

KYRGYZSTAN: ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET MEASURES FOR YOUTH

Working paper

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1 INTRODUCTION

The socio-economic development of the Kyrgyz Republic has been characterised by steady growth. Over the period 2021–2024, the average annual real GDP growth rate reached 8.0%. Inflation declined from 11.2% in 2021 to 6.3% in 2024. According to preliminary estimates, gross domestic product (GDP) in January–December 2024 exceeded KGS 1.5 trillion and increased by 9.0% compared with the same period in 2023.¹

Agriculture plays a key role in the economy of the Kyrgyz Republic. Between 2021 and 2024, gross agricultural output increased by 22.0%, rising from KGS 324.5 billion to KGS 395.6 billion. The main contribution to this growth came from livestock production, which expanded by 32.9%.²

Industrial production increased by a factor of 1.6 between 2021 and 2024, from KGS 370.5 billion to KGS 585.3 billion. The sector is primarily driven by manufacturing industries, including food processing, light industry, and construction materials production.³

The services sector also represents an important component of the economy, including trade, transport, and tourism. The tourism sector demonstrates strong development potential. In 2024, the number of border crossings by foreign citizens reached 8.6 million. During the period 2021–2024, gross value added in tourism increased from KGS 28.0 billion to KGS 58.2 billion.⁴

The mining sector plays a significant role in the national economy, contributing a substantial share of export revenues. The construction sector has also experienced dynamic growth, with its share in GDP increasing from 7.1% in 2021 to 8.3% in 2024.⁵ The information technology sector is developing, particularly in urban areas; however, the overall level of digitalisation and technical infrastructure remains insufficient to support large-scale growth.

It should be noted that economic growth has been accompanied by the commissioning of new production capacities. Within the framework of the “100 Industrial Enterprises” initiative, 102 enterprises were launched in 2024 across various sectors of the economy, with total investments amounting to USD 800 million and more than 8,300 jobs created. Overall, more than 263,000 jobs were created in 2024. In 2025, a further 128 enterprises are planned to be commissioned, with total investments exceeding USD 1.7 billion and the creation of approximately 13,900 additional jobs.⁶

Against the backdrop of economic development, the state faces the strategic task of ensuring that enterprises are supplied with a qualified workforce, including specialists equipped with modern knowledge, skills, and technological competencies.

This report aims to analyse the current situation of the youth labour market in the Kyrgyz Republic, identify key challenges and gaps in existing active labour market measures, and formulate policy recommendations to improve youth employment outcomes. The report is primarily based on desk research and stakeholder interviews.

¹ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, <https://stat.gov.kg/ru/>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ National Development Programme of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2030.

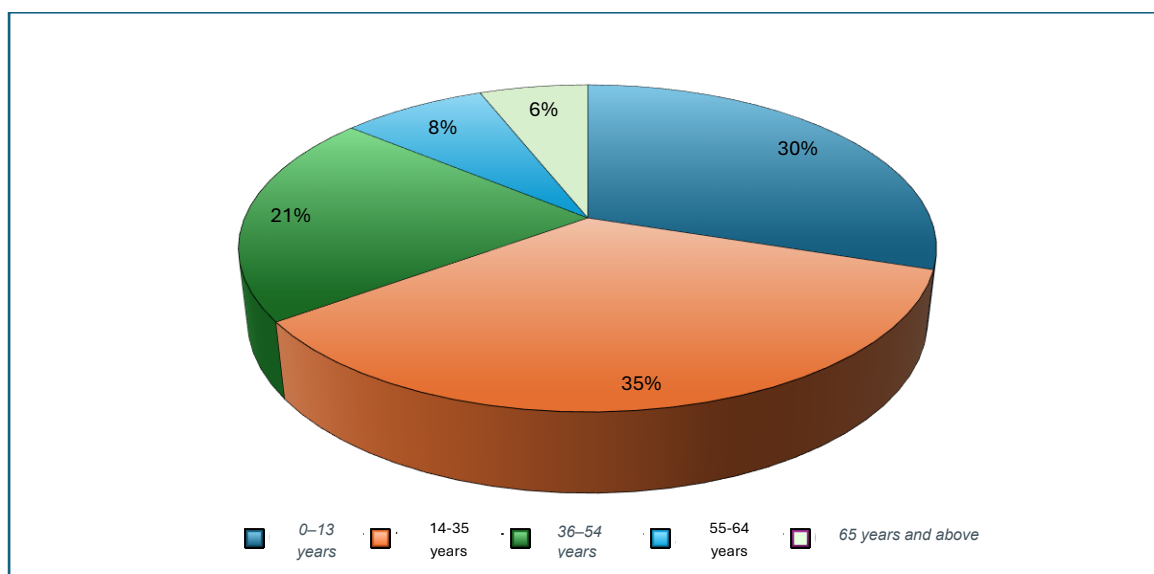
<https://www.gov.kg/files/news/froala/d0d92a4f1e52345a4e0bb0570f58b41290374e75.pdf>

2 YOUTH LABOUR MARKET OVERVIEW

Labour market indicators in the Kyrgyz Republic reflect the overall employment and unemployment situation. In 2024, the total labour force amounted to 2,860.7 thousand people. Of these, 2,756.0 thousand individuals (96.3%) were employed in the economy. Consequently, the overall unemployment rate stood at 3.7%, corresponding to 104.7 thousand individuals. At the same time, 50.9 thousand unemployed persons, or 1.8% of the labour force, were officially registered with the Public Employment Service. The labour force participation rate reached 71%.⁷ These indicators demonstrate a relatively stable labour market situation; however, understanding its dynamics and challenges requires consideration of the country's demographic characteristics.

The Kyrgyz Republic is characterised by a predominantly young population. According to estimates of the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (NSC KR), as of April 2025, the country's population reached 7,308.2 thousand people. Approximately one third of the population consists of young people aged 14–35 years (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Population age structure (April 2025)



Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic

The predominance of youth within the demographic structure creates the potential for harnessing the so-called demographic dividend, which represents a strategic national resource capable of supporting economic growth. However, this potential can only be realised through an active role of the state in creating enabling conditions for young people to develop and apply relevant skills and competencies. Maximising the benefits of the demographic dividend requires ensuring access to quality education, vocational skills development, and labour market opportunities for young people.

According to data from the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, the highest share of unemployed persons is observed among young people aged 20–29 years, accounting for 42.5%⁸, of

⁷ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, Statistical Yearbook “Kyrgyzstan in Figures”, 2025.

⁸ Ibid.

total unemployment. A significant proportion of youth are classified as NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training). In 2023, the NEET rate among youth was estimated at 18.6%,⁹ indicating the scale of this socio-economic challenge.

Female unemployment remains a major concern. In 2023, the employment rate among women was only 42.4%, almost twice as low as the employment rate among men, which stood at 71%. The unemployment rate among women was 5.2%, compared with 3.3% among men. Young women represent one of the most vulnerable groups in the labour market, as male employment rates exceed female employment rates across all age groups. The overall unemployment rate among young people aged 15–35 years reached 8.8%.¹⁰ Higher unemployment and inactivity rates among young women are associated with multiple structural and social factors, including early exit from education due to marriage and motherhood, as well as increasing adherence among young women to conservative religious norms, which may affect their access to and participation in vocational education and training (VET).

Furthermore, a significant proportion of young women are employed in the informal economy, which deprives them of social protection and income stability.¹¹ Employers often avoid hiring women of reproductive age, creating additional barriers to labour market participation and limiting career prospects.

Informal employment remains widespread in the Kyrgyz Republic. According to official data from the National Statistical Committee, approximately 66% of all employed persons work in the informal sector, particularly in agriculture, trade, construction, and services.¹² Informal employment is characterised by the absence of formal employment contracts, social protection, insurance coverage, and pension contributions.

The high prevalence of informal employment is driven by limited availability of formal jobs, weak institutional enforcement, and a high level of self-employment. Youth and women are particularly vulnerable in this context, as informal employment often represents their only available source of income. According to the National Statistical Committee, 44.5% of young people aged 15–34 are employed in the informal sector, including 32.2% of young women.¹³

Youth unemployment represents a critical socio-economic challenge affecting households, regions, and national development. When young people are unable to secure employment, it undermines their confidence in the future, reduces motivation, and weakens incentives for skills development. As a result, sustained trends in youth labour migration have emerged, with many young people seeking employment abroad, primarily in Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries such as the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan. This migration is largely driven by limited domestic employment opportunities and low wage levels.

In this context, the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic has identified youth employment as one of its key strategic priorities.

According to statistical data, youth employment by economic sector is structured as presented in Table 1.

⁹ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic

¹⁰ Women and Men of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2019–2023

¹¹ Women and Men of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2019–2023

¹² National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (2024), Employment and Unemployment, 2023.

¹³ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (2024), Employment and Unemployment, 2023.

Table 1. Employed population in main job by age group and economic activity (2023), thousand persons, %

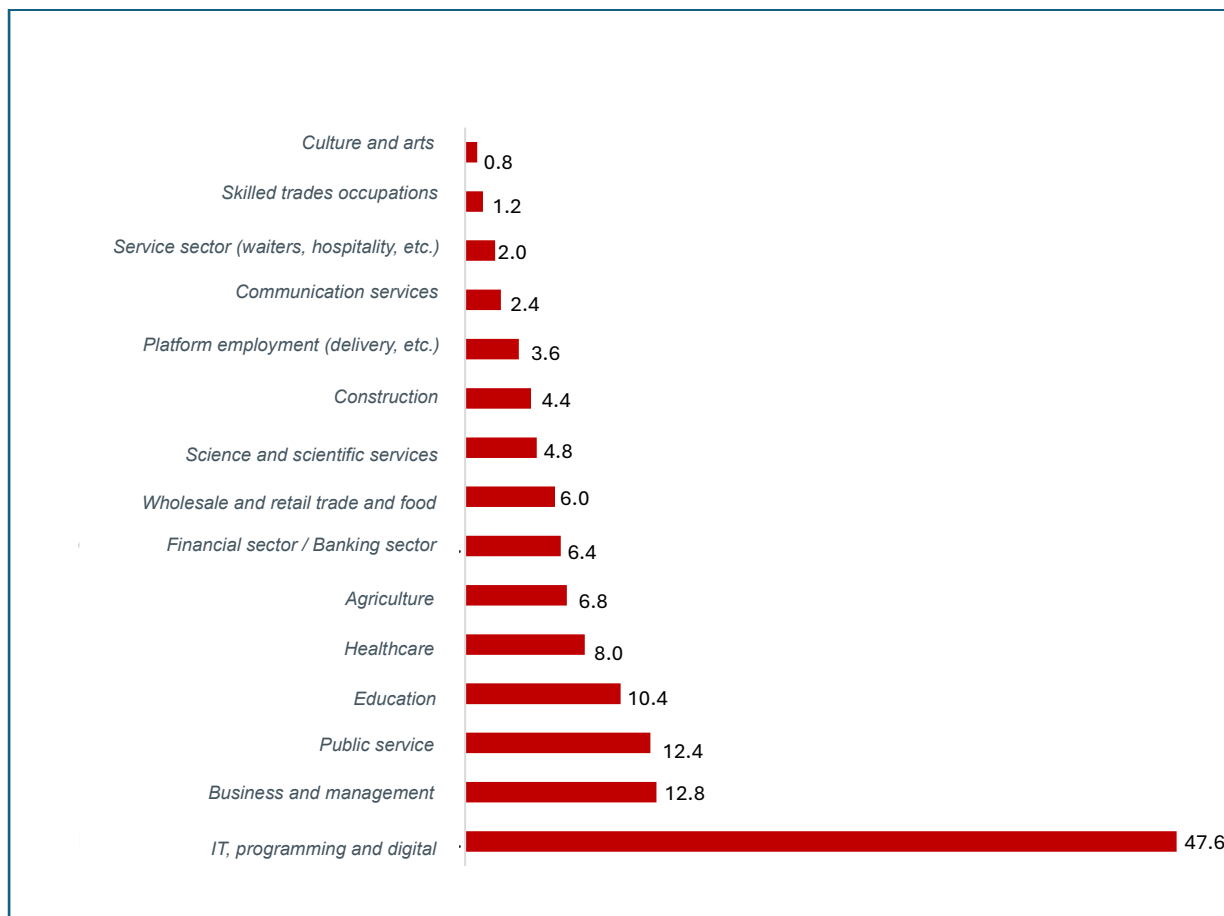
	Total population (thousand persons)	including by age group, years			
		15-19	20-29	30-39	Total youth aged 15-39
Total	2 656,2	76,9	598,9	763,4	1 439,2
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	454,3 (17,1%)	33,2 (43,2%)	80,9 (13,5%)	106,6 (14%)	220,7 (15,3%)
Mining and quarrying	15,7	0,0	1,4	5,6	7,0
Manufacturing	290,1 (10,9%)	7,6 (9,9%)	64,3 (10,7%)	91,9 (12%)	163,8 (11,4%)
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	38,6	0,1	6,2	11,0	17,3
Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	11,9	0,0	1,2	2,2	3,4
Construction	331,7 (12,5%)	9,2 (12%)	91,4 (15,3%)	96,1 (12,6%)	196,7 (13,7%)
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	419,3 (15,8%)	11,5 (15%)	111,2 (18,6%)	125,9 (16,5%)	248,6 (18,3%)
Transportation and storage	223,1	0,4	29,2	74,0	103,6
Accommodation and food service activities	178,0 (6,7%)	9,9 (12,9%)	81,2 (13,6%)	43,3 (5,7%)	134,4 (9,3%)
Information and communication	37,1	0,2	9,4	11,6	21,2
Financial and insurance activities	48,3	0,8	17,4	14,2	32,4
Real estate activities	4,3	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Professional, scientific and technical activities	23,0	0,0	7,8	6,0	13,8
Administrative and support service activities	20,3	0,5	2,9	4,7	8,1
Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	109,9	1,8	18,5	42,6	62,9
Education	261,5 (9,8%)	0,2	35,8 (6%)	81,9 (10,7%)	117,9 (8,2%)
Human health and social work activities	117,8	0,1	22,4	27,6	50,1
Arts, entertainment and recreation	15,8	0,8	2,5	2,5	5,8
Other service activities	51,1	0,5	14,4	14,9	29,8
Activities of households as employers	4,0	0,0	0,8	0,7	1,5
Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies	0,3	0,0	0,0	0,1	0,1

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic

The six sectors employing the largest numbers of young people are as follows: wholesale and retail trade employs nearly 248.6 thousand young people (18.3%); agriculture employs 220.7 thousand young people (15.3%); construction employs approximately 196.7 thousand (13.7%); manufacturing employs 163.8 thousand (11.4%); accommodation and food service activities employ approximately 134 thousand young people; and education employs 117.9 thousand young people (8.2%) (see Table 1).

According to young people themselves, the most promising sectors for employment are the information technology (IT) sector, business and entrepreneurship, public administration, and education (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Economic sectors considered promising for youth employment in the Kyrgyz Republic (%)



Source: Analytical Report "Study of the Youth Labour Market in the Kyrgyz Republic", 2025

Note: Within the framework of the survey, young respondents were asked the following question:

"Which sectors of the economy do you consider most promising for youth employment?" Respondents were invited to select sectors they perceived as offering the best employment prospects.

Young people are increasingly interested in employment related to new technologies, digital platforms, and opportunities offered by the information technology sector. This trend is particularly evident in urban areas, where major companies and start-ups are concentrated. It is also noteworthy that young people continue to express confidence in public sector employment, as reflected in their interest in working in government institutions. However, sectors such as science and culture demonstrate relatively low attractiveness among young people. These sectors play a critical role in supporting societal development and national identity. A decline in youth interest in these fields may lead to skills shortages, reduced research capacity, and a decline in cultural development.

Youth preferences for professions perceived as fashionable or prestigious may contribute to labour market imbalances. As a result, certain sectors become oversaturated, while others, equally important for economic development, face significant shortages of qualified specialists and skilled workers. For example, in the current academic year, Jalal-Abad State University named after B.Osmonov did not

receive a single applicant for newly introduced specialisations. These new academic programmes were established at the initiative of the Presidential Plenipotentiary Representative and included strategically important fields such as tourism, hospitality management, agronomy, psychology, and railway transport organisation and management. The latter is particularly relevant in the context of workforce preparation for the Kyrgyzstan–Uzbekistan–China railway project, which holds strategic importance for regional economic development.¹⁴

One of the main barriers to youth labour market integration remains the skills mismatch between graduates and labour market requirements. Employers frequently report a lack of practical skills, soft skills, digital competencies, and job-ready qualifications among young job seekers. Access to high-quality VET and modern education programmes remains limited, particularly in rural areas, where a significant proportion of the population resides¹⁵.

Low wage levels remain a significant barrier to sustainable youth employment. Many young people are unable to secure sufficient income to support independent living and long-term personal and professional development, as a substantial share of their earnings is allocated to meeting basic needs. As noted above, this contributes to increased labour migration among young people seeking better employment opportunities and higher wages abroad.

Furthermore, the limited availability of employment opportunities, combined with underdeveloped infrastructure and weak economic activity in regional areas, exacerbates labour market challenges. This contributes to increased social risks and economic vulnerability among young people, particularly in rural and remote regions.

Overall, youth employment challenges in the Kyrgyz Republic can be grouped into the following key categories:

- Skills mismatch with labour market requirements. The education and training system does not always equip young people with the practical skills and competencies required by employers.
- Lack of work experience. Employers tend to prioritise candidates with prior work experience, which creates barriers to labour market entry for young people.
- Informal employment. Many young people are employed in the informal sector, which limits access to social protection, employment stability, and career progression opportunities.
- Limited employment opportunities. Employment opportunities remain particularly limited in rural areas, contributing to youth migration in search of better employment prospects.
- Low wage levels. Young workers frequently face low wages, especially at early stages of their careers, reducing incentives for labour market participation.
- Limited career development opportunities. Restricted opportunities for professional advancement contribute to increased labour migration among young people.
- Gender disparities. Women face additional labour market barriers, including discrimination, wage inequality, and limited career advancement opportunities.
- Regional disparities and unequal access to employment opportunities. Youth in rural and remote areas face structural barriers due to limited availability of jobs and infrastructure.
- Insufficient access to career guidance and counselling services. Although career guidance services are gradually expanding, many young people still lack timely access to labour market information and career support, which limits their ability to make informed career choices.

¹⁴ “No applicants applied for new specialisations in Jalal-Abad.” Available at: <https://report.kg/obrazovanie/52762-v-zhalal-abade-na-novye-specialnosti-ne-podal-dokumenty-ni-odin-abiturient.html>

¹⁵ Author’s observation, based on consultations with experts in employment policy, labour market development, and analysis of current trends in the education system and labour market.

3 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND GOVERNANCE

According to the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On Youth”, adopted in August 2023, young people are defined as citizens aged 14 to 35 inclusive.

Key institutions responsible for youth employment policy

Youth employment policy in the Kyrgyz Republic is developed and implemented through the coordinated involvement of several key government institutions and partners. The primary responsible authority is the Ministry of Culture, Information and Youth Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic, which is mandated to formulate and implement state youth policy and develop measures aimed at creating enabling conditions for the economic, intellectual, and social development of young people.

The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic (MLSSM) plays a central role in coordinating national employment strategies and programmes, including those directly relevant to youth employment. The Ministry acts as a key intermediary between the education system, the labour market, and young job seekers. Its activities focus on creating favourable conditions for youth labour market integration and reducing youth unemployment.

The Ministry operates through territorial employment service offices at regional and local levels. These structures are directly responsible for implementing active labour market measures (ALMPs) on the ground. Their responsibilities include programme delivery, provision of employment services, support to unemployed individuals, engagement with employers, and delivery of career guidance services.

The MLSSM is responsible for financing and implementing active labour market measures. Funding is provided from the state budget, while programme implementation is carried out through regional and local employment service offices. These institutions implement measures such as VET, career guidance, public works programmes, self-employment support, and employment facilitation services. Monitoring and evaluation of active labour market measures are conducted by the Ministry based on administrative data.

The National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic plays a critical role in labour market governance by collecting and publishing data on employment, unemployment, and job creation. These data provide an evidence base for employment policy development and labour market planning.

An important role is also played by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic, which is responsible for general education and IVET, and the Ministry of Science, Higher Education and Innovation of the Kyrgyz Republic, which is responsible for higher education, research, and innovation policy.

The State Personnel Service of the Kyrgyz Republic plays a key role in developing the national human resource pipeline for public administration and civil service. Its responsibilities include improving the attractiveness of public service careers among young people and supporting career progression of young professionals. In 2024, the State Agency for Civil Service and Local Self-Government under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic developed a draft Presidential Decree aimed at attracting talented young professionals to the civil service and municipal administration.

In recent years, non-governmental organisations and international development partners have played an increasingly important role in supporting employment, particularly among young people, women, and vulnerable groups. These actors often work in partnership with government institutions, introducing innovative approaches and providing additional technical and financial resources. Their activities

complement government efforts by strengthening programme delivery and enhancing institutional capacity.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) implements projects aimed at improving working conditions, protecting workers' rights, and strengthening labour market participation. While the ILO does not directly implement active labour market measures in the Kyrgyz Republic, its activities contribute significantly to strengthening labour market governance and social protection systems.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) supports social entrepreneurship, women's employment, and self-employment, particularly in rural areas, thereby contributing to inclusive labour market development.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) contributes to improving employment outcomes by supporting the reintegration of returning labour migrants and introducing digital solutions in migration management. These initiatives enhance employment opportunities and improve the safety and sustainability of labour migration.

Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation implements projects focused on VET and skills development, particularly targeting rural youth, thereby improving employability and supporting local economic development.

The European Training Foundation (ETF), within the framework of the Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia (DARYA) project, supports skills development among young people in Central Asia, including the Kyrgyz Republic. The project focuses on improving employability through the development of flexible qualifications, digital and social skills, and the introduction of innovative learning tools, such as SCAFFOLD, a card-based pedagogical toolkit designed to support teachers in developing effective learning programmes.

The World Food Programme (WFP) contributes to reducing poverty and unemployment in the Kyrgyz Republic through temporary employment programmes, support to farmers, and skills development initiatives targeting low-income households. Through programmes such as the Social Contract and Food-for-Assets initiatives, vulnerable groups are provided with opportunities to develop skills, participate in infrastructure development, and establish income-generating activities.

The German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) has also played an important role in supporting labour market development in the Kyrgyz Republic, including through projects aimed at skills development, digitalisation of employment services, and youth employment support.

The Community Development and Investment Agency of the Kyrgyz Republic (ARIS) contributes to employment creation and self-employment development, particularly in rural areas, by supporting small-scale agricultural production and local economic initiatives through infrastructure projects and grant programmes.

In addition, business associations such as the Union of Entrepreneurs of Kyrgyzstan, the Association for Education Development, and local non-governmental organisations working with youth and migrants contribute to strengthening labour market development and employment opportunities.

These organisations complement the work of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration and contribute to the sustainable development of the labour market in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Legal and policy framework for active labour market measures

The legal framework governing active labour market policy in the Kyrgyz Republic includes several key laws and regulatory acts, among which the following are of particular importance:

- Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On Employment Promotion”. This law regulates employment promotion measures, including job placement support, vocational education and training (VET), social protection for unemployed persons, and labour market analysis and forecasting.
- Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On State Benefits” (revised version). This law provides the legal basis for delivering targeted social assistance to low-income households through the Social Contract mechanism. A social contract is defined as a formal agreement between a low-income household and the territorial employment authority, outlining mutual obligations aimed at supporting employment and income generation.
- Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On Youth” (No. 157, 4 August 2023). Article 9 of this law specifically addresses youth employment promotion, including labour market analysis and skills forecasting, provision of labour market information, development of employment support programmes for young professionals, promotion of youth participation in civil service, and support for entrepreneurship and start-ups.
- Presidential Decree “On the New State кадровая Policy” (29 January 2021). This decree aims to strengthen public sector human resource capacity by attracting qualified young professionals to public administration and local government institutions.
- Presidential Decree “On Approval of the State Strategy for Human Resource Development in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2023–2025” (2 February 2023). This decree highlights the importance of promoting youth entry into public service and introducing mentorship systems to support young professionals’ career development.
- Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic No. 397 (9 August 2023). This resolution approved the Model Regulation on Mentorship in Enterprises and Organisations, establishing formal mechanisms to support workplace-based learning and professional development.

In addition, the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration has developed several regulatory acts governing employment policy implementation, including:

- Regulation on the procedures, conditions, and duration of unemployment benefit payments.
- Regulation on vocational training, retraining, and upskilling of unemployed persons.
- Regulation on the organisation of paid public works programmes.
- Procedures for registering individuals as unemployed or job seekers.
- Regulation on career guidance for young people within the vocational education and training system.

Currently, the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration is developing the National Labour Market Development and Employment Promotion Programme of the Kyrgyz Republic “El Doölötü – Emgek” for the period up to 2030. Within this framework, employment is recognised as a central pillar of national economic and social policy.

In May 2025, the Demographic Policy Concept of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2040 was adopted. This policy framework places particular emphasis on labour market development and the effective utilisation of the demographic dividend. The Concept identifies key priorities, including the creation of conditions for sustainable population growth, the development of quality education and vocational skills, and the promotion of youth employment. Special attention is given to enhancing the competitiveness of young professionals and preventing the outflow of qualified human capital from the country. These measures are aimed at leveraging the country’s demographic potential to support sustainable economic development.

In June 2025, the National Development Programme of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2030 was adopted, which sets out strategic objectives for human capital development and the promotion of decent work.

Coordination mechanisms between stakeholders and digitalisation of employment services

Coordination among various stakeholders is ensured through the following mechanisms:

- Interagency working groups, established to implement specific programmes and projects, including youth employment initiatives. These working groups include representatives of various ministries, ensuring a coordinated and comprehensive approach to addressing employment challenges. They coordinate the development of new initiatives, analyse labour market needs, and prepare action plans for the implementation of strategic employment policy documents.
- Partnerships between government institutions, non-governmental organisations, business associations, and international organisations. Cooperation with business associations helps improve understanding of employers' skills requirements and facilitates the alignment of education and training programmes with labour market needs. One of the key partners of the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration is the Association of Young Entrepreneurs "JIA", which brings together more than 1,000 representatives of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The involvement of international organisations supports the transfer of good practices, capacity building, and mobilisation of financial resources for joint initiatives.
- The interagency electronic interaction system "Tunduk", which enables automated data exchange between state and municipal authorities. This system supports the provision of personalised and targeted employment services for job seekers.

As part of the digitalisation process, in 2018 the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration introduced the Labour Market Information System (LMIS) nationwide. The LMIS was developed to establish national databases covering job seekers, vacancies, employers, and available vocational training programmes. This system facilitates effective labour market intermediation and supports the employment of unemployed persons.

The system provides:

- Rapid access to vacancy information within the national database.
- Rapid identification of registered unemployed persons.
- Transparency in employment service operations.
- Access to labour market data disaggregated by region and district.
- Open access to aggregated labour market data.
- Electronic document management.
- Data exchange with other government information systems.

In addition to data collection and database management, the system enables direct provision of employment services to citizens, including:

- Career counselling services;
- Registration of job seekers;
- Referral to active and passive labour market measures.

The system also supports employer services, including:

- Employer registration;
- Vacancy registration;
- Development and maintenance of vacancy and job seeker databases at regional and national levels.

Functional architecture of the Labour Market Information System

The Labour Market Information System generates monthly statistical reports on labour market developments. It also enables ministry staff to monitor labour market trends in real time, both at national level and across individual regions and local administrative units.

The LMIS is integrated into the national employment portal “zanyatost.kg”, forming a unified digital employment ecosystem. The main objective of the portal is to connect job seekers with employers in need of qualified personnel. The system enables analysis of labour market trends, skills demand, and vacancy dynamics.

It should also be noted that within the framework of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the Unified Job Search System “Work Without Borders” was launched on 1 July 2021.¹⁶ This system is integrated into national employment systems of the Kyrgyz Republic, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and the Russian Federation. The system enables job seekers to search for employment opportunities across multiple member states, access vacancy and CV databases, and interact with employers through an integrated digital platform. Users are also provided with access to a wide range of public and private employment-related services.

4 ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET MEASURES FOR YOUTH

The labour market in the Kyrgyz Republic is undergoing a period of significant transformation, driven by both domestic socio-economic challenges and global labour market trends. Given the high share of young people in the population and the persistent challenges of unemployment—particularly among youth—employment policy has become a strategic priority for national development. The employment policy framework aims not only to support job creation but also to strengthen workforce skills, improve labour market adaptability, and enhance employability. Particular emphasis is placed on youth, who represent one of the most mobile but also one of the most vulnerable groups in the labour market. In this context, the government is working to establish a sustainable and inclusive employment support system that promotes not only job placement but also skills development, career progression, and the full socio-economic integration of young people.

The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration plays a central role in the design and implementation of active labour market measures (ALMPs), applying an integrated and coordinated policy approach. Through the Public Employment Service, the Ministry delivers a range of targeted programmes and services aimed at improving youth employability, facilitating labour market entry, and providing social protection to vulnerable groups. These measures are designed to respond to evolving labour market needs and strengthen the transition from education to employment.

A key component of this policy framework is the implementation of active labour market measures aimed at increasing employment participation and improving labour market outcomes, including for young people. These measures cover a broad range of interventions, including VET, internships, public employment programmes, employment mediation services, and entrepreneurship support.

Active labour market measures.

Active labour market measures in the Kyrgyz Republic are implemented for various target groups within the mandate of the MLSSM. While these measures are not exclusively youth-specific, young people constitute one of the primary beneficiary groups, alongside other vulnerable categories such as

¹⁶ <https://eec.eaeunion.org/news/proekt-rabota-bez-granic-startoval-v-eaes/>

unemployed persons, women, and persons with disabilities. This universal approach ensures broad access to employment services while allowing targeted interventions tailored to youth-specific needs.

Paid public works programmes. Paid public works programmes play an important role in supporting labour market entry, particularly for young people with limited work experience. These programmes provide temporary employment opportunities across a range of sectors, enabling participants to acquire practical skills, work experience, and improved employability. Between 2023 and 2024, a total of 26,582 unemployed individuals participated in public works programmes, of whom approximately 30% were young people aged 16–28.¹⁷

Employment mediation and employer engagement. The Ministry actively cooperates with employers and business associations to strengthen labour market intermediation and expand employment opportunities. This includes the development and maintenance of vacancy databases, support for employer recruitment, and the implementation of targeted employment quotas for vulnerable groups. In 2024, the number of analysed vacancies doubled compared to the previous year, reflecting strengthened labour market intermediation capacity.¹⁸

Vocational education and training and retraining programmes. Vocational training and reskilling programmes represent a core component of active labour market policy. The Ministry provides short-term training programmes aligned with labour market demand, aimed at improving skills relevance and employability. For example, the Vocational Training Centre in Bishkek successfully implemented IT training programmes, resulting in graduate employment in major telecommunications companies such as MegaCom and Beeline Kyrgyzstan.

Over the past two years, more than 14,000 young people have completed vocational training programmes across the country. Beneficiaries include individuals from low-income households, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups. These programmes contribute to strengthening human capital and facilitating labour market integration.

Career guidance and counselling services. Career guidance services play a central role in supporting informed career decision-making and improving labour market transitions. Public Employment Service centres provide personalised counselling, including job search support, CV preparation, and interview coaching. In 2024, KGS 8.2 million was allocated from the state budget to strengthen career guidance services, including the establishment of nine specialised career guidance centres nationwide. Training programmes are delivered through 105 educational institutions across 125 occupational fields. Career guidance centres and regional employment service offices provided counselling to 40,404 individuals in 2024, including 23,805 students and graduates and 16,599 unemployed individuals without formal qualifications.¹⁹ In the first months of 2025 alone, career guidance services reached 101,877 individuals.

Temporary employment programmes represent an important pathway for facilitating youth labour market entry and providing initial work experience. These programmes help young people develop foundational employability skills and gain exposure to real work environments. Since the beginning of 2025, temporary employment programmes have supported 10,394 individuals.

Job fairs and labour market matching initiatives. Job fairs serve as an important labour market activation mechanism, facilitating direct interaction between job seekers and employers. During the first half of 2025, 46 job fairs were organised in Bishkek, Osh, Jalal-Abad, and other regions, involving 12,885

¹⁷ Labour Market Information System (LMIS)

¹⁸ “The Ministry of Labour identified the most active regions in terms of employment.” Available at: <https://mlsp.gov.kg/ru/2025/08/01/v-mintruda-nazvali-samyie-aktivnye-regiony-v-sfere-trudoustrojstva/>

¹⁹ Ministry of Labour: More than 8,400 people provided with temporary employment. Available at: <https://mlsp.gov.kg/ru/2025/08/01/mintrud-bolee-84-tysyach-chelovek-obespecheny-vremennoj-rabotoj/>

participants and 825 employers offering 15,810 vacancies. For example, a major job fair held in Bishkek in April 2025 brought together approximately 40 employers, including large public enterprises such as Kyrgyz Temir Zholu (Kyrgyz Railways) and private ICT companies such as Nurtelecom and MegaCom. These employers offered approximately 5,000 vacancies across multiple sectors, demonstrating strong demand for skilled labour.

Support for vulnerable groups and returning migrants. Active labour market measures also focus on supporting vulnerable groups, including young people, persons with disabilities, and returning labour migrants. In 2024, more than 200 individuals benefited from the Labour Migrant Reintegration Project, receiving career counselling and retraining support to facilitate labour market reintegration.²⁰ In addition, the Мекеним 1+1 programme aims to support returning migrants in investing their financial capital in entrepreneurial activities, thereby promoting self-employment and local economic development.²¹

Youth internship programme. Since 2024, the Ministry has implemented a youth internship programme targeting graduates and unemployed young people, with support from the World Bank. The programme aims to strengthen employability by providing participants with practical work experience, professional skills, and exposure to real workplace environments. The programme covers 30 cities and districts nationwide, with a target of 3,000 participants. Interns receive financial compensation of KGS 8,600 per month, and the duration of internships may not exceed six months per participant per year.

Within the framework of this programme, young people are provided with opportunities to undertake internships in public and private sector organisations, with financial compensation provided at the level of the subsistence minimum. These internships play a critical role in strengthening the school-to-work transition by enabling participants to apply their professional knowledge in real workplace environments, acquire job-specific skills, and develop transversal competencies under the guidance of experienced mentors..

Initial programme results demonstrate promising outcomes. As of 2 June 2025, a total of 1,663 young people had been placed in internship positions, of whom 524 participants (31.5%) successfully transitioned into employment. This indicates that the programme serves as an effective labour market integration mechanism, bridging the gap between education and employment. It enables young people to acquire practical work experience in both public institutions and private sector enterprises, thereby strengthening their employability and labour market readiness. Particular attention is given to supporting youth from rural areas and socially vulnerable groups, who represent approximately 52% of programme participants.²² As the programme was launched relatively recently, its long-term impact and sustainability will require further monitoring and evaluation.

Development of digital skills and support for youth entrepreneurship. In the context of rapid digital transformation, strengthening digital skills has become a key policy priority for improving youth employability and supporting economic modernisation. Both public and private sector actors are actively expanding education and training opportunities in information and communication technologies (ICT), thereby contributing to the development of a digitally competent workforce.

With the support of the European Union, the European Neighborhood Council, and the Internet Society Kyrgyz Chapter (ISOC), the two-year “Sanarip Insan” project (2023–2024) was implemented to strengthen digital skills among young people and women, particularly in regional areas. The project contributed to the creation of 255 jobs and supported digital literacy development through targeted training programmes, digital platform training, and entrepreneurship support. The initiative also included a start-up competition involving more than 120 youth-led projects, covering a wide range of sectors,

²⁰ Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic (MLSSM).

²¹ “The Ministry of Labour discussed support for returning migrants.” Available at: <https://mlsp.gov.kg/ru/2024/07/12/v-mintruda-obsudili-podderzhku-vozvrashhayushhihsya-migrantov/>

²² Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic (MLSSM).

including agriculture, business services, and digital innovation. Ten start-ups received financial support totalling KGS 2.7 million. These interventions contribute to strengthening innovation ecosystems and fostering youth entrepreneurship, which plays an increasingly important role in the development of the digital economy in the Kyrgyz Republic.

The “Araketchil” project, implemented between 2021 and 2024, formed part of a broader programme aimed at strengthening youth employment and entrepreneurship in the southern regions of the Kyrgyz Republic, including Osh, Jalal-Abad, and Batken regions. The project was implemented within the framework of a cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration and the Aga Khan Foundation, with financial support from the Government of Japan and the World Bank.

Through this initiative, more than 3,500 young people received vocational training in labour market-relevant occupations. In addition, 35 young entrepreneurs received start-up grants totalling USD 92,000 to establish their own businesses. The programme also supported innovation through hackathons, during which 20 start-ups received financial support to develop their business concepts. Training activities also included the development of innovative production skills, such as felt production and agricultural product processing, thereby supporting local economic development and value chain diversification²³.

In August 2024, the Ministry formalised cooperation with the youth organisation Enactus Kyrgyzstan through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. This partnership aims to strengthen youth engagement in entrepreneurship, agriculture, and innovation-driven sectors, while promoting green skills and digital competencies. The cooperation includes employment facilitation, entrepreneurship development, support for youth self-employment, and implementation of joint innovation projects aimed at strengthening career guidance and employability support systems.

The Social Contract Programme, implemented by the Ministry since 2022, also targets young people from socially vulnerable population groups. To date, the programme has supported 32,044 households, with young people representing a significant share of beneficiaries. Youth participants are actively engaged in entrepreneurial activities and receive financial and institutional support to launch and develop their own business initiatives. These business activities are typically concentrated in sectors such as livestock production, aquaculture, crop farming, tourism, services, trade, and food services, among others.

In this context, the development of a sustainable employment support infrastructure and the diversification of support programmes oriented towards long-term employability outcomes have become key priorities of national employment policy. This requires not only short-term interventions aimed at reducing unemployment but also a comprehensive analysis of structural labour market imbalances, including skills mismatches between labour supply and demand. Strengthened cooperation between government institutions, education and training providers, and employers plays a critical role in improving labour market responsiveness. Such cooperation enhances labour market forecasting capacity and supports the alignment of VET systems with evolving labour market needs. At the same time, modern labour market governance increasingly emphasises individualised service delivery, tailored to the specific needs of different beneficiary groups, including young people, women, persons with disabilities, unemployed individuals, and returning labour migrants. This person-centred approach

²³ More than 3,500 young citizens trained in in-demand professions and prepared for the labour market under the “Araketchil” project. Available at: <https://mlsp.gov.kg/ru/2022/12/26/bole-35-tys-molodyh-grazhdan-obucheny-vostrebovannym-professiyam-i-podgotovleny-k-rynku-truda-v-ramkah-proekta-araketchil/>

contributes to the development of a more flexible, inclusive, and resilient labour market system in the Kyrgyz Republic, capable of responding effectively to current and future socio-economic challenges.

5 EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT OF ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET MEASURES

According to data from the Labour Market Information System (LMIS), the number of individuals seeking employment services between 2020 and 2024 ranged from 44,000 to 55,000 annually. Following an increase in 2021–2022, a gradual decline in the number of registered job seekers has been observed (see Table 2).

	2020			2021			2022			2023			2024		
	Total	including women	youth aged 16–28	Total	including women	youth aged 16–28	Total	including women	youth aged 16–28	Total	including women	youth aged 16–28	Total	including women	youth aged 16–28
Applied for employment services	46058	21755	14573	50444	23858	15871	54673	25536	16320	45811	21978	13860	44076	21947	23269
Registered as officially unemployed	31566	15406	10407	34229	16676	11525	38961	18229	12371	32326	15562	10870	28130	14235	16648
Received counselling services	83995	41027	20265	103840	50175	22903	110732	52955	23296	112140	54120	23069	110656	54939	55334
Referred to:	22427	10553	6870	22902	10871	6662	22602	11405	6005	21024	11078	5018	19976	10971	10016
public works programmes	15318	6142	3710	15393	6140	3461	15289	6531	3221	14172	6398	2526	12410	5766	5277
vocational training programmes	7109	4411	3160	7509	4731	3201	7313	4874	2784	6852	4680	2492	7566	5205	4739
Total number employed: including:	15037	8432	3885	15574	8483	4004	15798	9143	3126	16703	9546	3244	17983	10754	8741
employment through registered vacancies	14931	8375	3869	15543	8457	3995	15817	9157	3124	16718	9554	3252	17961	10722	8724
employment following vocational training	3260	2122	1251	3994	2673	1583	3363	2275	1152	3474	2409	1046	4154	3041	2476
Unemployment benefits granted	435	247	39	360	220	36	249	129	16	187	113	8	179	112	42
Recipients of unemployment benefits	266	140	19	170	97	9	111	58	4	78	51	3	89	58	14
Registered with the Public Employment Service, including:	98746	44073	29294	99341	43367	28004	98784	42369	27828	91572	39196	25854	70667	30988	41940
officially unemployed	76652	35772	23469	75970	34302	22059	74683	33074	21986	67603	29800	20473	50854	22985	31634
Vacancies registered	19572			20639			20184			23521			27941		

Table 2. Active labour market measures implemented by the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic (2020–2024)

As shown in Table 2, active labour market measures demonstrated positive trends over the period 2020–2024, particularly in relation to vulnerable groups, including youth and women. The number of individuals participating in public works programmes ranged between 12,400 and 15,300 annually. In 2024, a total of 12,410 individuals were referred to public works programmes, including 5,277 young people and 5,766 women. This indicates that these programmes play an important role in supporting labour market integration among key target groups.

VET programmes also demonstrate a gradual expansion in coverage. The number of participants increased from 7,109 in 2020 to 7,566 in 2024, including 4,739 young people and 5,205 women. This trend reflects increased access to skills development opportunities and improved alignment with labour market demand.

Employment outcomes improved significantly during the reporting period. The total number of individuals placed in employment increased from 15,037 in 2020 to 17,983 in 2024, representing an increase of nearly 20%. The increase was particularly pronounced among young people, with the number of employed youth rising from 3,885 to 8,741—more than doubling during the period. Employment among women also increased, from 8,432 to 10,754. These results indicate improved effectiveness and coverage of active labour market measures.

However, unemployment benefit coverage remains extremely limited. In 2024, unemployment benefits were granted to only 179 individuals, including 42 young people and 112 women, while only 89 individuals were actively receiving benefits. This highlights the need to review eligibility criteria, expand benefit coverage, and improve awareness of available social protection measures.

Despite the overall decline in the number of registered job seekers and officially unemployed individuals, the number of young job seekers increased by more than 59%, from 14,573 in 2020 to 23,269 in 2024. This trend reflects growing labour market pressures affecting youth. At the same time, increased participation of young people in public works programmes, vocational training, and employment placements represents a positive development. Nevertheless, youth vulnerability in the labour market remains significant, requiring targeted and flexible policy interventions.

The analysis indicates that the most effective interventions are integrated programmes combining vocational training, career counselling, motivation support, practical workplace-based learning, and employer engagement through internships and employment placement mechanisms.

Public Employment Service institutions play a central role in delivering career guidance, facilitating job matching, and supporting programme participants. However, their operational capacity remains constrained, particularly in rural and remote areas, where access to employment services is limited.

Temporary employment programmes, including paid public works, contribute to reducing youth unemployment in the short term. However, such programmes primarily provide temporary employment and have limited impact on long-term employability and career progression.

In contrast, youth entrepreneurship support programmes, including the Social Contract Programme, demonstrate strong potential to promote self-employment, support small business development, and contribute to job creation among young people.

The effectiveness of these programmes depends on the availability of comprehensive support measures, including entrepreneurship training, financial literacy education, and business advisory services.

One of the key achievements has been the expansion of access to vocational education and training programmes delivered through licensed training providers. Training programmes are aligned with labour market demand, based on labour market analysis and participant preferences. Priority sectors include:

- construction,
- information and communication technologies (ICT),
- services,
- agriculture,
- garment production and related industries.

According to training providers, employment rates following completion of vocational training programmes reach between 60% and 70%, demonstrating the strong labour market relevance and effectiveness of these programmes.

Career guidance activities, delivered through schools, vocational education institutions, and Public Employment Service centres, play an important role in supporting informed career decision-making and improving school-to-work transitions. Career guidance centres serve as key platforms for strengthening career motivation and facilitating early labour market engagement among young people.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that active labour market measures in the Kyrgyz Republic contribute positively to improving youth employment outcomes. Vocational training, internships, and entrepreneurship support programmes have demonstrated measurable impact, particularly when implemented within an integrated and coordinated policy framework. However, the full potential of these measures has not yet been fully realised, highlighting the need for continued policy development, strengthened institutional capacity, and expanded programme coverage.

Table 3. Key strengths and weaknesses of existing active labour market measures

Strengths:	
Accessibility and free provision of services.	All employment support services are provided free of charge, ensuring broad accessibility for the population and reducing financial barriers to participation.
Coverage of diverse target groups.	Active labour market programmes target a wide range of beneficiary groups, including young people, women, persons with disabilities, and returning labour migrants. This inclusive approach contributes to strengthening equal access to employment opportunities and promoting labour market inclusion.
Diversity of programme interventions.	A broad range of active labour market interventions is available, including VET, internships, career guidance services, and self-employment support. This diversified programme portfolio enables the provision of tailored support aligned with different labour market needs.
Integration with the private sector.	Internship programmes and employment placement initiatives are implemented in cooperation with employers, strengthening the relevance of interventions and improving employment outcomes for young people. Employer engagement enhances the effectiveness of school-to-work transition mechanisms.
Flexibility and adaptability of policy measures.	Active labour market measures are designed with a high degree of flexibility, allowing services to be adapted to the specific needs and profiles of job seekers. Different intervention formats and levels of engagement are applied depending on individual employability barriers, supporting a person-centred approach to employment service delivery.
Weaknesses:	

Uneven geographical distribution of programmes.	Access to employment support programmes varies significantly across regions, with rural and remote areas experiencing limited access to services.
Limited coverage.	Despite the availability of various programmes, overall coverage remains limited relative to the number of individuals requiring support. This constraint is linked to limited institutional capacity, insufficient infrastructure, and human resource constraints within employment service delivery systems.
Limited public awareness.	Awareness among citizens of employment support services provided by the Ministry remains insufficient, limiting programme uptake and reducing the overall impact of active labour market interventions.
Short-term nature of programme.	The lack of sustained post-programme support following participation in internships or vocational training represents a key structural challenge. Insufficient follow-up support reduces the sustainability of employment outcomes and increases the risk of participants returning to unemployment, particularly among vulnerable groups, including young people.

6 CHALLENGES AND GAPS

Shortcomings in the design and implementation of measures

1. Limited scope and diversity of active labour market measures. The current portfolio of active labour market measures remains limited, constraining more effective labour market participation and integration. Existing interventions primarily focus on basic measures, such as temporary employment and paid public works programmes. There is a need to develop more flexible and innovative approaches, including targeted reskilling and upskilling programmes aligned with specific labour market needs and sectoral skills demand.
2. Lack of an integrated and coherent service delivery model. Active labour market measures are often implemented as standalone interventions—such as training, internships, or counselling—without a structured and coordinated pathway covering the full employment support cycle. This includes needs assessment, skills development, employment placement, and post-placement support. For example, VET and internship programmes are not systematically complemented by post-programme support, including employment mediation, workplace integration assistance, and mentoring. This limits the sustainability of employment outcomes and reduces long-term employability.
3. Insufficient individualisation of employment support services. Employment services lack personalised employment pathways based on systematic assessment of individual skills, competencies, and labour market barriers. This gap is particularly relevant for vulnerable groups, including young people, women with childcare responsibilities, persons with disabilities, and labour migrants.
4. Limited programme coverage and unequal access to services. The actual coverage of active labour market programmes remains limited relative to the number of potential beneficiaries. In addition, access to employment services is constrained in rural and remote areas, where institutional

capacity, infrastructure, and qualified personnel remain insufficient to ensure effective service delivery.

5. Low levels of awareness of employment support services. Many citizens, particularly young people and vulnerable groups, remain insufficiently informed about available employment support services. This reduces participation rates and limits the overall effectiveness and reach of active labour market measures.
6. Weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation systems. There is a lack of regular independent evaluation of active labour market programmes. Without systematic monitoring, impact assessment, and feedback mechanisms, it is difficult to improve programme design, scale successful interventions, or discontinue ineffective measures.
7. Insufficient digitalisation of employment services. The modernisation of employment services requires the development of an integrated digital employment service platform enabling:
 - registration of unemployed persons and job seekers.
 - automated matching of job seekers' profiles with vacancies.
 - online access to career guidance, training programmes, internships, and counselling services.
 - provision of online training programmes aligned with labour market demand.
8. Limited engagement of employers and the private sector. Cooperation with employers and private sector stakeholders remains insufficiently institutionalised. Internship programmes and vocational training initiatives are not consistently developed in close partnership with employers, which reduces their relevance to labour market needs and limits employment outcomes.

Barriers to participation in active labour market measures

Gender-related barriers. Gender disparities remain a significant constraint to youth labour market participation. Young women face additional barriers related to cultural and social norms, including conservative religious and cultural expectations, which may limit their participation in employment and training programmes. Addressing these barriers requires targeted measures to promote gender equality, labour market inclusion, and equal access to employment opportunities.

Geographical disparities. Employment opportunities and programme availability remain concentrated in Bishkek and other major urban centres, while young people in rural and remote areas have limited access to active labour market measures and employment services.

Limited and fragmented financing of active labour market programmes. Public funding allocated to active labour market measures remains limited, affecting programme scale, quality, and attractiveness. Insufficient funding constrains the provision of high-quality training, career guidance, and employment support services. A significant share of programme funding is dependent on international donor support, which creates sustainability risks and exposes employment policy implementation to external funding fluctuations.

Institutional capacity constraints. Public Employment Service institutions, particularly at regional and local levels, face significant human resource constraints. The expansion of active labour market programmes, combined with insufficient staffing levels, has increased the workload of employment service personnel. This challenge is particularly acute in district-level employment offices, where limited institutional capacity affects programme implementation effectiveness and service quality.

Weak inter-institutional coordination. Coordination between government institutions, education and training providers, employers, and business associations remains limited. Many programmes are

implemented as pilot initiatives or donor-funded projects rather than as part of a fully integrated national employment support system.

Fragmented system for occupational standards and qualification development. The fragmented nature of the professional standards system limits the development of a coherent framework for defining occupational and qualification requirements. Employer participation in the development of occupational standards remains inconsistent and, in some cases, largely formal. This reduces the labour market relevance and practical applicability of standards.

7 CONCLUSION

In the Kyrgyz Republic, young people constitute a significant share of the population, and labour market conditions affecting this group remain one of the key socio-economic challenges. Overall, the analysis of youth labour market developments indicates that young people face substantial structural barriers, including relatively high levels of youth unemployment, skills mismatches between education outcomes and labour market requirements, and limited access to high-quality vocational education and training.

The system of active labour market measures covers a wide range of interventions, including employment services, vocational training programmes, employment promotion measures, and entrepreneurship support initiatives. However, despite positive examples and measurable progress, the scale and effectiveness of these measures remain insufficient to address youth employment challenges in a comprehensive and systemic manner.

Key barriers include weak coordination between relevant institutions, limited coverage of targeted programmes, insufficient financial sustainability of interventions, and unequal access to employment services, particularly for vulnerable youth groups, including rural residents and young women. Limited public funding poses additional risks to the sustainability of employment and skills development programmes and may reduce incentives for training providers to expand and improve their provision.

To enhance the effectiveness of employment policy, it is essential to strengthen coordination among stakeholders, expand digital infrastructure and employment services, scale up vocational education and training and internship programmes, and establish sustainable mechanisms to support youth entrepreneurship.

Further efforts are required to strengthen monitoring and evaluation systems, promote inclusive policy approaches, and address gender and regional disparities in access to labour market opportunities. Only a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated policy approach will enable sustainable labour market development and support the effective integration of young people into the economic life of the country.

Final recommendations for strengthening active labour market measures to support youth employment:

1. Strengthening institutional coordination - establish inter-institutional coordination platforms involving ministries, education and training providers, employers, and business associations to support strategic planning and implementation of youth employment policies.
2. Expanding programme coverage and accessibility - improve awareness of employment support services, particularly among young people in rural areas, and expand digital and mobile employment services to ensure equitable access to active labour market measures.
3. Strengthening post-programme support mechanisms - develop structured follow-up support for young people after completion of vocational training and internships, including mentoring, career counselling, and employment mediation services, to improve sustainable employment outcomes

4. Vocational education and training programmes should be aligned with regional economic development priorities to address labour market demand and contribute to balanced territorial development.
5. Strengthening private sector engagement - enhance employer participation in the design and implementation of vocational education and training programmes, internships, and employment initiatives, and introduce incentives to encourage youth employment.
6. Promoting women's employment and entrepreneurship - develop targeted policy interventions to address gender-specific labour market barriers and strengthen support for women's employment and entrepreneurship, ensuring equal access to labour market opportunities.
7. Enhancing financial sustainability of programmes - increase domestic public investment in active labour market measures and develop mechanisms to mobilise private sector investment and social financing instruments to ensure programme sustainability.
8. Strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems - establish systematic monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess programme effectiveness, inform policy adjustments, and support the scaling-up of successful interventions.
9. Formalisation of new forms of employment. The formalisation of emerging forms of employment, including platform work, freelance work, and other non-standard forms of employment, represents an increasingly important policy priority. This is essential to ensure adequate labour rights protection, social security coverage, and inclusion within the formal regulatory framework.
10. Facilitating the transition from informal to formal employment. Promoting the transition of workers from informal to formal employment is critical, particularly in sectors such as construction, services, garment production, and agriculture, where a significant share of young people and women are engaged without formal employment contracts, limiting their access to social protection and reducing fiscal revenues.
11. Introducing modern and innovative approaches to vocational training and retraining. Modernising vocational education and training systems requires the adoption of innovative and flexible learning approaches, including digital learning platforms, modular training programmes, micro-credentials with formal certification, and the expansion of dual education and training systems. The use of virtual and augmented reality technologies can further enhance practical skills development, particularly in technical and healthcare sectors. In addition, personalised learning pathways supported by artificial intelligence and mentoring systems can improve learning outcomes and strengthen employability. These approaches are particularly relevant for unemployed persons, labour migrants, persons with disabilities, young people, and women, and should be aligned with labour market demand.
12. Digitalisation and automation of employment services and labour market processes. The accelerated digitalisation of employment services is essential to improve efficiency, accessibility, and transparency. This includes automation of recruitment processes, digital job matching systems, electronic employment records, and online employment service platforms for both job seekers and employers. Strengthening digital employment service ecosystems will improve labour market governance and enhance the effectiveness of employment policy implementation.

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