Regional Initiative
Latin America and the Caribbean
Free of Child Labour

International Labour Organization

Latin America and the Caribbean:

Towards the first generation FREE OF CHILD LABOUR

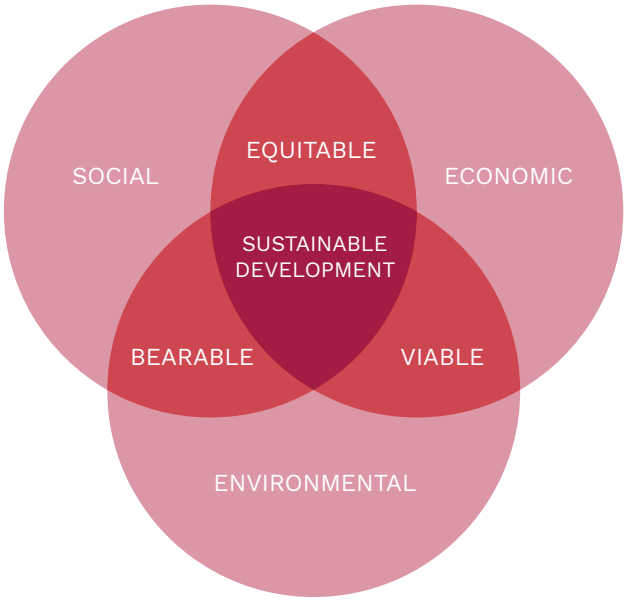
An integrated and interdependent analysis of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in relation to target 8.7

Summary

8.7

In September 2015, and after three years of intense work, 193 United Nations Member States unanimously adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a global commitment to address the remaining challenges of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

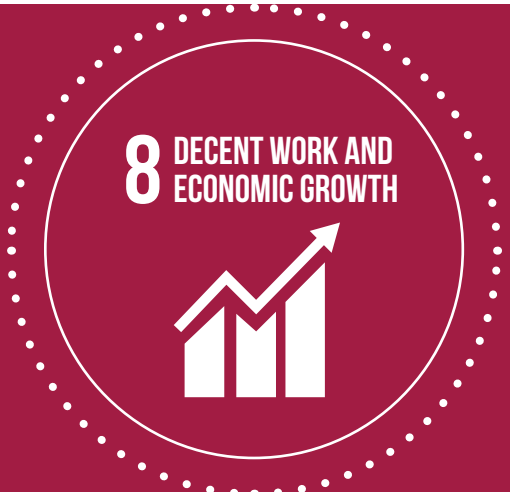
Each country will have to align the goals and targets to the national context, and during the coming 15 years, implement them in an integrated and interconnected manner in order to achieve economic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection, the bases of sustainable development:



Ending poverty	+	Fighting inequality	+	Promoting growth through decent work	=	Sustainable Development	

17 Sustainable Development Goals	169 associated targets

Universal, applicable to all countries in the world
Adopted by the countries as their own, negotiated by the UN Member States over three years, involving extensive consultation



SDG 8:
PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL

Why is it necessary **to eliminate child labour** in order to attain sustainable development?

Achieving many of the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda will depend on the success in reducing child labour. Progress in improving education, poverty reduction, equality and health and well-being have been seriously affected by employment of children and adolescents especially when the employment involves hazardous or criminal activities.

Ending child labour by 2025 will indicate that we are on track to reaching other targets.

By focusing on families with children in child labour or at risk of, it will help guarantee progress in other related goals. This will ensure a better educated, healthier generation with better labour skills who will be less likely to fall into poverty and more committed to caring for the planet.

CHILD LABOUR IN FIGURES

GLOBALLY:

168
million
child labourers

85
million
in hazardous work

TARGET 8.7

Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.

PREVENTION, the best strategy: Breaking the pattern of child labour.

Preventing children from the age of five entering the labour market will ensure the gradual decline of child labour. As they reach the minimum working age, it must be ensured that they enter the workplace under protected conditions and engage in safe activities that will enable them to continue their education and training.

In **LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:**

12,5 million child labourers (8.8 per cent of the population aged 5 to 17)

9,6 million are in hazardous work

2,9 million are under the minimum working age

An **undetermined number** are victims of unlawful economic exploitation

SDG 4:
ENSURE INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE AND QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL

Primary school enrolment in developing countries has reached 91 per cent, but 57 million children remain out of school.

103 million youth worldwide lack basic literacy skills. More than 60 per cent of them are women.

Target 4.1
By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

Beyond attendance and staying in school, quality and educational outcomes are fundamental: primary school attendance rates are high for children and adolescents in child labour, but their results are worse than those who do not work.

In secondary school, the likelihood of an adolescent worker dropping out is much greater, limiting acquiring and development skills and making the school-work transition and future job possibilities more precarious.

Target 4.2
By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

Social interventions in the early childhood may reduce some of the damages caused by adverse environments (such as child labour): they reduce future disadvantages and have a high economic return not only for child beneficiaries themselves, but also for their future offspring and society as a whole.

Target 4.3
By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

Child labour interrupts or hinders the education and training trajectory, preventing children from developing essential skills for working life. Therefore, for them, labour market access is limited to informal or low-paid jobs.

Target 4.4
By 2030, increase substantially the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

The inclusion of specific targets on education for children in vulnerable situations (including those in child labour or at risk of) will enable more people to gain the skills needed to obtain quality employment.

Target 4.5
By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

Ensuring access to education for vulnerable populations directly targets children and adolescents in child labour or at risk of due to their family's socioeconomic conditions.

Addressing specifically the most invisible forms of child labour, including intensive housework and other household chores done by girls and female adolescents, would reduce gender disparities and encourage more girls to enroll and remain in school. Many of them do not go to school and if they do, their chances of success are much lower due to the demands of activities linked to gender patterns and roles in the workplace.

Target 4.6
By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

Child labour, and the time it demands for children and adolescents, reduces the possibilities of acquiring the literacy and numeracy skills they need for work and life.

Reaching this goal will require a particular focus on those children and adolescents in child labour amongst whom illiteracy rates are highest.

SDG 5:
ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

About two thirds of the countries in developing regions have achieved gender equity in primary education.

Target 5.1
End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere

Girls and female adolescent workers, many of them the victims of commercial sexual exploitation or hazardous and covert work such as domestic labour, suffer double the discrimination other women do: for being female workers and possibly migrants or indigenous. These are mutually overlapping aspects aggravating the conditions of child labour, often leading to more extreme and covert forms.

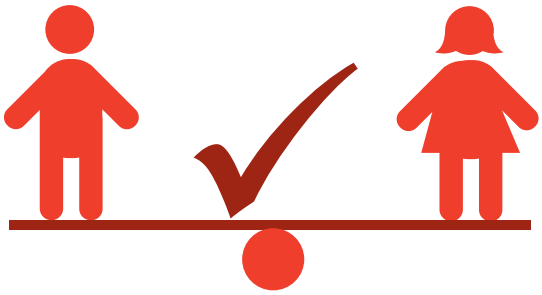
Fighting discrimination will pave the way for child labour reduction, especially in those areas that particularly affect girls.

Target 5.2
Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

Girls and female adolescent workers are more likely than their male counterparts to be victims of the worst forms of child labour, including trafficking and sexual exploitation, with the consequence of being at risk of becoming infected with HIV/AIDS.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, approximately 1,7 million people are living with HIV/AIDS, of whom about 33,000 are under age 15 and 180,000 are aged 15 to 24. Of the latter, 73,000 are female adolescents.

Most children orphaned by HIV/AIDS survive on their own as child labourers.



Target 5.4
Recognise and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate

The daughters of adult female domestic workers –who usually work in unsafe and informal conditions– are more likely to end up in the same type of work and stop studying. They are rendered socially invisible.

One of the worst forms of unpaid work is that of criaditas, ahijadas, filhas de criação or restàvek: girls and female adolescents sent by their parents to host families who take in the child in exchange for domestic work on the promise of an education or better opportunities, often involving hazardous household chores and confinement to the employer's premises.

Target 5.5
Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life

Target 5.6
Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences

The more girls and female adolescents find themselves immersed in child labour, especially the less visible forms such as domestic work or sexual exploitation, the more difficult it will be to guarantee them access to sexual and reproductive health services, much less allow them to enjoy equal opportunities in decision-making in the political, economic and public realms.

SDG 1:
END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE

836 million people still live in extreme poverty.

1 in 5 people in developing regions live on less than $1.25 a day.

Target 1.1
By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than $1.25 a day

Target 1.2
By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

While poverty is not always a cause of child labour, many poor families do not send their children to work and, conversely, there are families with financial resources that use child labour, however, lack of income is an important incentive.

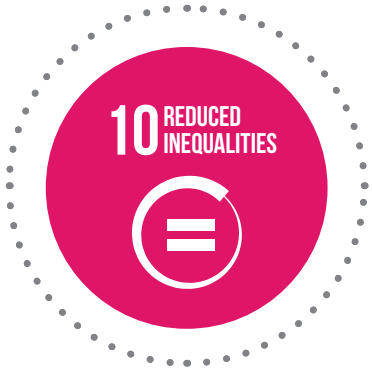
Conversely, child labour perpetuates poverty, creating a vicious circle between these two factors. Early access to the labour market affects school performance, often preventing children from completing their education, which places them in a vulnerable situation. They are more likely to be youths and adults in precarious, poorly paid, unprotected and unstable jobs that make them more prone to poverty.

Hence the importance that poverty reduction programmes recognise child labour as an indicator for targeting those households most vulnerable to poverty.

Target 1.3
Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable

Family crises such as the loss of employment of an adult member, health-related issues (serious illness or work-related injury) and adverse external situations (such as drought, flood and poor access to credit) can drastically reduce household incomes and force children out of school and into work in order to contribute to family income and recovery.

Public employment programmes, social health protection, maternity and paternity benefits, protection for persons with disabilities and those suffering from employment-related injuries or illnesses, income security in old age, unemployment protection and conditional transfers in cash or in kind, are answers that may help reduce child labour, but should be recognised individually as variables in policy design, implementation and monitoring.



SDG 10:
REDUCE INEQUALITY IN AND BETWEEN COUNTRIES

Between 1990 and 2010, income inequality increased by 11 per cent in developing countries.

The vast majority of households in developing countries –more than 75 per cent of the population– are nowadays in societies where income is distributed much more unequally than in the 1990s.

Target 10.1
By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average

Inadequate household income is one of the main reasons for child and adolescent labour in the region. Hence, achieving this target could have a direct positive impact on its reduction, as it would improve the chances of meeting basic needs and help prevent the youngest members of the household from entering the labour force prematurely.

Target 10.2
By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status

Evidence from the region indicates that "the leading reasons for the lower participation of indigenous and Afro-descendent people in secondary and post-secondary education includes higher rates of poverty and child and adolescent labour, the distance of schools from their homes, particularly in rural areas, the low quality of the educational facilities to which they have access, the relevance of their study programmes and discrimination."[1] Indeed, there is more incentives for child labour in socially and politically disadvantaged groups of society.

1 ECLAC (2015), p. 29.

Target 10.3
Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard

Target 10.4
Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality

Laws and policies are the responsibility of the State and are tools which demonstrate their willingness and interest to address certain issues. Policies on labour and children's issues should incorporate in particularly provisions of international labour standards. Ensuring compliance and effective implementation will contribute to progress in achieving decent work, having a positive impact on child labour prevention and reduction.

Target 10.7
Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies

Internal or international migration of children and adolescents, accompanied and unaccompanied is a factor in child labour.

In border crossing or rural-to-urban migration, many children find themselves involved in dangerous activities or become victims of the worst forms of child labour (sexual exploitation, use for drug trafficking, recruitment for criminal groups, etc.).

Facilitating migration makes it possible to offer protection services to families and children, reducing their vulnerability to exploitation and allowing them access to opportunities for growth and personal development that will translate into medium and long-term benefits for their places of origin and destination.

SDG 2:
END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION, AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

795 million people in the world (1 in 9 on earth) do not have enough food to lead a healthy and active life.

500 million small farms worldwide, most rain-fed,[2] provide 80% of food consumed in most of the developing world.

Target 2.1
By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round

Target 2.2
By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting[3] in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons

The poorest families are the most affected by hunger. For them, the incentive to enter into child labour is the strongest, with the circle of poverty exacerbated by the burden of malnutrition. Thus, progress in the fight against hunger brings with it political stability and general economic growth, discouraging child labour.

2 Rain-fed agriculture is one in which human beings do not contribute to irrigation of the fields, but depend solely on rainfall.
3 Moderate malnutrition is defined as a weight-for-age between 2 and 3 zeta scores below the median of WHO child growth standards. It may be due to low weight for height (wasting), low weight for age (stunting) or a combination of both.

Target 2.3
By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment

Agricultural labour, especially in small family farms, attracts the greatest amount of child and adolescent labour. As a result, the desirable and necessary increase of productivity in those sectors resulting in more child workers must be avoided.

Businesses that do not use child labour will have greater access and the ability to remain in the supply chains of other companies that are under pressure to guarantee respect for human rights.

Target 2.4
By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality

Improving agricultural practices can support child labour reduction, especially in its most hazardous forms. In some places it will involve adopting technology to avoid child labour; in others, it will involve developing systems to reduce the impact of climate change and the vulnerability of rural families to droughts or floods that force families to resort to child labour to recover from crises.

SDG 16:

PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS

Corruption, bribery, theft and tax evasion cost some $1.26 trillion for developing countries per year. This amount of money could lift the income of people living on less than $1.25 a day above this threshold for at least six years.

The rate of children dropping out of primary school in conflict-affected countries reached 50 per cent in 2011: 28,5 million.

Target 16.2
End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

Violence in the home, school or neighbourhood are factors that increase the chances of children and adolescents entering the labour market early in search of alternatives to escape these conditions.

Physical, psychological, verbal and sexual violence are the most common forms of violence against children in the workplace. It is essential to strengthen a policy of zero tolerance to violence against children at work, either within or without a legal framework, in organised workplaces or in the informal sector. This should be taken into consideration when taking action on this target.

Target 16.3
Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all

It is essential to establish and enforce the necessary policy framework to address child labour so that prevention and reduction of child labour contributes to the full exercise of such fundamental rights such as access to education, health care and protection for children and adolescents.

Target 16.6
Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels

Child labour prevention and reduction requires institutions that are capable of implementing the relevant policies effectively at different territorial levels with multi-stakeholder participation.

In this regard, tripartism and social dialogue, which characterise international child labour standards, constitute added value for the defence of rights and building social cohesion.

Target 16.9
By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration

The lack of birth registers makes those children who are already in a vulnerable situation, even more invisible and limits their access to social protection systems that can often make the difference in preventing or withdrawing them from hazardous child labour.

Three main obstacles to full birth registration are: families' lack of knowledge about the importance of birth registration, administrative hurdles and registration fees charged at some registration sites.

SDG 3:
ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES

Each year, more than six million children die before reaching the age of five.

Children born into poverty are almost twice as likely to die before the age of five as those from wealthier families.

Target 3.4
Reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being

The harm caused by child labour not only affects children's health in the short term such as workplace accidents, but extends into, or only becomes visible in adult life, putting pressure on the budgets of public health services.

Target 3.5
Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol

When the worst forms of child labour are eliminated where drug and alcohol use is prevalent, including hazardous work and criminal forms such as sexual exploitation, current and future use of these substances during childhood and adulthood will also be prevented.

Target 3.9
By 2030, reduce substantially the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination

Most hazardous work is concentrated in agriculture and mining (artisanal and informal), sectors that use harmful chemicals.

Progress towards this goal involves improving health and safety conditions in the workplace for adults, and contributes to reducing the risks to which children and adolescents are exposed.

SDG 13:
TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS

From 1880 to 2012, average global temperature increased by 0.85° degrees Celsius.

Emissions growth between 2000 and 2010 has been larger than in the previous three decades.

Target 13.1
Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries

Target 13.3
Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning

Child labour is a coping mechanism for families in dealing with the harm caused by climate change. Climate change can be expected to have a more intense impact on children in rural areas, as children are used as workers to intensify or recover production or sent into the labour market as part of the general household subsistence plan.

By being less protected, poor families are more vulnerable to repeated extreme or unexpected climatic events and the sense of risk promotes child labour as a way to prepare for or mitigate the effects.

KEY **MESSAGES**

1. The SDGs should be understood as a network of interrelated goals that lead to sustainable development in all its dimensions including economic, social and environmental. This requires all stakeholders that have the ability to influence the expected results to commit and to advance the goals at multiple levels, including at the local, national, regional and global levels.

2. The coherence and cohesion of the SDGs is reinforced by three pillars that are fundamental to its achievement: the fight against poverty, the advancement of equality and the promotion of sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, based on full, productive employment and decent work as an effective combination to generate development models that are truly sustainable.

3. The decent work component, expressed in SDG 8 and its related targets, lies at the heart of the 2030 Agenda. The aim is to stimulate economic strategies in which more and better jobs generate the purchasing power that promotes investment, which in turn lifts productivity and brings competitiveness and success in a global market. But this process will not automatically be sustainable nor inclusive. That will require a framework of institutions, organisations, laws and policies, and a culture of social dialogue, to govern the world of work and the functioning of labour markets[4].

4. Target 8.7, in its aim to "end child labour by 2025," implies making progress in at least 35 related targets under goals other than Goal 8, which imply strengthening the coherence of public policies at the national and local levels and promoting mutual support at the global and regional levels.

5. The creation of the Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean free of child labour[5] is an expression of that pursuit of mutual support to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Twenty-seven governments together with employers' and workers' organisations are part of this intergovernmental cooperation platform that aims to accelerate child labour reduction rates in Latin America and the Caribbean. It intends to reach target 8.7, by impelling a new generation of policies that can respond effectively to change in the prevailing economic conditions, which have largely driven the reduction of child labour currently exhibited by the region.

4 See: http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/105/reports/reports-to-the-conference/WCMS_479681/lang--en/index.htm p.7.
5 See the Regional Initiative Framework Document at: http://www.iniciativa2025alc.org/sites/default/files/regional-initiative-framework.pdf p. 17 ff.

6

Given the current situation of child and adolescent labour and considering the existing knowledge 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 and the Caribbean.

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

Interventions aimed at prevention:
aimed at children aged 5-17 years, using a life-cycle approach to accompany children through their development and fulfil their specific needs, in order to break the pattern of child labour.

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 withdrawn from hazardous activities and forms of economic exploitation that constitute a crime.

Interventions aimed at sustainability:
for ensuring that State policies aimed at preventing and reducing child labour, protecting work permitted for adolescents and promoting coordination between public and private programmes and services are institutionalised.

In order to implement this strategy, the comprehensive analysis of the Sustainable Development Goals is essential, as it provides criteria to promote measures against child labour in broader policies and programmes such as on employment, education, fighting poverty and inequality, agrarian development policies and health, amongst others.

The ultimate objective is to adopt a comprehensive and integrated vision, based on a holistic approach capable of capturing and articulating the relationships and synergies between objectives and interdependent themes; a working model that will require an institutional design adapted to the new challenges and open to the participation of all development actors. For this reason, the official funding of the 2030 Agenda should focus on children and adolescents in child labour, a path that should be deepened by South-South cooperation and the private sector. The latter will play an instrumental part because of its very role in productive development.

In this context, the Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean free of child labour is an ideal platform to unite the political wills and capacities of different key public and private stakeholders who, with the support of international cooperation, can achieve an end to child labour by 2025 and take a key step to building sustainable development the world has set as its collective objective.

Considering the multi-causal nature of child labour, advancing its prevention and reduction requires addressing a variety of issues.

To achieve the goal to “end child labour in all its forms by 2025”, it will be necessary, among other things, to reduce poverty, improve education, promote gender equality and implement social protection policies. At the same time, progress in reducing child labour will facilitate progress in each of these issues and help to achieve the corresponding targets.

The analysis presented is based on a consideration of the links between the target of eliminating child labour and the other goals which have direct effect on child labour. These have been identified through a correlation analysis based on empirical evidence in each area.

Each target identified as having a “direct effect” is defined to be an impact on the relationship between child labour and the goal that contains it. The total number of impacts on each target establishes an indicator of the degree of interdependence it has with child labour. In no case was the hierarchy of one goal over another considered. Furthermore, based on the available information, this analysis establishes and explores two-way relationships; i.e., it does not propose a network model, but a relational one.

By applying the described criteria, the analysis of the links between target 8.7 and the entire set of SDGs will focus on 8 goals and 35 specific targets, ordered by their degree of interdependence. The outcome of the analysis is illustrated in the following figure.

● Targets related to the eradication of child labour

Get the full study at:
http://www.iniciativa2025alc.org/sites/default/files/towards-the-first-generation-free-of-child-labour.pdf

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