

INFORMATION NOTE

12.5 million reasons to end child labour in Latin America and the Caribbean by 2025

Lima, October 2016

What is the Regional Initiative?

Created in October 2014, the Regional Initiative "Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour" is a platform for intergovernmental cooperation made up of 27 countries (Argentina, Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay and Venezuela), with active participation of employers' and workers' organisations, which aims to accelerate the pace of reduction of child labour in the region. Despite having achieved the withdrawal of 7.5 million children and adolescents from economic activities between 1995 and 2012 (especially hazardous types of work that threatened their life and development) the Regional Initiative still faces the important challenge of meeting Sustainable Development Goal Target 8.7¹ on ending child labour by 2025, ensuring the full exercise of the rights of children and adolescents and contributing to the accumulation of human and social capital in the region.

What are the aims of the Regional Initiative?

Based on the outcomes and lessons learned from public policies and programmes and private actions to prevent and end child labour in the last 20 years, the Regional Initiative has two strategic objectives:

1. Accelerate and intensify the pace of prevention and elimination of child labour
2. Increase awareness in the countries about the negative consequences of child labour, especially its worst forms

The actions of the Regional Initiative are organised around eight acceleration factors selected based on an analysis of the factors explaining the reduction child labour,² the current socio-economic situation in the region and existing specific needs. These factors, or priority issues, have the potential to improve the performance of national responses to the persistence of child labour: i) indigenous communities; ii) education; iii) policy decentralisation; iv) production chains; v) youth employment; vi) agriculture; vii) migration and viii) information and communication technologies.

¹ See: <http://www.iniciativa2025alc.org/pt-br/meta-8.7-y-la-primera-generacion-libre-de-trabajo-infantil-en-la-region>

² See: <http://www.iniciativa2025alc.org/es/factores-explicativos-de-la-reduccion-del-trabajo-en-america-y-el-caribe-2000-2012>

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What does the Regional Initiative propose?

Given the current characteristics of child and adolescent labour and considering the installed capacity in the countries, the Regional Initiative has proposed a Public Policy Acceleration Framework oriented at creating the first generation free of child labour in Latin America the Caribbean.

To this end, it proposes a combination of three types of interventions:

1. Prevention interventions: aimed at children aged 5 - 17 years, using a life-cycle approach to accompany children through their development and fulfill their specific needs, in order to break the pattern of child labour.
2. Interventions aimed at the restoration of rights: focusing on children and adolescents who are already in child labour (including its worst forms) and should be removed from hazardous activities and forms of economic exploitation that constitute a crime.
3. Interventions aimed at sustainability: for ensuring the institutionalisation of State policies aimed at preventing and reducing child labour, protecting work permitted for adolescents and promoting coordination between public and private programmes and services with a bearing on this matter.

How does the Regional Initiative operate?

The Regional Initiative operates through a Focal Points Network consisting of 27 representatives of the ministries of labour, 4 regional representatives of the employers' organisations and 4 regional representatives of workers' organisations. The operational responsibility rests with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), through its Regional Office for the Americas, which serves as the Technical Secretariat, and provides support to the implementation and monitoring of the adopted agreements.

In order to finance specific interventions in the priority issues, the Regional Initiative mobilizes resources with the member countries, donor countries and international financial institutions.

Why is the involvement of Ministries of Education of importance to the Regional Initiative?

The available evidence shows that higher rates of school attendance in a country are linked to lower rates of child labour. This inverse relationship confirms the importance of the education system to the child labour reduction target. It has also been found that higher levels of public social spending on education are typically linked to lower rates of child labour and vice versa. The causality between the dimensions considered is then clear: lower rates of child labour are associated with higher rates of school attendance and higher social spending on education.

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Strengthening the response to child labour therefore requires coordinated and articulated action between the labour and education sectors, the former for its leading role in formulation of specific public policy, and the latter as responsible for the provision of an essential public service and a fundamental right for children and adolescents in the country.

From the perspective of the Regional Initiative, building a successful and sustainable response to the persistence of child labour requires, on the one hand, integrating a more comprehensive approach to the problem into policies, programmes and models of care in the education sector and, on the other hand, generating proposals for intervention that will leverage more effectively and creatively the existing capabilities, resources and infrastructure in the countries.

With this goal in mind, it has been deemed relevant to open a forum for dialogue, exchange and building of agreements between Ministries of Labour and Education of member countries of the Regional Initiative in order to identify actions and/or develop joint proposals that, applied in the territory, will allow advancing in the prevention and reduction of child labour and improving aspects such as school attendance, retention, timely completion and learning achievements, some of which are affected by the early involvement of students in the labour market.

At the Third Annual Face to Face Meeting of the Regional Initiative, the Technical Secretariat tabled a working proposal aimed at secondary education and the adolescent population between 13 and 17 years be addressed, since, according to statistics available on child labour, this segment of the population constitutes an important source of labour supply in the region, mostly in informal conditions linked to hazardous activities that jeopardize their safety and development and seriously affect their school-to-work transition process.

For more information on the Regional Initiative visit <http://www.iniciativa2025alc.org/en>

About the Brazil-ILO Partnership Program for the Promotion of South-South Cooperation Project, “Support to Caribbean States - Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour: Enhancing School to Work Transition for the Elimination of Child Labour.”

Objectives: To build the capacity of participating Caribbean Countries (the Bahamas, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia, Grenada, Suriname) to enhance the school-to-work transition of youth.

Background: In July 2015, Caribbean Members of the RI participated in a South-South Cooperation meeting in Brazil, organized within the framework of the Regional Initiative. At this meeting some common areas of need within the Caribbean countries were identified. The most common requests for assistance focussed on the link between child labour and youth employment, and the school-to-work transition.

Given the existence of good practices and the long-standing experience of the Government of Brazil in the areas of both child labour and school-to-work transition for youth, participants

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welcomed the opportunity for Brazil to share its technical resources and experiences with its Caribbean counterparts, with the aim of assisting them to develop capacity in these areas. On those grounds, this Project was developed and approved by the Member states at the end of 2015.

Implementation to date: Activities under the project commenced in July 2016 with the launch of Rapid Assessments of Child Labour in the Bahamas, Guyana, St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. (Draft reports have been prepared and are expected to be published in the coming months.)

In December 2016, at the Third Meeting of the Focal Point Network of the Regional Initiative, held in Fortaleza, Brazil, representatives of Caribbean Ministries of Labour and Education were given an introduction to the Brazilian Apprenticeship models through officials' presentations and site visits to two participating institutions in the State of Ceará.

At the meeting, planning also commenced for a series of Missions by an expert team from the Government of Brazil to each of the participating Caribbean countries with the objectives of more in-depth information exchanges and the identification of specific opportunities for targeted technical assistance from Brazil on the matter of School to Work Transition.

For more information on the ILO-Brazil Caribbean Support Project visit: http://www.ilo.org/caribbean/projects/WCMS_525556/lang--en/index.htm