



Regional Initiative
Latin America and the Caribbean
Free of Child Labour



International
Labour
Organization

Latin America and the Caribbean:
**Towards the
first generation
FREE OF CHILD LABOUR**

.....
An integrated and interdependent analysis of
the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
in relation to target 8.7



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PART 3

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**DECENT WORK
AND CHILD LABOUR
PREVENTION AND
ELIMINATION WITHIN
THE FRAMEWORK OF
THE 2030 AGENDA**

Given the many causes of child labour, multiple issues should be addressed in relation to its prevention and elimination. To achieve the target by 2025, it will be necessary, among other things, to reduce poverty, improve education, promote gender equity and implement social protection policies. Conversely, progress in reducing child labour will facilitate progress on each of these issues.

Given this relationship, this section analyzes target 8.7 (on ending child labour) within the broader framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, considering first its direct link with Goal 8 (on economic growth and the creation of decent work) of which it is part.

The section then goes on to analyze the links between the target to put an end to child labour and the other objectives through which direct links are identified from a thematic correlation analysis based on empirical evidence in each area. Each target identified as having a “direct effect” is considered to be an impact in the relationship between child labour and the goal that contains it, so that the total number of impacts on each target establishes an indicator of the degree of interdependence it has with child labour. The outcome of the analysis performed is illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 17

Interdependence of target 8.7 on ending child labour and other commitments adopted within the framework of the SDGs



By applying the described criteria, the analysis of the links between the target on ending child labour and the entire set of SDGs will focus on 8 goals and 35 specific targets, ordered by their degree of interdependence:

1. **SDG 4:** Ensure inclusive, equitable and quality education
2. **SDG 5:** Achieve gender equality
3. **SDG 1:** End poverty
4. **SDG 10:** Reduce inequality
5. **SDG 2:** End hunger
6. **SDG 16:** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies
7. **SDG 3:** Ensure healthy lives
8. **SDG 13:** Combat climate change

Source: Author's elaboration.

3.1

SDG 8: DECENT WORK AS A GOAL AND ENDING CHILD LABOUR AS A TARGET

Sustainable Development Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Sustainable Development Goal 8 addresses two closely linked pillars of development: economic growth and employment. It also includes the characteristics they must have in order to promote a sustainable development model. Growth can only be sustained, inclusive and sustainable in association with full, productive employment framed within the principles of decent work, and vice versa.

By including a specific target on child labour and directly linking it with the possibility of progressing towards sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, underpinned by the creation of decent work, the SDGs have taken a critical step in including child labour at the centre of global development concerns.

Sustainable Development Target 8.7:

Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.

Decent work refers to productive work performed in conditions of freedom, equity, security and dignity, in which the rights of workers are respected, workers receive just compensation, have prospects for personal development and social protection for both the workers and their families.¹⁹ Unlike the vicious cycle of child labour (see Figure 8), decent work operates in the opposite direction: it builds a productive life cycle with growth, freedom, security and protection (see Figure 18).

Figure 18
The productive life cycle of decent work



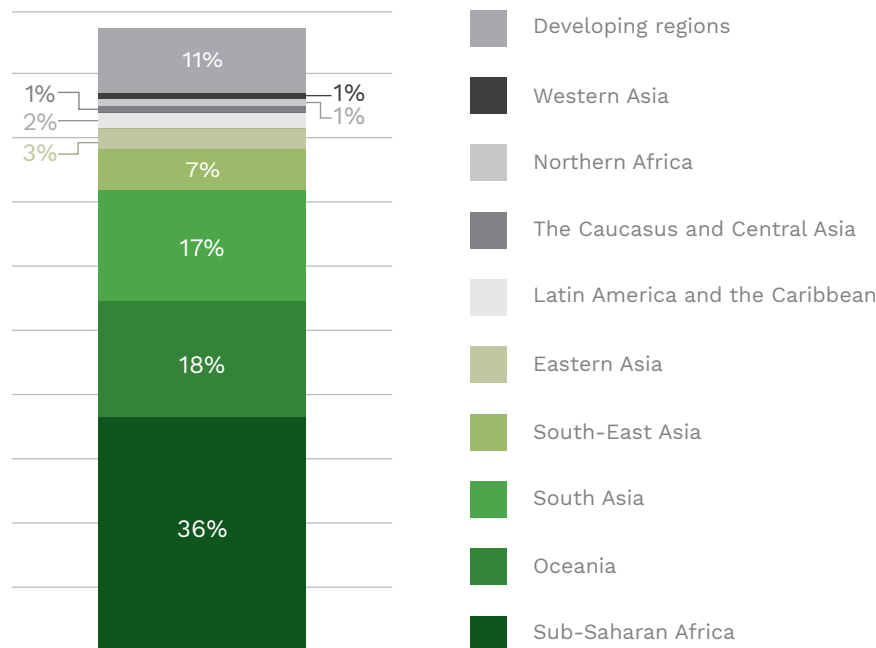
¹⁹ See: [ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization](#).

Source: Compiled by author based on ILO/IPEC data (2015).

Working without decent conditions has many consequences. One of which is exacerbated extreme poverty.

Figure 19

Percentage of employed people living on less than 1.25 USD per day, by region (2015 estimate)



Source: United Nations (2015).

The lack of decent work is reflected in future generations: lack of a fair income, absence of gender equality, violation of workers' rights and lack of adequate social protection for families. This may lead households to resort to child labour to compensate for income deficiencies. This, in turn, undermines children's and adolescents' prospects for decent work in the future.²⁰

This cycle also feeds on child labour: its continued existence is directly proportional to the difficulties in creating decent work. This affects a society's ability to achieve the sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth to which states committed to under the SDGs. **Target 8.1** aims to "Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries."

²⁰ ILO (2013c).

Between 2007 and 2012 countries that have invested in promoting quality jobs have achieved an annual growth of about 1 per cent above those economies that did not, demonstrating the direct relationship between both variables²¹.

Target 8.2 aims to “Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors.”

Child labour is directly at odds with achieving this target: it is an obstacle to health, training and full development of skills in children and adolescents, and results in a loss of value of human resources in the countries.

In addition to the problems of education and health, child labour causes a loss of productivity. The reduction and elimination of child labour “would reduce the labour supply and potentially give rise to improved production technologies, creation of skilled or semi-skilled jobs, increased labour productivity and higher wages.”²²

Target 8.5 which aims to “Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value” and **Target 8.6** which commits all States to “Reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training” also have a direct correlation with child labour.

An [ILO analysis of the transition from school to first employment](#) shows that, by disrupting or hindering the schooling and training trajectories for children and adolescents, child labour places individuals at a disadvantage when entering the workforce and pushes them into unstable jobs (contracts for less than 12 months or no contract at all) and deprives them of access to decent work.

In 2015, approximately 75 million people in the world aged 15 to 24 were unemployed:²³ Only four out of ten young women and men were employed. In 1991, five out of ten young women and men were employed: a decline of 10 per cent.²⁴

21 See ILO: Report *World of work 2014: Developing with jobs*.

22 ILO (2006), p. 62.

23 IPEC (2015), p. 79.

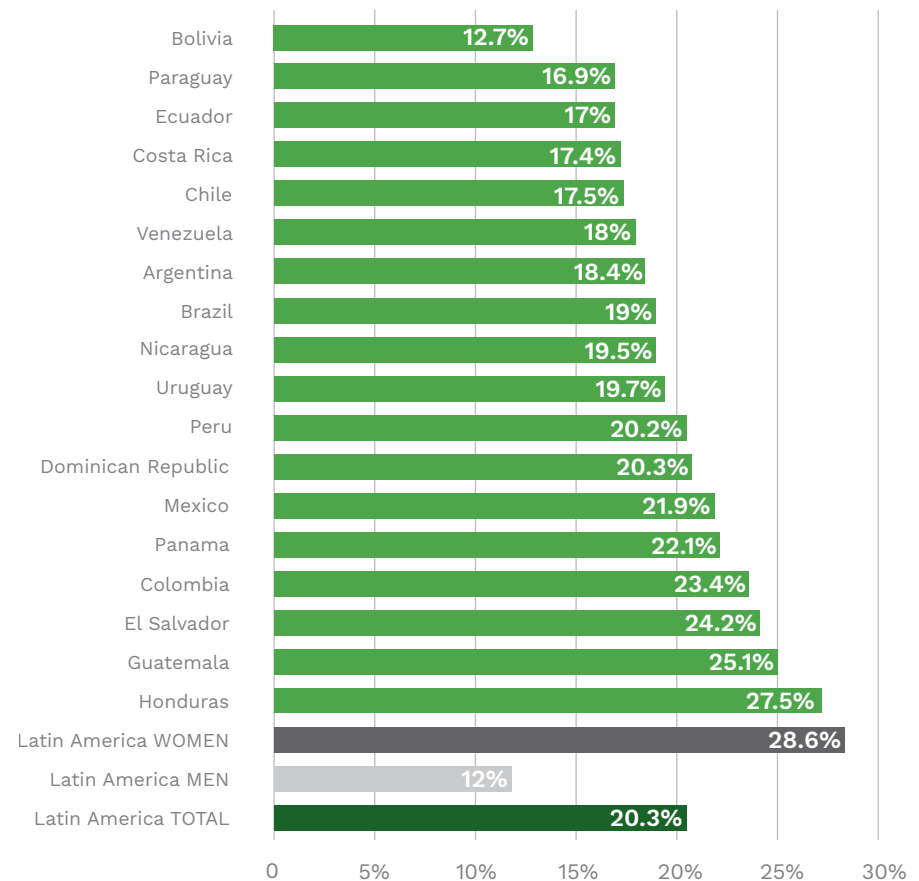
24 United Nations (2015), p. 17.

It is proven that youth unemployment costs more for societies than adult unemployment due to the premature interruption of amassing human capital and because unemployed youth “are active in violence, substance abuse, and risky sexual behaviour.”²⁵

In Latin America and the Caribbean this involves paying special attention to the situation of young people who are neither in employment nor in education or training. They account for approximately 20 per cent of the population aged 15 to 24. There is also a strong gender disparity disadvantaging adolescent women, who are often relegated to the care of family members and to domestic labour,²⁶ forms of work which often go unrecognised.

Figure 20

Latin America and the Caribbean: Percentage of young people aged 15 to 24 who are neither in employment nor in education or training (2005-2011)



Source: Compiled by author based on ILO/IPEC data (2013c).

²⁵ World Bank (2003), p. 53.

²⁶ ECLAC/FAO/UN Women/UNDP/ILO (2013), p. 88.

Target 8.8, which commits all States to “Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment,” establishes a direct link to the international labour standards.²⁷

This target also reaffirms the commitment made by States in adopting the [ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work](#) in 1998, which in Article 2 provides that all members shall have an obligation “to respect, to promote and to realize” freedom of assembly and of association, recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the abolition of forced labour and child labour and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, as universal rights that apply to all people in all countries, in the understanding that this is the minimum base of rights necessary in a globalized economy and constitutes the “basic rules of the game” for growth with social progress.

²⁷ Eliminating child labour entails a global commitment to the effective application of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) and the [ILO Fundamental Conventions No. 138 on Minimum Age for Admission to Employment \(1973\)](#) and [No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour \(1999\)](#), among other relevant instruments.



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