



LABOUR FORCE SURVEY REPORT, MALAYSIA, 2017



Department of Statistics Malaysia
<https://www.dosm.gov.my>



@StatsMalaysia

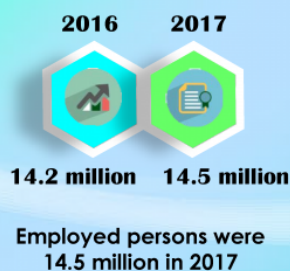
PRINCIPAL STATISTICS OF LABOUR FORCE, MALAYSIA, 2017

Labour force **increased 2.0 per cent** in 2017 at 15.0 million persons as compared to 2016



LABOUR FORCE

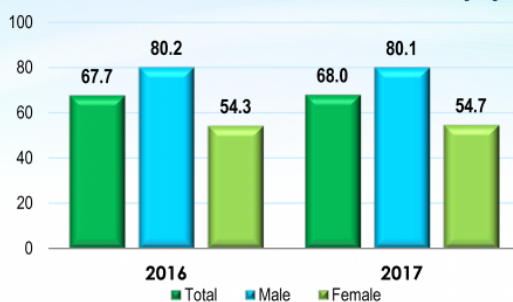
EMPLOYED



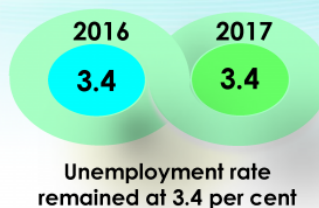
UNEMPLOYED



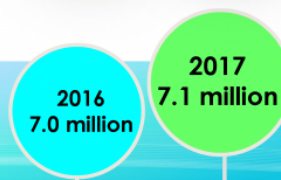
LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE (%)



UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (%)



In 2017, 7.1 million persons or 32.0 per cent of working age population were outside labour force



INTRODUCTION

Labour Force Survey (LFS) is conducted by Department of Statistics, Malaysia (DOSM) every month through household approach to obtain data on the structure of labour force, employment and unemployment. This survey covers citizens and non-citizens in urban and rural areas for the whole of Malaysia.

The Labour Force Survey Report is an annual publication which presents the principal statistics of the labour force for population in the working age of 15 to 64 years old by selected demographic and socioeconomic characteristics such as sex, age group, educational attainment, occupation and industry.

LABOUR FORCE IN MALAYSIA 2017 INCREASED 2.0 PER CENT TO NEARLY 15.0 MILLION PERSONS

Labour force in Malaysia increased 2.0 per cent to nearly 15.0 million persons in 2017 as compared to 14.7 million persons in 2016. The increase in labour force was contributed by 286,300 employed persons.

Labour force participation rate (LFPR) in 2017 increased 0.3 percentage points to 68.0 per cent as compared to 67.7 per cent in 2016. Hence, the remaining 32.0 per cent of the working age population were outside labour force. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate in 2017 remained at 3.4 per cent. This shows that the country's economy is still operating in full employment that is unemployment rate below 4.0 per cent¹.

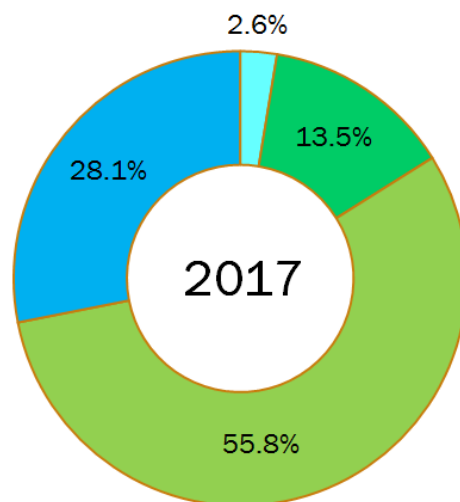
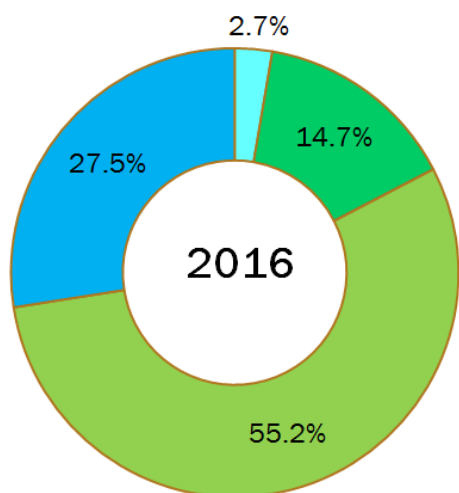
Female LFPR rose 0.4 percentage points to 54.7 per cent in 2017. The participation of female in the labour market for the prime age groups namely 25-34 (74.0%), 35-44 (67.5%) and 45-54 (57.1%) were higher as compared to female LFPR at the national level².





The participation of male labour force was 80.1 per cent in 2017, dropped 0.4 percentage points as compared to the previous year. The LFPR for age group 55-64 years registered the highest decrease of 1.0 percentage points to 65.8 per cent. However, age group 25-34 years recorded an increase of 0.4 percentage points. Overall, male LFPR was still higher than female for all age groups.

EMPLOYED PERSON

In 2017, the number of employed persons with tertiary education increased 0.6 percentage points to 28.1 per cent as against 27.5 per cent in the previous year. On the contrary, employed persons with primary education and no formal education declined 1.2 percentage points and 0.1 percentage point respectively.

Chart 1: Employed persons by educational attainment, Malaysia, 2016 and 2017

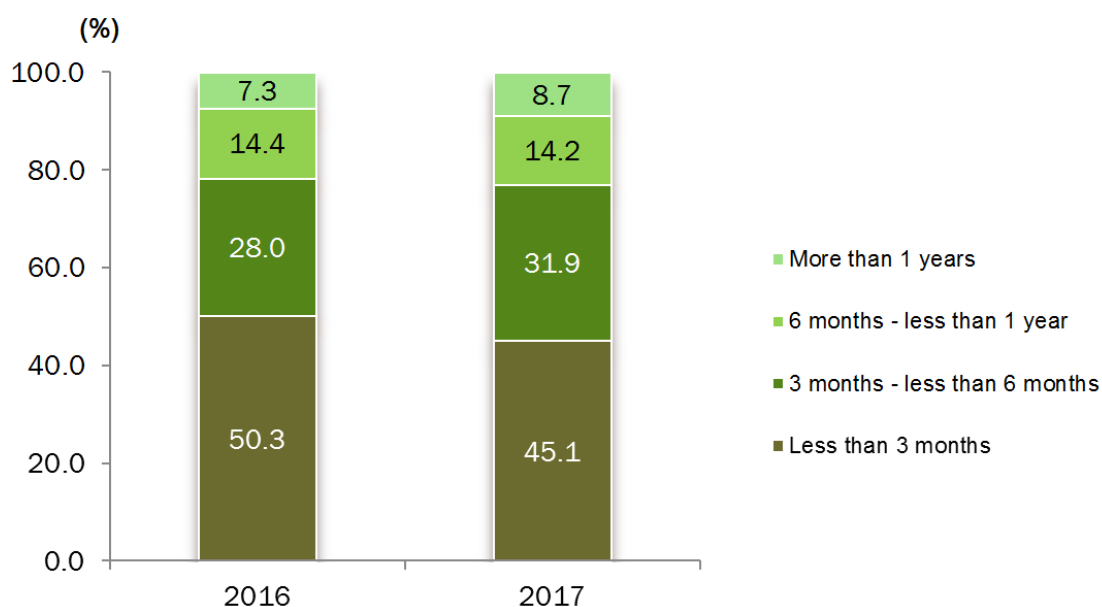


 No formal education  Primary  Secondary  Tertiary

UNEMPLOYED PERSON

In 2017, 45.1 per cent of active unemployed persons secured employment in less than three months. The other 31.9 per cent were active unemployed persons that unemployed between three months to less than six months.

Chart 2: Active unemployed persons by duration of unemployed, Malaysia, 2016 and 2017



OUTSIDE LABOUR FORCE

In 2017, the main reason for not seeking work among the population outside labour force was schooling (42.7%). This group had the potential to join the labour market after completing their studies. Approximately 41 per cent of those outside the labour force stated housework/family responsibilities as the reason for not seeking work.

Table 1: Population outside labour force by reasons for not seeking work, Malaysia, 2016 and 2017

Reasons for not seeking work	('000)		(%)	
	2016	2017	2016	2017
Total	6,987.6	7,042.9	100.0	100.0
Schooling	3,002.8	3,008.8	43.0	42.7
Housework/family responsibilities	2,906.5	2,905.0	41.6	41.2
Going for further studies	155.3	153.3	2.2	2.2
Disabled	274.1	303.2	3.9	4.3
Not interested	88.2	75.8	1.3	1.1
Retired	560.7	597.7	8.0	8.5

The detailed information and technical notes are published in the Labour Force Survey Report, Malaysia, 2017. This report is accessible and downloadable free of charge through the [eStatistik](#) application in DOSM web page, www.dosm.gov.my.

Note:

^[1] Strategic Paper 8, Eleventh Malaysia Plan.

^[2] The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines prime age as population aged 25–54 years.

Released By:

DATO' SRI DR. MOHD UZIR MAHIDIN
CHIEF STATISTICIAN MALAYSIA
DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS, MALAYSIA

 [DrUzir_Mahidin](#)   [Dr_Uzir](#)

#myHariBulan# #myBulan# #myTahun#

Contact person:

Ho Mei Kei
Public Relation Officer
Strategic Communication and International Division
Department of Statistics, Malaysia
Tel : +603-8885 7942
Fax : +603-8888 9248
Email : mkho[at]dosm.gov.my

Contact person:

Baharudin Mohamad
Public Relation Officer
Strategic Communication and International Division
Department of Statistics Malaysia
Tel : +603-8090 4681
Fax : +603-8888 9248
Email : baharudin[at]dosm.gov.my

Copyright ©2026 Department of Statistics Malaysia Official Portal. All Rights Reserved.