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The Gambia Labour Market: Progress and Trends, GLFS 2023 (Q1) to GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Implemented by:
The Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS)
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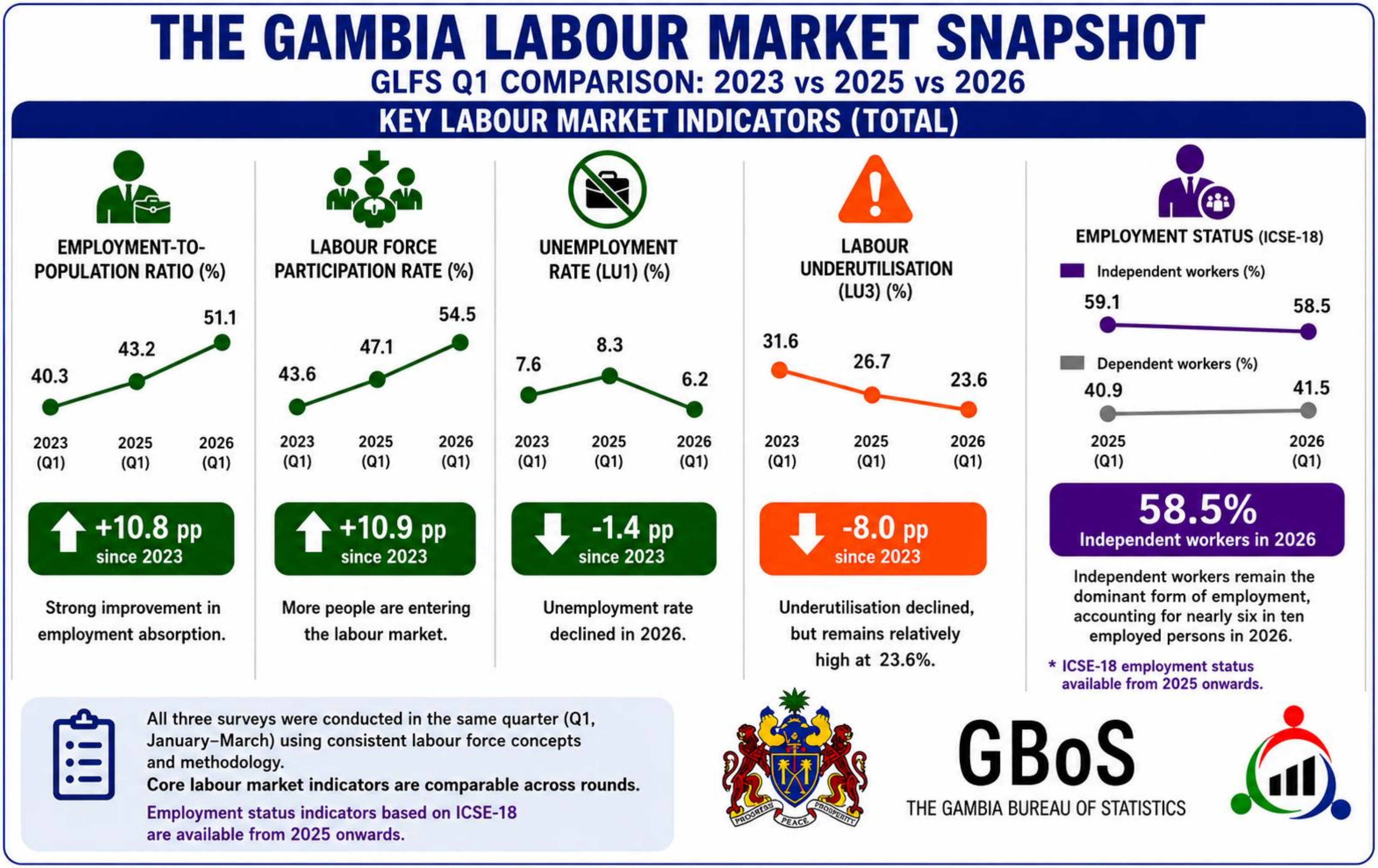


All comparisons refer to changes between GLFS 2023 (Q1) and GLFS 2026 (Q1). GLFS 2025 (Q1) is shown as an intermediate reference.

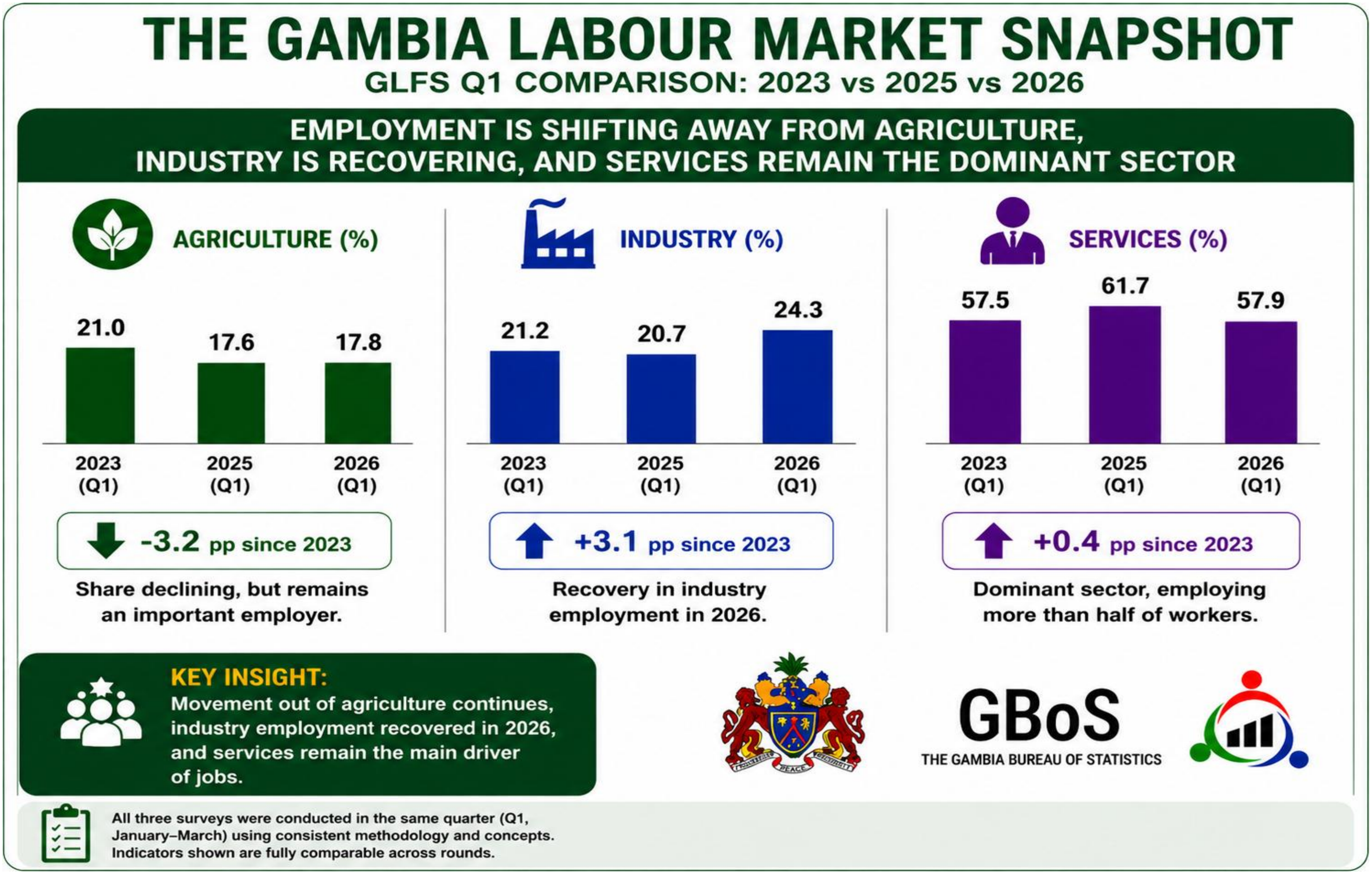
KEY LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

Key findings

- Labour force participation increased from **43.6% to 54.5%** (**+10.9 pp**).
- Employment-to-population ratio increased from **40.3% to 51.1%** (**+10.8 pp**).
- Unemployment decreased from **7.6% to 6.2%** (**-1.4 pp**).
- Labour underutilisation (LU3) decreased from **31.6% to 23.6%** (**-8.0 pp**) but remains high.

Policy considerations

- Support employment growth alongside expansion of formal economic activities and address labour underutilisation (23.6%) beyond unemployment.


THE GAMBIA LABOUR MARKET SNAPSHOT
GLFS Q1 COMPARISON: 2023 vs 2025 vs 2026
EMPLOYMENT IS SHIFTING AWAY FROM AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY IS RECOVERING, AND SERVICES REMAIN THE DOMINANT SECTOR
AGRICULTURE (%)
21.0
17.6
17.8
2023 (Q1)
2025 (Q1)
2026 (Q1)
-3.2 pp since 2023
Share declining, but remains an important employer.
INDUSTRY (%)
21.2
20.7
24.3
2023 (Q1)
2025 (Q1)
2026 (Q1)
+3.1 pp since 2023
Recovery in industry employment in 2026.
SERVICES (%)
57.5
61.7
57.9
2023 (Q1)
2025 (Q1)
2026 (Q1)
+0.4 pp since 2023
Dominant sector, employing more than half of workers.
KEY INSIGHT:
Movement out of agriculture continues, industry employment recovered in 2026, and services remain the main driver of jobs.
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All three surveys were conducted in the same quarter (Q1, January–March) using consistent methodology and concepts. Indicators shown are fully comparable across rounds.

EMPLOYMENT BY ECONOMIC SECTOR

Employment is shifting away from agriculture, while industry recovered in 2026 and services remain the dominant employer.

- Employment in agriculture decreased from **21.0% to 17.8%** (**−3.2 pp**).
- Employment in industry increased from **21.2% to 24.3%** (**+3.1 pp**).
- Services remained the largest sector (**57.5% to 57.9%**).

Policy considerations

- Promote movement of workers toward industry (**24.3%**).
- Strengthen productivity in services (**57.9%**) and agriculture (**17.8%**).

Note : Changes in Agricultural Employment Measurement

Prior to 2013, employment in agriculture was defined broadly under the **13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) standards**, where subsistence farming and own-use food production were included as employment. This resulted in relatively high estimates of agricultural employment.

Following the adoption of the **19th ICLS standards (2013)** by the International Labour Organization, employment is now defined strictly as work for pay or profit. Own-use food production (e.g., subsistence farming, crop cultivation for household consumption) is excluded from employment and measured separately.

As a result, **agricultural employment appears lower in Labour Force Survey estimates** under the new standards, reflecting a change in statistical definition rather than an actual decline in agricultural activity or sectoral output.

In the context of Population Censuses, agriculture is often measured using a broader main activity concept, which may still include subsistence farming. This leads to higher reported shares of agriculture compared to labour force statistics.

Accordingly, **caution is required** when interpreting trends in agricultural employment, particularly when comparing LFS estimates across different standards or with Census data.

THE GAMBIA LABOUR MARKET SNAPSHOT

GLFS Q1 COMPARISON: 2023 vs 2025 vs 2026

KEY POLICY MESSAGES

01 **LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT INCREASED BETWEEN 2023 AND 2026**

Labour force participation rate and employment-to-population ratio recorded significant increases.

02 **INDEPENDENT WORKERS REMAIN THE LARGEST EMPLOYMENT GROUP**

Independent workers accounted for 58.5 per cent of total employment in 2026, compared with 41.5 per cent for dependent workers, highlighting the continued importance of own-account and other independent forms of work in The Gambia.

03 **LABOUR UNDERUTILISATION DECREASED, BUT REMAINS AT 23.6 PER CENT IN 2026**

Despite the decline, a substantial share of the labour force remains underutilised.

04 **THE SHARE OF EMPLOYMENT IN AGRICULTURE DECLINED, WITH SHIFTS TOWARD INDUSTRY AND SERVICES**

Structural transformation is underway, with services accounting for the largest share of employment.

05 **LABOUR SUPPLY HAS EXPANDED OVER THE PERIOD**

More people are active in the labour market, reflecting increased labour supply.

EMPLOYMENT HAS EXPANDED, WITH INDEPENDENT WORKERS REMAINING THE DOMINANT FORM OF EMPLOYMENT.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

All three surveys were conducted in the same quarter (Q1, January–March) using the same methodology and concepts.

Core labour market indicators are comparable across rounds. Employment status indicators based on ICSE-18 are available from 2025 onwards.

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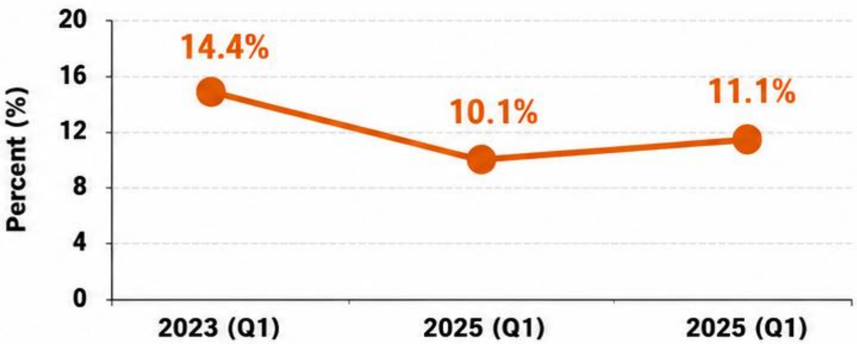
THE GAMBIA LABOUR MARKET SNAPSHOT

GLFS Q1 COMPARISON: 2023 vs 2025 vs 2026

HIDDEN LABOUR MARKET PRESSURE

TIME-RELATED UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATE (%)

Share of employed persons who worked fewer hours and wanted more work

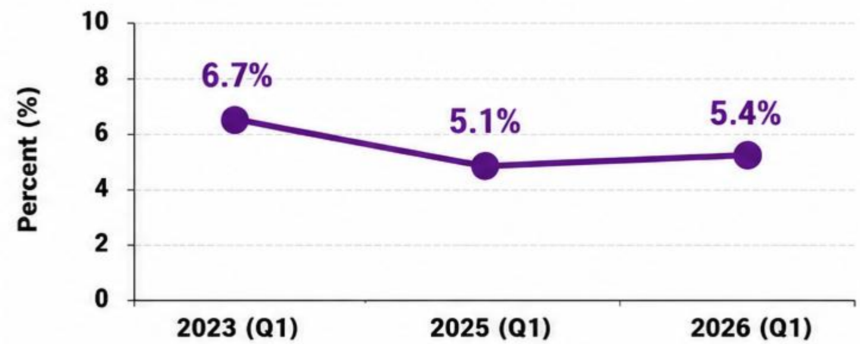


−3.3 percentage points since 2023

More than one in ten employed persons remain underemployed despite improvements since 2023.

DISCOURAGED JOB-SEEKERS

% of population aged 15 years and above



−1.3 percentage points since 2023

Discouragement has declined but continues to affect a sizeable share of the working-age population.

KEY MERSAGE

Labour market pressures have eased since 2023, with declines in both underemployment and discouragement. However, hidden forms of labour underutilisation remain significant and continue to affect a substantial share of the population.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE: All three surveys were conducted in Q1 (January–March) using consistent labour force concepts and methodology. The indicators presented are fully comparable across survey rounds.

HIDDEN LABOUR MARKET PRESSURE

Key findings

- Time-related underemployment declined from 14.4 per cent in 2023 (Q1) to 11.1 per cent in 2026 (Q1), representing a reduction of 3.3 percentage points. Nevertheless, more than one in ten employed persons remain underemployed.
- The proportion of discouraged job-seekers declined from 6.7 per cent in 2023 to 5.4 per cent in 2026, a decrease of 1.3 percentage points. However, a sizeable share of the working-age population continues to perceive limited employment opportunities.
- The decline in both indicators suggests an easing of labour market pressures since 2023, although hidden forms of labour underutilisation remain significant.

Policy considerations

- Promote the creation of stable and productive employment opportunities to further reduce time-related underemployment.
- Strengthen labour market programmes that improve job matching, skills development and access to employment opportunities, particularly for young people and other vulnerable groups.
- Enhance labour market information systems and employment services to reduce discouragement and support labour force attachment.
- Continue monitoring labour underutilisation indicators to ensure that labour market improvements are accompanied by better employment outcomes.

INFORMALITY IN THE GAMBIA 2026 (GLFS Q1)

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85.8% OF ALL EMPLOYED PERSONS WORK IN INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT

Less than 1 in 7 workers have a formal job

BY SECTOR (HIGHEST INFORMALITY)

Sector	Informal employment rate (%)
Construction	98.1
Agriculture	97.7
Accommodation & food services	93.6
Wholesale & retail trade	91.5

BY SECTOR (LOWEST INFORMALITY)

Sector	Informal employment rate (%)
Public administration	7.4
Human health	37.3
Education	40.5

BY TYPE OF PRODUCTION UNIT

Type	Share of employment (%)
Informal sector	75.9
Formal sector	22.3
Household sector	1.8

BY SEX AND RESIDENCE

Group	Informal employment rate (%)
Women	88.7
Men	83.6
Rural areas	91.2
Urban areas	83.1

BY STATUS IN EMPLOYMENT (ICSE-18 SIMPLIFIED)

Status	Informal employment rate (%)
Contributing family workers	100.0
Dependent contractors	100.0
Own-account workers	94.1
Employers	82.5
Employees	63.5

BY LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Education level	Informal employment rate (%)
No schooling	94.0
Primary	94.4
Lower secondary	92.6
Upper secondary	83.8
Diploma	46.0
Higher education	37.0

BY LGA (HIGHEST AND LOWEST)

Highest informality	Rate (%)	Lowest informality	Rate (%)
Basse	93.2	Banjul	78.4
Kuntaur	92.0	Kanifing	81.7
Janjanbureh	91.8	Brikama	84.9

Informality increases as you move away from the capital.

WORKING TIME

AVERAGE USUAL HOURS (MAIN JOB)
44.0 hours/week

AVERAGE ACTUAL HOURS (MAIN JOB)
36.6 hours/week

HOURS GAP (UNPAID/UNDERWORKED)
7.4 hours/week

WORKERS WORKING 49+ HOURS (USUAL)
39.2%

Nearly 2 in 5 workers usually work 49 hours or more per week.

NOTE: Informal employment refers to jobs that lack formal employment arrangements or protections, regardless of whether the work is performed in formal or informal sector enterprises.

Source: GBoS, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

Key Findings

- Informal employment accounts for **85.8 per cent** of total employment in GLFS 2026 (Q1). Less than **1 in 7** workers have a formal job.
- Informality is highest in construction (**98.1%**), agriculture (**97.7%**), accommodation and food services (**93.6%**), and wholesale and retail trade (**91.5%**).
- The informal sector accounts for **75.9 per cent** of employment, compared to **22.3 per cent** in the formal sector.
- Women (**88.7%**) and rural workers (**91.2%**) experience higher informality than men (**83.6%**) and urban workers (**83.1%**).
- Contributing family workers and dependent contractors are almost entirely informal (**100.0%**), while employees have the lowest informality (**63.5%**).
- Informality declines sharply with education, from above **92 per cent** among workers with low education to **37.0%** among workers with higher education.
- Informality is highest in Basse (**93.2%**) and lowest in Banjul (**78.4%**).
- Workers usually work **44.0 hours** per week but actually work **36.6 hours**, creating a **7.4-hour** gap. About **39.2 per cent** work **49+ hours** per week.

Policy Considerations

- Expand formal employment opportunities, especially in agriculture, construction, and trade.
- Strengthen social protection and formal employment arrangements for vulnerable workers.
- Promote education and skills development to improve access to formal jobs.
- Target rural areas and high-informality LGAs with employment and enterprise support programmes.
- Improve job stability and productivity to reduce underemployment and excessive working hours.

EMPLOYMENT STRUCTURE BY TYPE OF AUTHORITY (ICSE-18 – MAIN JOB)

GLFS 2025 (Q1) vs GLFS 2026 (Q1)

KEY MESSAGE:

Most workers are independent workers.

The share of dependent workers increased slightly between 2025 and 2026.

A. EMPLOYMENT BY TYPE OF AUTHORITY
(% of total employment)

Independent workers

59.1% → 58.5% ↓

2025 (Q1) 2026 (Q1)

Includes: Employers, independent workers without employees

Dependent workers

40.9% → 41.5% ↑

2025 (Q1) 2026 (Q1)

Includes: Employees, dependent contractors, contributing family workers

SUMMARY: The share of dependent workers increased slightly, while independent workers declined marginally.

B. COMPOSITION BY STATUS IN EMPLOYMENT (% of total employment)

	2025 (Q1)	2026 (Q1)	
Employers	5.6%	6.1%	↑
Independent workers without employees	53.5%	52.4%	↓
Dependent contractors	6.5%	8.5%	↑
Employees	30.9%	27.4%	↓
Contributing family workers	3.5%	5.7%	↑

SUMMARY: Independent workers without employees remain the largest group. Dependent contractors and contributing family workers increased, while employees declined.

KEY INSIGHTS

- Independent workers account for the majority of employment.
- Dependent forms of work increased between 2025 and 2026.
- Changes are driven by increases in dependent contractors and contributing family workers.

IMPLICATION

Employment is characterised by a predominance of independent work arrangements, alongside a concentration of employment in the private sector.

C. EMPLOYMENT BY INSTITUTIONAL SECTOR
(% of total employment)

	2025 (Q1)	2026 (Q1)	
Private sector	88.8%	90.8%	↑
Public sector	9.8%	8.3%	↓
Household sector	1.3%	0.9%	↓

SUMMARY: Employment is concentrated in the private sector, with a declining share in the public sector.

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

EMPLOYMENT RISK PROFILE (ICSE-18 – MAIN JOB)

GLFS 2025 (Q1) vs GLFS 2026 (Q1)

KEY MESSAGE

Workers are predominantly in employment for profit (higher economic risk).

The share of employment for pay declined between 2025 and 2026.

A. EMPLOYMENT BY TYPE OF ECONOMIC RISK

(% of total employment)

Employment for profit (higher economic risk)

64.4% → 66.9% ↑

2025 (Q1) 2026 (Q1)

Includes: own-account workers, employers (household enterprises), dependent contractors, contributing family workers.

Employment for pay (more stable remuneration)

31.0% → 27.5% ↓

2025 (Q1) 2026 (Q1)

Includes: employees, owner-operators of corporations.

Not classifiable by status

4.6% → 5.6% ↑

2025 (Q1) 2026 (Q1)

SUMMARY: The share of employment for profit increased, while employment for pay decreased.

B. COMPOSITION WITHIN EMPLOYMENT FOR PROFIT

- Own-account work remains the largest component.
- Dependent contractors increased.
- Contributing family workers increased.

KEY INSIGHTS

- Employment for profit remains the dominant form of employment.
- Employment for pay accounts for a smaller share of total employment.
- Changes between 2025 and 2026 are driven by increases within employment for profit categories.

IMPLICATION

The structure of employment is characterised by a higher share of employment for profit relative to employment for pay.

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

Key findings (Authority)

- Independent workers account for the majority of employment (58.5% in 2026).
- Dependent workers account for 41.5% of total employment.
- Employees represent 27.4% of total employment.
- Employers account for a relatively small share (6.1%).

Key findings (Economic risk)

- Employment for profit accounts for the majority of workers (66.9%).
- Employment for pay accounts for 27.5% of total employment.

Key findings (Institutional sector)

- Employment is concentrated in the private sector (90.8% in 2026).
- The public sector accounts for 8.3% of employment.
- The household sector represents a small share (0.9%).

Labour market structure

- Employment is characterised by a high share of independent work arrangements.
- Employment for profit represents the dominant form of employment.
- Employment is concentrated in the private sector.
- Changes between 2025 (Q1) and 2026 (Q1) are driven by increases in dependent contractors and contributing family workers.

CHILD LABOUR IN THE GAMBIA

GLFS 2026 (Q1)

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Building a better future for our children through decent work, quality education and protection.

1. CHILD LABOUR PROFILE (2026 Q1)

National child labour measure (5–17 years)

TOTAL CHILDREN AGED 5–17 YEARS	835,194
WORKING CHILDREN (engaged in economic activities)	115,157 (13.8%)
CHILD LABOUR (National child labour measure)	108,087 (12.9%)
HAZARDOUS WORK (The most severe form of child labour)	75,348 (9.0%)

BY SEX

	MALE	TOTAL	FEMALE
Working children	56,856 (13.7%)	115,157 (13.8%)	58,302 (14.0%)
Child labour	54,492 (12.9%)	108,087 (12.9%)	53,595 (13.0%)
Hazardous work	43,634 (10.4%)	75,348 (9.0%)	31,714 (7.7%)

Nearly 94% of working children are classified as being in child labour. Around 70% of children in child labour are engaged in hazardous work.

2. CHILD LABOUR BY AGE GROUP (2026)

Age group (years)	Prevalence (%)	Number of children
5–15	12.3%	88,916
16–17	17.4%	19,171
TOTAL 5–17	12.9%	108,087

Prevalence increases with age. Children aged 16–17 (17.4%) are more likely to be in child labour than those aged 5–15 (12.3%).

3. GENDER & RESIDENCE (2026)

By sex

Sex	Prevalence (%)	Number
Male	12.9%	54,492
Female	13.0%	53,595

By residence

	Prevalence (%)	Number
Rural	19.5%	70,980
Urban	7.9%	37,108

Rural children are more than twice as likely to be in child labour as urban children (19.5% vs 7.9%).

4. HIGHEST PREVALENCE BY LGA (2026)

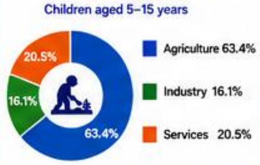
Child labour prevalence (%)

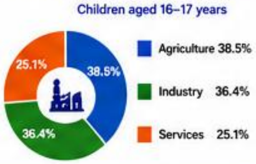
LGA	Child labour prevalence (%)
Kuntaur	34.7%
Mansakonko	22.6%
Janjanbureh	17.9%
Kerewan	12.4%
Brikama	11.2%
Basse	9.8%
Banjul	3.7%
Kanifing	3.6%

NATIONAL TOTAL 12.9%

Kuntaur, Mansakonko and Janjanbureh record the highest prevalence of child labour. These LGAs require priority intervention.

5. SECTOR OF WORK





Agriculture is the main sector among children aged 5–15 (63.4%).

Among older children (16–17), industry (36.4%) is nearly as common as agriculture.

6. WORK & SCHOOL COMBINATION (5–15 YEARS)

Activity status	Percentage	Number
Only schooling	64.7%	55,740
Working + schooling	8.9%	7,661
Only working (no school)	3.2%	2,783
Neither	23.1%	19,932

Most children (64.7%) are attending school only. About 9 in 10 working children aged 5–15 are also attending school.

7. HAZARDOUS WORK (2026)

Age group (years)	Hazardous work prevalence (%)	Number
5–15	7.7%	55,828
16–17	17.4%	19,521
TOTAL 5–17	9.0%	75,348

Older children are more likely to be engaged in hazardous work. Nearly 1 in 11 children (9.0%) aged 5–17 are in hazardous work.

8. WORKING HOURS (AMONG CHILDREN IN CHILD LABOUR)

Age group (years)	Average weekly hours worked	% working 43+ hours (per week) (hazardous)
5–15 years	16.6 hrs	9.5%
16–17 years	29.8 hrs	28.6%

Older children work longer hours. Over one quarter (28.6%) of children aged 16–17 work 43 hours or more per week.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 108,087 children aged 5–17 are in child labour (12.9%). This includes 75,348 children engaged in hazardous work (9.0%).
- Rural children (19.5%) are more than twice as likely to be in child labour as urban children (7.9%).
- Prevalence rises with age: 12.3% among children 5–15 years and 17.4% among 16–17 years.
- Kuntaur, Mansakonko and Janjanbureh have the highest prevalence and are priority areas for intervention.
- Agriculture is the main sector for younger children (63.4%). Industry becomes more common among older children (36.4%).
- Support education – most working children aged 5–15 (8.9%) are also attending school. Keep children in school and out of work.
- Address hazardous work – 7 in 10 children in child labour are engaged in hazardous work. Protect children from the worst forms of child labour.
- Strengthen data systems and coordination for targeted programmes and to monitor progress over time.

Note: Estimates are based on the GLFS 2026 (Q1) and reflect the national child labour measure aligned with The Gambia's legal framework.

Source: Gambia Bureau of Statistics – Gambia Labour Force Survey 2026 (Q1)

Key Findings

- Using the national child labour measure, 12.9 per cent of children aged 5-17 years in The Gambia were in child labour in 2026 (Q1), representing 108,087 children.
- Of the 835,194 children aged 5-17 years, 115,157 were engaged in economic activities. Among working children, 108,087, or 93.9 per cent, were classified as being in child labour under the national definition.
- Child labour prevalence increases with age, rising from 12.3 per cent among children aged 5-15 years to 17.4 per cent among those aged 16-17 years.
- Rural children are more than twice as likely to be in child labour (19.5%) as urban children (7.9%). Rural areas account for 70,980 children in child labour.
- Kuntaur recorded the highest child labour prevalence (34.7%), followed by Mansakonko (22.6%) and Janjanbureh (17.9%). The lowest prevalence was observed in Kanifing (3.5%) and Banjul (3.8%).
- Agriculture is the dominant sector of child labour among children aged 5-15 years, accounting for 63.4 per cent of child labour in this age group. Among children aged 16-17 years, agriculture accounts for 38.5 per cent, while industry accounts for 36.4 per cent.
- Among children aged 5-15 years, 64.7 per cent are only schooling, 8.9 per cent combine work and schooling, 3.2 per cent are only working, and 23.1 per cent are neither working nor attending school.
- An estimated 75,348 children, or 9.0 per cent of all children aged 5-17 years, are engaged in hazardous work. Hazardous work accounts for nearly 70 per cent of all children in child labour and is more prevalent among boys (10.4%) than girls (7.7%).
- Hazardous work increases sharply 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. It is highest in Kuntaur (30.4%), Mansakonko (16.2%) and Janjanbureh (12.1%).
- Children in child labour work substantial hours. Average weekly working hours increase from 16.6 hours among children aged 5-15 years to 29.8 hours among those aged 16-17 years. Among children aged 16-17 years, 28.6 per cent work 43 hours or more per week.

Policy Considerations

- Target high-prevalence LGAs, particularly Kuntaur, Mansakonko and Janjanbureh, with integrated child labour interventions combining education, social protection, agricultural support and livelihood programmes.
- Strengthen support for rural households and agricultural communities, where child labour remains most prevalent and where children are more exposed to family-based production activities.
- Promote school attendance, retention and progression, especially among rural children and older adolescents who are more likely to combine work with schooling or remain out of school.
- Strengthen enforcement of hazardous work prohibitions for children under 18, especially in agriculture, industry, construction and other high-risk activities.
- Reduce children's exposure to long working hours, particularly among children aged 16-17 years, where nearly three in ten children in child labour work 43 hours or more per week.
- Strengthen inter-institutional coordination among labour, education, agriculture, social protection and child welfare institutions to improve prevention, monitoring and response mechanisms.
- Continue strengthening child labour measurement and monitoring in line with the national legal framework, while maintaining separate SDG 8.7.1 estimates for international reporting and trend comparison.

Note on Definitions

- For national monitoring, child labour is measured in accordance with The Gambia's legal framework, principally the Children's Act (2005) and the Labour Act (2023), and operationalised using internationally recognised statistical standards where the legislation does not provide explicit statistical criteria.
- Under the national measure, child labour includes all children aged 5-15 years engaged in employment work or own-use production of goods; children aged 5-15 years spending 21 hours or more per week fetching water or collecting firewood; and all children aged 5-17 years engaged in hazardous work, exploitative work, or work that is harmful to their health, safety, morals, education or development. Children aged 16-17 years are classified as being in child labour when they are engaged in hazardous work, exploitative work, or work exceeding the hazardous-work threshold of 43 hours or more per week.

- Hazardous work is measured using a composite indicator comprising hazardous working conditions, hazardous occupations, hazardous industries, and excessive working hours. Hazardous working conditions include exposure to dangerous tools and machinery, agricultural chemicals, excessive noise, dust and fumes, night work, underground or underwater work, dangerous animals, and other conditions that may endanger a child's health, safety or development.
- The national child labour estimates presented in this chapter are not directly comparable with those published in previous GLFS reports because the measurement framework has been revised to better reflect The Gambia's legal framework.
- For international reporting and trend comparison, the report also presents a separate SDG Indicator 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).
- Not all work performed by children is classified as child labour. International standards distinguish between acceptable forms of children's work and work that is hazardous, exploitative, excessive, or otherwise harmful to a child's health, safety, education, morals or development.
- Data on the worst forms of child labour, such as trafficking, forced labour, commercial sexual exploitation, recruitment into armed conflict, and similar hidden activities, cannot generally be measured through household surveys and are therefore not captured in the estimates presented above.

WOMEN IN THE GAMBIA

KEY LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS

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GLFS Q1 COMPARISON: 2023 vs 2025 vs 2026 (Main job)

INDICATOR	MEN 2023 (Q1)	MEN 2025 (Q1)	MEN 2026 (Q1)	WOMEN 2023 (Q1)	WOMEN 2025 (Q1)	WOMEN 2026 (Q1)	GAP (2026, pp) Women – Men
Labour force participation rate (%) Share of population 15+ that is in the labour force	47.9	53.8	63.5	39.6	40.9	46.3	−17.2 pp ↓
Employment-to-population ratio (%) Share of population 15+ that is employed	44.2	49.8	60.2	36.7	37.2	42.8	−17.4 pp ↓
Unemployment rate (%) Share of labour force that is unemployed	7.8	7.5	5.2	7.2	9.2	7.5	+2.3 pp ↑
Labour underutilisation rate (LU3, %) Combination of unemployment and underemployment	24.9	19.1	16.8	37.9	34.3	30.9	+14.1 pp ↑

Women's participation and employment have improved over time, but they remain behind men across key labour market indicators, particularly in employment outcomes and labour underutilisation.

pp = percentage points.
LU3 = Combined rate (%).

Note: Gap (2026) = Women (%) – Men (%).
All three surveys were conducted in the same quarter (Q1) using consistent methodology and concepts. Indicators shown are fully comparable across rounds.

WOMEN IN THE GAMBIA

EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND SECTOR

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GLFS Q1 COMPARISON: 2023 vs 2025 vs 2026 (Main job)

EMPLOYMENT BY STATUS (% OF EMPLOYED)

STATUS IN EMPLOYMENT	GLFS 2023 (Q1) MALE	GLFS 2023 (Q1) FEMALE	GLFS 2025 (Q1) MALE	GLFS 2025 (Q1) FEMALE	GLFS 2026 (Q1) MALE	GLFS 2026 (Q1) FEMALE	GAP (2026, pp) Women – Men
Self-employed	38.7	68.9	52.9	75.2	55.7	75.5	+19.8 pp ↑
Contributing family workers	1.6	13.8	2.0	14.6	1.9	14.6	+12.7 pp ↑
Employees (wage & salaried)	46.8	20.9	47.1	24.8	44.3	24.5	−19.8 pp ↓
Employer/ Own-account employer	12.9	2.3	10.9	1.4	10.8	1.4	−9.4 pp ↓

Nearly three-quarters (75.5%) of employed women are self-employed in 2026, compared to 55.7% of employed men.

EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR (% OF EMPLOYED)

AGRICULTURE

	MALE	FEMALE
2023 (Q1)	12.9	30.1
2025 (Q1)	12.0	24.3
2026 (Q1)	12.4	24.7

Women are about twice as likely as men to work in agriculture in 2026.

INDUSTRY

	MALE	FEMALE
2023 (Q1)	34.5	6.1
2025 (Q1)	33.6	5.0
2026 (Q1)	38.1	6.4

Men are about 6 times more likely than women to work in industry in 2026.

SERVICES

	MALE	FEMALE
2023 (Q1)	52.2	63.6
2025 (Q1)	54.4	70.7
2026 (Q1)	49.5	68.8

Services are the main source of employment for both women and men, especially for women.

pp = percentage points.

Note: Gap (2026) = Women (%) – Men (%).
All three surveys were conducted in the same quarter (Q1) using consistent methodology and concepts.

KEY LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS (WITH GENDER)

Key findings

- Labour force participation increased from **43.6% to 54.5%** (**+10.9 pp**), with a gender gap (**male 63.5%, female 46.3%**).
- Employment-to-population ratio increased from **40.3% to 51.1%** (**+10.8 pp**), with a gap (**male 60.2%, female 42.8%**).
- Unemployment decreased from **7.6% to 6.2%** but remains higher for females (**7.5% vs 5.2%**).
- Labour underutilisation (LU3) decreased from **31.6% to 23.6%**, with higher levels among females (**30.9% vs 16.8%**).

Policy considerations

- Address gender gaps in participation and employment.
- Improve access of women to employment opportunities.

YOUTH IN THE GAMBIA
LABOUR MARKET (15–35 YEARS)

KEY INDICATORS AT A GLANCE

GLFS Q1 COMPARISON: 2023 2025 2026

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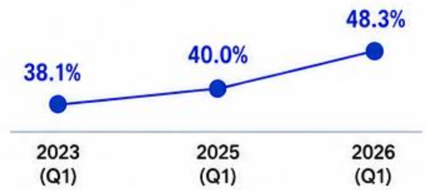
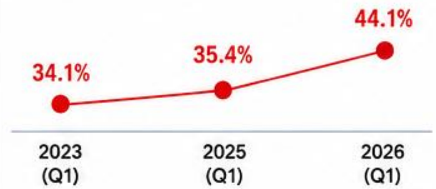
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE
(% of youth 15–35)



CHANGE (2023 TO 2026)
+10.2 pp ↑

More youth are participating in the labour market.

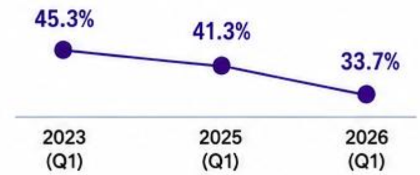
EMPLOYMENT-TO-POPULATION RATIO
(% of youth 15–35)



CHANGE (2023 TO 2026)
+10.0 pp ↑

More youth are employed.

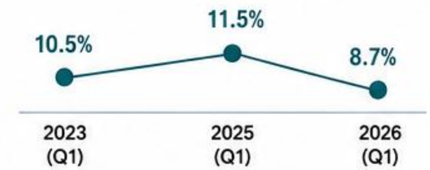
NEET RATE
(Not in Education, Employment or Training)
(% of youth 15–35)



CHANGE (2023 TO 2026)
-11.6 pp ↓

The NEET rate declined, but remains relatively high.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (LU1)
(% of youth labour force 15–35)



CHANGE (2023 TO 2026)
-1.8 pp ↓

Youth unemployment decreased.

LABOUR UNDERUTILISATION RATE (LU4)
(Composite measure)
(% of youth 15–35)

CHANGE (2023 TO 2026)
-9.7 pp ↓

Labour underutilisation declined, but remains elevated.

TIME-RELATED UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATE
(% of employed youth 15–35)

CHANGE (2023 TO 2026)
-3.4 pp ↓

Declined overall, though it increased slightly between 2025 and 2026.

SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYED YOUTH
(% of employed youth 15–35)

	AGRICULTURE (%)	INDUSTRY (%)	SERVICES (%)	TOTAL (%)
GLFS 2023 (Q1)	20.2	24.8	55.0	100.0
GLFS 2025 (Q1)	16.0	24.8	59.2	100.0
GLFS 2026 (Q1)	16.1	29.1	54.8	100.0

Services remain the main source of youth employment, while industry employment increased in 2026.

KEY MESSAGE

Youth participation and employment have increased since 2023, while unemployment and labour underutilisation have declined. However, a substantial share of youth remain not in education, employment or training (NEET), and most youth employment continues to be in the services sector.

- +10.2 pp ↑ More youth in the labour force
- +10.0 pp ↑ More youth employed
- -11.6 pp ↓ Drop in NEET rate (but still high)
- -1.8 pp ↓ Youth unemployment decreased
- -9.7 pp ↓ Labour underutilisation declined (but remains elevated)
- -3.4 pp ↓ Time-related underemployment declined overall

NOTES:

pp = percentage points.
All data refers to 15–35 years youth.

Source: GLFS Q1 2023, 2025 and 2026.

YOUTH LABOUR MARKET (15-35)

Key findings

- Participation increased from **38.1% to 48.3%** (**+10.2 pp**).
- Employment increased from **34.1% to 44.1%** (**+10.0 pp**).
- Unemployment decreased from **10.5% to 8.7%** (**-1.8 pp**).
- NEET decreased from **45.3% to 33.7%** (**−11.6 pp**), but remains high.

Policy considerations

- Improve transitions from education to employment (**NEET 33.7%**).
- Expand access to productive and stable jobs for youth.

THE GAMBIA: PERSONS WITH AND WITHOUT DISABILITIES LABOUR MARKET SNAPSHOT

GLFS 2023 (Q1), 2025 (Q1) & 2026 (Q1) (Population 15 years and older)

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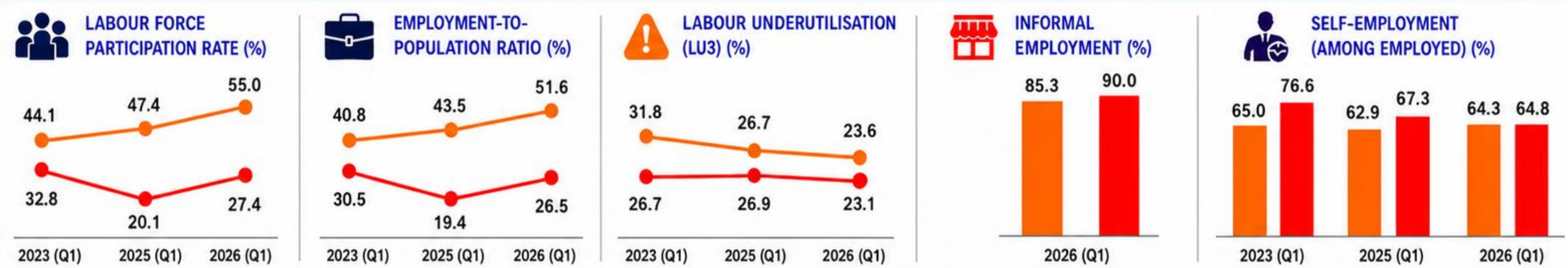
Persons without disabilities — Persons with disabilities

KEY LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS OVER TIME (TOTAL)

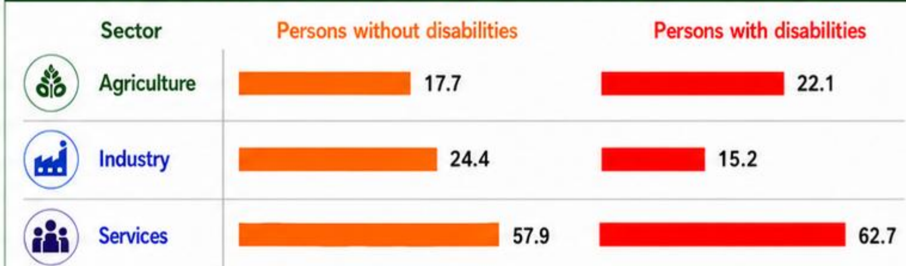


GENDER DIFFERENCES BY SEX AND DISABILITY (2026 Q1)

Indicator	Male, without disabilities	Male, with disabilities	Female, without disabilities	Female, with disabilities
Labour force participation (%)	64.1	30.3	46.6	24.1
Employment-to-population ratio (%)	60.8	30.1	43.1	22.4
Labour underutilisation (LU3) (%)	16.8	15.4	30.9	32.4
Informal employment (%)	82.8	84.8	88.6	97.9[1]
Self-employment (among employed) (%)	55.7	51.9	75.4	84.6

[1] Female with disabilities estimate is high; interpret with caution due to small sample size.

SECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT (% OF EMPLOYED) – 2026 (Q1)



Note: Sector shares refer to employed persons aged 15 years and older. Totals may not sum to exactly 100% due to rounding.

KEY MESSAGE

Persons with disabilities have substantially lower participation and employment rates, higher informality, and are more concentrated in agriculture and services, while remaining underrepresented in industry.

NOTES

- Sector shares may not sum to exactly 100% due to rounding.
- 2023 (Q1), 2025 (Q1) and 2026 (Q1) estimates for persons with disabilities are based on small unweighted samples but are the official published figures; use with caution.
- All data refer to the population aged 15 years and older (sector shares are among employed).

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Source: GBoS, GLFS 2023 (Q1), 2025 (Q1) & 2026 (Q1)

KEY FINDINGS

- Labour force participation increased for both groups, but **persons with disabilities remain significantly lower (27.4% vs 55.0% in 2026)**.
- Employment-to-population improved over time, yet the gap persists, with **persons with disabilities at 26.5% compared to 51.6% for persons without disabilities**.
- Informal employment remains consistently high and is **higher among persons with disabilities (90.0%) than persons without disabilities (85.3%)**.
- Labour underutilisation (LU3) declined for both groups, with **persons with and without disabilities converging at around 23% in 2026**, though levels remain elevated, particularly among women.
- Gender disparities among persons with disabilities are pronounced: **females have lower employment (22.4%) and higher informality (97.9%) than males**.
- Sectorally, persons with disabilities are **less represented in industry (15.2% vs 24.4%) and more concentrated in agriculture and services**.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- Strengthen inclusive labour market access for **persons with disabilities**, particularly in participation and employment.
- Promote formalisation and improved working conditions, given the **high levels of informality among persons with disabilities**.
- Address gender gaps among persons with disabilities, especially in **access to employment opportunities for women**.
- Expand skills development and transition pathways to support entry into **more productive sectors, particularly industry**.
- Improve data use and integration across sectors to better monitor inclusion within the **RF-NDP, SDGs, and Agenda 2063 frameworks**.

INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS IN THE GAMBIA LABOUR FORCE

GLFS 2026

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1. WHO ARE THE INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS?

	Native-born	Foreign-born
Share of working-age population	94.0%	6.0%

Top countries of origin (foreign-born):
- Senegal 37.2%
- Guinea 30.2%
- Sierra Leone 9.7%

	Family	Economic
Main reason for migration (foreign-born)	62.4%	31.9%

Long-term migrants (5+ years): 71.1%

2. LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES BY MIGRATION STATUS (2026)

INDICATOR	NATIVE-BORN	FOREIGN-BORN
Labour force participation rate (%)	53.8%	65.0%
Employment-to-population ratio (%)	50.3%	63.8%
Unemployment rate (%)	6.5%	1.8%
Informal employment (%)	85.5%	90.1%
Self-employed (%)	63.5%	73.8%

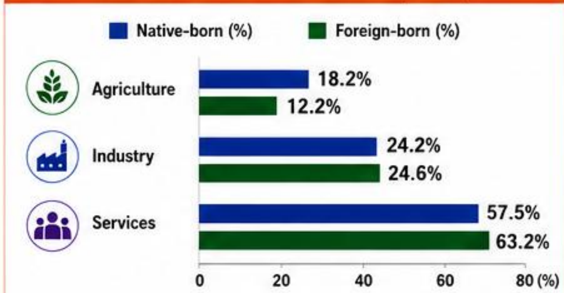
Foreign-born have higher participation and employment, much lower unemployment, and are more likely to be self-employed.

3. BY SEX (2026)

INDICATOR	NATIVE-BORN		FOREIGN-BORN	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
Labour force participation rate (%)	62.4%	46.1%	80.0%	49.4%
Employment-to-population ratio (%)	58.9%	42.6%	87.9%	47.5%
Unemployment rate (%)	5.6%	7.7%	0.4%	4.0%

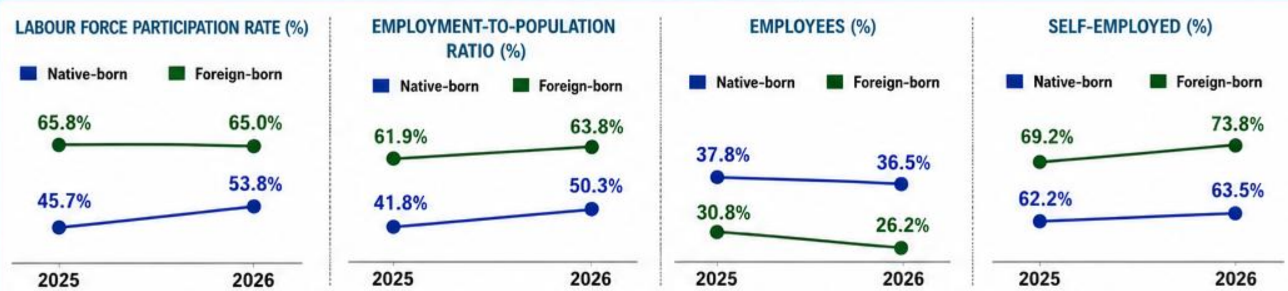
Foreign-born men have very high employment rate (87.9%), while gender gaps remain, especially among females.

4. SECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT (2026)



Foreign-born are more concentrated in services (63.2%) and less in agriculture (12.2%).

5. CHANGE OVER TIME (2025 → 2026)



Self-employment increased for both groups, especially among foreign-born (69.2% → 73.8%).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Higher participation 65.0% vs 53.8% Foreign-born vs Native-born
- Much lower unemployment 1.8% vs 6.5%
- Very high employment rate among foreign-born men 87.9%
- More likely to be self-employed 73.8% vs 63.5%
- Family is the main reason for migration 62.4%

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

Source: GBoS, GLFS 2026

KEY FINDINGS

- Foreign-born workers have **higher labour force participation (65.0% vs 53.8%)** and **employment levels (63.8% vs 50.3%)** than native-born.
- Unemployment is **substantially lower among foreign-born (1.8% vs 6.5%)**.
- Foreign-born workers are **more likely to be self-employed (73.8% vs 63.5%)**.
- Informal employment is **high for both groups**, and slightly higher among foreign-born (**90.1% vs 85.5%**).
- Foreign-born men have **very high employment levels (79.7%)** compared to native-born men (**58.9%**).
- Migration is largely **family-driven (62%)**, with most migrants being **long-term residents (71%)**.
- Sector distribution shows foreign-born workers are **less in agriculture (12.2% vs 18.2%)** and more in **services (63.2% vs 57.5%)**.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- Strengthen **labour market monitoring of migrant populations**, including their employment structure and sectoral distribution.
- Address **high levels of informality across both native-born and foreign-born workers**.
- Support **productive employment and enterprise development**, given the high reliance on self-employment.
- Promote **inclusive labour market policies** that consider both native-born and migrant workers within national development frameworks.
- Enhance **data integration across migration, labour, and social systems** to support evidence-based planning under the RF-NDP and SDGs.

SDG INDICATORS FROM THE GAMBIA LABOUR FORCE SURVEY

GLFS Q1 COMPARISON: 2023 vs 2025 vs 2026

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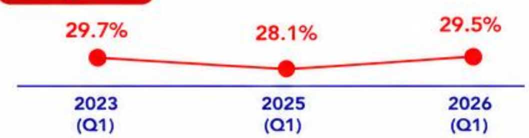
5 GENDER EQUALITY

5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions
(% of total managerial positions)



CHANGE (2023 TO 2026)
−0.2 pp
Remained broadly stable.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

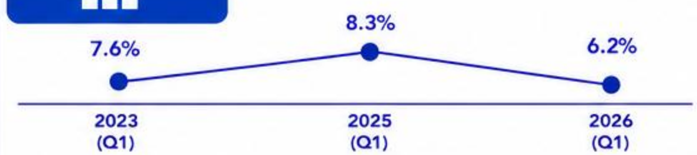
8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in total employment (%)

CHANGE (2023 TO 2026)
+6.4 pp
Informal employment remains high.

* The 2026 estimate is not directly comparable with previous rounds due to the adoption of the 21st ICLS framework.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

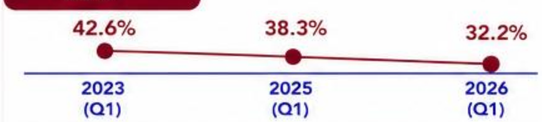
8.5.2 Unemployment rate
(% of labour force)



CHANGE (2023 TO 2026)
−1.4 pp
Unemployment rate has declined.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

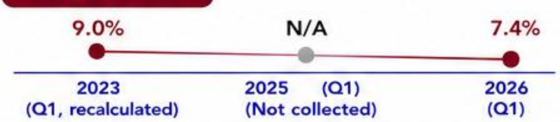
8.6.1 Proportion of youth (15–24 years) not in education, employment or training (NEET) (%)



CHANGE (2023 TO 2026)
−10.4 pp
NEET rate declined, but remains high.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

8.7.1 Proportion of children aged 5–17 years engaged in child labour (%) *



CHANGE (2023 TO 2026)
−1.6 pp
Child labour has declined.

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

9.2.2 Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment (%)

CHANGE (2023 TO 2026)
+0.5 pp
Manufacturing employment share increased slightly.

KEY MESSAGE:

Labour market outcomes improved between 2023 and 2026, with declines in unemployment, youth NEET, and SDG-comparable child labour. Manufacturing employment increased slightly, while women's representation in managerial positions remained broadly stable. Informal employment remains high, although the 2026 estimate is not directly comparable with previous rounds due to the adoption of the 21st ICLS.

NOTE ON CHILD LABOUR (SDG 8.7.1)

Measurement follows SDG 8.7.1 standards using age-specific working-hour thresholds and selected household chores. The estimates exclude the direct measurement of hazardous work. For children aged 15–17 years, working 43 hours or more per week is used as a proxy for hazardous work in accordance with SDG metadata. The 2023 (Q1) data were recalculated using the methodology applied in GLFS 2026 (Q1) to ensure comparability over time.

For more information on the 21st ICLS changes, please visit:
www.ilo.org/icls21

NOTE ON INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT (SDG 8.3.1)

The 2026 estimate for the proportion of informal employment is not comparable to the 2023 and 2025 estimates due to the adoption of the 21st International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) in 2026. The concepts and definitions of informal employment under the 21st ICLS differ from those under the 19th ICLS used in 2023 and 2025. Users are advised to interpret the time trend with caution.

Source: GBoS, GLFS 2023 (Q1), 2025 (Q1) & 2026 (Q1)

SDG INDICATORS

Key findings

- Unemployment decreased from **7.6% to 6.2%** (**−1.4 pp**).
- Youth NEET decreased from **42.6% to 32.2%** (**−10.4 pp**) but remains high.
- Child labour decreased from 9.0% to 7.4% (−1.6 percentage points) under the SDG 8.7.1 comparable methodology.
- The percentage of persons in Informal employment in GLFS 2026 (Q1) is **85.8%.**
- Manufacturing employment increased slightly from **9.1% to 9.6%** (**+0.5 pp**).
- Women in managerial positions remained broadly stable (**29.7% to 29.5%**).

Policy considerations

- Strengthen progress toward decent work, particularly job structure.
- Reduce informality while sustaining employment growth.
- Continue efforts to reduce child labour (7.4%) under the SDG 8.7.1 framework.
- Continue to support expansion of manufacturing employment (**9.6%**).
- Promote women's participation in leadership roles (**29.5%**).

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LABOUR INCOME SNAPSHOT

GLFS 2026 (Q1) | Evidence for Policy. Data for Development.

1. MEAN MONTHLY INDICATORS BY EMPLOYMENT TYPE (GMD)

EMPLOYEES (WAGE & SALARY WORKERS)

Mean monthly employee earnings
9,455
Median
6,500

Includes wages/salaries, allowances and benefits in kind.

SELF-EMPLOYED / PROFIT WORKERS

Mean monthly self-employment income
4,609
Median
1,750

Includes income from own-account work, unincorporated enterprises and own-use production.

ALL WORKERS (EMPLOYMENT-RELATED INCOME)

Mean monthly employment-related income
6,238
Median
3,000

Combines earnings from employment for pay and income from employment for profit.

KEY MESSAGE

Half of workers earned
GMD 3,000
or less per month.

2. INEQUALITY ACROSS KEY GROUPS (MEAN MONTHLY EMPLOYMENT-RELATED INCOME, GMD)

BY SEX

MEN **8,099** | 2.1x more | WOMEN **3,875**

Men earned 2.1 times more than women on average.

BY RESIDENCE

URBAN **6,920** | 40% higher | RURAL **4,947**

Urban workers earned 40% more than rural workers.

BY FORMALITY STATUS

FORMAL **12,753** | 2.4x more | INFORMAL **5,262**

Formal workers earned 2.4 times more than informal workers.

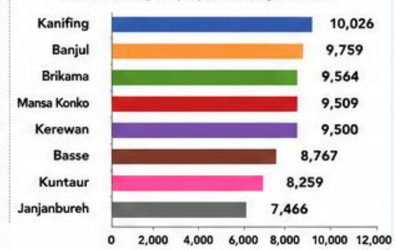
BY INSTITUTIONAL SECTOR (EMPLOYEES)

PUBLIC SECTOR **15,095** | 1.9x more | PRIVATE SECTOR **7,942**

Public-sector employees earned nearly twice as much as private-sector employees.

BY LGA (EMPLOYEES ONLY)

Mean monthly employee earnings (GMD)



3. HIGHEST AND LOWEST MEAN MONTHLY EMPLOYMENT-RELATED INCOME

BY SECTOR
HIGHEST: Non-market services **9,356**
LOWEST: Agriculture **3,353**

BY LGA
HIGHEST: Kanifing **7,285**
LOWEST: Janjanbureh **4,765**

BY BROAD SECTOR OF EMPLOYMENT
HIGHEST: Non-market services **9,356**
LOWEST: Agriculture **3,353**

4. HOURLY WAGES (ALL WORKERS)

Median hourly wage **42.25** GMD per hour

Mean hourly wage **67.41** GMD per hour

Hourly wages remain highly unequal.

5. INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT

Informal employment is job-based under the 21st ICLS framework and may occur in formal, informal or household-sector economic units.

KEY NOTES

MEAN vs MEDIAN
The mean is the average. The median is the midpoint of the distribution. Half of workers earned below GMD 3,000 per month.

WHAT IS INCLUDED
Employment-related income includes wages, salaries, self-employment profit, benefits in kind and income from secondary jobs.

EMPLOYEES vs SELF-EMPLOYED
Self-employment income is often more variable and closely linked to business performance than employee earnings.

DATA NOTE
Estimates are survey-weighted. Means are winsorised at the 1st and 99th percentiles. All values are in Gambian Dalasi (GMD) per month.

IMPORTANT
Income is prone to underreporting or misreporting, especially among self-employed and informal workers. Results should be interpreted with this in mind.

These findings support the goals of the RF-NDP 2023–2027: Creating Jobs, Reducing Poverty, and Promoting Inclusive Economic Growth.

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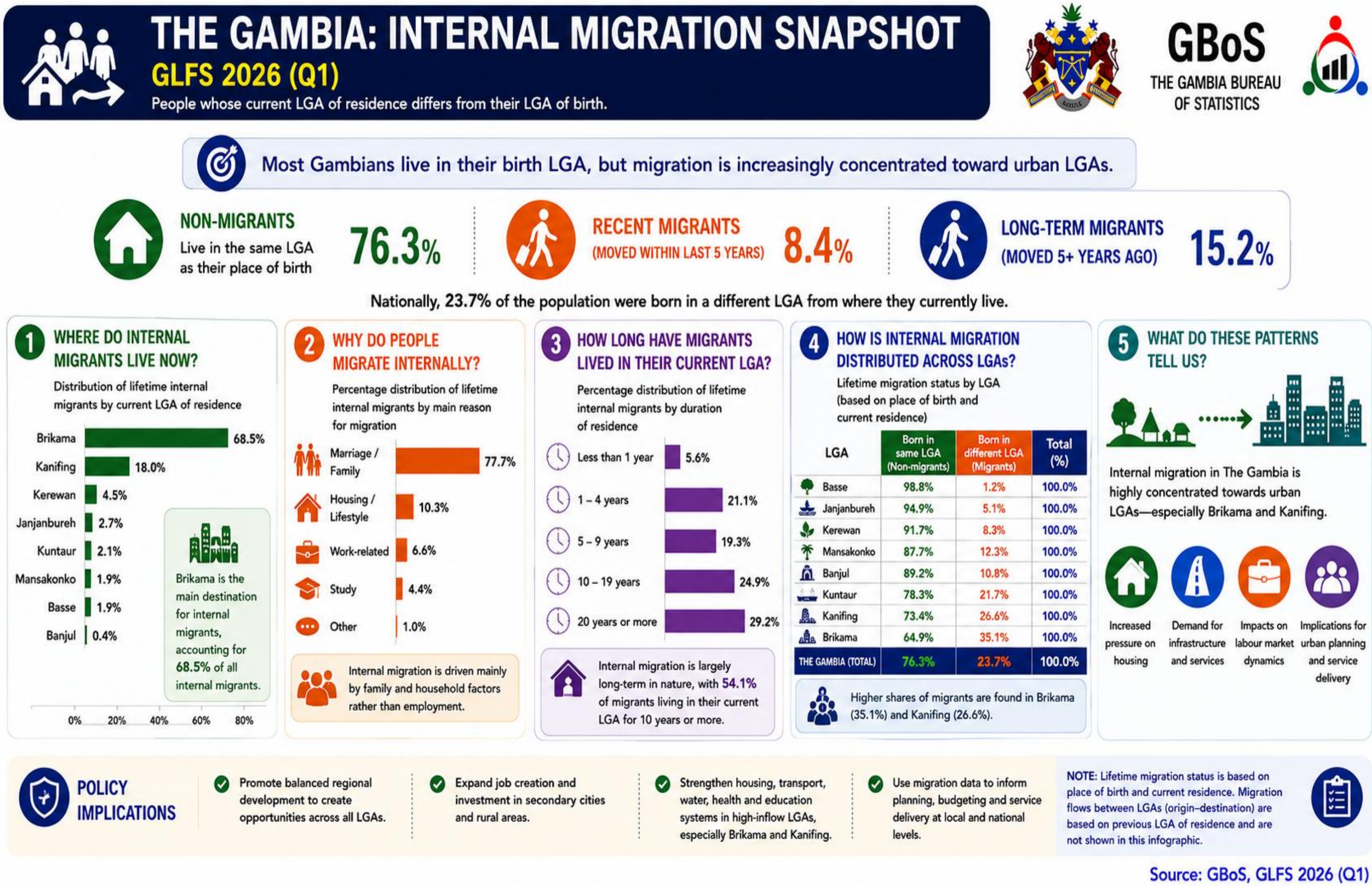
KEY FINDINGS

- Mean monthly employee earnings (GMD 9,455) were substantially higher than mean self-employment income (GMD 4,609), reflecting large differences between wage employment and own-account or household enterprise activities.
- The median monthly employment-related income was GMD 3,000, indicating that half of all workers earned GMD 3,000 or less per month despite a higher national mean (GMD 6,238), reflecting substantial income inequality.
- Male workers recorded considerably higher mean monthly employment-related income (GMD 8,099) than female workers (GMD 3,875), with men earning about 2.1 times more on average.
- Urban workers earned more on average (GMD 6,920) than rural workers (GMD 4,947), with the urban-rural gap linked partly to differences in employment structure and concentration in agriculture and informal activities.
- Formal workers earned substantially more (GMD 12,753) than informal workers (GMD 5,262), highlighting large productivity and earnings differences associated with informality.
- Public-sector employees recorded much higher mean monthly earnings (GMD 15,095) than private-sector employees (GMD 7,942), with public-sector earnings nearly twice as high on average.
- Large sectoral differences were observed. Non-market services recorded the highest mean monthly employment-related income (GMD 9,356), while agriculture recorded the lowest (GMD 3,353).
- Regional disparities in employment-related income persist. Kanifing recorded the highest average monthly income (GMD 7,285), while Janjanbureh recorded the lowest (GMD 4,765).
- Median hourly wages among employees remained relatively low (GMD 42.25 per hour), while the large difference between the mean and median hourly wage indicates substantial wage inequality.
- Self-employment income remains highly variable and may be prone to underreporting or misreporting, particularly among informal and household-based enterprises.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- Promote productive and better-paying employment opportunities, particularly for women, youth, and rural workers, to reduce observed income disparities.
- Strengthen support to micro, small and household enterprises through improved access to finance, markets, business development services and technology to enhance self-employment incomes.
- Promote formalisation and improved working conditions, given the large earnings gap between formal and informal employment.
- Support skills development and labour market transition pathways into higher-paying sectors such as non-market services, construction and formal private-sector employment.
- Strengthen rural economic transformation and productivity enhancement initiatives, particularly in agriculture, where average employment-related income remains lowest.
- Address persistent gender disparities in employment-related income through equal opportunity measures, women’s economic empowerment programmes, and improved access to productive employment.
- Strengthen labour market information and income measurement systems to improve monitoring of earnings, informality and employment quality within the RF-NDP 2023-2027, SDGs and Agenda 2063 frameworks.
- Improve social protection and income security measures for vulnerable workers, particularly informal and low-income workers exposed to unstable earnings and economic shocks.



THE GAMBIA: INTERNAL MIGRATION SNAPSHOT
GLFS 2026 (Q1)
People whose current LGA of residence differs from their LGA of birth.
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Most Gambians live in their birth LGA, but migration is increasingly concentrated toward urban LGAs.
NON-MIGRANTS
Live in the same LGA as their place of birth
76.3%
RECENT MIGRANTS
(MOVED WITHIN LAST 5 YEARS)
8.4%
LONG-TERM MIGRANTS
(MOVED 5+ YEARS AGO)
15.2%
Nationally, 23.7% of the population were born in a different LGA from where they currently live.
1 WHERE DO INTERNAL MIGRANTS LIVE NOW?
Distribution of lifetime internal migrants by current LGA of residence
Brikama 68.5%
Kanifing 18.0%
Kerewan 4.5%
Janjanbureh 2.7%
Kuntaur 2.1%
Mansakonko 1.9%
Basse 1.9%
Banjul 0.4%
0% 20% 40% 60% 80%
Brikama is the main destination for internal migrants, accounting for 68.5% of all internal migrants.
2 WHY DO PEOPLE MIGRATE INTERNALLY?
Percentage distribution of lifetime internal migrants by main reason for migration
Marriage / Family 77.7%
Housing / Lifestyle 10.3%
Work-related 6.6%
Study 4.4%
Other 1.0%
Internal migration is driven mainly by family and household factors rather than employment.
3 HOW LONG HAVE MIGRANTS LIVED IN THEIR CURRENT LGA?
Percentage distribution of lifetime internal migrants by duration of residence
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%
Internal migration is largely long-term in nature, with 54.1% of migrants living in their current LGA for 10 years or more.
4 HOW IS INTERNAL MIGRATION DISTRIBUTED ACROSS LGAs?
Lifetime migration status by LGA (based on place of birth and current residence)
LGA | Born in same LGA (Non-migrants) | Born in different LGA (Migrants) | Total (%)
Basse | 98.8% | 1.2% | 100.0%
Janjanbureh | 94.9% | 5.1% | 100.0%
Kerewan | 91.7% | 8.3% | 100.0%
Mansakonko | 87.7% | 12.3% | 100.0%
Banjul | 89.2% | 10.8% | 100.0%
Kuntaur | 78.3% | 21.7% | 100.0%
Kanifing | 73.4% | 26.6% | 100.0%
Brikama | 64.9% | 35.1% | 100.0%
THE GAMBIA (TOTAL) | 76.3% | 23.7% | 100.0%
Higher shares of migrants are found in Brikama (35.1%) and Kanifing (26.6%).
5 WHAT DO THESE PATTERNS TELL US?
Internal migration in The Gambia is highly concentrated towards urban LGAs—especially Brikama and Kanifing.
Increased pressure on housing
Demand for infrastructure and services
Impacts on labour market dynamics
Implications for urban planning and service delivery
POLICY IMPLICATIONS
Promote balanced regional development to create opportunities across all LGAs.
Expand job creation and investment in secondary cities and rural areas.
Strengthen housing, transport, water, health and education systems in high-inflow LGAs, especially Brikama and Kanifing.
Use migration data to inform planning, budgeting and service delivery at local and national levels.
NOTE: Lifetime migration status is based on place of birth and current residence. Migration flows between LGAs (origin–destination) are based on previous LGA of residence and are not shown in this infographic.
Source: GBoS, GLFS 2026 (Q1)

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KEY FINDINGS

- 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, indicating that most Gambians remain in their place of birth, although internal migration remains significant.
- Internal migration is strongly concentrated towards a few urban LGAs, particularly Brikama and Kanifing. Brikama alone accounts for **68.5 per cent** of all lifetime internal migrants, followed by Kanifing at **18.0 per cent**.
- Brikama records the highest share of migrants (**35.1%**) and the lowest share of non-migrants (**64.9%**), confirming its role as the country's primary destination for internal migration.
- Internal migration in The Gambia is driven mainly by marriage and family-related reasons (**77.7%**), while work-related migration accounts for a relatively small share (**6.6%**).
- Migration is largely long-term in nature. More than half (**54.1%**) of internal migrants have lived in their current LGA for **10 years or more**, indicating permanent or long-duration settlement patterns.
- More remote LGAs such as Basse, Janjanbureh, and Kerewan record very low levels of inward migration, suggesting persistent spatial disparities in economic opportunities and service concentration.
- The migration flow matrix shows that Brikama is the dominant destination for migrants from nearly all LGAs, highlighting increasing urban concentration and pressure on infrastructure, housing, and labour markets.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- Promote balanced regional development and expand economic opportunities across all LGAs to reduce excessive migration pressure towards a few urban centres.
- Strengthen urban planning, housing, transport, water, sanitation, health, and education infrastructure in high-inflow LGAs, particularly Brikama and Kanifing.
- Expand employment creation and investment in secondary urban centres and rural areas to reduce spatial inequalities in labour market opportunities.
- Integrate migration trends into national and local development planning, including infrastructure planning, budgeting, and service delivery systems.
- Strengthen the use of migration statistics within labour market, urbanisation, and population policies to support evidence-based planning.

- Improve coordination between labour market policies, spatial planning, and local government development strategies to better manage internal population movements.

GBOS
THE GAMBIA BUREAU OF STATISTICS

HOUSEHOLD LIVELIHOODS
MAIN SOURCES OF HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT

GLFS 2026 (Q1)

1 NATIONAL PICTURE
Main source of support of households

Main source of support of households	Weighted count (households)	Weighted per cent
Income from a household business (other than farming/fishing)	101,156	34.0%
Income from a paid job (held by a household member)	81,929	27.5%
Income from household farming or fishing	43,379	14.6%
Money or support from people living abroad	41,121	13.8%
Food produced by the household from farming, fishing, etc.	11,684	3.9%
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%**

2 TOP 4 MAIN SOURCES OF LIVELIHOOD BY LGA
Share of households (%)

LGA	1st source	2nd source	3rd source	4th source
Banjul	Business 48.0%	Paid job 32.6%	Support from abroad 6.4%	Other households 1.7% *
Kanifing	Business 47.0%	Paid job 32.6%	Support from abroad 14.2%	Other households 1.5%
Brikama	Business 34.1%	Paid job 33.0%	Support from abroad 17.6%	Farming/fishing income 6.9%
Mansa Konko	Business 32.6%	Paid job 29.3%	Farming/fishing income 28.3%	Support from abroad 4.7%
Kerewan	Farming/fishing income 46.7%	Business 27.1%	Paid job 12.6%	Support from abroad 8.2%
Kuntaur	Farming/fishing income 40.1%	Food produced by household 23.4%	Business 15.5%	Paid job 11.8%
Janjanbureh	Farming/fishing income 28.6%	Food produced by household 28.0%	Business 20.6%	Paid job 16.7%
Basse	Farming/fishing income 44.2%	Business 18.9%	Food produced by household 18.2%	Support from abroad 12.4%

*Support from other households in The Gambia (1.7%) is the 4th largest source in Banjul.

KEY MESSAGES

Household businesses (34.0%) and paid jobs (27.5%) are the main livelihood sources nationally, particularly in Banjul and Kanifing.

Farming and fishing income is the leading livelihood source in Kerewan (46.7%), Kuntaur (40.1%), Janjanbureh (28.6%) and Basse (44.2%).

Support from abroad is an important source of financial support nationally, particularly in Brikama (17.6%) and Kanifing (14.2%).

Support from other households accounts for 4.2% of households nationally and ranks among the top four sources only in Banjul (1.7%) and Kanifing (1.5%).

Source: GLFS 2026 (Q1) | The Gambia Bureau of Statistics

Key Findings

- Household businesses are the largest source of livelihood nationally, supporting **34.0 per cent** of households.
- Paid jobs account for **27.5 per cent** of household livelihoods, particularly in Banjul and Kanifing.
- Farming and fishing income remains the leading livelihood source in Kerewan **(46.7%),** Basse **(44.2%),** Kuntaur **(40.1%),** and Janjanbureh **(28.6%).**
- Nearly 1 in 5 households **(18.5%)** depend directly on agriculture or fishing activities, including own food production.
- Remittances from abroad support **13.8 per cent** of households nationally, with higher reliance in Brikama **(17.6%)** and Kanifing **(14.2%).**
- Own food production remains an important livelihood source in Kuntaur **(23.4%),** Janjanbureh **(28.0%),** and Basse **(18.2%).**
- Support from other households within The Gambia accounts for **4.2 per cent** of household livelihoods nationally.

Policy Considerations

- Strengthen support to small household businesses and informal enterprises, which remain the largest livelihood source nationally.
- Improve agricultural productivity and resilience in areas highly dependent on farming and fishing income.
- Expand decent paid employment opportunities, particularly outside Banjul and Kanifing.
- Promote productive investment and financial inclusion linked to remittances.
- Strengthen social protection and livelihood support for vulnerable households dependent on informal or subsistence activities.

ANNEX

CHANGES IN LABOUR FORCE AND EMPLOYMENT (15+), GLFS 2023 TO 2026

Indicator	2023	2025	2026	Change (2023 to 2026)
[1]Population (15+)	1,397,221	1,434,329	1,434,115	—
Labour force	609,410	675,470	781,868	+172,458
Employed	563,395	619,620	733,364	+169,969
Unemployed	46,015	55,851	48,504	+2,489
Outside labour force	787,811	758,859	652,247	−135,564

INTERPRETATION

Employment increased by 169,969 between 2023 and 2026, indicating an expansion in the number of persons in employment over the period. Over the same period, the labour force increased by 172,458, while the number of persons outside the labour force declined by 135,564, suggesting increased participation in the labour market.

These results indicate improved labour absorption, meaning that a larger share of the working-age population was engaged in economic activity or available for work. Labour absorption refers to the extent to which the economy provides employment opportunities for persons entering or participating in the labour market.

However, the increase in the number of employed persons should not be interpreted as equivalent to the number of new jobs created in the economy. The Labour Force Survey measures labour market status at a given point in time and captures changes in the number of persons employed, unemployed, or outside the labour force. Increases in employment may result from several factors, including:

- persons previously outside the labour force entering employment,
- unemployed persons moving into work,
- persons returning to existing economic activities,
- demographic changes,
- and broader improvements in labour market participation.

As such, the observed increase reflects an improvement in labour market outcomes and participation, rather than a direct measure of net job creation.

[1]Population estimates for 2023 are based on projections from the 2013 Population and Housing Census, while estimates for 2026 are based on final counts from the 2024 Population and Housing Census. The difference in the working-age population between the two rounds is relatively small (+36,894) compared to the increase in employment (+169,969). This suggests that the observed increase in employment reflects both updated population estimates and improved labour market outcomes. The increase in the employment-to-population ratio from 40.3 per cent to 51.1 per cent provides a more consistent indication of improved labour market performance.