



Ulandssekretariatet
LO/FTF Council

Danish Trade Union
Council for International
Development Cooperation

Honduras

Labour Market Profile

2014

This Labour Market Profile is a yearly updated report that provides a broad overview of the labour market's situation and development. The report is based on the latest data available and following trends. Each section has also accesses to the sources' links that can be used to go more in-depth on selected themes.



Honduras – Labour Market Profile 2014

Executive Summary

In Honduras development contrasts are present. It is a medium-to-low income country with a high international trade flow. The Export Processing Zones are creating many jobs and the United States is a main direction of export. The country is one of the highest remittances receiver in the world. Unfortunately, it is also one of the most violent countries in the world and with a very high unequal income. On the indexes on Doing Business and Governance Indicators, the country is experiencing decreasing.

Honduras' economy entered into a recession in 2009 due to a political turmoil, where international community withdrew financial support, and the global financial recession. The country has rebounded slowly and reached a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth at 2.8% in 2013. It remains a very low GDP per capita in comparison with the Latin America and the Caribbean's (LAC) average growth.

The total labour force is 3.3 million workers and with an overall employment rate of 60%, which is slightly lower than the Latin American region's average at 64%. The participation of women in the workforce is relatively low. Rates of under-utilization and job insecurity are alarming. Unemployment is at 4.2%, while youth unemployment at 7.7%. The rate of self-employed workers and rural workers are one of the highest in the LAC region, signifying underutilization of the labour force and decent work deficits. Supporting this is the high number of working poor and high share of informal employment. Many, especially young people, therefore migrate.

The Honduran trade union movement is the least scattered in the Central American region. There are three trade unions centres, all currently affiliated to the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). The trade union movement is relatively strong, especially among the civil servant, teachers, and peasants. The trade union density is estimated as 15% of the labour force.

ITUC registered a wide range of violations of trade union rights in the period 2013, and the ILO has two active cases of Freedom of Association.

The new minimum wages for different sectors were set by tripartite negotiation for the period 2014-2016. The minimum wages range from 5,115 lempira (US\$246) in agriculture to 8,278 lempira (US\$398) in the finance and real estate sector in 2014. Almost one-third of full-time paid employees (some 370,000 persons) earn less than the minimum wage. The growth of real average wage over the period 2001-2010 has been only 0.7%.

Informal employment makes up 74% of total employment in the non-agricultural sector; and the informal sector employed 58% of total employment. The informal economy is much larger than the average for the LAC region.

There has been a significant growth of secondary education in Honduras and of enrollment in technical/vocational programs is significantly much higher than the average in LAC.

Honduras still lacks a general employment policy and the relatively new national Social Protection Policy (SPP) has barely begun to be implemented in practice. So far, the scope of social protection programs has been limited. The total health social protection coverage is measured at 12% of the population.

The gender equality has specific challenges relating to the society's patriarchal norms, poverty, human security, and corruption. Although civil society and social movements have played a central role in bringing gender issues to the forefront in past decades, political crisis has created ruptures among activists and civil society organizations, even within the women's movement.

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Trade Unions

Trade unions in Honduras (2014)	
Number of trade unions	250
Dues (standard) (FITH)	60 Lempira per month
Members of trade unions	502,000
Trade union members share of labour force	15 %
Trade union members to waged workers	36 %
Female member share of trade unions	N/A
Members of affiliated trade unions from the informal economy	55,046
Number of CBAs (confederations)	89
Workers covered by CBAs ¹ (2005)	15,261
Share of workers covered by CBA	N/A
Labour force (2013) ²	3,286,000

The Labour Code provides for the right of workers to form and join unions of their choice, to bargain collectively, and to strike, and it prohibits employer retribution for engaging in trade union activity. However, it places a number of restrictions on these rights. Among others, the law requires 30 or more workers to constitute a trade union, prohibits foreign nationals from holding union offices, and requires that union officials be employed in the economic activity of the business the union represents.³ In addition, the Labour Code establishes that federations and confederations may not call a strike.

It has also been observed that workers had difficulties with the rights to form and join unions as well as to engage in collective bargaining. One issue is that the government has failed to enforce applicable laws effectively. Due to past allegations that the registry office informed companies which workers were attempting to unionize, some unions delayed providing lists of unionizing workers until after the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (*Secretaría de Trabajo y Seguridad Social*) (STSS) formally notified the employer of union formation. Unions were independent of the government, but some were closely aligned with political parties.⁴

Honduras' central trade unions cover multiple sectors of the national economy, but the most powerful are concentrated among the civil servant, teachers, and peasants. The trade union movement is the least

scattered in the Central American region and relatively strong. There are only three central trade unions, all currently affiliated to the ITUC. On the other hand, social dialogue is lacking and trade unions are weaker in the private sector and the Export Processing Zones.

It has been assessed that 250 trade unions. The trade union density has been calculated at 15% of the labour force. In addition, the three trade union confederations have registered 89 Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs). There are only outdated data on workers covered by CBAs, but it is likely that relatively few are covered due to the inefficient social dialogue: Some employers either refuse to engage in collective bargaining with unions with impunity or make it very difficult to engage in bargaining. Some companies also delayed or failed to appoint representatives for required STSS-led mediation, a practice that lengthened and impeded the mediation process and the right to strike, according to the U.S. Report Human Rights Practices.

United Confederation of Workers in Honduras (CUTH)

CUTH (*Confederación Unitaria de Trabajadores de Honduras*) is a trade union organization that was founded in 1992. It currently encompasses 16 sectoral, social and popular trade union federations in the country, around 200,000 workers. Its main purpose is to advocate for the rights and interests of the working class and contribute to the unity and integration of the Honduran popular workers movement, for promoting economic, political and social transformations necessary for the welfare of the Honduran people.

General Workers' Central (CGT)

CGT (*Central General de Trabajadores*) was formed by Christian democrats in 1970. It later developed closer ties to the conservative party PNH (*Partido Nacional de Honduras*).

Confederation of Honduran Workers (CTH)

CTH (*Confederación de Trabajadores de Honduras*) is the oldest trade union center in Honduras. It was founded in 1964, by peasant organizations. CTH which still has a large membership base among peasants, used to be the largest trade union centre, but memberships have fallen to around 55,000.

Trade Unions in Honduras ⁵							
Members, Dues, Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) and Occupational Safety and Health committees							
Trade Union Centre	National affiliation	Total Members (2012)	Female Members	Dues	Number of CBAs	Workers covered by CBAs	Number of OSH committees at workplaces
CUTH Confederación Unitaria de Trabajadores de Honduras		197,000	-	-	27	-	-
CGT Central General de Trabajadores		250,000	-	-	13	-	-
CTH Confederación de Trabajadores de Honduras		55,000	-	-	23	-	-
CNTC	CUTH	-	30 %	-	-	-	-
UTC	CUTH	-	25 %	-	-	-	-
FPNH	CUTH	-	55 %	-	-	-	-
FEPANAP	CUTH	-	25 %	-	-	-	-
CPEP	CUTH	-	100 %	-	-	-	-
CODIMCA	CUTH	-	100 %	-	-	-	-
COPRUMH	CUTH	-	-	-	-	-	-
FITH	CUTH	-	60 %	60 L/month	6	-	-
COPEMH	CUTH	-	60 %	-	-	-	-
FETRIMLH	CUTH	-	25 %	-	-	-	-
OCH	CUTH	-	20 %	-	-	-	-
ONIL	CUTH	-	-	-	-	-	-
FUTH	CUTH	-	15 %	-	21	-	-
COLPROSUMAH	CUTH	-	60 %	-	-	-	-
COLPEDAGOGOSH	CUTH	-	60 %	-	-	-	-
FOTSSIEH	CUTH	-	50 %	-	-	-	-
FASH	CGT	-	-	-	7	-	-
FENATRA	CGT	-	-	-	6	-	-
FESISUR	CGT	-	-	-	-	-	-
FENTAE	CGT	-	-	-	-	-	-
ANACH	CTH	-	-	-	-	-	-
CAN	CTH	-	-	-	-	-	-
FECSITLIH	CTH	-	-	-	9	-	-
FESITRANH	CTH	-	-	-	14	-	-
FOMUR	CTH	-	-	-	-	-	-
FESITRAINCOH	CTH	-	-	-	-	-	-
ANVIH	CTH	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sindicatos Independientes (no federados)	-	-	-	-	26	-	-

Employers' Organisations

Honduran Council of Private Enterprise⁶ (COHEP)

COHEP (*Consejo Hondureño de la Empresa Privada*) is the main employers' organisation. COHEP was founded in 1967 and its mission is to contribute to national economic development through the strengthening of free enterprise. COHEP has 62 affiliated organisations such as associations, employers' organisations, and chambers of commerce. COHEP conducts CSR activities, and has a Center for Economic and Social Research, which produces publications, papers and proposals.

Central Tripartite Structures

Mediation and Arbitration

Labour disputes must first be attempted to be settled between the employer and three employed union representatives. Thereafter a state appointed mediator tries to settle the dispute. If that fails the dispute is referred to a conciliation board. The Employers and workers may also refer the dispute for arbitration at a labour court.

Comisión Nacional de Salario Mínimo

As required by the constitution, the minimum wage is reviewed periodically by the National Minimum Wage Commission. The Commission is composed of the General Labour Inspector, the Director General of Census and Statistics, and a representative each from the National Economic Council, trade unions and employers - from farmer associations, industry or chambers of commerce.

Economic and Social Council (ESC)

ESC is an institution that provides analysis and reports on labour market issues to promote social dialogue. A new organizational structure of the ESC was approved by law in January 2014, clarifying that the organization is functioning independent; provides opinions on labour market draft laws; and includes the vice-president and the Consultative Council.

Other bi/tripartite organs⁷

- Honduran Institute of Social Security
- Professional Training Institute
- Private Tax Regime
- National Unification Forum
- National Minimum Wage Commission
- Solidarity Housing Programme
- Bi- and Tripartite Maquila Commission

National Labour Legislation

Constitution⁸

The constitution is from 1982 and has been modified several times. It was last modified in 2005. The then president Manuel Zelaya planned to convey a constitutional assembly to rewrite the constitution in 2009, and controversies over this led to the 2009 coup that sent Zelaya in exile. The constitution establishes rights such as a maximum work of 8 hour per day 44 hours per week, right to a minimum wage, occupational safety and health, paid annual leave, maternity leave, social security and to strike. It prohibits employment of children less than 16 years old, except if it is essential for their or their family's survival.

Código del Trabajo (Labour Code)⁹

The labour code was last amended in 2002. It regulates employment contracts, specific types of work, leave, breaks, salary, protection of workers, collective labour disputes, trade unions and employers' organisations. It also establishes the labour courts.

The labour code is the most important labour legislation. Several other legislations exists which regulates and sets standards and restrictions for the labour market.¹⁰

ILO Conventions

Ratified ILO Conventions ¹¹		
Subject and/or right	Convention	Ratification date
Fundamental Conventions		
Freedom of association and collective bargaining	C087 - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, 1948	1956
	C098 - Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949	1956
Elimination of all forms of forced labour	C029 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930	1957
	C105 - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957	1958
Effective abolition of child labour	C138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973	1980
	C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999	2001
Elimination of discrimination in employment	C100 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951	1956
	C111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958	1960
Governance Conventions		
Labour inspection	C081 - Labour Inspection Convention, 1947	1983
	C129 - Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969	Not ratified
Employment policy	C122 - Employment Policy Convention, 1964	1980
Tripartism	C144 - Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976	2012
Up-to-date Conventions		
	C014 - Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921	1964
Working time	C106 - Weekly Rest (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1957	1960
Elimination of child labour and protection of young persons	C078 - Medical Examination of Young Persons (Non-Industrial Occupations) Convention, 1946	1960
Wages	C095 - Protection of Wages Convention, 1949	1960
Social security	C102 - Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952	2012
Occupational safety and health	C127 - Maximum Weight Convention, 1967	2012
Indigenous and tribal peoples	C169 - Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989	1995
<p>Fundamental Conventions are the eight most important ILO conventions that cover four fundamental principles and rights at work. Equivalent to basic human rights at work.</p> <p>Governance Conventions are four conventions that the ILO has designated as important to building national institutions and capacities that serve to promote employment. In other words, conventions that promotes a well-regulated and well-functioning labour market.</p> <p>In addition, there are 71 conventions, which ILO considers "up-to-date" and actively promotes.</p>		

Trade Union Rights Violations

Both the U.S. Report Human Rights Practices and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) have registered a wide range of violations of trade union rights in the period 2013/14 in Honduras, among others:¹²

The Ministry of Education has directly interfered in union rules by demanding that union leaders not seek election after two mandates. The ministry forced trade union leaders in the education sector back to work and denied them their right to free time for trade union activities.

Workers recently formed a trade union in a cardboard company in response to abuses and deteriorated work conditions. The company closed the gates and sacked about 70 workers without paying the benefits and . The company also suspended the members of the union's executive committee on full pay while it applies to the labour courts for authorization to dismiss them. In response to the company's non-payment of the minimum wage, the union lodged a complaint with the labour courts and asked them to impose a pay rise to cover the last two years.

It is observed that 57 rural workers have been murdered since 2009 for opposing forced evictions by large landowners who want to increase the cultivation of African palm trees. Any popular uprising is brutally repressed amid impunity and a growing criminalization of protest and social struggle.

A collective agreement signed between a garment factory and a union stipulating the reintegration of unfairly dismissed workers was breached by the company. Several union members were dismissed soon after it was signed. Another company also dismissed 100 members of the SITRACCMA union in a breach of the collective agreement. The dismissed workers refused to accept an order to be transferred to a different branch of the same company.

After almost 30 months of negotiations on a new Collective Bargaining Agreement between the *Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Industria de la Bebida y Similares* (STIBYS) and the *Embotelladora La Reyna SA* (CABCorp-PepsiCo), the multinational categorically refused to negotiate on the main clauses of the agreement.

There were mass dismissals at *Operadora Portuaria Centroamericana* in March 2014. The *Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Empresa Nacional Portuaria* (SITRAENP) reported that the multinational port management company ICTSI and its subsidiary began a process of mass dismissals. It was reportedly affecting some 80 workers, all members or former leaders of the SITRAENP. According to the company, the dismissals were made in accordance with Honduran law, supposedly because the workers had reached the end of their 60-day trial period.

ILO is processing two active confidential cases in the Committee of Freedom of Association: One was filed in April 2014 by FITH; and the other in May 2013 that was filed by Latin American Federation of Education and Culture Workers (FLATEC), Education International (IE), and the Federation of Teachers Organizations of Honduras (FOMH). A follow-up case was filed in July 2012 with relation to violations of the collective agreement, impediments to collective bargaining, dismissals and anti-union practices in a company and in the Honduras Institute of Children and the Family. Based on an Interim Report the Committee considered that it was not in a position to determine whether or not the terms of the agreement in force have been breached.¹³ Honduras had their first case examined by the ILO Committee on the Application of Standards in 2013 because of the persistent and serious nature of trade union rights' violations.¹⁴

ILO Complaints Procedure ¹⁵	
Freedom of Association cases (2014)	
Active	2
Follow-up	1
Closed	39

Persons from indigenous and Afro-descendant communities continued to experience discrimination with respect to employment and occupation. The special prosecutor for indigenous affairs reported receiving two formal complaints of ethnic discrimination in education and 16 of violation of the right to consultation and usurpation of land.¹⁶

Working Conditions

Wages and earnings			
Monthly average, median and legal minimum wages			
	Source	Current Lempira	2011 US\$
Average wage (2010)	Global Wage Database ¹⁷	7,125	388
Median wage (2010)		4,030	220
Minimum wage (2014) (average)	La Gaceta ¹⁸	6,697	339
Minimum wage for a 19-year old worker or an apprentice (2014)	Doing Business ¹⁹	8,133	430
Ratio minimum wage to value added per worker (2014)		1.49 %	
Wage Share Unadjusted (2005)		44 %	
Growth of real average wage (2001-2010)	Global Wage Database ¹⁷	0.7 %	
Growth of real median wage (2001-2010)		3.3 %	
Growth of real minimum wage (2000-2011)		174 %	
<p><i>% of minimum wage to value added per worker denotes the minimum wage share of labour productivity. Reported as ratio of minimum wage to value added per worker in the Doing Business Report.</i></p> <p><i>The Wage Share is the share of GDP that goes to wages and other forms of labour compensation. It is not adjusted for the self-employed, and can therefore underestimate the amount of GDP that goes to workers, if there are many self-employed in the economy.¹⁷</i></p>			

The minimum wages for different sectors is set by tripartite negotiation for the three year period 2014-2016. The minimum wage ranges from 5,115 lempira (US\$246) in agriculture to 8,278 lempira (US\$398) in the finance and real estate sector in 2014.²⁰

The minimum wage in the industry was almost doubled in 2008 from 2,393 to 5,500 Lempira, it was increased again to 6,858 lempira in 2014. In real terms, the minimum wage has therefore seen a large increase over the last decade.

The median wage has been on a lower level than the minimum wages, meaning that a large group of workers earn below the minimum wage. One of the reasons why the median wage is close to the minimum wage, it is that there are large wage differences

between rural and urban areas as well as sectors. ILO has also estimated that around one out of three (33%) of workers are earning less than two-thirds of the median earnings of all workers.

Based on the National Statistical Institute estimations from December 2010, the minimal living cost for a family of five was 2,681 lempira (US\$142) in urban areas and 1,424 lempira (US\$75) for a family of six in rural areas. Almost one-third of full-time paid employees (some 370,000 persons) earn less than the minimum wage. The situation is worst in the rural sector.²¹

The gross average nominal monthly wages between women and men is close to be equal; i.e. men's earnings are 2.4% higher than women's.²² The average wages of domestic workers in Honduras, in per cent of average wages for all paid employees, was 64%, which was the highest rate.²³

The average and median wage for all sectors has hardly grown in real terms over the last decade. The median wage is also lower than the minimum wage in the industry.

It has been observed that the authorities did not effectively enforce worker safety standards, particularly in the construction, garment assembly, and agriculture sectors. The minimum wage was rarely paid in the agricultural sector and was not paid consistently in other sectors. Agricultural workers frequently reported being penalized for taking legally established days of rest and holidays.²⁴

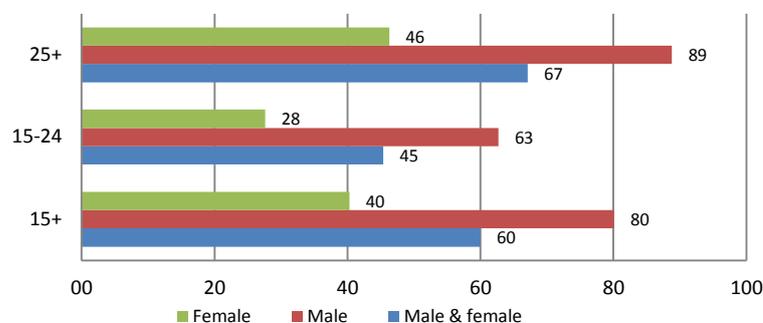
Human rights organizations continued to report that in the private security and household sectors, workers were typically obliged to work more than 60 hours a week but paid for only 44 hours.

While the government did not allocate adequate resources for labor inspectors to perform their duties, the number of inspections significantly increased, from 5,226 inspections in 2012 to 12,079 inspections as of August 2013. There were 135 labor inspectors, i.e. 1 per 23,600 workers in the labour force. The ILO recommends 1 inspector per 40,000 workers in less developed countries and 1 per 20,000 workers in transition economies.²⁵

Workforce

Employment rates²⁶ (2013), Age and Sex distribution

Sex	Age	Employment rate
Male & female	Total 15+	60 %
	Youth 15-24	45 %
	Adult 25+	67 %
Male	Total 15+	80 %
	Youth 15-24	63 %
	Adult 25+	89 %
Female	Total 15+	40 %
	Youth 15-24	28 %
	Adult 25+	46 %



The total population is estimated a population at 8.6 million and the labour force at 3.3 million workers. It has an overall employment rate at 60%, which is slightly lower than the Latin American region's average at 64%. Females have considerably lower employment rates than men in Honduras. In comparison with an average in the Latin America, the men's and female's employment rates are 63% and 65%, respectively.

The latest data on working poverty from 2009 indicate that there are close to four times higher living for US\$1.25 a day in Hondurans in comparison with the Latin America and the Caribbean region's average.

Working Poor²⁷

Age 15+

	Share of workers in total employment	
	1.25 US\$ a day	2 US\$ a day
Honduras (2002)	23 %	35 %
Honduras (2009)	15 %	26 %
Latin America and the Caribbean (2009)	3.9 %	8.3 %
Latin America and the Caribbean (2013)	2.9 %	6.5 %

Working poor measures employed people living for less than US\$1.25 and US\$2 a day, as proportion of total employment in that group

Honduras has a slightly smaller middle class, especially upper middle class than the regional average, as 23% lived for US\$2-4 a day and 42% for US\$4-20 a day, compared the average for Latin America and the Caribbean where 19% lived for US\$2-4 a day and 57% for US\$4-20 a day.²⁸

One out of three (33%) of the urban employed population is self-employed and a little more than one out of four (52%) are employees.

Structure of total urban employed population, by category of employment²⁹ (2010)

Employers	3.8 %
Employees	52 %
Self employed	33 %
Domestic service	4.0 %

Honduras is a lower-middle income country facing significant challenges, with more than two thirds of the country's population living in poverty, and around 46% in extreme poverty in 2012. In rural areas, 58% of households are in extreme poverty.³⁰ Most of those are employed in the primary sector, which is a predominantly male sector. By contrast, female poverty is more closely linked to paid employment in the services sector and to self-employment involving commercial activities.

Honduras is a relatively industrialised country, though with a large share of informal employment. Around 36% of the employed work in agriculture, 44% are in waged employment and 74% of non-agricultural employment is informal.³¹

Recently, Honduras passed a legislative package which aims at boosting the economic development and employment, including by three major laws: i) Law on Supplementary Income in Rural and Sub-Urban Areas; ii) the National Program of Employment by the Hour; and iii) the Law on the Promotion of the Public-Private Alliance.

Unemployment and underemployment

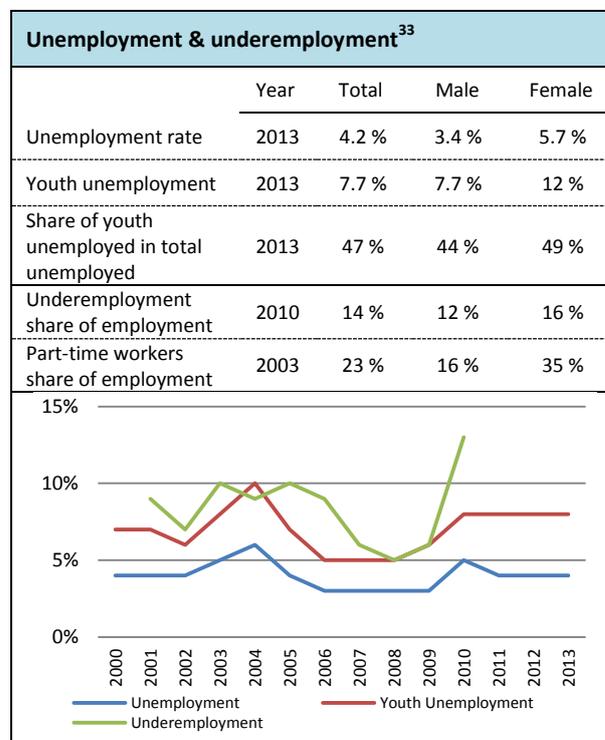
Rates of under-utilization and job insecurity are high. Unemployment is at 4.2% and youth unemployment at 7.7%. The unemployment and youth unemployment rate are slightly lower than the LAC regional average, since the unemployment and youth unemployment rates are 6.2% and 13%, respectively.

Partly this is because Honduras is a poorer country where fewer have the option to be unemployed. Interpretation of the open unemployment and employment rates as indicators of a relatively well-functioning labour market is problematic in developing countries. When unemployment is not an option where a person can survive, work of some sort has to be found, often casual and informal work. Unemployment should therefore be understood in relation to the strength of social safety nets, the prevalence of informal employment and how much of informal employment is underemployment due to few formal employment possibilities.³²

A lot of unemployment is concealed as underemployment. In Honduras around 14% of the employed are underemployed, which indicates those who involuntarily work less than they desire; and 23%, which are mostly women, are part-time workers, voluntary or not.

Honduras experienced a reduction of unemployment rates in 2004, but in 2009 they rebounded. Some might be due to changes in measurement from different sources, but all have increased. Most likely

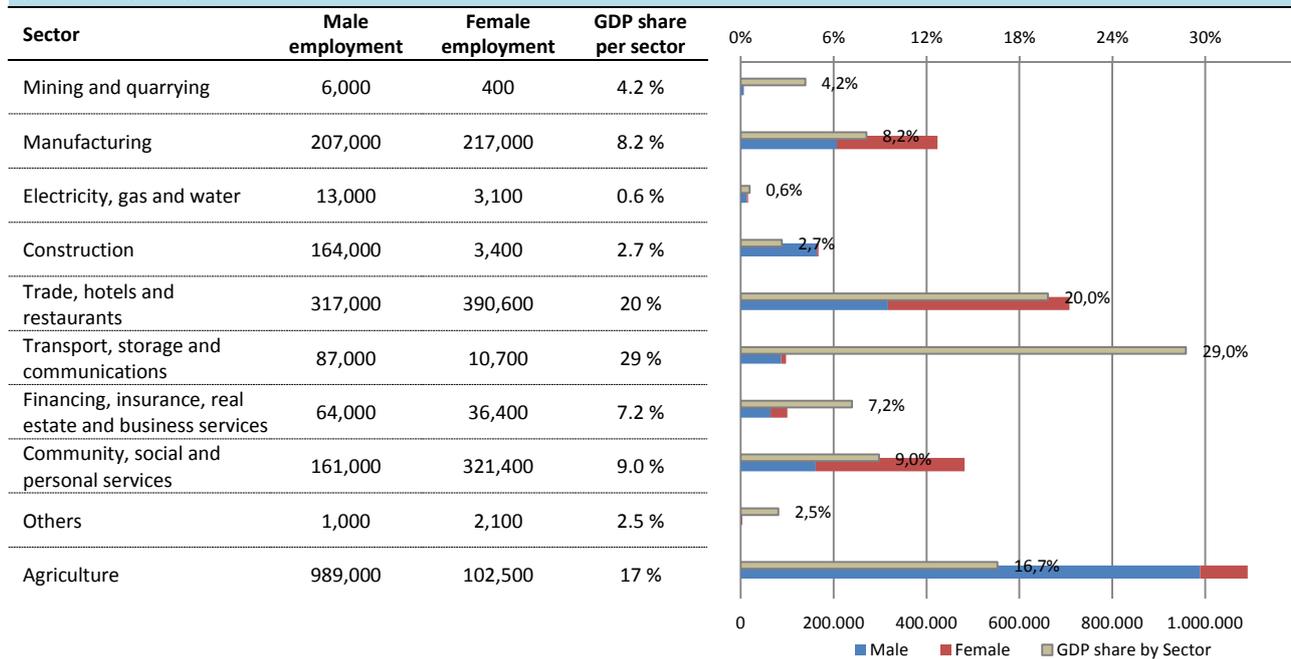
the increase is due to the coup in 2009, the impact of the Global Financial Crisis 2008-2009; and high levels of crime and violence. (See also the section General Economic Performance)



Sectoral employment

Employment (2011)³⁴ & GDP share (2012)³⁵

Sector & Gender distribution



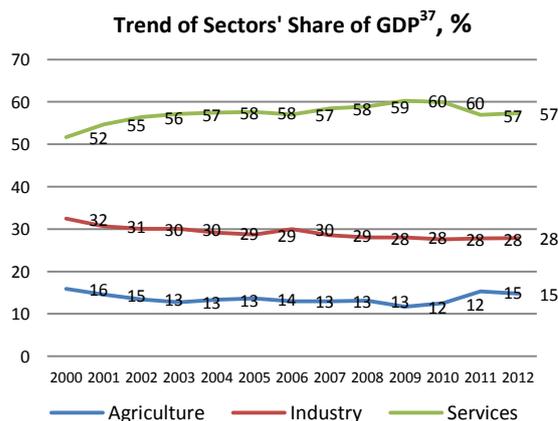
Around 36% of employed Hondurans work in the agricultural sector, which contributes with 17% of the GDP. This sector is dominated by men and only one out of ten is a females. A couple of other sectors are also male dominated such as such as Construction, Mining, and Transport.

In terms of male workforce, the participation of the very young and of adults over 65 years of age is high. This has been interconnected to a lower coverage of the education system on secondary and tertiary level, which impels young people to enter the labour market at an early age instead of building up human capital. It is also connected to the low social security coverage, which prevents older workers from obtaining retirement benefits.³⁶

The women who are employed tend to work outside agriculture, especially in Community, Social and Personal Services; Trade, Hotels, and restaurants; and Manufacturing.

Honduras is experiencing a slow, but steady sectoral shift towards services, as more and more of GDP is generated there. Employment in services is also

increasing. Since 2009 the service sector dived slightly in terms of GDP share, while agriculture experienced an expansion at 3%. This trend is related to the expansion of agriculture and of non-agricultural employment (trade and services) in rural and peripheral urban areas. The ratio of rural employment has been decreasing throughout the Latin America region, though.



Migration

Migration ³⁸		
Net migration (2008-2012)	Honduras	- 50,000
Net migration to average population per year (2008-2012)	Honduras	- 1 : 763 Inhabitants
	Latin America & the Caribbean	- 1 : 956 Inhabitants
Personal transfers i.e. remittances received, % of GDP (2012)	Honduras	16 %
	Latin America & the Caribbean	1.1 %
<i>Net migration is the net total of migrants during the period, that is, the total number of immigrants less the annual number of emigrants, including both citizens and noncitizens. Migration rates are based on five-years average estimations.</i>		

The net migration flow is decreasing. In the period 2006-2010 it was -100,000, which now is estimated as -50,000 in the period 2008-2012. Among others, the flows have been curbed by the economic crisis in the United States, which took effect in late 2007, as well as the increasingly dangerous migration route through Mexico.

With a remittance rate at 16% of GDP, Honduras receives much more remittance than the Latin American's average at 1.1%. It makes Honduras one of the highest remittance receiving countries in the world.³⁹

More migrate out of Honduras than enter, i.e. in the period 2008-2012 there were around 50,000 inhabitants in surplus of those who left the country. An estimated 60% of the migrants are young people, which is a very large share.⁴⁰ Overall, the LAC region already has a relatively high migration rate, compared to the rest of the world.

Many of the young migrants have had little access to formal education in Honduras, many are unskilled. Even then they tend to find work in their destination countries at skill levels below their education. Economic factors and lack of job creation are major

reasons for migration from Honduras.⁴¹ In addition, apart from being the origin, Honduras is also a large transit country for migrant from Latin America seeking to enter the United States.⁴²

It has also been observed that Hondurans tend to migrate to distant countries where there are better economic opportunities, with the top destinations being the United States and Spain.³⁹ Nicaragua has also been a destination.

A study demonstrated that a 10% increase in emigration led to an increase of about 17% of wages in Honduras. Wages increase more for women than for men; women in Honduras appear to benefit more from the outmigration of workers.⁴³

Other studies have concluded that a lack of opportunity to earn an income prospective and migrants hope to earn abroad seems to be the principal motive underlying the emigration of Hondurans to the United States and Europe. The number of emigrants has been estimated at roughly one million, which would have been equivalent in 2010 to almost a quarter of the economically active population.⁴⁴

Remittances and returnees bring capital into the Honduran economy, but reliance on illegal immigration also leaves many families indebted to *coyotes*, i.e. human smugglers, strengthening the power and influence of organized crime.⁴⁵

In one of the most high-profile incidents of violence against migrants passing through Mexico, perhaps as many as 24 of the 72 migrants, who were brutally killed in the August 2010 massacre in Tamaulipas, were Honduran. In early March 2013, 102 Honduran migrants on their way to the United States were rescued by the Mexican marines after being kidnapped by criminal groups in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico.⁴⁶

Informal Economy

Employment in the informal economy ⁴⁷		
Total informal employed in non-agricultural employment	Honduras (2009)	74 %
	LAC (2010)	50 %
Employment in the informal sector in non-agricultural employment	Honduras (2009)	58 %
	LAC (2010)	32 %

Employment status on informality-index	Percentage
1 = Very informal	37%
2	13%
3	13%
4	13%
5 = Very formal	30%

Rated workers on an informality scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being workers not entitled to social benefits, who do not contribute to social security and with no contract.

Informal employment makes up 74% of total employment in the non-agricultural sector. The informal 'sector', that is informal businesses, employed 58% of total employment. The informal economy is therefore much larger than the average for the Latin American and Caribbean region.

Another indication is the type of employment: Two types of employment, which are often informal, are own-account workers who make up 41% of the employed and contributing family workers who make up 13%. There are 44% waged workers.⁴⁸

The Honduran labour market is therefore mostly informal, which means that a large percentage of the

employed population suffers precarious labour conditions insofar as income, occupational safety and health, and social security. According to the ILO, the main cause of informal employment of salaried workers in the formal companies is non-compliance with the regulating framework. In contrast, the make-up of the informal company sector is heterogeneous and, in practice, corresponds to micro-businesses with self-employed workers and unregistered informal micro-businesses, whose main problem is lack of capital and small-scale operations that make it difficult to achieve sufficient levels of productivity to cover the cost of becoming formal.

A survey by WageIndicator conducted in 2012 rated workers on an informality scale from 1-5, with 1 being workers not entitled to social benefits, who do not contribute to social security and with no contract. It shows 37% in the most informal category and 30% in the most formal. This is more informal than several similar surveys conducted by WageIndicator.org.⁴⁹

The survey also showed that the informality index correlates positively with the wage level as well as how likely one is to be paid above the minimum age level. With only 50% in the most informal category paid above the minimum wage level. People, younger than 29 years old, are more likely to be in informal employment, whereas the age group 30-39 is least likely to be informal.

The survey was conducted in urban areas, with a few surveyed in rural areas. Likely among the slightly better of segment of the labour force, as the median wage was about 5,900 lempira (US\$312) in 2010 prices among the surveyed, somewhat higher than the median 4,030 lempira (US\$213) reported in the Global Wage Database.⁵⁰

Child Labour

Working children			
Proportion of all children in age group			
Region	Age	Type	Proportion
Honduras (2007) ⁵¹	7-14	Children in employment	8.7 %
	5-17	Child Labour	11.1 %
	14-17	Hazardous work	24.6 %
Latin America and the Caribbean ⁵² (2008)	5-17	Children in employment	13.3 %
		Child labourers	10 %
		Hazardous work	6.7 %
Children in employment include all children who conduct some kind of work, whereas child labourers is a narrower term without mild forms of work. Hazardous work is the worst form of child labour as defined in ILO C182.			

Honduras has made some advancement to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. First of all, a comprehensive law on trafficking was passed in April 2012 and a new Fundamental Law of Education that raised the compulsory education level to ninth grade, also in 2012. It has also been noted that the police force received training on the worst forms of child labour as well as trained municipal employees and community stakeholders on child labor.⁵³ However, the government has not devoted sufficient resources or inspectors to monitor compliance with child labor

Gender

In terms of the Global Gender Gap Index, Honduras is ranking 82 out of 136 countries.⁵⁶ The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was approved by the government in 1981, but the CEDAW Protocol has not been ratified. The National Institute for Women develops government policy on women and gender. In addition, the nationally sponsored National Plan on Equality and Gender Equity continued its efforts to achieve gender equity.

The gender equality has specific challenges relating to the society's patriarchal norms, poverty, human security, and corruption. Although civil society and social movements have played a central role in bringing gender issues to the forefront in past decades, political crisis has created ruptures among activists and civil society organizations, even within the women's movement.⁵⁷

As noted elsewhere in this report: Women have a considerably lower employment rate than men. Women are only slightly more likely than men to be affected by unemployment or underemployment. Few

laws or to prevent or pursue violations. The *Secretaría de Trabajo y Seguridad Social* (STSS) did not effectively enforce child labor laws outside the apparel assembly sector, and there were frequent violations.⁵⁴

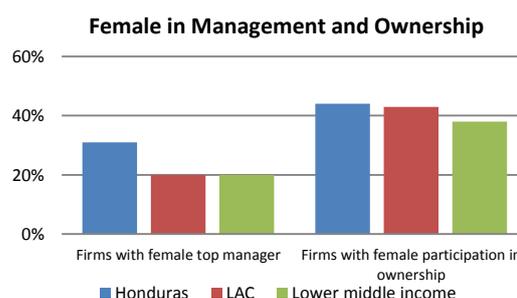
Data estimate that 11% of Honduras children are engaged in child labour. This is average for the Latin America and Caribbean region.⁵⁵ They also show that children are more likely to be engaged in child labour in rural areas (14%) than urban (6%), and boys (18%) are more likely than girls (4%). It has also been registered that children are more likely to work the older they are, as 9% of children aged 7-14 vs. 33% of children aged 15-17 are employed.

Most children aged 7-14 work as unpaid helpers (74%) many are also waged workers (23%). The average working week for children who only work is 34.8 hours, children who also go to school work an average of 17.3 hours.

The rate of children in employment has changed somewhat, from 11.4% in 2000 to 6.8% in 2002 to 8.7% in 2007.

women work in agriculture, and more commonly find employment in manufacturing, commerce and social services. In addition boys are more than four times likely as girls to be engaged in child labour.

An Enterprise Survey from the World Bank reported that 43% of firms had female participation in ownership compared to 40% for the average in Latin America and the Caribbean, and that 8.7% of full time employees were women, much lower than the Latin America and the Caribbean where it was 14%.⁵⁸ Moreover, while 15% of women have an account in a formal financial institution, 26% men have similar accounts.⁵⁹

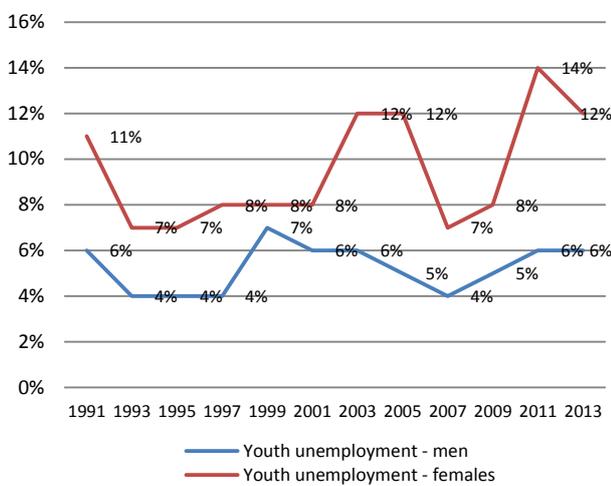


Youth

The National Youth Institute operates with a budget of US\$846,760 and coordinates the national Youth Policy, adopted in 2007, that covers the period 2007-2021.⁶⁰

Honduras has a high enrollment on secondary education and technical/vocational programs. As previously showed, the youth unemployment (persons aged 15 to 24) is almost double as high as the total unemployment rate, just as the youth unemployment is almost the double as high for women than men. The share of youth unemployed in total unemployed is 44%.⁶¹

Youth unemployment trend, 1991-2013 (%)⁶²



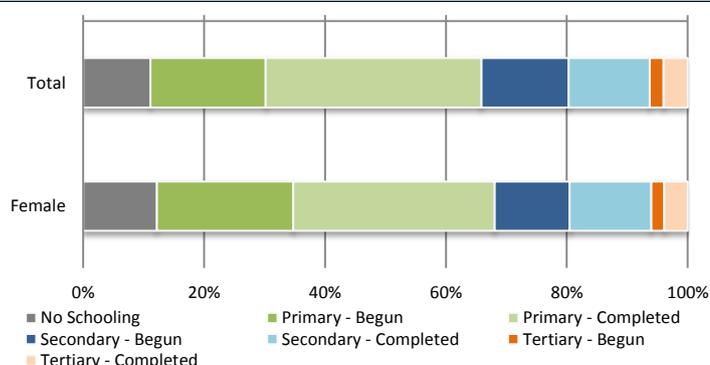
Honduras has one of the most severe gang problems in Central America and one of the highest homicide rates in the world. It has been estimated that more than 4,700 children and young people belong to gangs in Honduras.⁶³ Social exclusion and lack of opportunities are some of the factors that drive them to join these dangerous groups. While the government promoted hard-line law enforcement, the approach failed to reduce the rising crime rate, and has had negative consequences. Among others, due to budget restrictions, the government has to some extent left most gang prevention and rehabilitation programs to churches and NGOs.⁶⁴

Several youth programs have been implemented, including to discouraging the exodus of youth from rural areas by promoting networking and entrepreneurship, thus improving their chances of entering the labor market. The priorities of the program are rural development and food security with equity and sustainability. Targeting the chains that could potentially generate decent employment in combination with stronger partnerships with local institutions, businesses and educational centers made it possible to enhance national identity and local connections.⁶⁵

Characteristics of the Working Age Population

Highest level attained and years of schooling in the population⁶⁶ (2010), Population 25+, Total and Female

Highest Level Attained	Total	Female
No Schooling	11.1 %	12.2 %
Primary		
Begun	19.1 %	22.5 %
Completed	35.7 %	33.3 %
Secondary		
Begun	14.4 %	12.4 %
Completed	13.4 %	13.5 %
Tertiary		
Begun	2.3 %	2.1 %
Completed	4.0 %	3.9 %
Average year of total schooling	6.5 years	6.3 years
Educational Gini Coefficient	0.33	0.35



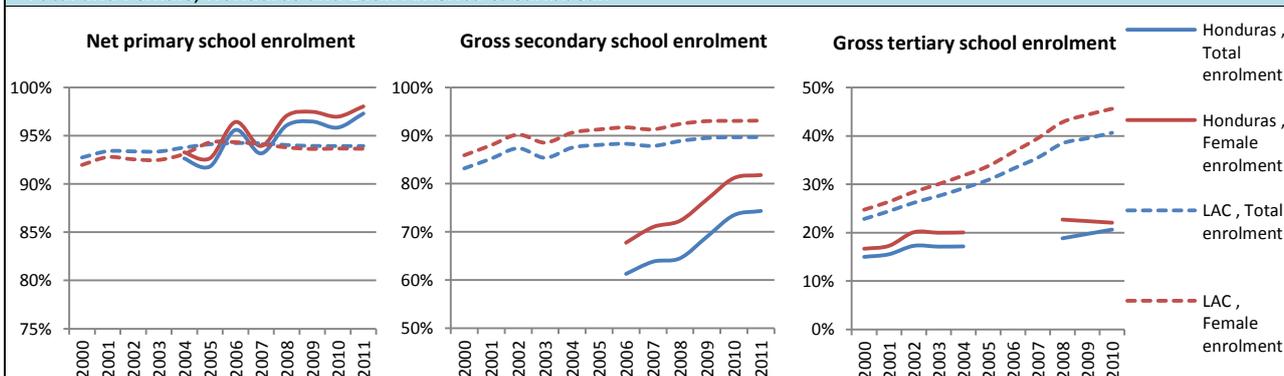
Primary, secondary and tertiary is the internationally defined distinction of education. In Denmark these corresponds to grundskole, gymnasium & university.

The educational Gini Coefficient is similar to the Gini Coefficient, but instead of measuring the distribution of income in a population, it measures the distribution of education measured as years of schooling among the population.⁶⁷

Honduras has a relatively good level of education for a Central American country. About 70% have completed primary school, though considerably fewer have progressed to secondary school.

The gender difference in education is very small, with women only having 0.3 years less schooling than the average. The graph above shows the educational attainment of all Hondurans above 25 years, therefore gives a glance of the human capital of the labour force.

Enrolment in Primary, Secondary and Tertiary schools (2000-2011)⁶⁸ Total and Female, Honduras and Latin America & Caribbean



Net enrolment is the ratio of children of official school age, who are enrolled in school to the population of the corresponding official school age. Gross enrolment is the ratio of total enrolment, regardless of age, to the population of the corresponding official school age. Gross primary enrolment is therefore sometimes higher than 100%.

There are some missing data on enrolment in Honduras. However, it is notable that women have higher enrolment rates in all types of education, especially secondary education. It is also a regional trend for women to have higher enrolment rates in the Latin American and Caribbean.

Secondary and tertiary educations have lower enrolment rates than the regional average, whereas more enrol into primary schools in Honduras than what is average for the Latin American and Caribbean. Notwithstanding, the Honduran Congress approved the Fundamental Education Law in 2012, providing support for poor families, funds for bilingual

education, and establishing new requirements for teacher certification and free, compulsory education through high school.

The government strengthening the secondary education by enhancing materials, shoes, and uniforms for families with limited means and will begin

training teachers to teach in bilingual Spanish/English classrooms. In addition, all teachers will be required to hold university degrees by the year 2018. There are estimations that the government will need to hire 15,000 new teachers at the secondary level and to train 5,000 teachers for bilingual classrooms.⁶⁹

Vocational Training

Vocational Training ⁷⁰ (2010)		
Pupils in vocational training	Honduras	301,435
Ratio of pupils in vocational training to all pupils in secondary education	Honduras	46 %
	LAC	10 %
Ratio of pupils in vocational training out of 15-24 year olds	Honduras	19 %
	LAC	5.4 %

As a previously showed, there has been a significant growth of secondary education in Honduras, from 35% in 1991 to 73% in 2011. Also enrollment in technical/vocational programs is significantly much higher than the average in Latin America and the Caribbean (including the close neighboring countries), with a total 46% of total enrollment in secondary education, out of which an estimated 56% are women.⁷¹

It is estimated that 34% of formal firms in Honduras are offering formal training.⁷²

Organizations have argued that the non-formal vocational training system is not oriented towards existing needs on the labour market and presents obstacles to improvement of the employment situation for young people.

New programs are implemented to promote non-formal vocational training. Among others, a program was launched in 2013 selected non-formal vocational training institutions offer further education options tailored to existing needs. The target group consists of male and female trainees in the non-formal vocational qualification system, together with job seekers or underemployed young people of both genders who belong to poor or disadvantaged population groups.⁷³

The Honduran National Vocational Training Institute (INFOP) offers a wide range of vocational training to workers. Although the institution is independent, it collaborates with the government and the business sector in order to contribute towards growth in national productivity. The institution operates with a wide range of programs.⁷⁴

Social Protection

Public spending on social protection schemes ⁷⁵ (2010)		
Public social protection expenditure, excl. health	Lempira	2.8 billion
	US\$	148 million
	% of GDP	0.94 %
	per capita	19.4 US\$
	% of government expenditure	5.3 %
Public health care	% of GDP	3.5 %
Health social protection coverage	% of population	12 %
Trends in government expenditure in health	% changes per year (2007-2011)	3.1 %

Benefits, coverage and contributions to pension schemes in Honduras ⁷⁶ (2009-2010)		
Social benefits for the active age	% of GDP	0.2 %
Sickness, maternity, employment injury, disability	% of GDP	0.2 %
Old age pension effective coverage (age 65+ men; 60+ females)	Proportion of elderly	8.4 %
Old age effective coverage to a pension scheme	Active contributors working age 15-64, %	11 %

Coverage of IHSS and other schemes ⁷⁷				
	EM	IVM	RP	Others
Of population	17 %	17 %	7.4 %	3.3 %
Of the economic active population	19 %	16 %	18 %	5 %
Of waged workers	48 %	39 %	46 %	11 %
<i>IHSS has three systems: Enfermedad-Maternidad (E-M) provides medical services in IHSS clinics, sickness leave and maternity benefits. Invalidez, Vejez Y Muerte (IVM) provides invalidity, old-age and survivor pensions. Riesgo Profesional (RP) covers professional risks and work injuries.</i>				

According to the ILO, social protection in Honduras operates on three areas: health, social insurance, and social welfare. Contributory social security covers only a small percentage of the working population, with no more than an estimated 20%, out of which 12% are in health care. Persons engaged in informal work and with low incomes are most frequently inadequately covered although a myriad of social welfare programs are currently operating.

The government presented a new national Social Protection Policy (SPP) in 2011.⁷⁸ The policy has

incorporated socially vulnerable groups and people of working age without access to decent employment as well as references are made to enhancement of employability and/or entrepreneurial skills. However, the policy does not include the labour market regulation nor openly unemployed workers are not identified as a group requiring attention in the policy's framework.⁷⁹ Notwithstanding, the Government has aimed to launch an Inter-Agency Strategic Plan for the Social Protection Policy 2012–2016. The plan is estimated to be "gradual and progressive" since the scope of the policy is limited due to available resources.

Generally, Honduras' workers have a myriad of social security schemes in the formal public and private sectors, e.g. the health system comprises both public and private services; and seven organizations form the social welfare system and running 22 different social welfare programs.

The largest scheme is the *Instituto Hondureño de Seguridad Social* (IHSS). Self-employed, domestic, agricultural and temporary workers are excluded from work injury, maternity benefits and sickness leave; but self-employed and domestic workers can enter the *Invalidez, Vejez Y Muerte* (IVM) scheme and the medical service part of *Enfermedad-Maternidad* (E-M) for a total of 12.5% of monthly earnings.⁸⁰ Overall, IHSS are insuring around 1.6 million of the population, which is about 19% of the total population.⁸¹

Permanent government workers, teachers, university employees and the military each have their own social protection schemes. In total, these schemes cover around 267,600 affiliates and their family members.⁸²

The ILO convention 183 on maternity leave protection has not been ratified. Following the Labour Code, maternity leave is compulsory at 10 weeks and requires a medical certificate. Wages are fully compensated with two thirds from IHSS and one third from the employer.⁸³

ILO has argued that the social welfare in Honduras is limited by comparatively low funding rates and questionable efficiency in practice, among others due to excessive operational costs; unfocused, slow rates of implementation; and superficial impact assessments.⁸⁴

General Economic Performance

Key Facts ⁸⁵ 2013 (est.)				
GDP	GDP per capita (PPP) (US\$)	GDP real growth (%)	Human Development Index (2012) ⁸⁶	Gini Index (2007)
19 billion (US\$)	4,800 163 of 229 countries	2.8	0.632 120 of 187 countries	57.7 8 of 141 countries
<p>The Human Development Index (HDI) measures the average of a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent standard of living.</p> <p>This Gini Index is measured if income were distributed with perfect 'equality', the index would be zero; if income were distributed with perfect 'inequality', the index would be 100. In terms of the ranking, the first country has the highest inequality, while the number 136 has the highest equality.</p>				

Doing business ⁸⁷	Control of corruption	Government effectiveness	Rule of Law
104 of 189 countries	-0.69 (2007) -0.94 (2012)	-0.55 (2007) -0.72 (2012)	-0.92 (2007) -1.17 (2012)
<p>A high ranking on the Ease of Doing Business Index means the regulatory environment is more conducive to the start-up and operation of a local firm.⁸⁸</p> <p>The selected Governance Indicators cover the years 2007 and 2012 and ranging from -2.5 to 2.5; i.e. negative tendencies below the zero mean and unit standard deviation, score negative measurements.⁸⁹</p>			

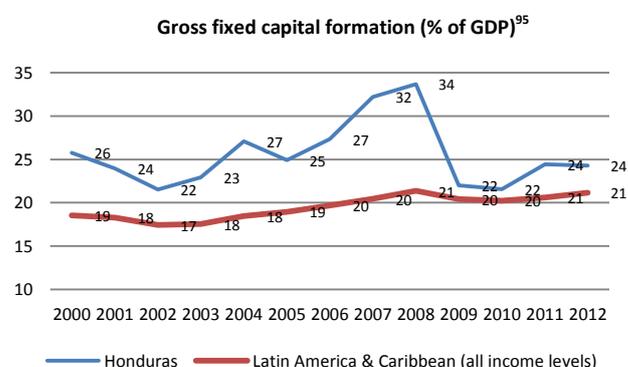
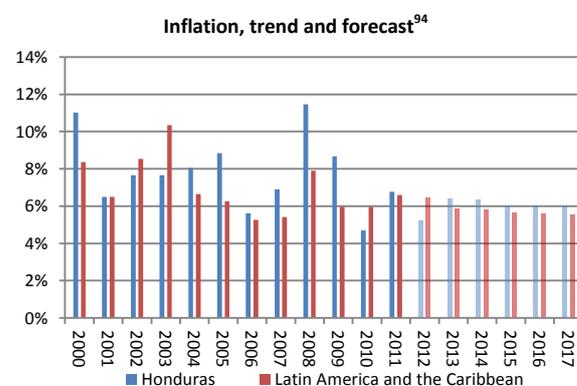
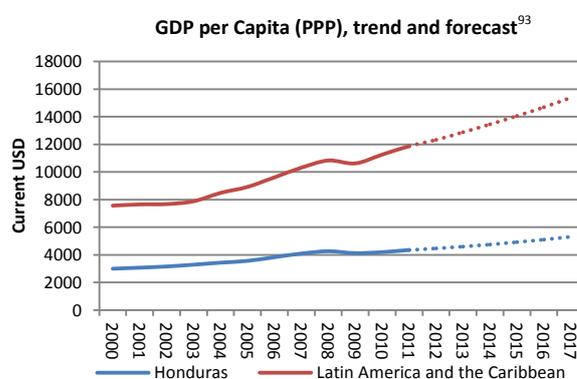
Honduras is a lower-middle income country. The country suffers from high unequal distribution of income and has confronted political and economic difficulties by a military coup in 2009, where the international community withdrew its financial and political support, and the global financial crisis in the same period affected its export sector.

Honduras went into recession in 2009 with a negative growth rate at -2.1% and fixed capital formation plummeted down to 22% of GDP. Increased remittances, public investment and exports made the growth rate somewhat recover to 3.3% in 2012.⁹⁰ Honduras received a loan from IMF in a Standby Arrangement in 2010 and at the concluding Article IV Consultation in 2013 expressed that the country has a robust economic growth and modest inflation. However, it also was noted that the external and fiscal positions have weakened; increasing downside risks and vulnerabilities, and poverty reduction remains a major challenge.⁹¹ The economic growth is estimated at 2.8% in 2013.

Honduras is the most violent country in the world, in terms of the murder rate, and the rate has been increasing in the last couple of years. This is largely

due to drug trade and social inequality. Instability has affected the economy.⁹²

The Doing Business index ranks Honduras as medium to low at 104 out of 189 countries. On the indicators Honduras scores very high on getting credit, while Protecting Minority Investors and Enforcing Contracts are quite low. Starting a Business has declining slightly since 2013/14. Honduras has low scores on all three governance indicators, especially on Rule of Law, and declining.



Trade

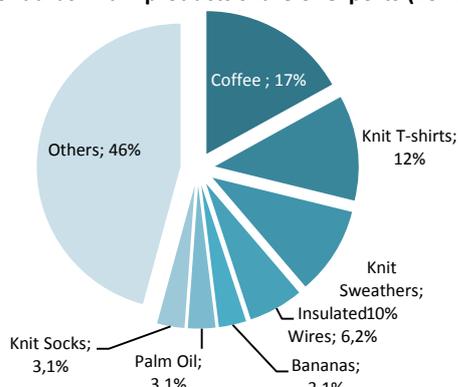
Trade and Foreign Direct Investment ⁹⁶ 2013 (est.)			
Exports	Imports	FDI flow ⁹⁷ (average 2008-12)	FDI Stock ⁹⁸ (2012)
7.9 billion US\$ 42 % of GDP	11 billion US\$ 60 % of GDP	858 million US\$ 5.4 % of GDP	9.0 billion US\$ 48 % of GDP

Exports form a significant part of Honduras' economy, though imports are still higher. The rate of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows to GDP is also high. It fell drastically in 2009, but has since somewhat recovered.

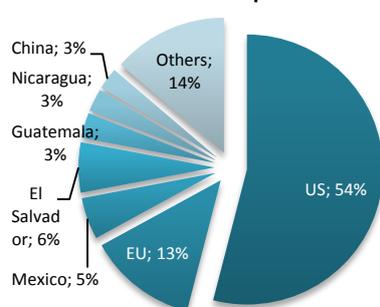
One of the engines of the country's growth has been FDI, which has accounted, on average, for about 5.8% of GDP during the past decade.⁹⁹ The high rate of exports and FDI is mainly attributed to the significant Export Processing Zones (EPZ).¹⁰⁰ The single largest exporting partner is the United States, which is also Honduras' largest source of FDI.

While historically dependent on the export of bananas and coffee, Honduras has diversified its export base to include clothing and automobile wire harnessing.

Honduras' main products share of exports (2012)¹⁰¹



Honduras' main export markets (2013)¹⁰²



Trade agreements

Honduras has bilateral trade agreements with Costa Rica, Mexico, Guatemala, Panama, and Taiwan.

Honduras is also part of the Central American Integration System, which includes the Central American Common Market and has a Consultative Committee involving labour and works to harmonise education systems.¹⁰³

Honduras is a member of the CAFTA-DR, which was initiated in 2002. It is an agreement between the United States and Central American states, with the goal of setting up a free trade area. It requires the two countries to uphold the four core ILO labour standards, as well as acceptable conditions of work, in a manner that does not affect trade. It sets up a monitoring mechanism.¹⁰⁴ CAFTA has been controversial in the United States, for not making enough labour and environmental requirements,¹⁰⁵ as well as in the Central American countries for seeking to liberalise state owned enterprises and opening markets to subsidised United States agricultural products.¹⁰⁶

Honduras benefits from EU's unilateral GSP+ special incentive arrangement, which allows duty and quota free access for most products. To be granted and continue to be granted GSP+, a country must ratify and effectively implement conventions within human rights, environmental and the eight ILO Core Conventions. The European Parliament and European Council will examine each beneficiary every second year.¹⁰⁷ GSP+ is very much a continuation of the 'special arrangement to combat drug production and trafficking', which Honduras benefitted from before 2005.

So far only Sri Lanka has lost GSP+ benefits due to poor human rights standards, but countries like El Salvador and Georgia has been scrutinised due to labour standards.¹⁰⁸

Along with five other Central American countries, Honduras has entered an association agreement with EU. The association agreement is to strengthen regional integration between the Central American countries, including cooperation, harmonisation and improvement of labour market. In turn, the EU will provide trade benefits.¹⁰⁹

Export Processing Zones

Honduras established its first EPZ, or *maquilas*, in 1976, and in 1998 the entire country was declared a free trade zone.¹¹⁰ There are 102 EPZs and 19 industrial parks. Strikes are permitted if they do not interfere with the operation of the plant.

In 2006 there were about 354,000 workers in the *maquilas*, 75% of them female. *Maquila* exports made up 61% of total exports, and mainly exported to the United States within textile, footwear, services, electronics, equipment assembly and food processing.¹¹¹

According to ITUC, there are no trade unions independent of employers or collective bargaining. In many cases workers have to work 12 hours a day six to seven days a week to meet high production quotas. Social security fees are often not paid and protests are met with dismissals and blacklisting.¹¹² Anti-union activities by employers and international contractors were reported.¹¹³

The American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) released a report in 2013, which is critical of NGO's providing audit of corporate social responsibility, using among others examples from factories in the EPZs in 2008.

Several companies in the country's *maquilas* instituted solidarity associations that, to some extent, functioned as company unions for the purposes of setting wages and negotiating working conditions.¹¹⁴

On the other hand, a study from ILO recorded that union activity has been largely ineffective, and the size of the union force has shrunk in recent years. Instead, many EPZ companies have turned to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives to deflect criticism of their anti-union activity. Despite legislation that protects the right to unionize, under-resourced unions, aggressive anti-union management, and a poor legal enforcement mechanism ensure that the process is extremely difficult if not impossible.¹¹⁵

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