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The Labour Force of Curaçao 2025: The Supply Side of the Labour Market

This report presents the results of the 2025 Labour Force Survey (LFS) of Curaçao. It analyses the labour force, employment, unemployment and economic inactivity, and provides an in-depth view of the labour market by examining gender and age distributions, labour force participation, income, employment characteristics and other labour market trends.

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Foreword

I am pleased to present the results of the development of the Labour Market of Curaçao for the year 2025 publication of the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) Curaçao. **The Labour Force of Curaçao 2025: The Supply Side of the Labour Market** provides an overview of the latest developments in Curaçao's labour market based on the results of the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

The statistics presented in this report offer valuable information on labour force participation, employment, unemployment, and other key labour market indicators. They provide policymakers, businesses, researchers, and the public with reliable information to better understand current labour market developments and support informed decision-making.

The Central Bureau of Statistics remains committed to producing high-quality, independent, and timely official statistics. This publication is the result of the dedication and commitment of our staff, particularly the statistical researcher Mr. Michael Matthews, who contributed significantly to its preparation. We also sincerely thank all households who participated in the Labour Force Survey 2025 for their valuable cooperation and contribution.

Hopefully this publication will serve as a useful reference for everyone interested in the labour market of Curaçao and contribute to a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges that shape our workforce.

I want to extend my sincere appreciation to all households that participated in the survey. Their cooperation makes it possible to produce reliable and high-quality statistics that contribute to a better understanding of Curaçao's labour market.

The director of Central Bureau of Statistics

Sean de Boer

Contents

List of figures

List of tables

Summary

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a household survey that collects information on the size and structure of the labour force at a given time. The Central Bureau of Statistics of Curaçao has been conducting a LFS since 1987 to monitor developments in the labour force on the island.

In 2025 the labour force on Curaçao decreased from a total of 78,013 in 2024, to 74,807. Of these 74,807 persons, 70,980 were employed and 3,828 were unemployed. Curaçao saw a decrease in its unemployment rate from 7.8 percent in 2024 to 5.1 percent in 2025. The labour force also dropped, driven by an increase in the economically inactive population. This trend was seen across gender and age groups. The participations rates -both gross and net- dropped compared to 2024, from 58.7 and 54.1 percent to 55 percent and 52.2 percent respectively.

When delving deeper into the employed population, it was reported that nearly 55 percent of them were employees in permanent employment. Furthermore, the occupation group *service and sales workers* were the most common occupations overall and for women while the group *Craft and Related Trades Workers* was the most common for men. *Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles* was the most reported sector of employment. 8.1 percent of the employed population reported that they wish to work more hours next to their current employment.

The number of unemployed persons decreased from 6,094 in 2024 to 3,828 in 2025. The age groups 15-24 and 55-64 were the largest unemployed age groups. The main reason for not working, according to the unemployed population, is being willing to work but not being able to find a job. More than a third of the unemployed population have been partaking in job-searching for 12 months or longer and visiting companies personally was the most common method of searching for work. Furthermore, a sizeable portion of the unemployed population have reported that they are willing to work in any sector and are not looking for a specific sector to work in. The ones who are seeking a specific sector have reported the *Construction* sector most commonly.

The number of economically inactive persons grew from 54,919 in 2024 to 61,070 in 2025. More than 60 percent of the economically inactive population is the 65+ age group which means that the main cause of being inactive is age/retirement. The age group 15-24 was the second largest group and their main reason for being inactive was wishing to finish school/study first. Noteworthy, around 10 percent of the inactive population indicated that they are inactive due to ill health/ mental or physical disability. It was the main reason for inactivity for the age groups 35-44, 45-54 and 55-64.

A closer examination of the labour force of Curaçao indicates that the decline in unemployment rate and unemployed population decrease does not necessarily reflect solely positive labour market developments. Instead, this is accompanied by an increase in the economically inactive population, due to a variety of reasons.

These reasons include an ageing population, which has resulted in a larger share of individuals abandoning the labour market due to retirement. In addition, individuals aged 15-24 are prioritizing completing their education before entering the labour force. Also, among persons aged 35 to 64, ill health and disabilities constitute a barrier to labour market participation. Indicating that it is not only by choice that they are inactive.

Furthermore, informal labour might contribute to underreporting labour force participation, as individuals engaged in informal activities may be less likely to declare their economic activity. Particularly, the tourism and construction sectors have seen an increase in informal labour activities.

The two main sources of income in 2025 were labour and old age pension (AOV). The average monthly income was 2,060 across all sources. For women it this was Cg. 1,839 and for men Cg. 2,342. The income category Cg. 2,001-3000 was the most common for the employed population. At the same time more than half of the employed population reported that they earn more than the minimum hourly wage.

No income was most frequently cited by the unemployed population. The ones that did report an income reported the income category Cg. 1-1,000 the most. For the economically not active population, old age pension (AOV) was the most common income source, reflecting the composition of this population. Similarly, the Cg. 1–1,000 income category was the most prevalent income category among this population.

Having a second source of income is not very common, with almost 66 percent of the population reporting that they do not have a second source of income. Old age pension (AOV) and labour were the two most common sources for persons who have indicated that they have a second source income. Among those who reported having a secondary source of income, the reported monthly income from this was approximately Cg. 1,208. Of all reported secondary sources of income, own capital/property generated the highest average monthly income.

A gender difference is seen in unpaid domestic and care work. Women spend more time a day doing housework or taking care of other members of the household, compared to men. On average women spend 6 percent (1.5 hours) more on domestic and care work daily than men.

Voluntary work is not very common on Curaçao, only 13.4 percent of persons have indicated that they have participated in voluntary work in the past year while 86 percent indicated that they have not. With little difference in participation between men and women.

1. Introduction

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is one of the principal instruments for assessing labour market developments and is implemented in more than 160 countries worldwide (International Labour Office, 2011). The LFS is a household-based sample survey that collects information directly from individuals on their labour market status, working conditions, and socio-economic characteristics. Owing to its standardized methodology, the survey facilitates the production of internationally comparable labour market indicators. On Curaçao, the LFS has been conducted annually since 1987 by the Central Bureau of Statistics Curaçao (CBS) (Central Bureau of Statistics Curaçao, 1990). The survey serves as the primary source of information on labour market conditions, providing comprehensive data on employment, unemployment and labour force participation.

Over the past decade, Curaçao's labour market has experienced fluctuations reflecting both domestic economic challenges and external shocks. The unemployment rates were 13.3 percent, 14.1 percent and 13.4 percent in 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively. However, a period of business closures resulting in loss of employment contributed to a sharp increase in unemployment, which reached 17.4 percent in 2019 (Central Bureau of Statistics Curaçao, 2020). This was then further compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic which caused an unprecedented disruption, driving the unemployment rate to 19.1 percent in 2020 and sharply reducing the employed population (Central Bureau of Statistics Curaçao, 2020). The years that followed saw a sustained recovery: the unemployment rate declined from 13.1 percent in 2022 to 7.8 percent in 2024, while youth unemployment fell from 29.8 to 16.3 percent over the same period (Central Bureau of Statistics Curaçao, 2025). Furthermore, the employed population increased to approximately 71,900 persons in 2024, reflecting continued economic recovery and growth (Central Bureau of Statistics Curaçao, 2025).

This publication presents an analysis of key labour market indicators for Curaçao for 2025. Attention is given to the size and composition of the labour force, employment and unemployment levels and labour force participation rates. In addition, the survey provides insight into occupational and sectoral employment patterns, income distribution, unpaid domestic and care work, and voluntary work. Together, these indicators offer a comprehensive overview of the supply side of the labour market and provide valuable information of the ways in which individuals participate in both paid and unpaid forms of work.

The remainder of the report is structured as follows. Chapter 2 describes the survey methodology, including the study design, definitions, and data collection procedures. Chapter 3 presents the labour force results in detail, covering the employed, unemployed, and economically inactive populations by gender and age group. It also examines and explains the changes observed in these labour force indicators. Chapter 4 examines income results, including the distribution of main and secondary income sources and average earnings by gender and labour status. Chapter 5 focuses on unpaid domestic and care work, while Chapter 6 presents findings on voluntary work. Finally, chapter 7 summarizes the main findings and discusses their implications for labour market developments on Curaçao.

2. Methodology

2.1 Study design and study population

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a sample survey designed to produce estimates of the labour market situation of the resident population aged 15 years and older. Data collection was conducted between September and December 2025. Although fieldwork spanned this period, the survey results refer to a single reference date of 1 October 2025. This reference date was adopted to ensure that all estimates represent a consistent point in time.

The resident population as of 1 October 2025 was estimated using the standard population estimation methodology of CBS (CBS, 2026). The estimated resident population on the reference date was 156,929 persons, which formed the basis for weighting and estimation of the survey results.

The sampling frame for the LFS was taken from the addresses provided by a verified stakeholder. The sample was selected using a simple random sampling design without replacement. By using this procedure, each household in the database had an equal chance of participating in the survey.

The sample size of the survey was 3,100 households, with a minimum of 30 households for every zone on the island. The target response was set at 1,860 households. Local media and social platforms were used to inform the community of the upcoming survey. Furthermore, to ensure that the selected households would be fully informed, a letter was sent to them containing background information of the survey and request for cooperation and participation.

The target group of the LFS included non-institutionalized men and women residing for 12 months or more in Curaçao or planning to stay for 12 months or longer on the island. By defining the target population in this manner, tourists and persons with short stays (e.g. attending short-term training activities), who do not contribute to the labour market, were not included. The LFS makes statements about the population aged 15 years and older (also known as the working population) (International Labour Office, 2013).

In total 1,758 households participated in the survey, which is a target response rate of 94.4 percent. This resulted in data on 4,166 participating individuals.

Individuals who stated during the interview that they did not want to continue answering or who asked interviewers to leave were removed during the data cleaning process. The total number of participants in the 2025 LFS, after data cleaning, was 4,054.

2.2 Data collection and questionnaire

The Fieldwork department of CBS carried out fieldwork for the study. Data collection for the LFS (and social survey) took place in the period of September 27th to December 1st, 2025. As in previous years, the data was collected by face-to-face interviews where the interviewers used tablets to digitally fill in the questions for the participants. Interviewers were trained in the methodology of the study and the use of tablets, to assure consistency in data collection. Within the selected households, basic demographic information was collected on all household members, while labour force information was collected for household members aged 15 years and older.

The subjects included in the questionnaire were:

1. Demographics
    a. Age
    b. Gender
    c. Country of birth
    d. Nationality
2. Labour Market
    a. Current job or own company/business
3. Employed population
    a. Economic position in current work
    b. Economic activity of company/business
    c. Occupation in current work
    d. Average working hours per week
4. Unemployed population
    a. Amount of time looking for work
    b. Reasons for looking for work
    c. Methods of looking for work
    d. Reasons for it being difficult to find work
    e. Desired type of work
    f. Desired working hours per week
    g. Willingness to accept other types of work
5. Economically not active population
    a. Reasons for not working or looking for a job
6. Income
    a. The amount of the highest income last month
    b. Source of highest income
    c. Amount of second highest income last month
    d. Source of second highest income
7. Unpaid domestic and care work
    a. Time spent on domestic and care work per week
8. Volunteer work
    a. Did you volunteer over past 12 months
    b. For what cause/organization

2.3 Analysis

After the fieldwork period the collected data were coded by the research department using international classification systems, while also considering local situation. The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED-1997), the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC-rev. 4), and the International Standard Classification of Occupation (ISCO-2008) were applied to ensure consistency and comparability of the data.

As a sample survey, weighting procedures were applied to produce estimates representative of the total population. Post-stratification weighting procedures were calculated by the research department using population estimates derived from the 2023 Census and the population registry database of the Registry Office (Kranshi). The weighted data was subsequently used in all analyses and tabulations presented in this report.

The analysis primarily consisted of descriptive statistical techniques. Frequencies, percentages, ratios and population estimates were calculated to summarize the characteristics of the labour force and to describe key labour market indicators. Cross-tabulations were used to examine differences cross population groups, such as age and sex. The results are presented in tables and figures to facilitate interpretation and comparison.

Despite the application of weighting procedures, the LFS remains a sample survey and the resulting population estimates are subject to sampling variability. Consequently, the reported figures should be interpreted as estimates rather than exact population counts, and small differences between estimates may not necessarily reflect statistically significant differences in the population.

2.4 Definitions

The definitions used in the LFS are based on the Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM) from the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the local labour market situation. Accordingly, individuals 15 years and older were classified in one of the three categories of the labour market (labour status): employed, unemployed, or economically not active. The definitions are provided below.

Employed

All persons of 15 years and older who during the research period: a. had a job or have their own business; or b. who during the week preceding the research period performed any work for pay in cash or in kind, for 4 hours or more.

Unemployed

All persons 15 years and older who during the research period: a. did not have a job or a business of their own; and b. had actively been seeking work in the preceding month of the research period; and c. who were available to start working or start a business within two weeks.

Economically not active

All persons of 15 years and older who during the research period: a. did not have a job or own a business; and b. who were not actively seeking work.

Labour force

The total number of persons who are employed added to the total number of persons who are unemployed.

Unemployment rate

The number of unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force.

Youth unemployment rate

The unemployment rate in the age category of 15 to 24 years.

Labour Force participation rate

The number of persons in the labour force as a percentage of the working age population.

Gross Participation rate

The number of persons in the labour force as a percentage of the total population.

Net Participation rate

The number of persons working as a percentage of the total population.

Underemployment

The percentage of employed persons who are employed and are seeking or are available for additional work during the reference period.

Individuals 15 years and older were also classified in the following categories depending on their answers.

In addition to the labour status definitions presented above, the following definitions are used throughout the LFS.

Informal labour

Working arrangements that are in practice or by law not subject to national labour legislation, income taxation, or entitlement to social protection or other employment categories; for example, advance notice of dismissal, severance pay or paid annual or sick leave (International Labour Organization, 2023).

Unpaid domestic and care work

Activities under unpaid domestic services for household and family members and unpaid care services for household and family members (United Nations Development Programme, 2018). Refers to unpaid housework, such as cooking, cleaning and other household tasks, and taking care of household members, including children and older persons.

Volunteer work

Unpaid non-compulsory work; that is, time individuals give without pay to activities performed either through an organization or directly for others outside their own household (International Labour Office, 2011).

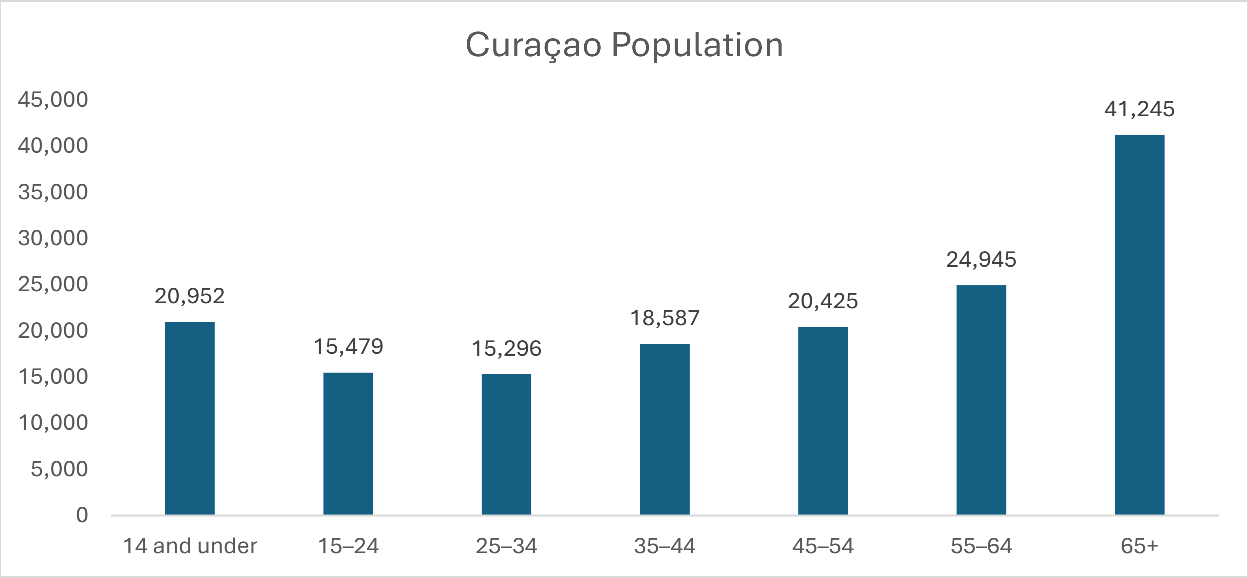
3. Labour Results

Population size and age composition are important determinants of the labour force. Persons aged 15 years and older may participate in the labour market. However, with the retirement age being 65 on Curaçao, many individuals in the 65+ age group are less likely to be part of the labour force.

3.1 Population Composition in Relation to the Labour Force

The population of Curaçao was 156,929 at the reference point of the survey, with the 65+ age group being the largest with 41,245 persons. Figure 1 below gives an overview of the population per age group. The population aged 0–14 has continued to shrink, standing at 20,952 in 2025 compared to 22,001 in 2024 (table 1). Someone who is the age of 15 or older could be part of the labour force; this group totalled 135,977 persons.

Figure 1. Population of Curaçao on October 1st, 2025



3.2 Labour Force

The labour force is defined as the total number of employed and unemployed persons aged 15 years and over. Table 1 below shows Curaçao's total labour force. In 2025, the total labour force stood at 74,807 persons, a decrease from 78,013 in 2024. This decline is driven by a sharp contraction in the unemployed population, as the number of persons actively seeking work fell from 6,094 in 2024 to 3,828 in 2025. The unemployment rate has dropped to 5.1 percent, down from 7.8 percent in 2024[1]. However, Curaçao's employed population also shrank from 71,919 persons in 2024 to 70,980 in 2025.

[1] Further analysis of the unemployment rate is presented in chapter 3.4 and 3.6

Table 1. Labour Force of Curaçao 2016-2025

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	2024	2025
Total Population	156,721	156,597	156,230	153,545	150,789	148,924	154,934	156,929
Population 0-14	29,382	28,539	29,950	28,665	25,735	24,238	22,001	20,952
Population 15+	127,339	128,058	126,280	124,880	125,054	124,696	132,933	135,977
Employed population	65,118	62,834	60,729	61,547	57,050	66,722	71,919	70,980
Unemployed population	9,953	10,313	9,424	12,992	13,442	10,035	6,094	3,828
Economically not active population	52,268	54,911	54,113	49,715	54,562	47,479	54,919	61,170
Labour Force	75,071	73,147	70,153	74,539	70,492	76,757	78,013	74,807
In % of total population 15+								
Gross participation rate (%)	59	57.1	55.6	59.7	56.4	61.6	58.7	55.0
Net participation rate (%)	51.1	49.1	48.1	49.3	45.6	53.5	54.1	52.2
Unemployment rate (%)	13.3	14.1	13.4	17.4	19.1	13.1	7.8	5.1

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics Curaçao
Note: Due to rounding, totals may not add up exactly.

Furthermore, the gross participation rate among the population 15+ stands at 55.0 percent in 2025 and it was 58.7 percent in 2024, while the net participation rate, reflecting those who are employed, stands at 52.2 percent down from 54.1 percent from 2024.

3.2.1 Labour Force by gender

At the gender level (tables 2-3), the male labour force in 2025 totalled 35,804 persons while the female labour force totalled 39,003. The male unemployment rate fell to 4.7 percent compared with 5.5 percent among females.

Male labour force

Curaçao's male population grew from 58,564 in 2024 to 60,216 in 2025 (table 2). However, the male labour force declined modestly from 36,352 in 2024 to 35,804 in 2025. Male employed population grew from 33,745 to 34,130 in 2025. Male unemployment fell from 2,607 to 1,674 persons, reducing the male unemployment rate from 7.2 to 4.7 percent. The economically not active male population increased to 24,412 from 22,212. The gross participation rate was 59.5 percent and the net participation rate stood at 56.7 percent, down from 62.1 percent and 57.6 percent in 2024, respectively.

Table 2. Labour Force of Curaçao 2016-2025 (Male)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	2024	2025
Population 15+	56,215	56,504	55,314	54,955	55,074	55,128	58,564	60,216
Employed population	31,684	29,810	29,575	28,710	26,934	31,546	33,745	34,130
Unemployed population	4,222	4,396	3,779	5,456	5,760	4,049	2,607	1,674
Economically not active population	20,308	22,298	21,432	20,383	22,381	19,289	22,212	24,412
Labour Force	35,906	34,206	33,354	34,166	32,694	35,595	36,352	35,804
In % of total population 15+								
Gross participation rate (%)	63.9	60.5	60.3	62.2	59.4	64.6	62.1	59.5
Net participation rate (%)	56.4	52.8	53.5	52.2	48.9	57.2	57.6	56.7
Unemployment rate (%)	11.8	12.9	11.3	16	17.6	11.4	7.2	4.7

Female labour force

Curaçao's female population grew from 74,370 in 2024 to 75,761 in 2025 (table 3). The female labour force decreased from 41,662 persons in 2024 to 39,003 in 2025. The female employed population decreased with 1,325 to 36,849 in 2025. Despite this contraction, the female unemployment rate fell from 8.4 percent in 2024 to 5.5 percent in 2025, as the number of unemployed women fell from 3,488 to 2,154. The female economically not active population reached 36,758 a growth of 4,050 women. The gross participation rate for women stood at 51.5 percent, while the net participation rate was 48.6 percent down from 56.0 percent and 51.3 percent in 2024 respectively. Table 3 provides an overview of these results.

Table 3. Labour Force of Curaçao 2016-2025 (Female)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	2024	2025
Population 15+	71,125	71,554	70,966	69,925	69,980	69,568	74,370	75,761
Employed population	33,434	33,024	31,055	32,837	30,116	35,175	38,174	36,849
Unemployed population	5,731	5,917	5,645	7,536	7,682	5,986	3,488	2,154
Economically not active population	31,960	32,613	32,681	29,332	32,181	28,190	32,708	36,758
Labour Force	39,165	38,941	36,700	40,373	37,798	41,161	41,662	39,003
In % of total population 15+								
Gross participation rate (%)	55.1	54.4	51.7	57.7	54	59.2	56	51.5
Net participation rate (%)	47	46.2	43.8	47	43	50.6	51.3	48.6
Unemployment rate (%)	14.6	15.2	15.4	18.7	20.3	14.5	8.4	5.5

3.2.2 Labour Force by age

This section will examine the labour force across different age groups, providing an overview of labour market trends and patterns by age (tables 4-9). Furthermore, youth unemployment is an important indicator of the labour market as it indicates the effectiveness of the transition from education to work (International Labour Organization, n.d.). Please note that students are not counted in the unemployment rate unless they have stated that they are actively looking for employment and can start within two weeks.

15-24 Labour Force

The population between the ages of 15 and 24 grew from 14,861 in 2024 to 15,479 in 2025 (table 4). The labour force in this age cohort declined with 696 persons to 6,138 in 2025. The employed population also declined, from 5,722 in 2024 to 5,154 in 2025. However, the youth unemployment rate stands at 16.0 percent, a slight decline of 0.3 percentage points compared to 16.3 percent in 2024. The absolute number of unemployed youth fell from 1,113 in 2024 to 984 in 2025. Noteworthy, is that 41.7 percent of the unemployed youth are currently enrolled in a study or course. The number of economically inactive grew from 8,027 in 2024 to 9,341 in 2025. The gross participation rate among this age group fell from 46.0 percent in 2024 to 39.7 percent, while the net participation rate fell from 38.5 to 33.3 percent in 2025.

Table 4. Labour Force of Curaçao 2016-2025 (15-24 years)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	2024	2025
Population	19,215	18,807	18,016	17,300	16,680	15,219	14,861	15,479
Employed population	4,450	3,815	3,818	4,121	2,902	4,792	5,722	5,154
Unemployed population	2,593	1,858	1,579	2,952	2,119	2,032	1,113	984
Economically not active population	12,171	13,093	12,409	10,193	11,658	8,356	8,027	9,341
Labour Force	7,043	5,673	5,397	7,073	5,021	6,824	6,834	6,138
In % of total population 15+								
Gross participation rate (%)	36.7	30.2	30	40.9	30.1	44.8	46	39.7
Net participation rate (%)	23.2	20.3	21.2	23.8	17.4	31.5	38.5	33.3
Unemployment rate (%)	36.8	32.8	29.3	41.7	42.2	29.8	16.3	16.0

25-34 Labour Force

The population in the 25-34 age group declined slightly with 149 persons to 15,296 in 2025 (table 5). The labour force declined from 13,570 in 2024 to 12,998 in 2025. The employed population declined from 12,391 in 2024 to 12,330 in 2025. The unemployed population declined sharply from 1,180 in 2024 to 668 in 2025, a 43,4 percent decline. The unemployment rate for this group has fallen to 5.1 percent, matching the overall rate and down from 8.7 percent in 2024. The economically not active population grew from 1,875 in 2024 to 2,298 in 2025. The gross participation rate decreased from 87.9 percent in 2024 to 85.0 percent. While the net participation stood at 80.6 percent slight increase from 80.2 percent in 2024.

Table 5. Labour Force of Curaçao 2016-2025 (25-34 years)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	2024	2025
Population	18,035	18,334	18,161	17,600	16,810	16,265	15,445	15,296
Employed population	13,298	12,894	12,485	12,578	10,568	13,156	12,391	12,330
Unemployed population	2,298	2,976	2,764	2,433	3,376	1,726	1,180	668
Economically not active population	2,439	2,464	2,617	2,414	2,866	1,258	1,875	2,298
Labour Force	15,596	15,870	15,249	15,011	13,944	14,882	13,570	12,998
In % of total population 15+								
Gross participation rate (%)	86.5	86.6	84	85.3	83	91.5	87.9	85.0
Net participation rate (%)	73.7	70.3	68.7	71.5	62.9	80.9	80.2	80.6
Unemployment rate (%)	14.7	18.8	18.1	16.2	24.2	11.6	8.7	5.1

35-44 Labour Force

The population for the 35-44 age group has increased from 18,151 in 2024 to 18,587 in 2025 (table 6). The labour force declined from 16,374 in 2024 to 15,655 in 2025. The employed population decreased from 15,210 in 2024 to 15,078 in 2025. The unemployed population declined sharply from 1,163 in 2024 to 577 in 2025, a 50,4 percent decline. The unemployment rate for this group declined from 7.1 percent in 2024 to 3.7 percent in 2025. The economically not active population grew from 1,777 in 2024 to 2,932 in 2025. The gross participation rate fell from 90.2 percent in 2024 to 84.2 percent in 2025. While the net participation rate fell from 83.8 percent in 2024 to 81.1 percent in 2025.

Table 6. Labour Force of Curaçao 2016-2025 (35-44 years)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	2024	2025
Population	19,309	19,111	18,738	18,336	17,968	17,871	18,151	18,587
Employed population	14,871	14,703	13,859	13,861	13,454	14,763	15,210	15,078
Unemployed population	1,837	1,906	1,950	2,633	2,912	1,792	1,163	577
Economically not active population	2,601	2,502	2,830	1,802	1,603	1,277	1,777	2,932
Labour Force	16,708	16,609	15,809	16,494	16,366	16,555	16,374	15,655
In % of total population 15+								
Gross participation rate (%)	86.5	86.9	84.4	90	91.1	92.6	90.2	84.2
Net participation rate (%)	77	76.9	74	75.6	74.9	82.6	83.8	81.1
Unemployment rate (%)	11	11.5	12.3	16	17.8	10.8	7.1	3.7

45-54 Labour Force

The population of the 45-54 age group has declined from 21,152 in 2024 to 20,425 in 2025 (table 7). The labour force declined from 18,024 in 2024 to 17,399 in 2025. The employed population declined with 85 persons to 16,879 in 2025. The unemployed population declined from 1,060 in 2024 to 520 in 2025. A 51 percent decline. The unemployment rate dropped from 5.9 percent to 3 percent in 2025. The economically not active population declined from 3,128 in 2024 to 3,026 in 2025. The gross participation rate remained constant at 85.2 percent. While the net participation rate increased from 80.2 percent in 2024 to 82.6 percent.

Table 7. Labour Force of Curaçao 2016-2025 (45-54 years)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	2024	2025
Population	24,282	24,142	23,991	23,162	21,726	20,860	21,152	20,425
Employed population	18,690	17,952	17,424	16,558	15,289	16,254	16,964	16,879
Unemployed population	2,179	2,332	1,914	2,627	2,340	1,787	1,060	520
Economically not active population	3,413	3,858	4,228	3,772	4,098	2,704	3,128	3,026
Labour Force	20,869	20,284	19,338	19,185	17,629	18,041	18,024	17,399
In % of total population 15+								
Gross participation rate (%)	85.9	84	80.6	82.8	81.1	86.5	85.2	85.2
Net participation rate (%)	77	74.4	72.6	71.5	70.4	77.9	80.2	82.6
Unemployment rate (%)	10.4	11.5	9.9	13.7	13.3	9.9	5.9	3.0

55-64 Labour Force

The population in the 55-64 age group declined from 25,633 in 2024 to 24,945 in 2025 (table 8). The labour force declined from 18,768 in 2024 to 18,253 in 2025. The employed population declined from 17,706 in 2024 to 17,335 in 2025. The unemployed population declined from 1,062 in 2024 to 918 in 2025. The unemployment rate dropped from 5.7 percent to 5.0 percent. The economically not active population declined from 6,865 in 2024 to 6,692 in 2025. The gross participation rate remained constant at 73.2 percent while the net participation rate grew slightly from 69.1 percent to 69.5 percent.

Table 8. Labour Force of Curaçao 2016-2025 (55-64 years)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	2024	2025
Population	22,090	22,714	22,746	23,046	23,680	23,695	25,633	24,945
Employed population	11,422	11,070	11,555	12,267	12,902	14,656	17,706	17,335
Unemployed population	866	1,116	1,103	2,087	2,343	2,314	1,062	918
Economically not active population	9,802	10,528	9,792	8,544	8,434	6,691	6,865	6,692
Labour Force	12,288	12,186	12,658	14,354	15,245	16,970	18,768	18,253
In % of total population 15+								
Gross participation rate (%)	55.6	53.6	55.6	62.3	64.4	71.6	73.2	73.2
Net participation rate (%)	51.7	48.7	50.8	53.2	54.5	61.9	69.1	69.5
Unemployment rate (%)	7	9.2	8.7	14.5	15.4	13.6	5.7	5.0

65+ Labour Force

The 65+ population has grown by 3,734 persons from 37,691 in 2024 to 41,245 in 2025, driven by Curaçao's ageing demographic profile (table 9). The labour force shrank slightly from 4,444 in 2024 to 4,365 in 2025. The employed population aged 65 and over grew from 3,927 in 2024 to 4,205 in 2025 The unemployed population declined from 517 in 2024 to 160 in 2025. A 69.1 percent decrease. The unemployment rate declined from 11.6 percent in 2024 to 3.7 percent in 2025. The economically not active population grew with 3,633, from 33,247 in 2024 to 36,880 in 2025. The gross participation rate declined from 11.8 percent in 2024 to 10.6 percent in 2025. While the net participation rate declined from 10.4 percent in 2024 to 10.2 percent in 2025.

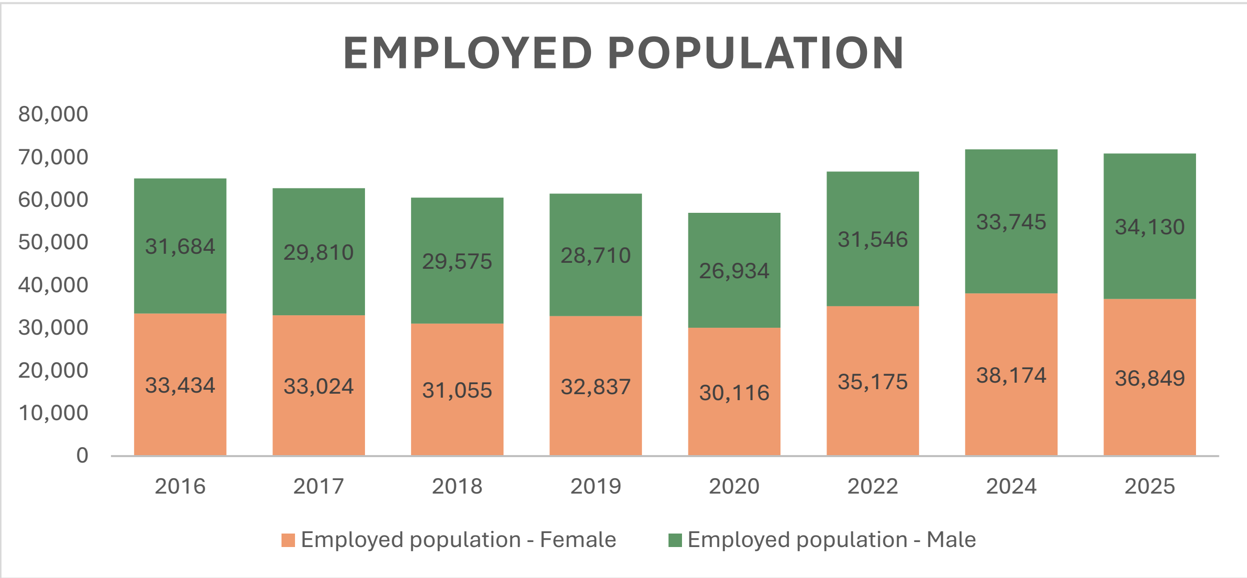
Table 9. Labour Force of Curaçao 2016-2025 (65+ years)

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022	2024	2025
Population	24,408	24,950	24,628	25,436	28,190	30,786	37,691	41,245
Employed population	2,386	2,400	1,587	2,162	1,935	3,100	3,927	4,205
Unemployed population	179	125	113	259	351	382	517	160
Economically not active population	21,843	22,425	22,325	22,989	25,903	27,194	33,247	36,880
Labour Force	2,565	2,525	1,700	2,421	2,286	3,482	4,444	4,365
In % of total population 15+								
Gross participation rate (%)	10.5	10.1	6.9	9.5	8.1	11.3	11.8	10.6
Net participation rate (%)	9.8	9.6	6.4	8.5	6.9	10.1	10.4	10.2
Unemployment rate (%)	7	5	6.6	10.7	15.4	11	11.6	3.7

3.3 Employed Population

Someone who is employed is 15 years or older and either has a job, their own business or during the week before the research period performed any work for pay or in kind for 4 hours or more. In 2025, the employed population was 70,980 persons, comprising 34,130 men and 36,849 women. After reaching 71,919 in 2024, the employed population decreased slightly, though it remains above pre-pandemic levels (figure 2). Figure 2 below shows development of the employed population from 2016 onwards.

Figure 2. Employed population development 2016-2025



The largest employed age groups are the 55–64-year-olds (17,335 persons; 24.4 percent) and the 45–54-year-olds (16,879 persons; 23.8 percent), reflecting the sustained increase in older-worker participation. The 35–44 group accounts for 21.2 percent, the 25–34 group for 17.4 percent, while youth (15–24) represent 7.3 percent and those aged 65 and above 5.9 percent of the employed population (table 10).

Table 10. Employed population by age group in 2025

Age group	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
15–24	2,444	2,710	5,154	6.6	7.9	7.3
25–34	6,315	6,015	12,330	17.1	17.6	17.4
35–44	7,980	7,098	15,078	21.7	20.8	21.2
45–54	8,981	7,898	16,879	24.4	23.1	23.8
55–64	9,087	8,248	17,335	24.7	24.2	24.4
65+	2,043	2,162	4,205	5.5	6.3	5.9
Total	36,849	34,130	70,980	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.3.1 Economic position

The largest category of employed persons in 2025 is employees in permanent service, accounting for 54.8 percent of the employed population (38,881 persons). Casual workers and freelancers account for 15.1

percent (10,714), while employees in temporary service account for 14.0 percent (9,955). The self-employed constitute 9.4 percent (6,680). Due to the high economic need, persons tend to find alternative ways to make ends meet, and the relatively high share of self-employment and casual work reflects this dynamic (Weber et al., 2023). Table 11 provides an overview of these economic positions.

A notable gender difference is observed: women are more concentrated in permanent service (60.2 percent) compared to men (48.8 percent). Men are disproportionately represented among casual workers and freelancers (19.7 percent male vs. 10.8 percent female) and employers (3.0 percent vs. 0.6 percent). Self-employment is also more prevalent among men (11.9 percent) than women (7.1 percent).

Table 11. Economic Position

Economic Position	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Employee in permanent service	22,193	16,688	38,881	60.2	48.8	54.8
Casual worker/Freelancer	3,991	6,723	10,714	10.8	19.7	15.1
Employee in temporary service: contract or definite time, recall worker	5,864	4,091	9,955	15.9	12	14
Self employed	2,621	4,058	6,680	7.1	11.9	9.4
Other/Not reported/Unknown	1,259	1,033	2,293	3.4	3	3.2
Employer	204	1,008	1,212	0.6	3	1.7
Unpaid family worker	388	248	636	1.1	0.7	0.9
Work for an employment agency ('uitzendkracht')	200	192	392	0.5	0.6	0.6
Trainee	130	89	218	0.4	0.3	0.3
Total	36,849	34,130	70,980	100	100	100

3.3.2 Occupations

The most common individual occupations in 2025 reflect the structure of Curaçao's economy, these can be seen in table 12 below. *Service and sales workers* are the largest occupations group, accounting for 22 percent of total employment. Followed by p*rofessionals* (15.5 percent) and *technicians and Associate professionals* (13.1 percent).

Gender segregation across occupations remains pronounced. The two largest occupation groups are predominantly female, these are *service and sales workers* and *professionals*, while groups such as *managers*, *craft and Related trades workers* and *plant and machine operators, and assemblers* are predominantly male. The occupations *armed Forces* and *skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers* are the least common occupations for both men and women.

Table 12. Occupations by gender

Occupation	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Service and Sales Workers	9,996	5,593	15,589	27.1	16.4	22
Professionals	7,214	3,770	10,984	19.6	11	15.5
Technicians and Associate Professionals	4,920	4,374	9,294	13.4	12.8	13.1
Elementary Occupations	4,156	4,806	8,962	11.3	14.1	12.6
Managers	3,606	4,275	7,881	9.8	12.5	11.1
Craft and Related Trades Workers	1,201	6,382	7,582	3.3	18.7	10.7
Clerical Support Workers	4,465	1,714	6,178	12.1	5	8.7
Plant and Machine Operators, and Assemblers	214	1,905	2,119	0.6	5.6	3
Other/Not reported/Unknown	977	716	1,692	2.5	2.1	2.3
Armed Forces Occupations	32	393	425	0.1	1.2	0.6
Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers	69	205	274	0.2	0.6	0.4
Total	36,849	34,130	70,980	100	100	100

3.3.3 Sectors

Table 13 below presents the five largest sectors by employment. Overall, the sector *Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles* employed the largest proportion of workers accounting for 16.2 percent of total employment. This was followed by the sectors *construction* (10.6 percent), *accommodation and food service activities* (9.5 percent), *Administrative and support service activities* (8.3 percent) and *Human health and social work activities* (8.1 percent).

There were some notable gender differences in the sectoral distribution. *Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles* was the largest employer for women (16.9 percent), slightly higher than the proportion for men (15.3 percent). The largest proportion for men was in the *Construction* sector (17.6 percent). Men were much more likely to be employed in construction than women (4.2 percent), making it also the only sector in the top five where men are more represented than women. In contrast, women were much more represented in the *Human health and social work activities* sector (12 percent compared to 3.9 percent). Women also had slightly higher employment shares in accommodation and food service activities (10.3 percent versus 8.6 percent) and administrative and support service activities (9.2 percent versus 7.2 percent)

Table 13. Top Five Sectors by Number of Employees

Sector	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	16.9	15.3	16.2
Construction	4.2	17.6	10.6
Accommodation and food service activities	10.3	8.6	9.5
Administrative and support service activities	9.2	7.2	8.3
Human health and social work activities	12	3.9	8.1

3.3.4 Underemployment

Underemployment is when someone who is employed wants to work additional hours or who is available to work additional hours. In 2025, 59.2 percent of the employed population worked exactly 40 hours per week, 60.3 percent of women work 40 hours, while 58.1 percent of men work 40 hours (table 14). Men are more likely to work longer hours: 11.4 percent of male workers worked between 41 and 60 hours per week, compared to 7.5 percent of female workers and 1.3 percent of male works indicated to work more than 60 hours a week compared to 0.7 percent of employed women. Part-time employment under 40 hours is more prevalent among women, with 14.6 percent working 4 to 20 hours and 13.6 percent working 21 to 39 hours.

Table 14. Hours worked by gender

Hours worked	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
40 hours	22,208	19,831	42,040	60.3	58.1	59.2
4 - 20 hours	5,391	4,205	9,596	14.6	12.3	13.5
21 - 39 hours	4,997	4,086	9,083	13.6	12	12.8
41 - 60 hours	2,777	3,886	6,663	7.5	11.4	9.4
Other/Not reported/Unknown	1,222	1,695	2,916	3.3	4.9	4.1
> 60 hours	255	428	683	0.7	1.3	1
Total	36,849	34,130	70,980	100	100	100

Note. 40 hours a week is a standard work week

In 2025, 8.1 percent of the employed population was classified as underemployed, defined as being employed while simultaneously seeking additional working hours. Women have a slightly higher underemployment rate (9.1 percent) than men (7.0 percent) (table 15).

Table 15. Underemployment

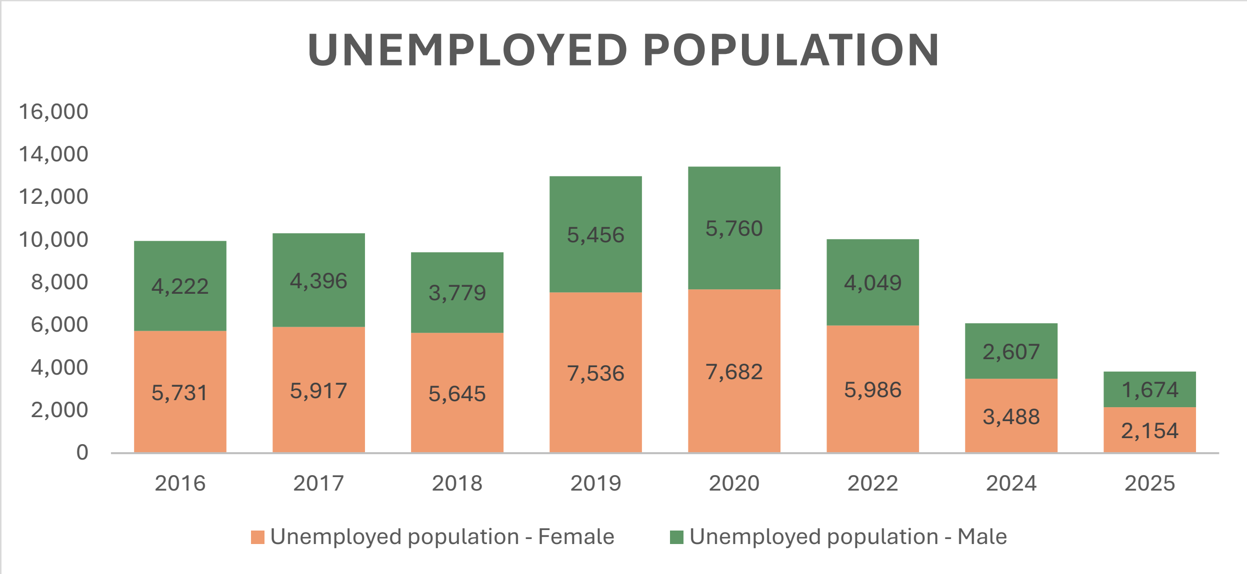
Underemployment	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Not Underemployed	30,152	26,433	56,585	81.8	77.4	79.7
Other/Not reported/Unknown	3,353	5,322	8,675	9.1	15.6	12.2
Underemployed	3,345	2,375	5,720	9.1	7	8.1
Total	36,849	34,130	70,980	100	100	100

3.4 Unemployed Population

A person is identified as being unemployed if they are 15 years or older, not employed, actively seeking employment, and able to start working within two weeks. These three criteria must all be met; otherwise, a person is classified as economically not active. In 2025, the unemployed population totalled 3,828 persons, a decline from 6,094 in 2024. The unemployment rate stands at 5.1 percent[2]. Figure 4 below illustrates the development of the unemployed population from 2016 to 2025.

[2] Further analysis of the unemployment rate is presented in chapter 3.6

Figure 3. Curaçao unemployed population development 2016-2025



The 15-24 age group accounts for the largest share of the unemployed population at 25.7 percent (984 persons), followed by the 55-64 group at 24.0 percent (918 persons). Young men (15–24) make up 32.0 percent of all unemployed males, underscoring the continued vulnerability of youth in the labour market. Women aged 55-64 make up the largest group of unemployed women at 27.6 percent. At the other end, persons aged 65 or older account for 4.2 percent of the unemployed, but this small group is notable given the large and growing older population (table 16).

Table 16. Unemployed Population

Age	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
15–24	449	535	984	20.9	32.0	25.7
25–34	428	240	668	19.9	14.3	17.5
35–44	358	218	577	16.6	13.1	15.1
45–54	301	220	520	14.0	13.1	13.6
55–64	595	324	918	27.6	19.3	24.0
65+	23	137	160	1.1	8.2	4.2
Total	2,154	1,674	3,828	100.0	100.0	100.0

Of the unemployed population, 84.6 percent are looking for work while 15.4 percent wish to start their own business (table 17). The desire to start a business is notably more common among women (18.9 percent) than men (10.8 percent).

Table 17. Looking for work or wishes to start own business?

Work/Business?	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Yes, looking for work	1,747	1,493	3,239	81.1	89.2	84.6
Yes, wishes to start own business	407	181	588	18.9	10.8	15.4
Total	2,154	1,674	3,828	100	100	100

3.4.1 Reasons and time spent looking for work

The principal reason cited for unemployment in 2025 remains wanting to work but being unable to find employment, accounting for 54.9 percent of all unemployed (table 18). This suggests that structural mismatches between job seekers and available positions persist. Getting fired accounted for 12.7 percent, while finishing school accounted for 12.2 percent. The low combined share of those whose employment ended due to firing or contract termination (21.1 percent) is consistent with greater job security in the current labour market.

Table 18. Reasons for looking for work

Reasons for looking	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
I want to work, but cannot find one	1,127	976	2,103	52.3	58.3	54.9
I was fired	313	172	485	14.5	10.3	12.7
I finished school	244	223	467	11.3	13.3	12.2
Other/Not reported/Unknown	305	102	407	14.2	6.1	10.6
End of contract / end of job	118	202	320	5.5	12	8.4
The business closed down	46	-	46	2.2	0.0	1.2
Total	2,154	1,674	3,828	100	100	100

Regarding the duration of job search, 34.7 percent of the unemployed population have been looking for work for 12 months or longer (table 19). With no real differences in gender. 3 to 6 months is the second most common and less than 1 month the least common. Men are more likely to be searching for 3 to 6 months, 1 to 3 months and less than a month. While women are more likely to be searching for 6 to 12 months.

Table 19. Time spent looking for work

Time spent	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
12 months or longer	750	578	1,328	34.8	34.5	34.7
3 to 6 months	360	311	671	16.7	18.6	17.5
Other/Not reported/Unknown	413	173	587	19.2	10.3	15.3
1 to 3 months	200	251	451	9.3	15	11.8
6 to 12 months	245	165	410	11.4	9.9	10.7
Less than 1 month	186	196	382	8.6	11.7	10
Total	2,154	1,674	3,828	100	100	100

3.4.2 Ways of looking for work

The methods used by unemployed persons to search for work provide insight into the intensity of their job search activities. Direct approaches to employers, such as visiting companies personally, represent a more proactive form of job search compared with relying solely on advertised vacancies. The results for this are presented in Table 20 below. Of those actively looking for work, visiting companies personally remains the most common method overall (33.0 percent). However, a pronounced gender difference exists 47.5 percent of male job seekers visit companies personally compared to just 21.7 percent of females. Women are more likely to write application letters (18.4 percent) or use online advertisements (13.7 percent). 13.5 percent of the unemployed population look for work through friends and family, where 15.3 percent of the unemployment women and 11.2 percent of unemployed men.

Table 20. Ways of Looking for Work

Ways of looking	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Visited companies personally	467	796	1,263	21.7	47.5	33
Wrote application letters	395	413	808	18.4	24.7	21.1
Other/Not reported/Unknown	556	225	781	25.7	13.5	20.4
Through friends or family	329	188	517	15.3	11.2	13.5
Respond to online advertisements	295	52	347	13.7	3.1	9.1
Respond to non-online advertisements	112	-	112	5.2	0.0	2.9
Total	2,154	1,674	3,828	100	100	100

3.4.3 Sectors in Which Unemployed Persons Seek Employment

Table 21 displays the five sectors most sought by the unemployed population. A large proportion of respondents (38.5 percent) did not report in which sector they are seeking work. However, among those who did not report a specific sector, more than half (53.9 percent) indicated that they are willing to work in any sector and would not decline a job opportunity based on the industry in which it was available. Among specified sectors, *Construction* was the most sought sector (14.4 percent), followed by *Accommodation and food service activities* (10.4 percent), H*uman health and social work activities* (7.9 percent) *Administrative and support service activities* (7.2 percent) and *Transportation and storage* (4.5 percent).

Gender differences were evident in the sectors sought by unemployed persons. Men were considerably more likely to be seeking employment in *Construction* than women (31 percent compared with 1.6 percent), while women were more likely to seek work in *Human health and social work activities* (14 percent compared with 0 percent). Interest in *Accommodation and food service activities* was similar among women (10.2 percent) and men (10.7 percent). Women also had higher proportions seeking employment in *Administrative and support service activities* (9.1 percent compared with 4.9 percent) whereas men were more likely than women to seek employment in *Transportation and storage* (6.8 percent compared with 2.8 percent).

Table 21. Top Five Sectors Sought by the Unemployed Population

Sector	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Other/Not reported/Unknown[3]	41.1	35	38.5
Construction	1.6	31	14.4
Accommodation and food service activities	10.2	10.7	10.4
Human health and social work activities	14	-	7.9
Administrative and support service activities	9.1	4.9	7.2
Transportation and storage	2.8	6.8	4.5

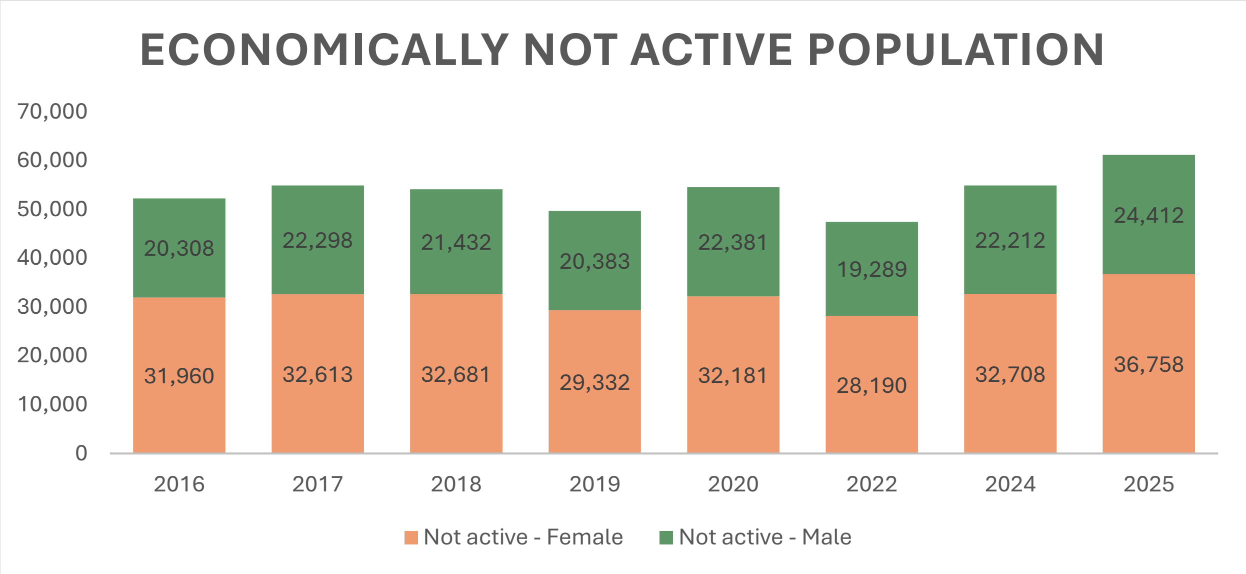
3.5 Economically Inactive Population

An economically inactive person is a person who is neither employed nor unemployed, as they are not currently working and are not actively seeking employment. They are classified as inactive because they are not actively contributing or looking to contribute to the economy. The reasons why persons are inactive should therefore be considered as an indicator of dissatisfaction with the market or as the reason for

[3] Some respondents that are part of this mentioned that they are not targeting a specific sector and would work wherever work is available.

demotivation. In 2025, the economically inactive population totalled 61,170, up from 54,919 in 2024. Figure 5 below illustrates the development of the economically not active population on Curaçao from 2016 to 2025.

Figure 4. Curaçao economically not active population development 2016-2025



This increase in the economically not active population is primarily driven by the growing 65+ population on Curaçao as Curaçao's demographic profile continues to age (Central Bureau of Statistics Curaçao, 2026). As presented in table 22 below, those aged 65 and over account for 60.3 percent of all economically inactive persons (36,880). The second largest group is the 15–24-year-olds at 15.3 percent (9,341), the majority of whom are in full-time education. Women outnumber men in the economically inactive population across all age groups, most markedly in the prime working-age groups of 35–44 and 45–54.

Table 22. Economically Inactive Population

Age group	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
15–24	4,578	4,763	9,341	12.5	19.5	15.3
25–34	1,323	975	2,298	3.6	4.0	3.8
35–44	2,109	823	2,932	5.7	3.4	4.8
45–54	2,343	683	3,026	6.4	2.8	4.9
55–64	4,322	2,370	6,692	11.8	9.7	10.9
65+	22,083	14,797	36,880	60.1	60.6	60.3
Total	36,758	24,412	61,170	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.5.1 Reasons for not looking for work

Table 23 reports the reasons for being economically inactive. The most common reason for economic inactivity in 2025 overall is retirement or age, cited by 58.1 percent of inactive persons (35,529). Wanting to finish school or study accounts for 13.5 percent, and ill health or physical or mental disability accounts for 9.8 percent. Noteworthy is that 2.9 percent (1,762 persons) cite the belief that there is no work available as their reason for inactivity, representing discouraged workers who have withdrawn from the labour market. Works in own household (homemaking) accounts for 4.7 percent and is predominantly female (2,584 women vs. 283 men) as was suggested above at the start of chapter 3.4

Table 23. Reasons for being inactive

Reasons	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Is retired/Because of age	21,400	14,129	35,529	58.2	57.9	58.1
Wishes to finish school/study first	4,160	4,094	8,255	11.3	16.8	13.5
Ill health/mental or physical disability	3,491	2,520	6,011	9.5	10.3	9.8
Other/Not reported/Unknown	1,979	1,525	3,504	5.4	6.2	5.7
Because of family circumstances	2,162	1,080	3,242	5.9	4.4	5.3
Works in own household (stay-at-home spouse)	2,584	283	2,867	7	1.2	4.7
There is no work available	981	780	1,762	2.7	3.2	2.9
Total	36,758	24,412	61,170	100	100	100

3.5.2 Reasons for not looking for work by age

The reasons for inactivity differ considerably by age group. The tables below (tables 24-29) provide a breakdown for each age cohort.

Reasons for Inactivity — Age 15–24

As expected, the overwhelming majority of economically inactive 15–24-year-olds cite wanting to finish school or study (81.7 percent, 7,631 persons). This is consistent with the survey definition, which excludes students from the unemployed count unless they are actively seeking work. A small but notable share (2.9 percent, 270 persons) reports that there is no work available, suggesting early discouragement among some young persons. Family circumstances account for 6.3 percent (table 24).

Table 24. Reasons for being inactive (15-24)

Reasons	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Wishes to finish school/study first	3,775	3,855	7,631	82.5	80.9	81.7
Because of family circumstances	264	323	587	5.8	6.8	6.3
There is no work available	105	165	270	2.3	3.5	2.9
Works in own household (stay-at-home spouse)	131	-	131	2.9	0.0	1.4
Ill health/mental or physical disability	86	-	86	1.9	0.0	0.9
Other/Not reported/Unknown	217	420	637	4.7	8.8	6.8
Total	4,578	4,763	9,341	100.0	100.0	100.0

Reasons for Inactivity — Age 25–34

In the 25–34 age group, reasons for inactivity are more varied. The largest category is other or not reported (28.3 percent), followed by family circumstances (24.9 percent) and wanting to finish school (20.1 percent). Working in own household accounts for 12.4 percent and is almost exclusively female (19.0 percent of inactive women vs. 3.5 percent of inactive men), reflecting caregiving and homemaking responsibilities. There is no work available is cited by 6.0 percent, a higher share than in the overall inactive population (table 25).

Table 25. Reasons for being inactive (25-34)

Reasons	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Because of family circumstances	274	297	572	20.7	30.5	24.9
Wishes to finish school/study first	263	198	462	19.9	20.3	20.1
Works in own household (stay-at-home spouse)	251	34	285	19.0	3.5	12.4
Ill health/mental or physical disability	74	74	148	5.6	7.6	6.4
There is no work available	89	48	137	6.7	5.0	6.0
Is retired/Because of age	-	45	45	0.0	4.6	2.0
Other/Not reported/Unknown	371	278	649	28.1	28.5	28.3
Total	1,323	975	2,298	100.0	100.0	100.0

Reasons for Inactivity — Age 35–44

Among 35 to 44-year-olds, ill health or disability is the most common single reason for inactivity (33.8 percent) and is disproportionately cited by men (44.5 percent of inactive men vs. 29.6 percent of inactive women). Working in own household accounts for 22.5 percent (26.4 percent female, 12.5 percent male), and family circumstances for 20.2 percent. Together these three reasons account for over three quarters of inactivity in this group. The low share citing no work available (1.4 percent) is consistent with the very low unemployment rate of 3.7 percent for this age group (table 26).

Table 26. Reasons for being inactive (35-44)

Reasons	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Ill health/mental or physical disability	624	366	990	29.6	44.5	33.8
Works in own household (stay-at-home spouse)	557	103	660	26.4	12.5	22.5
Because of family circumstances	484	108	591	22.9	13.1	20.2
Wishes to finish school/study first	50	41	91	2.4	5.0	3.1
Is retired/Because of age	89	-	89	4.2	0.0	3.0
There is no work available	40	-	40	1.9	0.0	1.4
Other/Not reported/Unknown	265	205	470	12.6	25.0	16.0
Total	2,109	823	2,932	100.0	100.0	100.0

Reasons for Inactivity — Age 45–54

In the 45–54 age group, the reasons for inactivity are more evenly distributed. Ill health or disability (25.4 percent), working in own household (20.8 percent), and family circumstances (19.5 percent) are the three largest categories. The share citing no work available is notably higher at 10.1 percent (18.8 percent for men versus 7.6 percent for women), suggesting a degree of labour market discouragement at this age that is not fully captured by the unemployment rate. Other or not reported accounts for 20.2 percent, which is higher than in most other age groups (table 27).

Table 27. Reasons for being inactive (45-54)

Reasons	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Ill health/mental or physical disability	556	214	769	23.7	31.2	25.4
Works in own household (stay-at-home spouse)	590	39	630	25.2	5.8	20.8
Because of family circumstances	517	74	591	22.1	10.8	19.5
There is no work available	178	128	307	7.6	18.8	10.1
Is retired/Because of age	81	-	81	3.4	0.0	2.7
Wishes to finish school/study first	37	-	37	1.6	0.0	1.2
Other/Not reported/Unknown	384	228	612	16.4	33.4	20.2
Total	2,343	683	3,026	100.0	100.0	100.0

Reasons for Inactivity — Age 55–64

Among inactive 55–64-year-olds, ill health or disability is by far the most common reason (37.1 percent), followed by retirement (19.2 percent) and working in own household (11.9 percent). The share citing there is no work available is the highest of all age groups at 12.7 percent (14.5 percent for men, 11.7 percent for women), consistent with the difficulties older job seekers can face in returning to employment after job loss. The results suggest that a large portion of the inactivity in this age cohort may not be fully voluntary (table 28).

Table 28. Reasons for being inactive (55-64)

Reasons	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Ill health/mental or physical disability	1,436	1,048	2,485	33.2	44.2	37.1
Is retired/Because of age	813	474	1,287	18.8	20.0	19.2
There is no work available	507	344	851	11.7	14.5	12.7
Works in own household (stay-at-home spouse)	722	73	795	16.7	3.1	11.9
Because of family circumstances	452	216	668	10.5	9.1	10.0
Other/Not reported/Unknown	391	216	607	9.0	9.1	9.1
Total	4,322	2,370	6,692	100.0	100.0	100.0

Reasons for Inactivity — Age 65+

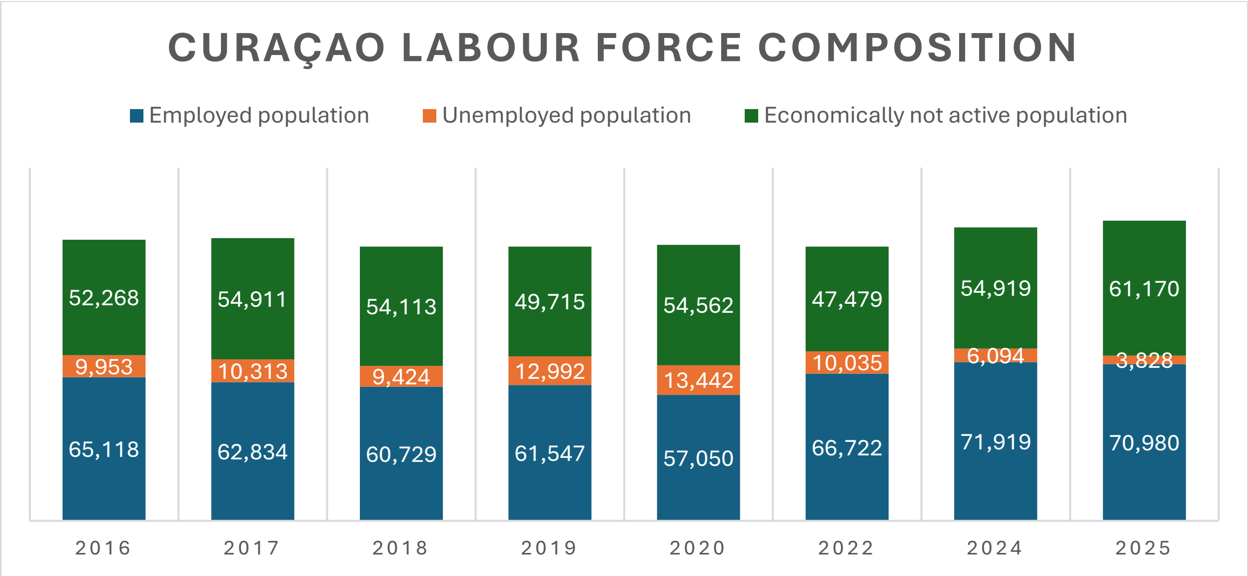
As expected, retirement or age dominates the reasons for inactivity in the 65+ group at 92.3 percent (34,027 persons). Ill health or disability accounts for a further 4.2 percent. Discouragement — citing no work available — is very low at 0.4 percent, and the share wishing to work in their own household at 1.0 percent. The high and stable concentration of retirement as the driver of inactivity in this group reflects that for most in this cohort, withdrawal from the labour market is a deliberate life-stage transition rather than a response to labour market conditions (table 29).

Table 29. Reasons for being inactive (65+)

Reasons	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Is retired/Because of age	20,417	13,610	34,027	92.5	92.0	92.3
Ill health/mental or physical disability	715	818	1,533	3.2	5.5	4.2
Works in own household (stay-at-home spouse)	333	34	367	1.5	0.2	1.0
Because of family circumstances	171	63	234	0.8	0.4	0.6
There is no work available	61	95	157	0.3	0.6	0.4
Wishes to finish school/study first	35	-	35	0.2	0.0	0.1
Other/Not reported/Unknown	351	178	528	1.6	1.2	1.4
Total	22,083	14,797	36,880	100.0	100.0	100.0

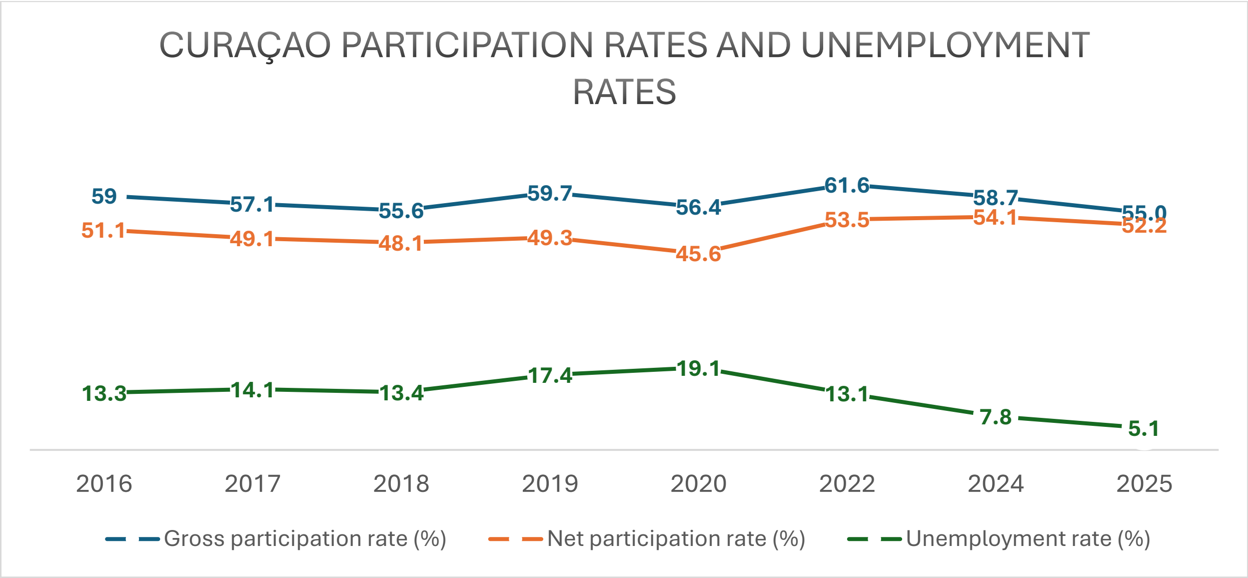
3.6 Understanding the Labour Force

Figure 5. Curaçao Labour Force Composition



At first glance, the decline in Curaçao's unemployment rate and the reduction in the total number of unemployed persons appear to indicate a continued recovery of the labour market and sustained demand for labour. However, a closer examination of the labour force composition, as presented in Figure 5 above, suggests a more complex situation. While unemployment has decreased, both the employed population and the overall labour force have also declined, indicating that the reduction in unemployment is not solely the result of increased job creation. The economically inactive population has increased; this is also reflected in the decline in participation rates compared to 2024, as shown in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6. Curaçao participation rates and unemployment rates from 2016 to 2025



One factor contributing to this trend is the demographic composition of the population. Curaçao has an ageing population, resulting in a growing proportion of older individuals who have exited, or are in the process of exiting, the labour force. The 65+ age group has expanded considerably and now accounts for most of the economically inactive population, as shown in table 22. As presented in table 23, retirement or old age was cited as the reason for economic activity by 58.1 percent of the inactive population. This is also reflected in income sources, with old age pensions emerging as the second most common source of income overall.

At the same time, individuals are prioritizing the completion of their education before entering the labour market, contributing to a decline in the labour force participation rate. As shown in table 23, Wishes to finish school/study was the second most frequently reported reason for economic inactivity. This pattern is particularly pronounced among the 15–24 age group, where nearly 82 percent of economically inactive individuals cited education as their primary reason for not participating in the labour force (Table 24). As a result, a smaller share of the working-age population may be actively participating in the labour force, independent of underlying labour demand conditions.

Furthermore, Ill health and mental or physical disability was another common reason for economic inactivity, particularly among the 35–44, 45–54, and 55–64 age groups. As shown in table 23 it is the third most frequently cited cause of economic inactivity overall. However, tables 26, 27 and 28 report that it is the most common reason for being inactive for the age groups 35-44, 45-54 and 55-64. This suggests that not all the growth in the economically inactive population is voluntary or reflective of improved economic circumstances; rather, a meaningful portion may be constrained by health limitations and could represent a latent labour supply.

A further possible explanation concerns the prevalence of informal employment. Individuals engaged in informal economic activities may underreport or misrepresent their employment status in household surveys, owing to the irregular, unregistered, or perceived transitory nature of such work. As a result, some economically active individuals may not be adequately captured within official labour market statistics, which could lead to an overstatement of economic inactivity and a corresponding understatement of actual labour market engagement. This concern is substantiated by the International Monetary Fund, which identified a discernible shift toward informal labour activities on Curaçao, particularly within the tourism and construction sectors (International Monetary Fund, 2025).

Overall, these factors suggest that the observed decline in unemployment should be interpreted with caution. Although labour market conditions may have genuinely improved, demographic changes, educational participation, informal employment practices, and health-related constraints are also likely to influence the size of the labour force and the measured levels of employment and unemployment. A comprehensive understanding of Curaçao's labour market therefore requires looking beyond the headline unemployment rate to consider the underlying dynamics of labour force participation and economic inactivity.

4. Income Results

Labour or business income is the primary source of income for 48.4 percent of the population aged 15 and over, making it by far the most common main income source. Old age pension (Algemene Ouderdomsverzekering (AOV)) is the second most prevalent at 21.8 percent, further reflecting the large and growing share of the population that has reached retirement age. A notable 17.1 percent of the 15+ population reports no income at all as their main source. Pension income from Algemeen Pensioenfonds van Curaçao (APC), private, or company pension schemes accounts for 6.6 percent, while welfare represents 2.9 percent.

As for second sources of income, 82.9 percent of the population aged 15 and over indicated that they do not have a second source of income. Old age pension (AOV) is the most common secondary income source at 5.7 percent, followed by labour or business income and pension income at 4.7 and 4.4 percent respectively. The relatively low shares across all second income categories confirm that much of the population relies on a single income source. Table 30 below lists the different income sources and the percentages of whether they are a main source of income or a second source.

Table 30. Income Sources

Source	Main Source (%)	Second source (%)
Labour (also own company/business)	48.4	4.7
Old age pension (AOV)	21.8	5.7
No income	17.1	65.8
Pension (APC, private pension, company pension, etc.)	6.6	4.4
Welfare	2.9	0.3
Other/Not reported/Unknown	1.4	18.1
Widow- and orphanage pension	0.7	0.5
Child support/alimony	0.4	0.2
Own capital/property	0.4	0.2
Scholarship	0.2	0.0
Retaining pay/severance pay arrangement	0.1	0.0

4.1 Main Income

The average net total monthly income across all main sources of income is Cg. 2,060, with men averaging Cg. 2,342 and women Cg. 1,839 (table 31). The gender gap is most pronounced in *labour* income, where men earn on average Cg. 3,079 per month compared to Cg. 2,518 for women, a difference of approximately Cg. 561, or 18.2 percent. Women earn more on average than men from the sources *widow and orphanage pension* (Cg. 1,365 vs. Cg. 721) and *child support or alimony* (Cg. 762 vs. Cg. 192), reflecting different household circumstances. *Old age pension (AOV)* is slightly higher for men (Cg. 970) than women (Cg. 878), which may be explained by differences in prior earnings histories. Table 32 below summarizes the amount of net income for each main source by gender.

Table 31. Average net monthly income by main source of income

Source	Female (Cg.)	Male (Cg.)	Total (Cg.)
Labour (also own company/business)	2,518	3,079	2,783
Pension (APC, private pension, company pension, etc.)	2,596	2,809	2,698
Widow- and orphanage pension	1,365	721	1,291
Scholarship	967	938	955
Old age pension (AOV)	878	970	913
Other/Not reported/Unknown	1,122	433	808
Own capital/property	628	510	586
Child support/alimony	762	192	477
Retaining pay/severance pay arrangement	500	455	470
Welfare	317	353	332
Total	1,839	2,342	2,060

Note. Due to rounding totals might not round up exactly.
Note. Net income

4.1.1 Main income – Employed Population

Table 32 below shows the net monthly income distribution in 2025 of the employed population. The largest share of the employed population (both 21.8 percent) earns Cg. 1 - 1,000 or Cg. 2,001 - 3,000 per month. The Cg.1 – 1,000 being so prevalent reflects the continued presence of low-wage employment. The two smallest groups are persons who earn between Cg. 7,501 and 10,000 and more than Cg. 10,000 at 2.8 percent and 1.9 percent respectively.

Table 32. Distribution of net income of the employed population

Income category	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
1-1000	8,506	6,934	15,440	23.01	20.3	21.8
1001-2000	8,391	6,331	14,722	22.8	18.6	20.7
2001-3000	7,286	8,169	15,454	19.8	23.9	21.8
3001-4000	4,365	4,034	8,399	11.9	11.8	11.8
4001-5000	2,240	2,044	4,283	6.1	6.0	6.0
5001-7500	3,034	2,760	5,794	8.2	8.1	8.2
7501-10000	755	1,208	1,963	2.1	3.5	2.8
More than 10000	349	1,028	1,377	1.0	3.0	1.9
Other/Not reported/Unknown	1,925	1,622	3,547	5.2	4.8	5.0
Total	36,849	34,130	70,980	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 33 provides information on the income of the employed population in relation to the minimum hourly wage. 51.9 percent of the employed population earn more than the minimum hourly wage. Men (54.9 percent) are slightly more likely to earn above the minimum hourly wage than women (49.2 percent). 17.8 percent of the population state that they earn exactly the minimum hourly wage, more women earn the minimum hourly wage than men. 14 percent of the population earn less than the minimum hourly wage, 14.8 percent of women earn less than the hourly wage and 13.2 percent of men.

Table 33. Minimum Hourly Wage

Income higher than minimum hourly wage?	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
No, higher than the minimum hourly wage	18,103	18,757	36,860	49.2	54.9	51.9
Yes, the minimum hourly wage	7,672	4,935	12,607	20.8	14.5	17.8
Other/Not reported/Unknown	5,608	5,950	11,558	15.2	17.4	16.3
No, lower than the minimum hourly wage	5,467	4,489	9,955	14.8	13.2	14
Total	36,849	34,130	70,980	100	100	100

4.1.2 Main income – Unemployed Population

Table 34 below displays the distribution of income sources among the unemployed population. No income is the most common at 68.5 percent, a finding consistent with the expected profile of individual actively seeking work. A gender differential is observed in this respect, with women more likely than men to report no income (70.6 percent versus 65.9 percent). Welfare constitutes the second most prevalent income source, received by 8.3 percent of the unemployed population. As with the absence of income, this category exhibits a gender disparity, with women more likely to receive welfare benefits (9.6 percent versus 6.7 percent). A further 7.1 percent of the unemployed population report income derived from labour, which may be attributable to severance arrangements whereby individuals continue to receive wages for the remainder of a contractual period following the ending of active employment. Men are more likely to receive old age pension than women (7.8 percent versus 2.7 percent). Child support/alimony (1.0 percent) and widow-and orphanage pension (0.8 percent) represent the least common income sources within the unemployed population, indicating that these forms of income provide negligible support.

Table 34. Main source of income of the unemployed population

Source	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
No income	70.6	65.9	68.5
Welfare	9.6	6.7	8.3
Labour (also own company/business)	8.1	5.9	7.1
Old age pension (AOV)	2.7	7.8	5.0
Pension (APC, private pension, company pension, etc.)	5.9	2.4	4.3
Other/Not reported/Unknown	0.0	7.4	3.2
Own capital/property	1.8	1.7	1.8
Child support/alimony	0.0	2.2	1.0
Widow- and orphanage pension	1.4	0.0	0.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 35 below presents the net monthly income distribution for the unemployed population. Among those who have reported an income, the Cg. 1-1,000 bracket is the most frequent, accounting for 24.1 percent of the unemployed population overall. A gender differential is observed within this category, with men more likely than women to report income in this category, 28.2 percent and 21 percent respectively. The Cg. 1,001 – 2,000 bracket follows at 6.3 percent; women have a slightly higher proportion here (6.6 percent for women versus 5.9 percent for men). The Cg. 2,001–3,000 bracket is reported exclusively among women, accounting for 1.1 percent of unemployed women but 0 percent of unemployed men, resulting in an overall share of 1.1 percent for this bracket. 68.5 percent of the unemployed population report no income whatsoever, with women (70.6 percent) more likely than men (65.9 percent) to fall into this category.

Table 35. Distribution of net income of the unemployed population

Income category (Cg.)	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
1-1,000	452	472	923	21.0	28.2	24.1
1,001-2,000	142	99	240	6.6	5.9	6.3
2,001-3,000	40	-	40	1.9	0.0	1.1
No Income	1520	1103	2623	70.6	65.9	68.5
Total	2154	1674	3828	100.0	100.0	100.0

4.1.3 Main income – Economically Not Active Population

Table 36. Main source of income of the economically not active population

Income source	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Old age pension (AOV)	48.2	42.9	46.1
No income	27.2	29.1	28.0
Pension (APC, private pension, company pension, etc.)	11.5	17.6	13.9
Welfare	5.4	5.5	5.5
Other/Not reported/Unknown	2.4	1.2	1.9
Labour (also own company/business)	2.1	1.5	1.9
Widow- and orphanage pension	1.9	0.5	1.3
Child support/alimony	0.4	0.8	0.6
Own capital/property	0.6	0.3	0.5
Scholarship	0.2	0.3	0.3
Retaining pay/severance pay arrangement	0.1	0.2	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 36 above presents the distribution of the main source of income among the economically not active population. Old age pension (AOV) constitutes the predominant main income source for this group, accounting for 46.1 percent overall, a finding consistent with the composition of the economically inactive population, with persons aged 65 years and older accounting for the majority. Women are more likely than men to report old age pensions as their main income source (48.2 percent versus 42.9 percent).

The absence of any main income source is the second most prevalent category, reported by 28 percent of the economically not active population, with a slight gender differential favouring men (29.1 percent versus 27.2 percent for women).

Pension income from other sources, including APC, private, and company pension schemes, constitutes the main income source for a further 13.9 percent, and is notably more common among men (17.6 percent) than women (11.5 percent). Welfare is reported as the main income source by 5.5 percent of the economically not active population, with negligible difference between women (5.4 percent) and men (5.5 percent). Labour or business income, reported as the main source by 1.9 percent of this group, may reflect residual or occasional earnings among individuals who are otherwise classified as economically inactive.

The remaining categories each account for a marginal share of the main income distribution within this population: widow- and orphanage pension (1.3 percent), child support or alimony (0.6 percent), own capital or property (0.5 percent), scholarship (0.3 percent), and retaining or severance pay arrangements

(0.1 percent). Of these, widow- and orphanage pension exhibits the most pronounced gender disparity, being considerably more common among women (1.9 percent) than men (0.5 percent).

Table 37. Distribution of net income of the economically not active population

Income category (Cg.)	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
1-1,000	20,477	12,348	32,825	55.7	50.6	53.7
1,001-2,000	2,361	1,916	4,277	6.4	7.9	7.0
2,001-3,000	1,902	842	2,745	5.2	3.5	4.5
3,001-4,000	994	869	1,862	2.7	3.6	3.0
4,001-5,000	562	613	1,175	1.5	2.5	1.9
5,001-7,500	248	418	667	0.7	1.7	1.1
7,501-10,000	201	293	494	0.6	1.2	0.8
More than 10,000	25	-	25	0.1	0.0	0.0
No Income	9,987	7,114	17,101	27.2	29.1	28.0
Total	36,758	24,412	61,170	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 37 presents the distribution of total net monthly income among the economically not active population by income category. The largest proportion of this population, 53.7 percent, falls within the Cg. 1–1,000 bracket, a finding consistent with the predominance of old age pension as the main income source observed in Table 36, as pension amounts typically fall within this lower income range. Women are more likely than men to fall within this category (55.7 percent versus 50.6 percent).

The absence of any income is the second most prevalent category, reported by 28.0 percent of the economically not active population, with men slightly more likely than women to report no income (29.1 percent versus 27.2 percent), consistent with the pattern observed in Table 36.

Beyond these two dominant categories, the share of the economically not active population declines progressively as income brackets increase. The Cg. 1,001–2,000 bracket accounts for 7.0 percent overall, with men marginally more represented than women (7.9 percent versus 6.4 percent). The Cg. 2,001–3,000 bracket accounts for 4.5 percent overall; here, the pattern reverses, with women more likely than men to fall within this range (5.2 percent versus 3.5 percent).

At the higher end of the income distribution, representation diminishes notably. The Cg. 3,001–4,000 and Cg. 4,001–5,000 brackets account for 3.0 percent and 1.9 percent respectively, with men consistently more represented than women in both categories. The Cg. 5,001–7,500 and Cg. 7,501–10,000 brackets together account for less than 2 percent of the economically not active population, again with a higher male share in both instances. Income exceeding Cg. 10,000 per month is reported by a negligible 0 percent of the economically not active population overall, and exclusively among women.

4.2 Second source of income

Table 38 below presents the distribution of second sources of income across the population. Most of the population, 65.8 percent, reports no second source of income, indicating that most individuals rely on a single income source. This pattern is broadly consistent between genders, with a marginally higher proportion of men than women reporting no second income (66.4 percent versus 65.3 percent).

Among those with a second source of income, a considerable proportion, 18.1 percent overall, falls within the other, not reported, or unknown category, suggesting a degree of non-disclosure with respect to secondary income that limits the precision of the analysis.

Old age pension (AOV) constitutes the most reported second income source among those who specify one, accounting for 5.7 percent of the total population, with men slightly more likely than women to receive this as a second income (6.0 percent versus 5.4 percent). Labour or business income is reported as a second source by 4.7 percent of the population overall, with men marginally more represented than women (5.1 percent versus 4.4 percent). Pension income from other sources, including APC, private, and company pension schemes, accounts for a further 4.4 percent, with comparable shares between men (4.6 percent) and women (4.4 percent).

The remaining categories each constitute a marginal share of the second income distribution: widow- and orphanage pension (0.6 percent), welfare (0.3 percent), child support or alimony (0.2 percent), and own capital or property (0.2 percent). Of these, widow- and orphanage pension displays the most pronounced gender disparity, being reported almost exclusively by women (0.8 percent) compared to a negligible share among men (0.0 percent), consistent with the gender pattern observed for this income source elsewhere in this report.

Table 38. Presence of Second Source of Income

Source	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
No income	49,520	39,984	89,503	65.3	66.4	65.8
Other/Not reported/Unknown	14,142	10,491	24,633	18.7	17.4	18.1
Old age pension (AOV)	4,094	3,621	7,715	5.4	6	5.7
Labour (also own company/business)	3,325	3,065	6,390	4.4	5.1	4.7
Pension (APC, private pension, company pension, etc.)	3,300	2,745	6,044	4.4	4.6	4.4
Widow- and orphanage pension	636	25	661	0.8	0	0.6
Welfare	308	107	415	0.4	0.2	0.3
Child support/alimony	301	37	338	0.4	0.1	0.2
Own capital/property	137	141	278	0.2	0.2	0.2
Total	75,761	60,216	135,977	100	100	100

Table 39 below displays the average net monthly income by second source of income. Overall, respondents who reported a second source of income earned an average of Cg. 1,208 per month. Men reported a higher average monthly income from a second source (Cg. 1,436) compared to women (Cg. 1,031).

Among the different sources, own capital/property generated the highest average monthly income, amounting to Cg. 1,879. Men earned an average of Cg. 2,600.00 from this source, while women reported Cg. 1,338. This was followed by labour (including own company/business) with an average income of Cg. 1,615, and pension income (APC, private pension, company pension, etc.) with Cg. 1,583 per month.

In contrast, welfare generated the lowest average monthly income among the reported sources at Cg. 289 per month, followed by child support/alimony at Cg. 443 and other/not reported/unknown sources at Cg. 474.

Gender differences were evident across most income sources, with men generally reporting higher earnings than women, particularly from own capital/property and labour-related activities. However, women reported higher average incomes from widow- and orphanage pensions, welfare, child support/alimony, and other or unknown income sources.

Table 39. Average Net Income by Second Source of Income

Source	Female (Cg.)	Male (Cg.)	Total (Cg.)
Own capital/property	1,338	2,600	1,879
Labour (also own company/business)	1,265	1,998	1,615
Pension (APC, private pension, company pension, etc.)	1,342	1,871	1,583
Old age pension (AOV)	777	876	821
Widow- and orphanage pension	834	423	814
Other/Not reported/Unknown	707	225	474
Child support/alimony	470	250	443
Welfare	351	126	289
Total	1,031	1,436	1,208

5. Unpaid domestic and care work

Unpaid domestic and care encompass tasks done in own household. Domestic work is for example tasks like cooking and cleaning. While care work can be either taking care of children or elders who are living in the same household.

On average, the population of Curaçao spends 3.3 hours per day on unpaid domestic and care work, accounting for 13.9 percent of the day. Women spend considerably more time on these activities than men, averaging 4.0 hours per day (16.6 percent of the day) compared to 2.5 hours for men (10.3 percent). Domestic work is the largest component, accounting for an average of 2.0 hours per day overall. Women spend 2.3 hours per day on domestic work compared to 1.6 hours for men, representing 9.7 and 6.5 percent of their respective days. Care work for children accounts for an average of 1.0 hour per day overall, with a pronounced gender difference: women spend on average 1.3 hours per day caring for children (5.3 percent of the day) compared to 0.6 hours for men (2.5 percent). Finally, care work for older persons accounts for an average of 0.3 hours per day, with women again spending slightly more time on this activity (0.4 hours) than men (0.3 hours).

Table 40. Hours spent on unpaid domestic and care work on average per day

Domestic and care work	Female (Hrs)	Male (Hrs)	Total (Hrs)	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
Domestic work	2.3	1.6	2.0	9.7	6.5	8.3
Care work (children)	1.3	0.6	1.0	5.3	2.5	4.1
Care work (elders)	0.4	0.3	0.3	1.6	1.2	1.4
Total	4.0	2.5	3.3	16.6	10.3	13.9

6. Volunteer work

A total of 18,177 persons, representing 13.4 percent of the population aged 15 and over, reported having performed volunteer work in the past year. There is minimal gender difference in volunteer participation: 13.9 percent of men and 12.9 percent of women reported engaging in volunteer activities. These findings suggest that participation in voluntary work remains relatively limited among the population aged 15 years and over, with little difference in participation between men and women.

Table 41. Participation in Volunteer Work During the Past 12 Months

Participation	Female	Male	Total	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total (%)
No	65,331	51,383	116,714	86.2	85.3	85.8
Yes	9,788	8,389	18,177	12.9	13.9	13.4
Other/Not reported/Unknown	642	444	1,087	0.9	0.8	0.8
Total	75,761	60,216	135,977	100	100	100

7. Conclusion

The 2025 Labour Force Survey results show that the labour force in Curaçao declined from 78,013 persons in 2024 to 74,807 persons in 2025. Of the 74,807 persons in the labour force, 70,980 were employed while 3,828 were unemployed. During the same period, the unemployment rate decreased from 7.8 percent in 2024 to 5.1 percent in 2025. As discussed in the preceding chapters, this improvement should not be read in isolation: it occurred alongside a contracting labour force, a declining employed population, and a notable rise in economic inactivity. When regarded together with the survey's other findings, a more complete picture of the forces shaping Curaçao's labour market emerges.

Ages 45-54 and 55-64 were the two largest groups of the employed population. Nearly 55 percent of the employed population were employees in permanent employment. *Service and sales workers* was the most common occupation group. *Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles* was the sector in which most employees reported to be working in. 8.1 percent of the employed population reported that they were underemployed and wished to work more hours.

Ages 15-24 and 55-64 were the two largest groups of the unemployed population. The unemployed population cited not being able to find work as the main reason for not working. Nearly 35 percent of this population indicated that they were looking for a job for 12 months or longer. Visiting companies personally was the most common method of looking for work. A large portion of the unemployed population indicated that they are seeking work in a specific sector. They would work in whichever sector they get an opportunity to.

More than 60 percent of the economically not active population was the 65+ age group, which aligns with the fact that the retirement age on Curaçao is 65. The 15-24 age group was the second largest group of the economically not active population. The most common causes for being not active were retirement, wanting to finish school/study first and ill health/disability. For 65+ it was retirement, for 15-24 years it was wanting to finish school/study. For the ages 35-64 it was ill health/disability.

Normally, a decrease in unemployment rate and unemployed population would be a positive sign. However, in this case it is combined with a rise in the economically not active population and a drop in the employed population. This is linked to several reasons. Curaçao has an aging population, with slightly more than 26 percent of the entire population being 65 or older, this leads to more retirement and fewer persons participating in the labour force. Furthermore, 15–24-year-olds are choosing to finish school/study before entering the labour market, which further shrinks the pool of possible participants. Ill health/disability was also cited as reason for not being economically active, which indicates that not the entirety of the not active population is there by their own choice. Additionally, informal labour is quite prevalent on Curaçao.

Someone who is actively engaged in informal labour may underreport or misrepresent their employment status during surveys, intentionally or not.

The income results reveal that labour and old age pension (AOV) are the two most common main sources of income. Furthermore, these results point to a gender income gap. The average net monthly income for women stood at Cg. 1,842, compared to Cg. 2,342 for men, a difference of approximately Cg. 500. This gap is most pronounced in *labour income*, where men continue to out-earn women on average, despite women forming a larger share of the employed population in this sector and being more concentrated in permanent, stable employment. The gap suggests that gender-based wage disparities are structural in nature and are unlikely to resolve on their own through general economic recovery. This is compounded by the finding that having a second source of income is uncommon overall, meaning most women, like most men, cannot easily supplement a lower primary income, leaving the gender earnings gap largely unmitigated at the household level.

Cg 1,001-2,000 and Cg. 2,000-3,000 were the two largest income groups for the employed population. Nearly 52 percent of the employed population indicated that they earn above the minimum hourly wage. No income was most frequently reported for the unemployed population. The part of the unemployed population who do have an income, have given Cg.1-1,000 as the most common income group. As expected, old age pension (AOV) was the most reported income source for the economically not active population. And again Cg. 1-1,000 was the most common income group.

Second sources of income are not very common, nearly 66 percent of the population indicated they do not have a secondary income. Persons who have indicated that they have a secondary income have reported that they earn/receive around Cg. 1,208 a month, with men indicating they earn around Cg. 400 more a month than women from their secondary income.

The findings on unpaid domestic and care work add a further dimension to gender differences. Women spend, on average, 1.5 hours more per day than men on unpaid domestic and care responsibilities. Taken together, these findings describe a pattern in which women's economic position is shaped not only by lower earnings in paid work, but also by a disproportionate share of unpaid labour, both of which limit their financial independence and labour market mobility relative to men.

The relatively low rate of voluntary work participation suggests that unpaid civic engagement is not widespread among the population. At the same time, the small difference between men and women indicates that participation in volunteer activities is broadly similar across genders.

Taken as a whole, the 2025 results indicate that Curaçao's labour market is undergoing a structural transition driven primarily by demographic ageing, focus on education, health-related withdrawal, informal employment, a persistent gender wage gap, gendered patterns of unpaid care work contributing to the gap between the headline unemployment rate and the underlying state of the labour market and economic wellbeing. Future labour market policy and planning will benefit from looking beyond the unemployment rate to these underlying dynamics, particularly as the fiscal and social implications of an ageing population become more pronounced in the years ahead.

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