Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS)
Q2:2023

Risenga Maluleke
Statistician-General

statssa.gov.za
twitter.com/StatsSA
facebook.com/StatsSA
There were **154 thousand** more people employed in Q2:2023 than in Q1:2023.
Since Q4:2021 employment has been increasing. It increased in the second quarter of 2023 by 154,000 to 16.3 million. Employment changes Q2:2019 - Q2:2023
The number of **employed** increased to 16,3M and has **almost reached pre-COVID** levels of 16,4M. This is the 7th consecutive increase since Q4: 2021.
Official unemployment rate has decreased by 0.3 of a percentage point to 32.6% in Q2:2023.

**40.7 million**
People of working age in South Africa (15 – 64-year-old)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labour force</th>
<th>Not Economically Active</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24.3 million</td>
<td>16.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employed</strong></td>
<td><strong>Unemployed</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.3M</td>
<td>7.9M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other NEA</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2M</td>
<td>13.3M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SA's official unemployment rate stands at **32.6%**

Decreased by 0.3 of a percentage point between Q1:2023 and Q2:2023

ILO hierarchy – Employed first then unemployed and the remainder is NEA (including discouraged job-seekers). 3 mutually exclusive groups. Cannot be in two groups at the same time.

Due to rounding numbers may not add up.
The number of **Not Economically Active** persons **decreased by 1 000** in Q2:2023 compared to Q1:2023

Characteristics of the not economically active, Q1:2023 vs Q2:2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Q1:2023</th>
<th>Q2:2023</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td></td>
<td>37,0%</td>
<td>0,6 % point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discouraged work seekers</td>
<td>19,3%</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0,6 % points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home-maker</td>
<td>15,3%</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0,2 % points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too old/young to work</td>
<td>10,6%</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0,1 % points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness/disability</td>
<td>10,1%</td>
<td></td>
<td>0,3 % points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7,6%</td>
<td></td>
<td>Remained unchanged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q/Q Changes

- **104 000**
- **-94 000**
- **-40 000**
- **-10 000**
- **46 000**
- **-8 000**

*Due to rounding numbers may not add up*
The **Labour force participation rate** increased by 0.2 of a percentage point from 59.4% in Q1:2023 to 59.6% in Q2:2023

Labour force participation and absorption rates Q2:2013-Q2:2023

**Labour force participation rate** is the proportion of the working-age population that is either employed or unemployed

**Absorption rate** is the proportion of the working-age population that is employed

---

**Labour force participation rate**

- 2013: 42.3%
- 2014: 42.0%
- 2015: 42.3%
- 2016: 42.6%
- 2017: 43.9%
- 2018: 43.8%
- 2019: 43.5%
- 2020: 39.4%
- 2021: 50.6%
- 2022: 59.4%
- 2023: 59.6%

**Absorption rate**

- 2013: 56.6%
- 2014: 59.9%
- 2015: 59.9%
- 2016: 59.5%
- 2017: 56.6%
- 2018: 59.4%
- 2019: 59.6%
- 2020: 40.1%
- 2021: 40.1%
- 2022: 39.9%
- 2023: 40.1%

14.3% Points difference in Labour force participation rate from Q1:2023 to Q2:2023

19.5% Points difference in Absorption rate from Q1:2023 to Q2:2023
Official and expanded unemployment rates decreased by 0.3% of a percentage point each to 32.6% and 42.1% respectively when comparing Q2:2023 and Q1:2023.

Official vs Expanded unemployment: Q2:2013-Q2:2023

Expanded Definition includes the following:

- Official unemployment (searched and available) 7.9 M
- Available to work but are/or
  - Discouraged work-seekers 3.2 M
  - Have other reasons for not searching 0.8 M
NW (53.5%) recorded the highest expanded unemployment rate in Q2:2023, followed by MP (49.5%). NW, NC, LP, and KZN recorded more than 15 percentage points difference between expanded and official unemployment rates.
Over the last ten years **EC** has consistently been **above the SA average official unemployment rate**.
The number of unemployed people in South Africa increased from 5.0 million in Q2:2013 to 7.9 million in Q2:2023. The proportion of those in long-term unemployment increased from 66.7% in Q2:2013 to 77.3% in Q2:2023.

*Long term unemployment – unemployed for a year or longer
The **formal sector** in South Africa accounts for **69.3%** of total employment.

Employment share by sector, Q2:2013 to Q2:2023
Formal sector employment increased by **143 thousand jobs** between Q1:2023 and Q2:2023.

Employment changes by sector, (Quarter-on-quarter)
Employment increases were mainly in Construction, Trade, and Community and Social Services industries.

Employment changes by industry, Quarter-on-quarter change ('000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Employment Change ('000)</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>8,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>2,8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and social services</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private households</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3,5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7,5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0,8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>-6</td>
<td>-4,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>-0,7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>-68</td>
<td>-2,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>-96</td>
<td>-5,8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LP, WC and KZN recorded the largest employment increases in Q2:2023

Quarter-on-quarter change in employment by province (‘000) (Q2:2023 and Q1:2023)
Graduate unemployment rate decreased by 1.0 percentage point to 9.6% in Q2:2023 compared to 10.6% in Q1:2023.

Official Unemployment rate Q2:2023

- Less than matric: 38.3%
- Matric: 35.2%
- Other tertiary: 20.2%
- Graduates: 9.6%

SA Official Unemployment Rate 32.6%
Youth aged 15-24 years and 25-34 years recorded the highest unemployment rates of 60.7% and 39.8% respectively.

Labour market rates by age group, Q2:2023

**Unemployment rate**
- 15-24 yrs: 60.7% (↓ 1.4% point)
- 25-34 yrs: 39.8% (↓ 0.9% point)
- 35-44 yrs: 28.3% (↓ 0.4% point)
- 45-54 yrs: 19.9% (↑ 1.1% point)
- 55-64 yrs: 10.9% (↑ 0.1% point)

**Absorption rate**
- 15-24 yrs: 10.7% (↑ 0.3% point)
- 25-34 yrs: 43.9% (↑ 0.6% point)
- 35-44 yrs: 56.6% (Remained unchanged)
- 45-54 yrs: 59.1% (↓ 0.4% point)
- 55-64 yrs: 37.0% (↑ 0.3% point)

**Participation rate**
- 15-24 yrs: 27.2% (↓ 0.4% point)
- 25-34 yrs: 72.9% (Remained unchanged)
- 35-44 yrs: 78.8% (↑ 0.3% point)
- 45-54 yrs: 73.8% (↑ 0.5% point)
- 55-64 yrs: 59.6% (↑ 0.2% point)

Change: Percentage points Q1:2023 to Q2:2023
- Labour market rates by age group, Q2:2023
Youth aged **15-34 years** are more vulnerable to unemployment when compared to older age groups.

Official Unemployment rates by age group, Q2:2013-Q2:2023

- **15-34 years**: 36.5% in 2013 vs. 45.3% in 2023
- **35-64 years**: 15.2% in 2013 vs. 23.0% in 2023
Approximately 3.5 million (34.2%) out of 10.2 million young people aged 15-24 years were not in employment, education or training (NEET).
The overall NEET rate (15 – 24yrs) decreased by 1.5 percentage points in Q2:2023 compared to Q2:2022.
The unemployment rate among the **Black African (36.8%)** population group remains higher than the national average and other population groups.

*OFFICIAL* unemployment rate by population group, Q2:2023
Black African unemployment rates have been consistently higher than other population groups over the past 10-year period.

Official Unemployment rates by population group, Q2:2013-Q2:2023
Women in South Africa
There were **2 million less women** employed in Q2:2023 than men.
Only 54.3% of women of working age in South Africa participate in the labour force either as employed or looking for work.

Labour force participation by Gender Q2:2013 - Q2:2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>51.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>52.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>56.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>60.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Over the past ten years, the unemployment rate for women has been higher than for men. The female unemployment rate increased from 27.5% in Q2:2013 to **35.7% in Q2:2023**.
Black African women continue to be the most vulnerable with an unemployment rate of 39,8% in Q2:2023. This is 4.1 percentage points higher than the national average for women at 35,7%.
Using the expanded unemployment definition, **Gender disparity** persists throughout all population groups.

**EXPANDED** unemployment rate by population group and sex, Q2:2023

- **Black African**: Male 43.1% vs. Female 50.6%
- **SA**: Male 38.5% vs. Female 46.1%
- **Coloured**: Male 28.1% vs. Female 31.8%
- **Indian/Asian**: Male 15.4% vs. Female 36.4%
- **White**: Male 6.8% vs. Female 12.2%

7.6% Gap in *expanded unemployment* between the sexes
36.0% of young females aged 15-24 years were not in employment, education or training (NEET) in Q2: 2023. This is a 1.2 percentage points decrease compared to Q2: 2022.

Source: QLFS Q2:2023
Women were more likely to be employed in Private households and Community & Social services than men

Employed by sex and industry Q2:2023
Women are more likely to be employed in **domestic work occupations** than men. There are twice as many **men (0.8 million)** in **managerial occupations** than **women (0.4 million)**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>2.4M</td>
<td>1.6M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and services</td>
<td>1.4M</td>
<td>1.4M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>0.6M</td>
<td>1.3M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic worker</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.8M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technician</td>
<td>0.7M</td>
<td>0.8M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>0.7M</td>
<td>0.6M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>0.8M</td>
<td>0.4M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft and related trade</td>
<td>1.4M</td>
<td>0.2M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant and machine operator</td>
<td>1.1M</td>
<td>0.1M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled agriculture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employed by sex and occupation Q2:2023
RECAP (QLFS, Q2:2023)

- Unemployment rate decreased by 0,3 of a percentage point to 32,6% in Q2:2023. Both Absorption and labour force participation rates increased by 0,2 of a percentage point to 40,1% and 59,6% respectively.

- The number of those who were employed increased by 154 000 in Q2:2023 compared to Q1:2023. The number of those unemployed decreased by 11 000 in the same quarter.

- The largest industry employment gains were recorded in Construction (104 000), Trade (92 000), and Community and social services (63 000).

- Women are more likely to be employed in Private households and community and social services industries and in domestic work occupations compared to men.
NOW IN THE FIELD

Geospatial Information Frame
Governance, Public Safety and Justice Survey (April 2023-March 2024)
Quarterly Labour Force Survey (Collected quarterly)
General Household Survey (January-December)
Domestic Tourism Survey (January-December)
Consumer Price Index (Collected monthly)
Income and Expenditure Survey 2022/23 (Nov 2022-Nov 2023)
Ndzi hela kwala!