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*Trends in children's employment and child labour in the Latin
America and Caribbean region*

Regional overview

June 2010

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September 2010

Understanding Children's Work (UCW) Programme

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As part of broader efforts towards durable solutions to child labor, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Bank initiated the interagency Understanding Children's Work (UCW) project in December 2000. The project is guided by the Oslo Agenda for Action, which laid out the priorities for the international community in the fight against child labor. Through a variety of data collection, research, and assessment activities, the UCW project is broadly directed toward improving understanding of child labor, its causes and effects, how it can be measured, and effective policies for addressing it. For further information, see the project website at www.ucw-project.org.

This paper is part of the research carried out within UCW (Understanding Children's Work), a joint ILO, World Bank and UNICEF project. The views expressed here are those of the authors' and should not be attributed to the ILO, the World Bank, UNICEF or any of these agencies' member countries.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. The current report presents an overview of the child labour phenomenon in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region over recent years. It represents part of a broader effort to improve understanding of how child labour is changing over time in the region, and to ensure that policies relating to child labour adequately reflect these changes. The report draws on an accompanying set of country briefs on child labour developed for 15 countries in the LAC region.

2. ILO global estimates have highlighted the LAC region as a particular success story in fighting child labour. In the period from 2000 to 2008, the ILO estimates that children in employment in the region fell from 16 to 9 percent, and by almost seven million children in absolute terms.

3. However, the current report, based on more recent data, suggests that the sub-regional-level picture behind these regional estimates is more mixed:

- In the Southern-Cone sub-region, the percentage of children in employment fell in two of the three countries. Brazil, by far the most populous LAC country, saw a steady decline in children's employment from 1992 to 2008. Children's employment in Argentina fell also from 21 to 17 percent during 1997-2004. Paraguay was the only one of the three countries in the sub-region to experience a slippage in terms of children's employment, but this was not at the expense of school attendance, which continued to rise.
- In the Andean sub-region, children's employment fell in three countries but rose in two others. The largest gains were made in Colombia, where children's employment fell by about eight percentage points; gains in Bolivia and Ecuador were smaller. Peru saw a sharp rise in children's employment during 1994-2007 from 18 to 42 percent. In Venezuela, periods of progress were outstripped by periods of reversal leading to net rises in children's employment over the relevant periods.
- Like in other sub-regions, progress in the Meso-americo sub-region appears mixed. At the one end, in countries such as Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, children's employment was reduced. At the other end, Mexico and Panama saw a rise in the proportion of children in employment. In Panama and Mexico, we observe that fluctuations over the 1992-2007 period led to a reversal in children's employment trends.

4. Trends in the LAC countries where comparable child labour estimates are available for 10 or more years indicate that levels of children's employment, in most countries already not high, fell further in ten of the 15 countries. However, in five countries, we observe that fluctuations that substantial slowdowns or even reversals are possible. The analysis shows

that progress against child labour can be precarious, subject to quick reversals when conditions deteriorate. This finding argues against complacency even where countries have succeeded in achieving low levels of child labour, and is particularly relevant in light of the current global financial and economic crisis. The data cited in this report predate the current global crisis, and therefore could present an overly optimistic. The global and financial crisis can potentially reverse the positive trends in several countries and further aggravate the problem in countries where the phenomenon of child labour has been particularly resilient.

5. The remainder of this report is structured as follows. Section 2 discusses the data sources and child labour terminology used in the report. Section 3 presents descriptive overview of children's involvement in employment and schooling and Section 4 examines the nature of children's employment. Section 5 then goes beyond the static picture of children's employment presented in the prior sections to assess the direction in which LAC countries are moving in terms of children's employment, i.e., whether a greater or lower proportion of children are working over time. Changes in both the extent and nature of children's employment are assessed. Section 6 highlights some of the strategies for addressing the child labour problem.

2. DATA SOURCES AND TERMINOLOGY

6. This study draws on data from household surveys conducted in 15 LAC countries; the list of survey used is presented in Table 1. They include ILO SIMPOC surveys,¹ World Bank multi-purpose household surveys,² UNICEF MICS surveys³ and national Household and Labour force surveys.

7. The breadth of information available on the characteristics of child labour differs considerably across survey instruments. SIMPOC and other dedicated surveys offer the greatest depth of information. Surveys conducted through the SIMPOC survey programme collect information on children's involvement in employment and in other productive activities, the former disaggregated by three-digit standard industry⁴ and occupational⁵ classification, and the latter by type of household chore. The SIMPOC surveys also collect information on work-related illness and injury, work intensity (i.e., working hours), sector in employment (i.e., waged, family, self employed, etc.) and exposure to common workplace hazards. Separate child modules included in some SIMPOC surveys investigate children's own attitudes towards work and their workplace experience.

8. The UNICEF-developed MICS survey instrument contains a separate module of child labour which also collects on involvement in employment and household chores. But beyond work setting (i.e., family or non-family) and working hours, it provides little information about the nature of work performed by children, its hazardousness and injury and illness incurred as a result of work. The MICS survey instrument excludes, older, 15–17 year-old children, although these too are covered by international legal standards.

9. World Bank-supported Living Standard Measurement Surveys (LSMS), national Household Survey and national Labour force surveys differ from the other standard instruments in that they do not typically contain questions relating to child labour *per se*, but rather collect information on child workers as part of questions relating to the general labour force. The questions, therefore, do not reflect the unique nature of children's work, but rather measure the work performed by persons below the age of 18 in the same way as they measure adult workers.

10. The differences in the various survey instruments affect the comparability of child labour estimates across countries and over time

¹ Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour. Since its inception in 1998, more than 250 child labour surveys have been supported, 56 of which were national in scope. An additional 80 baseline surveys and 100 rapid assessments were supported targeting specific groups of child labourers in particular geographical locations.

² Principally, the Living Standards Measurement Study/Integrated Survey series.

³ Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys.

⁴ International Standard Industry Classification, ISIC, **rev 3**

⁵ International Standard Classification of Occupations, ISCO-88.

within countries. These differences mean that of the 18 countries in the UCW where estimates are available for more than one point in time, only in 15 can trends over time be assessed. Comparing levels of child labour across countries is problematic for the same reason, even when child labour estimates are available for the same reference year. There are large variation in child labour estimates derived from different survey instruments, even when these survey instruments are implemented in the same or similar reference periods. The results presented in the sections below should therefore be interpreted with this in mind.⁶

Table 1. Survey characteristics

Country	Reference years	Survey name
Argentina	2004	Encuesta sobre Actividades de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes
	1997	Encuesta de Desarrollo Social (EDS)
Bolivia	1999, 2000, 2002, 2005	Encuesta de Hogares
	2003-2004	Encuesta Continua de Hogares
	2000	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2
Brazil	1976-1999, 2001, 2003-2007, 2008	Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios
Colombia	2000, 2005	Demographic and Health Survey
	2001	Encuesta Nacional de Trabajo Infantil
Dominican Republic	2003- April, 2003-October, 2005-April	Encuesta Nacional de Fuerza de Trabajo
	2000	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2
	2000	Encuesta Nacional de Trabajo
Ecuador	2001, 2004, 2006	Encuesta de Empleo, Desempleo, Subempleo y Empleo Infantil
El Salvador	2001, 2003	Encuesta de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples
Guatemala	2003, 2004	Encuesta Nacional Sobre Empleo e Ingresos
	2000	Encuesta de Condiciones de Vida
Honduras	2004	Encuesta Permanente de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples
	2002	National Child Labour Survey
Mexico	2007	ENOE (Modular child labour survey)
	1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004 (12-14 year-olds)	Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares
	2003 (12-14 year olds)	Encuesta Nacional de Empleo Trimestral (ENET)
Nicaragua	2001, 2005	Encuesta Nacional de Hogares sobre Medición de Nivel de Vida
	2000	Encuesta de Hogares para la Medición del Empleo Urbano y Rural
Panama	2003	Encuesta de Niveles de Vida
	2000	Encuesta del Trabajo Infantil
Paraguay	1999, 2004, 2005	Encuesta Permanente de Hogares
	2000	Encuesta Nacional de Hogares Sobre Medición de Niveles de Vida
Peru	1994	Encuesta Nacional de Hogares Sobre Medición de Niveles de Vida
Venezuela	1998, 2000-2007	Encuesta de Hogares por Muestreo (EHM)

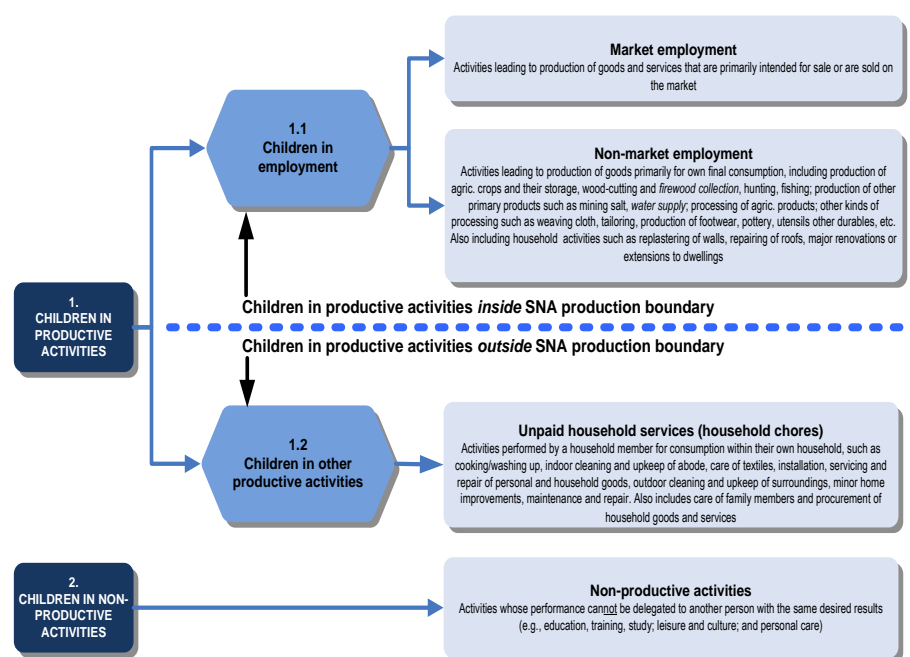
⁶ A recent survey comparison study suggests that the main inconsistencies concern the groups of children performing unremunerated and family work, and among children combining school and work. This is not surprising, as these are areas where the differences in surveys structure are likely to be more relevant as they try to capture a not very well defined phenomenon. The study indicates that the structure of the questionnaire, the season of field work and the characteristics of the respondent all play a role in explaining observed differences. However, even when these factors are taken into account, a large part of the difference across survey estimates remains unexplained. Source: Guarcello, L. et al. 2009. *Towards consistency in child labour measurement: assessing the comparability of estimates generated by different survey instruments*, Draft Understanding Children's Work Working Paper Programme Paper Series (Rome).

11. This paper will present information on children in employment as a proxy for child labour. Children in employment, or children's employment, is a broad concept covering all market production and certain types of non-market production (principally the production of goods for own use). It includes forms of work in both the formal and informal sectors, as well as forms of work both inside and outside family settings (see Box 1 for child labour terminology). It does not, however, include unpaid domestic and personal services performed in a child's own household (e.g., cleaning, preparing meals, care of other household members and other household chores).

Box 1. Children's work and child labour: A note on terminology

Terminology and concepts used for categorising children's work and child labour (and in distinguishing between the two) are inconsistent in published statistics and research reports, frequently creating confusion and complicating cross-country and longitudinal comparisons. In this study, "children's work", is used broadly to refer to all productive activities performed by children. Productive activities, in turn, are defined as all activities falling within the general production boundary, i.e., all activities whose performance can be delegated to another person with the same desired results. This includes production of all goods and the provision of services to others within or outside the individual's household.

In accordance with the standards for national child labour statistics set at the 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (Res. II), the study distinguishes between two broad categories of child workers – children in employment and children in other productive activities. The definition of **children in employment** in turn derives from the System of National Accounts (SNA) (Rev. 1993), the conceptual framework that sets the international statistical standards for the measurement of the market economy. It covers children in all market production and in certain types of non-market production, including production of goods for own use. **Children in other productive activities** are defined as productive activities falling outside the SNA production boundary. They consist mainly of work activities performed by household members in service to the household and its members, i.e., household chores.



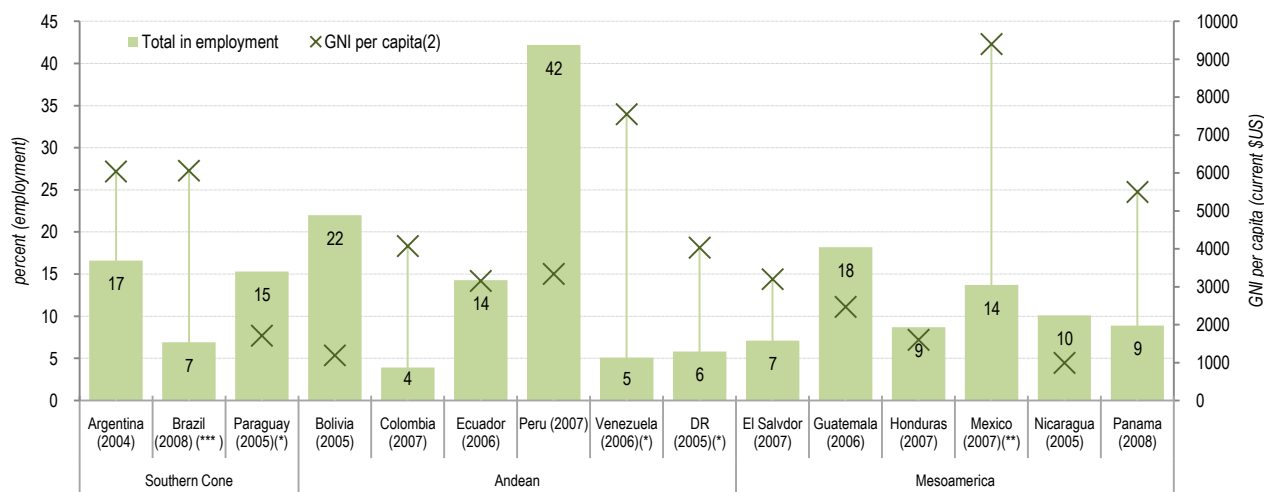
The term "child labour" is used to refer to the subset of children's work that is injurious, negative or undesirable to children and that should be targeted for elimination. It can encompass both children in employment and children in other productive activities. Three main international conventions – the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), ILO Convention No. 182 (Worst Forms) and ILO Convention No. 138 (Minimum Age) – provide the main legal standards for child labour and a framework for efforts against it.

3. CHILDREN'S INVOLVEMENT IN EMPLOYMENT AND SCHOOLING

12. How widespread is child labour in the LAC region? Most recent data available (from 2004 or later) indicate that the child labour phenomenon exists in all developing countries in the region. But, recent data also point to a large differences in levels of children's employment in the LAC region, although the caveat concerning survey comparability discussed above means that cross country comparisons should be interpreted with caution.

13. Bolivia and Peru in the Andean sub-region stand out as particular challenges: more than one in five children remain in employment in the former, and two out of every five children are in employment in the latter. At the other end of the spectrum are five countries (Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, El Salvador) by contrast, the share of children in employment stands at seven percent or less (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Proportion of children working in employment, 7-14 years age group, and GNI per capita, by country



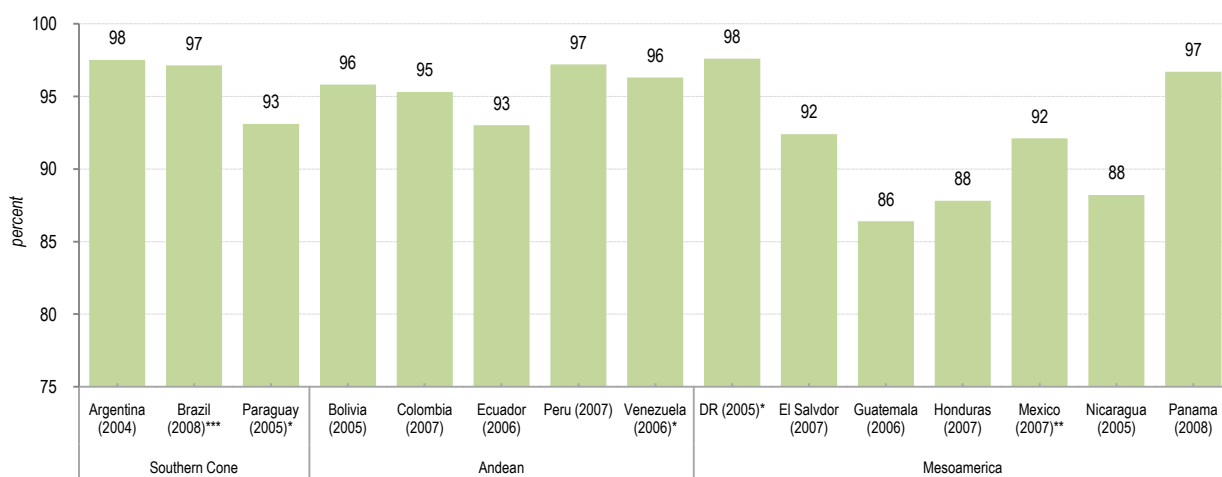
Notes: (*) Refers to the 10-14 years age group; (**) Refers to the 12-14 years age group; (***) refers to 7-15 years age group.
Sources: (1) UCW calculations based on LAC household survey datasets; (2) World Bank Development Indicators, 2007.

14. Levels of children's employment vis-à-vis income levels are a better measure of relative progress in reducing children's employment. Figure 1 presents children's employment levels juxtaposed against per capita income levels. When seen from this perspective, countries such as Nicaragua and Honduras, where levels of children's employment are relatively low despite per capita incomes also being low, stand out as success stories. Peru, Argentina and Mexico, on the other hand, have high levels of children's employment relative to their income levels. The presence of countries achieving relatively low levels of child labour despite also having relatively low levels of income underscores the substantial scope for policy intervention in reducing child labour.

15. There is also large variation across the 15 countries in terms of children's school attendance. Some countries are approaching universal primary enrolment while others remain distant from this goal. Eight countries have attained school attendance rates of at least 95 percent for the 7-14 years age group (Brazil, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Argentina, Peru, Panama, Venezuela and Colombia). However, in three other countries (Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala) in the Mesoamerica sub-region, still more than one of 10 children in the 7-14 years age group remain out of school.

16. While it might be expected that the best performing countries in terms of school attendance are also those with the lowest levels of children's employment, this is not always the case in the region. Bolivia and Peru, for instance, have among the highest levels of school attendance despite also having the highest levels of children's employment. This does not mean, of course, that children's employment in these countries is not at a cost to their education. Time spent working makes it less likely that children are able to draw educational benefit from their time in the classroom and/or to remain in school long enough to graduate.

Figure 2. Proportion of children attending school, 7-14 years age group, by country

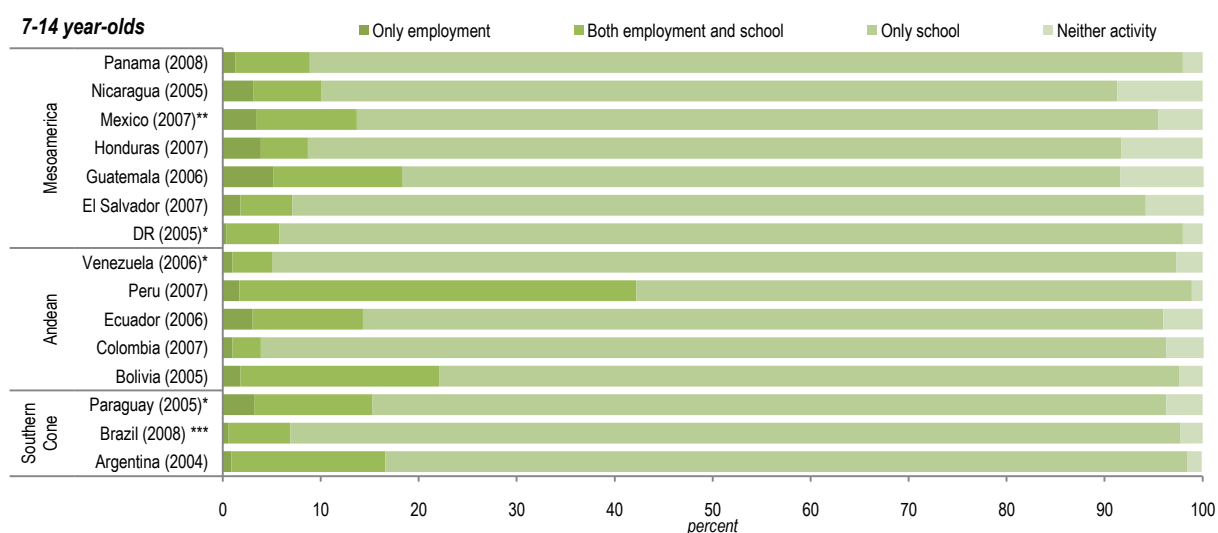


Notes: (*) Refers to the 10-14 years age group; (**) Refers to the 12-14 years age group; (***) refers to 7-15 years age group.
Source: UCW calculations based on LAC household survey datasets.

17. How do children divide their time between employment and schooling? This question is one of the most important in determining the long-term impact of early work experience. Clearly, if the demands of work mean that children are denied schooling altogether or are less able to perform in the classroom, then these children will not acquire the education necessary for more gainful employment upon entering adulthood. This, in turn, means former child labourers as adults are more likely to be poor and more likely to have to depend on their own children's labour, thus continuing the child labour-poverty cycle.

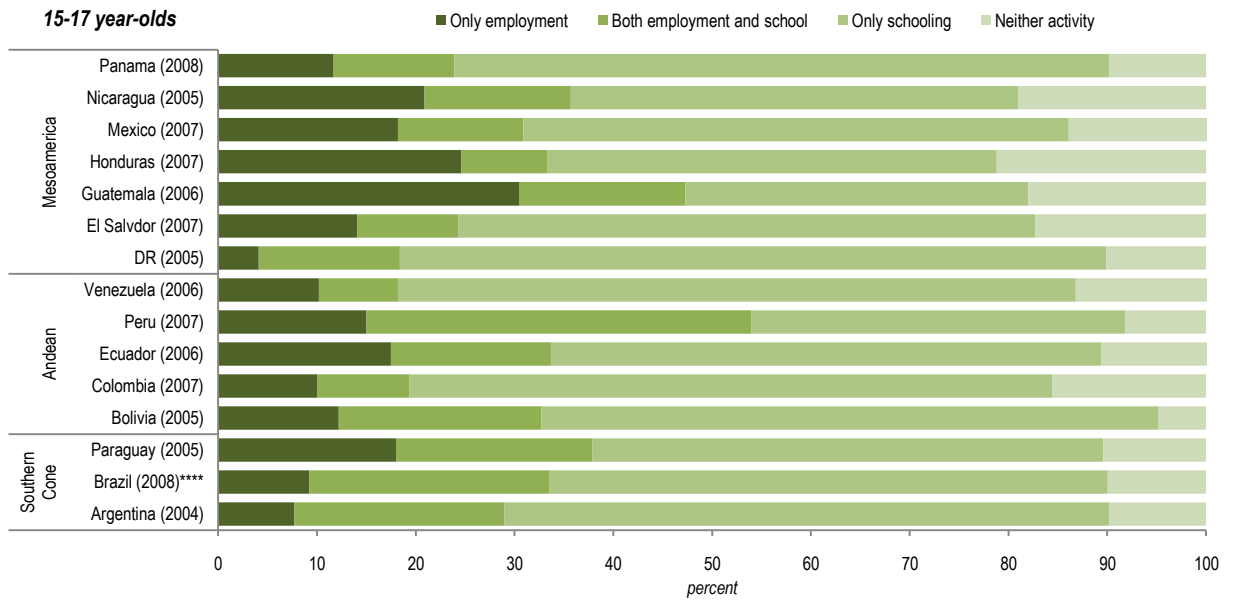
18. Disaggregating the child population into four non-overlapping activity groups – children only in employment, children only attending school, children combining school and employment, and children in neither – offers an initial view of how children's employment and schooling interact (Figure 3). This disaggregation shows that the largest proportion of 7-14 year-olds in all 15 countries attend school unburdened by work responsibilities.⁷ It also shows that children in employment typically also attend school – only a small proportion of 7-14 year-olds work without attending school in most of the 15 LAC countries. But this should not be interpreted as an indication of the compatibility of employment and schooling, as there is a growing body of evidence indicating that working children have greater difficulty in benefiting from their classroom time.⁸ Lacking the time and energy for study enjoyed by their non-working classmates, employed children often lag behind and perform less well on achievement tests.

Figure 3. Distribution of children by activity category, 7-14 years and 15-17 years age groups, by country



⁷ Activity patterns differ somewhat for older, 15-17 year-old children: a higher share work without attending school and a smaller share is in school exclusively.

⁸ Student test scores from the first Comparative International Study of Language, Mathematics and Associated Factors (FCIS), for example, show a strong and consistent negative relationship between child labour and test scores in across the nine countries and the two achievement tests included in the survey.



Notes: (*) Refers to the 10-14 years age group; (**) Refers to the 12-14 years age group; (***) Refers to the 7-15 years age group; (****) Refers to the 16-17 years age group
Source: UCW calculations based on LAC household survey datasets.

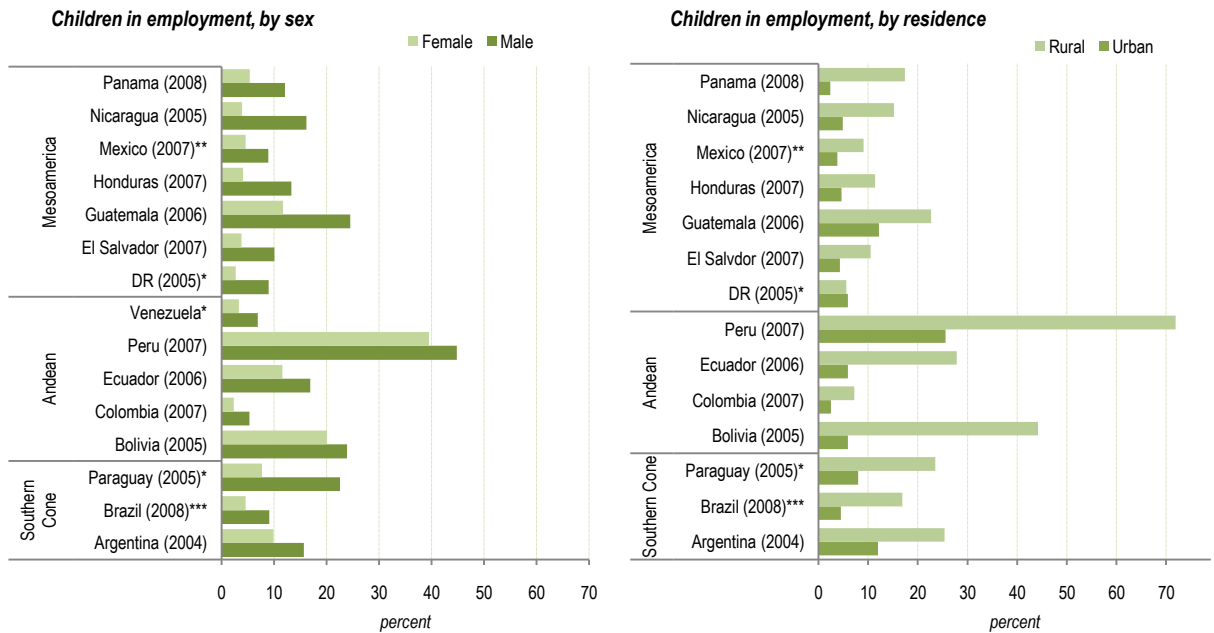
19. Children's employment extends to both boys and girls, but the share of boys in employment is greater than that of girls in all 15 of the LAC countries. The differences by sex in employment rates are often substantial. Indeed, the proportion of boys in employment is at least double that of girls in 11 of the LAC countries.

20. But a somewhat different picture would undoubtedly emerge were household chores also considered, as chores performed within the household remain the domain of women and girls in most societies. However, the incorporation of household chores in child labour measurement remains the subject of discussion.⁹ It is also worth bearing in mind that girls may work in hidden forms of child labour, such as commercial sexual exploitation and domestic service in a third party household, that can be under-reported in household surveys. In order to better capture the gender dimension of child labour, there is a need to fill these information gaps and make sure that adequate methodologies are implemented by international organizations and national statistical offices (see Box 2).

⁹ There are unfortunately no clear measurement criteria yet established for the measurement of child labour in household chores. The resolution on child labour measurement emerging from the 18th ICLS recommends considering hazardous household chores as child labour for measurement purposes, and, in line with ILO Recommendation No. 190., cites household chores "performed (a) for long hours, (b) in an unhealthy environment, involving unsafe equipment or heavy loads, (c) in dangerous locations, and so on" as general criteria for hazardousness. But the resolution contains no specific guidance in terms of what, for example, should constitute "long hours" or "dangerous locations" for measurement purposes, and states that this as an area requiring further conceptual and methodological development.

Source: Paragraph 63, Resolution II, Resolution Concerning Statistics of Child Labour, Rpt. ICLS/18/2008/IV/FINAL, International Labour Office, Geneva, 2009.

Figure 4. Proportion of children working in employment, 7-14 years age group, by sex, residence and country



Notes: (*) Refers to the 10-14 years age group; (**) Refers to the 12-14 years age group; (***) Refers to 7-15 years age group.
Source: UCW calculations based on LAC household survey datasets.

21. Disaggregating children's employment by place of residence highlights the fact that it is overwhelmingly a rural phenomenon in the LAC region. As shown in Figure 3, the share of children in employment in rural areas is at least twice that of children in urban areas in all but one country - Guatemala. This is in large part a reflection of the importance of the agriculture sector in children's employment, as discussed below. Not shown Figure 3 are the large regional variations in children's employment *within* most of the LAC countries, as detailed in the country-specific briefs that accompany this overview report. Differences by residence and region in levels of children's employment point to the importance of geographically targeting interventions addressing the problem.

Box 2. Child Labour in Latin America and Caribbean Region: A Gender Based Analysis

Disaggregating data on child labour according to sex is an important starting point for identifying gender dimensions of the child labour phenomenon. But in formulating policies and programmes to address the special needs of the working girls or working boys in a gender sensitive manner, more detailed information and analysis is required. In sectors where girls are in workplaces that are not easily visible, such as the household, their numerical visibility are of little help to increase programmes on their behalf. This is mainly due to the fact that employment arrangements of working children are generally casual and informal, making the girls virtually scattered, invisible, separated from their families and difficult to reach.

As a part of a broader effort to improve understanding of how child labour differs by sex in the Latin America and Caribbean region, and to ensure that policies relating to child labour adequately reflect these differences, Guarcello et al.¹⁰ examines the child labour phenomenon from a gender perspective. The study draws primarily on data from recent surveys conducted in 12 LAC countries – Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and Venezuela. Using information from these datasets, the study looked at differences by sex in key dimensions of the child labour phenomenon – its extent, nature, and effect on health and education outcomes. It addressed what types of work are more common among girls, and the extent to which girls' work experience differs from that of boys.

Among the key results emerging from the descriptive analysis are the following:

- There are large sex-based disparities in children's involvement in employment in the 12 countries, suggesting that gender plays an important role in decisions concerning children's work. Boys are much more likely to be involved in employment. The proportion of 7-14 year-old boys in employment is almost or more than double that of similarly aged girls. The overall gap by sex in employment is primarily the result of boys' greater involvement in rural (mostly agricultural) work; urban areas feature a lower overall level of child involvement in employment and a smaller difference in involvement by sex. Factors favouring boys' involvement in employment therefore appear less relevant in urban contexts.
- Girls are more likely to be assigned responsibility for household chores. Latin American households appear much more likely to assign responsibility for household chores to girls than to boys. the proportion of girls spending at least 14 hours per week on chores outstrips that of boys in all countries where data are available.
- Differences by sex in rates of both employment and housework tend to grow with age.
- Girls are at least as likely as boys to be involved in work when "work" is defined to include both employment and household chores: this underscores the fact that the employment rate – the most commonly used measure of children's work – alone is a misleading indicator of girls' work involvement. When the "invisible" work performed by girls in the household is ignored, girls' work involvement is understated vis-à-vis that of boys.
- Working boys and girls appear to differ little in terms of the amount of time they spend on employment
- Girls spend more weekly hours performing household chores than boys.
- There is considerable specialisation by sex in children's employment: boys' employment is heavily concentrated in the agriculture sector, while girls' employment tends to be more heterogeneous, distributed across commerce, services, manufacturing as well as agriculture.
- Work does not appear to have a greater affect on the ability of girls to attend school.
- Working girls have generally lower levels of work-related illness and injury than boys.

These findings indicate that girls' and boys' work is dissimilar, but do not indicate that girls face a lower risk of work involvement or that work poses a lower threat to girls' welfare. Girls appear to work as long hours as boys and they appear to be as likely as boys to be excluded from education. They also appear no more likely than boys to suffer the triple burden of housework, schoolwork and employment.

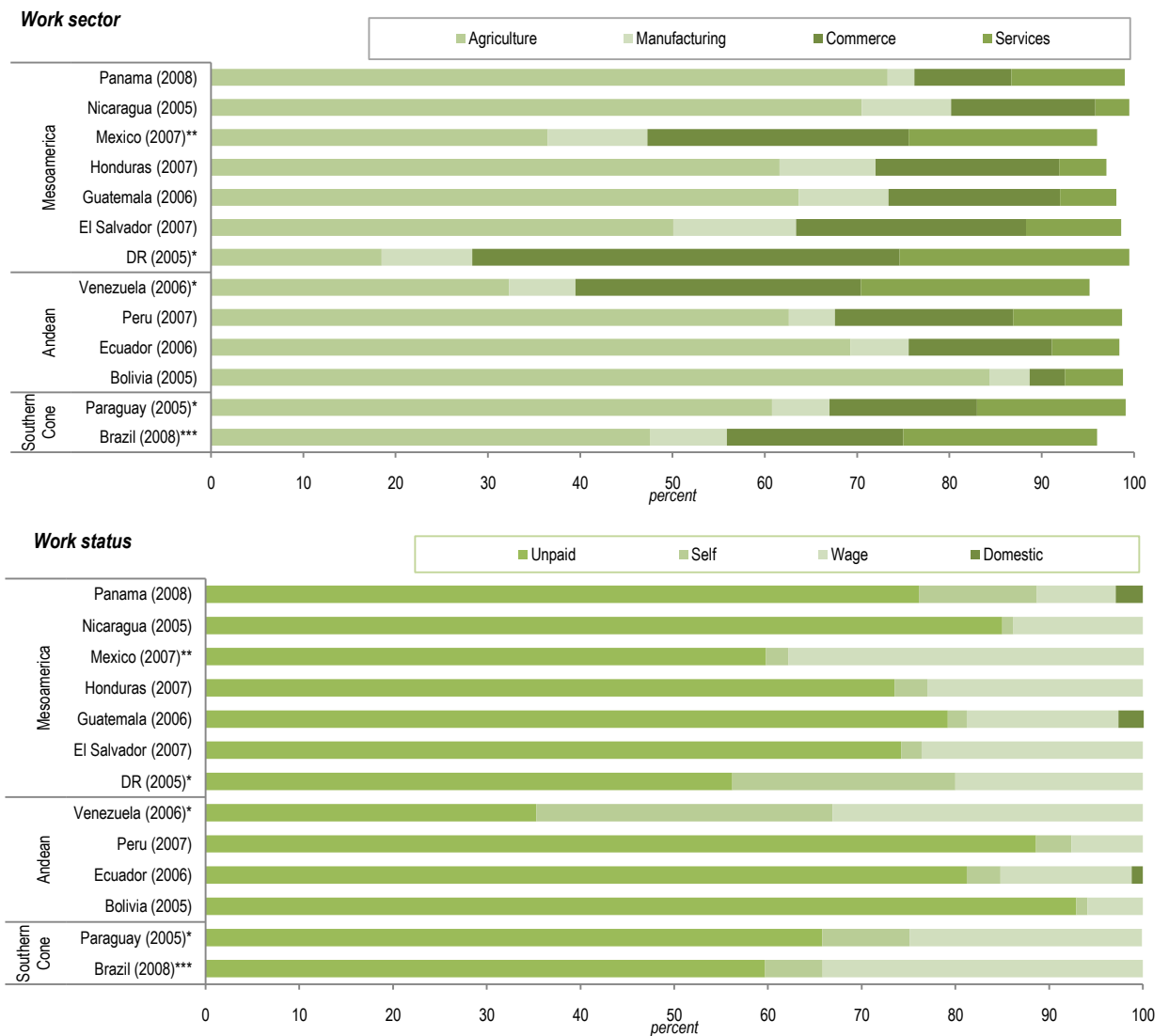
The study also models the determinants of children's work and schooling, critical for identifying policy targets. It looked specifically at the influence of three factors – household income, mothers' education and household water access – on family decisions to involve their boys and girls in work, schooling or both. Regression results indicated that the direction of the influences was similar for boys and girls, and generally consistent with that predicted by theory (i.e., household income, water access and mothers' education had a positive influence on school attendance and a negative influence on work in economic activity). The regression results, however, indicated important sex-based differences in the strength of the influences favouring male children. The impact of income, mothers' education and water access on involvement in employment and school attendance was greater for boys than girls with only a few exceptions. This result suggests that girls' work may be more resistant to policy measures addressing these factors, and points to the need for different policy approaches for reducing girls' and boys' work. A more in-depth analysis is needed, making use of a wider range of explanatory variables, to identify other policy targets with particular potential for combating girls' work in the LAC region.

¹⁰ Guarcello L. et al. 2006, *Child Labour in the Latin America and Caribbean region. A gender based analysis* (Geneva. ILO)

4. NATURE OF CHILDREN'S EMPLOYMENT

22. Detailed breakdowns of children's employment by its various defining features are necessary to understanding the nature of children's work as well as to identifying where child workers are found in the economy. A number of broad distinctions are useful in this context. Distinctions by industry based on the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC Rev. 3) provide a standardised picture of the nature of children's involvement in the measured economy. A distinction by employment status (e.g., unpaid family work, wage, self employed) can offer additional insight into how children's employment is carried out.

Figure 5. Distribution of children in employment, 7-14 years age group, by work sector and work status



Notes: (*) Refers to the 10-14 years age group; (**) Refers to the 12-14 years age group; (***) Refers to 7-15 years age group.
Source: UCW calculations based on LAC household survey datasets.

23. The two graphs contained in Figure 5 disaggregate children's employment by industrial sector and employment status. The first graph indicates that the sectoral composition of children's employment varies somewhat across countries, but that the agriculture sector is typically the most important employer of children in the LAC region. Despite the relative importance of agriculture, there is still insufficient information in most countries concerning the agriculture sub-sectors where children work and the modalities under which this work is undertaken. The second largest proportion of employed children in most of the LAC countries is in the services sector. Most of working children in services are employed in hotels, restaurants and in private households. Indeed, 25 percent of children working in services in Brazil, 41 percent in Bolivia, 63 percent in Peru and 60 percent in El Salvador are employed in hotels and restaurants. Another striking figure is related to children working in private households. In Brazil, 34 percent of children working in services are employed in private households. In Bolivia, this proportion is 23 percent.

24. The nature of children's employment varies considerably between urban and rural areas, again highlighting the importance of area-specific approaches to addressing children's employment. The country-specific briefs indicated that while agriculture not surprisingly predominates in rural areas, services and manufacturing are the most important sectors of children's employment in urban areas in most of the LAC countries.

25. The second graph of Figure 5 points to the overwhelmingly importance of non-formal work, primarily within a family context, across all of the LAC countries. Very few children in employment, on the other hand, are engaged in more formal, waged work. This is significant because non-formal work often lies outside national legislation concerning child labour, is not covered by formal employment contracts and is beyond the reach of most workplace inspection systems.

26. And while it is often assumed that working with parents or relatives is less damaging to children than working outside of the family, there is little evidence supporting this assumption.¹¹ Involvement in domestic service, a type of informal work performed *outside* the family, is common in many of the LAC countries (see for instance Box 3 for child domestic workers in Paraguay). Domestic service is performed in other private homes, and thus it is hidden from public view and eludes inspection. This makes child domestic workers particularly vulnerable to exploitation, including excessively long hours with little or no pay, and physical, emotional and sexual abuse.¹²

¹¹ In UCW studies in Brazil and elsewhere, for instance, family-based work appeared to pose a lesser obstacle to school attendance but did not appear to be less hazardous than work outside it. Source: UCW 2007. *Measuring child labour: discussion note for country consultation in Brazil*, UCW Working Paper Series (Rome).

¹² ILO/IPEC, *Facts on Domestic Child Labour*, Geneva, March 2003.

Box 3. Child Domestic Workers in Paraguay: A brief statistical profile based on household survey instruments

The standard household survey instruments used for child labour measurement can also yield valuable information concerning the subset of child labourers in domestic work. The reliability of the estimates of CDWs generated from these survey instruments, however, needs to be assessed by comparing them with the results of dedicated based line surveys on the CDW phenomenon.

A recent UCW study¹³ presents (Lyon and Valdivia, 2010) a brief statistical profile of child domestic workers (CDW) in Paraguay based on information from the standard household survey instruments. The measure of CDW includes children performing housework beyond a set hours threshold (35 hours per week) who are not closely related to the household head.

The estimates confirm that domestic work is primarily the domain of girls. In Paraguay, seven percent of 10-17 year-old girls against one percent of same-aged boys are CDWs, and the gap grows with age. Domestic work is also a much more important form of work for girls than boys in relative terms, accounting for 41 percent of total girls' employment but only for two percent of total boys' employment. Parents may prefer to put girls into domestic service rather than boys, not only because household chores are seen as the domain of girls in most societies, but also because in some cases, the girls' income helps to support the schooling of their brothers.

Percentage of children in domestic work, by sex and age group

	10-14			10-17			15-17		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Paraguay	0.7	3.2	1.9	1.0	7.0	3.9	1.5	14.1	7.6

Source: UCW calculations based on data from Paraguay *Encuesta Permanente de Hogares* (2004)

Child domestic workers are frequently migrants from rural areas, sent to the city to help their families of origin to help make ends meet. In Paraguay, 12 percent of child domestic workers living in urban areas at the time of the survey reported having migrated from rural areas while the same figure for children in other forms of employment is only two percent.

Child domestic worker and migration, by sex

	Percentage living in urban areas at the time of the survey that moved from rural areas	
	Child domestic workers	Children in other forms of employment (excluding domestic workers)
Male	0	2.5
Female	14.1	1.3
Total	12.4	2.2

Source: UCW calculations based on data from Paraguay *Encuesta Permanente de Hogares* (2004)

Child domestic workers are disadvantaged with respect to other working children with respect to their ability to attend school. In Paraguay, the school attendance of female child domestic workers is 15 percentage points lower than for other working children, but there is almost no attendance gap for male domestic workers. Child domestic work, therefore, not only constitutes a short term threat to children, but also constrains their ability to accumulate the human capital necessary for more gainful employment in adulthood.

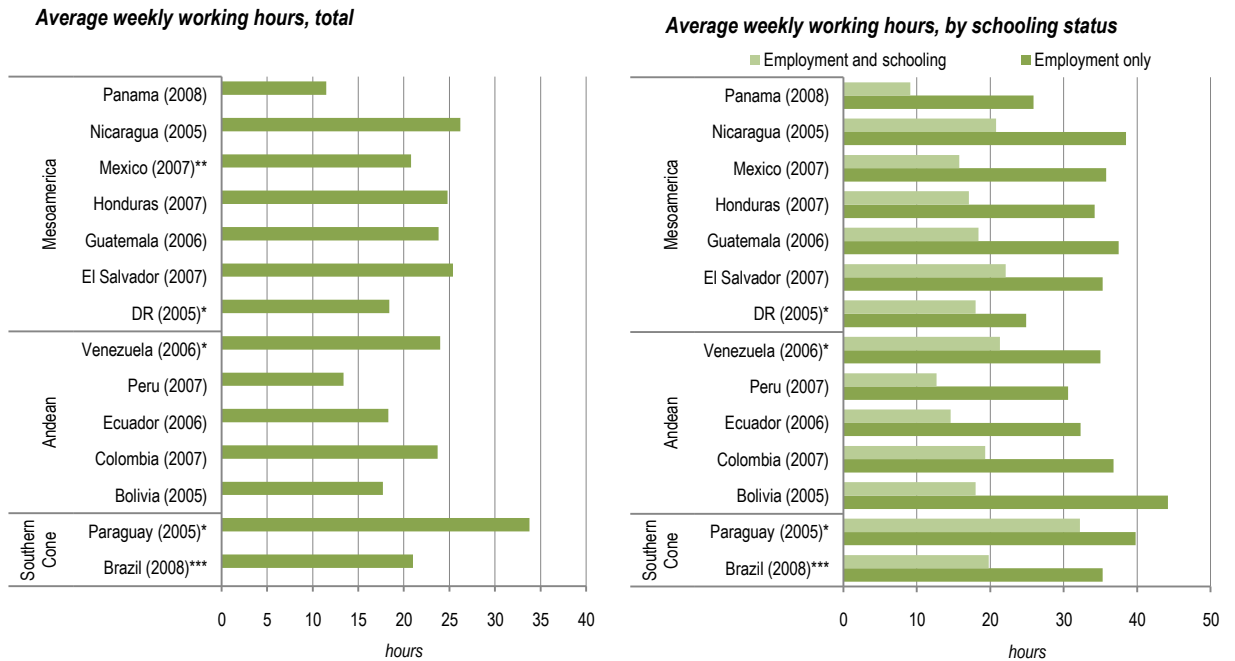
Percentage of child domestic workers and children in other forms of employment attending school, by sex,

School attendance of child domestic workers		School attendance of children in other forms of employment (excluding domestic workers)	
Male	Female	Male	Female
67.9	54.3	69.8	69.3

Source: UCW calculations based on data from Paraguay *Encuesta Permanente de Hogares* (2004)

¹³ Lyon S. et Valdivia C (2010): *Towards the Effective Measurement of Child Domestic Workers: Building Estimates using Standard Household Survey Instruments*. Draft UCW working paper, April 2010.

Figure 6. Average weekly working hours, 7-14 years age group, total and by schooling status



Notes: (*) Refers to the 10-14 years age group; (**) Refers to the 12-14 years age group; (***) Refers to 7-15 years age group.
Source: UCW calculations based on LAC household survey datasets.

27. Average weekly working hours provide an indication of how much work is being performed, and, concomitantly, how it may impact on health and schooling outcomes. As shown in Figure 6, employment is typically time intensive for children in the LAC region, but again variations across countries are large. Working hours are strongly negatively correlated with school attendance – children working only put in more than twice as many hours each week than children working and attending school in most of the countries (second graph in Figure 6). It is worth recalling in interpreting the estimates of working hours that they refer only to employment; many children combine employment with household chores, and for this group the total time burden associated with work is considerably higher and often unmeasured. It should also be recalled that the aggregate estimates of working hours can mask significant groups of employed children performing work for many more hours each week. Figure 7, which presents the distribution of children in employment by weekly working hours in Brazil, illustrates the latter point. While children in employment are concentrated at around 20 weekly working hours (the peak of the distribution) there are also many who work 40 hours or more (the upper tail of the distribution).

Figure 7. Distribution of children in employment by working hours, 7–15 years age group, Brazil



Source: UCW calculations based on Brazil Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios, 2008.

28. For a more complete picture of children's employment in the region, additional information is needed on core work tasks or activities, beyond the framework of standardised international labour force classifications discussed above. This is because standardised classifications, designed primarily with the adult labour force in mind, may fail to adequately reflect the work actually performed by children in a specific setting, particularly when collected at only a general (3-digit) level. Better information on children in hazardous work and other worst forms of child labour (as defined in C182¹⁴) is particularly needed, as this is the subgroup of child labourers whose rights are most compromised and whose well-being is most threatened. Common household survey instruments used for child labour measurement are ill-suited to capturing many worst forms other than hazardous, because household members may not report them to a survey interviewer, even if the child in question is still part of the household, which often is not the case.¹⁵ Alternative survey tools and methodologies are needed for generating information on children in worst forms other than hazardous.

¹⁴ According to Article 3 of ILO Convention No. 182, the worst forms of child labour comprise: (a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom, as well as forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; (b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances; (c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in relevant international treaties; and (d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children. The ICLS resolution defines activities covered under subparagraphs 17(a)–17(c) as the "worst forms of child labour other than hazardous work". Activities under subparagraph 17(d) are referred to as "hazardous work".

¹⁵ Children in worst forms other than hazardous in particular often do not belong to a household, having either run away or been abandoned, orphaned, displaced or even sold.

5. TRENDS IN CHILDREN'S EMPLOYMENT AND SCHOOLING

5.1 Changes in the levels of children's employment and schooling

29. The question of most interest in terms of policy, not captured by the static picture of children's employment presented above, is the direction in which LAC countries are moving in terms of children's employment, i.e., whether a greater or lower proportion of children are working over time.

30. Data for the 15 countries, presented in Figure 8, paint a mixed picture in terms of progress against child labour in the region:

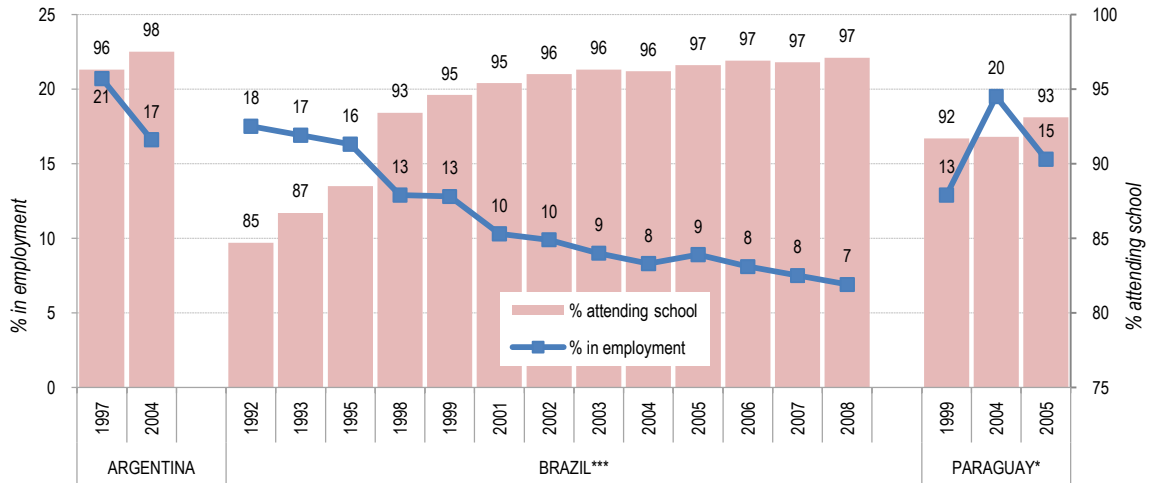
- In the Southern-Cone sub-region, the percentage of children in employment fell in two of the three countries. Brazil, by far the most populous LAC country, saw a steady decline in children's employment from 1992 to 2008. Children's employment in Argentina fell also from 21 to 17 percent during 1997-2004. Paraguay was the only one of the three countries in the sub-region to experience a slippage in terms of children's employment, but this was not at the expense of school attendance, which continued to rise.
- In the Andean sub-region, children's employment fell in three countries but rose in two others. The largest gains were made in Colombia, where children's employment fell by about eight percentage points; gains in Bolivia and Ecuador were smaller. Peru saw a sharp rise in children's employment during 1994-2007 from 18 to 42 percent. In Venezuela, periods of progress were outstripped by periods of reversal leading to net rises in children's employment over the relevant periods.
- Like in other sub-regions, progress in the Meso-americo sub-region appears mixed. At the one end, in countries such as Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, children's employment was reduced. At the other end, Mexico and Panama saw a rise in the proportion of children in employment. In Panama and Mexico, we observe that fluctuations over the 1992-2007 period led to a reversal in children's employment trends.

31. Trends in the LAC countries where comparable child labour estimates are available for 10 or more years indicate that levels of children's employment, in most countries already not high, fell further in ten of the 15 countries. However, in five countries, we observe that fluctuations that substantial slowdowns or even reversals are possible. The analysis shows that progress against child labour can be precarious, subject to quick reversals when conditions deteriorate. This finding argues against complacency even where countries have succeeded in achieving low levels of child labour, and is particularly relevant in light of the current global financial and economic crisis. The data cited in this report predate the current global crisis, and therefore could present an overly optimistic

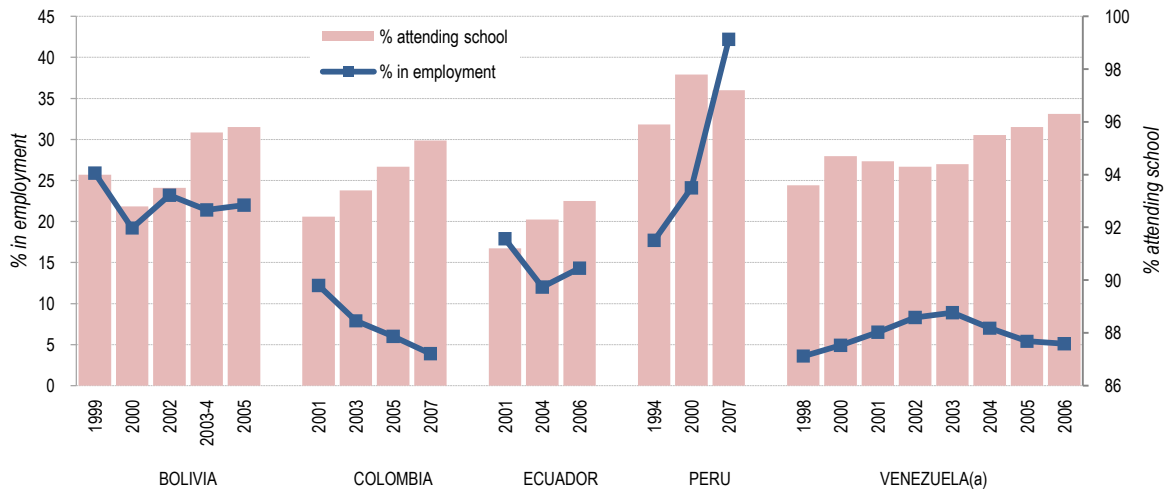
view of progress against child labour. The global and financial crisis can potentially reverse the positive trends in several countries and further aggravate the problem in countries where the phenomenon of child labour has been particularly resilient.

Figure 8. Changes in children's involvement in employment and school attendance, 7-14 years age group, by country

(a) Southern Cone



(b) Andean countries



(c) Mesoamerica



Notes: (*) Refers to the 10-14 years age group; (**) Refers to the 12-14 years age group; (***) Refers to 7-15 years age group.
Source: UCW calculations based on LAC household survey datasets

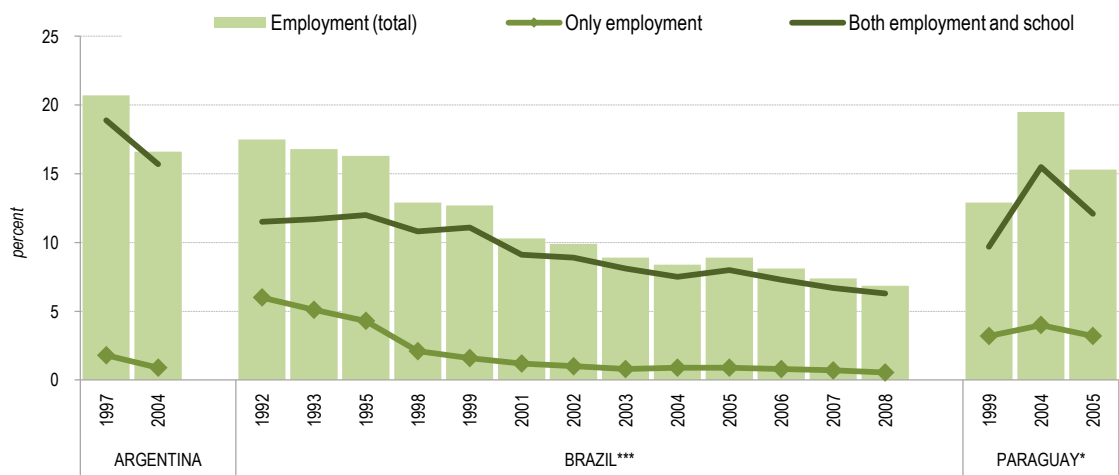
32. Getting children out of employment is of course closely linked to efforts to get them into school. How have children's school attendance rates changed over time in the 15 LAC countries? And has progress against child labour translated into similar progress in expanding schooling? Figure 8 indicates that progress in terms of raising school attendance rates has been steadier and broader-based across the 15 LAC countries. Guatemala, the furthest behind in 2000, made the most progress, helping to close the attendance gap with the other countries in the region. In only one of the countries – Venezuela – was there a significant reversal in progress in raising attendance rates. This occurred in 2003 and coincided with the severe economic crisis in the country at that time. Of particular note is the fact that children's schooling was safeguarded or even extended in the countries where children's employment rate rose (i.e., Paraguay, Peru, Mexico and Panama) indicating that more children combined work and schooling in these locations, and did not have to forego school in order to work. However, it is worth mentioning that for some LAC countries (such as, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala) reaching universal primary enrolment remains a significant challenge.

33. Overall changes in the share of children in employment mask very different trends among the two sub-groups of working children, i.e., those attending school and those not attending school. As shown in Figure 9, the group of working children not attending school, whose long-term development prospects are therefore most compromised, has fallen steadily across almost all of the 15 countries. The group of children combining work and school, on the other hand, has seen a much larger degree of fluctuation. For instance, in Mexico, the rise in children's employment was the result of students taking on work (without dropping out of school); working children not attending school as a proportion of the child population actually fell in Mexico over the 2000 to 2007 period.

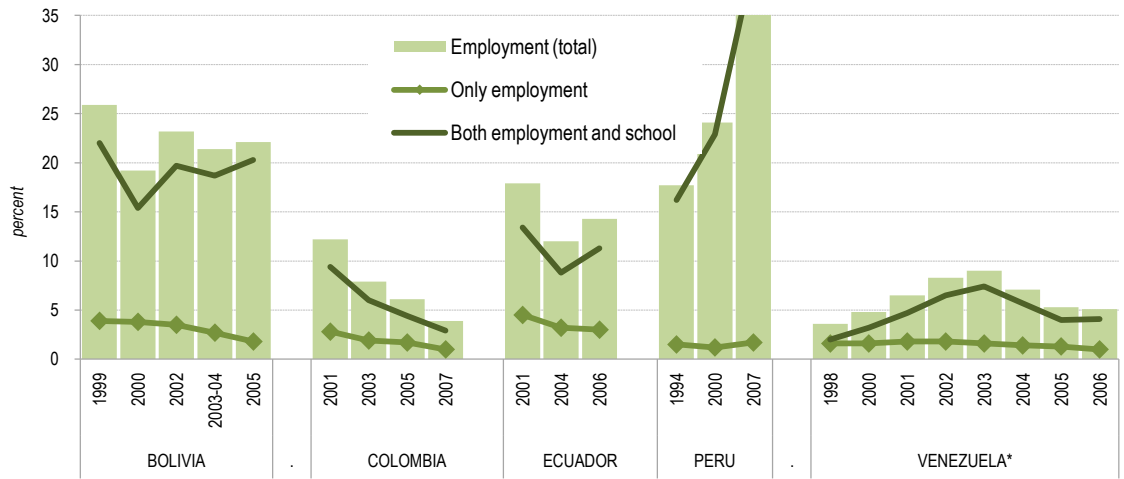
34. Children working and studying formed a larger proportion of the child labour population in 2005 than in 2000 in most of the Latin American countries. Parents, it seems, when forced by circumstances to send their children to work, are less and less likely to sacrifice their children's school attendance in order to do so. But, as discussed above, even in these circumstances work comes at a cost to education, as working children typically have less time and energy for their studies.

Figure 9. Changes in children's involvement in employment, by school attendance status, 7-14 years age group

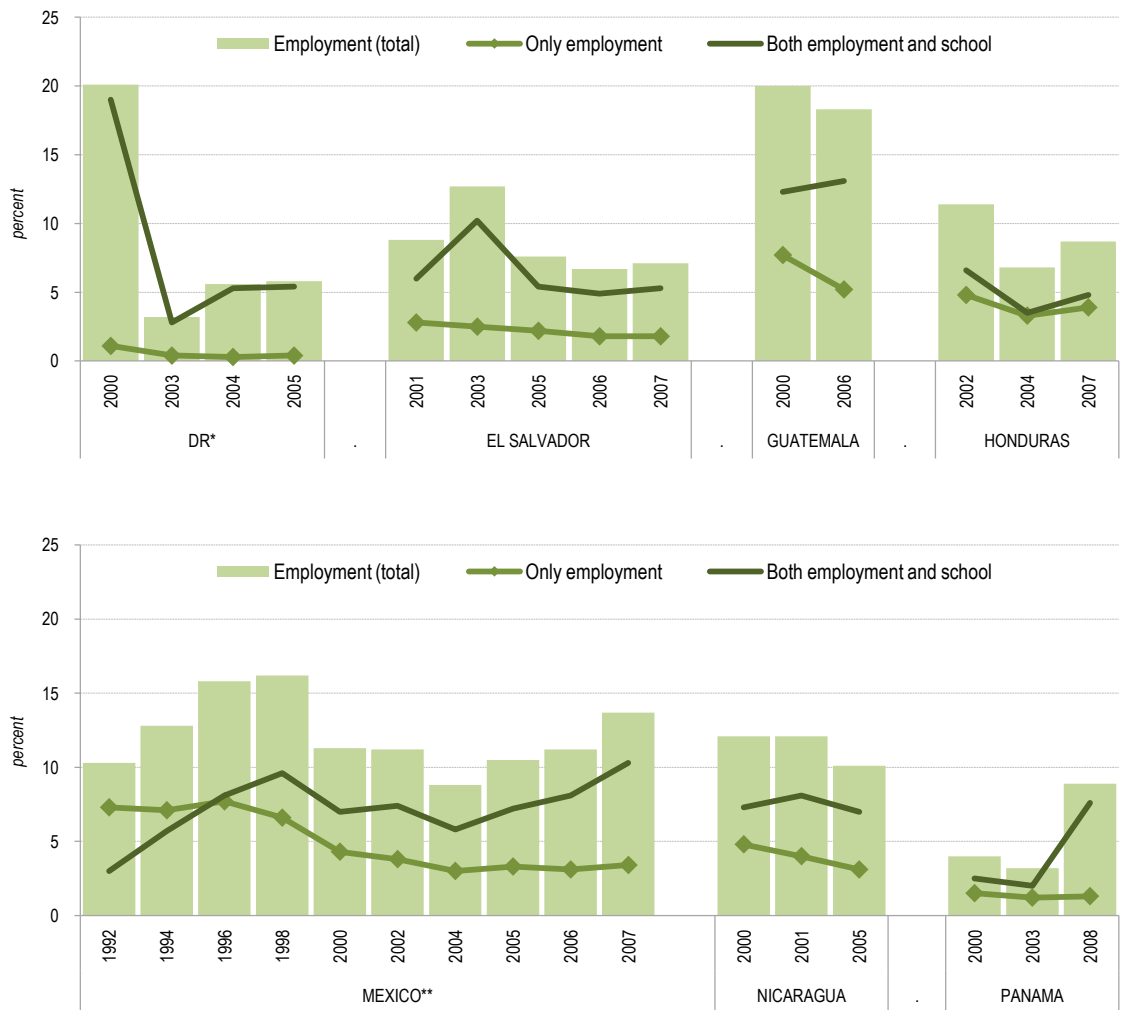
(a) Southern Cone



(b) Andean countries



(c) Mesoamerica



Source: Notes: (*) Refers to the 10-14 years age group; (**) Refers to the 12-14 years age group; (***) Refers to 7-15 years age group.
Source: UCW calculations based on LAC household survey datasets

35. Many of the accompanying country briefs showed that changes in children's employment were closely correlated with macro-economic conditions. Returning to the case of Venezuela, for example, the rise in children's employment in 2003 coincided with the aforementioned economic crisis in the country. This raises the question of the possible effects of the global economic crisis which broke out in 2008 (*after* the surveys upon which the above estimates were based). Although it is too soon to assess the impact of the crisis on children's employment and schooling, theory and past experience suggest that it could threaten progress in a number of ways. A reduction in living standards, greater difficulties in obtaining loans and reduced remittances from family members abroad together are likely to force more vulnerable households to send their children to work in order to help make ends meet during the crisis period. Reduced public spending and cut-backs in international aid flows are likely to limit social safety nets and threaten public education expenditure, also increasing families' dependence on children in employment for household survival (see Box 4).

36. Several of the LAC countries have a large population of indigenous children for whom reducing employment and raising school attendance has posed a particular challenge. Earlier studies in Latin America show that children of indigenous populations disproportionately miss out on education and are found in some of the worst forms of child labour in mining, agriculture and other sectors. Patrinos and Psacharopoulos, (1994) indicate that child labour is greater in indigenous areas than in non-indigenous areas. This can be partially explained by the rural concentration of the indigenous population. Moreover, indigenous children are expected to have a higher likelihood of being employed and not in school because of language problems, school access and "cultural" differences. Guarcello, Mealli and Rosati (2009) show that indigenous households in Guatemala have a lower school attendance and higher work participation rate than the rest of the population. Social safety net programmes such as Mexico's *Oportunidades* (conditional cash transfers) have proven very successful in getting poor children into school and was even more successful in reducing the indigenous/non-indigenous gap in schooling (Lopez- Calva and Patrinos 2005).

Box 4. Economic shocks and child labour

There exists an important body of empirical evidence on the effect of economic shocks on children's labour supply in developing countries. This evidence indicates that households in low income countries with little access to credit markets are more likely to reduce children's full time school attendance and send them to work when hit by economic shocks. Households in these instances appear to use child labour as a form of risk coping mechanism, helping to offset sudden losses of income arising from economic shocks. In Guatemala, for example, households hit by shocks reduce children's full time school attendance, and increase children's work. Following a collective shock (earthquakes; floods, fires, etc), children's participation in economic activities increases by 5.5 percentage points. Most of the impact is borne by full time students who start to work without dropping out of school. Individual shocks (loss of employment, bankruptcy, etc.) have a similar overall effect as collective shocks. Child labor participation for households hit by collective shocks is about 5 percentage points higher than average. About two thirds of the children that enter the labor force, however, also continue to attend school (Guarcello, Mealli and Rosati, 2009). Blanco and Valdivia (2006) note that during the economic downturn in Venezuela (2002-2003), the number of children who work increased by almost five percentage points from 2000 to 2003. They show that this increase in the employment rates was driven mainly by the reduction in children in school but not working and by the growth of children combining work and school; overall enrolment rates were unaffected.

Children aged 10-14 in Venezuela, by activity status and year

	Work only	School only	Work and school	No activities
2000	1.6	91.0	3.2	4.2
2001	1.8	89.8	4.7	3.8
2002	1.8	87.9	6.5	3.8
2003	1.6	87.0	7.5	3.9
2004	1.4	89.0	5.7	3.1

Source: Blanco and Valdivia, 2006

Working students who are exhausted by the demands of their work, or whose work schedule leaves them with little time for homework, are less likely to derive educational benefit from their classroom time than their non-working counterparts. Children who perform poorly in the classroom, in turn, are much more likely to leave the school system prematurely (Guarcello, Lyon and Rosati, 2008). This suggests that even in instances such as the one observed in Venezuela, where the initial effect of the economic shock was a rise in working students, there could also be a subsequent impact on drop-outs. Moreover, looking at the changes during the period 2000-2004 in the distribution of children combining school and employment across per capita household income quintiles, Blanco and Valdivia (2006) notice that the rise in the percentage of children working and attending school at the same time was especially strong for the lowest quintiles, although the increase touched the children from all household income levels. The highest quintile presents a low increase in the percentage of children combining school and economic activity. This confirms the idea that the crisis was especially hard to face for poor families leading them to put their children to work and to oblige them to study and work at the same time

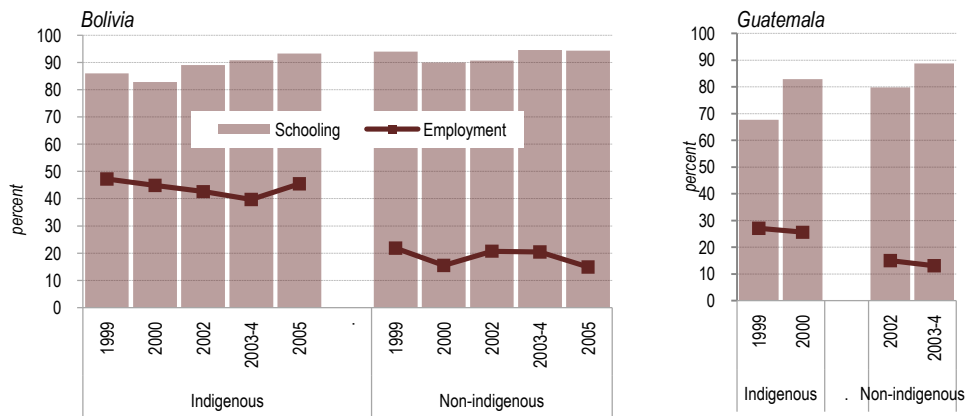
Other studies show milder effects of crisis on children's schooling and child labour (Skoufias, 2003). Using large repeated cross-sectional surveys from Brazil over a 20-year period (1977-98), Duryea and Arends-Kuenning (2003) examine the determinants of the decision to work and/or attend school. Controlling for household income and other child and parental characteristics, they find that for 14-16 year old boys in urban Brazil, the reduction in employment opportunities appears to offset the impact of reduction in the household income on children's labour supply. Similarly, in Peru, despite a significant drop in public spending in education, Schady (2002) shows that children were more likely to be enrolled and less likely to be working during the crisis in 1991 than in other years.

In summary, we can expect the economic crisis to be associated with an increase in child labour in low income countries, and especially within the poorer households in these countries. For middle-income countries, there is some evidence that the impact of falling living standards (income effect) might be offset by reduced employment opportunities (substitution effect). Empirical results from cross-country analysis (Flug et al., 1998) and the review of existing evidence by Ferreira and Schady (2008) are highly supportive of these predictions. Available evidence indicates that the impact of the crisis will depend on individual country characteristics and, especially, on policy responses. The case of Nicaragua described above clearly illustrates how households' responses to the crisis will depend on the presence of well-functioning safety nets.

Source: Koseleci, N.; Rosati, F.C. *Child labour and the global financial crisis: An issue paper*, Understanding Children's Work Programme, Working Paper Series, Rome 2009.

Guarcello L.; Mealli F.; Rosati F.C. 2009. Household vulnerability and child labour: the effect of shocks, credit rationing and insurance, in *Journal of Population Economics*

Figure 10. Changes in children's involvement in employment and school attendance, 7-14 years age group, by indigenous status



Source: UCW calculations based on household survey datasets for Bolivia and Guatemala

37. Unfortunately trend data broken down by indigenous status are available for only two countries – Bolivia and Guatemala. In Bolivia, Figure 10 indicates that progress was made in reducing the gaps in employment and school attendance during the 1999-2003/04 period, but that the 2003/04-2005 period saw a reversal of this progress, at least in terms of employment – the employment of indigenous children rose sharply while employment among non-indigenous children declined by about one-fourth. Bolivian indigenous children nonetheless continued to make gains in school attendance, and in 2005 the school attendance gap stood at only one percentage point. In Guatemala, Figure 10 indicates that progress was made in reducing the schooling gap during the 2000-2006 period, but that at the same time the employment gap changed little.

5.2 Changes in the characteristics and time intensity of children's employment

38. The data for Latin America permit assessing changes in the sectoral composition of children's employment. Overall changes in employment levels have been accompanied by changes in the composition of children's employment, but patterns in this regard vary across the countries:

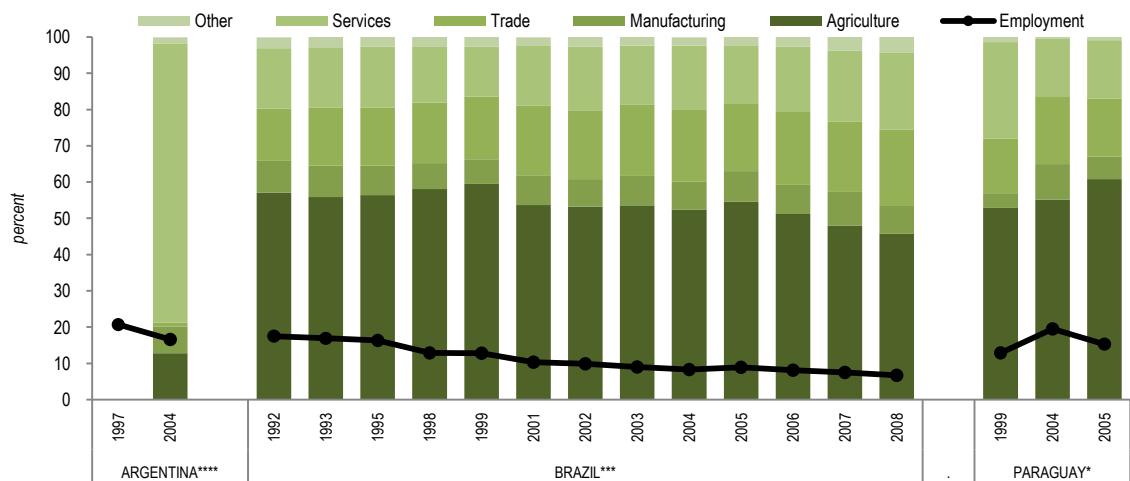
- In the Southern Cone sub-region, Brazil witnessed a shift away from farm work towards work in the services sector. However, in Panama, the opposite pattern held, children's farm work grew in importance relative to work in services.
- In the Andean sub-region, four countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela) witnessed an increase in the relative

importance of work in agricultural work and a decrease in the relative importance of services and trade sectors. Only Peru saw a movement of children out of agriculture and an increase in the relative importance of trade and services. The sharp rise in children's employment was accompanied by a significant fall in the proportion of working children in agriculture.

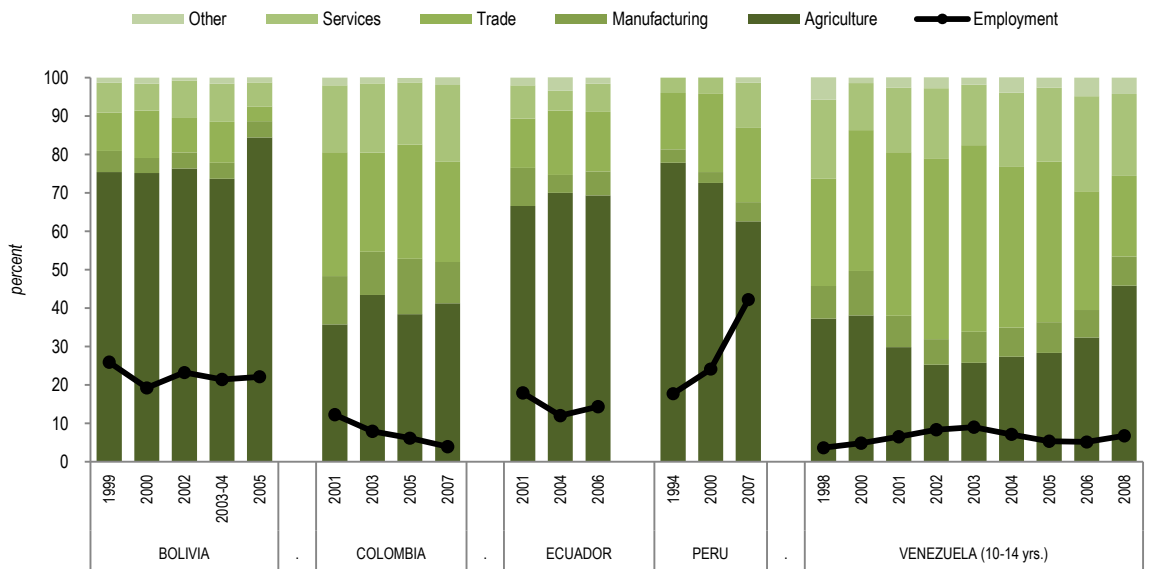
- In the Mesoamerica sub-region, changes in the sectoral composition of children's employment differed substantially across countries. In Mexico, there was an increase in the relative importance of work in the services and trade sectors, and a decrease in the relative importance of agricultural work. El Salvador too saw a movement of children out of agriculture and an increase in the relative importance of trade and services. In Nicaragua and Panama, by contrast, there are more working children in agriculture, while work in the service and trade sector decreased. Changes in the relative importance of work in agriculture appears to be negatively correlated with changes in the overall percentage of children in employment in a number of countries (e.g., Honduras, Nicaragua), i.e., as overall employment rises, the relative importance of agriculture work declines, and vice versa.

Figure 11. Changes in the sectoral composition of children's employment, 7-14 years age group

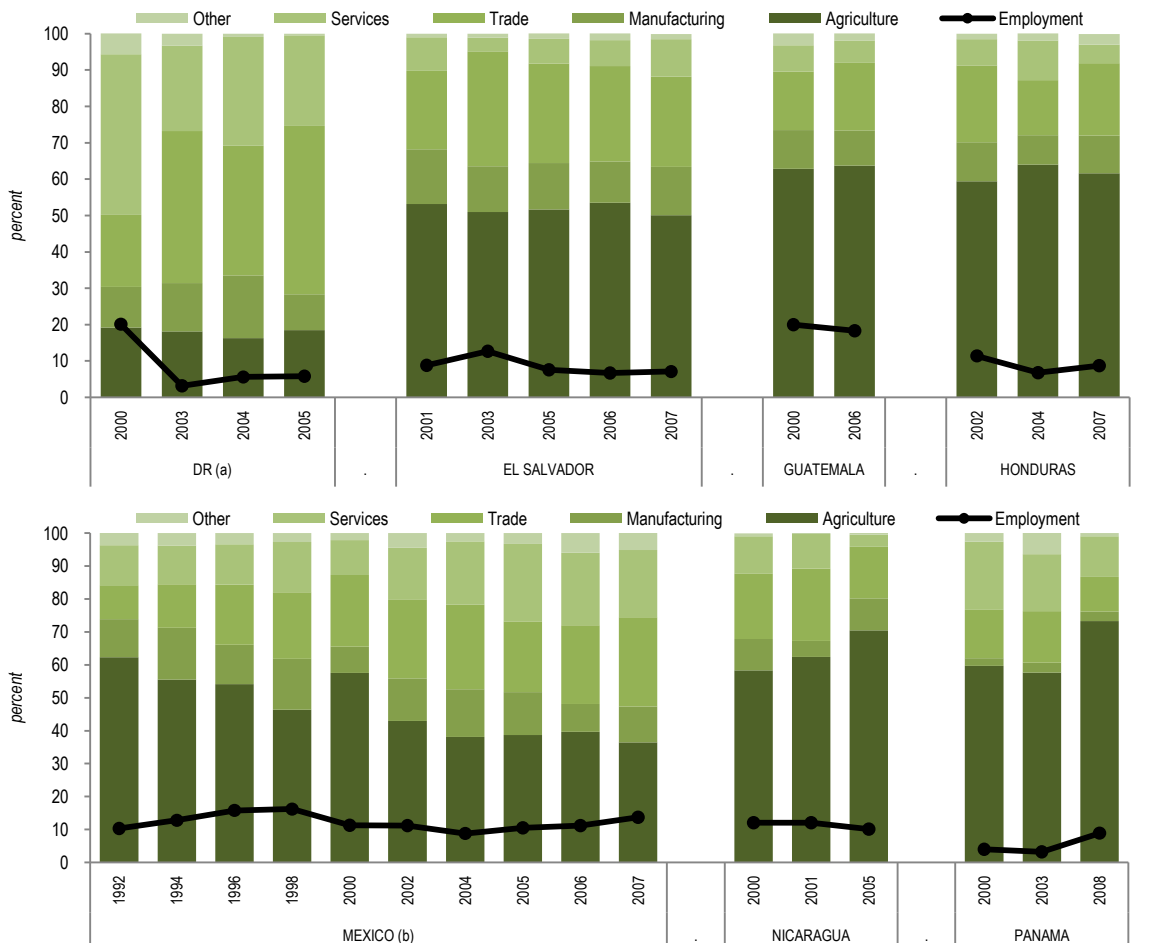
(a) Southern Cone



(b) Andean countries



(c) Mesoamerica

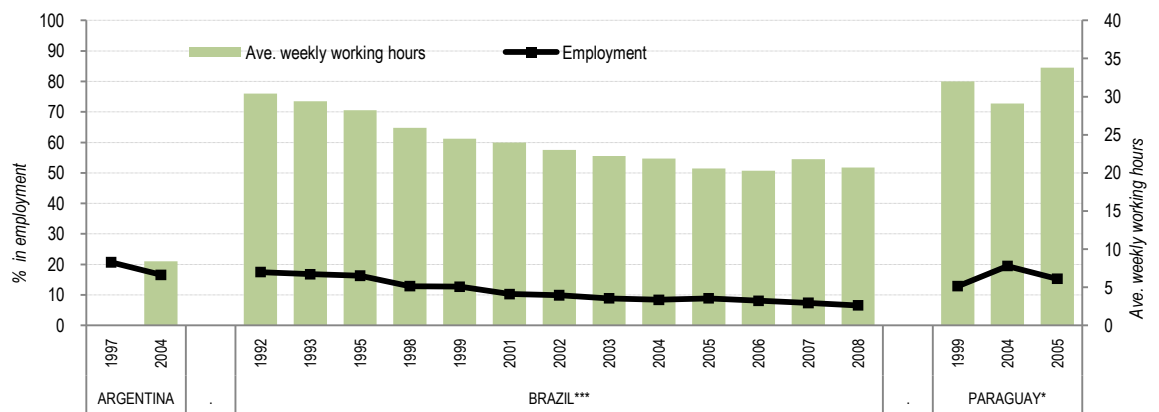


Source: Notes: (*) Refers to the 10-14 years age group; (**) Refers to the 12-14 years age group; (***) Refers to 7-15 years age group; (****) Data do not allow to disaggregate the sectoral composition of children's employment
Source: UCW calculations based on LAC household survey datasets

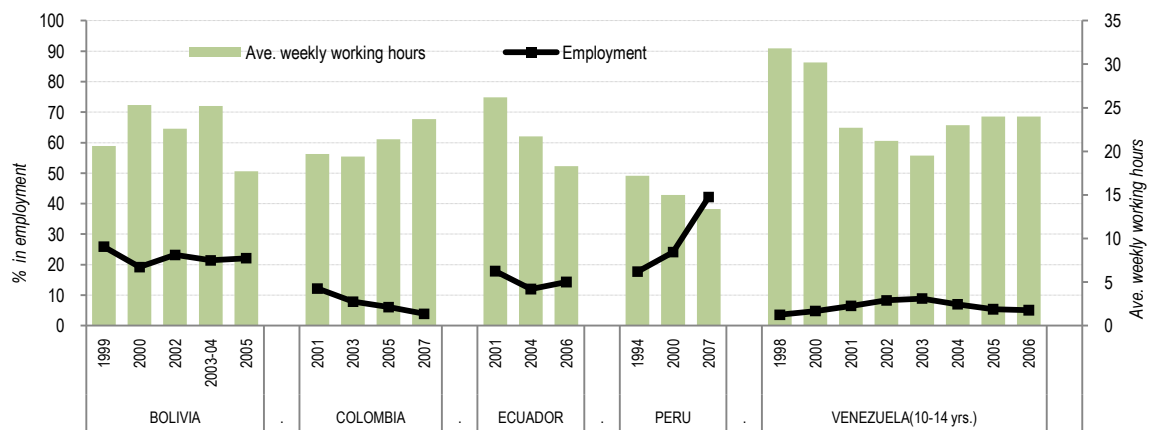
39. Changes in the time intensity of children's employment do not consistently track changes in the overall level of children's employment. In Brazil, Guatemala and Nicaragua, the overall decline in children's employment was accompanied by a decline in the working hours of those remaining in employment. In Colombia the opposite pattern prevailed – fewer children are working over time, but their work *burden* is increasing. In Peru and Panama, sharp rises in children's employment were accompanied by a decline in working hours, suggesting children's production is being spread across a greater number of children.

Figure 12. Changes in the time intensity of children's employment, 7-14 years age group

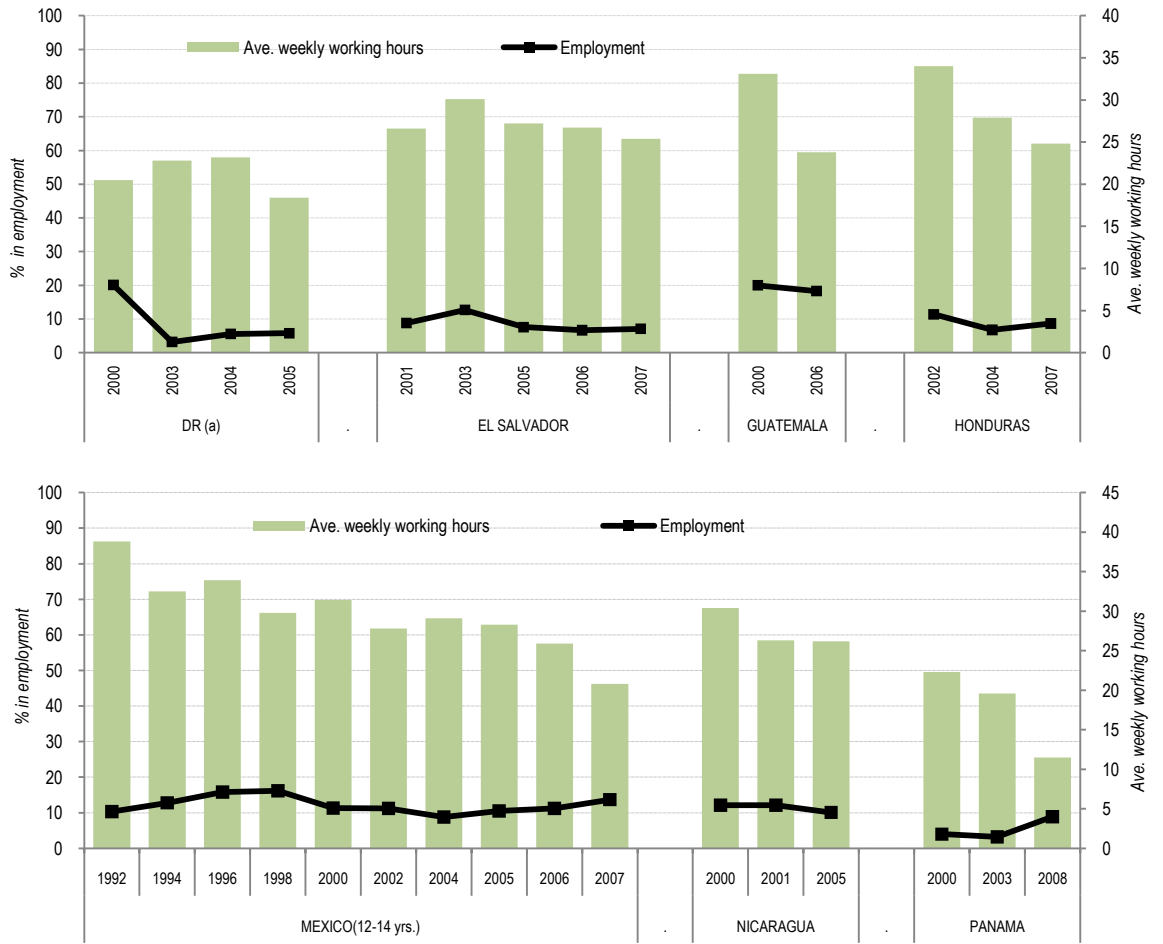
(a) Southern Cone



(b) Andean countries



(c) Mesoamerica



Source: Notes: (*) Refers to the 10-14 years age group; (**) Refers to the 12-14 years age group; (***) Refers to 7-15 years age group; (****) Data do not allow to disaggregate the sectoral composition of children's employment
Source: UCW calculations based on LAC household survey datasets

6. CONCLUSION

40. The country-specific evidence presented in this report presents mixed picture in terms of the progress against child labour. Alongside some notable success stories there are a number of countries where progress has stagnated, and where accelerated action is therefore needed. Brazil, by far the most populous LAC country, saw a steady decline in children's employment from 1992 to 2008; two other populous countries – Colombia and Argentina – also witnessed declines over more limited time periods. In most of the other countries looked at in this report, however, progress has been uneven and in some cases even negative. In Mexico and Venezuela, the second and sixth largest countries in population terms, periods of progress were outstripped by periods of reversal leading to net rises in children's employment over the relevant reference periods. Peru, fifth largest in population terms, saw a sharp rise in children's employment during 1994-2007.

41. Overall changes in the share of children in employment also mask very different trends among those attending school and those not attending school. The group of working children not attending school, whose long-term development prospects are therefore most compromised, has fallen steadily across almost all of the 15 countries. The group of working *students*, on the other hand, has seen a much larger degree of fluctuation. Parents it seems, when forced by circumstances to send their children to work, are less and less likely to sacrifice their children's school attendance in order to do so. But, as discussed above, even in these circumstances work comes at a cost to education, as working children typically have less time and energy for their studies.

42. Even in countries where progress has been substantial, the national development milestone of child labour elimination has not yet been reached. In Brazil, for instance, some 2.1 million children aged 7-15 years, were still at work in employment in 2008. Who are the children remaining in employment? The household survey data for the 15 countries also permit a statistical profile of the group still in employment: they are more likely to boys than girls, to live in the countryside rather than in cities and town, and to be at the upper end of the 7-14 years age spectrum. The largest share is typically found in the agriculture sector and in unpaid family or other informal sector work, largely beyond the realm of formal labour inspections. They typically attend school in addition to working in employment.

43. What policies are needed to effectively reach the large group of LAC children still in child labour? The experience in Brazil, where progress against child labour has been greatest, holds a number of potentially important lessons in this context. A large body of evidence suggests that the role of policy was critical in the country. Impact evaluations of Bolsa Escola – the large-scale Brazilian Government cash transfer programme conditional on school attendance – indicate that it played a particularly

important role in reducing inequality,¹⁶ in raising school attendance rates¹⁷ and in reducing child labour.¹⁸ Initial impact evaluations of PETI – another Brazilian Government cash transfer programme that contains removal from child labour as an explicit eligibility criterion – suggest that the programme has also had a significant effect on child labour rates in the programme sites.¹⁹ Research also points to the importance of Brazil's policy efforts in other areas. A 2005 study found that the increase in the minimum working age in 1998 led to a statistically significant decline in the share of 14-15 year-olds in child labour.²⁰ Another 2007 study highlighted the important role of addressing school quality factors such as the average schooling of public school teachers.²¹

44. A recent UCW study based on the unique PNAD dataset covering the 1992 to 2008 period – corroborates other research pointing to the central role of policy in the decline in child labour in Brazil.²² In specific terms, UCW study indicated that about 30 percent of the fall child labour was attributable to improvements in parental education, while only a small percentage was attributable to other changes in the population structure less susceptible to direct policy intervention, including smaller family sizes and greater urbanisation. Improvements in living standards and an overall fall in poverty – spurred by social security reforms and broad-scale cash transfer schemes such as *Bolsa Escola* and PETI – also played a central role, accounting for around 17 percent of the decline in child labour. Successful efforts to increase piped water access and to improve school quality, accounted by eight and five percent, respectively, of the decline in child labour.

¹⁶ World Bank (2009): "Conditional Cash Transfers", World Bank Policy Research Report, Washington D.C.; Barros, R., Foguel M.N., & Ulyssea G (2006). "Desigualdade de Renda no Brasil: Uma Análise da Queda Recente", *Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada*, Brasília.

¹⁷ Abramovay, M., C. Andrade, and Waiselfisz J.J. (1998): *Bolsa Escola: melhoria educacional e redução da pobreza*. UNESCO; World Bank (2001): "Eradicating child labour in Brazil". *Report No. 20208-BR*, Washington D.C.; Aguiar, M. and Araújo C. (2002): *Bolsa Escola: Education to Confront Poverty*. UNESCO; Cardoso E. and Souza A.P, 2004. "The Impact of Cash Transfers on Child Labor and School Attendance in Brazil", *Department of Economics, Vanderbilt University Working Papers*, 0407.

¹⁸ Ferro, A. R.; Kassouf, A.L. and D. Levison. (2007): The Impact of Conditional Cash Transfer Program in Brazil on Household Work Decisions in Brazil, *mimeo*; Ferro, A. R. and A. C. Nicollela (2007). The Impact of Conditional Cash Transfers Programs on Household Work Decisions in Brazil. *mimeo*, Universidade de São Paulo.

¹⁹ World Bank (2001): "Eradicating child labour in Brazil". *Report No. 20208-BR*, Washington D.C.; Pianto, D., and S. Soares. 2004. "Use of Survey Design for the Evaluation of Social Programs: The PNAD and PETI." Paper presented at the annual meetings of the Latin American and Caribbean Economic Association, October 2003, Puebla, Mexico.

²⁰ [Ferro A.R](#) and [Kassouf A.L.](#) (2005b): "Efeitos do aumento da idade mínima legal no trabalho dos brasileiros de 14 e 15 anos", *Revista de Economia e Sociologia Rural*, 43 (2), 307-329.

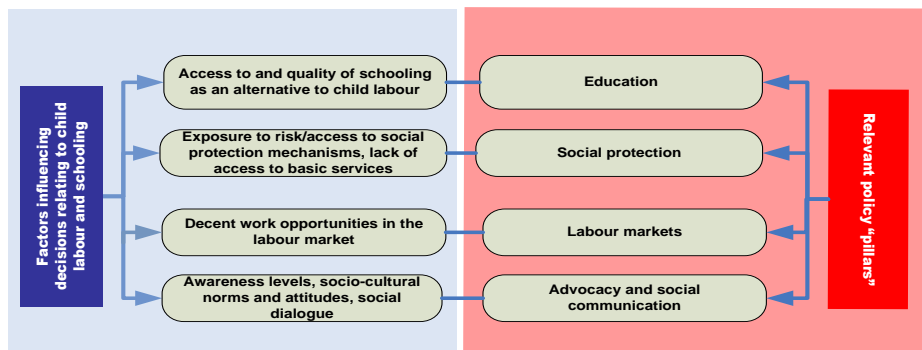
²¹ Santos F.C and Souza A.P (2007): "[A Redução Do Trabalho Infantil E O Aumento Da Frequência Escolar Na Década De 90 No Brasil](#)", [Anais do XXXV Encontro Nacional de Economia](#), 129, ANPEC - Associação Nacional dos Centros de Pósgraduação em Economia.

²² UCW (2010): *Building on success in reducing child labour: Drawing policy lessons from the Brazilian experience*. Draft UCW working paper, June 2010.

45. In sum, the Brazil evidence highlights the fact that the decline in child labour in the country did not happen by itself – only a small proportion can be explained by changes in the population structure unrelated to policy. Much of the decline, on the other hand, can be traced to active policy efforts to extend and improve schooling, which have led to more educated generations of parents, efforts to implement broad-scale cash transfer schemes, which have helped improve living standards and reduce household vulnerability, and efforts to expand basic services, which have freed children from tasks such as water collection. This leads to a second key lesson from Brazil – the *nature* of a policy response to child labour. The complexity of child labour means that there is no single answer to it. Brazil's success has underscored the value of a comprehensive policy response, addressing in an integrated fashion the wide range of factors contributing to child labour.

46. A comprehensive response should start from an adequate legal framework setting out an unambiguous definition of child labour, and the principles, objectives and priorities for national action against it. Building on this foundation, evidence from Brazil and elsewhere points to four policy “pillars” of particular importance as part of a comprehensive response to child labour – education, social protection, labour markets, and strategic communication and advocacy.

Figure 13. Key determinants of child labour and schooling and policy pillars to address them



47. *Education*: The most effective means of preventing children from entering child labour is to extend and strengthen schooling, so that families can have the opportunity to invest in their children's education. More accessible and better quality schools are important because they also affect the returns to schooling vis-à-vis child labour, making the former more attractive as an alternative to the latter. In Guatemala²³, for instance, distance to primary school has an influence on girls' time allocations. Each additional minute of travel time to primary school decreases the probability of a girl attending school and increases her

²³ Vuri, D. 2008. *The effect of availability and distance to school on children's time allocation in Ghana and Guatemala*, Understanding Children's Work Programme Working Paper Series (Rome).

probability of performing household chores. In Brazil, policy efforts to both reduce the indirect costs of schooling (i.e., children's foregone wages or production) through cash transfers and to raise quality through teacher training appear both to have been important. Greater school access should be completed by supply-side policies to raise quality. For instance, in Mexico²⁴, the impact of a specific school quality improvement programme (CONAFE)²⁵ shows that quality enhancement can be an effective strategy for both encouraging schooling and discouraging children's work, especially for children of secondary school age, and even when enacted alongside a major demand-side programme like PROGRESA/OPORTUNIDADES.²⁶ The CONAFE programme appears to have been effective in shifting children away from working (especially those working only) to school.

48. *Social protection*: The vulnerability of households to poverty and exposure to risk and shocks has proven to be one of the main factors underlying the decision of households to send their children to work. Households without adequate social protection may rely on their children's work to make ends meet, rendering them unable to sacrifice the immediate returns to work for the future returns to schooling. There is no single recipe for implementing social protection programmes to address child labour. Among the range of options available to policy makers are unconditional cash transfers of various sorts, conditional cash transfers, public works programmes and credit schemes. Earlier evidence highlights the potential of some social protection instruments in decreasing the vulnerability of families. For instance, in Ecuador, the Bono de Desarrollo Humano programme has a large positive impact on school enrolment and a large negative impact on child work. The effects of cash transfers vary, with larger enrolment impacts among poorer children.²⁷ In Nicaragua, Red de Protección Social programme raises school enrolment by 18 percentage points and reduces the number of working children by five

²⁴ Rosati, F.C.; Rossi, M. 2007. *Impact of school quality on child labor and school attendance: The case of CONAFE compensatory education program in Mexico*, Understanding Children's Work Programme Working Paper Series (Rome).

²⁵ Mexico started to address the challenge of providing access to quality education in the 1970s with the establishment of a National Council of Education Promotion (CONAFE). In the early 1990s, CONAFE initiated the Compensatory Education programme (referred to hereafter as the CONAFE program) with the aims of improving the quality of education in disadvantaged communities and reducing schooling inequalities. The CONAFE programme targets those schools with the lowest educational performance in highly disadvantaged communities. It now serves about 4 million students in preschool and primary education, and about 300,000 students in secondary education, in 44,165 marginalized rural and urban areas in all 31 states in Mexico.

²⁶ Started in 1997, PROGRESA/OPORTUNIDADES is the first nationwide anti-poverty programme in Mexico to offer "conditional cash transfers" in order to promote incentives for positive behavior. The programme offers transfers to poor families in Mexico conditional on their participation in health and nutrition programmes (such as prenatal care, well-baby care and immunization, nutrition monitoring and supplementation, and preventive checkups), along with incentives to promote children's school attendance.

²⁷ Araujo, M.C.; Schady, N. 2006. *Cash transfers, conditions, school enrollment, and child work: Evidence from a randomized experiment in Ecuador*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper Series, No. 3930 (Washington, DC).

percentage points.²⁸ Nicaraguan social safety net programmes appear to play an important role in protecting households' well-being and promoting investment in children's human capital during the coffee crisis.²⁹ As mentioned earlier, in Brazil, cash transfers, social pension programmes and expanded basic services appeared to have played an important role in the progress against child labour.

49. *Labour markets*: Youth labour market outcomes and child labour are closely related. On one hand, there is a need to provide former child labourers with "second chance" learning and vocational training opportunities to ensure they possess the necessary skills to find gainful employment in the labour market. On the other hand, there is a need to ensure a well-functioning labour market for youth, so that households have an incentive to invest in their children's education and to refrain from sending them to work prematurely. Education and training are essential for the design of an effective strategy to help young people to reach improved labour market outcomes and decent employment possibilities. Improving youth skills and employability is central to ensuring a smooth and successful transition to decent work. The evidence on the effects of training programmes on employment and wage is large part positive. For instance, the Jóvenes training programmes in LAC countries target disadvantaged young people and offer a package of classroom training, work experience, life skills, job search assistance, and counselling. They are large-scale, strongly linked to the labour demand, involve the private sector, and lead to recognized diplomas. Evaluations of these programmes provide evidence of increased employment probability and/or earnings upon graduation in Argentina³⁰, Peru³¹ and Mexico.³² A randomized evaluation of the training programme (Jóvenes en Acción) introduced in Colombia in 2005, in particular, shows that the programme raises earnings and employment for both men and women, with larger effects on women.³³ Cost-benefit analysis of these results suggests that the programme generates a large net gain, particularly for

²⁸ Maluccio, J.A.; Flores, R. 2004. *Impact evaluation of a conditional cash transfer program: The Nicaragua Red de Protección Social*, FCND Discussion Paper, No. 184 (Washington, DC, International Food Policy Research Institute, Food Consumption and Nutrition Division).

²⁹ Maluccio J.A. 2005. *Coping with the coffee crisis in Central America: The role of the Nicaraguan Red de Protección Social*, IFPRI FCND Discussion Paper, No. 188 (Washington, DC, International Food Policy Research Institute, Food Consumption and Nutrition Division).

³⁰ Aedo C.; Nuñez, S. 2001. *The Impact of training policies in Latin America and the Caribbean: The case of "Programa Joven"*, Mimeo (Santiago de Chile, ILADES/Georgetown University).

Alzúa, M.L.; Brassiolo, P. 2006. *The impact of training policies in Argentina: An evaluation of Proyecto Joven*, Working Paper, OVE/WP-15/06 (Washington, DC, Inter-American Development Bank)

³¹ Díaz, J.; Jaramillo, M. 2006. *An evaluation of the Peruvian Youth Labor Training Program "PROJOVEN"*, OVE Working Papers, No. 1006 (Washington, DC, Inter-American Development Bank).

³² Delajara, M.; Freije, S.; Soloaga, I. 2006. *An evaluation of training for the unemployed in Mexico*, Working Paper, OVE/WP-09/06 (Washington, DC, Inter-American Development Bank).

³³ Atanasio, O.; Kugler, A.; Meghir, C. 2008. *Training disadvantaged youth in Latin America: Evidence from a randomized trial*, NBER Working Paper Series, No. 13931 (Cambridge, MA).

women. Similar positive effects are also found for the Procajóven programme in Panama.³⁴

50. Strategic communication and advocacy: If households are insufficiently aware of the benefits of schooling (or of the costs of child labour), or if prevailing socio-cultural norms discourage schooling, they are also less likely to choose the classroom over the workplace for their children. A range of strategic communication and advocacy efforts are relevant to both building a broad-based consensus for the elimination of child labour and changing the attitudes of households towards child labour. Both national- and local-level strategic communication efforts are relevant in reaching households with information on the benefits of schooling, and the costs and risks associated with child labour. Such communication efforts need to be based on knowledge of the economic considerations as well as of the social norms that underlie child labour and schooling decisions. The use of a wide variety of conventional (e.g., radio, television and print media) as well as of non-conventional communication channels (e.g., religious and tribal leaders, school teachers, health care workers) is important in order to achieve maximum outreach. Social mobilization plays an important role in engaging a broad range of social actors in efforts against child labour. Care providers in direct contact with children, including teachers and health workers, are in an especially good position to identify and refer child labourers, and therefore constitute particularly important allies in the fight against child labour. Also important are employers' and workers' organizations, which together can work to ensure that children are not present in the workplace. Labour inspectorates also have a key role to play in this context. Involving parents in school management, through, for example, parent-school associations, is an important means of giving them a more active stake in their children's education. Initiatives such as community-based child protection networks provide useful vehicles for bringing together a wide variety of stakeholders – government and non-governmental – to combat child labour. Advocacy aimed at generating political will is also critical to obtaining a successful response to child labour. Important areas of focus for advocacy efforts include the ratification of international legal standards on child labour, and the development of effective legislative, policy and programmatic measures to implement these standards.

51. While the specific policy responses to child labour across the LAC countries should of course be dictated by national circumstances, interventions relating to all four of these policy pillars are likely to be relevant.

³⁴ Ibarraran, P.; Rosas Shady, D. 2006. *IDB's job training operations: Thematic report of impact evaluations*, Draft, Oct. (Washington, DC, Inter American Development Bank).

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