

# Iraq Knowledge Network

## LABOUR FORCE FACTSHEET

December 2011

### INTRODUCTION:

The Iraq Knowledge Network (IKN) survey is part of a Socio-Economic Monitoring System being developed by the Iraqi Ministry of Planning to advance evidence-based planning and improve services provided to Iraqi citizens. The IKN survey data was collected in the first quarter of 2011 from 28,875 Iraqi households. The sample was designed to provide statistics at the district and governorate levels and nationally by urban and rural areas. This factsheet is a brief analysis of labour force data from the IKN.

### Population

The estimated population size is 31.7 million people. 18.7 million (59%) are aged 15 and above. Females comprise 50 percent of the population. Forty-one percent of the Iraqi population is below the age of 15. The Iraqi age structure shows a young population similar to other Arab countries. The pyramidal shape reveals high dependency rates and the extent to which individuals in the labour force support individuals outside it. For every 100 individuals in the labour force (aged 15-64 years), 75 individuals outside it are supported. The average Iraqi household size is 6.4. Rural

households are larger with an average size of 7.4 while in urban areas the average household has six members.

### Education

Education is a key element of human capital and a basic factor in promoting individual productivity. 11 percent of Iraqis have at least a diploma. Half the population has primary or intermediate education and 38 percent have no education. Increasing the population's human capital and productivity is therefore a considerable challenge for policymakers.

### Labour Force Participation

Labour Force Participation (Economically Active Population) Labour force participation refers to the population aged 15 years and above who are working or looking for a work. Forty two percent (7.9 million) of Iraqis is in the labour force (72% of males and 13% of females). Iraqis aged 35-44 years are more likely to be in the labour force (57%) as are those with a higher education. Sixty eight percent of females holding at least a diploma is in the labour force compared to just eight percent of females with less than a diploma. Only one in six persons in the labour force is female.

There are significant differences in labour force participation rates between governorates. Anbar, Najaf and Wassit governorates have the highest rates of labour force participation (47-48%). The lowest labour force participation rates are in Dahuk (37%), Thi-Qar (39%), and Muthanna (40%) governorates.

Labour force participation increases from 42 to 44 percent when using the relaxed definition, which includes individuals who are unemployed and not looking for work. The labour force participation rate marginally increases from 72 to 73 percent for males and from 13 to 15 percent for females.

### Unemployment

Unemployed persons are those individuals who did not work at all during the reference period (the seven days preceding the interview), who were not absent from a job and were available for work and actively seeking a job during the reference week.

The unemployment rate is eight percent nationally (7% of active males and 13% of active females): this means that 653,000 people are unemployed, of which 496,000 are male and 157,000 are female. Youth (15-24 years) unemployment is high at 18 percent (27% of females, 17% of males) and higher in urban areas compared with rural. Of particular concern is the fact that unemployment is higher among youth with higher education.

Thi-Qar (17%), Anbar (16%) and Diyala (14%) governorates have the highest unemployment rates. Kirkuk (2%), Erbil (4%) and Ninewa (5%) governorates have the lowest. Female unemployment rates are highest in Diyala (30%) Kerbala and Thi-Qar (18%), and Sulaymaniya

(17%) governorates. The lowest are in Kirkuk (3%) and Salah Al-Din (4%). Male unemployment rates are the highest in Anbar (17%), Thi-Qar (16%) and Diyala (11%) governorates. The lowest are in the governorates of Kirkuk (2%) and Erbil (3%) governorates.

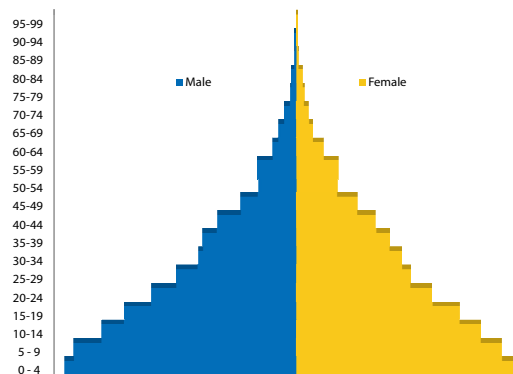
Using the relaxed definition of unemployment, the unemployment rate increases to 11 percent. Among females, the relaxed unemployment rate is 21 percent and nine percent among males.

### Employed persons

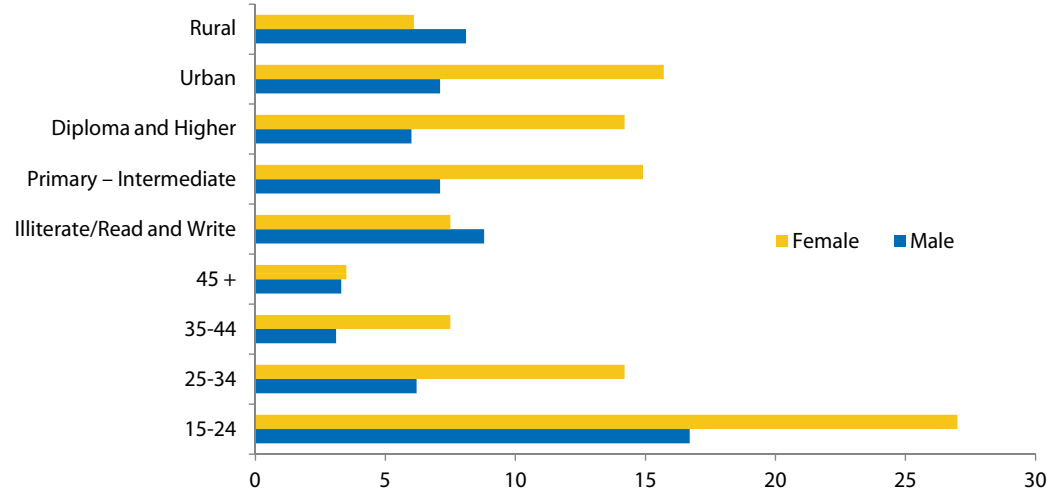
Persons aged 15 years and over who were at work at least one hour during the reference week, or who were not at work during the reference week (the seven days preceding the interview), but held a job or owned business from which they were temporarily absent (because of illness, vacation, temporarily stoppage, or any other reason). The total number of employees in Iraq is 7.3 million. Females comprise 15 percent of all workers.

Of all those that are employed, nine percent are

### Iraq Population Pyramidal Shape



### Unemployment Rate by gender and other indicators



underemployed. Underemployment is defined as those who work a number of hours that are less than 35 hours a week or who intend to change their current job.

Education generally decreases the likelihood of being underemployed. The underemployment rate among those with at least a diploma is nine percent while for those with no education it is 20 percent. The underemployed rate among female workers is four percent compared with 18 percent among employed males.

The government and public sector employs 40 percent of all employed and the remainder work in the private sector. The public and government sector employs 45 percent of all employed in urban areas and 28 percent in rural areas. One in five jobs in the public sector is occupied by a female. Of all working females, 60 percent are employed in the government and public sector.

More than half of employed persons are unprotected workers. Unprotected work is that

which is expected to end in the event that there is a crisis or a change in the job market. Protected work, by contrast, is work with a contract and which has a pension and annual leave. Most employed females work in agriculture and the service sector, while male workers are mainly employed in activities related to defense, and in services such as building and construction. Slightly more than half of all employees have privileges such as paid annual and paid sick leave, retirement benefits and end of service entitlements.

The government and public sectors provide 62 percent of all waged employees. Kirkuk, Diyala, Najaf and Basrah governorates have the highest rates of government and public employment (around 70% of wage employees. Sulaymaniyah has the lowest rate of government and public sector employment (47%).

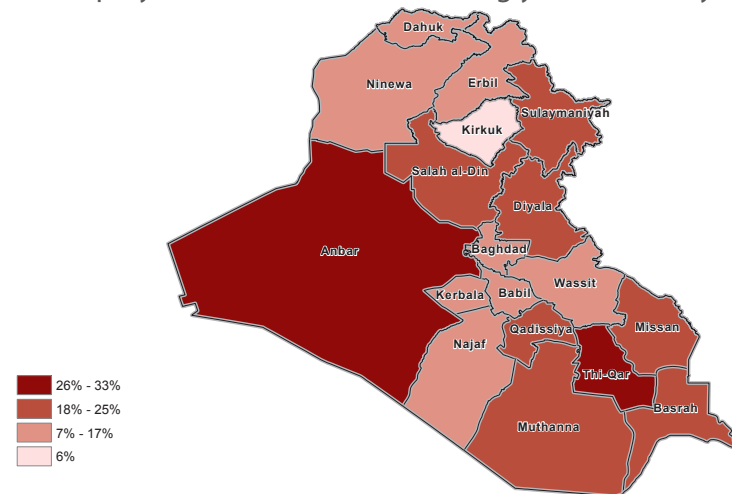
## Economically inactive population

57 percent of the population aged 15 years and above is not economically active. The main

reason for not working or for not wanting to work among males is education (53%) old age (13%) and disability and sickness (7%) whereas among

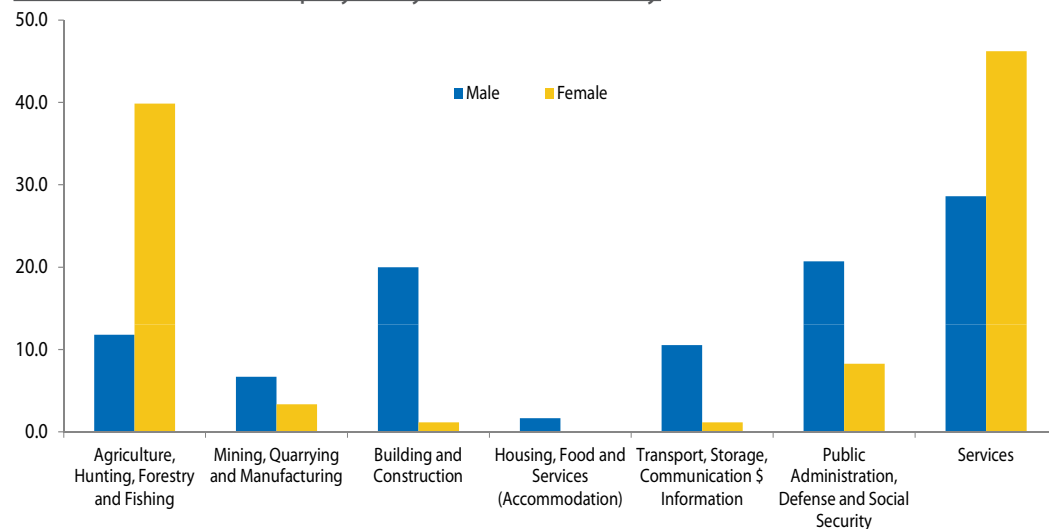
females, housewifery (78%) is the main reason for not being economically active.

## Unemployment rate (relaxed) among youth (15-29 yrs)

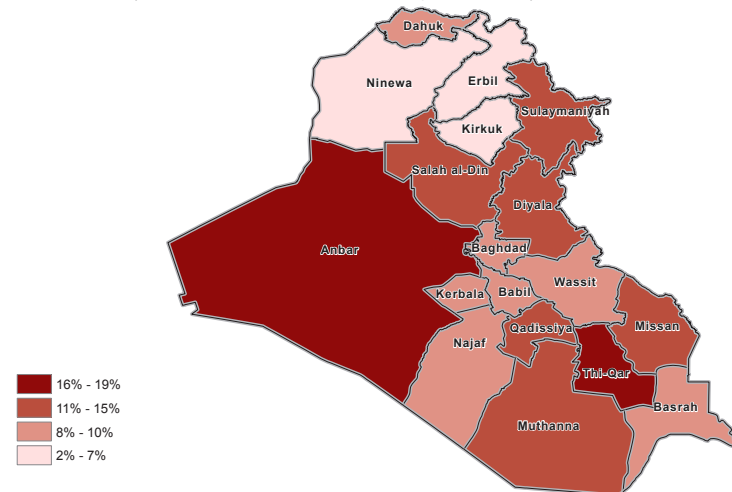


Source: IKN 2011

## Distribution of the employed by economic activity



## Unemployment rate (relaxed) aged 15+ yrs



Source: IKN 2011