

Global Unemployment : 225+ Million Persons Without Jobs

Global employment in a shambles


The global employment situation keeps deteriorating at an alarming speed. Since the 2008 crisis, another 25 million persons are actively seeking a job that they cannot find. ILO (International Labor Organization) estimates at 202 million the number of unemployed worldwide in 2013 — equivalent to 125% of the total US labor force. The reality is even uglier. ILO has been trying to track the number of the so-called discouraged workers — people without a job and available for work but who gave up all hopes and resigned themselves to remain unemployed. The estimate for 2013 is a minimum of 23 million, thus pushing the total number of unemployed plus discouraged job seekers up to more than 225 million (Fig.1).

Gender employment gap

The problem is compounded by a gender issue, since female workers are at a disadvantage, with an unemployment rate of 6.4%, versus 5.7% for males (Table 1). Notwithstanding all initiatives taken with a view to fill the job gap between genders, female unemployment keeps growing at the average annual rate of 1.21% against the slower rate of 1.09% for males.

Paradoxically, while working-age cohorts, driven by demographic growth, swell at the average annual rate of 1.5%, and while jobs evaporate at an accelerated pace as a result of productivity gains and of a lengthy economic downturn, most policy makers became enamored of a fashionable regulatory trend by which the working age ceiling is moved up to 65 and 70 years of age, and work schedules are extended by increasing both the number of working hours per week, and the number of working days per year. Inevitably, more and more hands become available to fill fewer and fewer jobs.

Can unemployment be cured?

Unemployment is a social cancer that destroys the sense of belongingness and group cohesiveness, wipes out self-esteem and dignity, dissolves individual resolve and competences, and ultimately throws people into misery. The result is an impoverished society in the present, and a shattered workforce unable to perform in the future. This result fits nobody's best interests. To make the case worse, unemployment seems likely to become an incurable malady. 

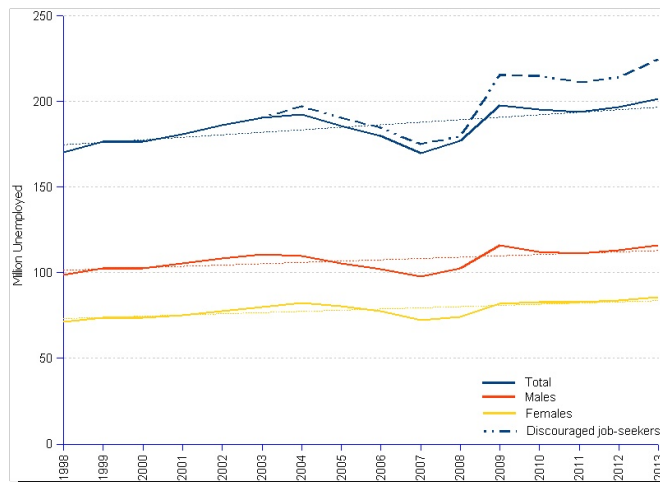


Fig.1: Global unemployment by gender, 1998 - 2013.

Youth : the employment underdogs

Against the dark background of growing global unemployment, young people continue to be particularly affected by the lack of jobs (Fig.2). In total, 74.5 million young people were unemployed in 2013, an increase of almost 1 million over the previous year. There were 37.1 million fewer young people in employment in 2013 than in 2007, while the global youth population declined by only 8.1 million over the same period.

The global youth unemployment rate has reached close to 13% which is almost three times as high as the adult unemployment rate. Indeed, the youth-to-adult unemployment ratio has reached a historical peak. The global youth unemployment rate is expected to edge up to 13.2% in 2014.


Neither in employment, nor in education

In the countries for which information exists, the proportion of young people neither in

employment, nor in education or training (NEET) has continued its upward trend. In certain countries, almost one-quarter of young people aged 15 to 29 are now NEET. In such crisis-stricken countries as Ireland and Spain, the NEET rate rose by more than 9.4 and 8.7 percentage points respectively since 2007. In both countries, the NEET rate is over 20%.

A serious social threat

Youth unemployment is a major economic hazard because it may hugely impact the workforce replacement process on which economic progress rests. It is also a serious social threat, because it is unreasonable to expect from young people that they will

keep their calm, levelheadedness and forbearance when faced to a foreseeable, clogged future. 

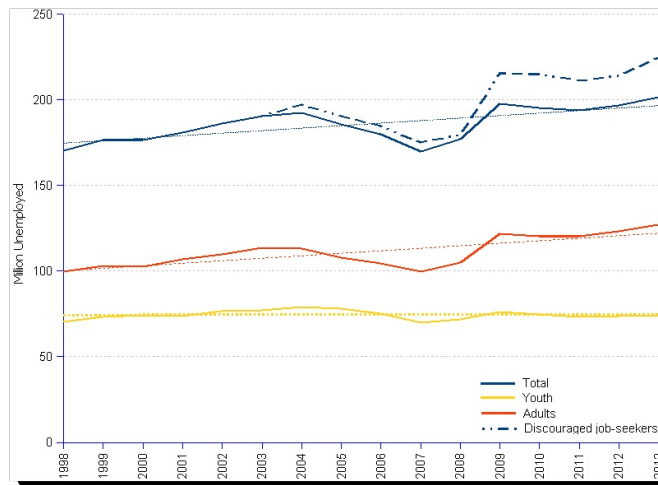


Fig.2: Global unemployment by age class, 1998-2013.

References:

- ILO - International Labor Organization, ILOSTAT Database.
- Global Employment Trends 2014, International Labour Organization 2014.

Sources:

http://stats.areppim.com/stats/stats_unempl_98x13.htm.

Unemployment by gender 1998 - 2013 (million and percent)											
Year	Unemployed									Discouraged Job-seekers ¹	
	Total			Males			Females				
	Active Population	Unemployed	Percent	Active Population	Unemployed	Percent	Active Population	Unemployed	Percent	Total million	Percent ²
1998	2,683	170.3	6.3%	1,614	98.8	6.1%	1,069	71.5	6.7%		
1999	2,735	176.5	6.5%	1,644	102.5	6.2%	1,091	73.9	6.8%		
2000	2,778	176.7	6.4%	1,669	102.7	6.2%	1,109	74	6.7%		
2001	2,823	180.8	6.4%	1,694	105.7	6.2%	1,129	75.1	6.7%		
2002	2,871	186.4	6.5%	1,720	108.6	6.3%	1,151	77.8	6.8%		
2003	2,921	190.8	6.5%	1,749	111	6.3%	1,173	79.8	6.8%		
2004	2,976	192.5	6.5%	1,780	109.9	6.2%	1,196	82.6	6.9%	4.6	0.2%
2005	3,032	186	6.1%	1,811	105.4	5.8%	1,220	80.5	6.6%	4.7	0.2%
2006	3,073	179.8	5.9%	1,837	102.2	5.6%	1,235	77.6	6.3%	4.9	0.2%
2007	3,113	170	5.5%	1,863	97.7	5.2%	1,250	72.2	5.8%	5.2	0.2%
2008	3,151	177	5.6%	1,889	102.5	5.4%	1,262	74.5	5.9%	2.6	0.1%
2009	3,187	197.9	6.2%	1,913	116.1	6.1%	1,274	81.8	6.4%	17.7	0.6%
2010	3,225	195.2	6.1%	1,938	112.3	5.8%	1,287	82.9	6.4%	19.9	0.6%
2011	3,271	193.9	5.9%	1,966	111.1	5.7%	1,305	82.9	6.4%	17.4	0.5%
2012	3,317	196.9	5.9%	1,994	113.2	5.7%	1,323	83.7	6.3%	17.3	0.5%
2013	3,362	201.8	6.0%	2,022	116.2	5.7%	1,340	85.6	6.4%	23	0.7%
Average annual growth	1.5%	1.1%		1.5%	1.1%		1.5%	1.2%		19.5%	

¹ ILO data for discouraged job-seekers is incomplete, covering a limited and varying number of countries. Real numbers are likely far greater.

² Discouraged job-seekers as percent of total active population.

Table 1: Unemployment by gender, 1998-2013.

Unemployment by age 1998 - 2013 (million and percent)											
Year	Unemployed									Discouraged Job-seekers ¹	
	Total			Youth			Adults				
	Active Population	Unemployed	Percent	Active Population	Unemployed	Percent	Active Population	Unemployed	Percent	Total million	Percent ²
1998	2,683	170.3	6.3%	567	70.6	12.4%	2,116	99.7	4.7%		
1999	2,735	176.5	6.5%	572	73.3	12.8%	2,163	103.1	4.8%		
2000	2,778	176.7	6.4%	572	74.2	13.0%	2,206	102.5	4.6%		
2001	2,823	180.8	6.4%	576	74	12.8%	2,247	106.8	4.8%		
2002	2,871	186.4	6.5%	583	76.6	13.1%	2,288	109.8	4.8%		
2003	2,921	190.8	6.5%	590	77.1	13.1%	2,331	113.7	4.9%		
2004	2,976	192.5	6.5%	600	79.2	13.2%	2,376	113.3	4.8%	4.6	0.2%
2005	3,032	186	6.1%	608	78	12.8%	2,423	108	4.5%	4.7	0.2%
2006	3,073	179.8	5.9%	608	75.2	12.4%	2,464	104.6	4.2%	4.9	0.2%
2007	3,113	170	5.5%	606	70.1	11.6%	2,507	99.9	4.0%	5.2	0.2%
2008	3,151	177	5.6%	602	71.8	11.9%	2,549	105.2	4.1%	2.6	0.1%
2009	3,187	197.9	6.2%	597	76	12.7%	2,590	121.9	4.7%	17.7	0.6%
2010	3,225	195.2	6.1%	591	74.9	12.7%	2,634	120.3	4.6%	19.9	0.6%
2011	3,271	193.9	5.9%	590	73.5	12.5%	2,681	120.5	4.5%	17.4	0.5%
2012	3,317	196.9	5.9%	588	73.8	12.6%	2,729	123.2	4.5%	17.3	0.5%
2013	3,362	201.8	6.0%	584	74.5	12.8%	2,778	127.3	4.6%	23	0.7%
Average annual growth	1.5%	1.1%		0.2%	0.4%		1.8%	1.6%		19.5%	

¹ ILO data for discouraged job-seekers is incomplete, covering a limited and varying number of countries. Real numbers are likely far greater.

² Discouraged job-seekers as percent of total active population.

Table 2: Unemployment by age, 1998-2013.