

SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL CHILD LABOUR SURVEY IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Edition

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The results presented here come from the National Child Labour Survey (ENTI) conducted by the Dominican Republic State Department of Labour (SET) in November and December of 2000, with support from the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC) of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) of the International Labour Office (ILO).¹ ENTI was carried out to collect information on school, domestic, economic, and recreational activities of the population aged 5-17 years in the country.

Children aged 5 to 17 years

According to ENTI results, in the year 2000 in the Dominican Republic there are over 2.4 million people aged 5-17 years, that is to say, 3 of every 10 persons in the country fall into this age bracket. Distribution by sex is equitable, 41% are 5- to 9-year-olds, 39% are in the 10-14 year age group, and 20% are adolescents from 15 to 17 years. Most of them, 61%, live in the country's urban areas. Distribution by age of the population in this age group is similar in rural and urban areas - 81% y 80%, respectively, of total population in the age bracket is under 15 years.

Housing conditions under which many 5-to-17-year-olds live are not optimal for their development, particularly in rural areas. For instance, 6% of persons in this age bracket live in dwellings with a dirt floor (12% in rural areas and 2% in urban areas), almost 8% lack access to electric lighting (18% in rural areas and 2% in urban areas), and 53% do not have private toilet facilities in their dwellings (78 and 37% in rural and urban areas, respectively).

Household chores in their own homes

Assuming for the analysis a minimum average of 2, 3, and 4 hours per day spent on household chores for age groups 5-9, 10-14, and 15-17 years, respectively, an estimated 9% of people aged 5 to 17 years devote at least this minimum time to chores in their own home.² The percentage for girls is 14% and for boys is a mere 5%. The relative weight of females in the group increases with age, i.e., of all children who spend long hours on household chores, girls comprise 67% of the 5-9 year group, 77% of the 10-14 year group, and 91% of adolescents.

¹ For a more detailed presentation and analysis of the National Child Labour Survey results in the Dominican Republic, refer to *Report on the results of the National Child Labour Survey in the Dominican Republic* (ILO, 2004) and *Analysis of child labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic* (ILO, 2004).

² The idea behind these minimum hours is only to illustrate the extent to which many children bear the burden of domestic chores at home, which could be considered excessive for their age, and also to set forth the differences between sexes, age groups, and areas of residence. These minima are not meant to become a standard for future studies, but are based on previous research. See, for example, *Understanding Children's Work in El Salvador* (ILO, 2004), and *Understanding Children's Work in Guatemala* (ILO, 2003), where a minimum average of 4 hours a day (28 average hours per week) is used in the analysis, and *Estudio analítico e*

The age group working the longest hours on household chores is that of 10- to 14-year-olds (10% of them), followed by the 5-9 year group (9%), and adolescents (8%). The percentage is also higher in rural (12%) than in urban (8%) areas.

As an average, these children and adolescents spend 3.5 hours a day on housekeeping tasks. Girls in this group spend an average of 3.6 hours a day, and boys 3.3 hours. Averages in urban and rural areas are 3.6 and 3.4, respectively. This average increases to 4.8 hours a day for those who do not manage to attend school.

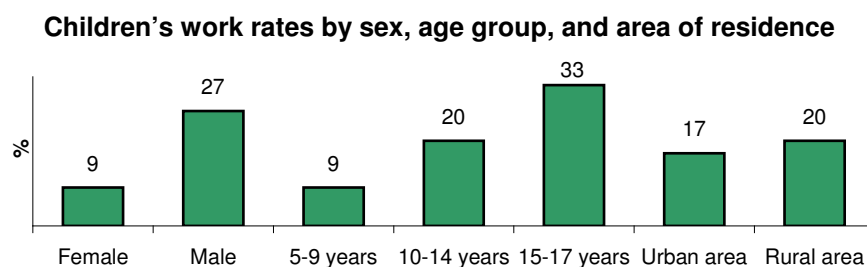
School activities

In 2000, ENTI measured a 93% school attendance rate for persons aged 5-17 years, being virtually the same for boys and girls. Concerning age groups, the highest attendance was found among the 10- to -14-year-old children (97%), followed by the 5-9-year-olds (93%), and the 15-17-year adolescent group (87%). In urban areas attendance reaches 94%, while this figure becomes 92% for rural areas. For both sexes and all age groups, urban school attendance is higher than rural.

Despite this relatively high and equitable attendance rate among groups, schooling lag³ is estimated at 36%, reaching up to 41% for males, 44% in rural areas, and 68% for adolescents in the 15-17-year age group.

Working children

Around 436 thousand persons aged 5 to 17 years are working in 2000. Of these, 25% are girls and 75% are boys; 21% are children aged 5 to 9 years, 44% are 10- to -14-year-olds, and 35% are adolescents from 15 to 17 years; 56% are urban residents and 44% are rural residents.



At the national level, 18% of persons aged 5 to 17 years are working. The rate is higher for males than for females, increases with age, and is higher in rural than in urban areas.

interpretación de los resultados de la encuesta sobre caracterización de la población entre 5 y 17 años en Colombia (ILO, 2003), where the analysis is based on a minimum of 15 hours per week devoted to household chores.

³ Schooling lag was defined in this case as being in a school grade that is 2 years behind the grade corresponding to the student's age, assuming 6 years to be the age for starting first grade of primary school.

The average age of working children is a mere 12.5 years. The average age for girls in this situation is 12.4 years, and that of urban and rural residents is 12.6 and 12.3 years, respectively.

It is worth mentioning that the vast majority of working children (90%) began working before they turned 15 years of age. The ages for starting to work are particularly low in the case of boys and rural residents.

**Percent distribution of working children aged 5-17 years
by age at which started to work, by sex and area of residence**

Sex and area of residence	Under 10 years	From 10 to 14 years	From 15 to 17 years
Female	37	48	15
Male	44	48	8
Urban area	39	50	11
Rural area	45	45	10
Total	42	48	10

The main industry –employing 41% of working children– is services,⁴ followed by trade, agriculture, and manufacturing.⁵ Additionally, girls are relatively more concentrated in services and trade than boys, whereas males have a stronger relative presence in agriculture and manufacturing. By age there is a decreasing trend in the percentage of children employed in services and agriculture, and a slight growing trend in the percentage in manufacturing. In urban areas, agriculture draws relatively few working children, whereas in rural areas this is the main industry.

**Percent distribution of working children aged 5-17 years by industry,
by sex, age group, and area of residence**

Sex, age group, and area of residence	Industry					Total
	Agriculture, forestry, hunting and fishing	Manufacturing industries	Wholesale and retail trade, hotels, and restaurants	Community, social, and personal services	Others	
Female	6	5	24	60	4	100
Male	23	14	20	35	9	100
5-9 years	22	6	19	49	4	100
10-14 years	19	11	21	43	6	100
15-17 years	16	15	21	35	13	100
Urban areas	4	16	24	47	9	100
Rural areas	37	5	16	35	7	100

Note: Sum of items may not be exactly equal to total due to rounding.

Four of every 10 working children are salaried employees, 2 of every 10 are unpaid family helpers, 2 of 10 are paid apprentices, and 1 out of 10 is an own account worker. Salaried employment prevalence increases with worker age, while the relative importance of unpaid work decreases. Own-account work decreases in relative terms with age and is more frequent among boys.

⁴ According to the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), the services industry includes: public administration and defense, compulsory social security; education; health and social work; other community, social, and personal service activities; and private households with employed persons.

**Percent distribution of working children aged 5-17 years by status in employment,
by sex, age group, and area of residence**

Sex, age group, and area of residence	Salaried employee	Own account worker	Unpaid family helper	Paid apprentice	Unpaid apprentice
Female	44	6	28	13	5
Male	42	13	20	18	5
5 -9 years	25	13	33	17	9
10-14 years	39	11	23	19	5
15-17 years	57	10	15	14	3
Urban area	46	11	17	19	4
Rural area	38	11	28	15	6
Total	42	11	22	17	5

A majority of working children (56%) have a permanent type of work. At the time of the survey, 24% in this group have occasional jobs, and 20% temporary work. Job permanence is more visible among boys than girls, in urban areas more than in rural areas, and increases with age.

**Percent distribution of working children aged 5-17 years by type of work,
by sex, age group, and area of residence**

Sex, age group, and area of residence	Permanent	Temporary	Occasional
Female	50	22	29
Male	58	20	22
5 -9 years	43	21	36
10 -14 years	57	18	26
15-17 years	63	23	15
Urban area	58	17	25
Rural area	53	25	23
Total	56	20	24

Note: The sum of items may not be exactly equal to the total due to rounding.

Working children spend an average of 4.6 hours a day and 4.5 days a week at work. Both averages are higher for working boys, in urban areas, and increase with age.

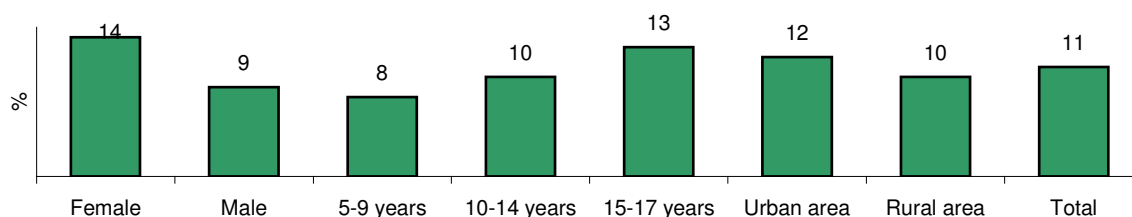
⁵ The remaining sectors are: mining and quarrying; electricity, gas, and water supply; construction; transport, storage and communications; financial intermediation; real estate, business, and rental activities; not well specified.

Average number of daily hours and weekly days of work for working children aged 5-17 years, by sex, age group, and area of residence

Sex, age group, and area of residence	Average hours per day	Average days per week
Female	4.1	4.2
Male	4.8	4.6
5 -9 years	3.1	3.9
10-14 years	4.4	4.4
15-17 years	5.8	4.9
Urban area	4.7	4.6
Rural area	4.5	4.4
Total	4.6	4.5

An extremely worrisome finding is the prevalence of night-time work among working children. In total, 11% of them regularly work at least 1 hour a workday in night shifts. It is worth noticing that this percentage is even higher for girls than for boys.

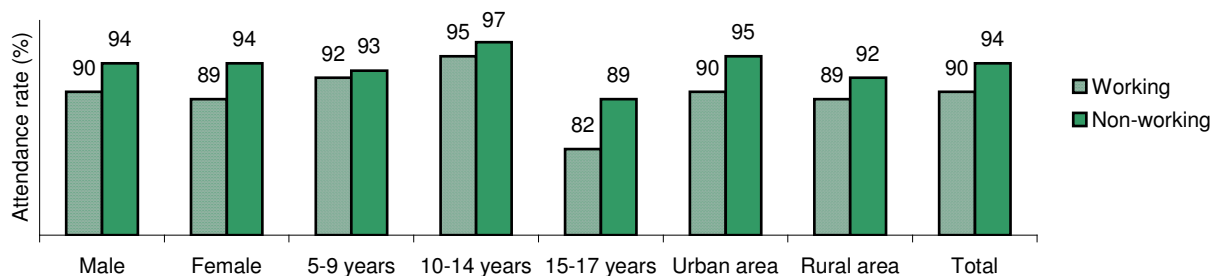
Percentage of working children aged 5-17 years who work at night, by sex, age group, and area of residence



Working and non-working children's schooling

Working children are at a disadvantage in school attendance, compared to non-working children, since their attendance is 4 percentage points lower than the 94% recorded for non-working children. A slightly lower rate is found among working girls, compared to boys in the same situation, in rural areas with respect to urban, and among working adolescents, 82% of which attend a school centre.

School attendance rate for working and non-working children aged 5-17 years, by sex, age group, and area of residence



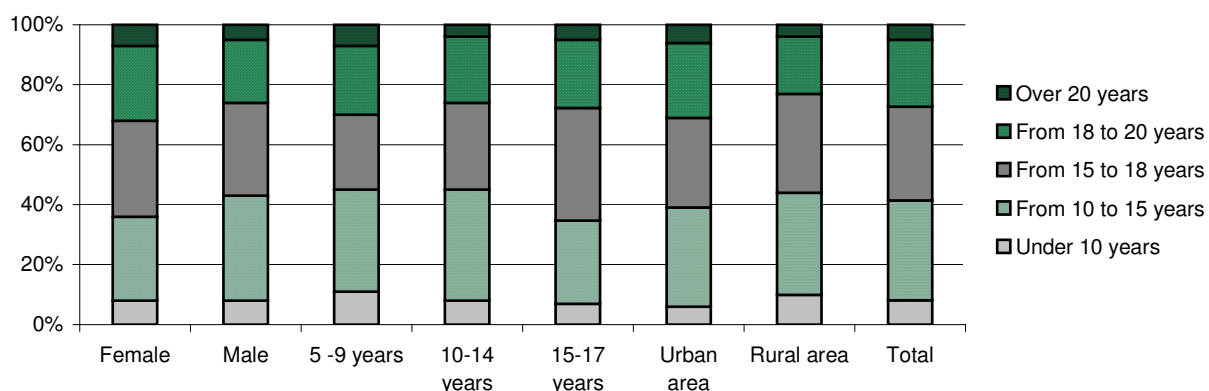
Parents' or guardians' perceptions of children's work

Parents or guardians of working children said the main reason for letting children work is to teach them a trade (51%), followed by their important economic contribution to the household (27%), the need for their collaboration with the family business (9%), because children or adolescents like it (2%), or because they do not attend school (2%). The trade-learning argument decreases in importance with children's age, and is more important in the case of boys than of girls. On the other hand, the relative importance of the family-income-contribution argument increases with the age of the child, is higher for boys than for girls, and in rural areas more so than in urban ones.

Not all parents or guardians of working children agree with children's work— 58% claim to be in agreement, 41% disagree, and 1% do not know. For working boys, the percentage of parents or guardians who agree is 60%, whereas this figure becomes 52% in the case of working girls. This percentage also increases with children's age, from 50% for children aged 5-9 years to 59% for the 10-14 age bracket, up to 62% for 15-17-year-old adolescents. In rural areas, 65% of parents or guardians of working children agree with children's work, whereas this percentage is 53% in urban areas.

Concerning the impact of children being removed from work, 64% of parents or guardians claimed the household would not be affected, with this percentage being 69% in urban areas and 79% in the case of children aged 5-9 years. On the other hand, 23% of parents or guardians thought their household income would go down - 24% in the case of working boys, 28% in rural areas, and 33% for working adolescents aged 15 to 17.

Percent distribution of responses given by parents or guardians of working children aged 5-17 years about age to begin working, by sex, age group and area of residence of child



A noteworthy result is that 8% of parents or guardians of working children think people should start working before they turn 10 years old, and 33% think the right age to begin working is between 10 and 15 years. The percentages of those who consider work should begin before 10 years of age is higher in the case of parents or guardians of rural children, and decreases as working children's age increases.

Working children's perceptions

It is worth pointing out that 87% of working children, both urban and rural residents, agree with children working. This percentage is higher for boys (89%) than for girls (82%), but decreases with age – from 90% of children aged 5-9 years to 86% in the 10-14 year and 15-17 year age brackets.

According to answers provided by working children, 41% of those who agree with children's work (39% of boys and 46% of girls) accept it because it enables them to help their families. This rationale is followed by the argument of learning a trade, given by 36% of total respondents (37% of males and 34% of females), and starting to earn an income when they are very young (14% in total, 15% among boys and 12% among girls). The arguments of helping the family and earning an income when they are very young are relatively more important in rural than in urban areas (44% and 16%, respectively, versus 38% and 12% in urban areas), whereas the learning-a-trade reason is more valued in urban than in rural areas (39% versus 32%). This last argument decreases in importance with age.

Child labour

The child labourer population consists of working girls and boys whose involvement in economic activities violates national legislation and/or international agreements, because it is physically, mentally, socially, or morally harmful or detrimental to children or adolescents, or because it somehow interferes with their schooling.⁶ Based on ENTI results, an estimated 8 out of every 10 working children in the Dominican Republic are involved in child labour. Of these, 78% are boys and 22% are girls; 25% are in the 5-9 year age group, 49% are children aged 10-14 years, and 26% are 15-17-year-old adolescents; 55% are urban residents and 45% live in rural areas.

Of the 4 main industries, agriculture presents the largest percentage of working children who are in child labour (9 out of 10), followed by manufacturing, services, and trade (with 8 out of 10 each).

In spite of the difficult working conditions for this group of child labourers, 90% of them manage to attend school.

Characteristics of households of children engaged in child labour

The households of children engaged in child labour consist on average of 4.6 members, of which, 2.5 are below 18 years of age. These results are in contrast with what is observed in the households of 5- to 17-

⁶ Pursuant to national legislation and/or international conventions, in analyzing data from ENTI the following groups were considered to be child labour: 5- to 17-year-olds working in mining and quarrying; construction; electricity, gas, and water supply; transport, storage, and communications; 5- to 17-year-olds working on night shifts; workers under 12 years of age; workers aged 12-15 years working over 6 hours a day; workers aged 5-17 years using saws, knives, welders, mattocks in their work; workers aged 5-17 years using pesticides, muriatic acid, fertilisers, solvents, paints, heavy metals, or hydrocarbons in their work. These parameters are used for illustration purposes only, and are not to be construed as a proposal for legislation.

year-olds who do not work, or who are workers not engaged in child labour, which have an average of 3.9 members, 1.9 of which are under 18 years of age. The household dependency rate is 1.3 for the former and 1.1 for the latter.⁷ In addition to their larger size, the households of children involved in child labour have a stronger presence in the lowest socio-economic quintiles.

Conclusions

- Around 9% of 5- to- 17-year-olds in the country spend long hours performing household chores in their own homes, according to the minimum hours used in this analysis. This group consists mostly of girls.
- There is a 93% school attendance rate at the national level, with a slight advantage in urban areas. Nevertheless, there is an apparent schooling lag problem.
- According to survey data, approximately 436 thousand children work, accounting for 18% of the total in this age group. Children's work is more prevalent among boys (27%), increases with age, and is higher in rural areas (20% versus 17% in urban settings), although the absolute number of working children is higher in urban areas.
- The services sector is the main employer of boys and girls (41%), although in rural areas agriculture ranks first (37%). Similarly, salaried work (42%) and permanent employment (56%) are the most common for these working children.
- Working hours for many of these children are long, working an average of 4.6 hours per workday and 4.5 days per week, and in some cases (11%) they work at night, thus being exposed to even greater dangers.
- Responses provided by parents or guardians and by working children themselves show that both groups accept the early insertion in the labour market, since over half of them agreed with children's work. Views expressed by working children and their parents or guardians reveal that the reasons for children to work go beyond immediate economic household needs, focusing on the instructive aspect of work. It is also worth mentioning that 8% of parents or guardians of working children think people should start working before they turn 10 years of age.
- Some 64% of parents or guardians claimed their households would not be affected if children were removed from work, whereas 23% are under the impression that household income would be adversely affected.
- Eight out of every 10 working persons aged 5-17 years are involved in child labour, although in agriculture this percentage increases to 9 out of 10.
- The households of children engaged in child labour tend to be larger (consisting of 4.6 members versus 3.9 in the other households), and also live under more restrained socio-economic conditions.

⁷ In estimating the rate of dependency in this case, the dependant population is defined as consisting of people younger than 18 years and older than 64 years, leaving the population of productive age to be those between 18 and 64 years.