

The ILO Work4Youth project worked with the Samoa Bureau of Statistics (SBS) to implement the School-to-work transition survey (SWTS) in 2012 (November-December). The results of the survey were published by Samoa Bureau of Statistics and Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Labour (2014): *Labour market transitions of young women and men in Samoa* (Government of Samoa). The objective of this country note is to offer a general summary of youth labour market trends in Samoa based on the SWTS. Youth is defined as 15–29.

## Main findings of the ILO SWTS

### *Human capital and mismatch*

- Virtually all surveyed youth had attended school or a training programme at some point in their lives (99.9 per cent in 2012). About one-third of the youth population (36.7 per cent) was enrolled in school in 2012 with the remaining having either completed school (22.9 per cent) or left school before graduation (30.3 per cent). Young men and women have equal access to education in Samoa.
- SWTS results showed a strong correlation between the levels of education and a young person's labour market transition: tertiary educated youth completed their transition to a stable or satisfactory job in 2.3 months, as compared to 9.4 months for secondary graduates and 20 months for youth who left after primary school.
- With relatively high educational attainment, it is not surprising to find that a large share of employed youth on the island are overeducated for the job they are doing (25.6 per cent). More than two-thirds (68.4 per cent) were classified as having qualifications matching their jobs, and only a small fraction of employed youth (5.9 per cent) were deemed overeducated for their occupation.
- Samoan students showed a strong preference for future work in the government/public sector (81.5 per cent signalled this preference in 2012). While the attraction of public sector employment is understandable given concerns with job security, the ability of the sector to absorb a significant number of young workers is limited.

### *Underutilization of the youth labour potential remains a top concern*

- The survey registered a high youth labour underutilization rate, at 52.2 per cent. The share of underutilized labour potential consisted of 8.3 per cent of the youth population in irregular employment (either in self-employment or paid employment with contract duration less than 12 months), 5.7 per cent unemployed and 38.2 per cent inactive non-students.

The ILO **School-to-work transitions surveys (SWTS)** are implemented as an outcome of the Work4Youth (W4Y) project, a partnership between the ILO and The MasterCard Foundation. The project has a budget of US\$14.6 million and will run for five years to mid-2016. Its aim is to “promote decent work opportunities for young men and women through knowledge and action”. The immediate objective of the partnership is to produce more and better labour market information specific to youth in developing countries, focusing in particular on transition paths to the labour market.

See the website [www.ilo.org/w4y](http://www.ilo.org/w4y) for more information.

- The youth unemployment rate (strict definition)<sup>1</sup> stood at 16.7 per cent in 2012, which is higher than the regional average for Pacific Islands in the same year (12.7 per cent).<sup>2</sup> Young women were more likely to be unemployed than young men (20.1 and 14.7 per cent, respectively).
- The most disadvantaged in finding work were those with lower levels of education: the unemployment rate of a young person with tertiary education was half that of a young secondary graduate at 11.6 and 27.1 per cent, respectively. For young women the discrepancy was even higher (43.7 and 13.7 per cent for female tertiary and secondary graduates, respectively).
- The duration of unemployment is comparatively short. Only 16.4 per cent of unemployed youth had been looking for work for longer than one year in 2012.
- The share of youth neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETs) in Samoa stood at 43.5 per cent in 2012. The share of NEETs among young women was comparable to that of young men at 44.5 and 42.6 per cent, respectively.

#### *Low employment rates and limited quality jobs hinder the country's productive transformation*

- Only one in five (20.1 per cent) young Samoans were employed in 2012, with young men working to a greater extent than young women (27.3 and 15.9 per cent, respectively).
- Although almost three-quarters of employed youth (71.4 per cent) were working as wage and salaried workers, a significant share remained in vulnerable employment as own-account workers (26.1 per cent) or unpaid family workers (1.1 per cent). At the same time, nearly one-third (31.9 per cent) of youth in paid employment were engaged without a written contract.
- The services sector is by far the largest source of youth employment in Samoa, providing more than three-quarters of jobs (76.8 per cent). Industry is the second source of jobs (17.6 per cent) while agriculture represents only a small share of employment opportunities for youth in the island nation (5.5 per cent). Young men were more likely to work in industry than their young female counterparts (22.2 and 9.6 per cent, respectively).
- Informal employment affected two-thirds (67.7 per cent) of young workers in Samoa, with young male workers more affected than women (72.3 and 59.5 per cent, respectively).
- Only a small segment (14.5 per cent) of employed youth worked less than 30 hours during the reference week in 2013, while 34.6 per cent worked excessively long hours (more than 50 hours per week).

## Selection of data tables

**Table 1. Youth population by educational status and sex, 2012 (%)**

<b>Educational status</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Never attended school	0.1	0.1	0.1
Dropped out before graduation or completion of school	40.3	45.8	34.6
Currently attending school	36.7	33.0	40.6
Education completed	22.9	21.2	24.8
Total	100	100	100

<sup>1</sup> The “strict” definition of unemployment refers to persons without work, available to work and actively engaged in a job search. The “relaxed” definition excludes the job search criteria. The youth unemployment rate is the number of unemployed persons divided by the youth labour force (employed plus unemployed).

<sup>2</sup> ILO, Key Indicators of the Labour Market, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition database, table R6. Note, the regional figure covers youth aged 15–24 while the data on the SWTS refer to youth aged 15–29. The youth unemployment rate in Samoa for the age range 15–24 was 19.3 per cent in 2012 based on the SWTS.

**Table 2. Key youth labour market indicators – traditional distribution by sex, 2012 (%)**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Employed	21.7	27.3	15.9
Unemployed	4.4	4.7	4.0
Inactive	73.9	68.0	80.0
Total youth population	100	100	100
Youth labour force participation rate	26.1	32.0	20.0
Youth unemployment rate (strict definition)	16.7	14.7	20.1

**Table 3. Key youth labour market indicators – alternative distribution by sex, 2012 (%)**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
In regular employment	13.4	15.6	11.1
In irregular employment	8.3	11.7	4.8
Unemployed (relaxed definition)	5.7	6.2	5.2
Inactive students	34.4	29.6	39.3
Inactive non-students	38.2	36.9	39.6
Total youth population	100	100	100
Youth labour force participation rate (relaxed definition)	27.4	33.5	21.1
Youth unemployment rate (relaxed definition)	20.7	18.5	24.5
Youth labour underutilization rate	52.2	54.7	49.6

**Table 4. Youth neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETs) by sex and composition, 2012 (%)**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>NEET rate</b>	<b>of which:</b>	
		<b>Inactive non-students</b>	<b>Unemployed non-students</b>
Total	43.5	39.5	4.1
Male	42.6	38.2	4.3
Female	44.5	40.7	3.8

**Table 5. Employed youth by status in employment and sex, 2012 (%)**

<b>Status in employment</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Wage and salaried workers (employees)	71.4	69.8	74.3
Employers	1.4	0.9	2.3
Own-account workers	26.1	28.6	21.8
Contributing (unpaid) family workers	1.1	0.8	1.6
Total employed youth	100	100	100

**Table 6. Young wage and salaried workers by type of contract and sex, 2012 (%)**

Type of contract	Total	Male	Female
Written agreement	68.1	60.9	80.0
Oral agreement	31.9	39.1	20.0
Unlimited duration	96.0	93.8	99.4
Limited duration	4.0	6.2	0.6
<i>Of which:</i>			
– Less than 12 months	63.4	61.0	100.0
– 12 months or more	36.6	39.0	0.0
Total young wage and salaried workers	100	100	100

**Table 7. Distribution of youth employment by sector, aggregate and 1-digit level, and sex, 2012 (%)**

Sector	Total	Male	Female
<b>Agriculture</b>	5.5	7.0	2.8
<b>Industry</b>	17.6	22.2	9.6
<b>Services</b>	76.8	70.8	87.6
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	5.5	7.0	2.8
Manufacturing	10.3	11.3	8.4
Water supply	1.3	1.8	0.5
Construction	6.1	9.1	0.7
Wholesale and retail trade	10.1	9.2	11.6
Transport	4.2	5.1	2.5
Accommodation	8.3	7.1	10.4
Information and communications	1.7	2.1	1.1
Financial activities	2.6	1.4	4.7
Professional scientific activities	4.4	3.1	6.7
Administrative and support activities	8.7	8.4	9.0
Public administration	3.6	1.7	7.0
Education	5.2	2.2	10.5
Health and social work	1.9	1.7	2.3
Arts and entertainment	0.3	0.0	1.0
Other services	1.5	1.6	1.2
Private households	24.5	27.1	19.8

**Table 8. Youth informal employment by composition and sex, 2012 (%)**

Informal employment	Total	Male	Female
Youth in formal employment	32.3	27.7	40.5
Youth informal employment	67.7	72.3	59.5

**Table 9. Employed youth by overeducation, undereducation or matching qualifications and sex, 2012 (%)**

Qualifications match	Total	Male	Female
Undereducated	5.9	5.1	7.3
Overeducated	25.6	26.7	23.9
Matching qualifications	68.4	68.2	68.8
Total employed youth	100	100	100

**Table 10. Youth unemployment rates by level of completed educational attainment and sex, 2012 (%)**

<b>Educational attainment</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Primary	-	-	-
Secondary general	27.1	22.3	43.7
Post-secondary vocational	15.9	12.8	20.7
University and postgraduate studies	11.6	9.3	13.7

**Table 11. Unemployed youth by duration of job search and sex, 2012 (%)**

<b>Duration of job search</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Less than 3 months	45.0	41.2	51.6
3 months to less than 6 months	26.7	29.0	24.6
6 months to less than 1 year	9.1	7.6	11.3
More than a year	16.4	21.0	11.1
Not available	2.8	1.2	1.5
Total unemployed youth	100	100	100