COVID-19, TECHNOLOGY, and POLARIZING JOBS

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Key Messages

- COVID-19 effects are further exposing the trend of job polarization and widening wage inequality among employees.
- COVID-19 spurs digital transformation of work and the workplace; presenting enormous opportunities and challenges.
- Policy strategies and options needed to increase investment in digital readiness, develop skills for the digital economy, and strengthen social protection, could help mitigate the impact.
Some sectors are more affected than others—Where do Asian workers work?

Employment Sectoral Distribution by Subregion (% in total employment)

- Agriculture; forestry and fishing
- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Mining and quarrying
- Utilities
- Accommodation and food service activities
- Education
- Financial and insurance activities
- Human health and social work activities
- Other services
- Public administration and defence; compulsory social security
- Real estate; business and administrative activities
- Transport; storage and communication
- Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles

World
Asia and the Pacific

Informal employment is mostly in vulnerable sectors

Informal Employment by Sector in Select Asian Countries (%)

Close to a quarter of Asia’s informal sector workers did not receive any education.

Educational Attainment of the Informally Employed (%)

Significant gaps in digital readiness across Asia

Individuals Using the Internet in Asia (%)

Lao PDR = Lao People’s Democratic Republic, PRC = People’s Republic of China.
Note: 2018 data for Cambodia; Hong Kong, China; Indonesia; Iran; Japan; Republic of Korea; Macau, China; Malaysia; Mongolia; Singapore; Taipei, China; Thailand; and Viet Nam. The rest is 2017.
Large Number of Online Workers in Asia—
job offers emanate mainly from developed economies

Online Workers by Economy and Occupation
2017‒2020

Online Work—by Region of Employer

Source: Online Labor Index.
Policy Implications for Future Work and Workforce

• Invest in digital readiness.
  • Develop enabling infrastructure for affordable and available ICT access
  • Nurture cooperative ecosystems

• Develop skills for the digital economy.
  • Government subsidies or programs for upskilling

• Strengthen social protection for the unemployed and vulnerable
Thank you!

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