

# The Labour Market at a Glance

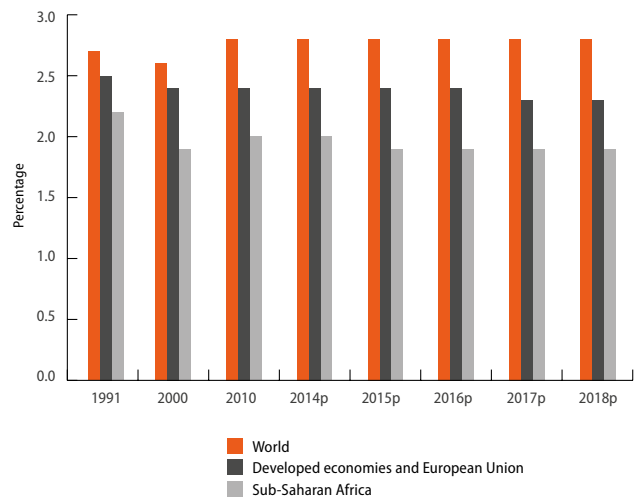
The unemployment rate increased to 25.3 per cent in the second quarter of 2014. While the size of the labour force grew, the labour force participation rate decreased between 2008 and 2014. This is indicative of an increase in the number of discouraged job-seekers. South African youth remain disproportionately affected by unemployment compared to the adult population. Individuals with less than a matric are most affected by unemployment. The unemployment rate among those with a tertiary education remained low compared to other educational levels, but it is important to note the unemployment rate has grown slightly among the tertiary educated.

While Brazil's overall unemployment rate was lower than South Africa's, its youth-to-adult ratio was higher, indicating that the youth are most negatively affected by unemployment in Brazil. Equally, the youth-to-adult ratio of unemployment was higher for developed countries and the European Union than it was for sub-Saharan Africa.

South Africa's vital labour statistics				
	1991	2000	2008	2014
Unemployment rate (official)	24.4%	23.3%	21.4%	25.3%
Labour force participation rate	53.7%	59.5%	55.3%	53.5%
Labour absorption rate	40.6%	45.7%	43.5%	40.0%
Not economically active	–	10 930 000	15 343 806	17 746 715
Labour force	12 473 900	16 078 000	18 975 639	20 411 857

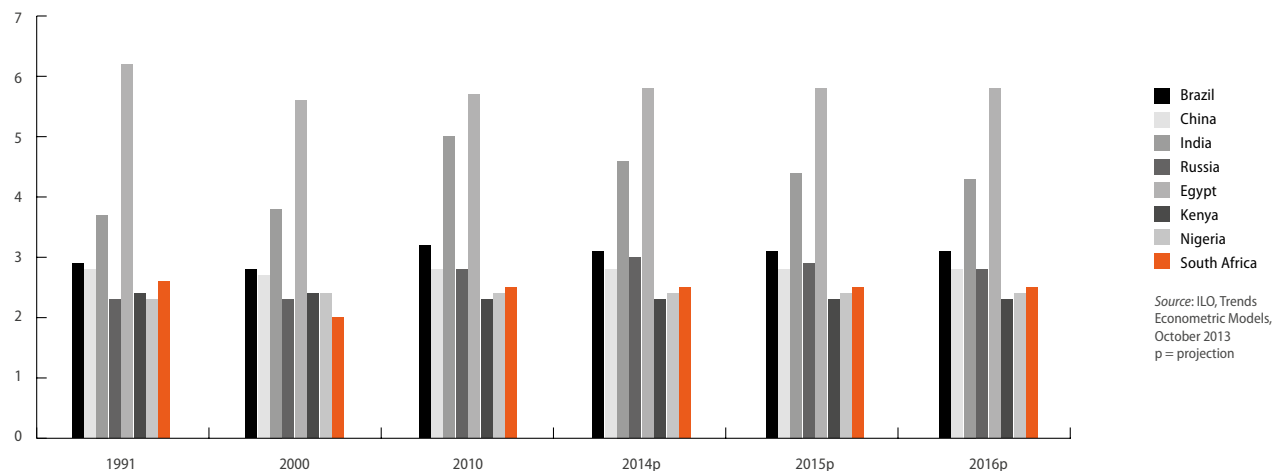
Source data for 1991 labour force and labour force participation rate from the ILO, Estimates and Projections of the Economically Active Population (EAPEP), 2013 Edition (update July 2013)  
 Source data 1991 for labour absorption rate: ILO, Trends Econometric Models, October 2013  
 Source for 2000 Stats SA, Labour Force Survey, Historical Revision September series 2000 to 2007  
 Source data for 2008 and 2014 own calculations based on Stats SA; 2014 QLFS (2nd quarter revised estimates) and 2008 QLFS (4th quarter revised estimates)  
**Data note:** 1991 figure not available for Not Economically Active

Youth-to-adult ratio of unemployment, world economies, 1991–2018



Source: ILO, Trends Econometric Models, October 2013  
 p = projection

Youth-to-adult ratio of unemployment, BRICS and Africa's largest economies, 1991–2016



Source: ILO, Trends Econometric Models, October 2013  
 p = projection

## Unemployment rate by level of educational attainment, 2014

22.4%  
Less than primary  
completed

32.7%  
Secondary not completed

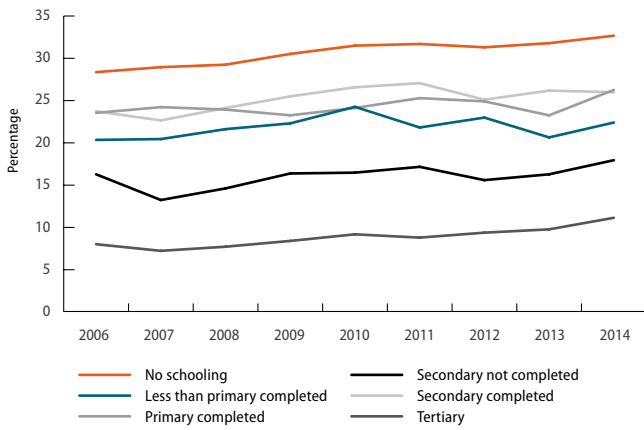
26%  
Secondary completed

11.2%  
Tertiary

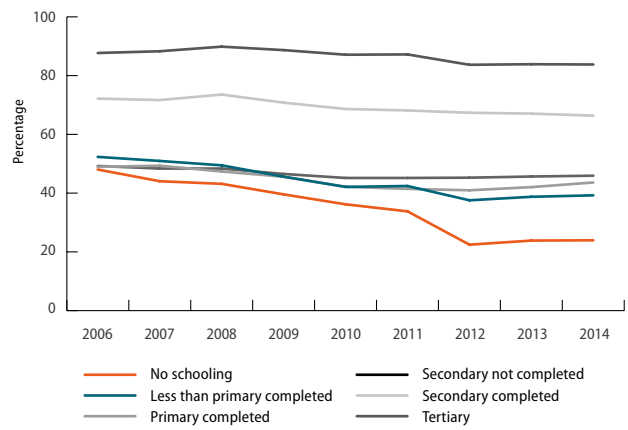
26.3%  
Primary completed

18%  
No schooling

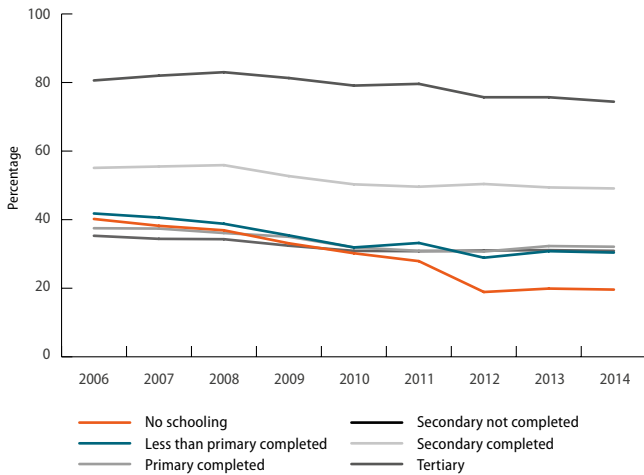
**Unemployment rate by level of educational attainment, 2006–2014\***



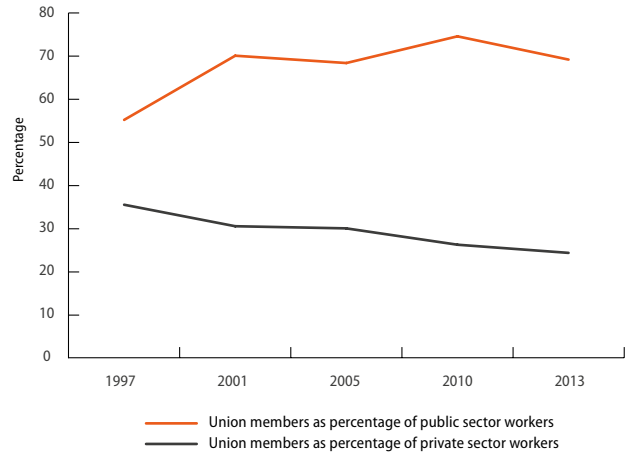
**Labour force participation rate by level of educational attainment, 2006–2014\***



**Labour absorption rate by level of educational attainment, 2006–2014\***



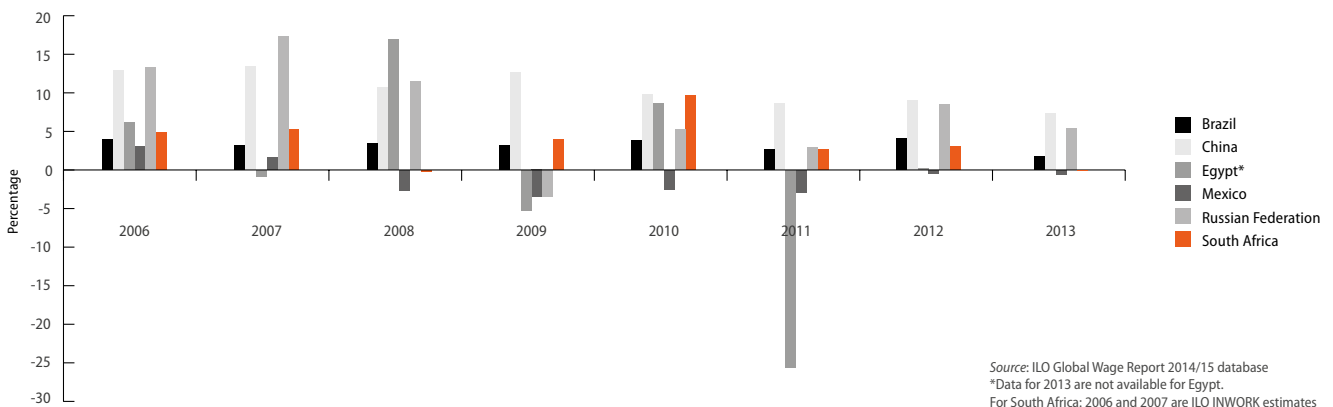
**Trade union membership, 1997–2013**



Source: Borhat, Naidoo & Yu (2014: 5), Trade Unions in an Emerging Economy

\*Source: 2012–2014 own calculations based on Stats SA Revised QLFS 2012 (Q4), QLFS 2013 (Q4), QLFS 2014 (Q2)  
Data for 2006–2011 from Stats SA, Labour Market Dynamics in South Africa, 2011

**Real wage growth in the largest emerging and developing economies, 2006–2013**



Source: ILO Global Wage Report 2014/15 database  
\*Data for 2013 are not available for Egypt.  
For South Africa: 2006 and 2007 are ILO INWORK estimates