and the potential labour force.

9.1.3 Sectoral and Occupational Segregation

Figure 9.4 shows persistent gender segregation across sectors and occupations between 2025 (Q1) and 2026 (Q1). Women are much more concentrated in the services sector (68.8% of employed women in 2026) compared to men (49.5%). The share of women in agriculture (24.7%) is about double that of men (12.4%). The small changes between 2025 (Q1) and 2026 (Q1) are not substantial.

In terms of occupations, women are overrepresented in services and sales worker roles, accounting for 52.1 per cent of employed women in 2026 (Q1), compared to only 19.5 per cent of employed men. Conversely, men hold a much larger share of managerial roles (2.6% of employed men) than women (1.6% of employed women). The gap in managerial representation has not narrowed between the two survey rounds.

Note: Industry (e.g., manufacturing and construction) is not shown separately and accounts for the remaining share.

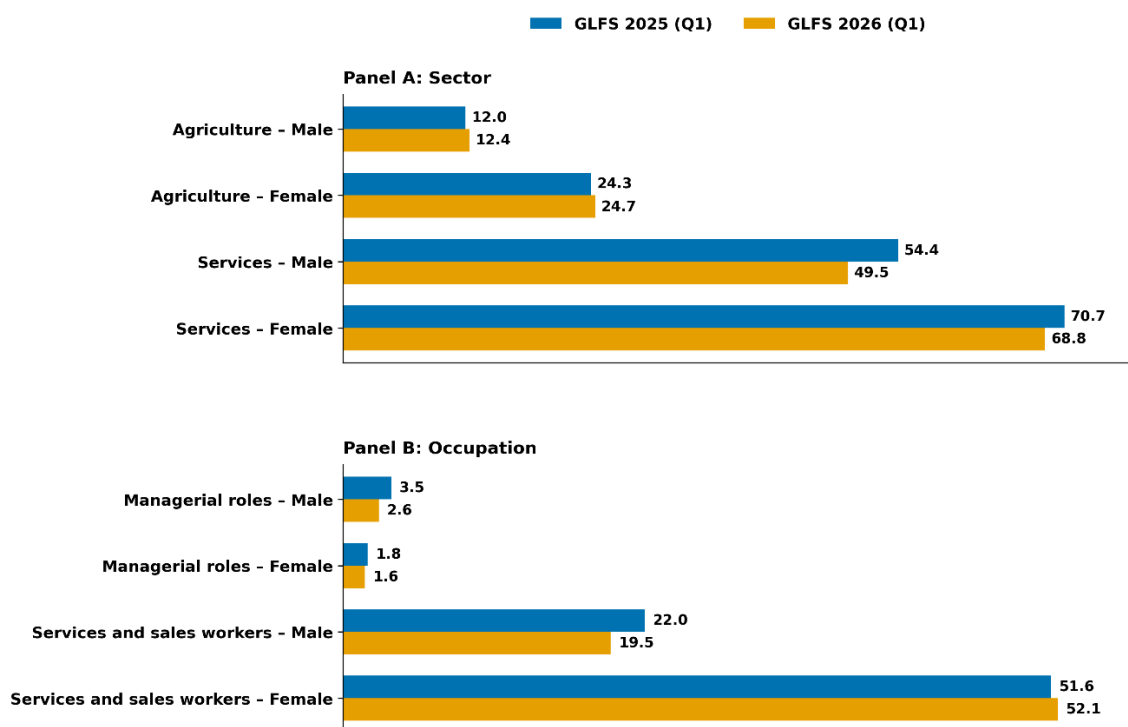


Figure 9.4: Sectoral and occupational distribution of employed persons by sex (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Note: Industry (manufacturing, construction, etc.) is not shown separately but accounts for the remaining shares.

9.1.4 Formal Employment

Figure 9.5 presents the share of employed persons in formal jobs by sex in GLFS 2026 (Q1). Formal employment remains higher among men than women. In 2026 (Q1), 16.4 per cent of employed men held formal jobs, compared to 11.3 per cent of employed women. These results indicate that access to formal employment remains limited overall, with a persistent gender gap in favor of men.

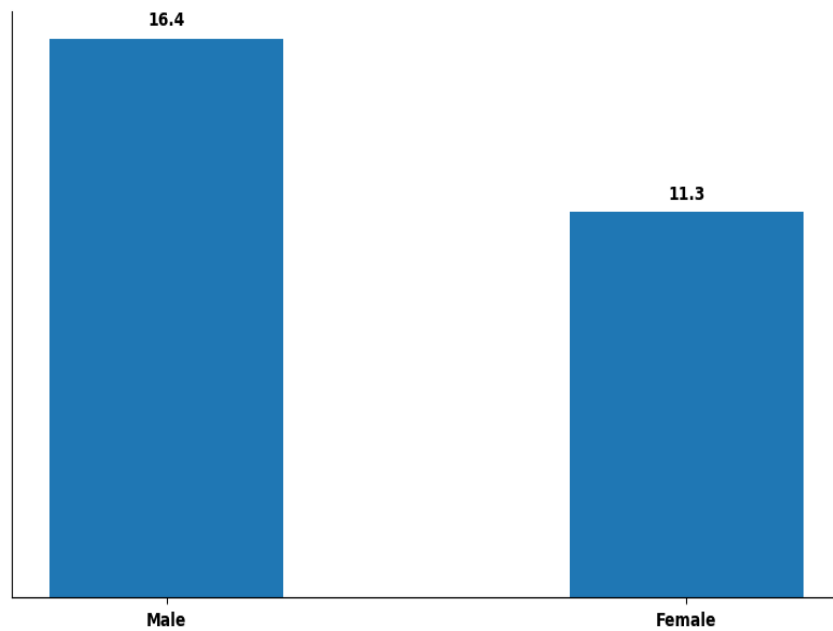


Figure 9.5: Share of employed persons in formal jobs by sex (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Informality and Vulnerability

Figure 9.6 shows informal employment rates by sex and residence in GLFS 2026 (Q1). Informality is higher among women than men, with 88.7 per cent of employed women in informal employment compared to 83.6 per cent of employed men.

Informality is even higher in rural areas. Among rural women, 94.3 per cent were in informal employment, while the corresponding rate for rural men was 88.7 per cent.

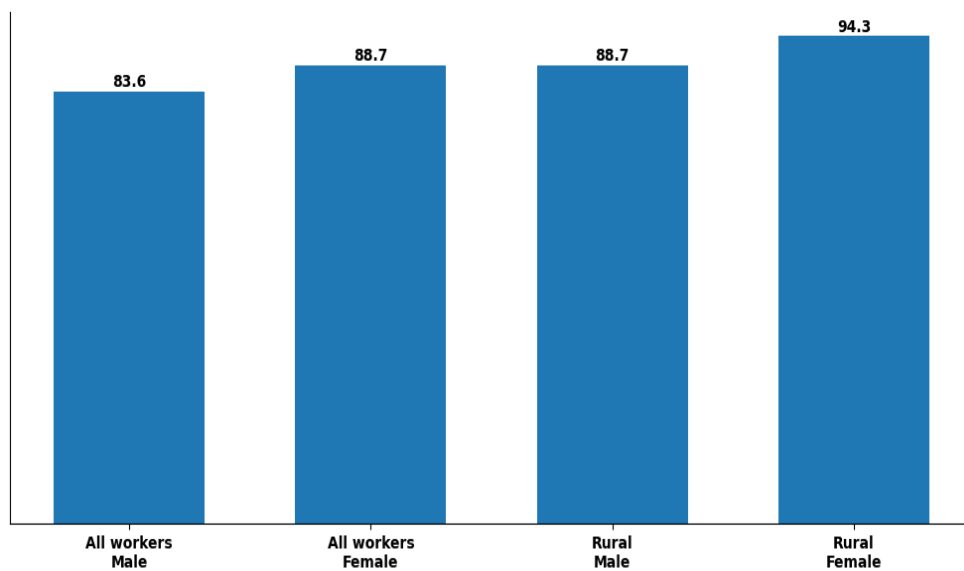


Figure 9.6: Informal employment by sex and residence (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Youth-Specific Challenges for Young Women

Table 9.1 presents two indicators of labour market exclusion for youth (15–35 years) by sex: the NEET rate (not in education, employment or training) and discouraged jobseekers as a percentage of the population aged 15 and older.

Between 2025 (Q1) and 2026 (Q1), the NEET rate for young women declined from 45.3 per cent to 40.0 per cent, while for young men it fell from 36.6 per cent to 26.5 per cent. Despite the improvement, young women remain more likely to be NEET than young men. The share of discouraged jobseekers increased for both sexes, with women having a higher rate (7.1% in 2026) than men (6.0%).

Table 9.1: Youth labour market exclusion indicators by sex (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	GLFS 2025 (Q1) (%)		GLFS 2026 (Q1) (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
NEET (15–35), %	36.6	45.3	26.5	40.0
Discouraged jobseekers (as % of population 15+)	4.6	6.8	6.0	7.1

Note: Discouraged jobseekers are persons outside the labour force who want to work but are not actively seeking employment because they believe no work is available.

Leadership and Decision-Making (SDG Indicator 5.5.2)

Table 9.2 presents the share of women in managerial positions (SDG Indicator 5.5.2) for three survey rounds: 2023 (Q1), 2025 (Q1) and 2026 (Q1). Between 2023 and 2026, the share of women in managerial positions remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 28.1 per cent and 29.7 per cent.

Despite a slight decline to 28.1 per cent in 2025 followed by a modest recovery to 29.5 per cent in 2026, none of the observed changes are statistically significant ($p > 0.05$ for all pairwise comparisons). The wide confidence intervals reflect the relatively small sample sizes of managers in each survey round. These estimates suggest no meaningful change in women's representation in managerial positions over the three year period.

Table 9.2: Share of women in managerial positions (SDG 5.5.2), GLFS 2023 (Q1), 2025 (Q1) and 2026 (Q1)

Indicator	Survey	Per cent	95% CI
Share of women in managerial positions (SDG 5.5.2)	¹ GLFS 2023 (Q1)	29.7	(18.1 – 41.2)
Share of women in managerial positions (SDG 5.5.2)	GLFS 2025 (Q1)	28.1	(20.5 – 35.6)
Share of women in managerial positions (SDG 5.5.2)	GLFS 2026 (Q1)	29.5	(21.3 – 39.4)

Note: Statistical tests for differences between rounds are not significant ($p > 0.05$). Confidence intervals are based on logit transformation.

¹ The GLFS 2023 (Q1) report originally reported 36.1% for SDG 5.5.2 using ISCO-08 data but applying the ISCO-88 classification (codes 11 and 12 only). Following the correct ISCO-08 methodology (codes 11, 12, and 13), the estimate has been revised to 29.7%.

The findings show that women in The Gambia's labour market continue to face multiple disadvantages relative to men. Between 2025 (Q1) and 2026 (Q1), female labour force participation increased, but remains substantially lower than male participation. Women have higher unemployment, higher labour underutilisation, and are more likely to work in informal employment.

They are concentrated in services and sales occupations and remain underrepresented in managerial roles. Young women are more likely to be NEET and discouraged than young men. Access to formal employment has declined for both sexes, but women remain less likely than men to hold formal jobs. The share of women in managerial positions has not changed significantly over the four year period from 2023 to 2026.

These findings underscore the need for targeted policies to improve women's labour market outcomes, including access to formal employment, support for young women transitioning from education to work, and measures to reduce occupational segregation and promote women into leadership positions.

Note: *Estimates for managerial positions are based on small sample sizes; confidence intervals are provided to reflect the uncertainty. Other indicators with small subgroup sample sizes (e.g., women in specific LGAs) should be interpreted with caution, following the guidance in earlier chapters.*

CHAPTER 10. YOUTH IN THE LABOUR MARKET

10.1 Introduction

This chapter presents labour market outcomes for youth aged 15-35 years using data from the Gambia Labour Force Survey (GLFS) 2026 (Q1), with comparisons to GLFS 2025 (Q1). The analysis covers labour force participation, employment, unemployment, and labour underutilisation, alongside indicators of labour market exclusion such as NEET (not in education, employment or training). Differences by sex and residence are examined. The results highlight changes in labour market engagement, as well as persistent disparities across groups.

10.1.1 Key Labour Market Outcomes for Youth

Figure 10.1 shows that labour market indicators for youth improved between GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). Labour force participation increased from 40.0 per cent to 48.3 per cent, while the employment-to-population ratio rose from 35.4 per cent to 44.1 per cent. Over the same period, the NEET rate declined from 41.3 per cent to 33.7 per cent, and labour underutilisation (LU3) decreased from 33.3 per cent to 29.9 per cent.

These changes indicate increased labour market engagement among youth, with a larger share of young people either working or actively participating in the labour market in 2026 (Q1) compared to 2025 (Q1).

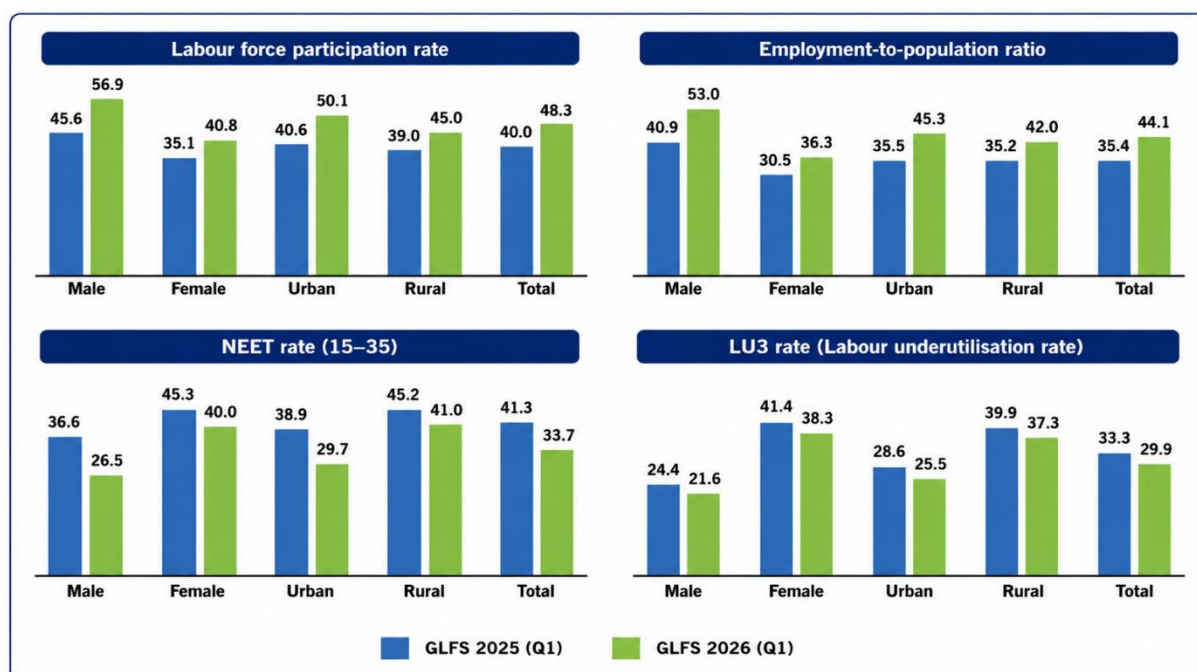


Figure 10.1: Key labour market indicators for youth (15-35 years), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

10.1.2 Youth Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET): Rate and Composition

Figure 10.2 shows the NEET rate among youth (15-35 years) by sex for GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). The NEET rate declined for both males and females over the period. Among males, the rate decreased from 36.6 per cent in 2025 (Q1) to 26.5 per cent in 2026 (Q1), while among females it declined from 45.3 per cent to 40.0 per cent. Overall, the NEET rate fell from 41.3 per cent to 33.7 per cent.

Despite the decline, females continue to exhibit higher NEET rates than males in both years, indicating a persistent gender gap in labour market and educational participation among youth.

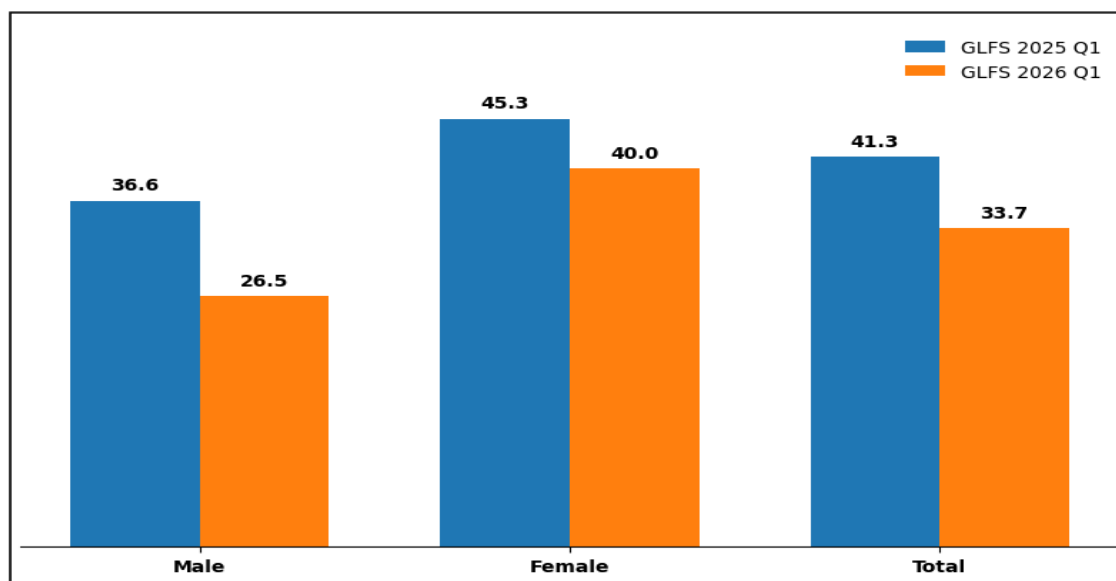


Figure 10.2: Youth NEET rate by sex (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

10.1.3 Composition of Youth NEET

Figure 10.3 presents the composition of youth NEET. In 2025 (Q1), unemployed youth accounted for 10.2 per cent of NEET, the potential labour force (available but not seeking) accounted for 27.4 per cent, and other outside the labour force accounted for 62.4 per cent. In 2026 (Q1), the share of unemployed NEET youth rose slightly to 11.0 per cent, the potential labour force share increased to 35.3 per cent, while the share of those outside the labour force declined to 53.7 per cent.

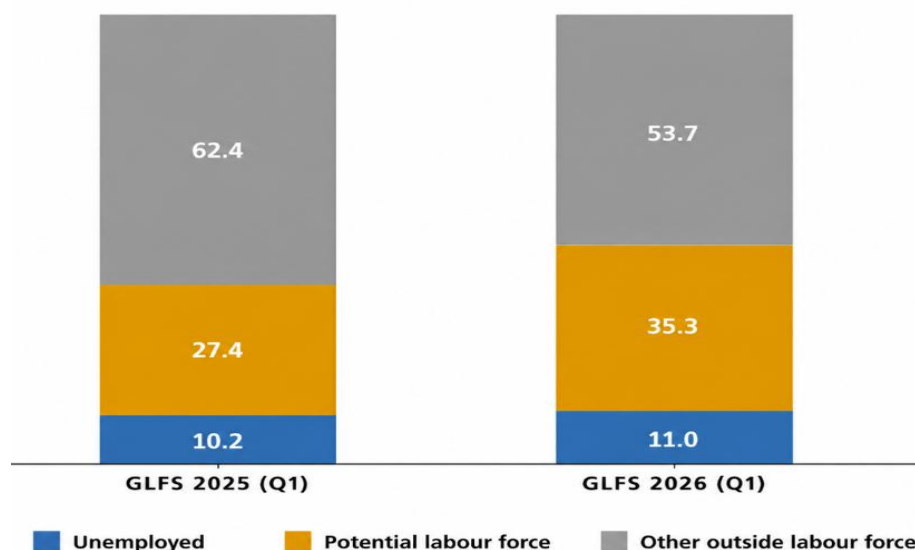


Figure 10.3: Composition of youth NEET (15-35), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Table 10.1 presents the detailed distribution of youth (15-35 years) in 2026 (Q1), including counts and the disaggregation of NEET into unemployed, potential labour force, and other outside the labour force.

In 2026 (Q1), the total youth population was 919,078. Of these, 39.6 per cent were in employment only, 22.2 per cent were in education only, and 4.5 per cent were in both employment and education. The remaining 33.7 per cent were not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Among NEET youth, 11.0 per cent were unemployed, 35.3 per cent were in the potential labour force, and 53.7 per cent were outside the labour force.

By sex, males are more likely to be in employment only (48.1%) than females (32.1%), while females have a higher NEET rate (40.0%) than males (26.5%). Within NEET, a larger share of females are in the potential labour force (37.7%) compared to males (31.2%).

Table 10.1: Distribution of youth (15-35) by employment and education status, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	Count			Per cent		
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
In employment only	364,067	206,957	157,110	48.1	32.1	39.6
In education only	203,890	88,273	115,617	20.5	23.7	22.2
In both employment and education	41,510	21,046	20,464	4.9	4.2	4.5
Not in education, employment or training (NEET)	309,611	114,055	195,556	26.5	40.0	33.7
- Unemployed	34,162	14,585	19,577	12.8	10.0	11.0
- Potential labour force	109,303	35,569	73,734	31.2	37.7	35.3
- Other outside labour force	166,145	63,901	102,245	56.0	52.3	53.7

Total youth population (15-35 years)	919,078	430,331	488,747	100.0	100.0	100.0
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10.1.4 Youth Status in Employment

Figure 10.4 presents the distribution of employed youth (15-35 years) by status in employment according to the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-18) in GLFS 2026 (Q1).

Under the authority classification (ICSE-18 A), dependent workers accounted for a slightly larger share of employed youth (52.1%) than independent workers (47.9%). However, substantial gender differences are evident. Male youth were more likely to be dependent workers (59.6%), whereas female youth were more likely to be independent workers (57.6%).

Under the economic risk classification (ICSE-18 R), employment for profit was the dominant form of youth employment, accounting for 64.1 per cent of employed youth, compared with 31.5 per cent in employment for pay. Female youth were considerably more likely to be engaged in employment for profit (71.1%) than male youth (58.7%), while employment for pay was more common among male youth (34.4%) than female youth (27.8%).

These findings indicate that youth employment remains strongly oriented towards independent and profit-based work arrangements, particularly among young women.

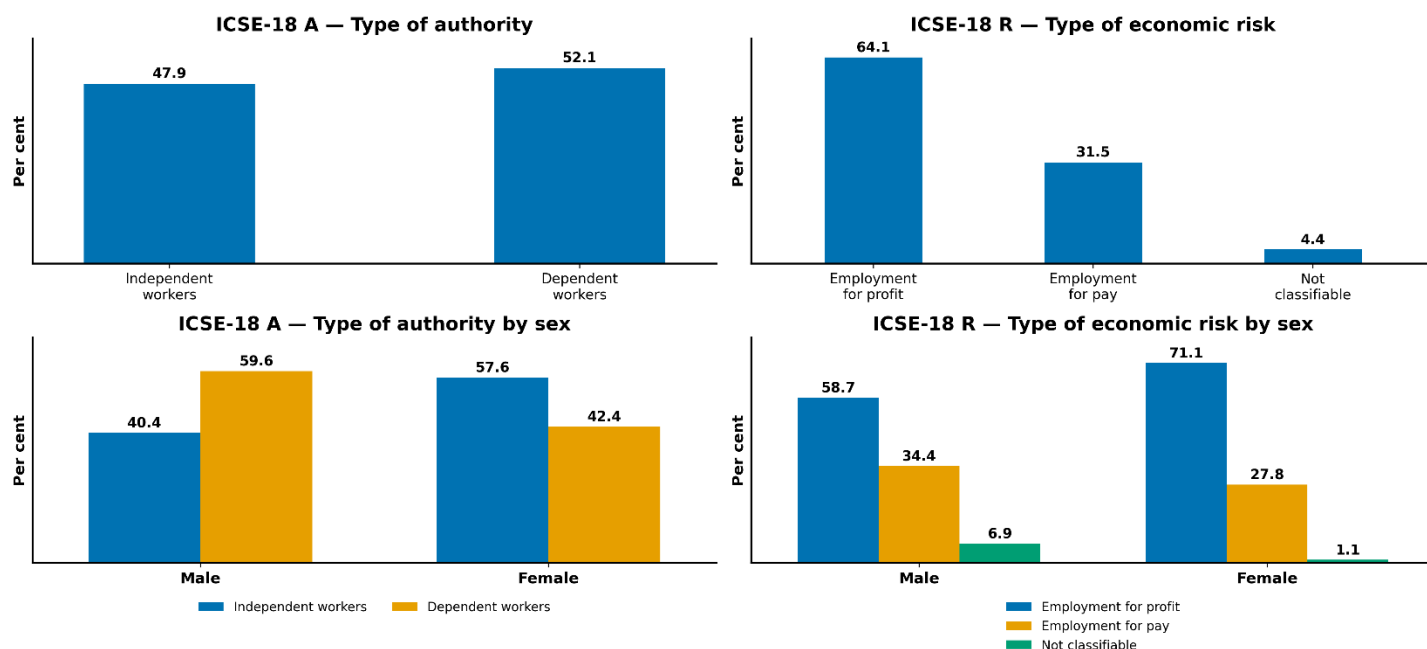


Figure 10.4: Youth status in employment by type of authority and type of economic risk (ICSE-18), main job (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1).

10.1.5 Youth Employment by Sector of Economic Activity

Figure 10.5 shows the distribution of employed youth (15-35 years) by sector of economic activity in GLFS 2026 (Q1). The majority of employed youth are engaged in the services sector, which accounts for 54.8 per cent of total youth employment. The industry sector accounts for 29.1 per cent, while agriculture represents 16.1 per cent.

This distribution indicates that youth employment in The Gambia is predominantly concentrated in services, with smaller shares in industry and agriculture.

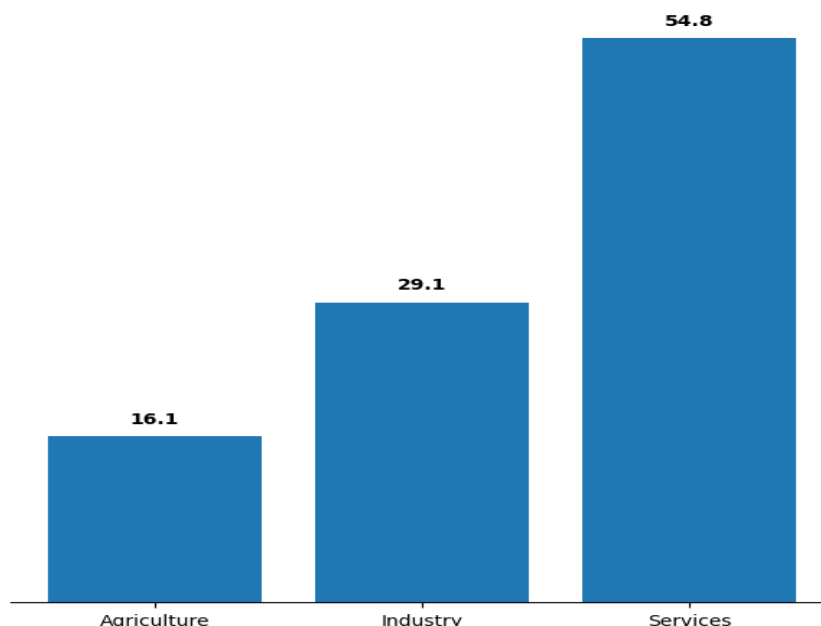


Figure 10.5: Youth employment by sector

10.1.6 Change in Key Youth Labour Market Indicators

Table 10.2 summarises changes in key youth labour market indicators between GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). Improvements are observed across several indicators, including increases in labour force participation and employment, and declines in the NEET rate and labour underutilisation (LU3).

Labour force participation and employment increased over the period, reflecting increased labour market participation and employment among youth. At the same time, the reduction in NEET and LU3 reflects a decline in labour market exclusion and underutilisation among youth.

Table 10.2: Change in key labour market indicators for youth (15-35), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	GLFS 2025 (Q1) (%)	GLFS 2026 (Q1) (%)
Labour force participation rate	40.0	48.3
Employment-to-population ratio	35.4	44.1
NEET rate (15-35)	41.3	33.7
LU3 rate	33.3	29.9
Unemployment rate	11.5	8.7

10.1.7 Detailed Youth Labour Force and Underutilisation Indicators (GLFS 2026 Q1)

Table 10.3 presents main labour force and labour underutilisation indicators for youth aged 15-35 years by sex, residence, LGA and total, based on the main job.

Between 2025 (Q1) and 2026 (Q1), youth (15-35) experienced improvements in labour force participation, employment, NEET rates and unemployment. In 2026 (Q1), substantial differences persist across sex, residence and LGAs. Female youth have lower labour force participation, higher NEET rates and higher labour underutilisation than males. Rural youth face higher NEET rates, higher informality and higher time-related underemployment than urban youth.

Youth unemployment varies across LGAs. In 2026 (Q1), higher unemployment rates are observed in Banjul (17.8%), Kanifing (13.1%), and Basse (13.1%), while lower rates are recorded in Janjanbureh (4.6%), Kerewan (6.3%), and Mansakonko (6.5%).

Table 10.3: Main labour force and labour underutilisation (LU) indicators for youth (15-35), GLFS 2026 (Q1) (%) - Main job

	Sex		Residence		Local government area								Total
	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Banjul	Kanifing	Brikama	Mansakonko	Kerewan	Kuntaur	Janjanbureh	Basse	
Labour force participation rate (%)	56.9	40.8	50.1	45.0	57.4	48.4	53.0	53.8	41.3	36.0	49.9	31.9	48.3
Outside the labour force (%)	43.1	59.2	49.9	55.0	42.6	51.6	47.0	46.2	58.8	64.0	50.1	68.1	51.7
Potential labour force (%)	24.7	30.5	21.2	40.1	21.7	18.3	23.5	51.0	52.2	52.2	42.5	18.8	28.2
Employment-to-population ratio (%)	53.0	36.3	45.3	42.0	47.2	42.1	49.0	50.4	38.7	32.9	47.6	27.8	44.1
NEET % (15-35)	26.5	40.0	29.7	41.0	29.7	31.0	27.6	29.9	40.0	52.0	38.0	55.5	33.7
NEET % (15-24)	29.5	34.8	28.0	39.7	25.2	29.0	26.4	27.9	39.2	49.3	36.7	51.8	32.2
² Discouraged job-seekers (% of outside LF)	13.9	12.0	8.3	20.2	10.7	6.4	8.5	10.0	23.8	33.1	24.0	15.7	12.8
Discouraged jobseekers (% of population 15+)	6.0	7.1	4.2	11.1	4.6	3.3	4.0	4.6	14.0	21.2	12.0	10.7	6.6
Informal employment (%)	88.6	88.5	86.5	92.9	80.9	85.9	87.9	91.0	89.4	94.2	94.6	93.1	88.6
Employed population in agriculture (%)	11.0	22.6	6.8	34.7	2.9	1.9	12.4	30.1	35.1	39.5	38.7	23.6	16.1
Informal employment excluding agriculture (%)	87.9	85.3	86	89.4	80.3	85.7	86.6	87.3	85.6	90.6	91.5	90.9	86.9
³ Time-related underemployment rate (%)	8.4	18.8	9.8	19.2	7.9	8.5	11.3	15.4	13.5	39.8	24.9	13.4	12.9
⁴ LU1: Unemployment rate (%)	6.9	10.9	9.7	6.6	17.8	13.1	7.5	6.5	6.3	8.6	4.6	13.1	8.7
LU2: Combined rate of time-related underemployment and unemployment (%)	14.7	27.6	18.6	24.5	24.2	20.5	17.9	20.9	18.9	44.9	28.3	24.7	20.5
LU3: Combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force (%)	21.6	38.3	25.5	37.3	29.1	27.3	23.5	34.9	46.2	52.6	33.1	38.0	29.9
LU4: Composite measure of labour underutilisation (%)	28.2	49.8	32.8	49.3	34.7	33.4	32.1	45.0	53.5	71.5	49.7	46.3	38.9

Note: Estimates for LGAs with small sample sizes (e.g., Banjul youth population) should be interpreted with caution. NEET rates for youth aged 15-24 are also provided as a sub-indicator.

² Estimates of discouraged job-seekers for Banjul, Kanifing, Brikama, Mansakonko, Janjanbureh, and Basse have coefficients of variation between 11% and 18%; interpret with caution.

³ Time-related underemployment estimates for Banjul, Kanifing, Mansakonko, Kerewan, and Basse have coefficients of variation between 10% and 16%; interpret with caution.

⁴ Unemployment rates for Mansakonko, Kerewan, Kuntaur, Janjanbureh, and Basse have coefficients of variation between 10% and 18%; interpret with caution.

CHAPTER 11. CHILD LABOUR

11.1 Introduction and Legal Framework

For the purpose of national monitoring, child labour in GLFS 2026 (Q1) is measured in line with The Gambia's national legislation and operationalised, where the legislation does not provide sufficient statistical detail, with reference to the international statistical framework on child labour measurement. The Children's Act, 2005 defines a child as any person below 18 years of age, prohibits exploitative labour, night work and hazardous employment for all children, and sets the minimum age for light work at 16 years. The Labour Act, 2023 further provides that, subject to the Children's Act, children shall not be engaged in public or private agricultural, industrial or non-industrial undertakings, except where the work forms part of approved and supervised vocational or technical education or training.

Accordingly, the national child labour measure classifies as child labour all children aged 5-15 engaged in employment work or own-use production of goods; children aged 5-15 spending 21 hours or more per week fetching water or collecting firewood; and all children aged 5-17 engaged in hazardous work, exploitative work, or work that is harmful to their health, safety, morals, education or development. Children aged 16-17 are classified as being in child labour when they are engaged in hazardous work, exploitative work, or work exceeding the working-time threshold used for hazardous work, set at 43 hours or more per week. This approach ensures that the national estimate reflects The Gambia's legal framework while using internationally recognised statistical criteria to operationalise elements not explicitly specified in the legislation, such as working-time thresholds.

Because the national child labour measure used in GLFS 2026 (Q1) has been revised to better reflect The Gambia's legal framework, the resulting estimates are not directly comparable with those presented in previous GLFS reports. For comparability over time and for international reporting, users should refer to the SDG 8.7.1 comparable estimate presented in the dedicated section of this chapter, which applies harmonised age-specific thresholds and provides the appropriate basis for trend analysis.

For international reporting purposes, the chapter also presents a separate SDG 8.7.1 estimate based on the internationally harmonised methodology jointly maintained by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). These estimates are presented in the final section of the chapter to facilitate international comparability while maintaining a primary focus on national monitoring and policy analysis.

11.1.1 Methodological Enhancements for GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Compared with GLFS 2023 (Q1), three important changes were introduced in the measurement framework to strengthen the measurement of child labour and improve alignment with The Gambia's legal framework and international statistical standards. First, fetching water and collecting firewood were classified as household chores rather than economic activities. These activities contribute to child labour only when they exceed 21 hours per week among children aged 5-15 years. Second, hours spent on own-use production of goods (OPG) activities were incorporated into the child labour measurement framework. These activities were not incorporated into the child labour measurement framework used for the 2023 estimates. Third, the national child labour measure was revised to align more closely with the provisions of the Children's Act (2005) and the Labour Act (2023).

These changes improve the measurement of child labour and strengthen the link between statistical reporting and the national legal framework. However, because the national child labour measure has been revised, the resulting estimates are not directly comparable with those presented in previous GLFS reports. Users interested in trend analysis should refer to the SDG 8.7.1 estimates presented later in this chapter, which are produced using a harmonised methodology designed for international comparability.

Note: The concept of child labour includes hazardous work and the worst forms of child labour, such as slavery, trafficking, forced labour, commercial sexual exploitation, and recruitment into armed conflict. However, most worst forms of child labour cannot be reliably measured through household surveys because of their hidden and often illegal nature. Consequently, the estimates presented in this chapter are limited to forms of child labour that can be measured using household survey data.

11.1.2 Prevalence of Child Labour in GLFS 2026 (Q1)

This section presents the prevalence of child labour among children aged 5-17 years using the national child labour measure. The estimates capture children aged 5-15 years engaged in employment work or own-use production of goods, children aged 5-15 years who spend excessive time fetching water or collecting firewood, and children aged 5-17 years engaged in hazardous work, including hazardous working conditions, hazardous occupations, hazardous industries, and excessive working hours. The results provide a comprehensive picture of child labour in The Gambia and identify population groups and geographic areas where children remain most vulnerable.

Table 11.1 presents the prevalence of child labour among children aged 5-17 years in 2026 (Q1), using the national child labour definition. Estimates include hazardous work and are therefore not directly comparable with SDG 8.7.1 estimates.

Nationally, 12.9 per cent of children aged 5-17 (108,087 children) are engaged in child labour. Prevalence increases with age. Among children aged 5-15 years, 12.3 per cent (88,916 children) are in child labour. Among children aged 16-17 years, prevalence rises to 17.4 per cent (19,171 children). The increase in child labour with age is consistent with greater participation in work activities and higher exposure to hazardous work among older adolescents.

By sex, child labour prevalence is very similar among boys (12.9%) and girls (13.0%), although the number of boys in child labour (54,492) is slightly higher than that of girls (53,595).

By residence, child labour is much more prevalent in rural areas (19.5%) than in urban areas (7.9%). Rural areas account for 70,980 children in child labour, compared to 37,108 in urban areas. Higher rural prevalence reflects the concentration of children in agricultural activities and family-based production, which are more common in rural areas.

By LGA, Kuntaur records the highest prevalence of child labour (34.7%), followed by Mansakonko (22.6%) and Janjanbureh (17.9%). The lowest prevalence is observed in Kanifing (3.5%) and Banjul (3.8%), followed by Basse (10.4%) and Brikama (12.4%).

The following sections examine the characteristics of children engaged in child labour, including the sectors in which they work, their educational participation, exposure to hazardous work, and working time.

Table 11.1: Prevalence of child labour among children aged 5-17 years, by age group, sex, residence and LGA, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	Children aged 5-15		Children aged 16-17		Children aged 5-17	
	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.
Sex						
Male	11.6	42,802	22.2	11,690	12.9	54,492
Female	13.0	46,114	13.0	7,482	13.0	53,595
Residence						
Urban	7.2	28,878	11.7	8,230	7.9	37,108
Rural	18.5	60,038	27.4	10,942	19.5	70,980
LGA						
Banjul	3.2	190	7.1	80	3.8	270
Kanifing	2.5	2,351	9.4	1,581	3.5	3,932
Brikama	12.0	39,785	14.7	8,050	12.4	47,835
Mansakonko	21.2	6,373	32.9	1,333	22.6	7,706
Kerewan	12.5	10,226	15.1	1,636	12.8	11,862
Kuntaur	33.0	13,435	47.7	2,457	34.7	15,891
Janjanbureh	16.6	8,264	27.7	1,776	17.9	10,040
Basse	9.2	8,292	20.2	2,259	10.4	10,551
TOTAL	12.3	88,916	17.4	19,171	12.9	108,087

Figure 11.1 presents the relationship between children engaged in economic activities, children in child labour, and children engaged in hazardous work among children aged 5-17 years in The Gambia. Of the estimated 835,194 children in this age group, 115,157 (13.8%) were engaged in economic activities. Of these, 108,087 children, representing 12.9 per cent of all children aged 5-17 years, were classified as being in child labour according to the national child labour measure. A further 75,348 children (9.0%) were engaged in hazardous work, which represents the most severe form of child labour captured by the survey.

The figure highlights that the vast majority of working children are classified as being in child labour under the national definition. Of the 115,157 children engaged in economic activities, 108,087 (93.9%) were in child labour, while only about 7,070 working children did not meet the criteria for child labour. Hazardous work also accounts for a substantial share of child labour, with 75,348 children engaged in hazardous work, representing nearly 70 per cent of all children in child labour.

The gender distribution reveals important differences. Girls were slightly more likely than boys to be engaged in economic activities, accounting for 58,302 working children compared with 56,856 boys. Child labour prevalence was almost identical for boys (12.9%) and girls (13.0%). However, boys were considerably more likely to be engaged in hazardous work, with 43,634 boys (10.4%) in hazardous work compared with 31,714 girls (7.7%). These findings suggest that while child labour affects boys and girls to a similar extent overall, boys are more frequently exposed to the most dangerous forms of work.

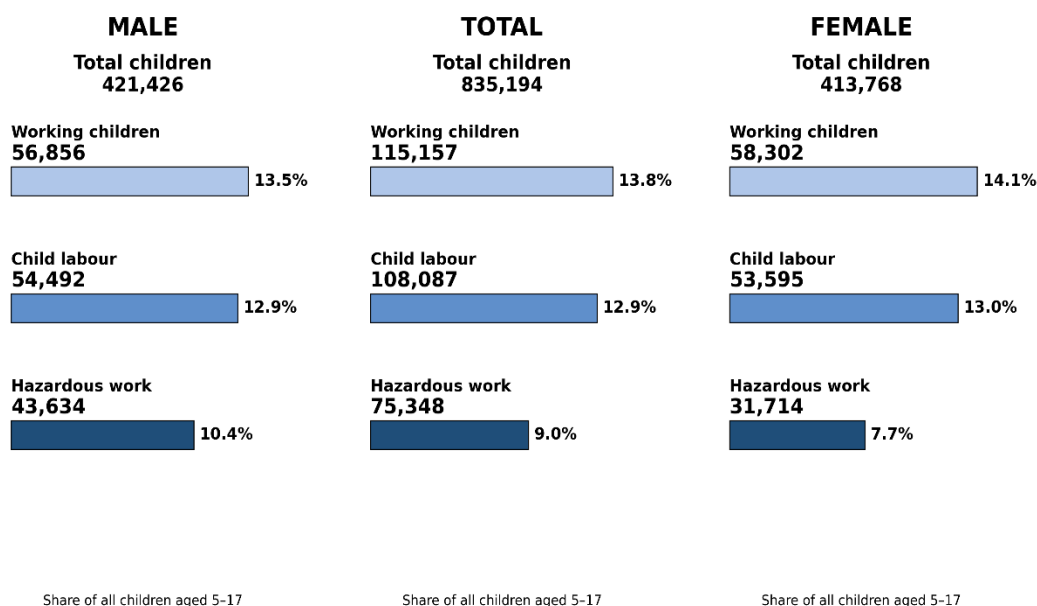


Figure 11.1: Child labour profile among children aged 5-17 years, by sex, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

11.1.3 Characteristics of Child Labour

11.1.3.1 Sector of Economic Activity

Table 11.2 presents the sectoral distribution of children in child labour. Among children aged 5-15 years, agriculture is the dominant sector, accounting for 63.4 per cent of child labour. Industry accounts for 16.1 per cent, and services account for 20.5 per cent.

By sex, girls in child labour are more concentrated in agriculture (67.7%) than boys (59.5%). Boys have higher shares in industry (23.8%) than girls (7.8%), while girls have a higher share in services (24.5%) than boys (16.8%).

By residence, rural children in child labour are heavily concentrated in agriculture (74.5%), while urban children are more evenly distributed across agriculture (38.1%), industry (26.0%), and services (35.8%).

Among children aged 16-17 years, agriculture accounts for 38.5 per cent of child labour, industry accounts for 36.4 per cent, and services account for 25.1 per cent. The share of industry is substantially higher among older children compared to younger children. Among boys aged 16-17 years, nearly half (48.7%) are engaged in industry-related activities, compared with 13.1 per cent of girls. In contrast, girls remain more concentrated in agriculture (64.5%) than boys (24.8%).

Residence patterns among older children are less pronounced than among younger children. Rural children aged 16-17 years remain concentrated in agriculture (46.1%) and industry (37.3%), while urban children are distributed more evenly across agriculture (29.9%), industry (35.4%), and services (34.6%).

Table 11.2: Percentage distribution of children in child labour by sector of economic activity, age, sex and residence, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Children aged 5-15 years				
	Agriculture	Industry	Services	Total
Sex				
Male	59.5	23.8	16.8	100.0
Female	67.7	7.8	24.5	100.0
Residence				
Urban	38.1	26.0	35.8	100.0
Rural	74.5	11.8	13.7	100.0
Total	63.4	16.1	20.5	100.0
Children aged 16-17 years				
Sex				
Male	24.8	48.7	26.5	100.0
Female	64.5	13.1	22.4	100.0
Residence				
Urban	29.9	35.4	34.6	100.0
Rural	46.1	37.3	16.6	100.0
Total	38.5	36.4	25.1	100.0

11.1.4 Activity Status (Work and School Combination)

Children's participation in economic activities does not necessarily constitute child labour. Many children engage in economic activities that fall within the System of National Accounts (SNA) production boundary while also attending school and without meeting the criteria for child labour. Examining the combination of work and schooling provides important insights into how children allocate their time and the extent to which participation in economic activities occurs alongside school attendance.

Table 11.3 presents the activity status of children aged 5-15 years according to their participation in economic activities and school attendance. The majority of children (64.7%) are engaged exclusively in schooling. A further 8.9 per cent combine economic activities with school attendance, while 3.2 per cent are engaged only in economic activities and are not attending school. Nearly one-quarter of children (23.1%) are neither engaged in economic activities nor attending school, highlighting a sizeable group of children who are disconnected from both work and education.

Overall, 12.1 per cent of children aged 5-15 years participate in economic activities, either exclusively or alongside schooling. At the same time, 73.6 per cent are attending school, while 26.4 per cent are out of school.

By sex, girls are more likely than boys to combine economic activities with schooling (10.4% compared with 7.4%). Boys are more likely to be engaged only in economic activities (4.2%) than girls (2.2%). School attendance is also higher among girls (80.0%) than boys (67.5%), while boys are considerably more likely to be out of school (32.5%) than girls (20.0%).

By residence, participation in economic activities is substantially higher in rural areas (18.2%) than in urban areas (7.1%). Rural children are also more likely to combine economic activities with schooling (13.1%) than urban children (5.5%). School attendance is considerably higher in urban areas (78.5%) than in rural areas (67.7%), while the proportion of children who are out of school is markedly higher in rural areas (32.3%) than in urban areas (21.5%).

Table 11.3: Percentage distribution of children by activity status, sex and residence, ages 5-15 years, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	Only working	Only schooling	Working and schooling	Neither activity	Total working	Total in school	Total out of school
Sex							
Male	4.2	60.1	7.4	28.3	11.6	67.5	32.5
Female	2.2	69.5	10.4	17.8	12.7	80.0	20.0
Residence							
Urban	1.6	73.0	5.5	19.9	7.1	78.5	21.5
Rural	5.2	54.6	13.1	27.2	18.2	67.7	32.3
Total 5-15	3.2	64.7	8.9	23.1	12.1	73.6	26.4

Table 11.4 presents the activity status of children aged 16-17 years according to their participation in economic activities and school attendance. Just over half of children in this age group (52.8%) are engaged exclusively in schooling, while 13.0 per cent combine economic activities with school attendance. A further 11.9 per cent are engaged only in economic activities and are not attending school, while 22.3 per cent are neither engaged in economic activities nor attending school.

Overall, 24.9 per cent of children aged 16-17 years participate in economic activities, either exclusively or alongside schooling. At the same time, 65.8 per cent are attending school, while 34.2 per cent are out of school.

By sex, boys are substantially more likely than girls to be engaged only in economic activities (16.6% compared with 7.6%) and are also more likely to be out of school (43.9% compared with 25.3%). In contrast, girls are more likely to combine economic activities with schooling (15.3%) than boys (10.5%) and have considerably higher school attendance rates (74.7% compared with 56.1%).

By residence, participation in economic activities is substantially higher in rural areas (34.9%) than in urban areas (19.2%). Rural children are also more likely to combine economic activities with schooling (17.4%) than urban children (10.5%). School attendance is higher in urban areas (71.7%) than in rural areas (55.4%), while the proportion of children who are out of school is considerably higher in rural areas (44.6%) than in urban areas (28.3%).

Table 11.4: Percentage distribution of children by activity status, sex and residence, ages 16-17 years, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	Only working	Only schooling	Working and schooling	Neither activity	Total working	Total in school	Total out of school
Sex							
Male	16.6	45.6	10.5	27.3	27.0	56.1	43.9
Female	7.6	59.4	15.3	17.7	22.9	74.7	25.3
Residence							
Urban	8.7	61.3	10.5	19.5	19.2	71.7	28.3
Rural	17.4	38.0	17.4	27.2	34.9	55.4	44.6
Total 16-17	11.9	52.8	13.0	22.3	24.9	65.8	34.2

11.1.5 Hazardous Work

Hazardous work refers to work that is likely to harm a child's health, safety, morals, or development. In the GLFS 2026 (Q1), hazardous work is measured using a composite indicator that combines information on hazardous working conditions, hazardous occupations, hazardous industries, and excessive working hours. This section presents the prevalence of hazardous work among children aged 5-17 years.

Table 11.5 presents the percentage of children engaged in hazardous work. Among children aged 5-17 years, 9.0 per cent are engaged in hazardous work. Prevalence increases with age, rising from 7.7 per cent among children aged 5-15 years to 17.4 per cent among those aged 16-17 years. By sex, hazardous work is more prevalent among boys (10.4%) than among girls (7.7%). By residence, hazardous work is much higher in rural areas (14.5%) than in urban areas (4.8%).

By LGA, Figure 11.2 presents the prevalence of hazardous work among children aged 5-17 years by Local Government Area (LGA). Substantial geographic disparities are evident across the country. Kuntaur records the highest prevalence of hazardous work at 30.4 per cent, followed by Mansakonko (16.2%) and Janjanbureh (12.1%). Elevated levels are also observed in Basse (8.7%) and Kerewan (8.6%).

In contrast, the lowest prevalence of hazardous work is recorded in Banjul (2.8%) and Kanifing (2.9%), while Brikama records a relatively lower prevalence of 7.5 per cent. The results indicate that hazardous work is concentrated in predominantly rural LGAs, reflecting the greater involvement of children in agricultural and other potentially hazardous activities in rural areas.

The particularly high prevalence observed in Kuntaur and Mansakonko suggests the need for targeted interventions and strengthened monitoring efforts in these areas to reduce children's exposure to hazardous forms of work and improve compliance with child protection legislation.

Table 11.5 highlights the strong association between hazardous work and both age and place of residence. Older children and those living in rural areas are considerably more likely to be exposed to hazardous forms of work than younger children and their urban counterparts.

Table 11.5: Percentage of children engaged in hazardous work by age group, sex, and residence, ages 5-17 years, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	Hazardous work (%)
Age group	
5 -15	7.7
16-17	17.4
Sex	
Male	10.4
Female	7.7
Residence	
Urban	4.8
Rural	14.5
Total (5-17)	9.0

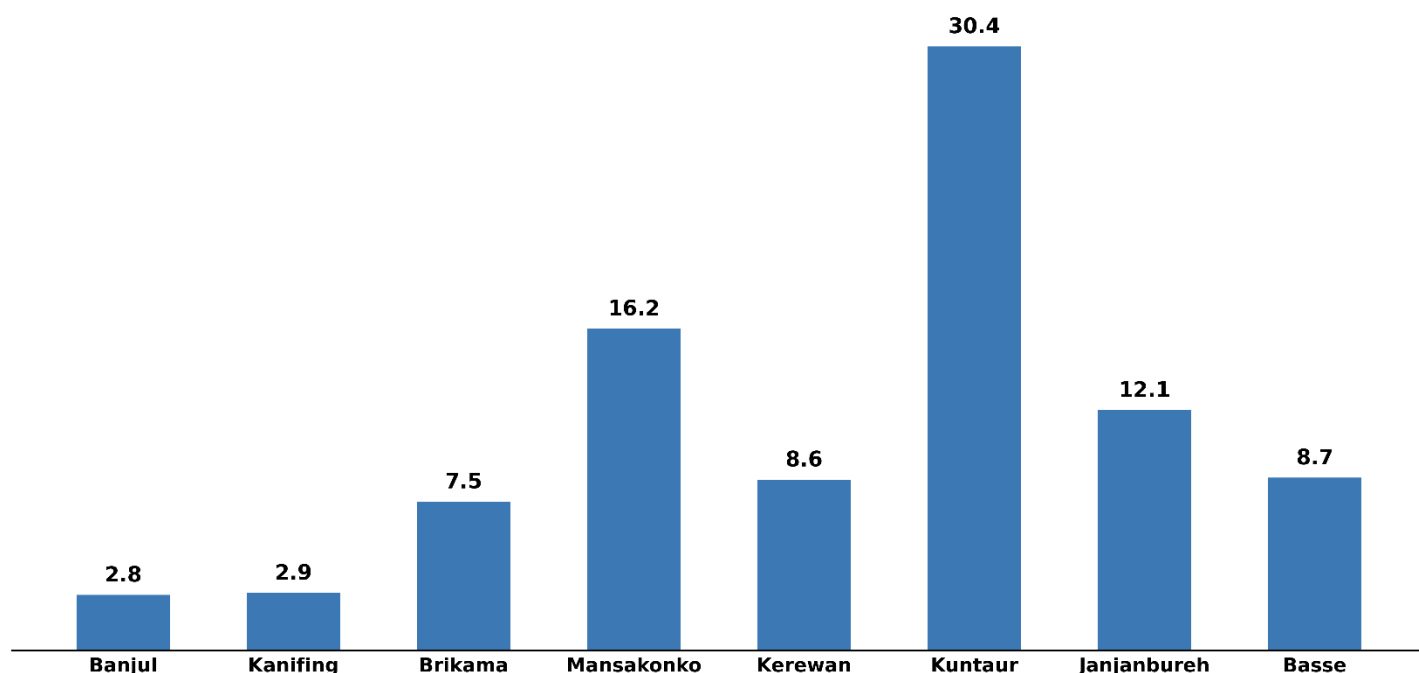


Figure 11.2: Percentage of children engaged in hazardous work by LGA, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

11.1.6 Time Intensity (Weekly Working Hours)

Table 11.6 presents the average weekly working hours among children in child labour. The mean number of working hours increases with age, rising from 16.6 hours per week among children aged 5-15 years to 29.8 hours among those aged 16-17 years. The substantially higher average among older children reflects their greater involvement in more intensive forms of work.

By sex, boys work longer hours on average (22.0 hours per week) than girls (15.7 hours). By residence, urban children in child labour work longer hours on average (21.2 hours per week) than rural children (17.7 hours), despite child labour being more prevalent in rural areas.

Table 11.6: Average weekly working hours among children in child labour, by age group, sex and residence, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	Mean hours (per week)
Age group	
5 –15	16.6
16 –17	29.8
Sex	
Male	22.0
Female	15.7
Residence	
Urban	21.2
Rural	17.7

Figure 11.3 presents the distribution of children in child labour by weekly working hours. Among children aged 5-15 years, the majority (52.2%) work 1-13 hours per week, while 38.3 per cent work 14-42 hours and 9.5 per cent work 43 hours or more.

For children aged 16-17 years, 28.6 per cent work 1-13 hours per week, 42.8 per cent work 14-42 hours, and 28.6 per cent work 43 hours or more.

The distribution of working hours shifts towards longer working hours with age. The proportion of children working 43 hours or more per week increases from 9.5 per cent among children aged 5-15 years to 28.6 per cent among those aged 16-17 years. Conversely, the share working 1-13 hours per week declines from 52.2 per cent to 28.6 per cent. These findings indicate that older children in child labour are more likely to be engaged in intensive work schedules, including long working hours that may be detrimental to their health, education, and overall well-being.

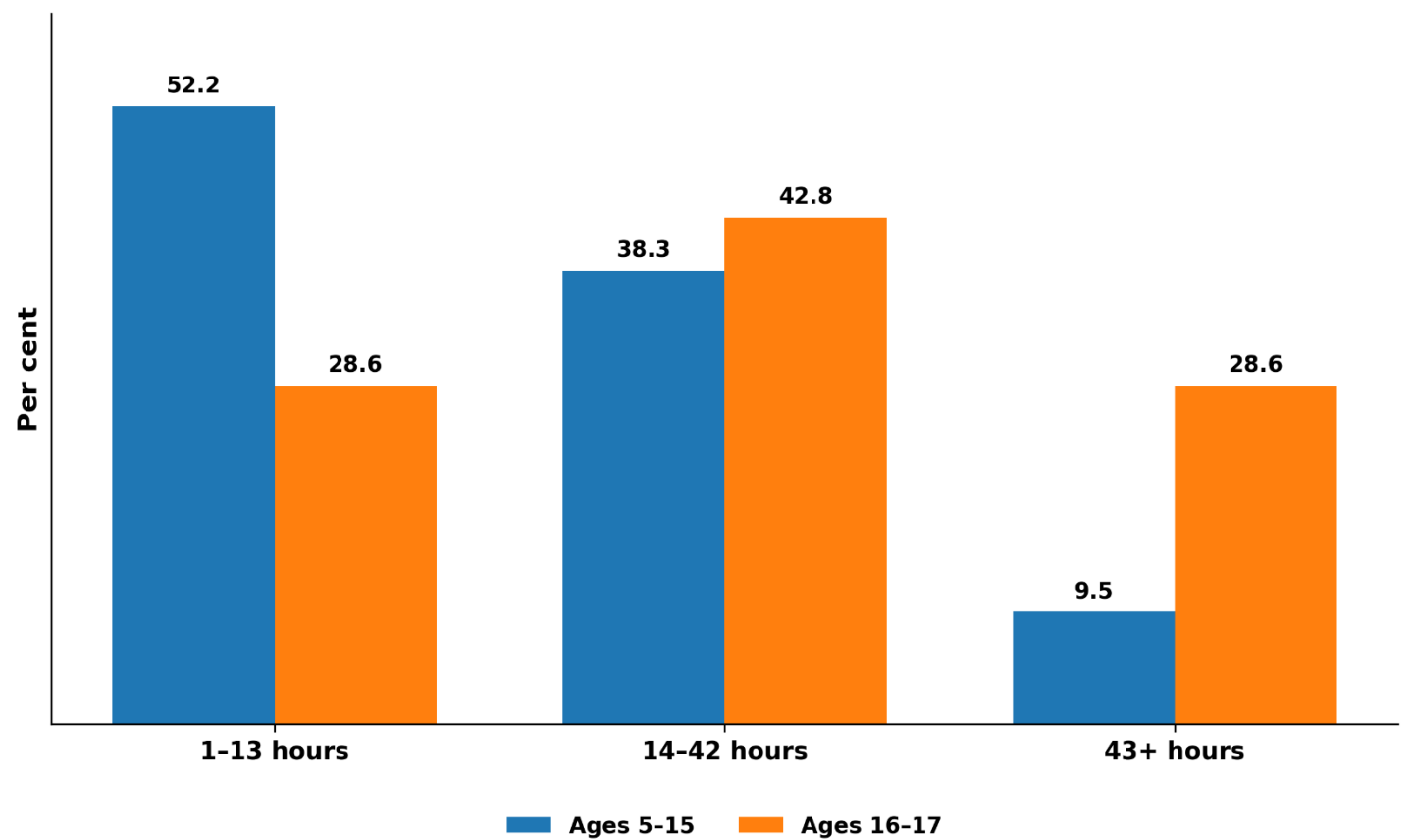


Figure 11.3: Percentage distribution of children in child labour by weekly working hours, by age group, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

11.1.7 Household Chores

The 2026 GLFS reclassifies fetching water and collecting firewood as household chores rather than economic activities. For child labour measurement, these activities contribute to child labour only when they exceed 21 hours per week among children aged 5-15 years. This methodological change aligns the measurement framework with the revised national approach and international statistical standards.

Household chores captured in the GLFS are limited to time spent fetching water and collecting firewood. Because other unpaid household services, such as cooking, cleaning, washing, and caregiving, are not captured, the contribution of household chores to child labour may be underestimated.

11.1.8 SDG 8.7.1 Comparable Estimates

The preceding sections presented child labour estimates based on the national measurement framework, which incorporates employment work, own-use production of goods, excessive household chores, and direct measures of hazardous work. For international reporting purposes, SDG Indicator 8.7.1 applies harmonised age-specific thresholds for economic activities and selected household chores to ensure international comparability. Under this approach, hazardous work is not measured directly and, for children aged 15-17 years, long working hours (43 hours or more per week) are used as a proxy for hazardous conditions in accordance with the SDG metadata.

To facilitate comparison over time, the GLFS 2023 (Q1) data were recalculated using the measurement framework applied in GLFS 2026 (Q1). The estimates presented in this section therefore differ from the national estimates presented earlier in this chapter and from previously published GLFS 2023 figures.

Under the recalculated SDG 8.7.1 methodology, child labour prevalence among children aged 5-17 years was 9.0 per cent in 2023 (Q1), declining to 7.4 per cent in 2026 (Q1). The estimates presented in this section are based on the SDG-comparable definition of child labour, which relies on age-specific working-hour thresholds and excludes the direct measurement of hazardous work.

Figure 11.4 presents child labour prevalence using hour thresholds for economic activity and household chores for comparability with SDG reporting. Among children aged 5-17 years, child labour declined from 9.0 per cent in 2023 (Q1) to 7.4 per cent in 2026 (Q1). For children aged 5-14 years, prevalence declined from 10.1 per cent to 8.1 per cent.

Among boys aged 5-17, child labour declined from 10.9 per cent to 7.9 per cent. Among girls aged 5-17, prevalence remained stable at 6.9 per cent in both periods.

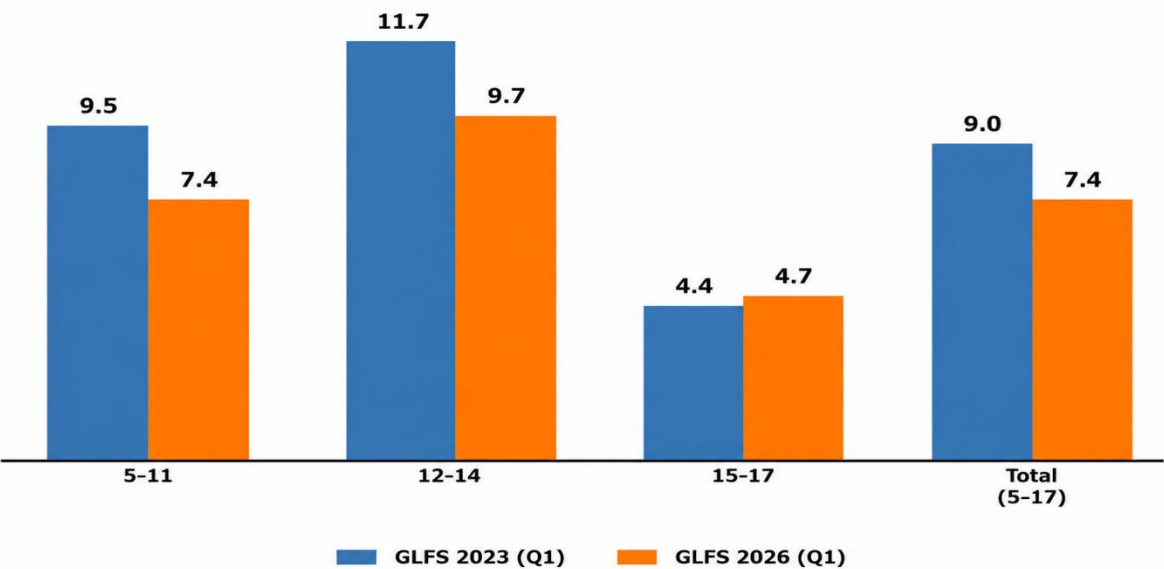


Figure 11.4: SDG 8.7.1: Percentage of children in child labour by age group (hour thresholds only), GLFS 2023 (Q1) (Recalculated) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Table 11.7 shows that child labour remains higher among boys than girls across all age groups. Among children aged 5-11, male prevalence declined from 11.5 per cent to 7.1 per cent, while female prevalence remained broadly unchanged (7.3% to 7.8%), narrowing the gender gap. A similar pattern is observed for ages 12-14, with a sharper decline among boys (13.2% to 9.9%) than girls (10.2% to 9.6%). In contrast, among those aged 15-17, child labour increased among boys (6.6% to 7.7%) but declined among girls (2.2% to 1.8%), widening the gap at older ages.

Table 11.7: Percentage of children in child labour by age group (hour thresholds only), GLFS 2023 (Q1) (Recalculated) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Age Group	GLFS 2023 (Q1)			GLFS 2026 (Q1)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
5 -11	11.5	7.3	9.5	7.1	7.8	7.4
12 -14	13.2	10.2	11.7	9.9	9.6	9.7
5 -14	12.0	8.1	10.1	7.9	8.3	8.1
15 -17	6.6	2.2	4.4	7.7	1.8	4.7
Total (5 -17)	10.9	6.9	9.0	7.9	6.9	7.4

Note: Estimates are based on the SDG 8.7.1 methodology and use working-hour thresholds only (ages 5–11: ≥1 hour; ages 12–14: ≥14 hours; ages 15–17: ≥43 hours). The estimates exclude the direct measurement of hazardous work but include excessive household chores (fetching water and collecting firewood) based on the 21-hour threshold for children aged 5–14 years. For international comparability, long working hours (43 hours or more per week) are used as a proxy for hazardous work among children aged 15–17 years. The 2023 (Q1) data were recalculated using the methodology applied in GLFS 2026 (Q1) to ensure comparability over time.

Summary and Policy Implications

Using the national child labour measure, 12.9 per cent of children aged 5-17 years were engaged in child labour in GLFS 2026 (Q1), representing approximately 108,087 children. Child labour remains an important challenge, particularly in rural areas and among older adolescents.

Key findings include:

- Child labour prevalence increases with age, from 12.3 per cent among children aged 5-15 years to 17.4 per cent among those aged 16-17 years.
- Child labour is substantially more prevalent in rural areas (19.5%) than in urban areas (7.9%). Rural areas account for approximately two-thirds (65.7%) of all children in child labour.
- Kuntaur (34.7%), Mansakonko (22.6%), and Janjanbureh (17.9%) record the highest prevalence of child labour among LGAs, while Kanifing (3.5%) and Banjul (3.8%) record the lowest.
- Agriculture remains the dominant sector of child labour, accounting for 63.4 per cent of child labour among children aged 5-15 years and 38.5 per cent among those aged 16-17 years. Industry becomes increasingly important among older adolescents, accounting for 36.4 per cent of child labour among children aged 16-17 years.
- Among children aged 5-15 years, 8.9 per cent combine economic activities with schooling, while 3.2 per cent are engaged exclusively in economic activities. Among children aged 16-17 years, 13.0 per cent combine economic activities with schooling and 11.9 per cent are engaged exclusively in economic activities.
- An estimated 9.0 per cent of children aged 5-17 years are engaged in hazardous work, rising from 7.7 per cent among children aged 5-15 years to 17.4 per cent among those aged 16-17 years. Hazardous work is more prevalent among boys (10.4%) than girls (7.7%) and is considerably higher in rural areas (14.5%) than in urban areas (4.8%).
- Children in child labour work substantial hours. The average working week increases from 16.6 hours among children aged 5-15 years to 29.8 hours among those aged 16-17 years. More than one-quarter (28.6%) of children aged 16-17 years in child labour work 43 hours or more per week.

The findings highlight the need for continued efforts to address child labour, particularly in rural areas, in agriculture, and among older adolescents who face greater exposure to hazardous and intensive forms of work.

Policy priorities include:

- Strengthening child labour prevention and monitoring programmes in high-prevalence LGAs, particularly Kuntaur, Mansakonko, and Janjanbureh.
- Expanding measures to improve school attendance, retention, and progression, especially in rural areas where children are more likely to combine work with schooling or remain out of school.
- Reducing children's exposure to hazardous work through strengthened enforcement of the Children's Act (2005) and the Labour Act (2023), increased awareness among employers and households, and targeted interventions in hazardous occupations and industries.
- Supporting rural households through livelihood, agricultural productivity and social protection programmes that reduce children's reliance on work and promote continued school participation.
- Strengthening child labour data systems and regular monitoring to support evidence-based policymaking, implementation of national legislation, and reporting on national and international commitments.

CHAPTER 12. PERSONS WITH DISABILITY IN THE LABOUR MARKET

12.1 Introduction

This chapter examines labour market outcomes for persons with disabilities (PWD) using data from GLFS 2026 (Q1), with comparisons to GLFS 2025 (Q1). The analysis covers labour force participation, employment, labour underutilisation, and differences by sex. The findings highlight persistent disparities between persons with and without disabilities, as well as changes over time.

12.1.1 Labour Force Participation and Employment

Table 12.1 presents core labour force indicators for the working age population (15+ years) by disability status for 2025 (Q1) and 2026 (Q1). Between the two rounds, labour force participation among persons with disability increased from 20.1 per cent to 27.4 per cent (+7.3 percentage points). The employment to population ratio rose from 19.4 per cent to 26.5 per cent (+7.1 percentage points), while the share outside the labour force declined from 79.9 per cent to 72.6 per cent (-7.3 percentage points).

Among persons without disabilities, participation also increased (from 47.4% to 55.0%, +7.6 pp). While the gap between the two groups narrowed slightly, it remains substantial.

Table 12.1: Core labour force indicators by disability status, working age population (15+ years), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	GLFS 2025 (Q1)		GLFS 2026 (Q1)		Change (PWD, pp)
	Without Disability	With Disability	Without Disability	With Disability	
Labour force participation rate	47.4	20.1	55.0	27.4	7.3
Employment-to-population ratio	43.5	19.4	51.6	26.5	7.1
Outside labour force	52.6	79.9	45.0	72.6	-7.3

12.1.2 Labour Force Indicators by Sex (GLFS 2026)

Table 12.2 presents labour force indicators by disability status and sex for 2026 (Q1). Among persons with disability, men have a higher labour force participation rate (30.3%) than women (24.1%). The employment to population ratio follows a similar pattern (30.1% for men and 22.4% for women).

Women with disabilities have the lowest levels of labour market engagement. For both sexes, large gaps relative to persons without disabilities persist.

Table 12.2: Labour force indicators by disability status and sex, working age population (15+ years), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	Male		Female	
	No disability	With disability	No disability	With disability
Weighted population (%)	47.7%	53.3%	52.3%	46.7%
(Unweighted N)	- (10,764)	(275)	(13,723)	(265)
Labour force participation rate (SE)	64.1% (1.0)	30.3% (4.3)	46.6% (0.9)	24.1% (3.7)
Employment-to-population ratio (SE)	60.8% (0.9)	30.1% (4.3)	43.1% (0.9)	22.4% (3.5)

Note: Standard errors in parentheses.

12.1.3 Labour Underutilisation

Table 12.3 presents the composite labour underutilisation rate (LU4) by disability status. Between 2025 (Q1) and 2026 (Q1), underutilisation among PWD declined from 36.9 per cent to 31.6 per cent (-5.3 percentage points). For persons without disabilities, it also declined, from 34.2 per cent to 32.1 per cent (-2.1 pp).

As a result, the gap between the two groups narrowed from 2.7 pp to 0.5 pp. The difference observed in 2026 (Q1) is not statistically significant (95% CI: -11.3, 10.3; $p = 0.91$), indicating no meaningful difference in underutilisation rates between the two groups in that year.

Table 12.3: Composite labour underutilisation (LU4) by disability status, working age population (15+ years), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	GLFS 2025 (Q1)		GLFS 2026 (Q1)		Change (PWD, pp)
	Without Disability	With Disability	Without Disability	With Disability	
Labour Underutilisation (LU4)	34.2%	36.9%	32.1%	31.6%	-5.3
95% CI for gap (2026)	—	—	—	(-11.3, 10.3)	—
p-value (2026)	—	—	—	0.91	—

The findings show that between GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1), persons with disabilities experienced notable improvements in key labour market indicators. Labour force participation increased from 20.1 per cent to 27.4 per cent (+7.3 pp), while the employment to population ratio rose from 19.4 per cent to 26.5 per cent (+7.1 pp). At the same time, the share outside the labour force declined from 79.9 per cent to 72.6 per cent (-7.3 pp), and the LU4 underutilisation rate decreased from 36.9 per cent to 31.6 per cent (-5.3 pp).

Despite these gains, substantial gaps relative to persons without disabilities remain. Women with disabilities continue to have the lowest levels of labour market engagement. These findings highlight the need for targeted policies to reduce barriers to labour market entry, promote inclusive hiring, and improve labour market outcomes for women with disabilities.

Note: Estimates for persons with disabilities are based on relatively small, unweighted samples (2026: $N = 540$). Confidence intervals are provided where available. Differences between 2025 and 2026 should be interpreted with caution due to potential changes in survey methodology and sample composition. Also, reliable 2026 estimates for youth with disabilities are not available due to small sample sizes. In 2025, youth with disabilities had a labour force participation rate of 23.5 per cent, compared to 40.1% for youth without disabilities, and a NEET rate of 61.6 per cent. Strengthening the measurement of this subgroup in future survey rounds will be important for tracking labour market outcomes among young persons with disabilities.

CHAPTER 13. AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT, HOUSEHOLD LIVELIHOODS AND OWN-USE FOODSTUFF PRODUCTION

13.1 Introduction

Agriculture remains a cornerstone of livelihoods in The Gambia, particularly for women and rural populations. This chapter examines trends in agricultural employment and own-use foodstuff production using data from GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1), with selected comparisons to GLFS 2023 (Q1). The analysis covers the share of employed persons working in agriculture, own-use production activities, the relationship between foodstuff production and agricultural employment, and informality in agriculture relative to other sectors. Differences by sex, residence and production status are presented.

13.1.1 Employment in Agriculture: Trends and Composition

Figure 13.1 shows the share of employed persons working in agriculture by sex and residence for GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). Between the two rounds, the overall share remained broadly stable at around 17.7 per cent. Women are consistently overrepresented: in GLFS 2026 (Q1), 24.7 per cent of employed women worked in agriculture compared to 12.4 per cent of employed men. Rural areas account for the majority of agricultural employment (36.4% in GLFS 2026 (Q1)), while urban areas have a much smaller share (8.3%).

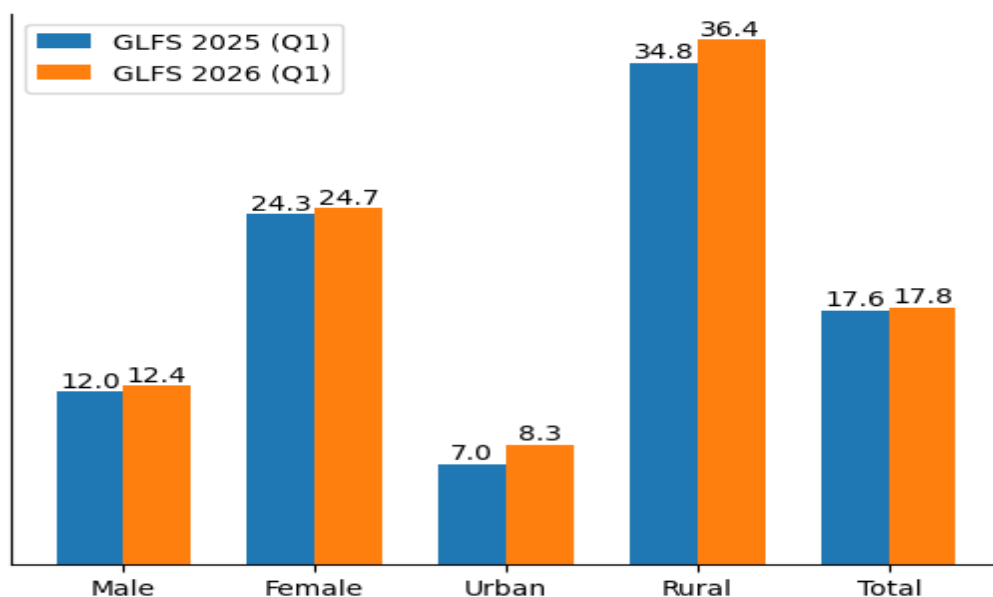


Figure 13.1: Employment in agriculture by characteristic (%), GLFS 2023 (Q1), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Figure 13.2 extends the comparison to include GLFS 2023 (Q1). Agricultural employment declined from 20.2 per cent in GLFS 2023 (Q1) to 17.6 per cent in GLFS 2025 (Q1), before stabilising in 2026. The decline was most pronounced among women (29.8% to 24.3%) and in rural areas (42.5% to 34.8%). Between GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1), modest increases are observed for women and rural workers, but levels remain below those recorded in GLFS 2023 (Q1).

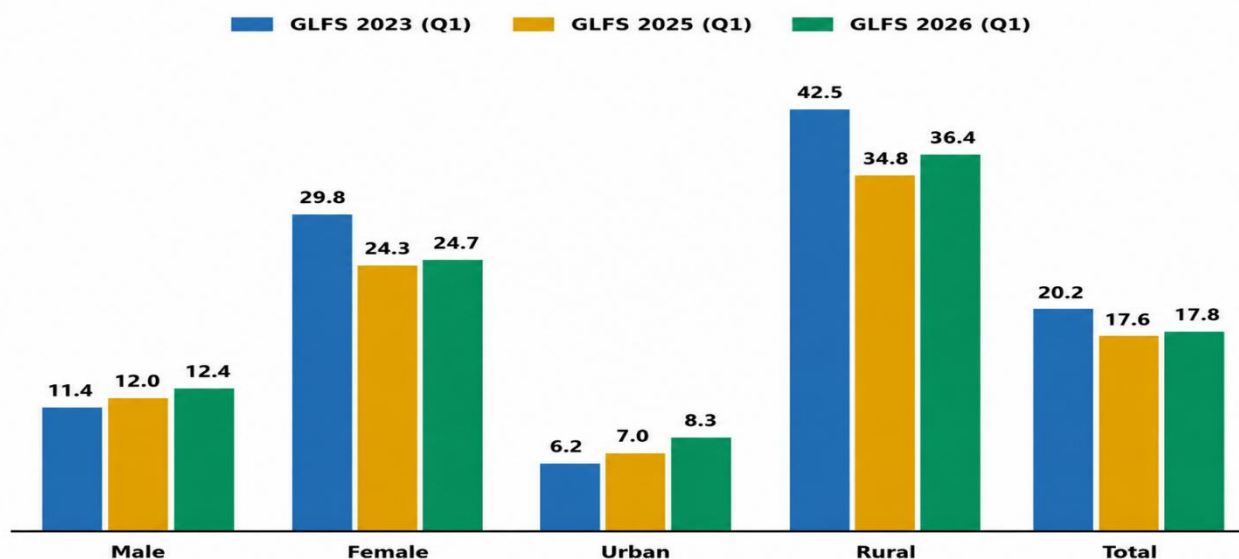


Figure 13.2: Employment in agriculture by characteristic (%), GLFS 2023 (Q1), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

13.1.2 Household Livelihoods (Main sources of household support)

Table 13.1 presents the main sources of household support for GLFS 2026 (Q1). Income from a household business (other than farming) is the most common source, accounting for 34.0 per cent of households, followed by income from a paid job at 27.5 per cent. Income from household farming or fishing accounts for 14.6 per cent of households, while remittances from abroad constitute 13.8 per cent.

A further 3.9 per cent of households rely on food produced by the household from farming, fishing or related activities. Combined, 18.5 per cent of households depend directly on agricultural activities (farming or fishing income, or own-use food production) as their main source of support.

Table 13.1: Main source of household livelihood, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	Weighted count (households)	Weighted per cent
Income from household farming or fishing	43,379	14.6
Income from a household business (other than farming)	101,156	34.0
Income from a paid job (held by a household member)	81,929	27.5
Food produced by the household from farming, fishing, etc.	11,684	3.9
Money or support from people living abroad	41,121	13.8
Support from other households in The Gambia	12,425	4.2
Income from properties, investments or savings	1,015	0.3
Private or state pension or other government support	2,237	0.8
Charity from charitable organisations	251	0.1
Other (specify)	68	0.0
Cannot say	2,439	0.8
Total	297,704	100.0

13.1.3 Own-Use Production of Foodstuff

Table 13.2 presents own-use production activities reported by persons aged 15 years and above in GLFS 2026 (Q1). An estimated 347,987 persons, representing 24.3 per cent of the population aged 15 years and above, engaged in at least one type of own-use production activity. The most commonly reported activities were fetching water for own use (49.5%) and collecting firewood for own use (40.9%). Own-use producers of foodstuff, including farming, fishing, hunting or gathering, and processing food for storage, accounted for 34.8 per cent. Because individuals may engage in more than one own-use production activity, the activity percentages are not mutually exclusive and do not sum to 100.0 per cent.

Table 13.2: Agricultural own-use production activities by type, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	Count	Per cent
Population aged 15 years and above engaged in some type of own-use production	347,987	24.3
- Farming for own-use	72,858	20.9
- Fishing for own-use	609	0.2
- Hunting or gathering for own-use	30,511	8.8
- Fetching water for own-use	172,428	49.5
- Collecting firewood for own-use	142,468	40.9
- Manufacture of other goods for own-use	6,179	1.8
- Own-use construction work	25,372	7.3
- Processing food for storage	31,920	9.2
- Own-use producers of foodstuff (farming, fishing, hunting, processing food for storage)	121,013	34.8

Figure 13.3 shows the share of the population engaged in own-use foodstuff production by sex and residence for GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). The overall rate declined from 9.9 per cent to 8.4 per cent. The decline is driven by women (14.8% to 11.9%) and urban residents (5.1% to 3.4%), while rates among men remained stable (around 4.5%) and rural areas showed no change (17.4% in both rounds).

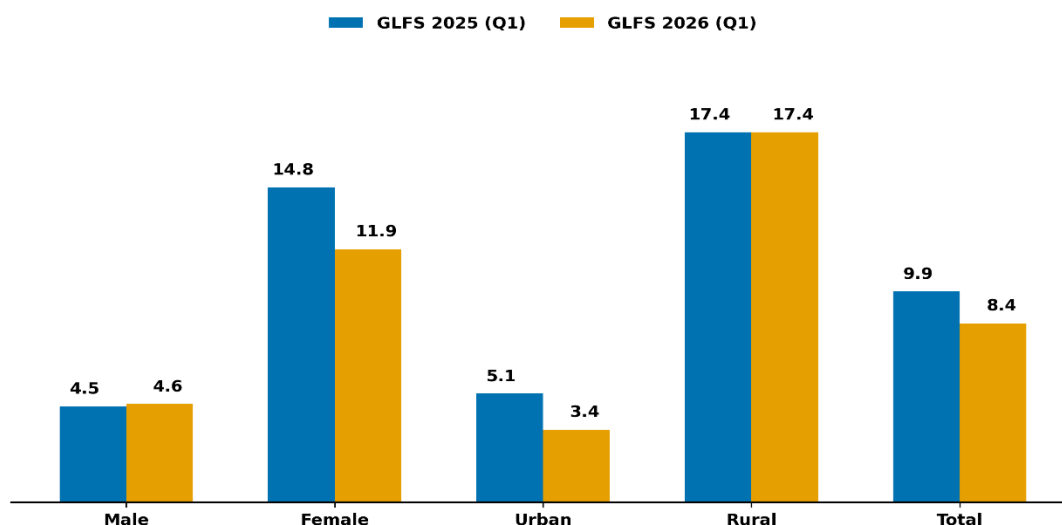


Figure 13.3: Own use foodstuff production by sex and residence (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

13.1.4 Relationship Between Agricultural Employment and Foodstuff Production

Figure 13.4 compares the share of employed persons working in agriculture between foodstuff producers and non-producers. In both rounds, foodstuff producers are much more likely to be employed in agriculture. In GLFS 2026 (Q1), 42.4 per cent of foodstuff producers worked in agriculture, compared to 16.6 per cent of non-producers.

Between GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1), the share of foodstuff producers in agriculture increased substantially (34.4% to 42.4%), while the share among non-producers remained broadly unchanged. This suggests a stronger alignment between own-use foodstuff production and engagement in agricultural employment, although the data do not allow firm conclusions on transitions between subsistence and market oriented activities.

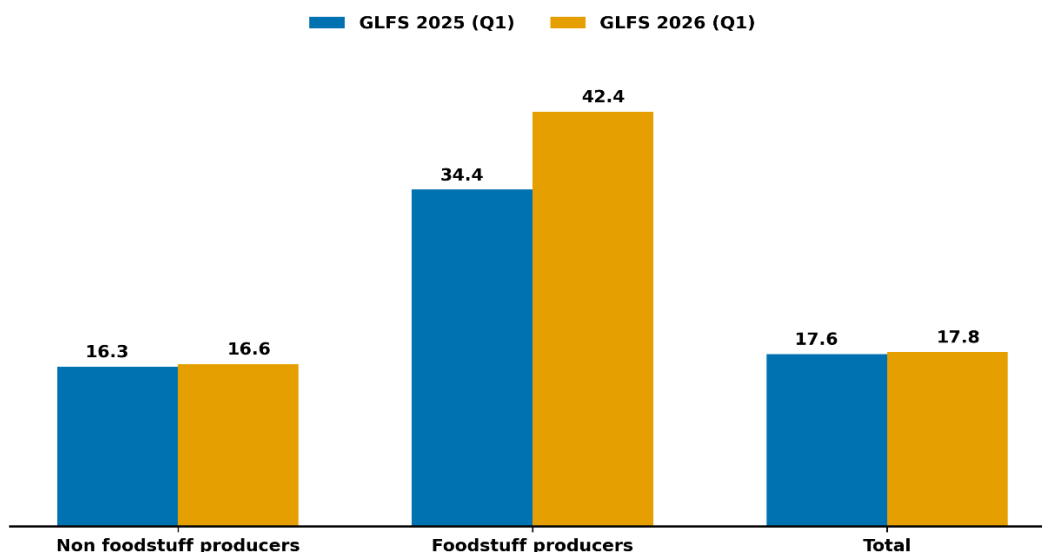


Figure 13.4: Agricultural employment by foodstuff production status (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

13.1.5 Informality in Agriculture

Figure 13.5 presents informal employment rates in agriculture compared to non-agriculture. Agriculture has persistently higher informality. In GLFS 2026 (Q1), 97.7 per cent of agricultural workers were in informal employment, compared to 83.3 per cent in non-agriculture. Informality in agriculture is near universal, indicating the limited presence of formal employment arrangements in the sector.

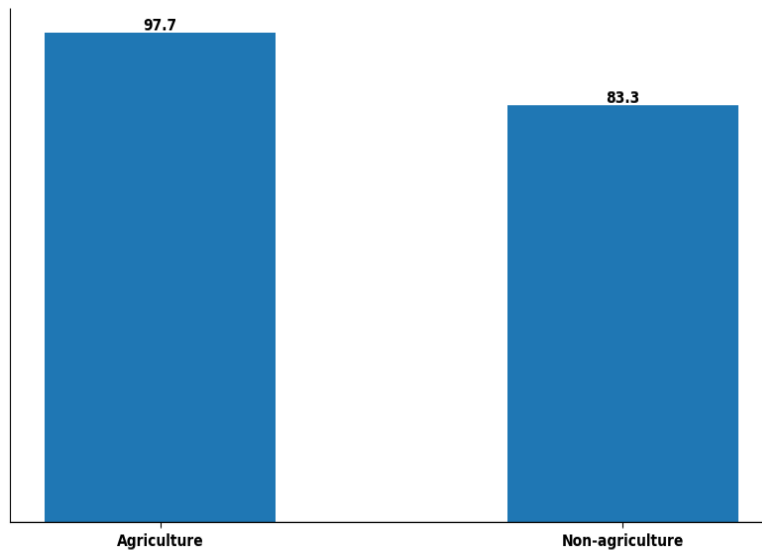


Figure 13.5: Informal employment in agriculture and non-agriculture sectors (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Employment in agriculture remained stable between GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1) (17.8%), following a decline from GLFS 2023 (Q1) (20.2%). Women and rural residents remain overrepresented, with women nearly twice as likely as men to work in agriculture. Own use foodstuff production declined overall, driven by reduced participation among women and urban residents.

Foodstuff producers are substantially more likely to be engaged in agriculture than non-producers, and this relationship strengthened between 2025 (Q1) and 2026 (Q1). Informality remains a defining feature of the sector, with nearly all agricultural employment classified as informal.

These findings highlight the continued importance of agriculture for women and rural populations, the dominance of informal employment, and the close link between own-use production and participation in agricultural activities.

CHAPTER 14. OWN-USE PRODUCTION WORK

14.1 Introduction

Own use production work refers to productive activities performed by persons primarily for their own final consumption rather than for sale or profit. These activities are not captured in standard employment statistics but are important for understanding household livelihoods, time use, and the informal economy.

Following the 19th ICLS resolution, own-use production work is defined as all productive activities performed by persons of working age for their own final use. This includes:

- **Production of goods (within the SNA production boundary):** farming, fishing, hunting and gathering; collecting firewood and other fuels; fetching water; manufacturing household goods (furniture, textiles, clothing, footwear, pottery, etc.); and building or effecting major repairs to one's own dwelling or farm buildings.
- **Provision of services (within the general production boundary):** household accounting and management, purchasing and transporting goods; preparing and serving meals; cleaning, decorating and maintaining one's own dwelling; childcare and instruction; and transporting and caring for elderly, dependent or other household members.

This chapter focuses on goods-producing activities, as services for own final use were not captured in the GLFS. **Subsistence foodstuff producers**, a subgroup engaged in farming, fishing, hunting, gathering or processing food for storage without hired labour, are identified separately in the analysis.

14.1.1 Engagement in Own-Use Production Work

Figure 14.1 shows the share of the population aged 15 years and older engaged in any own-use production work, as well as own-use foodstuff production specifically, by sex and residence. The overall share engaged in any own-use production work remained stable at 24.3 per cent in both GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1), following a decline from 27.7 per cent in GLFS 2023 (Q1). Women are more likely than men to engage in own-use production (28.0% and 20.2% in 2026), and rural residents are far more engaged (47.4%) than urban residents (11.2%).

Own use foodstuff production declined from 9.9 per cent in 2025 (Q1) to 8.4 per cent in 2026 (Q1), driven by reductions among women and urban residents, while rates among men and rural residents remained broadly unchanged.

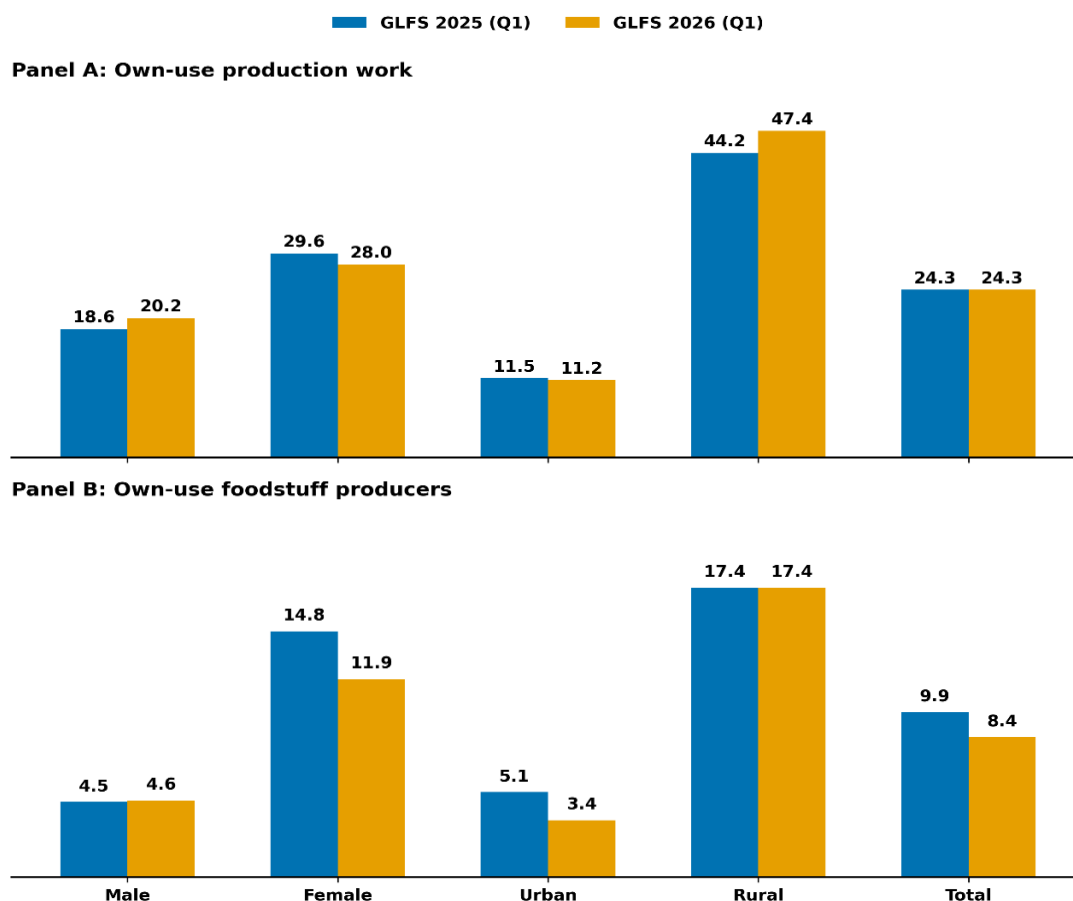


Figure 14.1: Own use work and own-use foodstuff production, by sex and residence, GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

14.1.2 Types of Own-Use Production Activities

Table 14.1 presents the distribution of persons engaged in specific own-use production activities for GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). Fetching water for own-use is the most common activity, although its share declined from 53.0 per cent to 49.5 per cent of own-use producers. Collecting firewood for own-use increased from 30.6 per cent to 40.9 per cent. Processing food for storage fell sharply from 17.1 per cent to 9.2 per cent, while own-use construction work declined from 12.2 per cent to 7.3 per cent.

Farming for own-use increased from 18.3 per cent to 20.9 per cent, while hunting or gathering declined from 10.7 per cent to 8.8 per cent. The share of own-use foodstuff producers also declined from 40.8 per cent to 34.8 per cent.

Table 14.1: Distribution of persons engaged in own-use production activities, GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	GLFS 2025 (Q1)		GLFS 2026 (Q1)	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
Farming for own-use	63,811	18.3	72,858	20.9
Fishing for own-use	320	0.1	609	0.2
Hunting or gathering for own-use	37,317	10.7	30,511	8.8
Fetching water for own-use	184,849	53.0	172,428	49.5
Collecting firewood for own-use	106,584	30.6	142,468	40.9
Manufacture of other goods for own-use	17,494	5.0	6,179	1.8
Own use construction work	42,463	12.2	25,372	7.3
Processing food for storage	59,737	17.1	31,920	9.2
Own use producers of foodstuff	142,215	40.8	121,013	34.8
Total persons (15+) engaged in any own-use production	348,723	100.0	347,987	100.0

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100% because persons may engage in multiple activities. Own-use producers of foodstuff includes farming, fishing, hunting/gathering, and processing food for storage.

Figure 14.2 shows the distribution of persons engaged in selected own-use production activities across GLFS 2023 (Q1), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). Fetching water for own-use remains the most common activity, although its share declined steadily from 57.8 per cent in GLFS 2023 (Q1) to 53.0 per cent in GLFS 2025 (Q1) and further to 49.5 per cent in GLFS 2026 (Q1).

In contrast, collecting firewood for own-use declined from 35.0 per cent in GLFS 2023 (Q1) to 30.6 per cent in GLFS 2025 (Q1), before increasing to 40.9 per cent in GLFS 2026 (Q1). Farming for own-use also shows a gradual increase, from 15.5 per cent in GLFS 2023 (Q1) to 18.3 per cent in GLFS 2025 (Q1) and 20.9 per cent in GLFS 2026 (Q1).

Processing food for storage increased slightly between GLFS 2023 (Q1) (15.6%) and GLFS 2025 (Q1) (17.1%), before declining sharply to 9.2 per cent in GLFS 2026 (Q1). The share of own-use foodstuff producers rose from 38.0 per cent in GLFS 2023 (Q1) to 40.8 per cent in GLFS 2025 (Q1) but declined to 34.8 per cent in GLFS 2026 (Q1).

Overall, the share of the population engaged in any own-use production work declined from 27.7 per cent in GLFS 2023 (Q1) to 24.3 per cent in GLFS 2025 (Q1) and remained unchanged at 24.3 per cent in GLFS 2026 (Q1).

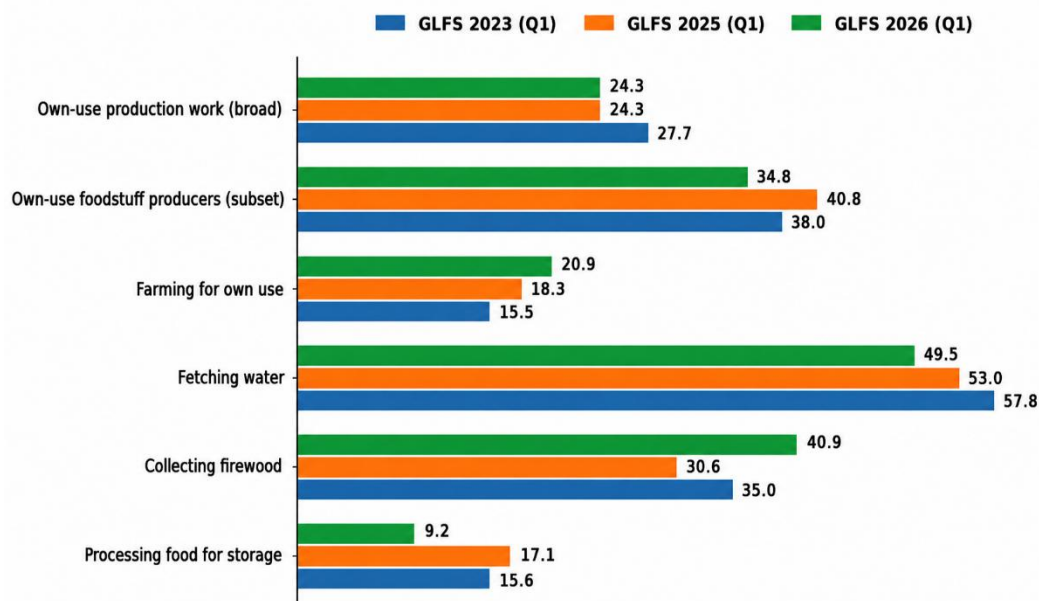
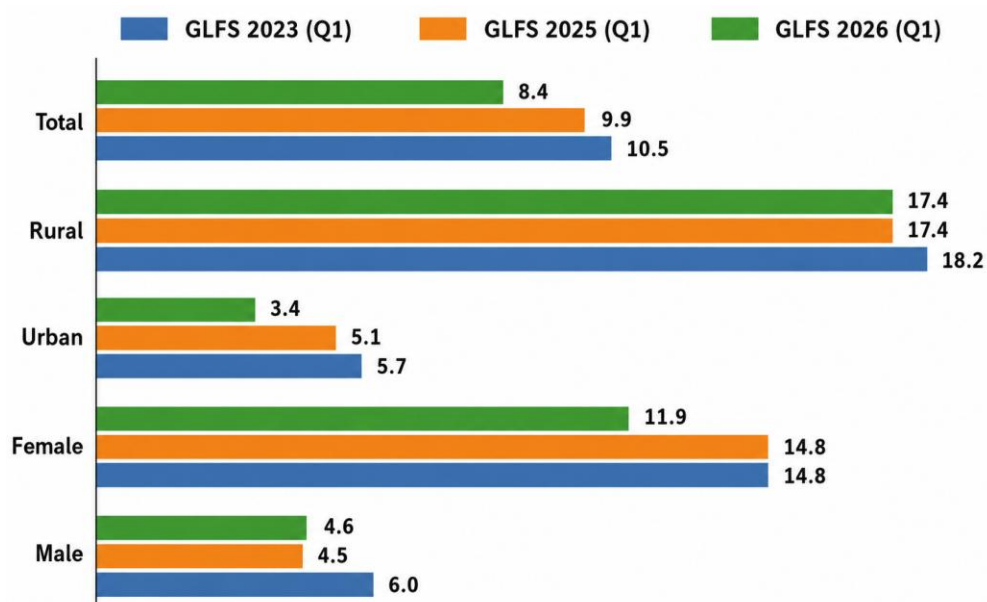


Figure 14.2: Population engaged in own-use production activities (%), GLFS 2023 (Q1), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

14.1.3 Own-Use Foodstuff Production Trends by Sex and Residence

Figure 14.3 presents trends in own-use foodstuff production across three survey rounds. The overall rate declined from 10.5 per cent in 2023 (Q1) to 9.9 per cent in GLFS 2025 (Q1), and further to 8.4 per cent in GLFS 2026 (Q1). The decline is most pronounced among women (from 14.8% in 2023 to 14.8% in 2025, then down to 11.9% in 2026) and urban residents (from 5.7% to 5.1% to 3.4%). Rates among men remained broadly stable, while rural rates declined slightly from 18.2 per cent in 2023 (Q1) to 17.4 per cent in 2025 and remained unchanged at 17.4 per cent in 2026.



Note: Estimates are presented at the time of the survey in the first quarter of each survey year.

Figure 14.3: Own use foodstuff production by sex and residence (%), GLFS 2023 (Q1), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

14.1.4 Own-Use Production Among the Labour Force

Table 14.2 shows engagement in any own-use production work among the labour force (employed and unemployed) for 2025 (Q1) and 2026 (Q1). The share of the labour force engaged in own-use production declined from 25.9 per cent to 23.6 per cent. Among the employed, the share fell from 25.4 per cent to 23.2 per cent, while among the unemployed it declined from 32.2 per cent to 28.2 per cent. Unemployed persons are consistently more likely than employed persons to engage in own-use production.

Table 14.2: Engagement in own-use production among the labour force, GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	GLFS 2025 (Q1)		GLFS 2026 (Q1)	
	Count	Per cent	Count	Per cent
Labour force	175,057	25.9	184,161	23.6
– Employed	157,097	25.4	170,479	23.2
– Unemployed	17,960	32.2	13,683	28.2

14.1.5 Labour Market Outcomes by Foodstuff Production Status

Figure 14.4 compares key labour market outcomes between own-use foodstuff producers and non-producers for GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). In both periods, foodstuff producers have substantially lower labour force participation and employment to population ratios than non-producers, alongside higher unemployment rates.

Between 2025 (Q1) and 2026 (Q1), labour force participation declined among producers (from 35.2% to 31.9%), while it increased markedly among non-producers (from 48.4% to 56.6%). A similar pattern is observed for the employment to population ratio, which fell among producers (29.3% to 26.7%) but rose significantly among non-producers (44.7% to 53.4%).

Unemployment remains consistently higher among foodstuff producers, although it declined slightly from 16.7 per cent to 16.5 per cent, compared to a sharper decline among non-producers (from 7.6% to 5.7%).

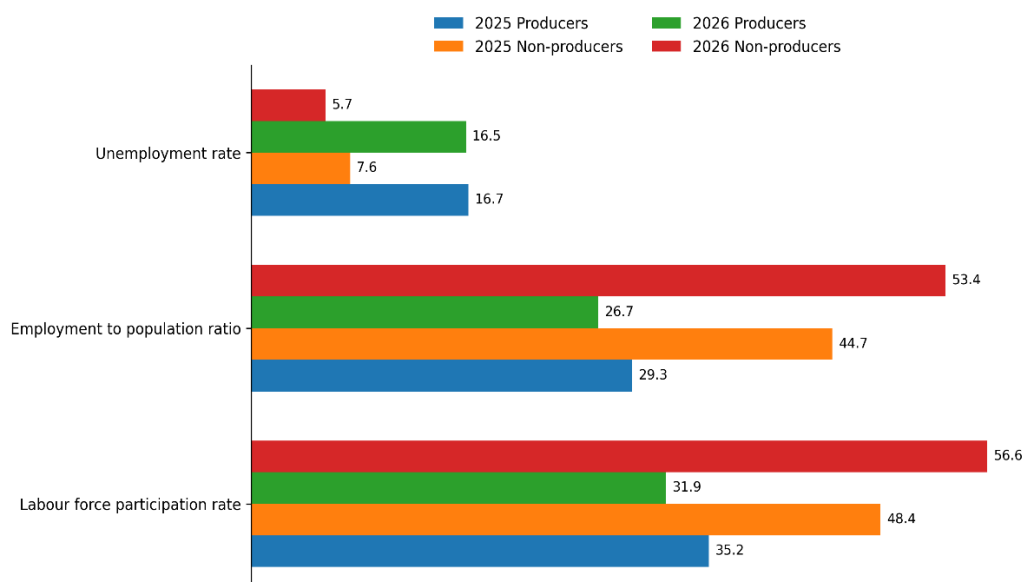


Figure 14.4: Labour market outcomes by own-use foodstuff production status (%), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Table 14.3 presents trends for own-use foodstuff producers across three survey rounds. Labour force participation and employment to population ratios have declined steadily for this group, while the unemployment rate increased from 9.6 per cent in GLFS 2023 (Q1) to 16.7 per cent in GLFS 2025 (Q1), remaining at a similarly high level in GLFS 2026 (Q1) (16.5%). Labour underutilisation (LU4) also increased from 62.5 per cent to 69.4 per cent over the same period, indicating that foodstuff producers face increasing challenges in securing adequate employment.

Table 14.3: Labour market indicators for own-use foodstuff producers, GLFS 2023 (Q1), GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Indicator	GLFS 2023 (Q1)	GLFS 2025 (Q1)	GLFS 2026 (Q1)
Labour force participation (%)	41.3	35.2	31.9
Employment-to-population ratio (%)	37.3	29.3	26.7
LU1: Unemployment rate (%)	9.6	16.7	16.5
LU4: Labour underutilisation (%)	62.5	68.0	69.4

14.1.6 Informality and Sectoral Employment

Error! Reference source not found. presents informal employment and the share of employment in agriculture across foodstuff producers, non-producers and the total population for GLFS 2026 (Q1). Informal employment is high across all groups but remains highest among foodstuff producers. In 2026 (Q1), 93.8 per cent of foodstuff producers were in informal employment, compared to 85.5 per cent of non-producers and 85.8 per cent overall.

A similar pattern is observed for employment in agriculture. Foodstuff producers are substantially more likely to be employed in agriculture, with 42.4 per cent engaged in agricultural activities. In contrast, the share among non-producers remains low at 16.6 per cent, while the national average stands at 17.8 per cent.

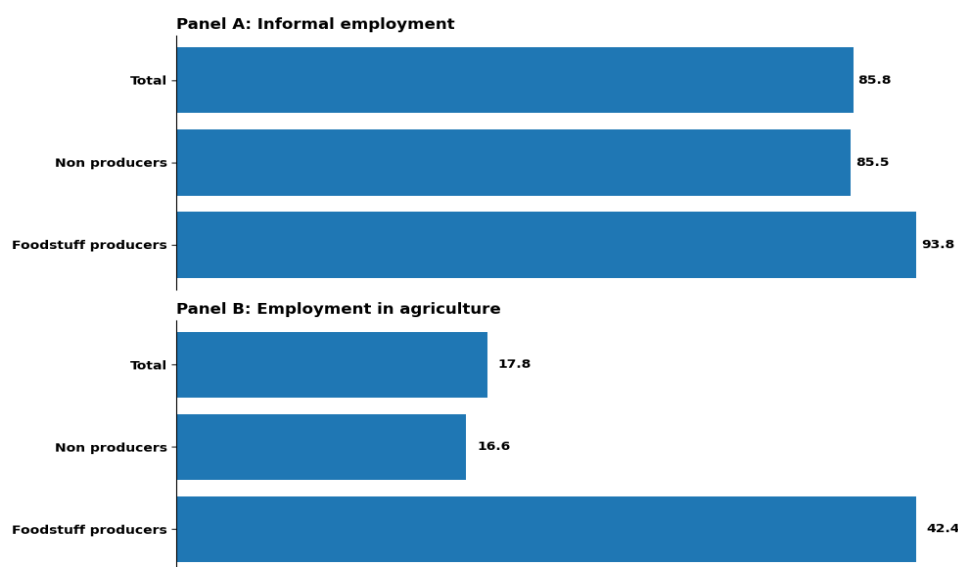


Figure 14.5: Informal employment and agriculture share by foodstuff production status (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

14.1.7 Labour Underutilisation by Foodstuff Production Status

Figure 14.6 shows that labour underutilisation is substantially higher among own-use foodstuff producers across all measures (LU1 – LU4). The unemployment rate (LU1) is 16.5 per cent for producers compared to 5.7 per cent for non-producers. Broader measures show larger gaps, with LU4 reaching 69.4 per cent for producers versus 28.8 per cent for non-producers.

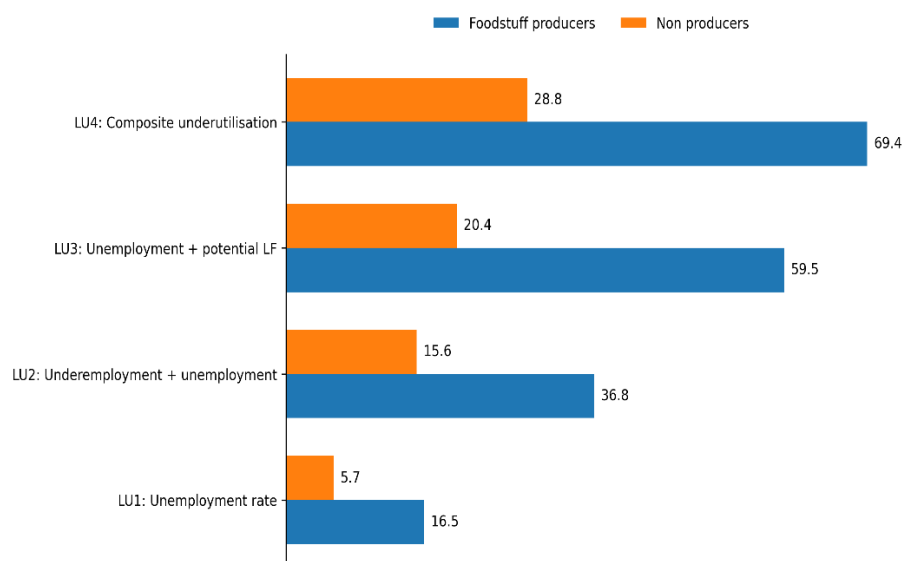


Figure 14.6: Labour underutilisation indicators by own-use foodstuff production status (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Own use production work remains an important component of household livelihoods in The Gambia, with 24.3 per cent of the population engaged in GLFS 2026 (Q1). Women and rural residents are disproportionately engaged, particularly in

fetching water and collecting firewood. Own use foodstuff production has declined over time, from 10.5 per cent in GLFS 2023 (Q1) to 8.4 per cent in GLFS 2026 (Q1), driven by reductions among women and urban residents.

Own use foodstuff producers experience weaker labour market outcomes than non-producers, with lower labour force participation, lower employment to population ratios, higher unemployment, and substantially higher labour underutilisation (LU4 at 69.4% versus 28.8%). Producers are also more likely to work in informal employment and in agriculture. These patterns indicate that own-use foodstuff production is concentrated among individuals with more limited access to labour market opportunities, particularly women and rural residents.

Note:

LU1 = Unemployment rate

LU2 = LU1 + time-related underemployment

LU3 = LU1 + potential labour force

LU4 = LU1 + time-related underemployment + potential labour force

CHAPTER 15. INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS IN THE LABOUR FORCE

15.1 Introduction

International migration is a defining feature of The Gambia's labour market. This chapter examines the demographic and labour market characteristics of international migrants using data from the 2026 Gambia Labour Force Survey Quarter 1 (GLFS 2026 (Q1)).

Following international statistical standards, international migrants are identified primarily on the basis of place of birth. In this chapter, foreign-born persons are defined as persons aged 15 years and older who were born outside The Gambia and are usual residents of The Gambia at the time of the survey. The chapter distinguishes between recent migrants (those who arrived within the last five years, i.e., since 2021) and long-term migrants (those who arrived five or more years ago, i.e., before 2021). Non-resident foreign workers (e.g., frontier or seasonal workers) are not captured in the GLFS household survey and are therefore excluded from this analysis. Comparisons are made with native-born persons and with GLFS 2025 (Q1) data. Selected indicators are also presented by citizenship status to compare citizens and non-citizens.

The chapter examines the demographic and labour market characteristics of international migrants in The Gambia. It begins with an analysis of the demographic profile of migrants, including country of birth and duration of residence, followed by key labour market indicators, including labour force participation, employment-to-population ratios, unemployment, and labour underutilisation by place of birth and sex. Subsequent sections examine the sectoral distribution of employment, status in employment, informal employment, working hours, labour market outcomes by citizenship status, and reasons for migration.

15.2 Demographic Profile of International Migrants

15.2.1 Working-age Population by Migration Status

Table 15.1 presents the distribution of the working-age population (15 years and older) by international migration status and sex. Non-migrants (persons born in The Gambia) constitute the vast majority of the population aged 15 and over, accounting for 94.0 per cent of the total. International migrants make up the remaining 6.0 per cent, with long-term migrants (those who arrived five or more years ago) representing 4.3 per cent and recent migrants (those who arrived within the last five years) representing 1.7 per cent.

The data reveal notable differences by sex. Among males, non-migrants constitute 93.6 per cent, while international migrants account for 6.4 per cent (1.7% recent, 4.7% long-term). Among females, non-migrants constitute a slightly higher share at 94.3 per cent, with international migrants accounting for 5.7 per cent (1.8% recent, 3.9% long-term). This indicates that male migrants outnumber female migrants in the working-age population, particularly among long-term residents.

Despite accounting for only 6.0 per cent of the working-age population, international migrants make a disproportionately large contribution to employment.

Table 15.1: Working age (15 years and older) population by international migration status and sex, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	Count			Per cent		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Non-migrants (born in The Gambia)	641,535	706,089	1,347,624	93.6	94.3	94.0
Recent international migrants	11,448	13,585	25,033	1.7	1.8	1.7
Long-term international migrants	32,438	29,020	61,458	4.7	3.9	4.3
Total population 15 and older	685,421	748,694	1,434,115	100.0	100.0	100.0

15.2.2 Distribution by Country of Birth

Table 15.2 shows the distribution of international migrants by country of birth. The data indicate that the majority of international migrants in The Gambia originate from neighbouring West African countries. Senegal is the most common country of birth, accounting for 37.2 per cent of all international migrants, followed by Guinea at 30.2 per cent. Sierra Leone (9.7%), Nigeria (5.6%), and Mali (4.1%) are also significant sources of migration. Migrants from non-African countries constitute 4.2 per cent of the total.

The concentration of migrants from Senegal and Guinea reflects the historical, cultural, and economic ties between The Gambia and its neighbours, as well as the relative ease of movement within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region.

Table 15.2: Distribution of international migrants by country of birth, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Country of Birth	Per cent
Senegal	37.2
Guinea	30.2
Sierra Leone	9.7
Nigeria	5.6
Non-African	4.2
Mali	4.1
Guinea-Bissau	3.0
Other Africa	2.0
Mauritania	1.5
Other West Africa	1.5
Ghana	0.8
Liberia	0.4
Total	100.0

15.2.3 Duration of Residence

Table 15.3 presents the duration of residence among international migrants of working age. Over half (53.9%) of international migrants have resided in The Gambia for ten years or more, indicating a high degree of long-term settlement. A further 17.2 per cent have lived in the country for five to nine years, while 28.5 per cent arrived within the last one to four years. Only a very small proportion (0.5%) have been in the country for less than one year.

These results indicate that most foreign-born persons captured by the survey have lived in The Gambia for an extended period, with more than seven in ten having resided in the country for at least five years.

Table 15.3: Duration of residence among international migrants (working age), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Duration of residence	Per cent
Less than 1 year	0.5
1-4 years	28.5
5-9 years	17.2
10 years or more	53.9
Total	100.0

15.3 LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT

15.3.1 Employment-to-Population Ratios by Place of Birth and Sex

Figure 15.1 presents the employment-to-population ratio and the share of the working-age population for native-born and foreign-born persons by sex. The employment-to-population ratio measures the proportion of the working-age population that is employed, providing an indicator of labour market absorption.

Foreign-born persons have a substantially higher employment-to-population ratio (63.8%) compared to native-born persons (50.3%), despite accounting for only 6.0 per cent of the working-age population. This differential is even more pronounced among men: foreign-born men have an employment-to-population ratio of 79.7 per cent, compared to 58.9 per cent for native-born men. Among women, foreign-born women also have a higher ratio (47.5%) than native-born women (42.6%), although the gap is narrower.

These findings suggest that international migrants are not only more likely to be employed than native-born Gambians but also make a disproportionately large contribution to the labour market relative to their share of the population.

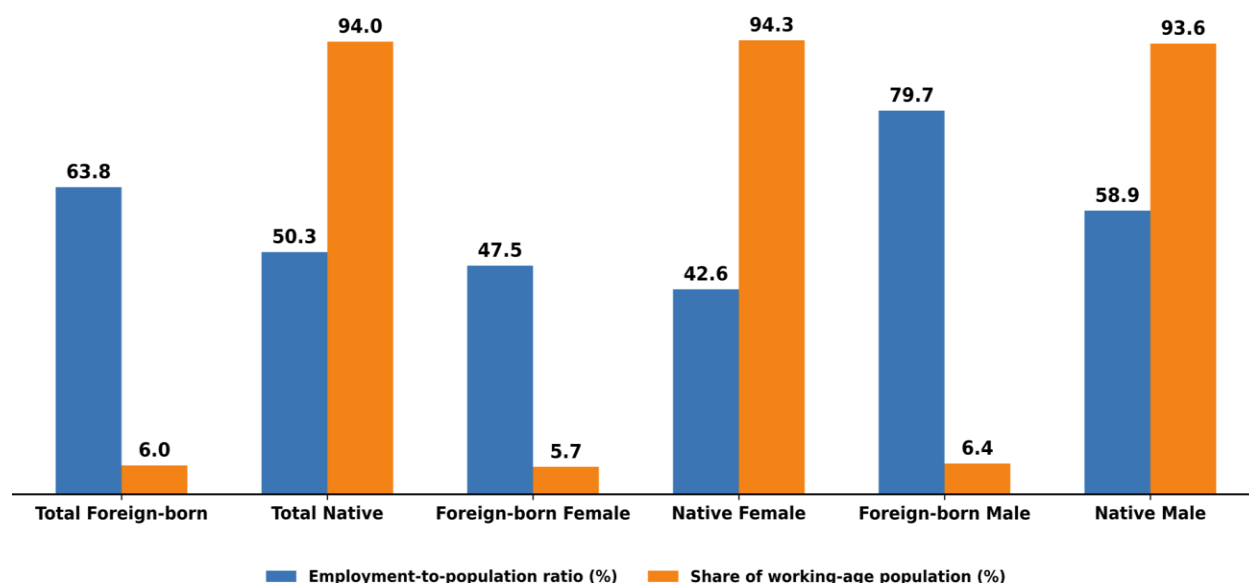


Figure 15.1: Working age and employed population by place of birth and sex, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

15.3.2 Changes in Employment-to-Population Ratios

Figure 15.2 compares employment-to-population ratios between the GLFS 2025 (Q1) and 2026 (Q1), disaggregated by place of birth and sex. The data show improvements in employment outcomes for both native-born and foreign-born populations over the period, with particularly notable gains among native-born men and women.

Among native-born persons, the employment-to-population ratio increased from 41.8 per cent in 2025 (Q1) to 50.3 per cent in 2026 (Q1), a substantial improvement of 8.5 percentage points. Native-born men experienced a gain of 11.3 percentage points (from 47.6% to 58.9%), while native-born women saw an increase of 5.9 percentage points (from 36.7% to 42.6%).

Foreign-born persons also experienced improvements, though more modest. The employment-to-population ratio for foreign-born persons rose from 61.9 per cent to 63.8 per cent, driven largely by gains among foreign-born men (from 72.1% to 79.7%). Foreign-born women saw a smaller increase from 45.6 per cent to 47.5 per cent.

While foreign-born persons exhibit higher employment-to-population ratios than native-born persons, this advantage should be interpreted alongside differences in job quality. As shown in later sections, foreign-born workers are more likely to be employed in informal activities and tend to work longer hours. This suggests that higher employment among migrants reflects strong labour market participation and absorption, but often in more precarious forms of employment.

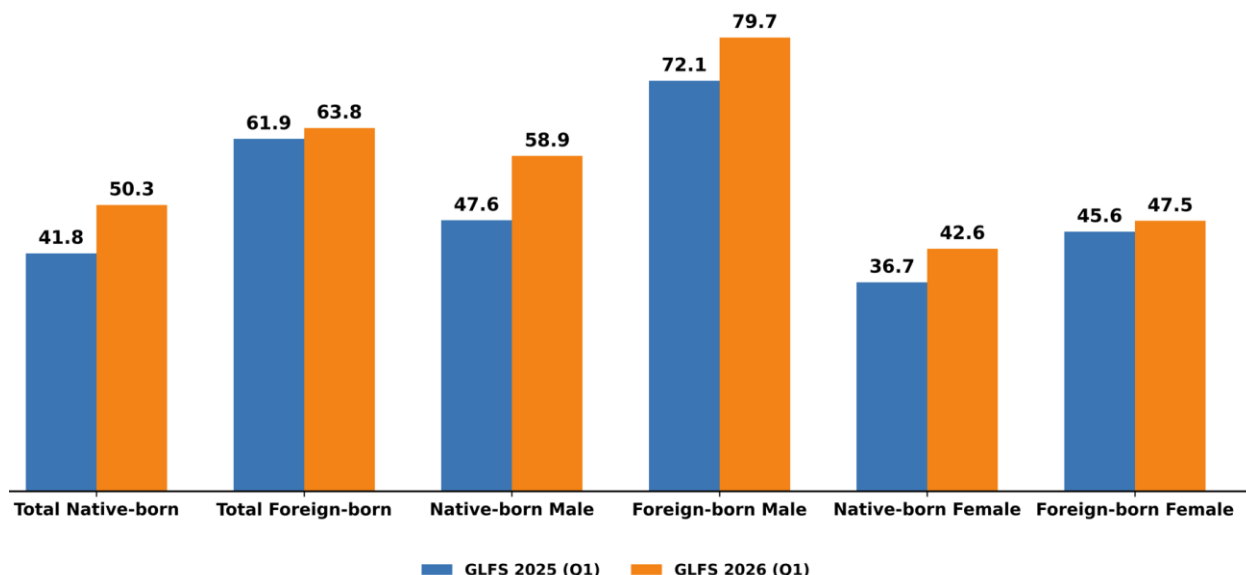


Figure 15.2: Employment-to-population ratio by place of birth and sex, GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

15.3.3 Labour Force Participation Rates by Place of Birth and Sex

Figure 15.3 presents labour force participation rates (LFPR) by place of birth and sex. The LFPR measures the proportion of the working-age population that is either employed or actively seeking employment, indicating the level of labour market engagement.

Foreign-born men have the highest LFPR at 80.0 per cent, followed by native-born men at 62.4 per cent. Among women, foreign-born women have a LFPR of 49.4 per cent, slightly higher than native-born women at 46.1 per cent.

These findings indicate that international migrants, particularly men, are more likely to participate in the labour force than their native-born counterparts. The higher LFPR among foreign-born persons is consistent with the profile of labour migrants who move specifically for employment purposes, as well as with the younger age structure of the migrant population.

The higher labour force participation and employment rates observed among foreign-born persons may reflect a selection effect, whereby individuals migrate primarily for economic reasons and are therefore more likely to participate in the labour force. In addition, migrants may be more willing or compelled to accept available employment opportunities, including in informal sectors.

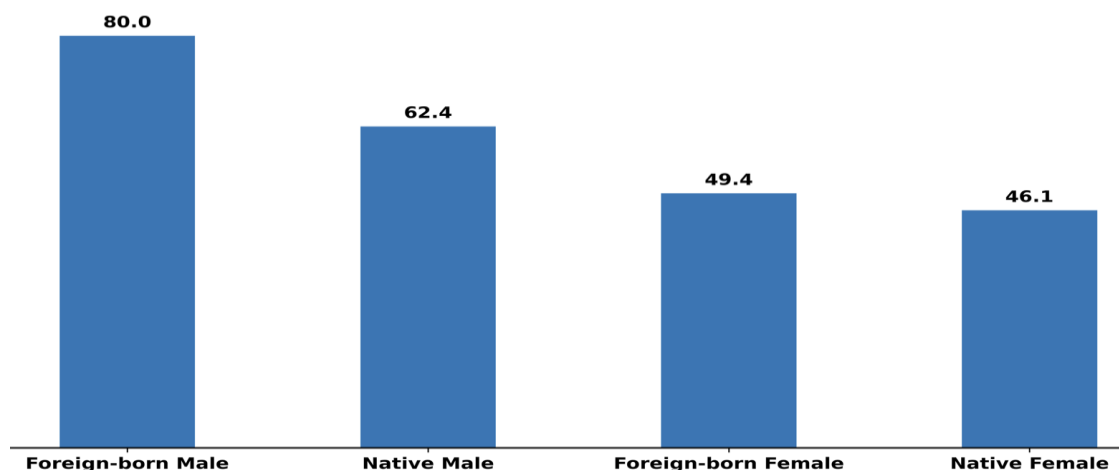


Figure 15.3: Labour force participation rate by place of birth and sex, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

15.4 Sectoral Distribution and Status in Employment

15.4.1 Employment by Sector of Economic Activity

Figure 15.4 presents the percentage distribution of employed persons by sector of economic activity, comparing native-born and foreign-born workers. The services sector is the largest employer for both groups, accounting for 57.5 per cent of native-born workers and 63.2 per cent of foreign-born workers.

Foreign-born workers are more concentrated in the services sector and slightly more concentrated in industry (24.6 per cent compared to 24.2 per cent for native-born workers). Native-born workers are more concentrated in agriculture (18.2 per cent compared to 12.2 per cent for foreign-born workers). This pattern reflects the tendency of international migrants to settle in urban areas where services and industrial employment are more readily available, while native-born workers are more likely to engage in agricultural activities, particularly in rural areas.

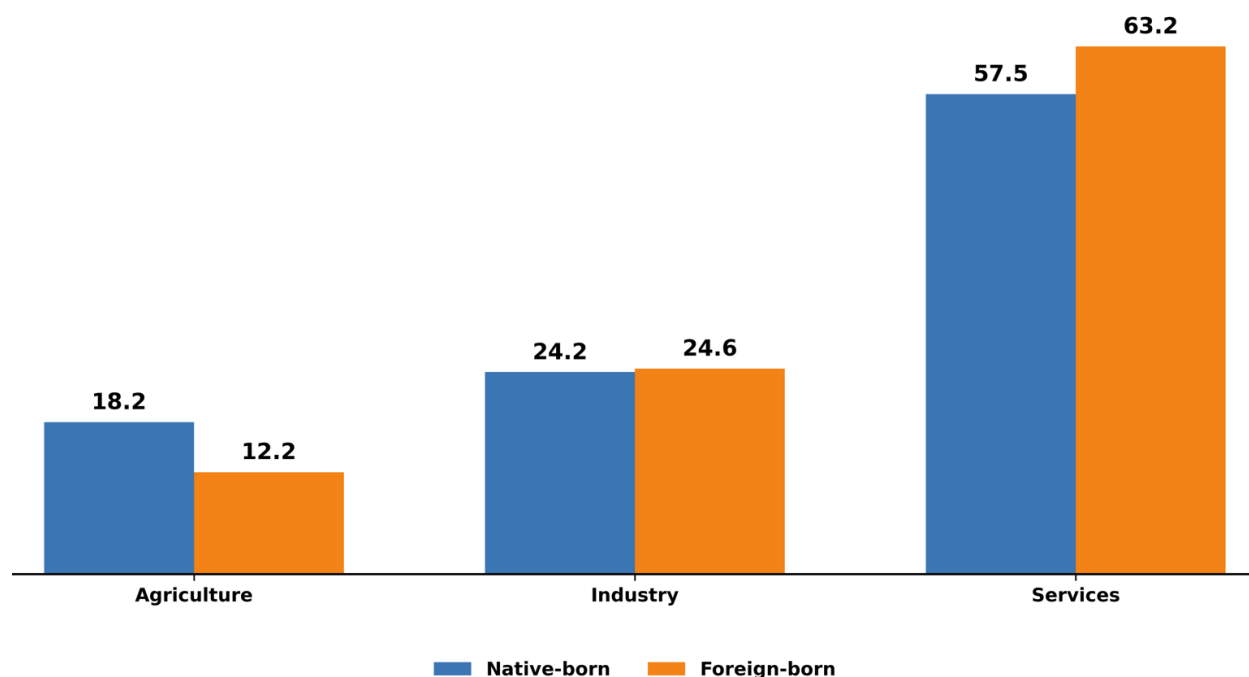


Figure 15.4: Percentage distribution of employed persons by sector of economic activity and place of birth, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

15.4.2 Status in Employment

Figure 15.5 presents the distribution of employed persons by type of authority and type of economic risk under the International Classification of Status in Employment (ICSE-18), comparing native-born and foreign-born workers.

Under the authority classification (ICSE-18 A), independent workers constituted the majority of employed persons in both groups. However, the share was notably higher among foreign-born workers (69.2%) than among native-born workers (57.6%). Conversely, dependent workers accounted for a smaller share of foreign-born workers (30.8%) than among native-born workers (42.4%).

Under the economic risk classification (ICSE-18 R), workers in employment for profit represented the dominant group among both native-born and foreign-born workers. The share of workers in employment for profit was higher among foreign-born workers (72.8%) than among native-born workers (66.4%). In contrast, workers in employment for pay accounted for a smaller proportion of foreign-born workers (20.1%) than native-born workers (28.1%). Workers not classifiable by status represented a relatively small share of employment in both groups.

These findings indicate that foreign-born workers are more likely to be engaged in independent and profit-oriented employment arrangements, while native-born workers are relatively more likely to be engaged in dependent employment arrangements and employment for pay.

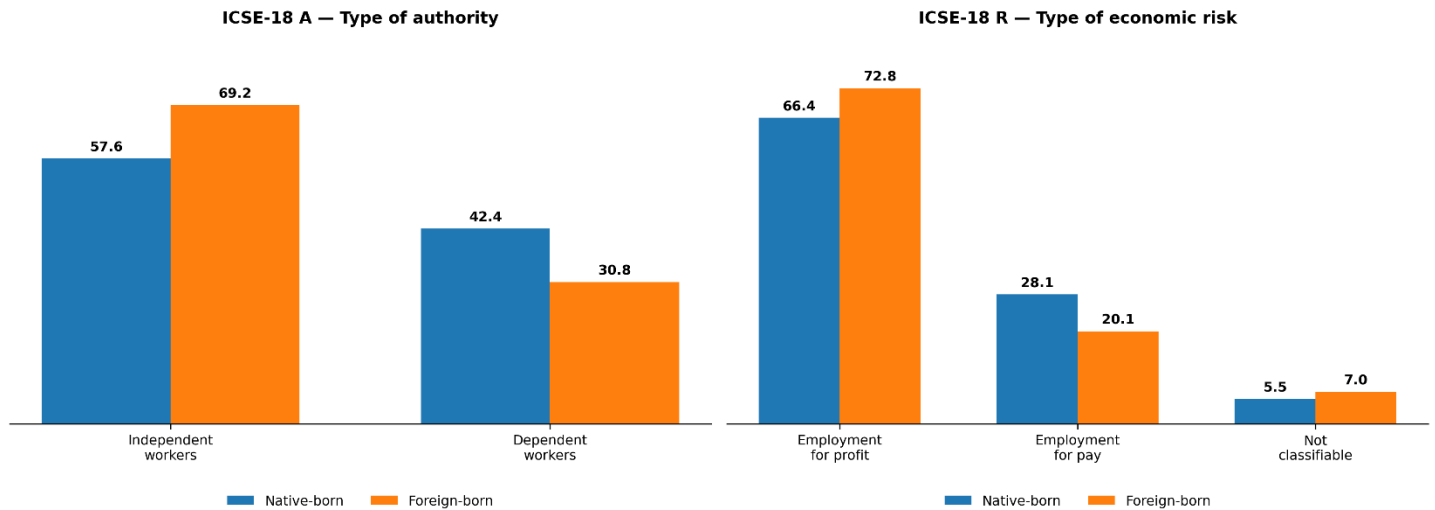


Figure 15.5: ICSE-18 status in employment by place of birth, main job (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

15.4.3 Changes in Status in Employment (2025-2026)

Table 15.4 presents changes in status in employment according to the type of authority classification (ICSE-18 A) between GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1) for native-born and foreign-born workers. Among native-born workers, the share of independent workers declined slightly from 58.4 per cent in 2025 (Q1) to 57.6 per cent in 2026 (Q1), while the share of dependent workers increased from 41.6 per cent to 42.4 per cent. Among foreign-born workers, the share of independent workers increased from 65.4 per cent to 69.2 per cent, while the share of dependent workers declined from 34.6 per cent to 30.8 per cent over the same period.

These findings indicate that independent work arrangements remained more prevalent among foreign-born workers than among native-born workers in both survey rounds. The gap widened slightly between 2025 (Q1) and 2026 (Q1), reflecting an increasing concentration of foreign-born workers in independent work arrangements.

Table 15.4: Status in employment by place of birth, %, GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	GLFS 2025 (Q1)	GLFS 2026 (Q1)
Native-born - Dependent workers	41.6	42.4
Native-born - Independent workers	58.4	57.6
Foreign-born - Dependent workers	34.6	30.8
Foreign-born - Independent workers	65.4	69.2

15.5 Unemployment and Labour Underutilisation

15.5.1 Unemployment Rates by Place of Birth and Sex

Table 15.5 presents unemployment rates by place of birth and sex. Native-born workers have considerably higher unemployment rates than foreign-born workers. Native-born men have an unemployment rate of 5.6 per cent, compared to just 0.4 per cent for foreign-born men. Native-born women have an unemployment rate of 7.7 per cent, compared to 4.0 per cent for foreign-born women.

Unemployment rates are considerably lower among foreign-born workers than among native-born workers. However, these estimates should be interpreted with caution due to the relatively small number of unemployed foreign-born persons in the sample. The observed differences may reflect stronger labour market attachment among migrants, their greater likelihood of accepting available work, including in informal or lower-quality jobs, or selective migration processes whereby migrants who are unable to secure employment may return to their countries of origin or move elsewhere.

Table 15.5: Unemployment rate by place of birth and sex, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	⁵ Unemployment rate (%)
Native-born Male	5.6
Native-born Female	7.7
Foreign-born Male	0.4
Foreign-born Female	4.0

15.5.2 Labour Underutilisation Rates by Place of Birth

Table 15.6 presents labour underutilisation rates by place of birth. Native-born persons experience higher levels of labour underutilisation than foreign-born persons across all measures. The LU2 rate, which combines unemployment and time-related underemployment, is 17.2 per cent among native-born persons compared with 9.7 per cent among foreign-born persons. Similarly, the LU3 rate, which combines unemployment and the potential labour force, is 24.3 per cent among native-born persons and 14.0 per cent among foreign-born persons. The broadest measure of labour underutilisation (LU4) reaches 32.9 per cent among native-born persons, compared with 21.0 per cent among foreign-born persons.

These findings suggest that native-born persons face greater labour market constraints than foreign-born persons, regardless of the labour underutilisation measure considered.

Table 15.6: Labour underutilisation rates by place of birth, main job (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Place of birth	LU2	LU3	LU4
Native-born	17.2	24.3	32.9
Foreign-born	9.7	14.0	21.0
Total	16.7	23.6	32.1

15.5.3 Labour Market Outcomes by Place of Birth and Citizenship

Table 15.7 compares labour market outcomes by place of birth (native-born and foreign-born) and by citizenship (citizens and non-citizens). The patterns are broadly similar under both classifications. Non-citizens have the highest labour force participation rate (66.0%), followed by foreign-born persons (65.0%), citizens (53.9%), and native-born persons (53.8%).

⁵ **Note:** Unemployment estimates for foreign-born persons are based on a relatively small number of observations in the sample (unweighted count = 24) and should therefore be interpreted with caution, as they may be subject to higher sampling variability.

Unemployment rates are considerably lower among non-citizens (2.5%) and foreign-born persons (1.8%) compared to citizens (6.4%) and native-born persons (6.5%). Employment rates follow the opposite pattern, with non-citizens (64.3%) and foreign-born persons (63.8%) having higher employment rates than citizens (50.5%) and native-born persons (50.3%).

These findings indicate that, regardless of whether migration status is defined by place of birth or citizenship, international migrants and non-citizens demonstrate stronger labour market outcomes than their native-born and citizen counterparts.

Table 15.7: Labour market outcomes by place of birth and citizenship,(%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	Labour force participation rate	Unemployment rate	Employment-to-population ratio
Native-born	53.8	6.5	50.3
Foreign-born	65.0	1.8	63.8
Citizens	53.9	6.4	50.5
Non-citizens	66.0	2.5	64.3

15.6 INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT AND WORKING HOURS

15.6.1 Informal Employment and Mean Usual Weekly Hours by Place of Birth and Sex

Table 15.8 presents informal employment rates and mean usual weekly hours by place of birth and sex. Informal employment is more common among foreign-born workers (90.1%) than among native-born workers (85.5%). This pattern holds for both men and women, although the gap is larger among women (93.9% for foreign-born women compared to 88.4% for native-born women) than among men (87.9% for foreign-born men compared to 83.2% for native-born men).

Foreign-born workers also work longer hours on average than native-born workers. The mean usual weekly hours for foreign-born workers is 47.8 hours, compared to 44.1 hours for native-born workers. Foreign-born men work an average of 54.1 hours per week, while native-born men work 50.5 hours. Among women, the difference is smaller: foreign-born women work 37.1 hours on average, compared to 36.1 hours for native-born women.

These findings indicate that while foreign-born workers are more likely to be employed than native-born workers, they are also more likely to be in informal employment and to work longer hours. This suggests that migrants may be concentrated in more precarious forms of employment, even as they achieve high rates of labour market participation.

Table 15.8: Informal employment and mean usual weekly hours by place of birth and sex, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	Informal employment (%)	Mean usual weekly hours
Male		
Native-born	83.2	50.5
Foreign-born	87.9	54.1
Female		
Native-born	88.4	36.1
Foreign-born	93.9	37.1
Total		
Native-born	85.5	44.1
Foreign-born	90.1	47.8

15.6.2 Informal Employment by Sector and Place of Birth

Table 15.9 examines informal employment rates by sector and place of birth. Across all sectors, informal employment is widespread, but notable differences exist between native-born and foreign-born workers. In agriculture, informal employment is nearly universal for both groups, though slightly higher among native-born workers (97.8%) than foreign-born workers (96.0%).

In industry, foreign-born workers have a much higher informal employment rate (99.6%) than native-born workers (95.0%). This suggests that foreign-born workers in industrial sectors are almost exclusively in informal employment. In services, foreign-born workers also have a higher informal employment rate (85.3%) than native-born workers (77.6%).

These findings indicate that, across all sectors of the economy, foreign-born workers are more likely than native-born workers to be in informal employment. This may reflect barriers to accessing formal sector employment, including documentation requirements, language barriers, or discrimination.

Table 15.9: Informal employment by sector and place of birth, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	Native-born (%)	Foreign-born (%)
Agriculture	97.8	96.0
Industry	95.0	99.6
Services	77.6	85.3

15.7 Reasons for Migration and Duration of Residence

15.7.1 Reasons for Migration

Table 15.10 presents the main reasons for migration among working-age international migrants. Family-related reasons are the most common motive for migration, accounting for 62.4 per cent of migrants, followed by economic reasons (31.9%). Education (1.0%), conflict and insecurity (0.5%), and other reasons (4.2%) account for relatively small shares.

The reasons for migration differ markedly by sex. Among male migrants, economic reasons are the dominant motive, accounting for 57.7 per cent of migration, while 34.3 per cent migrated for family reasons. In contrast, family-related reasons overwhelmingly predominate among female migrants, accounting for 91.3 per cent of migration, compared with only 5.4 per cent who migrated for economic reasons. These findings suggest that male migration is largely labour-oriented, whereas female migration is primarily driven by family reunification and related family considerations.

Table 15.10: Reasons for migration among international migrants (working age) (%), GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Reason for migration	Male	Female	Total
Economic	57.7	5.4	31.9
Education	1.8	0.2	1.0
Family	34.3	91.3	62.4
Conflict	0.3	0.7	0.5
Other	5.9	2.4	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

The findings highlight the important role of international migrants in The Gambia's labour market. While migrants appear to have stronger labour market attachment and contribute significantly to employment, they are disproportionately concentrated in informal and potentially more vulnerable forms of work. These results suggest the need for policies aimed at improving access to formal employment opportunities and enhancing working conditions for both migrants and native-born workers, particularly in sectors characterised by high informality.

CHAPTER 16. INTERNAL MIGRATION

16.1 Introduction

This chapter examines internal migration using data from the Gambia Labour Force Survey (GLFS) 2026 (Q1). Internal migrants are defined as persons whose current Local Government Area (LGA) of residence differs from their LGA of birth.

The chapter presents the distribution of lifetime migration status across LGAs, internal migration status distinguishing between recent and long-term migrants, destination patterns of internal migrants, migration flow matrices showing movement patterns between origin and destination LGAs, as well as the main reasons for migration and duration of residence in the current location.

While lifetime migration is defined based on place of birth and current residence, the migration flow matrix is based on previous LGA of residence, capturing more recent movement patterns.

16.1.1 Lifetime Migration Status by LGA

Table 16.1 presents lifetime migration status by LGA, showing the percentage of the population born in the same LGA versus a different LGA. Nationally, 76.3 per cent of the population were born in their current LGA of residence, while 23.7 per cent were born in a different LGA.

Basse has the highest proportion of persons born in the same LGA (98.8%), followed by Janjanbureh (94.9%) and Kerewan (91.7%), indicating relatively low levels of internal migration into these areas. In contrast, Brikama has the lowest proportion (64.9%), followed by Kanifing (73.4%) and Kuntaur (78.3%), reflecting higher levels of inward migration.

These patterns indicate that internal migration is strongly concentrated towards a few LGAs, particularly Brikama and Kanifing, while more remote LGAs experience limited population inflows.

Table 16.1: Lifetime Migration Status by LGA, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	Born in same LGA (%)	Born in different LGA (%)	Total (%)
Banjul	89.2	10.8	100.0
Kanifing	73.4	26.6	100.0
Brikama	64.9	35.1	100.0
Mansakonko	87.7	12.3	100.0
Kerewan	91.7	8.3	100.0
Kuntaur	78.3	21.7	100.0
Janjanbureh	94.9	5.1	100.0
Basse	98.8	1.2	100.0
Total	76.3	23.7	100.0

16.1.2 Internal Migration Status by LGA

Figure 16.1 presents the distribution of the population by internal migration status, distinguishing between non-migrants, recent internal migrants (those who moved within the last five years), and long-term internal migrants (those who moved five or more years ago).

Nationally, 76.3 per cent of the population are non-migrants, 8.4 per cent are recent migrants, and 15.2 per cent are long-term migrants.

Brikama records the lowest share of non-migrants (64.9%) and the highest shares of both recent (13.3%) and long-term migrants (21.8%), indicating sustained inward migration over time. Kanifing also shows relatively high levels of internal migration, with 8.0 per cent recent migrants and 18.7 per cent long-term migrants.

In contrast, LGAs such as Basse, Janjanbureh, and Kerewan have very high shares of non-migrants and low shares of both recent and long-term migrants, indicating limited population mobility into these areas.

These patterns highlight the strong concentration of internal migration in a few LGAs, particularly Brikama and Kanifing.

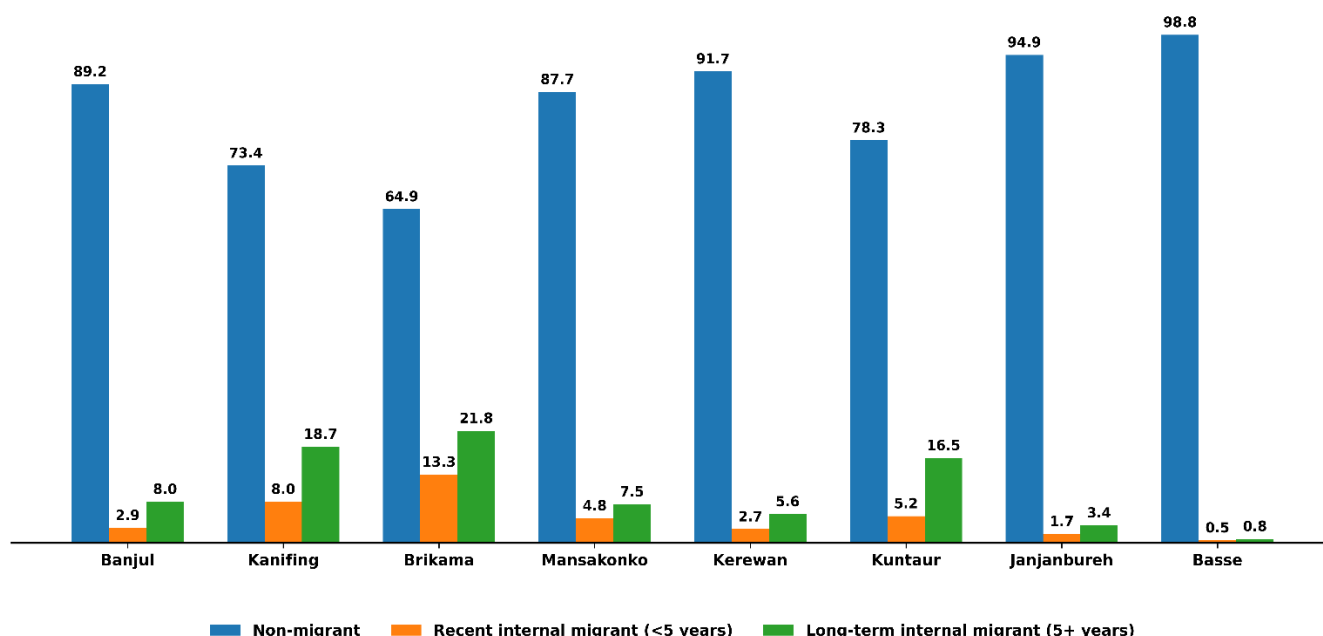


Figure 16.1: Internal Migration Status by LGA, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

16.1.3 Distribution of Internal Migrants by Current LGA

Table 16.2 presents the distribution of lifetime internal migrants by current LGA of residence. Brikama accounts for 68.5 per cent of all internal migrants, followed by Kanifing at 18.0 per cent. The remaining LGAs account for much smaller shares, with Kerewan (4.5%), Janjanbureh (2.7%), Kuntaur (2.1%), Mansakonko (1.9%), Basse (1.9%), and Banjul (0.4%).

This distribution indicates a strong concentration of internal migration towards Brikama, suggesting that it functions as the primary destination for migrants within The Gambia. The relatively high share of migrants in Kanifing further highlights the importance of the Greater Banjul Area as a major centre of population inflow.

Table 16.2: Distribution of Lifetime Internal Migrants by Current LGA of Residence, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Destination LGA	Share of Internal Migrants (%)
Brikama	68.5
Kanifing	18.0
Kerewan	4.5
Janjanbureh	2.7
Kuntaur	2.1
Mansakonko	1.9
Basse	1.9
Banjul	0.4
Total	100.0

16.1.4 Distribution of Internal Migrants by Main Reason for Migration

Table 16.3 presents the main reasons for migration reported by internal migrants. Marriage or family-related reasons are the dominant driver, accounting for 77.7 per cent of all internal migration. Housing or lifestyle considerations account for 10.3 per cent, while work-related reasons represent 6.6 per cent. Study accounts for 4.4 per cent, and other reasons account for 1.0 per cent.

The predominance of family-related migration suggests that internal migration in The Gambia is primarily driven by social and household factors rather than purely economic motives. This contrasts with international migration patterns, where economic reasons play a more prominent role.

Table 16.3: Percentage Distribution of Lifetime Internal Migrants by Reason for Migration, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

	Per cent
Marriage/Family	77.7
Housing/Lifestyle	10.3
Work-related	6.6
Study	4.4
Other	1.0
Total	100.0

16.1.5 Distribution of Internal Migrants by Duration of Residence in Current Location

Table 16.4 presents the duration of residence of internal migrants in their current LGA. The largest share of migrants (29.2%) have lived in their current location for 20 years or more, followed by 24.9 per cent who have resided for 10-19

years. Smaller shares are observed for those who have lived in their current LGA for 1-4 years (21.1%), 5-9 years (19.3%), and less than one year (5.6%).

This distribution indicates that internal migration in The Gambia is largely long-term in nature, with many migrants settling permanently or for extended periods in their destination LGAs.

Table 16.4: Percentage Distribution of Lifetime Internal Migrants by Duration of Residence in Current Location, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Duration	Per cent
Less than 1 year	5.6
1 - 4 years	21.1
5 - 9 years	19.3
10 - 19 years	24.9
20 years or more	29.2
Total	100.0

16.1.6 ⁶Migration Flow Matrix

Figure 16.2 presents the migration flow matrix showing the percentage distribution of migrants from each previous LGA of residence to each current LGA. Each row sums to 100.0 per cent, representing the distribution of migrants from a given origin LGA across destination LGAs.

Diagonal values represent individuals who changed residence but remained within the same LGA, indicating within-LGA mobility.

The results show that Brikama is the most common destination for migrants from all LGAs, receiving between 42.3 per cent (from Kuntaur) and 69.8 per cent (from Mansakonko) of migrants. Kanifing is the second most common destination, particularly for migrants originating from Banjul (44.0%), Basse (22.9%), and Kerewan (16.1%).

The consistent dominance of Brikama as a destination across all origin LGAs indicates strong centripetal migration patterns, likely reflecting its role as an economic and urban growth centre. Intra-LGA mobility is also notable in Brikama (87.2%), Kerewan (33.3%), and Kuntaur (33.0%), indicating that a significant proportion of movement occurs within LGAs.

⁶ Note: Diagonal values represent intra-LGA movement (persons who changed residence but remained within the same LGA).

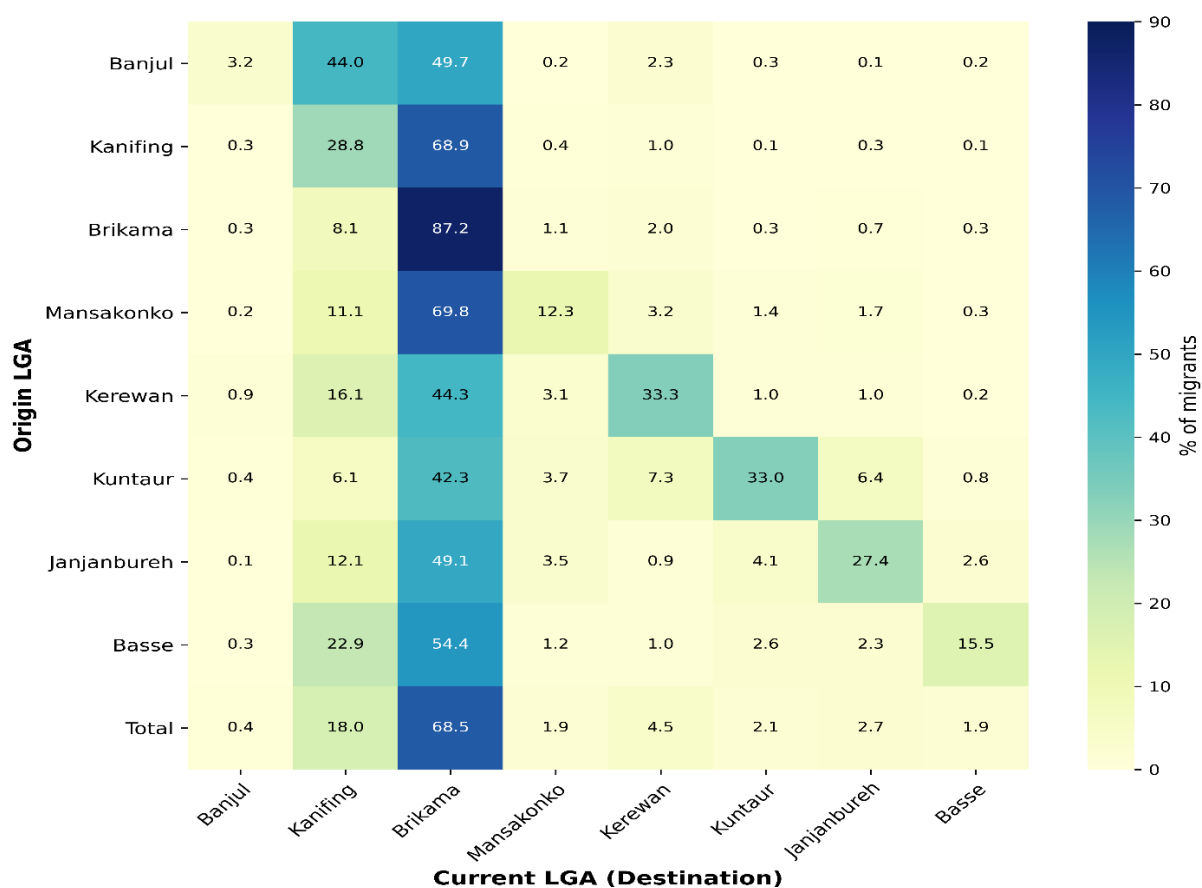


Figure 16.2: Migration Flow Matrix Showing Percentage Distribution of Migrants by Previous LGA and Current LGA, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

The findings highlight the strong spatial concentration of internal migration towards a small number of LGAs, particularly Brikama and Kanifing. While internal migration is predominantly driven by family-related factors, the observed patterns suggest increasing pressure on urban infrastructure, housing, and labour markets in these areas. At the same time, limited migration into more remote LGAs points to persistent spatial inequalities in access to economic opportunities. These results underscore the need for policies aimed at balanced regional development, improved service delivery, and expanded economic opportunities across all LGAs.

CHAPTER 17. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

17.1 Summary of Key Findings

The Gambia Labour Force Survey 2026 (Q1) indicates an improvement in key labour market indicators. Between GLFS 2025 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1), labour force participation increased from 47.1 per cent to 54.5 per cent, while the employment-to-population ratio rose from 43.2 per cent to 51.1 per cent. The unemployment rate declined from 8.3 per cent to 6.2 per cent, and labour underutilisation (LU3) decreased from 26.7 per cent to 23.6 per cent. These changes indicate that the increase in labour supply was largely absorbed into employment.

In GLFS 2026 (Q1), informal employment stands at 85.8 per cent of total employment. Time-related underemployment rose from 10.1 per cent to 11.1 per cent. The share of employees declined from 30.9 per cent to 27.4 per cent, while dependent contractors increased from 6.5 per cent to 8.5 per cent and contributing family workers from 3.5 per cent to 5.7 per cent. These patterns indicate an increasing share of employment in non-wage work arrangements.

Differences across population groups remain evident. Women have lower labour force participation (46.3% compared to 63.5% for men), higher unemployment (7.5% compared to 5.2%), higher informal employment (88.7% compared to 83.6%), and higher labour underutilisation (LU4 at 42.1% compared to 22.8% for men). Youth (15-35 years) also experience higher levels of labour underutilisation, although the NEET rate declined from 41.3 per cent in GLFS 2025 (Q1) to 33.7 per cent in GLFS 2026 (Q1). Rural areas continue to show higher levels of informality, underutilisation and child labour compared to urban areas.

Child labour is estimated at 12.9 per cent among children aged 5-17 years under the national child labour measure, representing approximately 108,087 children. Prevalence increases with age and is substantially higher in rural areas (19.5%) than in urban areas (7.9%). Agriculture remains the dominant sector of child labour, particularly among younger children. Hazardous work affects 9.0 per cent of children aged 5-17 years and rises from 7.7 per cent among children aged 5-15 years to 17.4 per cent among those aged 16-17 years.

Labour market outcomes for persons with disabilities improved, with increases in participation (from 20.1% to 27.4%) and employment (from 19.4% to 26.5%). However, differences relative to persons without disabilities remain, particularly among women with disabilities.

International migrants account for 6.0 per cent of the working-age population and have higher employment-to-population ratios (63.8%) than native-born Gambians (50.3%). Internal migration is concentrated towards Brikama and Kanifing, which serve as the main receiving LGAs, and is primarily driven by family-related reasons.

Participation in own-use foodstuff production declined from 9.9 per cent to 8.4 per cent of the working-age population. However, 24.3 per cent of the population remains engaged in some form of own-use production work. Individuals engaged in foodstuff production tend to have lower labour force participation and higher labour underutilisation than non-producers.

17.2 Conclusion

The results of GLFS 2026 (Q1) indicate that the labour market has expanded, with increases in participation and employment alongside declines in unemployment and underutilisation. At the same time, employment remains characterised by high levels of informality and a predominance of independent work arrangements, while dependent work arrangements account for a smaller share of total employment.

Differences by sex, age, residence, disability status and economic activity remain evident. Women, youth, rural populations, persons with disabilities, and foodstuff producers continue to experience different labour market outcomes compared to the overall population. Child labour, while declining on a comparable basis, remains present in specific LGAs and sectors.

Spatial differences are also observed, with Brikama and Kanifing serving as key destinations for internal migrants, while other LGAs record higher levels of labour underutilisation and lower labour market participation.

17.3 Recommendations

Improve Job Quality and Reduce Informality

- Develop and implement a national formalisation strategy targeting sectors with the highest informality, including agriculture (97.7%), construction (98.1%), wholesale and retail trade (91.5%), and accommodation and food services (93.6%).
- Strengthen enforcement of labour standards and extend social protection coverage to workers in informal employment, including dependent contractors and contributing family workers.
- Provide incentives for small and medium enterprises to register and comply with labour regulations, including tax breaks, simplified registration procedures, and access to credit.
- Promote the transition from independent work arrangements and dependent contracting to formal employment through skills development and enterprise support programmes.

Address Gender Disparities

- Implement targeted policies to raise female labour force participation, including affordable childcare services, parental leave policies, and measures to reduce the unpaid care burden borne disproportionately by women.
- Promote women's access to formal employment through affirmative action policies, skills training, and awareness campaigns targeting employers.
- Support women's entrepreneurship through access to credit and business development services.
- Monitor and promote women's representation in managerial positions (SDG indicator 5.5.2), which has remained stagnant at around 29.5 per cent since GLFS 2023 (Q1).

Enhance Youth Employment Outcomes

- Strengthen linkages between education and the labour market through vocational training, apprenticeships, and internships that lead to formal employment.
- Reduce the NEET rate among young women (currently 40.0%) through targeted interventions including second-chance education, skills training, and employment services.
- Support youth entrepreneurship while ensuring that independent work arrangements do not become a default option due to limited access to formal employment opportunities.
- Address the high rate of informal employment among youth (88.6%) through formal employment creation and social protection extension.

Combat Child Labour

- Target interventions in high-prevalence LGAs, particularly Kuntaur (33.7%), Mansakonko (20.5%), and Janjanbureh (16.1%).
- Strengthen school attendance and retention, especially in rural areas where 17.7 per cent of children aged 5–14 combine economic activities with schooling.
- Reduce children's exposure to hazardous work, particularly hazardous working conditions, hazardous occupations, hazardous industries, and excessive working hours among older adolescents.
- Strengthen enforcement of the Children's Act (2005) and the Labour Act (2023), particularly provisions relating to hazardous work, exploitative labour, and the protection of children from work that may endanger their health, safety, education, or development.
- Continue strengthening child labour measurement and monitoring systems in line with international standards to support evidence-based policymaking and track progress towards the elimination of child labour.
- Strengthening child labour prevention and monitoring programmes in high-prevalence LGAs, particularly Kuntaur, Mansakonko, and Janjanbureh.

Improve Labour Market Outcomes for Persons with Disabilities

- Reduce barriers to labour market entry for persons with disabilities through accessible infrastructure, inclusive hiring policies, and anti-discrimination enforcement.
- Provide targeted employment services, skills training, and workplace adjustments for persons with disabilities.
- Pay particular attention to women with disabilities, who have the lowest levels of labour market engagement (24.1% participation, 22.4% employment).
- Strengthen the measurement of disability in future survey rounds to enable more reliable estimates for youth with disabilities and other subgroups.

Address LGA Disparities

- Develop local economic development strategies for LGAs with high labour underutilisation, including Kuntaur (LU3 at 45.7%), Kerewan (36.5%), and Basse (31.4%).
- Invest in infrastructure, services, and employment opportunities in remote LGAs to reduce pressure on Brikama and Kanifing as the primary destinations for internal migrants.
- Target employment promotion programmes and social protection to rural areas, where informality (91.2%), underemployment (16.5%), and child labour (17.9%) are highest.

Leverage Migration for Development

- Recognise the positive contribution of international migrants to the labour market while improving their working conditions through access to formal employment and social protection.
- Address the high rates of informal employment among foreign-born workers (90.1%) through regularisation programmes and labour rights awareness.

- Facilitate the integration of internal migrants into destination LGAs through affordable housing, basic services, and employment support.

Monitor and Evaluate Progress

- Continue regular production of GLFS data to track trends in labour market indicators, with particular attention to job quality, informality, and underutilisation. The GLFS should serve as the primary data source for monitoring labour market-related priorities under the Recovery-Focused National Development Plan (RF-NDP) 2023-2027, providing evidence to assess progress towards the Plan's employment, decent work, and social inclusion targets.
- Strengthen the measurement of emerging forms of work, including platform work and multi-party employment arrangements.
- Enhance the sample size for small subgroups, including persons with disabilities, to improve the reliability of estimates.
- Use SDG indicators (5.5.2, 8.3.1, 8.5.2, 8.6.1, 8.7.1, 9.2.2) as a framework for international comparability and progress monitoring.

17.4 Suggestions for Future Surveys

Based on the findings and data limitations of GLFS 2026 (Q1), the following areas may be considered for future survey rounds:

1. Increasing sample sizes for small subgroups to improve the reliability of estimates.
2. Maintain light-touch screening questions to monitor the emergence of platform work and other new employment arrangements. Full module expansion should be considered only when these forms of work become statistically significant in future survey rounds.
3. Improving measurement of household services within own-use production and child labour.

ANNEX

Table 0.1: Precision measures for key labour indicators, population aged 15+, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Indicator	Estimate (%)	Standard error (%)	95% Confidence Interval	RSE (%)	DEFF	DEFT
Labour force participation rate	54.5	0.7	[53.1, 55.9]	1.3	4.9	2.2
Employment-to-population ratio	51.1	0.7	[49.8, 52.5]	1.4	5.0	2.2
Informal employment (a)	85.8	0.7	[84.4, 87.2]	0.8	4.9	2.2
Employed in agriculture	9.1	0.6	[7.8, 10.3]	7.0	12.3	3.5
Informal employment (excluding agriculture) (b)	83.3	0.8	[81.7, 84.8]	0.9	4.0	2.0
LU1: Unemployment rate	6.2	0.3	[5.6, 6.8]	5.3	2.3	1.5
LU2: Combined rate of time-related underemployment and unemployment	16.7	0.5	[15.6, 17.7]	3.2	2.6	1.6
LU3: Combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force	23.6	0.6	[22.4, 24.9]	2.7	3.8	2.0
LU4: Composite measure of labour underutilisation	32.1	0.7	[30.8, 33.5]	2.2	3.7	1.9

Notes for Table 0.1

- a) Based on employed population aged 15+ (n = 11,811).
- b) Based on employed population aged 15+ excluding agriculture (n = 9,007).

All estimates are weighted using survey design (14 strata, 260 PSUs).

RSE = Relative standard error = $(SE / \text{estimate}) \times 100$.

DEFF = Design effect. DEFT = $\sqrt{DEFF}$.

Table 0.2: Precision measures for key labour indicators, population aged 15-35 years, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Indicator	Estimate (%)	Standard error (%)	95% Confidence Interval	RSE (%)	DEFF	DEFT
Labour force participation rate	48.3	0.8	[46.7, 50.0]	1.7	4.4	2.1
Employment-to-population ratio	44.1	0.8	[42.6, 45.7]	1.8	4.0	2.0
Informal employment (a)	88.6	0.8	[87.1, 90.2]	0.9	3.9	2.0
Employed in agriculture	7.1	0.6	[6.01, 8.19]	7.8	7.1	2.7
Informal employment (excluding agriculture) (b)	86.9	0.9	[85.1, 88.6]	1.0	3.4	1.8
LU1: Unemployment rate	8.7	0.5	[7.71, 9.66]	5.7	2.1	1.5
LU2: Combined rate of time-related underemployment and unemployment	20.5	0.8	[19.0, 22.0]	3.6	2.4	1.5
LU3: Combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force	29.9	0.8	[28.3, 31.4]	2.6	2.9	1.7
LU4: Composite measure of labour underutilisation	38.9	0.9	[37.2, 40.6]	2.2	3.0	1.7
NEET (15-35 years)	33.7	0.8	[32.2, 35.2]	2.2	3.8	2.0
NEET (15-24 years)	32.2	1.0	[30.3, 34.1]	3.0	3.8	2.0

Notes for Table 0.2

a) Based on employed population aged 15-35 (n = 6,232).

b) Based on employed population aged 15-35 excluding agriculture (n = 4,824).

All estimates are weighted using survey design (14 strata, 260 PSUs).

RSE = Relative standard error = $(SE / estimate) \times 100$.

DEFF = Design effect. DEFT = $\sqrt{DEFF}$.

Table 0.3: Main labour force and labour underutilisation (LU) indicators, Population 15 years and above (15+), GLFS 2026 (Q1) - Main job

	Sex		Residence		Local government area								Disability status		Age		Own-use foodstuff production		Total
	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Banjul	Kanifing	Brikama	Mansakonko	Kerewan	Kuntaur	Janjanbureh	Basse	Without disability	⁷ With disability	Youth (15-35)	(36+)	⁸ Foodstuff producer	Not in foodstuff producer	
Population 15+	685,421	748,694	917,144	516,971	18,507	249,669	699,175	50,987	134,568	61,524	80,407	139,278	1,410,331	23,784	925,607	508,508	121,013	1,313,102	1,434,115
Labour force	435,124	346,744	520,487	261,381	11,840	140,452	412,579	30,181	66,708	25,881	43,551	50,675	775,348	6,520	451,083	330,785	38,650	743,218	781,868
-Employed	412,670	320,694	485,268	248,096	10,364	128,372	390,918	28,514	63,902	24,034	42,015	45,245	727,055	6,309	412,444	320,920	32,283	701,081	733,364
-Unemployed	22,454	26,050	35,219	13,285	1,476	12,080	21,661	1,667	2,806	1,847	1,536	5,430	48,293	211	38,639	9,865	6,367	42,137	48,504
Outside the labour force	250,297	401,950	396,657	255,590	6,667	109,217	286,596	20,806	67,860	35,643	36,856	88,603	634,983	17,264	474,524	177,723	82,363	569,885	652,247
Labour underutilisation	113,009	195,450	156,573	151,885	3,455	40,433	121,272	16,847	43,839	28,591	27,267	26,755	305,869	2,590	224,112	84,347	55,321	253,138	308,459
-Unemployed	22,454	26,050	35,219	13,285	1,476	12,080	21,661	1,667	2,806	1,847	1,536	5,430	48,293	211	38,639	9,865	6,367	42,137	48,504
-Time-related underemployed	29,718	52,007	40,680	41,046	693	9,483	35,557	4,175	7,085	8,360	10,344	6,029	81,029	696	52,558	29,167	7,853	73,872	81,725
-Potential labour force	60,837	117,393	80,674	97,554	1,286	18,870	64,054	11,005	33,948	18,384	15,387	15,296	176,547	1,683	132,915	45,315	41,101	137,129	178,230
Informal employment	345,060	284,495	403,305	226,250	8,129	104,829	331,814	25,523	56,420	22,104	38,578	42,159	623,878	5,677	365,259	264,296	30,297	599,258	629,555
Discouraged job-seekers	31,530	45,178	28,566	48,142	559	5,872	21,532	1,898	15,168	11,433	8,288	11,958	76,098	610	60,012	16,697	20,270	56,439	76,708
Employed population in agriculture	51,013	79,366	40,070	90,308	383	3,465	57,792	9,566	23,317	9,293	14,690	11,874	128,982	1,396	64,902	65,477	13,701	116,678	130,379

⁷ For persons with disabilities: the unemployment rate is not reported (unweighted sample size fewer than 5 cases); estimates for discouraged job-seekers, time-related underemployment, LU2, and LU3 have high sampling variability (coefficients of variation above 15%); and the estimate for employees is based on a small unweighted sample (n = 30). These estimates should be interpreted with caution.

⁸ The estimate of own-use foodstuff production for Kanifing has a coefficient of variation of 23%; interpret with caution.

Total employed (non-agriculture)	361,657	241,328	445,198	157,788	9,981	124,907	333,126	18,948	40,585	14,741	27,325	33,371	598,073	4,913	347,542	255,443	18,582	584,403	602,985
Informal employment (excluding agriculture)	296,402	205,796	365,687	136,512	7,773	101,618	275,968	15,999	33,597	12,897	24,018	30,328	497,918	4,281	301,733	200,466	16,619	485,579	502,198
Labour force participation rate (%)	63.5	46.3	56.7	50.6	64.0	56.2	59.0	59.2	49.6	42.1	54.2	36.4	55.0	27.4	48.7	65.0	31.9	56.6	54.5
Outside the labour force (%)	36.5	53.7	43.2	49.4	36.0	43.7	41.0	40.8	50.4	57.9	45.8	63.6	45.0	72.6	51.3	34.9	68.1	43.4	45.5
⁹ Potential labour force (%)	24.3	29.2	20.3	38.2	19.3	17.3	22.3	52.9	50.0	51.6	41.7	17.3	27.8	9.7	28.0	25.5	49.9	24.1	27.3
Employment-to-population ratio (%)	60.2	42.8	52.9	48.0	56.0	51.4	55.9	55.9	47.5	39.1	52.3	32.5	51.6	26.5	44.6	63.1	26.7	53.4	51.1
Discouraged job-seekers (% of outside LF)	12.6	11.2	7.2	18.8	8.4	5.4	7.5	9.1	22.4	32.1	22.5	13.5	12.0	3.5	12.6	9.4	24.6	9.9	11.8
Discouraged jobseekers (% of population 15+)	4.6	6.0	3.1	9.3	3	2.4	3.1	3.7	11.3	18.6	10.3	8.6	5.4	2.6	6.5	3.3	16.8	4.3	5.4
Informal employment (%)	83.6	88.7	83.1	91.2	78.4	81.7	84.9	89.5	88.3	92.0	91.8	93.2	85.8	90.0	88.6	82.4	93.8	85.5	85.8
Employed population in agriculture (%)	12.4	24.7	8.3	36.4	3.7	2.7	14.8	33.5	36.5	38.7	35.0	26.2	17.7	22.1	15.7	20.4	42.4	16.6	17.8
Informal employment excluding agriculture (%)	82.0	85.3	82.1	86.5	77.9	81.4	82.8	84.4	82.8	87.5	87.9	90.9	83.3	87.1	86.8	78.5	89.4	83.1	83.3
Time related underemployment rate (%)	7.2	16.2	8.4	16.5	6.7	7.4	9.1	14.6	11.1	34.8	24.6	13.3	11.1	11.0	12.7	9.1	24.3	10.5	11.1
¹⁰ LU1: Unemployment rate (%)	5.2	7.5	6.8	5.1	12.5	8.6	5.3	5.5	4.2	7.1	3.5	10.7	6.2	n.a.	8.6	3.0	16.5	5.7	6.2
LU2: Combined rate of time-related underemployment and unemployment (%)	12.0	22.5	14.6	20.8	18.3	15.4	13.9	19.4	14.8	39.4	27.3	22.6	16.7	13.9	20.2	11.8	36.8	15.6	16.7

⁹ The estimate of the potential labour force for Basse should be interpreted with caution due to moderate sampling variability (CV = 16%). However, it remains within acceptable reliability thresholds for analysis.

¹⁰ Unemployment rate estimates for Mansakonko, Kerewan, Kuntaur, Janjanbureh, and Basse have coefficients of variation (CV) ranging between 10 and 16 per cent, indicating acceptable levels of precision, though they should be interpreted with some caution. Agricultural employment estimates for Banjul (CV = 18%) and Kanifing (CV = 21%) exhibit lower precision, particularly for Kanifing where variability is relatively high. These estimates are presented but should be interpreted with caution.

LU3: Combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force (%)	16.8	30.9	19.3	30.9	21.0	19.4	18.0	30.8	36.5	45.7	28.7	31.4	23.6	23.1	29.4	14.7	59.5	20.4	23.6
LU4: Composite measure of labour underutilisation (%)	22.8	42.1	26.0	42.3	26.3	25.4	25.4	40.9	43.6	64.6	46.3	40.6	32.1	31.6	38.4	22.4	69.4	28.8	32.1

Source: The Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS), Labour Force Survey, 2026

Table 0.4: Main labour force and labour underutilisation (LU) indicators, population 15-35, GLFS 2026 (Q1) - Main job

	Sex		Residence		Local government area								Own-use foodstuff production		Total
	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Banjul	Kanifing	Brikama	Mansakonko	Kerewan	Kuntaur	Janjanbureh	Basse	Not Foodstuff producer	Foodstuff producer	
Population 15-35	430,331	488,747	596,888	322,190	10,829	156,974	460,057	31,066	81,733	38,427	50,868	89,124	848,350	70,728	919,078
Labour force	244,881	199,278	299,174	144,985	6,220	75,980	243,854	16,728	33,716	13,820	25,397	28,444	424,964	19,195	444,159
-Employed	228,004	177,574	270,127	135,451	5,115	66,023	225,590	15,645	31,603	12,637	24,234	24,731	390,362	15,216	405,578
-Unemployed	16,877	21,704	29,047	9,534	1,104	9,957	18,264	1,083	2,114	1,183	1,163	3,713	34,602	3,979	38,581
Outside the labour force	185,450	289,469	297,714	177,205	4,609	80,994	216,203	14,338	48,017	24,607	25,471	60,680	423,385	51,534	474,919
Labour underutilisation	81,894	143,309	118,739	106,464	2,506	30,373	94,567	10,813	31,417	19,060	18,013	18,454	191,145	34,058	225,203
-Unemployed	16,877	21,704	29,047	9,534	1,104	9,957	18,264	1,083	2,114	1,183	1,163	3,713	34,602	3,979	38,581
-Time-related underemployed	19,188	33,301	26,522	25,967	402	5,587	25,455	2,413	4,259	5,027	6,024	3,322	47,888	4,601	52,489
-Potential labour force	45,829	88,304	63,170	70,963	1,000	14,830	50,848	7,317	25,044	12,851	10,826	11,419	108,655	25,478	134,133
NEET (15-35)	114,055	195,556	177,490	132,121	3,211	48,621	127,029	9,280	32,710	19,993	19,305	49,461	268,444	41,167	309,611
NEET (15-24)	76,637	93,325	95,657	74,305	1,440	25,665	69,480	5,049	18,813	10,982	10,714	27,819	152,465	17,497	169,962
Informal employment	202,291	157,215	233,702	125,804	4,138	56,707	198,354	14,233	28,241	11,902	22,914	23,016	344,740	14,766	359,506
Discouraged job-seekers	25,861	34,823	24,836	35,848	495	5,204	18,377	1,429	11,413	8,155	6,104	9,507	47,260	13,424	60,684
Employed population in agriculture	25,175	40,109	18,249	47,035	148	1,257	27,889	4,704	11,096	4,989	9,377	5,824	59,082	6,202	65,284
Total employed (non-agriculture)	202,829	137,465	251,878	88,416	4,967	64,765	197,701	10,942	20,507	7,648	14,857	18,907	331,280	9,014	340,294
Informal employment (excluding agriculture)	178,356	117,198	216,521	79,033	3,990	55,522	171,230	9,552	17,544	6,931	13,593	17,192	286,990	8,564	295,554

Labour force participation rate (%)	56.9	40.8	50.1	45.0	57.4	48.4	53.0	53.8	41.3	36.0	49.9	31.9	50.1	27.1	48.3
Outside the labour force (%)	43.1	59.2	49.9	55.0	42.6	51.6	47.0	46.2	58.8	64.0	50.1	68.1	49.9	72.9	51.7
Potential labour force (%)	24.7	30.5	21.2	40.1	21.7	18.3	23.5	51.0	52.2	52.2	42.5	18.8	25.7	49.4	28.2
Employment-to-population ratio (%)	53.0	36.3	45.3	42.0	47.2	42.1	49.0	50.4	38.7	32.9	47.6	27.8	46.0	21.5	44.1
NEET % (15-35)	26.5	40.0	29.7	41.0	29.7	31.0	27.6	29.9	40.0	52.0	38.0	55.5	31.6	58.2	33.7
NEET % (15-24)	29.5	34.8	28.0	39.7	25.2	29.0	26.4	27.9	39.2	49.3	36.7	51.8	31.0	47.0	32.2
¹¹ Discouraged job-seekers (% of outside LF)	13.9	12.0	8.3	20.2	10.7	6.4	8.5	10.0	23.8	33.1	24.0	15.7	26.0	11.2	12.8
Discouraged jobseekers (% of population 15+)	6.0	7.1	4.2	11.1	4.6	3.3	4.0	4.6	14.0	21.2	12.0	10.7	19.0	5.6	6.6
Informal employment (%)	88.7	88.5	86.5	92.9	80.9	85.9	87.9	91.0	89.4	94.2	94.6	93.1	88.3	97.0	88.6
Employed population in agriculture (%)	11.0	22.6	6.8	34.7	2.9	1.9	12.4	30.1	35.1	39.5	38.7	23.6	15.1	40.8	16.1
Informal employment excluding agriculture (%)	87.9	85.3	86.0	89.4	80.3	85.7	86.6	87.3	85.6	90.6	91.5	90.9	86.6	95.0	86.9
¹² Time related underemployment rate (%)	8.4	18.8	9.8	19.2	7.9	8.5	11.3	15.4	13.5	39.8	24.9	13.4	12.3	30.2	12.9

¹¹ Estimates of discouraged job-seekers for Banjul, Kanifing, Brikama, Mansakonko, Janjanbureh, and Basse have coefficients of variation between 11% and 18%; interpret with caution.

¹² Time-related underemployment estimates for Banjul, Kanifing, Mansakonko, Kerewan, and Basse have coefficients of variation between 10% and 16%; interpret with caution.

¹³ LU1: Unemployment rate (%)	6.9	10.9	9.7	6.6	17.8	13.1	7.5	6.5	6.3	8.6	4.6	13.1	8.1	20.7	8.7
LU2: Combined rate of time-related underemployment and unemployment (%)	14.7	27.6	18.6	24.5	24.2	20.5	17.9	20.9	18.9	44.9	28.3	24.7	19.4	44.7	20.5
LU3: Combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force (%)	21.6	38.3	25.5	37.3	29.1	27.3	23.5	34.9	46.2	52.6	33.1	38.0	26.8	65.9	29.9
LU4: Composite measure of labour underutilisation (%)	28.2	49.8	32.8	49.3	34.7	33.4	32.1	45.0	53.5	71.5	49.7	46.3	35.8	76.2	38.9

¹³ Unemployment rates for Mansakonko, Kerewan, Kuntaur, Janjanbureh, and Basse have coefficients of variation between 10% and 18%; interpret with caution.