



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.

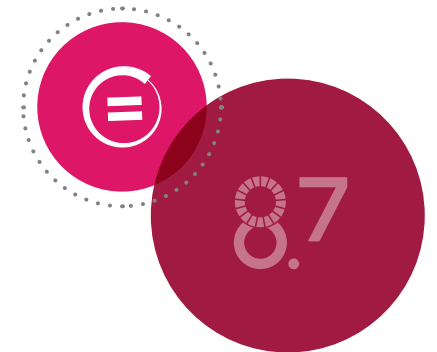
SDG 10: ENDING CHILD LABOUR IS A KEY PART TO PROMOTING EQUALITY

SDG 10: Reduce inequality in and between countries

The targets under this goal are of the greatest relevance for Latin America and the Caribbean given the inequalities in and between countries. ECLAC has stated that “One of the region’s distinguishing features has been its inequality in resource distribution and the exercise of rights. While Latin America is not the poorest region in the world, it stands out as the most unequal. This represents an obstacle to the current well-being and the future development of its societies and economies”.⁵⁶

Inequality is a factor that hinders access to opportunities. Working so that the poorest and most vulnerable children may have, from the beginning of their lives, the same opportunities as society as a whole including access to basic health care services, quality education and social protection schemes

⁵⁶ ECLAC (2014), p. 22.



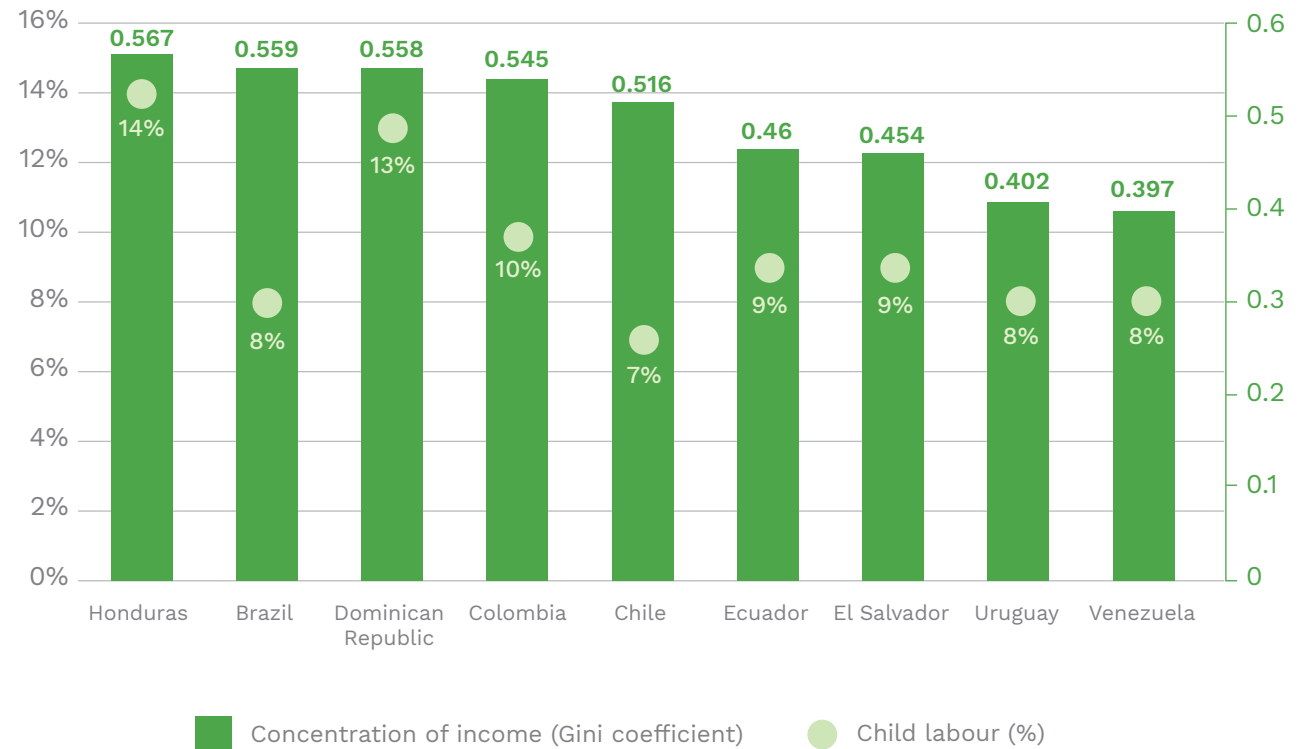
that are sensitive to their situation is one direct way to break the multiple cycles of poverty and lagging behind in which they are trapped.

Indeed, implementing policies in favour of the poorest sectors of a society leads to new opportunities for the development of society at large and is cost-effective.⁵⁷

In the specific area of child labour, the reduction of inequalities relates to other specific policies (in education, health and social protection) enhancing its outcomes. Thus, Latin America and the Caribbean is “the developing region with the smallest absolute and relative amount of child labour and the one that has made most progress in preventing and eradicating it.”⁵⁸

Figure 33

Gini index of income concentration and percentage of child labour presence for selected countries in Latin America and the Caribbean (according to household surveys, circa 2013)



57 Rees, Chai and Anthony (2012) and Heckman and Masterov (2007).

58 ECLAC (2015), p. 136.

Source: Author's elaboration.

Target 10.1 aims to, “By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average,” something that can already be seen in several countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Table 4
Shared prosperity

	Base year	Latest Year	Annual consumption or per-capita income growth rate	
			Bottom 40 per cent of income earners (%)	Total population (%)
Argentina	2007	2012	6,4	3,1
Bolivia	2007	2012	10,1	4,3
Brazil	2007	2012	6,9	4,5
Chile	2006	2011	3,9	2,8
Colombia	2008	2012	6,0	3,6
Costa Rica	2010	2013	1,33	3,15
Dominican Republic	2007	2012	1,8	-0,2
Ecuador	2007	2012	5,5	1,0
El Salvador	2007	2012	0,2	-1,5
Guatemala	2006	2011	-1,8	-4,6
Honduras	2007	2012	-3,22	-2,68
Mexico	2008	2012	1,1	-0,2
Panama	2008	2012	4,1	3,6
Paraguay	2007	2012	7,2	5,2
Peru	2007	2012	8,6	4,0
Uruguay	2007	2012	7,9	4,3

Source: Global Database of Shared Prosperity.

Raising the relative income level of the poorest groups discourages child labour and promotes education, thereby breaking the vicious cycle of child labour and poverty.

Inequality is not expressed solely as income levels. With that in mind, **Target 10.2** aims to, “By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.”

Available evidence in the region indicates that “The leading reasons for the lower participation of indigenous and Afro-descendent people in secondary and post-secondary education included: *higher rates of poverty and child and adolescent labour*; the distance of schools from their homes, particularly in rural areas; the low quality of the educational facilities to which they have access; the relevance of their study programmes and discrimination” (the Italics are the author’s).⁵⁹ Indeed, there are more incentives for child labour in socially and politically disadvantaged groups of society.

Target 10.3 aims to “Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard,” and **Target 10.4** aims to “Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality.”

Laws and policies are tools that are the responsibility of the State. In defining their content in terms of labour, children and young people, the States must, in addition to their commitment to the SDGs, consider the existence of international legal obligations arising from their ratification of ILO Conventions or within the specific framework of human rights.

Target 10.7 commits all States to “Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.” Migrant children and adolescents face a double vulnerability of being underage and a migrant. Even when they reach their destination, they are exposed to risks and difficulties in accessing education, social protection programmes and entering labour markets where they engage in hazardous work and away from decent work standards.⁶⁰

59 ECLAC (2015), p. 29.

60 See also: [Migration and Child Labour. Essentials.](#)

The relationship between migration and child labour is an under-explored and growing field.⁶¹ The little existing information confirms the links between the two, particularly, the risks children and adolescents are exposed to when there are mass cross-border movements. The most worrying cases are those of unaccompanied migrant minors.

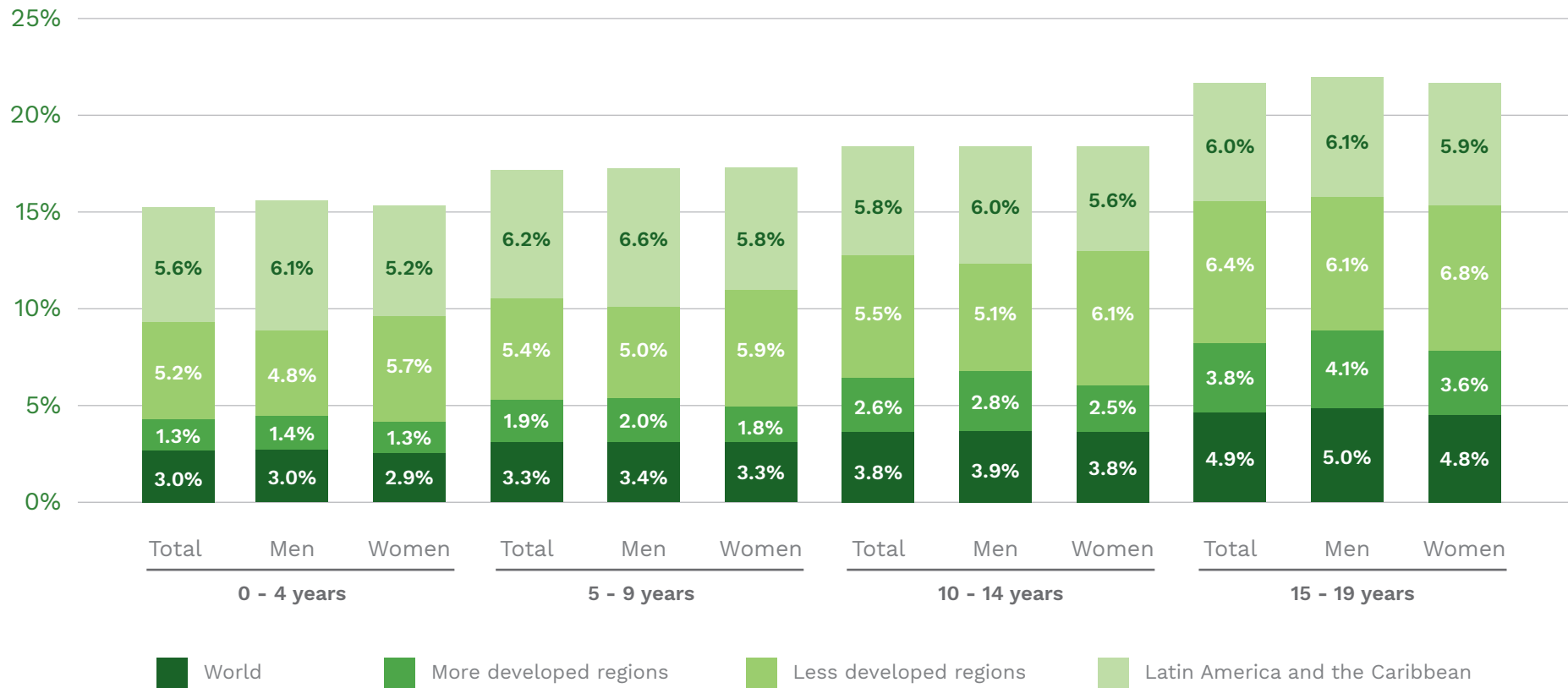
In 2013, the number of migrants in the world exceeded 231.5 million people: just over 61.5 million were in the Americas, of whom nearly 7 million were under age 19.⁶²

61 IPEC and IOM (2009) p. 20. In this regard, see also IPEC (2011b).

62 See [Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2013 Revision](#). Migrants by Age and Sex, United Nations database.

Figure 34

Percentage of migrants as part of total migrants in the reference group, by region and age (2013)



Source: Compiled by author based on data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Although young children generally move with their parents, members of the extended family or other responsible adults, increasingly children are migrating unaccompanied⁶³. There are different reasons for this, including: family reunification, search for better economic and social conditions, poverty, environmental degradation, persecution, violence and other forms of abuse.

The worst forms of child labour find fertile ground in mass movements of people. Therefore, their regulation necessitates coordinated control and enforcement of policies that contribute to discourage child labour and address its causes.⁶⁴ The unaccompanied migration of minors increases children's exposure to trafficking, with girls being especially vulnerable "because of gender discrimination and the sectors of work in which they may be engaged."⁶⁵

Unfortunately, there is still not enough information on the exploitation of children in activities such as smuggling and trade in illicit drugs, street crime and forced begging, but studies show that unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents are often exploited in these activities.⁶⁶

A UNHCR study found that the 38 per cent of unaccompanied children migrating from Mexico to the United States had been recruited into the human trafficking industry precisely because of their age and vulnerability. "These children have a unique set of potential protection needs that includes entrapment in criminal conduct, the worst forms of child labour and exposure to dangerous situations that are harmful to their safety and well-being."⁶⁷

On the other side of migration of unaccompanied children is the situation of those left behind in their countries of origin, separated from one or both parents who have migrated, which causes different types of problems and increases their vulnerability to child labour.

63 Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, Mr. Jorge Bustamante, on the Promotion and Protection of All Human, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, including the Right to Development (UN Doc. A/HRC/11/7), § 19.

64 Van de Glind (2010) y Van de Glind y Kou (2013).

65 United Nations (2011), p. 75.

66 ECPAT UK (2010).

67 UNHCR (2014), p. 11.

Figure 35
 Consequences for children and adolescents of their parents' migration



Source: Unicef (2011).

Concern about these situations led a group of Latin American and Caribbean countries to file an advisory opinion request with the [Inter-American Court of Human Rights regarding the “Rights and Guarantees of Children in the Context of Migration and/or in Need of International Protection.”](#) which was issued on August 19, 2014 (OC-21/14).

Although no explicit mention of child labour is made in the advisory opinion, the standards on protection of migrant children set guidelines for action by the States. For example: “the elements of the definition of refugee were traditionally interpreted based on the experiences of adults or persons over 18 years of age. Hence, in view of the fact that children are entitled to the right to seek and receive asylum and may, in consequence, submit applications for recognition of refugee status in their own capacity, whether or not they are accompanied, the elements of the definition should be interpreted taking into account the specific forms that child persecution may adopt, such as recruitment, trafficking, and female genital mutilation, as well as the way in which they may experience these situations” (§ 80).



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