



International  
Labour  
Organization



Regional Initiative  
Latin America and the Caribbean  
Free of Child Labour



UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC

# The COVID-19

pandemic could increase  
child labour in Latin America  
and the Caribbean

Technical Note N° 1

▶ #ResilientWith  
DecentWork

# Acknowledgement

This technical note was prepared by Ana López Castelló, María Olave and Noor Denkers from the ILO, and Andrés Espejo from ECLAC. We acknowledge the technical contributions of Julietta Rodríguez-Guzmán and Betzabé Butrón from the Pan American Health Organization. Likewise, the contributions of Julio García Benítez and Iván Rodríguez Carmiol, external consultants who supported with data processing and information analysis.

Currently the world is going through an unprecedented health, social, human and economic crisis due to the pandemic caused by the disease COVID-19 (ECLAC, 2020a), catalogued even as the greatest economic and social challenge facing humanity since the Great Depression of 1930 and World War II (ECLAC, 2020d; ILO, 2020).

In general, in crises of this nature, there are immediate effects on health and on economic, productive or labour aspects. However, there is also a set of less visible and probably more lasting impacts on women, who are affected by the wage gap, a higher poverty rate and over-represented in the informal and care economy; as well as, on vulnerable groups such as migrants and refugees, indigenous and Afro-descendant populations, boys, girls, adolescents and youth.

To be precise, in periods of crisis, boys and girls often go unnoticed, their well-being is overshadowed by other priorities and many times their rights are threatened

(UNICEF, 2016). Even though in the current health crisis derived from COVID-19, the frequency of infection and mortality in the child population are lower than in other age groups, children are being affected by the socioeconomic impacts and, in some cases, by mitigation measures that may inadvertently cause more harm than benefit (UN, 2020). The pandemic will exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, including an increased risk of child marriage<sup>1</sup>, child labour, and teenage pregnancy.

According to ILO estimates (2017), the percentage of children and adolescents between 5 and 17 years-old in child labour in Latin America and the Caribbean fell from 10.8% in 2008 to 7.3% in 2016, which is equivalent to a decrease of 3.7 million people in this situation. Despite this good news, there are still around 10.5 million children and adolescents in child labour, and the current situation has the potential to reverse this positive trend, placing the region at risk of not being able to reach Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as it relates to “ending child labour in all its forms by 2025”.



<sup>1</sup> Girls Not Brides (2020). COVID-19 y su vínculo con matrimonios y uniones infantiles, tempranas y forzadas: Plan de Acción. See: <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-19-y-los-matrimonios-y-uniones-infantiles-tempranas-y-forzadas.pdf>



# A region going into “intensive care”

**T**he countries of the region have taken containment and mitigation measures to control the advance of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the partial or total closure of economic activities, the reduction of government activity, the confinement of families in their homes, the reduction of people’s mobility, social and physical distancing, and the temporary closure of schools, among others.

Uncertainty about how the crisis may evolve is having devastating effects on the countries’ economies, business performance and the health of families in the region; effects that are likely to be more intense and broader than those suffered during the 2008 global financial crisis (ECLAC, 2020).

It is estimated that the region’s GDP will decrease this year by 5.3% (ECLAC, 2020d), there will be an increase in unemployment, with about 11.5 million new unemployed persons (ECLAC-ILO, 2020). Likewise, it is forecast that there will be a reduction in wages and income and less access to social protection, as well as a lower demand for

tourism services with possible contractions between 8% and 25% (ECLAC, 2020a). All this will lead to increasing poverty by 28.7 million people and extreme poverty by 15.9 million, with devastating impact for the region (ECLAC, 2020c).

The countries of the region have adopted social protection measures to mitigate the economic effects of the pandemic, especially for the most vulnerable population and formal workers. Measures include those aimed at guaranteeing income, food security and basic services. In this way, transfer programs become the main tool for support to this population. To date, according to ECLAC estimates, there are 22 countries in the region that have these programs, covering nearly 90.5 million households (ECLAC, 2020c).

Similarly, to cover especially vulnerable groups such as migrants and refugees, temporary residence rights are being granted to those migrants and asylum seekers, including access to health and social services. Cash transfers are also being implemented for workers in the

informal economy, in order to mitigate the fall in their labour income, which constitutes an innovative measure for this group (ECLAC, 2020c; ILO, 2020).

With regard to formal salaried workers, the measures have focused on unemployment insurance, sick leave and the prohibition of dismissals. Likewise, most of the countries of the region have implemented measures to activate teleworking, when possible, and the temporary reduction of working hours, in order to reduce workers' exposure to the virus and guarantee the continuity of economic activity (ECLAC, 2020c).

Currently, some countries of the region that have applied public health measures regarding the restriction of movement and social distancing are getting ready to resume economic activities. Plans of phased return to work have been designed considering the gradual incorporation of certain sectors, mainly associated with the design and adoption of prevention and protection protocols for workers in which occupational safety and health have a fundamental role. At the same time, they seek to minimize the contagion and spread of the virus in the workplace, as well as, prevent transmission to homes and communities (PAHO, 2020<sup>2</sup>).

## What is child labour?

The term “child labour” is usually defined as all work that deprives children and adolescents of their childhood, their potential and dignity, and that is detrimental to their physical and psychological development.

It refers to work that:



Is dangerous and detrimental to their physical, mental or moral well-being;



Interferes with their schooling since:

- it deprives them of the possibility of attending classes,
- it forces them to leave school prematurely,
- it requires them to combine study with heavy and time-consuming work.

In the most extreme forms of child labour, children and adolescents are subjected to situations of slavery, separated from their families, exposed to serious dangers and illnesses and/or left to fend for themselves on the streets of large cities (frequently at a very young age). Determining whether to qualify a specific activity as “child labour” or not, will depend on the age of the child, the type of work in question and the number of hours he/she devotes to it, the conditions in which it is carried out and the objectives pursued by each country. The answer varies from one country to another and between one sector and another.

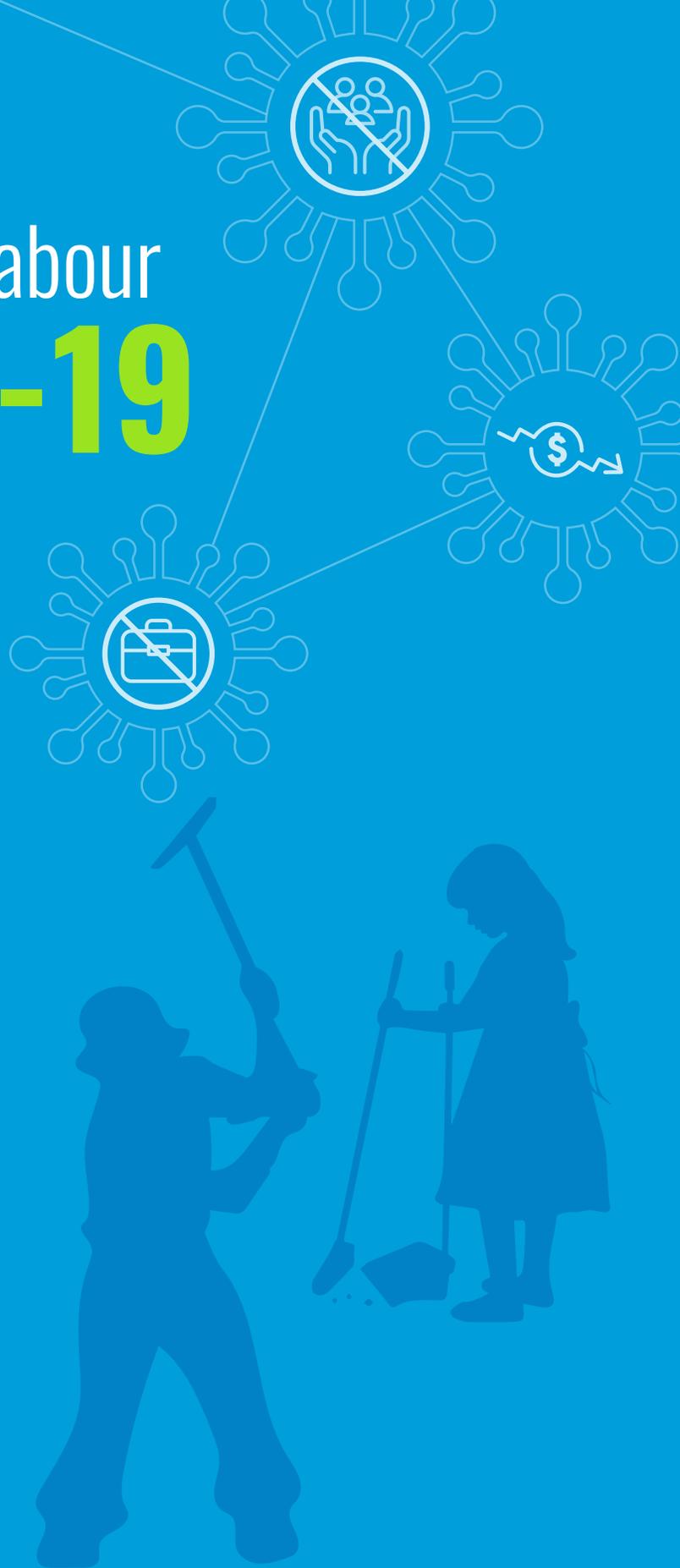
**For a more detailed definition please see:** [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_651815.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_651815.pdf) (pg. 21).  
**Source:** ILO.

2 PAHO and UNOPS (2020). COVID-19: Medidas de prevención en obras. Licencia: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. See: <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/52057>

# A Reading of child labour in the **COVID-19** context

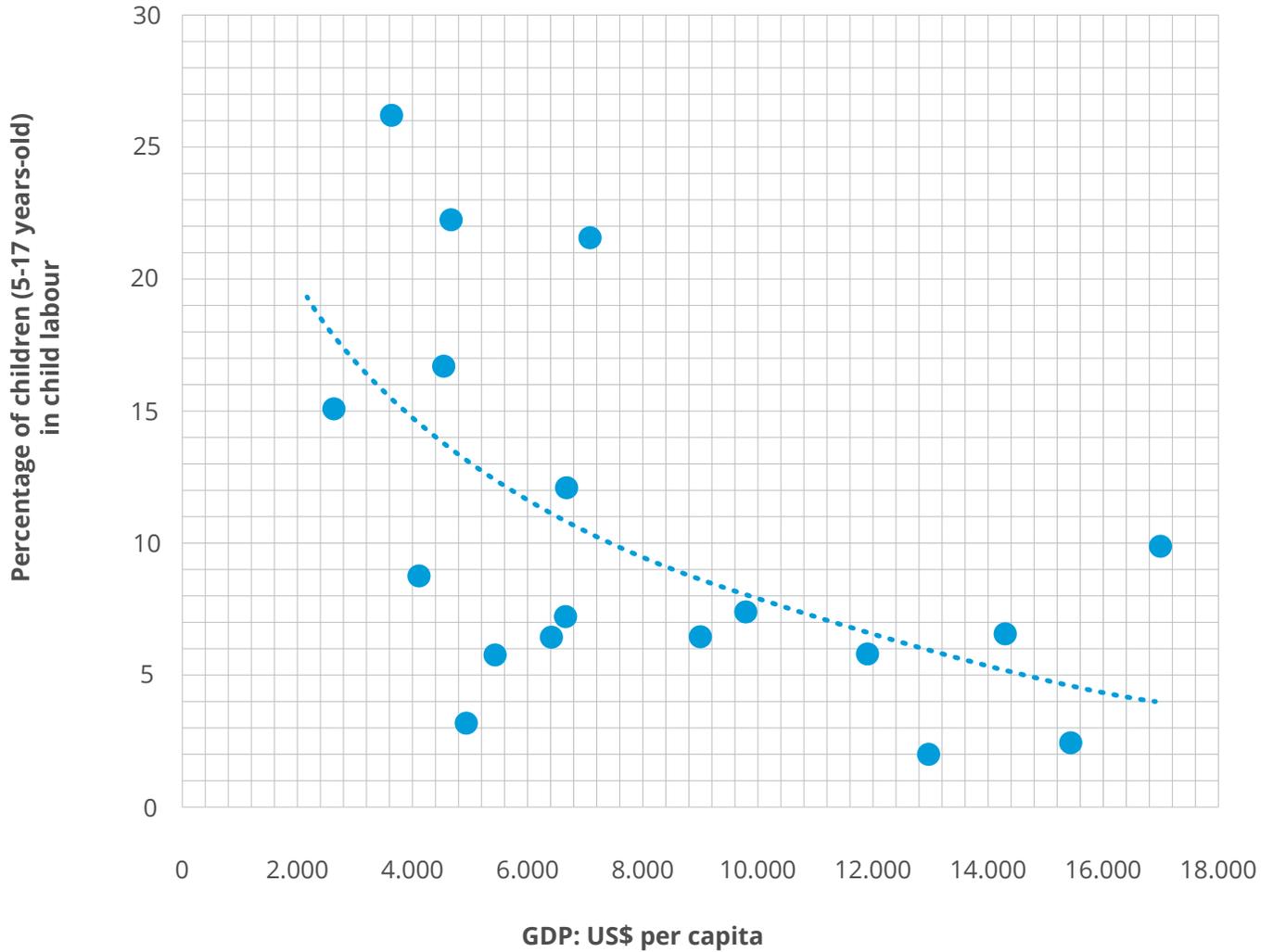
**T**he increase in unemployment and poverty will severely affect the well-being of families, particularly those in conditions of extreme poverty who tend to live in inadequate housing, work in informal jobs, in micro and small businesses, or on their own. Similarly, young people and women, who represent a significant proportion of persons in temporary, part-time, or unprotected and informal employment, will be among the groups most affected by the deterioration of the economy (ILO, 2020a). The crisis will quickly spread to rural areas, where there is traditionally a decent work deficit and where many jobs do not ensure sufficient levels of income and sustainable livelihoods.

The slowdown in production, unemployment, low coverage of social protection, lack of access to social security and higher levels of poverty are conditions that favour the increase in child labour (ILO, 2009). Comparative data shows that child labour has a higher incidence in countries where income levels are lower (see Chart N° 1)<sup>3</sup>. Often, in households where living conditions deteriorate, there are greater justifications for sending their sons or daughters to work, or for withdrawing them from school because they can no longer bear the education costs (UNESCO, 2015).



<sup>3</sup> However, it is also noted that there are some countries with comparatively low levels of GDP per capita and low levels of child labour, suggesting that there is margin to influence child labour through other means than economic advancement (OECD, 2019).

**CHART N° 1**  
**Association of GDP per capita and incidence rates of child labour in Latin America and the Caribbean**  
 (18 countries)

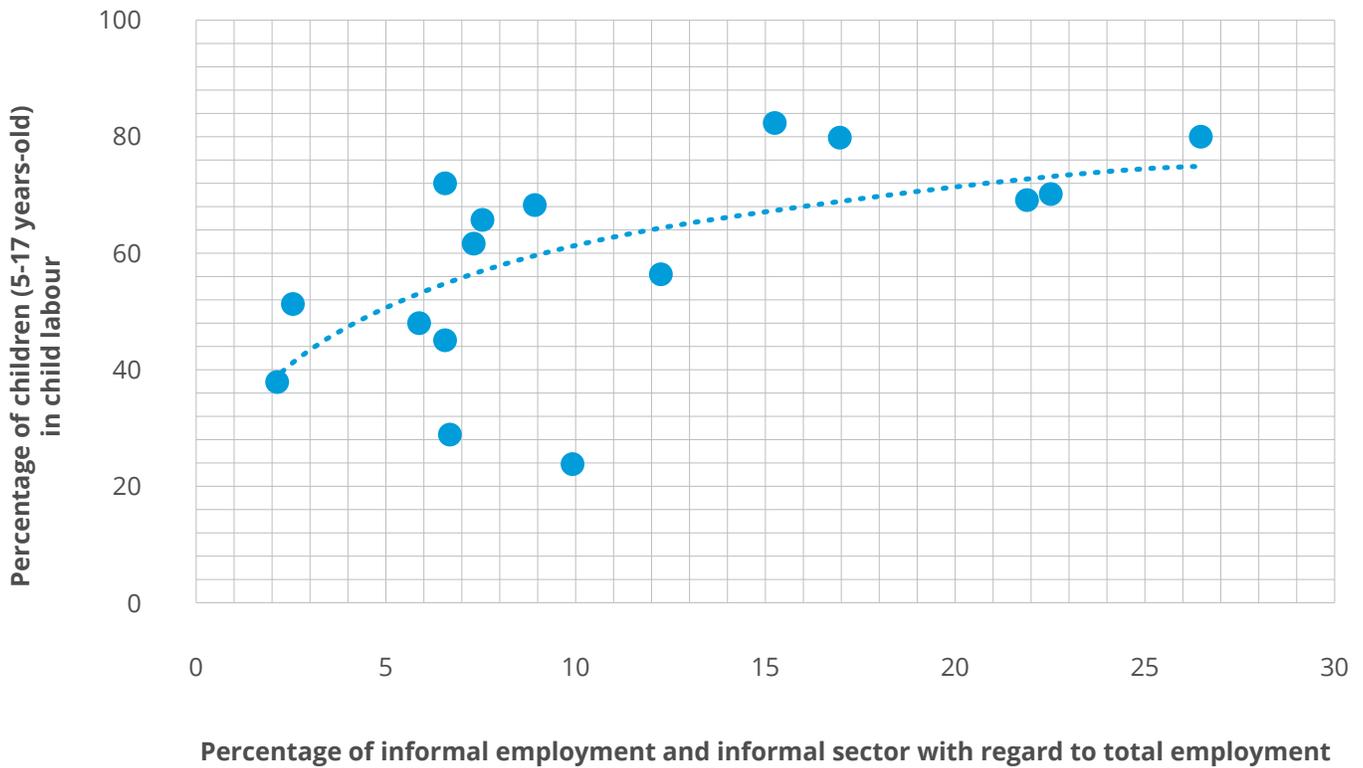


**Note:** The percentage of child labour refers to several years between 2016-2018 and the GDP per capita to 2018.  
**Source:** Author's own compilation based on ILO-ECLAC and IADB.

The figures on child labour and per capita income in the countries of the region suggest that there is a strong negative correlation between the economic situation and the incidence of child labour. However, low per capita incomes are not the only cause of child labour. Another important element is the economic insecurity of families. One of the main factors of insecurity and economic instability in households is that the head of the household

works in informal conditions, where social protection is minimal and employment contracts are non-existent, so child labour becomes an important component of how households manage economic insecurity (OECD, 2019). In this sense, Chart N° 2 illustrates the direct relationship between the higher proportion of informal work and the increase in child labour.

**CHART N° 2**  
**Association of informal employment and impact rates of child labour in Latin America and the Caribbean**  
 (18 countries)



**Note:** The percentage of child labour refers to several years between 2016-2018 and the percentage of informal employment at 2018.  
**Source:** Author's own compilation based on ILO-ECLAC and ILOSTAT.

Therefore, it is necessary to act with measures and strategies that can mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the economy, and the threat it poses to the progress made in reducing child labour in Latin America and the Caribbean during the last decade. These measures and strategies should also serve to continue the advance towards achieving Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In terms of barriers to access to quality services and adverse living conditions that reduce opportunities to ensure their development and well-being, most working minors face a double condition of vulnerability, due

to exposure to inadequate working conditions that characterize child labour and the disadvantaged position of the families and communities they belong to.

The temporary closure of schools is another of the social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic that has the potential to increase child labour. According to UNESCO data (2020), all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (33) have temporarily closed their schools nationwide. This implies that around 167 million children and adolescents are in their homes to prevent the contagion and spread of the virus. This interruption of activities in educational centres will not only have significant effects on learning,

especially among the most vulnerable<sup>4</sup>, but also on food security<sup>5</sup>, and the participation of parents, especially, mothers<sup>6</sup>, in the labour market (ECLAC, 2020a). All these factors create an environment that tends to favour the increase in child labour.

In fact, different studies (ILO, 2015; Ortiz and Cummins, 2012; UNICEF, 2020) show that crises interrupt education, delay initial access and contribute to higher school dropout and lower completion rates, in many cases leading to early entry into the labour market. However, the evidence collected by UCW (2011) from previous economic recessions in Latin America, points to a weaker or even marginally positive impact of the crisis on education. These same authors mention that it is important to keep in mind that the consequences of the crisis will vary from country to country and that it depends on current social policies.

Furthermore, the effects generated by the pandemic will have a different impact at territorial level. The effects are expected to be more damaging to those in poor households and in regions or provinces with less socioeconomic development. In these territories, access and response capacity in terms of diagnosis and health care are more limited and the economic impact of the crisis could be greater due to the strong presence of informal employment and the accumulation of socioeconomic inequalities that characterize these areas. (RIMISP, 2020). Therefore, it is predicted that the most important and long-term impacts will occur in the most vulnerable urban sectors, and then affect already widely marginalized rural communities.

In the first instance, prior to the crisis, municipalities identified through the Child Labour Risk Identification Model (CLRISK)<sup>7</sup> as presenting a lower risk of child labour,



**On the other hand, rural areas, where there are greater risks of child labour, will later be affected by the crisis due to the characteristics of less interaction between people and less economic dynamism.**

were more urban than high-risk ones and had a higher proportion of salaried jobs in micro, small and medium-sized companies, and a high presence of informal work<sup>8</sup>. In the current context, these municipalities will be immediately affected by the increase in unemployment, lower labour income and the loss of coverage for social protection. All this will exert greater economic pressure on families, who may be forced to incorporate children and adolescents into labour activities, either to replace those who have been dismissed, to replace the salaried workforce in businesses or family activities, or to look for work outside the household to generate complementary income.

On the other hand, in the municipalities that had a higher risk of child labour before the crisis, their situation will worsen due to the higher levels of poverty, a higher proportion of the population with insufficient income to cover minimum needs, lower levels of schooling, as well

4 In many cases, lower-income students cannot continue their education through digital means, since not all homes or educational centers have the tools, capacities and technologies necessary to operate in this modality (ECLAC, 2020b).

5 Around 85 million children of the region receive breakfast, a snack or a lunch at school (FAO/ WFP, 2019).

6 Daily, the women of the region dedicate to non-paid domestic work and care three times the time that men dedicate to the same tasks (ECLAC, 2020b).

7 Tool developed jointly by ILO and ECLAC and applied in nine countries of the region. See: [https://www.iniciativa2025alc.org/sites/default/files/child-labour-risk-identification-model\\_RI.pdf](https://www.iniciativa2025alc.org/sites/default/files/child-labour-risk-identification-model_RI.pdf)

8 In 2003, the 17th International Conference of Labour Statisticians of the ILO (17th ICLS) adopted a set of guidelines in which informal economic activity was approached from a different perspective, namely employment. In doing so, the concept of informal employment was defined as all paid work (for example, both self-employment and wage employment) that is not registered, regulated or protected by legal or regulatory frameworks, as well as unpaid work carried out in an income generating company. Informal workers do not benefit from secure employment contracts, labour benefits, social protection or worker representation.

as more precarious and informal jobs. In these contexts, there is a higher probability of incorporation of children and adolescents into dangerous forms of labour is not only detrimental to their physical and psychological development, but creates conditions that deprive them of their childhood, their potential and their dignity and they are an unacceptable way to mitigate the lack of household income.

On the other hand, rural areas, where there are greater risks of child labour, will later be affected by the crisis due

to the characteristics of less interaction between people and less economic dynamism. However, areas with strong value chains between urban and rural economies (small cooperatives or agricultural units that sell to businesses or urban establishments), will immediately feel the economic effects of the pandemic, especially associated with inequality that affects the working and family condition of the workers in the sector further increasing the risk that children and adolescents are linked to child labour.

## Box N° 1

### Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on child labour in Mexico, Peru and Costa Rica

In order to illustrate the different effects that the COVID-19 pandemic could have in the region, specific analyses have been carried out in countries that have applied the CLRISK, and some of the results obtained for Mexico, Peru and Costa Rica are shown below. As observed, the economic impacts of the crisis could have a regressive effect with respect to the progress made in reducing child labour and, in particular, the types of hazardous work, which account for the largest number of children and adolescents in this situation.



In the case of **Mexico**, it is forecast that GDP will decrease by 4% in 2020 (Banco de México) and there will be a loss of formal and informal jobs that is already being reflected in lower employment activity as registered by the Mexican Institute Social Security (IMSS). This, since the number of persons affiliated only increased by 134,435 jobs (0.7%) from March 2019 to March 2020, compared to the growth of 2.8% and 4.2% registered in the years 2019 and 2018, respectively (IMMS, 2020). Taking into account that 56.2% of workers are informal, it is observed that the rate of child labour for each of the 32 states has a negative ratio. In other words, the higher the per capita income, the lower the rate of child labour. In this context, adopting specific actions focused on the most vulnerable population groups could avoid an increase in the child labour rate of around 0.4%, which would imply a two-year setback in reduction efforts.



In the case of **Peru**, according to the International Monetary Fund, GDP may contract by 4.5% as a result of the combination of the fall in private final consumption (which represents 64% of GDP), the fall in copper and gold exports- which represent 59% of the country's exports- due to lower demand from the world economy, particularly from China, and the effect on national and international tourism flows, a sector that provides almost 4% of GDP and generates around 500 thousand jobs. Similar to Mexico, in Peru records show a decrease in child labour between 2012 and 2018, going from an employment rate of children and adolescents of 31.7% to 26.1%, which is equivalent to a reduction of 5.6 percentage points (ENAH0, 2018). Estimates on the regressive effects associated with the pandemic indicate that the rate of child labour could increase oscillating between 1 and 3 percentage points.

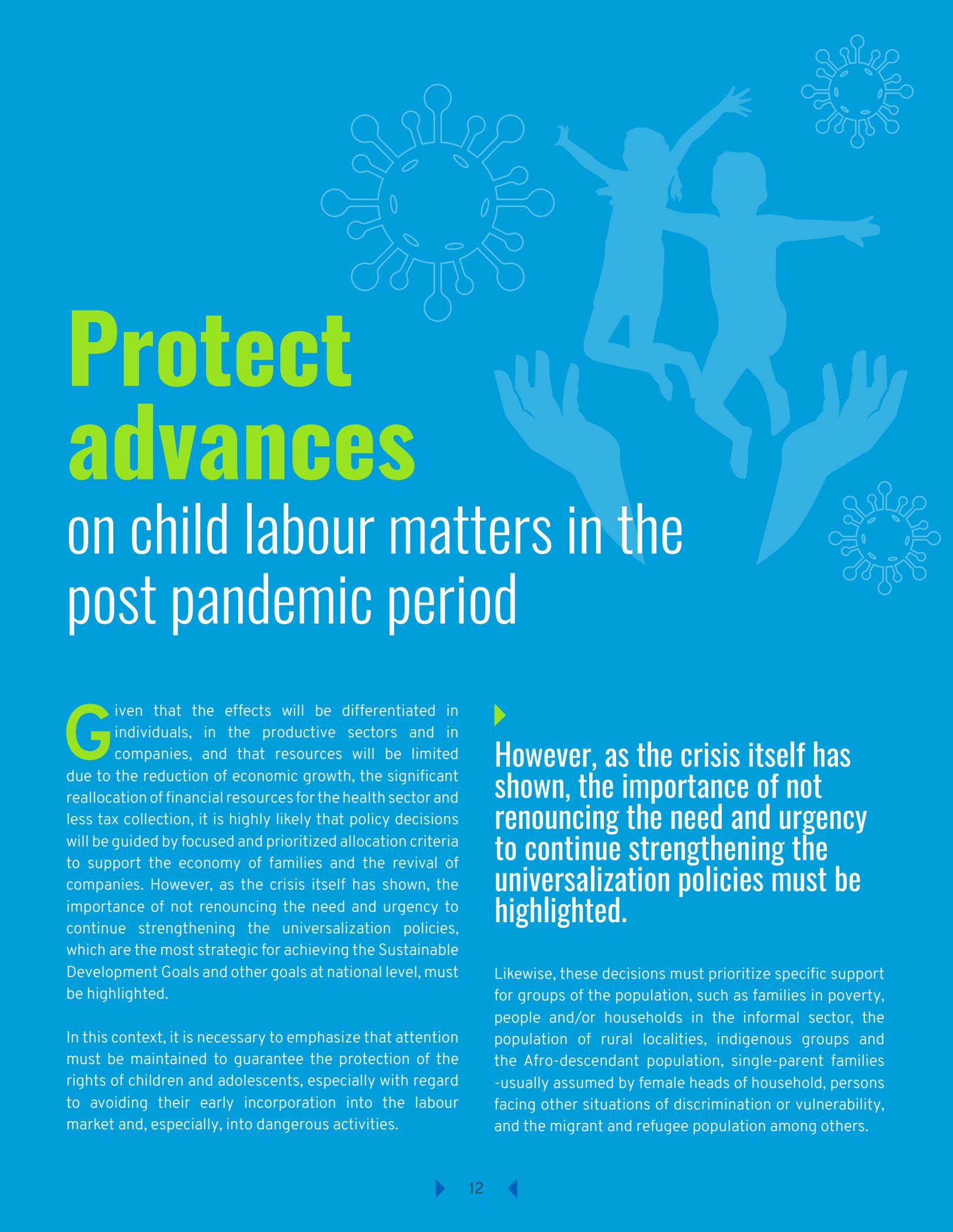


With regard to **Costa Rica**, one of the countries with the lowest rate of child labour in Latin America and the Caribbean, based on the National Household Survey (ENAH0, 2016) it is estimated that 20% of the total population is between 5 and 17 years-old, of which 3.1% are in child labour. This represented a decrease of 1.2 percentage points compared to the 4.3% observed in 2011. Thus, the effects of COVID-19 could increase the incidence of child labour although the impact is likely to be less than in other countries due to the economic and social characteristics of Costa Rica.

The data shown here were analysed by the ILO and ECLAC team, based on national survey reports, IMF data and complementary public sources, and are part of country notes that offer a more detailed analysis and will be published soon.

Against this background, in the face of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the indicators of child labour and dangerous adolescent work could increase significantly in the countries of the region, if measures and strategies are not implemented to reduce the impact. The analysis provided for three countries (see Box N° 1), shows that child labour could increase between 1 and 3 percentage points, which would imply that at least between 109,000 and 326,000 children and adolescents could enter the

labour market adding to the 10.5 million who are already in child labour situations today. For all these reasons, it is imperative that governments, together with employers' and workers' organizations and the active participation of civil society, international organizations and development partners, generate and articulate strategies and programs with a focus on health in all policies, to avoid the setback of the progress made on this issue over the last twenty years.

The background features a light blue gradient with several white line-art icons. There are three virus-like icons with circular heads and radiating lines. In the center, there are silhouettes of two children jumping joyfully. At the bottom, there are two large hands reaching upwards. The overall theme is child protection and recovery from a pandemic.

# Protect advances

## on child labour matters in the post pandemic period

**G**iven that the effects will be differentiated in individuals, in the productive sectors and in companies, and that resources will be limited due to the reduction of economic growth, the significant reallocation of financial resources for the health sector and less tax collection, it is highly likely that policy decisions will be guided by focused and prioritized allocation criteria to support the economy of families and the revival of companies. However, as the crisis itself has shown, the importance of not renouncing the need and urgency to continue strengthening the universalization policies, which are the most strategic for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and other goals at national level, must be highlighted.

In this context, it is necessary to emphasize that attention must be maintained to guarantee the protection of the rights of children and adolescents, especially with regard to avoiding their early incorporation into the labour market and, especially, into dangerous activities.

▶ **However, as the crisis itself has shown, the importance of not renouncing the need and urgency to continue strengthening the universalization policies must be highlighted.**

Likewise, these decisions must prioritize specific support for groups of the population, such as families in poverty, people and/or households in the informal sector, the population of rural localities, indigenous groups and the Afro-descendant population, single-parent families -usually assumed by female heads of household, persons facing other situations of discrimination or vulnerability, and the migrant and refugee population among others.

To face the damages that the COVID-19 pandemic is causing directly or indirectly, including the impact on child labour, it is necessary to act strategically and decisively on three interdependent work fronts:



## Effective prevention

to avoid i) the early insertion of children and adolescents into the labour market in risky conditions or their exploitation in any of the worst forms of child labour and ii) the loss or lack of access to jobs in protected conditions for adolescents who have reached the legal age to work, or the interruption of their studies for economic reasons.



## The identification and location

of children and adolescents who work, particularly those who perform hazardous work or adolescents who are at risk of losing their job in protected conditions.



## The restoration of the rights

of working children and adolescents and their families, beginning with access to and conditions for successful permanence in the quality education system and access to health services, urgent withdrawal from child labour and especially from the worst forms, and financial support for the home.

## Prevention, a cost-effective measure



**Decisive government action** is required to prevent children and adolescents from being forced into the labour market due to individual or family vulnerability and being exposed to the risk of exploitation in the worst forms of child labour. Once the child is in a situation of child labour, it is much more complex and expensive to withdraw them from the activity or intervene to restore their rights, so the best option remains to provide preventive support.

**Health and education services play an important role** in preventing illicit work by children and adolescents. These services are close to families and communities, they often know the socioeconomic situation of those who face difficult living conditions and accompany the majority of children and adolescents and their caregivers during the most important years of their lives. Now more than ever, it is essential that these services **coordinate with social protection services** to ensure that the social and economic support that is available can effectively reach the families that need it most.

Although the pandemic has caused these services to be closed or severely affected in this first stage, it is expected that as countries emerge from the acute phase of the epidemic, measures will be taken to ensure that these services resume their duties of care and protection as soon as possible. This will not be an obstacle to establishing necessary measures for accompaniment, protection and restitution of rights for specific cases and with the allocation of differentiated resources.

In the countries of the region, practically all boys and girls in child labour situations had entered the educational system, at least during the first years of basic (primary) education and even participated as students who did

not combine school and work. Therefore, **the first years of schooling are a window of opportunity** to initiate prevention actions, identify those children and adolescents at risk and prevent their early entry into the working world, as well as, to bring those who are already working to the systems of social protection. Basically, it is about ensuring that no minor leaves his/her education for economic or family reasons. The best guarantee of success for the best and most efficient use of available resources is to **design and implement social programs** that establish social protection mechanisms that allow the use of unemployment insurance, family income transfers or other mechanisms of access to resources for identified risk populations.

In the context of the closure of schools due to the pandemic, **the role of the education system can be strategic during the process of school reintegration** when sanitary conditions allow it. It can be very successful for the early identification through cross-referencing of children and adolescents who do not restart school, either in the virtual, face-to-face or other modality.

Actively working on prevention actions is not only a cost-effective option but also constitutes the ethically and legally correct action, which reflects the fulfilment of the commitment espoused by the countries through ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Fundamental Conventions of the ILO on child labour.

## Regarding the identification and localization



The COVID-19 health emergency has highlighted the need to strengthen health services at their different levels of care. In the immediate future, **demographic information collected and systematized by national health systems will be a key input to identify and locate vulnerable populations**, particularly those susceptible to child labour, and to guide the efforts of competent institutions to prevent the early entry of children and adolescents into the labour market and improve their access and permanence in the education system.

Similarly, the health system, by recording work accidents involving minors, especially adolescents<sup>9</sup>, within mandatory reporting events, could play a fundamental role in the identification and cross-referencing of children and adolescents who carry out hazardous work, thus helping to identify and care for the population affected by one of the most elusive forms of child labour<sup>10</sup>.

**The health system constitutes one of the most important pieces in a preventive intervention on child labour** since it facilitates obtaining data on the vulnerability conditions of households in relation to diseases, disabilities, teenage pregnancy, domestic violence and, in particular, gender based violence, among others, since they are all risk factors that may be associated with child labour<sup>11</sup>.

**Social security systems** can also play an important role, allowing families and sectors to be identified where

the destruction of jobs due to the pandemic has had stronger impact, opening the possibility to **intervention and accompaniment to prevent the entry of minors to child labour and dangerous child labour** as a subsistence strategy for families in the context of the crisis. This is relevant, not only in families with dependent minors who have lost jobs due to the pandemic, but also in the case of adolescents above the minimum permitted age who perform protected and registered jobs, who must be guaranteed health and safety conditions at work and avoid the risks associated with the conditions of the activity.

For their part, in the context of the crisis generated by COVID-19, businesses have lost money and people have lost jobs, which sets the stage for situations of abuse, inadequate working conditions, evasion of law and even the offering of jobs to minors. For this reason, the ministries of labour and other institutions with regulatory capacity, such as local governments, should **intensify their mechanisms for monitoring and verifying compliance with labour regulations**, including those related to the prevention and eradication of child labour and the protection of permitted adolescent work, in sectors such as agriculture, services and industry, which show the highest indicators of concentration of child labour<sup>12</sup>.

Complementary to preventive intervention through education and health services, the ILO and ECLAC, within

9 Including injuries indicative of sexual exploitation or others of the worst forms of child labour, such as drug consumption.

10 On this subject, one may consult the experience of the health system of Brazil, on health professional training in identifying labour accidents related with the labour risks that children face and their consequences for health.  
See: [https://www.ilo.org/legacy/spanish/buenos-aires/trabajo-infantil/resource/bibliografia/general/1\\_buenas\\_practicas\\_agricultura.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/legacy/spanish/buenos-aires/trabajo-infantil/resource/bibliografia/general/1_buenas_practicas_agricultura.pdf) (pg. 5 and ss.).

11 See: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---ipecc/documents/publication/wcms\\_178449.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---ipecc/documents/publication/wcms_178449.pdf)

12 See: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_651815.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_651815.pdf) (pg. 36 and ss.)

## Direct attention for restitution of rights



the framework of the **Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour**<sup>13</sup>, have designed the **Child Labour Risk Identification Model (CLRISK)**, a tool that geographically locates differentiated risk areas at the subnational level and that can support a strategic distribution of resources for the deployment of a precision policy aimed at the eradication of child labour.

This tool, combined with the local epidemiological maps of COVID-19 infections, could play a fundamental role in optimizing the use of available resources **to advance towards Target 8.7 during and immediately after the health and economic emergency**, helping to restore and increase the rate of progress. This proposal on joint analysis among the ILO, ECLAC and PAHO, can be very useful, contributing valuable information that will allow progress to be made towards the elimination of child labour.

▶ **Social security systems can also play an important role, allowing families and sectors to be identified where the destruction of jobs due to the pandemic has had stronger impact.**

The most expensive intervention, but at the same time **absolutely necessary**, is to provide support at the individual and family level, and accompany the process of withdrawal from child labour and restitution of rights to children and adolescents who are already working, especially for those in the worst forms of child labour. This would achieve a **sustained impact** that allows them to continue acquiring knowledge and skills until they come of age or, in any case, until they have the minimum age for admission to employment in protected conditions.

To face and overcome the socio-economic impacts of the crisis, it is proposed that governments guarantee **temporary monetary transfers** to satisfy basic needs and sustain household consumption, since it is one of the United Nations recommendations<sup>14</sup> to mitigate the impact, and at the same time, it will be **crucial to prevent children and adolescents from entering the labour market in child labour conditions**.

ECLAC (2020c) has proposed that the countries of the region implement an emergency basic income for six months for all people in poverty in 2020, including children and adolescents. The **basic emergency income** consists of a transfer equivalent to the value of a poverty line (on average, 143 dollars in 2010) and would represent a regional average expenditure of 3.4% of GDP, which is reduced to an additional expenditure of 2.1% of GDP if conditional transfer programs, social pensions and the programs that countries have already implemented during the emergency are considered.

13 Created in 2014, the Regional Initiative is a tripartite cooperation platform made up of 30 countries and 14 representatives of employers' and workers' organizations, engaged in the achievement of Target 8.7 of the SDGs. See: <http://www.iniciativa2025alc.org/>

14 See: <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/un-framework-immediate-socio-economic-response-covid-19>. It could reinforce what the countries are already receiving as a recommendation in this aspect of the economic response to the pandemic.

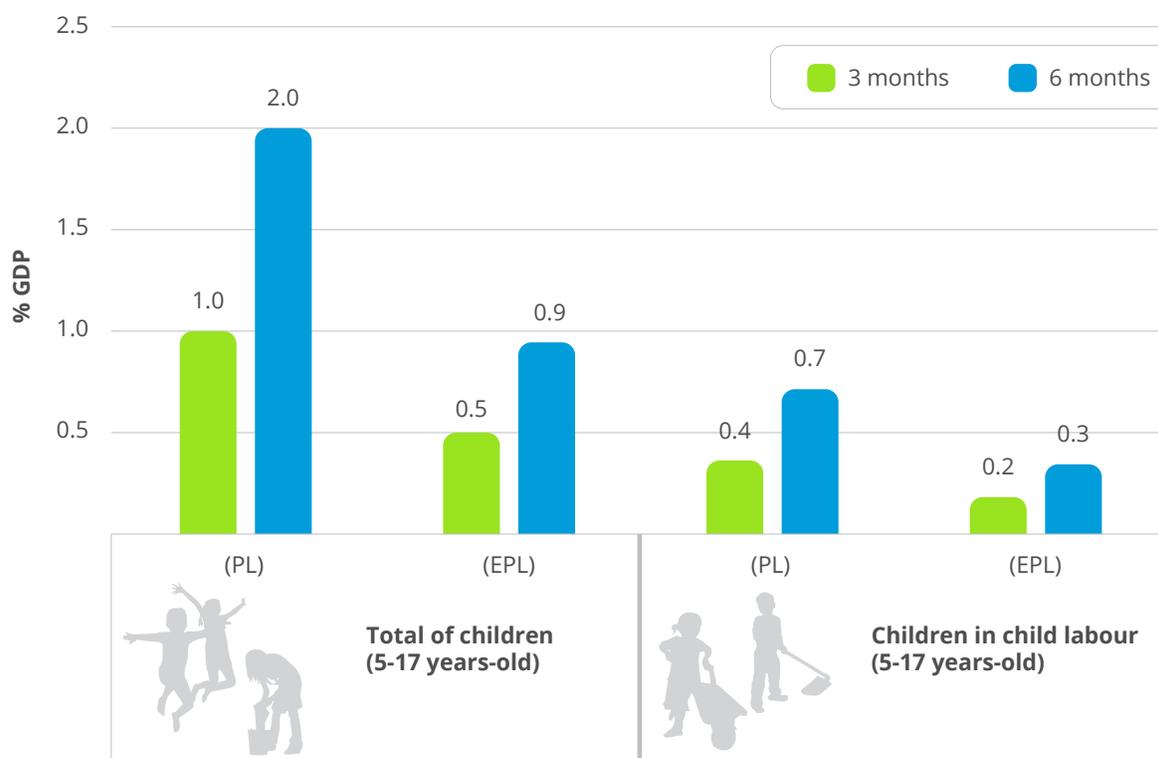
Chart N° 3 also shows the estimation of costs if the delivery of the transfer of a poverty line or extreme poverty (67 dollars in 2010) focused on children and adolescents

between 5 and 17 years-old, or in children who are currently in child labour in the 16 countries that have data to do this exercise.

### ▶ CHART N° 3

#### Latin America:

**Estimate of the cost of cash transfers to the entire population of children and adolescents between 5 and 17 years-old and to those who are in child labour, equivalent to a poverty line or an extreme poverty line to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to duration<sup>a/ b/</sup>**  
(16 countries)



**Note:**  
PL: Poverty line  
EPL: Extreme poverty line

**Source:** Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

a/ Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay.

b/ Estimate based on a variation of -5.3% of the GDP in 2020. Administrative costs necessary to make the transfers are not taken into account.

The estimated total cost of cash transfers for the entire population of children and adolescents between 5 and 17 years-old varies between a minimum of 0.5% of GDP for a transfer equivalent to an extreme poverty line for three months, and a maximum of 2% of GDP for a transfer equivalent to a poverty line for six months. On the other

hand, if the monetary transfer were delivered only to the population that is in child labour, the fiscal effort would range between 0.2% of the GDP for a transfer equivalent to a line of extreme poverty for three months, and 0.7% of the GDP for a transfer equivalent to a poverty line for six months.



# Conclusions

In summary, Latin America and the Caribbean have managed to reduce child labour in recent years thanks to sustained action and the shared effort among governments, employers' and workers' organizations, civil society and international cooperation. The current crisis could potentially reverse the positive trends observed, which would put the region in a more difficult position, than the one registered before the crisis, to meet SDG Target 8.7, in terms of "ending child labour in all its forms by 2025."

In this sense, now more than ever, children and adolescents must be at the centre of the priorities for action which altogether, through tripartite social dialogue, health-

focused policies and the active participation of the civil society, offer answers to consolidate progress in reducing child labour, especially in its worst forms.

In a time of reduction in the fiscal space of the Member States, it must be promoted and reinforced that the prevention approach continues to be the most cost-efficient. Including the focus of child labour in the political agendas for economic reactivation and for attention to the vulnerable population during the crisis, and taking advantage of the accumulated evidence and experience, will be crucial if we are to continue on the path towards achieving Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals.



## References used:

**Banco de México (2020).** Encuesta sobre las Expectativas de los Especialistas en Economía del Sector Privado: Marzo de 2020. <https://www.banxico.org.mx/publicaciones-y-prensa/encuestas-sobre-las-expectativas-de-los-especialis/%7BBF8CA59D-FDBE-F2C5-7C1A-E9778A46A3F8%7D.pdf>

**Consumo privado, un componente clave de la economía que tiene riesgo a la baja por coronavirus (March 13 of 2020).** Gestión. <https://gestion.pe/economia/consumo-privado-un-componente-clave-de-la-economia-que-tiene-riesgo-a-la-baja-por-coronavirus-noticia/>

**ECLAC (no date).** América Latina y el Caribe: Estimaciones y proyecciones de población. <https://www.cepal.org/es/temas/proyecciones-demograficas/estimaciones-proyecciones-poblacion-total-urbana-rural-economicamente-activa>

**ECLAC (2020).** Dimensionar los efectos del COVID-19 para pensar en la reactivación. <https://www.cepal.org/es/publicaciones/45445-dimensionar-efectos-covid-19-pensar-la-reactivacion>

**ECLAC (2020a).** América Latina y el Caribe ante la pandemia del COVID-19. Efectos económicos y sociales. [https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45337/4/S2000264\\_es.pdf](https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45337/4/S2000264_es.pdf)

**ECLAC (2020b).** COVID-19 tendrá graves efectos sobre la economía mundial e impactará a los países de América Latina y el Caribe. <http://coronavirus.onu.org.mx/covid-19-tendra-graves-efectos-sobre-la-economia-mundial-e-impactara-a-los-paises-de-america-latina-y-el-caribe>

**ECLAC (2020c).** El desafío social en tiempos del COVID-19. Informe Especial COVID-19, N° 3, Santiago de Chile. [https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45527/5/S2000325\\_es.pdf](https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45527/5/S2000325_es.pdf)

**ECLAC (2020d).** Dimensionar los efectos del COVID-19 para pensar en la reactivación. Informe Especial COVID-19, N° 2, Santiago de Chile. [http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45445/4/S2000286\\_es.pdf](http://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/45445/4/S2000286_es.pdf)

**ECLAC-ILO (2020).** El trabajo en tiempos de pandemia: desafíos frente a la enfermedad por coronavirus (COVID-19), Coyuntura Laboral en América Latina y el Caribe, N° 22, mayo. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---rolima/documents/presentation/wcms\\_745583.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---rolima/documents/presentation/wcms_745583.pdf)

**FAO and WFP (2019).** Fortaleciendo los Programas de Alimentación Escolar: El trabajo conjunto de FAO y WFP en América Latina y el Caribe. Panama City. 44 pp. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

**Girls Not Brides (2020).** COVID-19 y su vínculo con matrimonios y uniones infantiles, tempranas y forzadas: Plan de Acción. <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-19-y-los-matrimonios-y-uniones-infantiles-tempranas-y-forzadas.pdf>

**IADB (no date).** Sistema de Información de Mercados Laborales y de Seguridad Social. <https://www.iadb.org/es/sectores/inversion-social/sims/inicio>

**IADB (2020).** Políticas para combatir la pandemia. [https://publications.iadb.org/publications/spanish/document/Informe\\_macroekon%C3%B3mico\\_de\\_Am%C3%A9rica\\_Latina\\_y\\_el\\_Caribe\\_2020\\_Pol%C3%ADticas\\_para\\_combatir\\_la\\_pandemia.pdf](https://publications.iadb.org/publications/spanish/document/Informe_macroekon%C3%B3mico_de_Am%C3%A9rica_Latina_y_el_Caribe_2020_Pol%C3%ADticas_para_combatir_la_pandemia.pdf)

**ILO (no date).** ILOSTAT. <https://ilostat.ilo.org/es/>

**ILO (2009).** Impacto de la crisis económica mundial en el trabajo infantil en América Latina y recomendaciones para su mitigación.

**ILO (2009).** Understanding Children's Work Programme Working Paper Series. Child labour and the global financial crisis: an issues paper. September 2009. [http://www.ucw-project.org/attachment/financial\\_crisis\\_and\\_CL\\_15dec20110517\\_141701.pdf](http://www.ucw-project.org/attachment/financial_crisis_and_CL_15dec20110517_141701.pdf)

**ILO (2013).** Informe mundial sobre el trabajo infantil: Vulnerabilidad económica, protección social y lucha contra el trabajo infantil. [https://www.ilo.org/ipecc/Informationresources/WCMS\\_178449/lang-es/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/ipecc/Informationresources/WCMS_178449/lang-es/index.htm)

**ILO (2015).** No to child labour. Yes to safe and quality education in emergencies. <https://www.ilo.org/ipeccinfo/product/download.do?type=document&id=26995>

**ILO (2017).** Estimaciones mundiales sobre el trabajo infantil. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed\\_norm/@ipecc/documents/publication/wcms\\_596481.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@ipecc/documents/publication/wcms_596481.pdf)

**ILO (2020).** COVID-19 and the world of work: Impact and policy responses. 18 March 2020. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_738753.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_738753.pdf)

**ILO (2020).** Observatorio de la OIT, segunda edición: El COVID-19 y el mundo del trabajo. Estimaciones actualizadas y análisis. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms\\_740981.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/briefingnote/wcms_740981.pdf)

**ILO (2020).** Protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recommendations for Policy-makers and Constituents. April 2020. [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/publications/WCMS\\_743268/lang-en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/publications/WCMS_743268/lang-en/index.htm)

**ILO (2020a).** Desempleo, informalidad e inactividad asedian a los jóvenes en América Latina y el Caribe. [https://www.ilo.org/americas/sala-de-prensa/WCMS\\_738631/lang-es/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/americas/sala-de-prensa/WCMS_738631/lang-es/index.htm)

**ILO (2020b).** The coronavirus pandemic: economic and social impacts and responses. José Manuel Salazar-Xirinachs. 25 MARCH, 2020. <https://www.ioe-emp.org/index.php?eID=dumpFile&t=f&f=146470&token=499f9d7951cc7cc22b3a1ad018fadb60baa3bb54>

**Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social (2020).** Cubos Dinámicos de Información. <http://www.imss.gob.mx/conoce-al-imss/cubos>

**Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (2012).** Encuesta Nacional de Hogares (ENAHO). <http://inei.inei.gob.pe/microdatos/>

**Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (2018).** Encuesta Nacional de Hogares (ENAHO) – National Household Survey. <http://inei.inei.gob.pe/microdatos/>

**Instituto Nacional de Estadística e Informática (2018).** Estadísticas-Economía. <https://www.inei.gob.pe/estadisticas/indice-tematico/economia/>

**Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (2016).** Resultados generales Módulo de Trabajo Infantil y Adolescente. <https://www.inec.cr/noticia/disminuyo-trabajo-infantil-y-adolescente>

**Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (2015).** Módulo de Trabajo Infantil. <https://www.inegi.org.mx/programas/mti/2015/>

**Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía (2017).** Módulo de Trabajo Infantil. <https://www.inegi.org.mx/programas/mti/2017/>

**International Monetary Fund (2020).** Perspectivas de la Economía Mundial, April 2020. <https://www.imf.org/es/Publications/WEO/Issues/2020/04/14/weo-april-2020>

**Ministerio de Comercio Exterior y Turismo (2016).** Medición económica del turismo. [https://www.mincetur.gob.pe/wp-content/uploads/documentos/turismo/publicaciones/MEDICION\\_ECONOMICA\\_TURISMO\\_ALTA.pdf](https://www.mincetur.gob.pe/wp-content/uploads/documentos/turismo/publicaciones/MEDICION_ECONOMICA_TURISMO_ALTA.pdf)

**Ortiz, I., and Cummins, M. (2012).** The jobs crisis. In: Ortiz and Cummins (eds.) A recovery for all: Rethinking socio-economic policies for children and poor households. New York: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

**PAHO and UNOPS (2020).** COVID-19: Medidas de Prevención en Obras. Licencia: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/52057>

**RIMISP (2020).** Análisis de coyuntura. COVID-19 en América Latina. Análisis N° 01. Abril 13, 2020 Santiago de Chile.

**SAUMA, Pablo (2015).** Ellos crecen, tú también. Costos y beneficios de erradicar el trabajo infantil en América Latina y el Caribe. Lima: OIT, Programa Internacional para la Erradicación del Trabajo Infantil, 2015. [https://www.iniciativa2025alc.org/sites/default/files/ellos\\_crecen\\_tu\\_tambien.pdf](https://www.iniciativa2025alc.org/sites/default/files/ellos_crecen_tu_tambien.pdf)

**Thévenon, O. and E. Edmonds (2019).** Child labour: Causes, consequences and policies to tackle it, OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, N° 235, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/f6883e26-en>.

**Turismo es el tercer sector que genera más empleo y divisas al país (4 de diciembre de 2018).** Perú21. <https://peru21.pe/economia/ccl-turismo-tercer-sector-genera-divisas-pais-444536-noticia/>

**UNCTAD (2020).** Investment Trend Monitor March 2020. [https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/diaeiainf2020d3\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/diaeiainf2020d3_en.pdf)

**Understanding Children's Work (UCW) (2011).** Child labour and the global financial crisis: an issues paper. Working Paper September 2009. Rome, Italy.

**UNDP (2020).** Evaluación económica inicial de los efectos de covid-19 y el alcance de las opciones de política en Costa Rica. Síntesis para la discusión y análisis de políticas. Abril 2020. <https://www.cr.undp.org/content/costarica/es/home/library/evaluacion-economica-inicial-de-los-efectos-de-covid-19-y-alcanc.html>

**UNESCO (2015).** Informe de Seguimiento de la EPT en el mundo 2015. [https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000232565\\_spa](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000232565_spa)

**UNESCO (2020).** Interrupción educativa y respuesta al COVID-19 [en línea]. <https://es.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse>

**UNICEF (2016).** Los niños en las crisis humanitarias: Qué pueden hacer las empresas.

**UNICEF (2020).** Don't let children be the hidden victims of COVID-19 pandemic. 09 April 2020. <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/dont-let-children-be-hidden-victims-covid-19-pandemic>

**UN (2020).** Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19.

**UN (2020).** Policy brief: the impact of covid-19 on children. [https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/policy\\_brief\\_on\\_covid\\_impact\\_on\\_children\\_16\\_april\\_2020.pdf](https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/policy_brief_on_covid_impact_on_children_16_april_2020.pdf)



**International  
Labour  
Organization**



**Regional Initiative  
Latin America and the Caribbean  
Free of Child Labour**



UNITED NATIONS



**International Labour Organization (ILO)**

[www.ilo.org/childlabour](http://www.ilo.org/childlabour)

[sirti\\_oit@ilo.org](mailto:sirti_oit@ilo.org)

**Regional Initiative Latin America  
and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour**

[www.iniciativa2025alc.org](http://www.iniciativa2025alc.org)

[iniciativaregional@ilo.org](mailto:iniciativaregional@ilo.org)

**Economic Commission for Latin America  
and the Caribbean (ECLAC)**

Social Development Division

[www.cepal.org/en/work-areas/social-development](http://www.cepal.org/en/work-areas/social-development)



**WORLD DAY  
AGAINST  
CHILD LABOUR**  
**12 JUNE 2020**



GOBIERNO  
DE ESPAÑA

MINISTERIO  
DE ASUNTOS EXTERIORES, UNIÓN EUROPEA  
Y COOPERACIÓN



Cooperación  
Española



**JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA**

PROGRAMME OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION