

challenges

Number 8, January 2009

ISSN 1816-7543

Newsletter on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals from a child rights perspective

>> The invisible face of child labour in Latin America and the Caribbean



UNITED NATIONS

ECLAC

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The hidden side of child labour

Child labour has a gender bias related to the dominant stereotypes regarding gender roles. While out-of-home paid work is carried out predominantly by boys, girls bear the greater burden in unpaid domestic tasks, whether in their own homes or the homes of others. Boys are more exposed to the risks of being out on the street and find it more difficult to combine work and education. For girls it may be easier to reconcile the spheres of work and education, but they suffer costs that remain hidden and that reinforce their disadvantages throughout the life cycle. On the one hand, they are marked by the assumption that the burden of the care economy is entirely their responsibility, which determines future labour prospects. Indeed, even when girls show greater educational achievement, their occupational options are more limited. On the other hand, girls are exposed to risk within the household, where overexploitation, maltreatment and abuse are as frequent as they are unpunished.

The feature article of this issue of Challenges presents convincing information about the sexual distribution of child labour, which attests to the greater presence of girls in domestic work, the predominance of boys in paid work and the greater educational achievement of women in the region.

The voice of children and adolescents section contains statements by adolescent girls regarding the harshness of child labour. Child domestic labour in Haiti is dealt with in Viewpoints. In the Learning from experience section, a programme in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, for the eradication of child labour and protection of adolescents in domestic work is described. The publication concludes with a brief review of recent events and key documents on the subject.

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Challenges
Number 8, January 2009
ISSN print version 1816-7543
ISSN electronic version 1816-7551

Cover photo
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Recent events

>> Tenth Ibero-American Conference of Ministers and Senior Officials Responsible for Child and Adolescent Affairs

Held in El Salvador on 19 June 2008 as part of the eighteenth Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Government: Youth and Development, the conference focused on the integral protection of the rights of children and adolescents, and its agreements are presented in the San Salvador Declaration.

www.unicef.org/lac/partners_12307.htm

>> III World Congress against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents

This meeting was convened by the Brazilian government, ECPAT, UNICEF and the Group for the Convention on the Rights of the Child (a non-governmental organization). Gathered in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 25 to 28 November 2008, the participants considered measures to guarantee the rights of children and adolescents and protect them against sexual exploitation.

www.iiicongressomundial.net

>> In Times of Crisis: Making Budgets Work for Children, Women and the Millennium Development Goals, Doha, Qatar

UNIFEM and UNICEF organized this event on 30 November 2008, to examine the application of the Monterrey Consensus, with the aim of formulating a South-South platform for the exchange of good practices in the area of gender-sensitive social investment, underlining the added value of the rights perspective in public finance.

www.un.org/esa/ffd/doha

>> Gender equality observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean

This is an initiative that emerged at the tenth session of the Regional Conference on Women, 2007, coordinated by ECLAC with support from United Nations agencies and international cooperation agencies (AECID, PAHO, SEGIB, UNFPA, UNIFEM and UN-INSTRAW). By formulating gender indicators and creating an Internet website, the observatory will contribute to the analysis of the regional reality and the monitoring of public policies, providing technical support to countries.

www.cepal.org/mujer

Key documents



>> Quito Consensus, 2007

Tenth session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, Quito, Ecuador, 6-9 August 2007

www.eclac.cl/id.asp?id=29489&base=/dds/tpl/top-bottom.xsl



>> ECLAC, 2007

Women's contribution to equality in Latin America and the Caribbean

www.eclac.cl/id.asp?id=29399&base=/dds/tpl/top-bottom.xsl



>> UNICEF, 2007

Legislative Reform on Child Domestic Labour: A Gender Analysis

www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/files/Leg_Reform_on_Child_Domestic_Labour.pdf



>> OIT / IPEC, 2007

Invertir en la familia: Estudio sobre factores preventivos y de vulnerabilidad al trabajo infantil doméstico en familias rurales y urbanas de Colombia, Paraguay y Perú

white.oit.org.pe/ipec/documentos/invertir_familia.pdf

Domestic work by girls and adolescents: pending rights



© UNICEF. 2006. Cesar Villar

The following statements have been taken from the study "El trabajo infantil y adolescente doméstico ... pesa demasiado" (Costa Rica, 2002)¹

- "I like the house where I work, but the first day was real sad for me. No, I didn't cry. I've been in that house for about a month now, and I help Andrea sweep, mop and wash the kitchen things. I also wash shirts, shorts, skirts and jeans. Andrea will pay me 200 lempiras a month. Andrea says that right now I'm learning how to do things, that I'm not doing them as a household worker. I've already learned to cook rice."
(María, 12, Honduras)
- "Being a domestic worker is a risk. The men of the house always want to abuse you; they touch us and if we don't let them they threaten to kick us out. Also, the employer, if it is her son or husband, believes them and you're humiliated and fired."
(Hezzel, 15, Nicaragua)
- "I would have liked very much to have continued school, because I know education is very important for me: if I'd only known, if I'd continued in school, I wouldn't be working. Education costs a lot. Now there are many girls like me, and boys, too. Sometimes the teacher asks for a lot of things and parents don't have the money to buy everything they're asked for, so they stop going to school and start working."
(Flory, 15, Guatemala)

The following statement has been taken from the study "Las niñas a la casa y los niños a la Milpa: la construcción de la infancia Mazahua" (Mexico, 2006)²

- "I ground grain like at the age of 10 or 12, and shelled corn; my mother taught me. I never went to school, but my brother did."
(Bernarda, Mexico)

1 Study carried out by the Costa Rican branches of Defence for Children International and the Global March Against Child Labor, with the support of the ILO/IPEC and the Canadian International Development Agency.

2 Vizcarra, Ivonne and Nadia Marín, 2006. Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México.

The invisible face of child labour in Latin America and the Caribbean

**Sonia Montaña, Director a.i. and
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While the majority of the region's children already attend school, those who do not do so, or who do not remain in school, have few options. Many girls work in their own homes without pay, or go to work in another household under precarious conditions with little or no pay, while boys seek income that compensates or complements that of their parents. Thus the spiral of inequality is reproduced.

The majority of societies are organized around labour. In fact, in modern societies a significant number of citizens' rights are related to having or not having paid work, while unpaid work remains submerged in statistical and social obscurity. Protection as a right, with a few exceptions, derives primarily from formal employment. Health care and a pension are obtained if one has formal employment, and given that in the traditional model the majority of the persons who have this type of employment are still men, it is they who can provide these benefits to their spouses and children.

Those present-day labour practices that reproduce hierarchical gender relations are based on a distinction between the public and productive sphere of action and the private or reproductive sphere. The sexual division of roles and behaviours on which this distinction is founded is basically constructed in the family, the school and all of the institutions in which values regarding the place of women and men – and in the present case of girls and boys – are transmitted.

The rapid and massive entry of women into the paid labour market is universally recognized as one of the most important cultural transformations of the last century. While the majority of women still work under worse conditions than men, they obtain the income necessary to satisfy their basic needs. Paid work is a very important source of autonomy, and today it can be said that women go to work because they need to and because they want to.

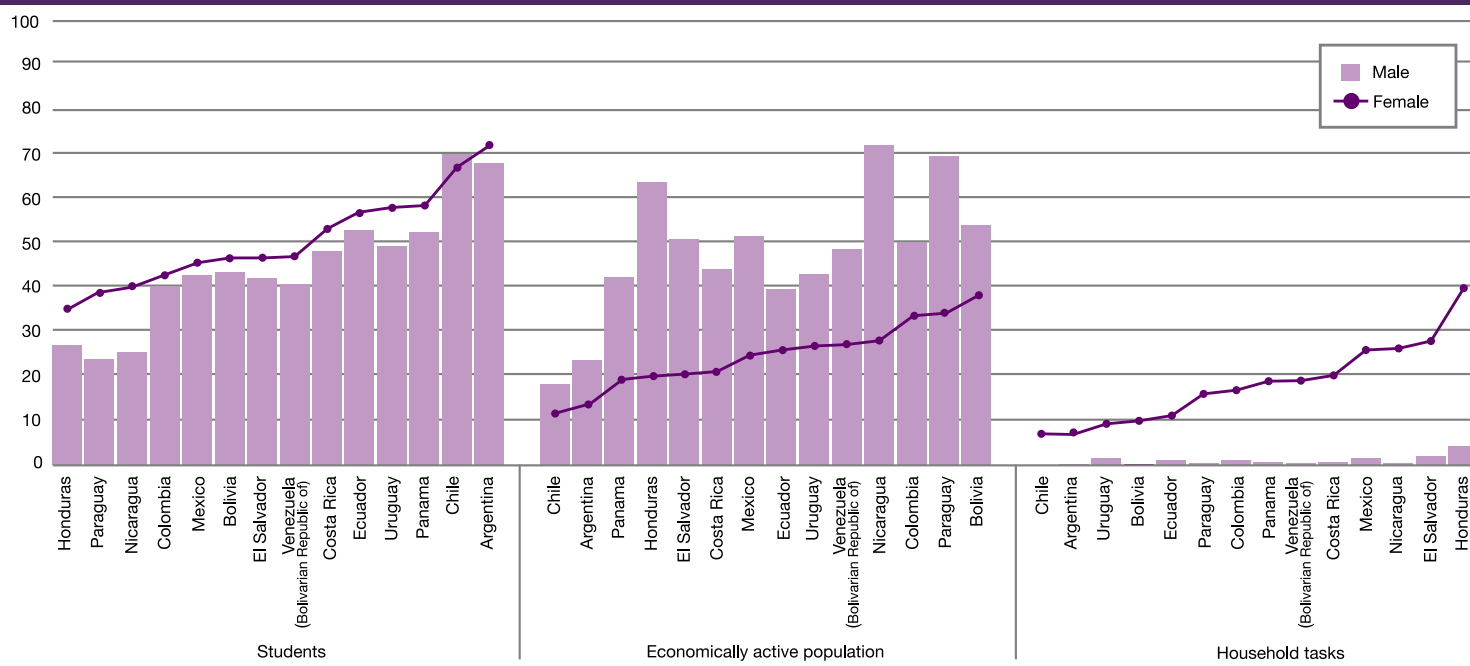
Likewise, in almost all countries, the proportion of women who attend school is greater than that of men, while in the economically active population the presence of adolescent girls is significantly less than that of boys. Thus, while girls achieve higher levels of education, boys fall behind in education and begin their work experience earlier (see figures 1 and 2).

Work in households

Many girls are able to reconcile their domestic tasks with their attendance at school as these tasks are not full-time; thus they are able to remain in school. . Of the boys – who do less domestic work – many tend to find work that is of high social risk and which affects their health. These effects are more visible than those suffered by the girls who remain in their own homes or in those of others. In general, boys who work do so in informal night jobs without any form of protection.

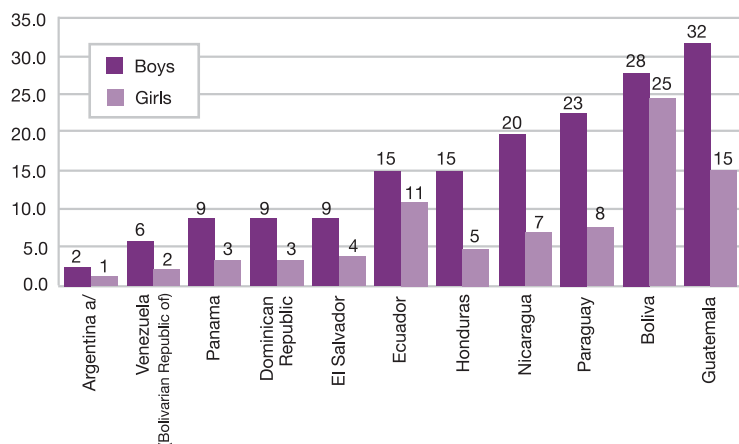
Often, unpaid work in households is neither recognised nor categorized as intolerable or unacceptable as little is known about it. Unpaid household work is invisible because it does not qualify as traditional production, and therefore is not measured by traditional economic indicators. In addition, the domestic employment of girls becomes culturally justified when their employers send them to school and provide them with clothing and lodging, maintaining relations of servitude and exploitation that are outside the law but socially tolerated.

FIGURE 1
LATIN AMERICA (14 COUNTRIES): MOST FREQUENT ACTIVITY OF WOMEN AND MEN IN THE 15-19 AGE GROUP.
NATIONAL TOTALS, AROUND 2002
(Percentages)



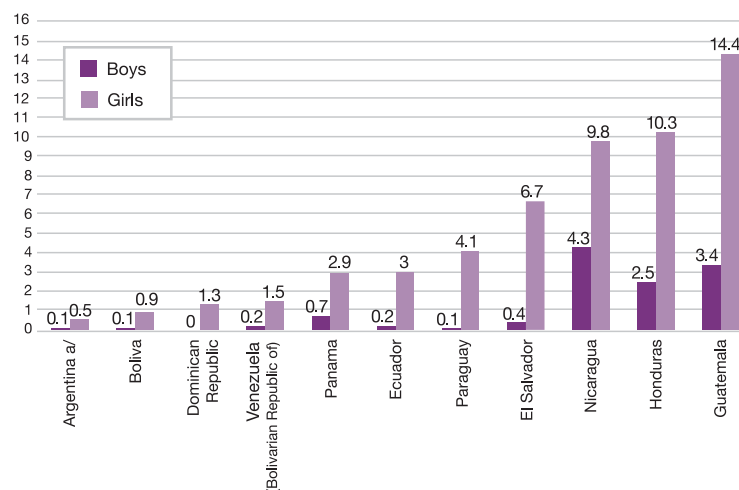
Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), based on special tabulations of the household surveys conducted in the respective countries.

FIGURE 2
LATIN AMERICA (11 COUNTRIES): PERCENTAGE OF BOYS AND GIRLS AGED 10 TO 14 WHO SAID THAT THEY WERE WORKING AT THE TIME OF THE SURVEY (ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE PERSONS), HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS, AROUND 2005



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), based on special tabulations of the household surveys conducted in the respective countries.
a/ Urban areas.

FIGURE 3
LATIN AMERICA (11 COUNTRIES): PERCENTAGE OF BOYS AND GIRLS AGED 10 TO 14 WHO SAID THAT THEIR PRINCIPAL ACTIVITY WAS DOMESTIC TASKS, HOUSEHOLD SURVEY, AROUND 2005



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), based on special tabulations of the household surveys conducted in the respective countries.
a/ Urban areas.

The organization of work, school attendance and household tasks are closely linked to the way in which gender relations are constructed in a society. As noted in the State of the World's Children report issued by UNICEF in 2007, gender is also a crucial factor for explaining child labour and, in the case that interests us here, unpaid work carried out in the home¹.

From childhood the sexual division of labour is based on sexual stereotypes that lead girls to paid domestic work under

conditions of exploitation and violation of their rights, or to unpaid work within their own homes. In many cases, girls assume responsibilities beyond those appropriate to their age.

Within the region, access to school tends to be more equitable and the labour market more open to women, which would explain why girls remain longer in the school system. However, this relative advantage for women has emerged in a context of inequality, including gender inequality, as a result of which the worst jobs are given to women and girls. An essential aspect of this inequality is the association of unpaid work with what are traditionally seen as feminine qualities. This is internalized by girls, either because they imitate the example of their mothers or because necessity forces them to assume responsibility for attending to the members of the household who do paid work.

What is the price that women and girls have paid for going out to work and obtaining an income of their own?

The social context reflects a paradox. Although girls study more than boys and want to enter the labour market, they are not in a position where they can simply abandon their family responsibilities. Women feel compelled to continue to perform the unpaid domestic work that has traditionally been assigned to them in the family and this is the price they pay. In the absence of public policies, the sexual division of labour of the last century is maintained by a generalized private pact, despite the advances of the twenty-first century.

Even more worrisome is the fact that girls start to pay this price in childhood, and continue to do so throughout their lives. When unpaid work is insufficient for the family, society gains a large contingent of girls and women prepared to work as domestic workers. Indeed, a group of considerable size excluded from education and paid work is composed of girls dedicated to household tasks, many of whom will never have the opportunity to complete their education and will be poorly integrated into the labour market.

According to the household surveys, a significant percentage of 10- to 14-year-old girls in several countries of the region state that housework in their own homes is their principal activity. This percentage varies from 7% to 14% in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras and Guatemala (see figure 3).

As can be seen in figure 1, in the 15-19 age group, school attendance as the principal activity is slightly higher among girls than among boys. Later, the proportion of women who enter the labour market falls abruptly. On the other hand, household tasks – washing, ironing, cooking, caring for the elderly and for children, and even for healthy adults – are almost exclusively the responsibility of women.

In five countries, the information on the sexual distribution of the use of time for household tasks indicates that girls in the 7-14 age group spend 3.1 hours per day in Bolivia and Nicaragua and 4.1 hours in Guatemala; the time spent by boys is 2.8 hours (see figure 4).

1 UNICEF. The State of the World's Children: Women and Children – The double dividend of gender equality. UNICEF, 2007.

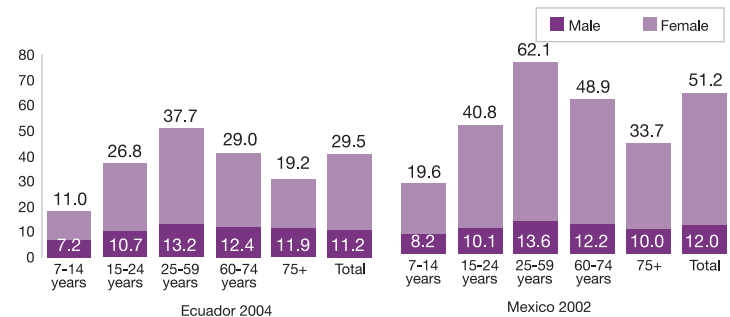
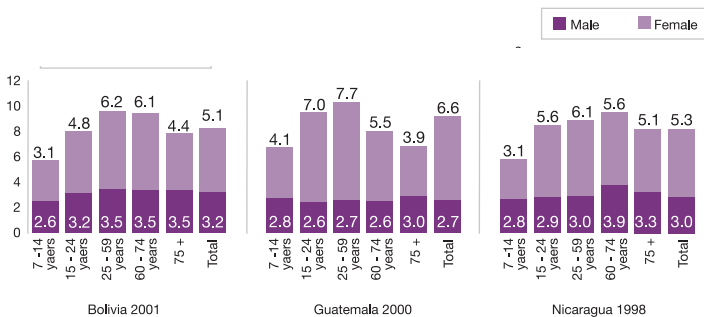
In Latin America and the Caribbean, many girls do unpaid work in their own homes, assuming responsibilities beyond those appropriate to their age



FIGURE 4
LATIN AMERICA (5 COUNTRIES): AVERAGE HOURS PER DAY AND PER WEEK IN ACTIVITIES RELATED TO HOUSEHOLD TASKS, BY SEX AND AGE GROUP, AROUND 1998-2002

AVERAGE HOURS PER DAY DEDICATED TO HOUSEHOLD TASKS

AVERAGE HOURS PER WEEK DEDICATED TO HOUSEHOLD TASKS



Sources: V. Milosavljevic and O. Tacla, Base document for the regional meeting Time Use Surveys, Their Design And Application, Santiago, Chile, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), 21-23 November 2005, based on special tabulations of the modules and questions on "time use" on household tasks present in the household surveys of the respective countries. Bolivia, 2001: Continuous survey of households, November and December, 2001. Guatemala, 2000: National survey of living conditions (ENCOVI: Encuesta nacional sobre condiciones de vida). Nicaragua, 1998: National household survey on measurement of living conditions. Ecuador, 2004: Survey of employment, unemployment and underemployment in urban areas. Mexico, 2002: National survey of household income and expenditure.

Note: The surveys are not strictly comparable owing to differences in both definitions and collection methods. These differences show up, among other things, in the minimum age of those surveyed, the periods of reference and geographical coverage.

In Ecuador, the female child population devotes 3.8 hours per week more to household tasks than the male child population; in Mexico, in the 12-14 age group the gap is as high as 11.4 hours per week. In short, in all countries girls spend more time than boys on unpaid household tasks.

The information obtained from the household surveys of ten countries for the 10- to 14-year-old child population gives an idea of the regional reality and provides statistical visibility of the activities carried out by girls and boys. Thus, it is observed that both paid domestic work and unpaid household tasks are activities performed predominantly by girls, whose percentage participation exceeds 80% in both cases. Likewise, household activities, paid or unpaid, are carried out by 1.2% of the boys and 5.7% of the girls (see table 1).

The fact that boys account for a larger proportion of both paid employed persons and unpaid family members is remarkable. Thus, 16% of boys state that paid occupations are their principal activity, compared with only 8.6% of girls (see table 1).

Lastly, among the children that state that they attend school, 78% are boys and 83% girls, indicating a higher attendance by the latter.

Although these data are illustrative, instruments especially aimed at this age group should be designed in order to develop and improve the perception of the sexual division of labour during childhood. It is also important to extend statistical coverage to a larger number of countries in order to have a more reliable regional overview, incorporating not

Table 1
LATIN AMERICA (10 COUNTRIES TOTAL):
10- to 14-YEAR-OLD POPULATION BY SEX AND ACTIVITY STATUS, HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS, AROUND 2005

	Activity	Population 10-14 years old, absolute values			Percentage distribution of boys and girls, by activity			Percentage distribution, by sex		
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Economically active occupied persons	Paid employed persons	269 795	86 314	356 109	4.6	1.5	3.1	75.8	24.2	100
	Unpaid family workers	674 527	377 765	1 052 292	11.5	6.6	9.1	64.1	35.9	100
	Domestic service	3 539	30 496	34 035	0.1	0.5	0.3	10.4	89.6	100
	Total employed persons	947 861	494 575	1 442 436	16	9	12	65.7	34.3	100
Other unpaid activities	Students	4 570 246	4 729 738	9 299 984	77.9	82.5	80.2	49.1	50.9	100
	Household tasks in the home	63 742	296 197	359 939	1.1	5.2	3.1	17.7	82.3	100
	Other economically inactive	287 394	213 122	500 516	4.9	3.7	4.3	57.4	42.6	100
	No data	74	222	296	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	75.0	100
Weighted total, 10 countries a/		5 869 317	5 733 854	11 603 171	100	100	100	50.6	49.4	100

Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the basis of special tabulations of the household surveys conducted in the respective countries.

a/Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela: 2005, Bolivia: 2003, Dominican Republic: 2005, Ecuador: 2005, El Salvador: 2004, Guatemala: 2004, Honduras: 2003, Nicaragua: 2003, Panama: 2005, Paraguay: 2005.

The domestic employment of girls becomes culturally justified when the employers send them to school and provide them with clothing and lodging, maintaining relations of servitude and exploitation that are outside the law but socially tolerated

Table 2
PARAGUAY: 5- to 17-YEAR-OLD POPULATION BY TYPE OF WORK, BY SEX, 2004

Type of work	Male		Female		Total	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Does not work	53.8	503 973	39.9	350 166	46.8	854 139
Only paid work	8.9	83 359	2.8	25 210	6.0	108 569
Only unpaid work	10.7	100 007	1.2	10 685	6.1	110 692
Household tasks	26.6	248 554	56.6	502 495	41.2	751 049
Total	100	935 893	100	888 556	100	1 824 449

OIT-IPEC / Céspedes, Roberto. Infancia y adolescencia trabajadora de Paraguay: Evolución 2001-2004 y análisis del módulo de la encuesta 2004. Asunción, Oficina Internacional del Trabajo, 2006. 105 p.

only the classification of principal activities but also the habits and customs with regard to the distribution of time, which would increase considerably the visibility of girls in these tasks.

In Paraguay, males perform fewer household activities, and this decreases significantly with age as their participation in the labour market increases (see table 2). Girls perform many household tasks, and this decreases but does not end when they enter the labour force. While more than half of the child population works, the gender differences are substantial and the gender perspective makes it possible to visualise them clearly.

In the first place, 53.8% of boys do not work, compared with 39.9% of girls. Secondly, the tasks carried out by the two groups are very different. Only 26.6% of males perform household tasks, compared with 56.6% of females. Correspondingly, boys make up 19.6% of paid and unpaid workers compared with just 4% for girls.

Another study, carried out in Chile, shows that females also dedicate more time to household tasks (see table 3). Boys devote 15% of their time to these tasks, compared with 85% for girls, including adolescent mothers (married and cohabiting).

Although the information provided covers the broad spectrum of countries in the region, unpaid work by girls and women predominates in all of them. There is not a single country in which this trend is different, and, while it is of more concern beyond the age of 25, the fact that even among the earliest age groups girls spend twice as much time as boys on household tasks is highly significant.

As signatories of international instruments, such as the Beijing Platform for Action (Objective L.2)² and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 28)³, countries have agreed to guarantee that all girls and boys have universal and equal access to education. Governments have concerned themselves with eliminating discrimination in schools and professional education, with success above all in expanding access. However, the greater number of girls in school has not been accompanied by the cultural changes required to eliminate sexually defined roles. In fact, the female workforce, although more educated than the male workforce, still suffers from the wage gap.

The region faces the enormous challenge of breaking down the labour segmentation that leads women to hold jobs related to

² Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China, 1995.

³ Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989.

traditional roles and in which so-called “feminine” qualities, such as obedience and collaboration, are valued excessively. This is partly why women are concentrated in areas of employment such as health services, education and domestic work. Sufficient attention has not been paid to the challenges of eliminating the discrimination in education that derives from family responsibilities and child labour (including unpaid labour), or to changing the teaching methods and the explicit and “hidden” curriculum content that “teaches” children and adolescents different social norms, standards and expectations for males and females.

In addition to invisible work in the home, such as caring for younger brothers and sisters or helping with other tasks, many girls and adolescents are employed in other households. In many households they carry out domestic activities under conditions that are not regulated and are highly exploitative, and in some cases the girls accept these jobs expecting to receive greater monetary income or in exchange for non-monetary remuneration, such as attending school and having clothing. In many such cases, girls start to work at an unacceptably young age and attend school separated from their family environment, which affects their education and mental, spiritual and social development.

Work by minors in the domestic sphere is considered one of the worst forms of child labour, as several violations of their rights are combined, such as separation from the family environment, obstacles to education, lack of contracts and prevalence of excessively long workdays. In addition, in many cases, such minors are exposed to health risks, sexual abuse and work accidents in kitchens or care spaces not suitable for the work. Such work is usually carried out by girls.

What girls are taught continues to be influenced by the traditional stereotypes regarding women and the kind of work considered suitable for them. This contributes to the sexist inertia of the education and labour systems.

Recapitulation: between working in households and suffering on the streets

In 2006, the proportion of school dropouts was higher for boys than for girls in most countries, except for Bolivia, Guatemala and Peru. These three countries also show higher female illiteracy rates than in the majority of the region, which favours the intergenerational transmission of poverty and with it the transmission of patriarchal habits and customs.

The sexual division of labour from childhood implies that girls obtain considerable experience in providing care within the home, while boys who work do so for money and outside of the home. This differentiation of roles allows girls to remain in an environment that is more protected, although not free of risk, while the boys who go out of their homes gain mobility but are exposed to greater social and safety risks. Paradoxically, the socialization of girls as caregivers and unpaid domestic workers keeps them inside the home, from which in many cases they are able to combine school and work, both of poor quality and contrary to their rights, while boys are pushed out onto the streets to seek work under conditions of risk and uncertainty. Boys are confronted with less protective and more challenging environments; girls are confined within spaces that are more sheltered and where obedience is demanded.

Table 3
CHILE: DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN HOUSEHOLD TASKS IN THEIR OWN HOMES, BY SEX, 2004
(21 hours or more per week)

Sex	Number	Percentage	Rate compared with total number of children and adolescents
Males	6 394	15.2	0.3
Females	25 541	60.7	1.5
Adolescent mothers, married and cohabiting	10 148	24.1	43.3
Total	42 083	100.0	1.2

Project “Diagnóstico nacional de trabajo infantil y adolescente e identificación de sus peores formas” (National Diagnostic Study of Child and Adolescent Labour and Identification of Its Worst Forms), International Labour Organization (ILO) and Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, carried out jointly with the National Institute for Statistics (INE: Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas) and the National Service for Children (SENAME: Servicio Nacional de Menores). International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC). OIT, 2004. Trabajo infantil y adolescente en cifras. Síntesis de la primera encuesta nacional y registro de sus peores formas. Santiago, Regional Office of the International Labour Organization (ILO), 2004.

The institutional framework existing among the school, the family and the world of work favours girls’ education, but it does so without challenging gender roles and the principles of abnegation, altruism and disinterestedness associated with women. Hence the need to attack inequality at its source by respecting the right of children to go to school and placing a lower limit on the age at which children and adolescents enter the labour market. It is also necessary to promote education and labour policies so that the family pact under which girls are treated as subordinate is replaced by one which fosters sharing rights and responsibilities, including unpaid care activities, from the earliest stages of schooling.

All too frequently, unpaid work in the home is considered acceptable as long as it does not interfere with access to education and appears as an activity compatible with the school day. What is not recognised is that this very widespread practice will seal the working future of girls and reproduce the gender relations that assign to women the role of caregivers, whether or not they want or need to work.



In the absence of public policies, the sexual division of labour common in the past century is maintained by a generalized private pact. In order to advance towards the society of the twenty-first century, every effort must be made to promote education and labour policies that transform the family pact of subordination of girls into one of shared rights and responsibilities

What is the situation of domestic work in Haiti and what measures are being adopted to guarantee the human rights of children?



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The use of children, often called *restavèks* (“those who live with” in *créole*), for domestic work is a very old and extended practice in Haiti. According to UNICEF estimates, in 2002 there were some 173,000 children in this situation, that is, more than 8% of 5- to 17-year-old Haitian children, 80% of whom were girls.

The *restavèks* are children, often of rural origin, who are given to other families by their own families so that they can receive suitable food and lodging. In exchange, the children perform household tasks and help in the functioning of the household. This old practice was considered – erroneously – to be of benefit to the children when they were placed in well-off families that had the means to feed and lodge them correctly. But at the present time the majority of children in service live with families who also suffer economic difficulty. Thus, the child who does not belong to the family is the first to suffer from insufficiency of food and means. Some of them are even subjected to maltreatment.

Widely condemned by the organisations that defend the human rights of children, child domestic work can be exhausting, as much as eighteen hours a day. *Restavèk* children, sometimes only five years old, in many cases underfed, receive no education or salary. On occasion, they also suffer physical or sexual abuse, and often have lost all contact with their own family.

The work done by these children, frequently considered forced labour, responds to a need for organization of the tasks related to reproduction. In Haiti, domestic work – arduous, often without modern conveniences and performed for long hours (especially in the case of water-carrying and cooking meals with charcoal) – belongs to the private sphere and is the exclusive responsibility of women. Insufficiently socialized, the supply of domestic service does not satisfy the demand. Poor women who must sell their labour in the labour market have no alternative but to free themselves from household tasks by having recourse to the services of children from peasant families that are in even greater need.

In May of 2003, the Parliament enacted a law repealing Chapter IX of the Haitian Labour Code, which authorized domestic work by *restavèk* children. While the law explicitly prohibits domestic work by children, it encourages Haitian families to continue the tradition of informal adoption of disadvantaged children in order to offer them education and health care of the same quality as that received by their own children, as stipulated by Title X of the Constitution.



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Programme for the eradication of child labour and protection of adolescents in domestic work, Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil¹

Implemented by the non-governmental organization Circo de Todo Mundo (Everybody's Circus), this programme seeks to make domestic work by children and young people visible and to prevent it. Specifically, it caters to young people under 24 years of age, ensuring the fulfilment of their rights as children and adolescents.

According to ILO estimates, 559,000 children aged 10 to 17 work in domestic service in Brazil², many of them in the state of Minas Gerais where the programme operates. This kind of work accounts for a large proportion of family income. In the city of Belo Horizonte, around a fifth of the 10- to 17-year-old workers contribute more than 30% to the family income³. This situation keeps the problem alive at the local and national levels.

In order to have a greater impact and foster co-responsibility, the programme is based on an intersectorial perspective aimed at integrated action by civil society agents, public authorities, the private sector and international cooperation.

The principal achievement is its holistic perspective. It provides direct care to children and adolescents, facilitating access to health care, psychological assistance, legal and social advice, recreation and literacy programmes. In addition, it motivates families to seek employment or other sources of income generation through access to training, microcredit and production workshops, in an effort to ensure that children are withdrawn from domestic work.

In the case of persons under 16 years of age, it seeks to replace the income generated by child labour so that they can exercise their right to education. With adolescent workers over the age of 16, it seeks formal regularization of their labour status, reconciling it with remaining in the education system.

The methodology combines circus and artistic-cultural activities with defending and guaranteeing rights and stimulating the educational process. This helps to boost self-esteem among child and adolescent workers and to build awareness that they have rights. Children are supported in the construction of a new life project that permits their (re)integration into the family and society. By providing constant stimulation and enabling young people to play a leading role, the programme helps them to develop intellectually and emotionally, fostering their creativity, autonomy and ability to solve problems.

Initiation in the arts is used as a factor of socialization that mobilizes and contributes to both remaining in school and



CEPAL, Brasil, 2007. Ricardo de Cerqueira

academic success, as well as better coexistence in the family and community. According to project leaders, children become hooked immediately by the circus and play activities, and the ludic approach helps to break down inhibitions and distrust. After a period of adaptation, the children and adolescents enter the routine of the activities of Circo de Todo Mundo.

Their participation, active role as performers and promotion of their self-esteem are the pillars of the methodology which seeks to give these children control over their own lives. A clear indicator of the success of this methodology is that practically no one ever drops out of the Circo once he or she has joined its activities.

Between its creation in 2002 and 2006, the programme served 570 children and adolescents and 300 families. In the case of the children, the programme has been successful in removing all of them from domestic service and returning them to school.

¹ www.cepal.org/dds/innovacionsocial/e/proyectos/br/circo/circodetodomundo@circodetodomundo.org.br

² ILO, 2004. Helping hands or shackled lives? p. 15.

³ Based on: Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), 2007. Síntese de Indicadores Sociais 2007.

... that in Argentina around eight out of ten children aged 14 to 17 do unpaid domestic work, and that the greater participation of girls becomes decisive starting at the age of thirteen and increases throughout adolescence?

Source: "Trabajo doméstico no remunerado de niños, niñas y adolescentes". In: El trabajo infantil en la Argentina. Análisis y desafíos para la política pública. ILO Argentina and Ministerio del Trabajo, Empleo y Seguridad Social, 2007.

www.oit.org.ar/documentos/ti_en_argentina.pdf

... that in Paraguay domestic work by children is still an activity carried out by the rural population and girls? ... that children aged 5 to 14 work a little more than half of the hours worked by an adult (54.4%), especially girls, who work as much as 44 hours without rest as maids or domestic workers?

Source: "Niñez y adolescencia trabajadora en Paraguay". UNICEF Paraguay, 2004.

www.unicef.org/paraguay/spanish/resources_5212.htm

... that in Chile 33% of children who work in their own homes have dropped out of school, and that in Brazil this figure reaches 21%? (2000)

Source: "Niños, niñas y adolescentes: Los riesgos de un trabajo invisible para el propio hogar", María Jesús Silva. ILO, 2005.

www.oitchile.cl/pub_deploy.php?cat=tra

... that in Jamaica a law on the property rights of spouses was passed in which the contribution of the wife to domestic work and child care is recognized, and it is stipulated that there should not be any presumption that a monetary contribution is greater than a non-monetary one?

Source: "Women` contribution to equality in Latin America and the Caribbean"

www.eclac.cl/publicaciones/xml/9/29399/capitulo_ii.pdf

... that the Convention on the Rights of the Child is the human rights instrument that has received universal ratification by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, and that it is legally binding ?

www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/CRC.C.49.2.pdf



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ECLAC Distribution Unit
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Santiago, Chile

UNICEF – Regional Office for
Latin America and the Caribbean
Documentation Centre
Ciudad del Saber, Edificio 131
Apartado 0843-03045
Panama, Republic of Panama

Printed in Santiago, Chile