

DECENT WORK AND
YOUTH

LATIN AMERICA

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INTRODUCTION

In popular belief, youth is associated with hope, and evokes a time of opportunity or a better future.

In Latin America, even the most impoverished invest a great deal in the education of children and youth so that they can achieve, through better jobs, a better quality of life than that of their parents or grandparents.

It is desirable for a society to make every effort to provide its youth with the largest number of options and the greatest freedom possible to develop as individuals, by providing better opportunities to join the workforce; particularly in a region where so many men and women face unemployment, inequality and poverty. However, private investment in education is not enough.

It is important for any country that its youth be given opportunities for progress and the capability to develop them by responsibly exercising their rights.

Offering to promote decent work and productive jobs for young people can strengthen democracy, support social unity and contribute towards economic growth.

The issue of youth employment has acquired major significance in Latin American societies, lately, for the contribution they provide to the economic growth of the region as well as for the high youth unemployment rates existing even in successful countries.

Youth employment was considered as a priority by the “Decent work: An agenda for hemisphere, 2006–2015”, presented by the Director-General of the ILO, Juan Somavia, during the XVI Regional Meeting of the American States Members of the ILO (2006) obtaining the support of the tripartite delegations that attended the meeting. Moreover, in the Decade of the Promotion of Decent Work, approved by the Meeting, it was settled as a main objective –regarding youth– to encourage more vocational training and a better insertion in the labour market.

The Agenda for the Hemisphere is a milestone for a better restructuring of the cooperation between the ILO and its constituents in the Americas. It also reflects priorities that will help improve the quality of development in the region.

In the promotion of a sustainable development model with equity, the priority is given to youth-oriented policies. Basically, in the Latin American context, where there are more young people than ever in its history. This trend will remain until the year 2015, when the demographic growth rate will decrease.

We hope this publication will be useful for more young people to achieve a decent work that enables them to progress as individuals and, therefore, contribute to the progress of their families and societies. Today, youth must be seen as one of the main assets of the social capital of the region and not be considered as something distant and apart. Future, somehow, begins everyday. Youth is the present, and the hope for a better future for the American region.

1. The magnitude and nature of the challenge

1.1 Youth who work: where and under what condition? 1.2 Youth who neither study nor work

Most of the studies and documents dealing with youth and employment in the region emphasize that **young people face much higher unemployment rates than adults.** In Latin America and the Caribbean, (LAC), open unemployment is 17%, while among adults the rate is 6%. This ratio is almost one to three, although in other countries the difference is greater. **Among the unemployed, young persons represent 46% of the total.** In 2005 youth unemployment rates were, on average, greater than those in 1990.

Notwithstanding the magnitude of youth unemployment, this is only one of the problems young people face in the region's labour market. **There are 10 million unemployed young persons; at the same time, 22 million young persons are not studying or working, and more than 30 million are informal workers or work in precarious conditions.** The precarious conditions in the region's labour markets affect one out of every two workers and two out of three young persons.

In Latin America and the Caribbean there have never been so many persons between the ages of 15 and 24, and it is likely that in the future this figure will not continue to grow, since forecasts indicate a lower demographic growth rate from 2015 onwards. The decrease in population, in itself, will not imply a significant drop in youth unemployment or in the pressures to obtain employment.

The challenge is immense and, at the same time, has many different aspects, since the different groups of young persons have different characteristics and needs. Employment and youth policies implemented in the region have rarely addressed such scope and such diverse issues at the same time. Some programmes have been implemented with very

good results but limited coverage, while some large initiatives have been carried out without the expected impact. The challenge consists of articulating both dimensions and moving on from the execution of programmes to the establishment and enforcement of State policies with the participation of youth.

When State policies are established, priorities need to be clearly identified. The following “map” shows how the youth labour markets in LAC are composed¹. In any other demographic group the analysis of the labour market would involve only three categories: the employed, the unemployed and the inactive. However, considering that young people are still in the process of pursuing basic and undergraduate studies, these categories must be supplemented with some level of education or training. This panorama can help to define priorities, at least from the standpoint of quantity and urgency.

In 2005, of the 106 million young persons in Latin America and the Caribbean², 48 million were employed while 10 million were unemployed and some 48 million were inactive. However, at the same time, some 49 million young persons were pursuing studies. Based solely on these two variables, this leads to several situations:

- 13 million youths study and work;
- 32 million inactive youths are studying;
- 4 million unemployed youths are studying.

From another perspective:

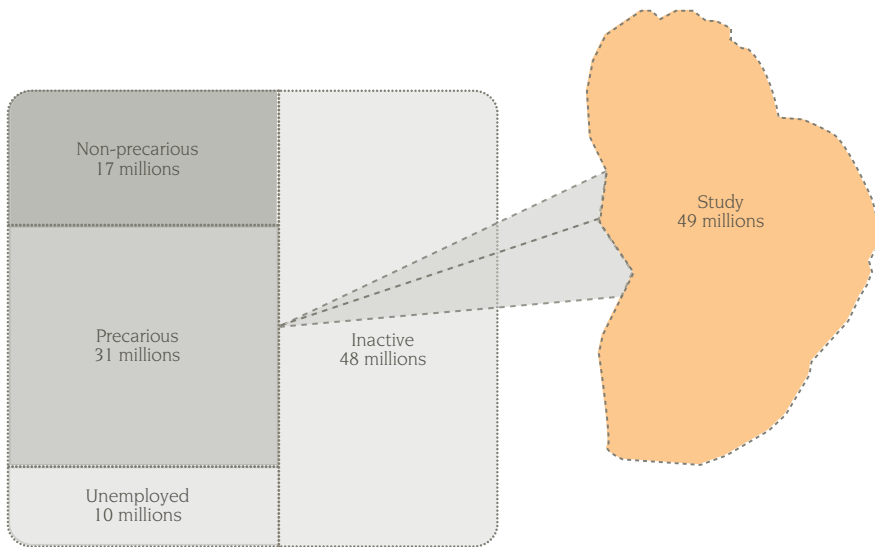
- 35 million work and do not study;
- 6 million are unemployed and do not study;
- 16 million are inactive and do not study.

If the last two groups are joined together, the result is that there are 22 million young persons who neither work nor study.

¹ A similar scheme was proposed by Fares, Montenegro and Orazem (2006).

² The total estimated population of Latin America and the Caribbean was obtained from the ECLAC Database of Social Indicators (BADEINSO) for 46 countries. The foregoing data has been combined with the structures of the population old enough to work, obtained from the household surveys conducted in 17 countries.

LABOUR MAP OF THE LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN YOUTH



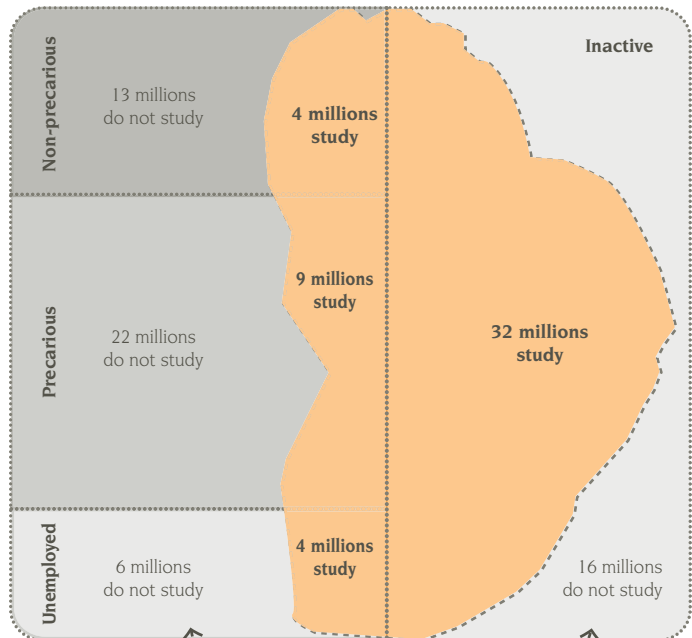
Non-precarious They work in an economic activity, with paid jobs, and health and pension coverage

Precarious They work in an economic activity, with paid jobs, without health and pension coverage.

Unemployed They are not currently working, and they are looking for a job.

Inactive They are neither working nor looking for a job.

 Population of young persons who **study**



Population of young persons who neither study nor work: 22 millions

Men are the majority in the group who work only and among those who study and work.

Women are the majority in the group of those who study only, and among those who do not study or work. The participation rates of young women in the workforce are much lower than those of young men. Among other things, this reflects a certain cultural tradition and the lack of opportunities for women, who must combine work with family obligations.

Among those who study only, almost 80% are between 15 and 19 years of age, and among those who work only, 68% are between 20 and 24 years of age.

While those who study and work are concentrated in the highest strata of family income *per capita*, those who neither study nor work are concentrated in the medium and low-income segments.

In terms of the establishment of public policies, two groups are of particular interest, due to their size and the challenges they pose: a) those employed in informal activities and therefore risk their future prospects; and b) those

who neither study nor work. Both of these groups have different characteristics and needs and a variety of situations coexist within each of them.

During their early years, all young persons should be studying, but there are many at age 15 who are not. It is most likely that they will work during their childhood years and, therefore, begin their teenage years facing a number of obstacles to the start of a positive employment path.

The number of employed young persons is three times greater between the ages of 15 and 24. In light of this, it must be remembered that first job experiences are crucial, not only in defining a young person's employment expectations but also their prospects for future employability.

1.1 Youth who work: where and under what conditions?

These youth number 48 million, of which 13 million work and study and the rest only work. Also, 38% of employed youth are women and 62% are between 20 and 24 years old.

Companies are the most important source of employment for young people.

Among the adults, 32% are self-employed or engaged in independent activities and 7% state that they are executives or owners of a company, while for youth these figures are limited to 14% and 2%, respectively, because they initially accumulate experience, capital and knowledge, which they later invest in their economic life. Studies in specific countries indicate that often the business ventures launched by young persons are a defensive response to the lack of employment, since many of them do so out of a need for income and not because they have identified a business opportunity. Consequently, a large percentage of them fail after a few months in the market.

Unpaid, family-based work is very prevalent among rural youth.

Even when the majority of women work in companies, 16% of them are employed as domestic workers, the most common occupation among young Latin American women.

The type of employment to which they have access is what

most distinguishes young people from adults. Two out of every three young persons are engaged in informal activities, in which their pay is often below the minimum wage and with no social security benefits. In terms of income, a young person earns 56% of what an average adult earns, thereby confirming the fact that the empirical income profiles grow as they get older. It is clear that the group of young people who participate precariously in the labour market deserve the greatest attention since this will influence their work careers.

Young people accept precarious jobs assuming that these will lead them to better job positions in the future. Over the last few decades, the region's main problem has been that the spread of insecure jobs has been so massive that it has broken the dynamics of labour progress and thereby created a great deal of discouragement among young people.

A broad perspective is required to define youth employment development policies. Measures which encourage the paid employment of young people may face the moral dilemma that many

of these jobs can be obtained by substituting youth employment for adult employment. Thus, it is important to have a comprehensive vision of the labour situation of youth and adults alike to prepare strategies suited to the general interest.

Efforts aimed at improving labour conditions for young persons require a combination of policies, ranging from macroeconomic policies to interventions in the labour market. If the labour market in general produces low quality jobs, it is only logical that the same will happen for young people. The policies aimed at tackling this problem are not just policies for youth but for the entire labour market.

1.2 Youth who neither study nor work

The second most numerous group is comprised by 22 million young people who neither study nor work.

Of this group, 79% live in urban areas, which explains why the activity rates in this sector are always higher, even though the labour conditions are not better.

In addition, 72% are women, 56% of whom are between 20 and 24 years of age. And 24% are married or living together, and this percentage increases to 37% in the case of women.

The high number of women in this group is explained by the large percentage of school drop-outs among them, as well as by the greater difficulties they face in gaining access to the labour market. Often, during their childhood, girls must take care of the domestic chores within their families, and they continue to do this when they marry or have offspring. Household work is important and productive for society but it should not be the sole job option for millions of young Latin American women. They already come up against major barriers to obtain equal wages and if they have children it becomes more difficult for them to gain access to the region's labour markets.

The figures show that, in the past several decades, women have progressed at higher rates than men in terms of education and, in some countries, there are more women than men who have pursued higher education. Despite

the foregoing, almost 30% of women do not study or work and are engaged solely in household activities. This is why many young women ask themselves whether education and the labour market are channels for progress.

Males represent 28% of the total number of young persons who do not study or work, a figure equivalent to around 6 million young persons. Practically none of them engage in domestic chores. They are in a high risk situation and a large number of them are engaged in illegal forms of subsistence. As a result, it is not surprising that juvenile delinquency in the region, basically among males, is increasing at accelerated rates. A recent report by the World Health Organization states that although Latin America is not the most dangerous region in the world, Latin American youth ranks first in the world in terms of deaths from violence.

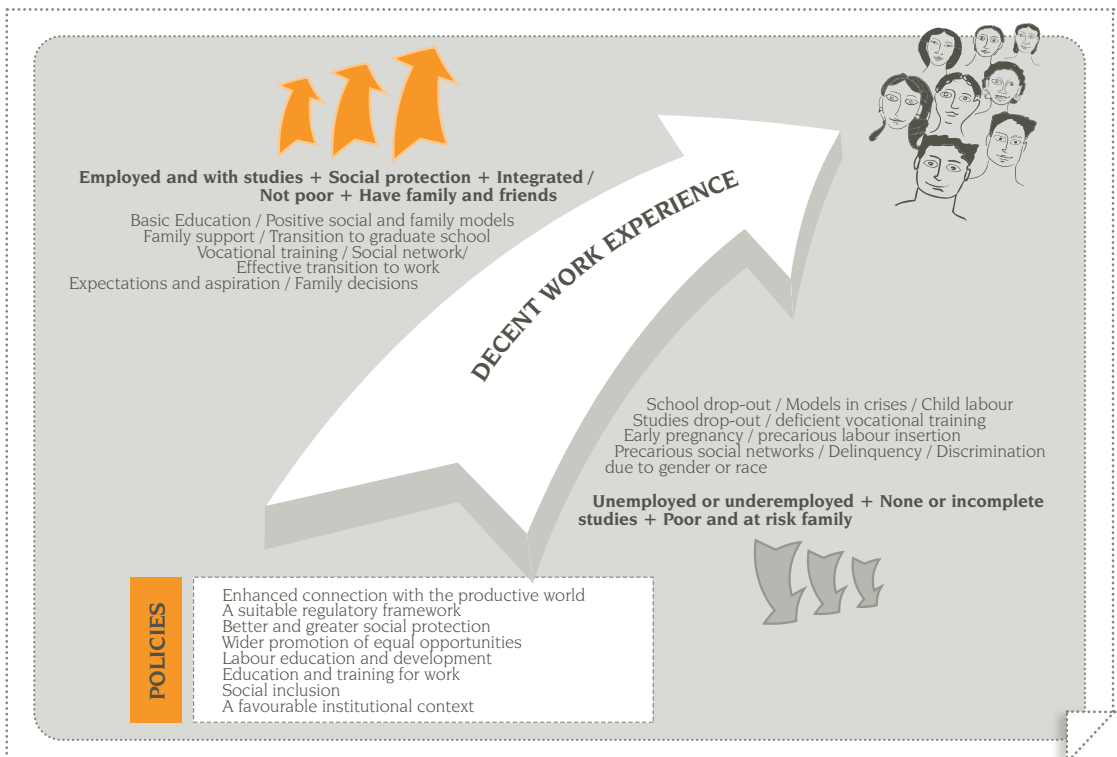
Young people who neither study nor work can be the subject of direct and specific labour policies, both in terms of education and the labour market. Within a period of ten years, the Decent Work in the Americas: An agenda

for the Hemisphere, 2006–2015 proposes to reduce, by half, the percentage of young persons aged 15 and above who do not study or work.

2. A decent work path

2.1 The challenges

The concept of decent work proposed by the Director General of the ILO, implies a productive job for a fair wage, safety in the workplace and social protection for employees and their families, improved prospects for personal and social development, freedom to express their concerns, freedom of association and to participate in the decision-making



process affecting their lives, as well as equal opportunities and treatment for both women and men.

Labour should not begin with a job but with education, training or the accumulation of productive experience, all of which constitute the first stages of a positive employment experience.

The key idea is that such progress requires the accumulation of useful elements in the labour market. Youth is the time when these are more quickly and greatly accumulated. There are limiting factors such as dropping out of school, premature and/or precarious entry into the labour market, unwanted pregnancies or unsuitable family or social environments, among others.

From the perspective of a person's life cycle, decent work is a dynamic concept, an experience rather than a condition or situation, and it has a number of implications. One is the importance of education and training and the other is less restricted access to a satisfactory work experience.

When young people cannot visualize a work experience which

will guarantee them positive socio-economic mobility, involving decent work, they begin to question the validity of education and of the labour market as means to progress. This leads to discouragement, apathy, social cohesion and problems of young people fitting into society. The lack of expectations by the young of achieving a decent work experience is a growing phenomenon in the region, associated with the crisis or the lack of role models. Parents have increasing work problems or, in some countries, they migrated en masse and some of their young people grew up far from their parents.

2.1 The challenges

To boost successful work paths for the largest possible number of Latin American youth, there are two main challenges.

The first, despite recent growth, is the lack of financial options for young people. This restricts or curtails their experiences and forces them either to work in precarious activities, thus increasing the numbers of those who neither study nor work, or

else to emigrate. This shortage of opportunities does not match the distribution of labour assets currently available in the region's labour markets. Youth account for 20% of employment but have more than 31% of the total number of years of education and more than 40% of total access to information technologies. Yet they earn only 10% of income from employment, and this has to do with factors which limit the most productive use of these assets, the nature of which undoubtedly varies from country to country. However, there are also common roots such as the widely accepted idea that young people are a group willing to accept poorer employment conditions in exchange for experience.

The second challenge is the size and diversity of the 30 million young persons who work in precarious activities and the 22 million who neither study nor work. This has consequences for the design of policies since high quality interventions and wide coverage are needed. In addition, the different worlds

of young people are extremely diverse in nature and in terms of interventions needed.

Facing these challenges is a critical task for the governments and stakeholders of the region. According to the ILO (2004) if youth unemployment were to be reduced by half, the region's production would grow by another 4.9 to 7.8 percentage points³. An integrated set of interventions in different areas is required to achieve these results.

³ See, ILO. *Global employment trends for youth*. Geneva: ILO, 2004.

3. Proposals: suitable institutional environment

- 3.1 A better articulation of the productive world
- 3.2 A suitable regulatory context: combining protection and promotion
- 3.3 Greater and better social protection
- 3.4 Education and vocational training for work
- 3.5 Business training and development
- 3.6 Promoting inclusion
- 3.7 Effective institutional framework
- 3.8 The contribution of workers' and employers' organizations

3.1 A better articulation of the productive world

A major problem in Latin America is low labour productivity, which restricts the creation of better jobs and tends to motivate the creation of precarious jobs⁴. An enormous diversity of production exists in the different economic sectors of the region since those who reach production levels inherent to very advanced economies, particularly in the primary sectors, exist alongside others in which productivity is very low. It is precisely the latter who provide employment to a large part of the workforce. These diverse structures have not changed in recent decades, even though there have been many attempts to modify them.

Economic growth should enable the sectors with the largest concentration of employment to articulate with the more dynamic sectors. A business climate that will attract private investment, promote the creation of new companies and encourage competition is important to boost growth. This requires a stable macro–economy as well as specific measures which facilitate articulation with the most backward sectors. A more dynamic insertion in the international economy is paramount. In many countries of the region, the export

⁴ For a further discussion on this point see ILO, *Decent work in the Americas: An agenda for the Hemisphere, 2006-2015*, Brasilia: ILO, 2006.

of primary or semi-primary resources does not appear to be sustainable in the long term. Rodrik (2005) has shown that for countries to grow not only is the fact that they export important but what they export. In other words, the way in which the economy grows, its size and composition are all important.

A combination of responsible macroeconomic policies with other meso- and micro-economic ones is necessary with the sole aim of encouraging production and competition on the part of countries⁵. Boosting competition requires work in several areas such as productive infrastructure, improved educational and training systems, suitable innovation systems, legal security and, at the same time, specifically boosting the productivity of companies. In other words, incentives are required for labour intensive sectors as well as policies which enable them to maintain their competitiveness and make progress in the qualification of employees.

The relationship between the economic context and youth employment has specific dimensions. There are "intensive youth employment" sectors such as trade or services and others based on know-how and information technology which need new assets which are quickly grasped by young people. These sectors have expanded over the last few years. The present generation faces a productive world that is drastically different to that of their parents when they were young, due to the existence, consolidation and extraordinary dissemination of these technologies.

During this decade, there has been a convergence of interesting elements such as a clear reduction in youth demographic pressure, regional and worldwide economic expansion, and an emphasis on the advantages enjoyed by young people in terms of acquiring education and access to technologies, as compared to other generations.

⁵ For a further discussion on the growth of competition and productivity, see ILO, *Growth, competition and employment in Andean Countries*, Lima: ILO, 2005 and ILO, *Growth, competition and employment in MERCOSUR*, Buenos Aires: ILO, 2005.

There is a scenario favourable to youth, which must be exploited. For them to do this, there is need for policies which provide opportunities for everyone, facilitating widespread inclusive dissemination of production know-how and new technologies. Policies are also needed to create favourable conditions so that the assets and advantages young people have for work can be suitably compensated in terms of opportunities and rewards in the labour market.

One area of intervention is the labour information systems which the region is seeking to operate between the production and labour worlds. For young people, who are the main seekers of employment, this market has produced unsatisfactory results because they are misled into believing that they will obtain employment, and they are often sold promises, without any guarantee of obtaining work.

In addition to public information and employment services, private labour information markets have arisen in an attempt to provide companies with suitable staff and to provide those seeking

As one young person said,
“Don’t tell me where the jobs are, tell the companies who I am.”

a job with periodic information on the employment opportunities available. The public and private services do not cooperate but rather compete with each other. The former could begin to approach and cooperate with private corporations without relinquishing their supervisory or monitoring work.

Another challenge for the information services is keeping abreast of the current requirements of the labour markets, which feature high labour turnover rates. In several countries it has been observed that these systems, despite being modern and up to date in information technologies, act in the belief that the only relevant information is where the jobs are. Although this is important, companies also require information on potential employees and, in particular, on young persons who do not have an employment record. They require information on their skills and basic issues such as their background and place of residence, among others. In other words, they demand employment credentials which take time and money to obtain, particularly for

young people. As one young person said, "Don't tell me where the jobs are, tell the companies who I am." Labour information systems could provide support to young people through job credentials in low cost certificates which do not need to be subsidized.

3.2 A suitable regulatory context: combining protection and promotion

Labour regulations have usually tackled the issue of youth employment from a protective angle, particularly with rules regarding the minimum age of employment, which is an essential right sanctioned by ILO Member States. Labour laws assume that once young persons are incorporated into the labour world they must enjoy the same rights and obligations as any employee and must therefore be treated equally, in the widest sense of the term, because being young, from a regulatory point of view, does not make them any different as employees.

In practice, this is not necessarily fulfilled. Young persons face greater disadvantages in

the labour market because they usually have access to jobs with a high turnover, or temporary or seasonal jobs. Theoretically, this is because they have less training and/or experience; but this is not always the case, and it is likely that under equal conditions they are treated differently. Thus, an urgent point on the region's agenda is to examine whether these differences in the labour results achieved by young people are due to discriminatory practices or are due to their experience, education or skills.

In the region, there are several mechanisms to encourage young people's demands for employment through legal schemes designed for young people⁶. Three of these mechanisms are the most commonly used.

There is a tradition of legislating on education or training contracts usually aimed at young people, with a dual purpose: encouraging organizations to hire young people whom they would not otherwise hire, and at the same time, facilitating youth's

access to training within the company. In Colombia and in Costa Rica or Paraguay, for every certain number of hired employees the company must hire an apprentice or otherwise it must make a contribution to a Professional Training Institution. In Chile, the apprentice programme includes incentives for companies which hire young persons –a monthly subsidy of 50% of the minimum monthly wage per apprentice. In Peru, a wide range of training contracts have been established for different target populations (those with no education, high school graduates, with technical education, college students or graduates) with lower labour costs and benefits in almost all cases.

It is important to point out that special provisions are not made for young women, despite their increasing rates of unemployment and inactivity. In many cases, they are discriminated against as much as or more than adult women, in the belief that as soon as they marry and have children they will be less productive or will leave their jobs.

⁶ Similar schemes are appearing for other groups such as the MSEs (Small and micro enterprises), whose efficacy is currently under debate.

These training contracts must in fact provide training, but this is not always the case. In many cases they are used only to cut costs without providing the relevant training, and consequently a number of mechanisms to control this type of contracts have been introduced in the past years.

An interesting method used in some countries is assessment of the training received in organizations or official accreditation through Professional Proficiency Certificates, as in the case of Colombia, Costa Rica or Panama; Professional Qualification Certificates in Brazil; Certificates of Labour Skills in Mexico and Training Certificates in Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Paraguay and Uruguay.

One of the most recent mechanisms is the so-called First Employment Laws, which implies that by financing part of the cost of hiring young people, they would find it easier to obtain their first job in an organization. These systems are currently in force in Mexico and Paraguay. Chile is discussing a programme similar to the Mexican one, related to subsidized contributions to the social security system.

The Mexican programme is interesting because in order to avoid poor selection practices, the incentive operates only after a young person's tenth month of employment (at which time the payment made by the organization during the first month is reimbursed and so on). As a result, it could be said that the goal of the Mexican programme, in addition to increasing social security among the youth, is to extend a young person's stay in the organization, which is a valid goal.

These programmes are intended to formalize youth employment. However, they are interesting only for companies which hire them formally. On the other hand, in the case of informal business organizations, the labour "incentive" does not seem to be enough because the decision to formally hire a person does not depend solely on the labour laws but also on tax and commercial laws and the production level of the organization.

There are some concerns over the long-term sustainability of jobs generated through these programmes. They are likely to be more successful in meeting

more specific objectives, such as encouraging greater social security coverage among young people or achieving a lower turnover rate; particularly, if they are concentrated in groups which usually have no access to these benefits, as in the case of independent workers.

Whether or not young persons find it more difficult than adults to enter the labour market is something which must be put into perspective because what appears to exist is a high job turnover. Young persons sometimes find it easier to get a job than adults; however, it is also easier for them to lose their jobs. As a result, policies related to a “first job” or initial entry into the labour market may become policies to extend time spent in the labour market or policies for permanent re-immersion.

A third instrument tested in the region is the special minimum wage regulations. Considering

that empirical income profiles grow as an employee gets older and it is a fact that young people on average earn around 60% of what adults earn, theoretically a minimum wage could discourage the hiring of more youths than adults. We would have to examine whether or not introducing lower wages improves their insertion⁷.

Theoretically, a minimum wage is an instrument which regulates the initial basic wage mainly for employees in the private sector. Given that young persons are usually paid a starting salary, the minimum wage involves a greater proportion of young people than any other generation of employees⁸. It is usually believed that the minimum wage acts to prevent young people from entering the labour market and, in fact, there are some countries in the region where young persons are paid below the minimum wage. Chile has a specific minimum wage for young people. Workers under the age of 18 and over 65

⁷ It should be noted that wages below minimum wage exist for apprentices. This appears to be different because, on the one hand, it lasts only for the duration of the training programme and on the other, if training does occur, a part of the wage is paid in cash and the other part in training.

⁸ In the case of young persons, the minimum wage regulations for the public sector and domestic labour are also relevant (although in several countries the selection processes in the public sector restrict the hiring of very young employees) because this is one of the main occupations for young persons.

can earn less than the minimum adult wage. In Costa Rica, young workers up to the age of 18 earn a minimum wage not less than 50% of the adult level during their first year of work, 75% during their second year, and the full minimum wage as of their third year, irrespective of their age. In Paraguay, the minimum wage established for people under the age of 18 is 60% of the adult wage, provided they do not perform the same kind of work.

Has this scheme worked?

First, if the minimum wage were a barrier to young persons entering the labour market, then there should be fewer young persons as compared to adults in those categories where there is compliance with regulations (i.e., mainly among wage earners in private companies). However, on the contrary, we found that in the region, there is over representation in countries where wages are paid below the minimum, as much as in countries where this is not the case. Second, even in the case of Chile, before and after the application of differential increases in the minimum wage, the youth unemployment rates

—and their relation to adult unemployment rates—remained the same.

3.3 Greater and better social protection

To prevent young persons from being hired under unsafe contracts with no social guarantees or social security benefits, legislation should be promoted which respects the essential nature of social protection. This would boost positive youth labour experiences.

Because of the way in which social protection systems in Latin America operate, it is possible to find: a) youth who have access to social security systems through employment; b) youth who have access to social security through family insurance, as dependents of paying or pensioned principals; and c) youth in both situations. Social protection of youth derived from their occupation based on a contributory approach, is necessary to boost access to decent jobs.

The inclusion of youth in social security is a subject which is relatively absent from the region's development agenda.

Alternative systems to increase the social protection of youth

A few potential strategic options to increase the social protection of youth could be:

- **Intergenerational Solidarity.** Social security systems intrinsically imply the concept of solidarity: of men towards women, of economically active employees towards the retired, of the urban population towards the rural population, etc. A valid question is whether it is possible to talk about setting inclusive policies based on the solidarity of economically active middle-aged employees towards young persons who have only recently entered the labour market.

- **Subsidy of premiums and "smooth" entry into the social security system.** A policy of subsidizing premiums for young employees could take two forms: simply lowering premiums for young employees, or making a State contribution to subsidize the payment made by young people. In summary, the question would be who pays the subsidy: the other contributors or the State? In the first case, the lower labour costs could be considered as a supplementary strategy to encourage youth employment. These measures could be viewed as instruments for young people to more easily gain a foothold in the social security system.

- **Alternative systems for unpaid youth.** In the case of the social security health programmes, young people have a lower "rate of illness" than adult and elderly employees. In the setting of health insurance premiums, this could be an "advantage" for the design of low cost insurance schemes accessible to a large percentage of unpaid youth. Evidently, the ability to pay in relation to the cost is not the only decisive variable, but there is sufficient evidence that it is one of the main variables in the decision to join contributory social security programmes.

This poses the challenge of drawing up innovative public policies to facilitate youth's access to social protection. The figures show that there are large differences among Latin American countries, and these are reflected in social security coverage.

A few of the possible policies to increase social protection for young people raise questions or controversies which must be addressed in depth within the context of the agenda of promoting decent work. Further research, knowledge and scientific dialogue are required as well as being open to innovation, without losing sight of the general interest and principles.

3.4 Education and vocational training for work

One of the most traditional areas on the youth labour agenda is employability, which is very important for establishing and continuing to build a person's employment record. It is therefore necessary to review the contribution that their education and occupational training should make towards their work. In both cases, indigenous peoples and persons of African descent have a greater deficit than other groups, and this reduces their chances of gaining access to productive jobs and decent work.

Learning difficulties in the primary education system have a direct impact on employment experience. Reading deficiencies and difficulty understanding basic mathematics prevent young persons from learning, thinking, using their imagination and solving day-to-day problems, which are essential elements for employment in today's world. The main constraints to the employment future of young persons begin in the primary education system. If this educational system prepares the

young only to become dependent employees, the options of the region's youth are being restricted.

For many countries, improving high school education both in terms of coverage and quality is the main challenge in the short term. There are problems of coverage, school drop-outs, especially in rural areas as well as the quality of content.

In most Latin American countries, educational infrastructure needs to be improved and expanded, but at the same time, improvement is needed in the quality of teaching. The decision-making process needs to be decentralized, curricula should be revised, and a flexible education provided so that students can continue learning when they begin working. The present quality of youth education is inadequate for a context in which better professional qualifications are needed. Without these improvements, the annual growth rate of the economy's productivity will scarcely move forward.

Another challenge is equity. For persons who possess an

University for all in Brazil

The ProUni (University for All Programme) was created on January 13, 2005 (Provisional Measure N°213/2004 and Law N°11.096) with the aim of granting partial or full scholarships to low income students pursuing graduate studies and specific training at private institutions of higher learning which adopt the Programme in exchange for a tax deduction.

In the two selection processes conducted to date (2005 and 2006), ProUni offered a total of 250,000 partial or full scholarships to 1,142 institutions of higher learning throughout Brazil. In 2007, 13,000 more scholarships have been offered.

The establishment of ProUni, together with the setting up of ten Federal Universities and 49 new campuses in the country, have increased the number of vacancies in higher education, taken public education to the heart of the country and fought against regional inequalities. These actions are part of the recently launched National Education Plan, aimed at increasing access to higher education for at least 30% of the population aged 18 to 24, by the year 2010. At present, this figure is 12%.

In the National Student Proficiency Exam held in 2006, university students who benefited from the Programme performed better than students pursuing advanced studies who did not receive scholarships. The ProUni students excelled in 14 of the endorsed areas of knowledge, including business management, bio-medicine, accounting, economic sciences, social communication, law, and teacher training.

The exam was taken by 386,524 students in 871 municipalities throughout the country in 5,701 courses at 1,600 institutions of higher learning.

In the business management course – the field with the largest number of students in the country – ProUni students recorded an average score of 48.7 on a scale of 0 to 100, while other students obtained an average score of 39.9. The greatest difference was recorded in bio-medicine: 55.0 versus 44.7.

education, this helps to create a positive employment experience, but the labour market's demand for greater skills can act as a means of exclusion for those who do not have these skills. Thus, demand-oriented policies are needed to reduce the school drop-out rate and provide greater educational

opportunities for those with fewer resources. In Mexico, the *Oportunidades* programme which covers about five million families, succeeded in reducing the school drop-out rate by 24% among the target population, and in Colombia the *Familias en Acción* programme significantly

increased the school attendance rate of children between 12 and 17. These programmes must be implemented within the context of a wider educational policy so that their achievements can become permanent.

The region has high quality universities and others with basic problems, a fact which seriously affects the prospects and possibilities of young people.

The professional or vocational training systems in Latin America are devised for those who do not have access to higher education or who fail to complete high school, as an attempt to guarantee the best possible transition between school and employment. The experience has been quite varied. At least three training models coexist: a) one based on professional training institutions, which is the widest and most consolidated; b) a model designed for specific groups; and c) the third generation model aimed at the social inclusion of young people.

In addition, in all the countries there are a variety of providers making up the private training or education markets. The users of

these markets are families, young persons, companies and the State. It is worth mentioning that the companies are another source of training but for a more limited group of the workforce.

It would seem that there are four main problems in the Latin American job training markets: a) the relevance of the training provided; b) inequity and exclusion of large segments of the population; c) the shortage of funding for education purposes; and d) the lack of transparency of this market and of its results. It is most likely that the importance of these factors varies from country to country.

Three models have been developed in Latin America to connect the educational supply with the production world: a) the occupational model, based on the US DACUM methodologies (developing a curriculum), developed in professional training institutions and pilot programmes in several countries; b) the functional model, represented by the Occupational Competency Standardization and Certification Council (CONOCER) of Mexico (1995), concerning the transformation of technical training and education (1995); and c)

the Spanish model of skills, which incorporates the functional approach to the development of a technical education subsystem linked to the general educational system. These models have been widely disseminated and tested by a number of institutions and accepted by various governments as well as by professional training institutions.

An important point is that the quality of the training is not known until individuals enter the labour market and perceive that it was unsuitable, and they are unable to complain as they would in any other transaction. There are several possible ways of solving this problem, ranging from the traditional methods adopted by Ministries of Education or Labour for authorizing operations, to those which measure the quality of training results. These mechanisms have the same objective of providing young persons with prior information concerning the quality of the education they will be acquiring.

In training, the problem is one of incomplete ownership rights, since this is an investment in which investors cannot take full

Demand-oriented policies are needed to reduce the school drop-out rate and provide greater educational opportunities for those with fewer resources.

advantage of all the benefits of their investment. Thus, the State often makes the investments in this sector. Employers who invest run the risk that once employees are trained they might leave the company, taking the benefits of the training with them. If employees invest, the company profits even if it has not invested in his training.

Education and vocational training must also contribute towards questioning gender stereotypes and sexual discrimination in the workplace.

3.5 Business training and development

Entrepreneurship can be a real opportunity for young people. Unfortunately, this subject has not been sufficiently analyzed, and despite the experience in the region there is comparatively less in this field than in other areas. Furthermore, there is a social, cultural and even political tendency to think of youth employment as essentially being within the scope of dependent employment. This is true in the education system which instils in children and adolescents a vision

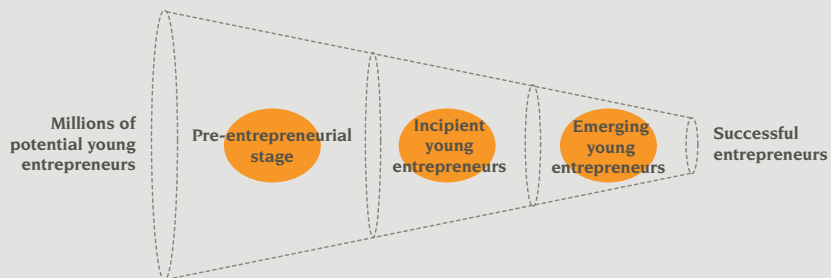
of work based on a dependent relationship. It is present even in the manner in which labour statistics are constructed. Most employment surveys in the region ask if a person looked for a job, for how long, the reasons for doing and even for not doing so; but they never ask why they did not start up a business or a company. This certainly does not mean that entrepreneur training programmes are the solution to youth unemployment and underemployment but they can play an important role.

In middle income countries such as those of Latin America, enterprises are equally guided by opportunity and by need; however, among young people the majority of entrepreneurs are guided by necessity or survival (GEM, 2006; Serida et al, 2006).

Usually, those who are entrepreneurs out of need come mainly from the low-income segment; in contrast, entrepreneurs driven by opportunity come from the higher income and higher educational strata. They have more resources to support their business options, a large circle of social contacts who provide them with

The Entrepreneurial Capacity Tunnel

The sketch proposed by Chigunta, 2002 is useful for defining policies to promote the business development by young persons.



The main idea is that there are phases in business development, which follow the life cycle of individuals:

- Pre-Entrepreneurial Phase, ranging from ages 15 to 18 years old, in which young persons prepare themselves and gather information regarding the productive business activity without actually executing any effective task conducive to the operation of a productive unit.
- Incipient Entrepreneurial Phase, ranging from ages 18 to 21, when the first steps are taken to organize an independent activity, the initial investment decisions are made and the first plans of the business are designed.
- Emerging Entrepreneur Phase, for persons aged 21 and older, is related to a certain amount of experience in managing a company and suitable technical know-how in the line of business.

The challenge is that in many Latin American countries, the age at which a business venture is started is too late and it is started out of necessity.

Graph source: TechnoServe

a better means of consolidating their business ventures and, in general, have better opportunities for business development than the poor young. Unlike Asia, young Latin American entrepreneurs are from the middle and upper classes, which contributes to inequity, one of the region's endemic problems⁹.

The main challenge for youth entrepreneurial promotion policies is to afford the poor young who wish to choose self-employment and business the same options as the youth of the middle and upper classes. This standardization of opportunities would provide a larger number of young persons with opportunities to contribute through their work to social integration and development.

In Colombia, in 2006, a "Law for the Promotion of an Entrepreneurial Culture" was enacted, one of the aims of which was to promote an entrepreneurial spirit in all the educational institutions of the country. The law stipulates that all official or

private institutions which provide formal education (nursery school, basic education, primary, high school education) are obliged to establish an educational area for business development, foster a positive attitude to creating business enterprises, design and teach entrepreneurial programmes and promote activities in support of business development (fairs, forums, seminars, roundtables, contests, etc.). In Chile, Peru and other countries, changes have been made to the national curricula for high schools to incorporate space for the promotion of business development among the youth.

Young persons who have already entered the labour market and who go to school to cover a deficit in their overall education have several choices. In this group, entrepreneurial education can be immediately applied and its design should therefore be suitably adapted. Programmes designed for the long-term have a content aimed at creating skills, providing information on processes and developing

⁹ According to Kantis (2005), in Latin America only 25% of the most viable enterprises (the "dynamic" ventures) stem from families with low income, unlike East Asia where this percentage is almost 50%.

entrepreneurial attitudes and values with no immediate specific application. In programmes for the medium and short term, the educational goal is usually to prepare a business project and examine its feasibility, as well as access to the production factors and the legal requirements for operation.

The programmes aimed at improving the entrepreneurship of women are important. Among the measures for promoting the business potential of young women, a gender focus in business management training and technological aspects is important in order to face the concentration of female led business enterprises in sectors such as personal services or garment manufacturing.

Concerns about the capabilities of young urban entrepreneurs have focused on the promotion of models of small individual companies, but it should be borne in mind that there are productive ventures which base their strength on cooperation among entrepreneurs. In various countries of the region, the cooperative system has solid promotional institutions in which youth play a key role in collaborative business.

3.6 Promoting inclusion

Latin America's main problem is profound inequality, which prevails even in the presence of economic growth. An important source of inequality is a labour market in which many must compete for few opportunities.

Young persons seeking jobs are aware of their exclusion based on gender, geographical origin, race, appearance, ethnic origin, age, and even for political reasons. To get a job or to be promoted at work, differences are made between employees with similar performance. Discrimination occurs when persons are classified according to criteria which have no bearing on the job or the workplace, and inequality is also rationalized. Breaking these patterns of discrimination and exclusion is a key challenge.

Youth policies must take into account measures aimed at overcoming the particular disadvantages faced by those who are most excluded.

The development of a legal framework on non-discrimination and equality at work is necessary

to protect the most vulnerable populations from discrimination, such as the youth, and particularly young women and indigenous women, as well as persons of African descent of both sexes.

Young women

Despite having increased their levels of education in relation to men, young women show low rates of participation and their presence in the group of young people who do not study or work is high. Due to cultural factors, the majority of young women continue to engage in traditional development processes, choosing careers reserved mainly for women, which require different general and professional skills, and which are not highly valued in the labour market.

Teenage pregnancy is one of the main factors restricting access to productive jobs and decent work, particularly among poor women with little education, who are unmarried and unattached. Despite the drop in the region's global fertility rate, early pregnancy, even among adolescents, is rising. The large majority of young mothers live with their parents,

performing household chores, taking care of their offspring and in some cases of younger siblings. They do not usually attend school or enter the labour market, and when they do, it is in very precarious occupations. This is a factor in the intergenerational reproduction of poverty, because adolescents from poor homes become pregnant at a younger age and consequently risk having more children.

In Latin America there are not enough institutions to care for the children of workers. Studies by the ILO have shown that a government policy of non intervention in this field produces high social and economic costs. If issues related to balancing work and family are considered to be private, their solution would be outside the competence of the State, and solutions will be sought which may tend to perpetuate social and gender inequalities.

Policies to provide equal rights and working conditions to women engaged in domestic services are essential. For young women in the region, this is the most important occupation (approximately 11 million). A large number of them are adolescents and young women

A few childcare programmes

In Latin America one can speak of three childcare support models:

- The company-based model. The regulations establish obligations for companies hiring women (let us say, more than 20 women with young infants), to provide childcare services (currently existent in Chile). There is an ongoing debate on the results of this type of intervention, since those women who work in small companies or in the informal sector are excluded from the benefit.

- The other two models are not directly related to employment. One is a community-based model, in which the mothers are organized in groups of eight, and one of them is the "babysitter" responsible for caring for the children of all the other members of the group, such as the the Wawa Wasis services in Peru. The other is a child care service provided by the State that exists in some countries of the Region, though with restricted coverage.

In other parts of the world there are other models:

- Government social security subsidy to pay "board certified child caregivers" for children under the age of six (France) or institutions which admit the children of low and medium wage earners (England).

- Tax relief for childcare services (for example, exemption from Value Added Tax in Australia).

- Tax relief for employers. In Holland, employers pay a percentage (determined by collective bargaining) of childcare costs (if both parents work, employers share these costs) and 30% of their contributions are tax deductible. In England, the childcare costs paid by employers are part of the cost of hiring staff and are tax deductible.

- Other successful measures which help relieve the burden of employees with domestic responsibilities involve setting more flexible hours for public services, which are not usually compatible with working hours (in keeping with ILO Recommendation 165, paragraph 32).

usually from poor peasant families, who start working at an early age. They are thus excluded from receiving an education and from enjoying protection of their rights.

In spite of the importance of their work, domestic workers receive the lowest levels of remuneration and social protection.

Composed mainly of females (over 90%), domestic service is the main occupational option for women with lower levels of education and income. Legislation on domestic services needs to be reviewed, since in most countries of the region, a domestic worker's

Social and professional qualification of domestic workers of Brazil

According to the Brazilian Household Survey (PNAD-IBGE), in Brazil, there are 6.6 million domestic workers, the majority of whom are of African descent, with an average income equivalent to nearly 90% of the minimum wage. Of this total, only 26% have a signed employment contract.

The Sector Qualification Plan "Citizen Domestic Work" (Ministry of Labour and Employment of Brazil, November 2005) is the first initiative of the Brazilian Government aimed at obtaining social and professional qualifications for domestic workers. It was created with the participation of the domestic workers' unions.

It is composed of three sub-projects: the first is aimed at increasing school enrolment and promoting the social and professional skills of domestic workers; the second, at strengthening their union organization, and the third at interaction between government ministries to develop public policies. It is coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and has the support of the Racial Equality Promotion Secretariat, the Special Secretariat for Women's Policies, in addition to other Ministries, the National Federation of Domestic Workers, and the ILO.

Developed as a pilot project during its first phase, the professional qualification, increased school enrolment and unionization components covered 350 domestic workers in seven cities: Aracaju, Sao Luiz, Salvador and Recife in the Northeast Region and Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Campiñas (SP) in the Southeast Region. The nationwide expansion of its coverage is expected to become a permanent public policy.

Two measures have been adopted as part of public policy, which contemplates action in the areas of Human Rights and Violence against Women, Housing, Health, Employment, Social Security and the Eradication of Domestic Child Labour. The first is the National Campaign for the Formalization and Valuation of Domestic Labour, launched in 2006 under the coordination of the Secretariat for Women's Policies (Law Nº11.324 dated July 19, 2006). This campaign proposes to provide income tax relief for employers who enter into official contracts with domestic workers. The second is a number of credit lines available for municipal governments to build houses for domestic workers (the first complex is under construction in the State of Bahia).

minimum wage is below the legal minimum wage, and their working hours are longer because the law does not stipulate the length of their workday but a minimum of rest hours.

Domestic workers are a clear example of the "multiple discrimination" that exists in Latin America,

since besides being female and poor they are mainly indigenous or of African descent.

Rural youth

Youth living in rural areas face major job restrictions. According to Celade (2005), they account for

22% of the total number of young persons in the region, around 23 million. Their problems are related to the shortage of opportunities in the rural sector, especially in areas with a high indigenous population. In the rural environment, production is centred on a few activities and strongly based on agriculture which, in different countries, continues to lag behind. Traditional work in rural areas tends to be temporary, physically demanding and poorly paid. One of the problems affecting rural youth is the lack of education and suitable training in their communities, which prevents them from finding suitable jobs.

In the rural area, the productivity of the land is usually valued above labour productivity. This limits the opportunities available to young people and causes them to attempt to leave the rural area. In some countries, the rural area "expels" young people, who emigrate not only in search of new opportunities but because they have an unattractive view of the type of personal development offered by the rural environment. Nonetheless, a more modern approach to rural development

can and must be adopted in accordance with its relationship to the urban environment. It is a well known fact that in certain areas, particularly of intermediate cities, the rural area is connected to the urban area through daily migration processes. Many workers living in rural areas work in urban areas and vice-versa; furthermore, many of the "urban" economic activities use rural components or inputs and vice-versa.

In an effort to rejuvenate the rural area, the "Land and Young Rural Entrepreneur Fund" programme in Mexico is targeted at persons aged 18 to 39. It offers technical and administrative training and grants scholarships worth up to the equivalent of 90 days of the daily minimum wage in force in the relevant geographical area. The young persons who successfully conclude this stage have access to the Land Fund, which provides funding for production projects and access to credit for leasing parcels of land or purchasing land rights. Another experience is the programme "Occupational Education for Rural Youth of Colombia," aimed at persons aged 16 to 25 who are not enrolled in

other SENA training programmes and who do not have any formal labour ties. The programme's general objective is to train unemployed youth in the rural sector to improve their chances of entry into the labour market. In addition, it plans to conduct training courses throughout the country.

However, these efforts require complementary interventions in other areas which will allow them to increase the competitiveness of the rural area, through investments in infrastructure and access to markets and inputs, in order to guarantee reasonable yields in economic activities which sustain the majority of rural residents, particularly when such activities are usually identifiable.

The evolution of agroindustry in many Latin American countries must be suitably considered to make the rural environment attractive for young persons who wish to contribute productively towards the progress of their societies.

Indigenous youth

Indigenous youth constitute one of the most vulnerable and

unprotected groups. According to several estimates, the native population in Latin America fluctuates between 30 and 50 million. There is a consensus that a large percentage of them are concentrated in five countries: Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico and Peru. Independent estimates indicate that approximately one third of the native population in Bolivia and Mexico are young people. In the labour markets, the native workers, including youth, face discrimination because of their origin and race. Furthermore, in many cases in areas where these communities are settled, typical labour relations are almost nonexistent and are instead based on cultural standards (such as community work).

In their work experience, young indigenous people face greater restrictions than their non-indigenous counterparts. In Bolivia, for example, a recent study has found that indigenous persons are 15 to 30 per cent more likely than non-indigenous persons to pass on their poverty to their children (Hernani, 2007).

The programmes conducted for indigenous youth have dealt more

with protecting their religious beliefs and cultural values or encouraging orderly migration – elements which are important in themselves. However, interventions in the labour market and in effective policies to address job discrimination have been scarce. It is therefore essential for these topics to be incorporated into the labour policy agendas of countries with an indigenous population.

3.7 Effective institutional framework

Almost all the governments of the region are developing initiatives in favour of rural youth, with the aim of increasing their skills so as to address the issues affecting them. However, these initiatives have their limitations, which need to be overcome because in most cases, youth issues are addressed through programmes rather than policies¹⁰.

The limitations of these plans are evident in the “youth project” type educational programmes, which

initially had an interesting impact but slowly faded away over time. The lesson here is that a programme can be successful for a certain period of time, but in order to solve the deeper problem the structures which created the problem must be modified. We must move from the application and execution of programmes to the design of effective policies to structurally and permanently deal with the problems. Another limitation of such programmes is their emphasis on education, even though the different opinion surveys indicate that employment (unemployment or underemployment), is the main concern of youth. Without ignoring the importance of education as a key element in shaping the development of youth labour, it is clear that labour policies must play a greater role than they had in the past.

It is difficult for initiatives which are not articulated in a plan or a policy to obtain results, and they are usually discontinued. They can often be scattered, diverse, varied and can lack cohesiveness and

¹⁰ Policies have broad and permanent goals, universal coverage and are institutionalized (have a legal and organic base), while programmes have specific objectives, they are either temporary or specific and are aimed at specific populations.

articulation with one another. This issue is so important that it could even be said that the problem is not what to do – because the areas of intervention are more or less clear – but how to implement initiatives which are truly useful for youth. In some cases, in addition to dispersed efforts, the activities undertaken by different entities are often duplicated, sometimes in the same geographical area. There is a clear need to establish an institutional framework to eliminate inaccuracies, reduce dispersion and institutional duplication, and suitably regulate the authority assigned to the public institutions in charge of promoting policies and actions in favour of youth and, especially, in education, training and labour–related issues.

In the past decade the National Youth Organizations have yielded

positive results in some countries of the region. They were set up to coordinate the work of public bodies with the youth institutions. These institutions have adopted different modalities, sometimes as ministerial departments or State Secretariats, and there are even organizations or bodies which are not dependent upon the Ministries but fall under the direct jurisdiction of the President of the Republic. They exercise a variety of functions such as management, debate and discussion, coordination, execution and assessment. In practice, one or more of these duties are combined, with emphasis on any one of them¹¹. Unfortunately, many of these bodies lack precise frameworks or mandates or the necessary financial resources, which prevents them from building stable teams of professionals and suitable experts.

¹¹ A few of them have even attempted to classify models of these initiatives. At the end of the 1990's, Rodríguez (2000) found 5 models: a) the Chilean "prototype" whereby the National Youth Institute concentrates on conducting studies and research to learn about the problems of youth and rigorously assesses public policies; b) the Uruguayan "prototype" in which the National Youth Institute does not conduct research or execute specific programs directly but plays a central role in the allocation of funds and assessing the management of «third parties»; c) the Colombian model in which the priority is to support the development of municipal and local youth policies; d) the Mexican model («Causa Joven») which gives priority to the strengthening of civil society and providing support to youth organizations; and e) the National Youth Movement model of Costa Rica, characterized by promoting youth organization and participation. Ernesto Rodríguez, *Juventud y políticas públicas en América Latina: Experiencias y desafíos de la gestión institucional*, in: Última Década N°13 (Youth and public policies in Latin America: Experiences and challenges of institutional management. Last Decade N°13). Viña del Mar: Ediciones Cidra, 2000.

The existence of these bodies is a step forward in the region, even though in most countries, institutional complexity has not been reduced by their creation.

In the United States of America "A shared vision for youth" alliance was created in 2004, designed to articulate efforts and build a common vision and action in relation to youth.

One basic institutional problem is the existence of initiatives or programmes which are unable to attend to the large number of young persons, considering the diversity of descriptions and needs in the region. Institutions must try to articulate the supply of services with the demands of young people. The existence of youth organizations can contribute to this. There are also other alternatives.

One of these is the assumption that institutions will continue to be dispersed, and that there is therefore a need to put in place measures to stop this from being a problem, and allow services to reach the youth who really need them. An example of this is the "One Stop" centres in the United States of America, in which the variety of services of-

fered by institutions is concentrated at the local level to provide youth with an orderly and unified service. The important issue in this option is the connection made with the young person. The idea is simple: dispersion is a part of the structure of governments and it is, therefore, better to acknowledge this. However, young persons do not have to suffer as a result.

Another alternative is to try to organize young people's needs, such as employment, to provide them with suitable responses. In Jamaica, within the context of the Youth Employment Network (YEN), the Federation of Young Entrepreneurs (JEF) has prepared a single youth registration form to uniformly gather information on their characteristics and needs. This can be done with some incentives, at no cost to the State. In Mexico, the National Youth Organization has managed to register a large number of young persons through the "Youth Power" card, whereby young persons are given discounts at more than 11,000 affiliated establishments. In the case of socially disconnected youth, more direct methods of contact are required and

The "One Stop" system for the provision of training and employment services in the United States of America

The One Stop centres enable their users to receive an assessment of their level of skills and knowledge, obtain information on different employment services, obtain counselling on available training and assistance programmes as well as information on their quality, obtain vocational and professional counselling and access to updated information on the labour market (as well as on the programmes conducted by the Departments of Education, Health, Social Security and Justice, among others). The centres are selected, authorized and supervised by local Boards through a competitive bidding process and possess affiliate institutions: currently there are more than 1,800 One Stop centres and around 1,400 affiliated centres.

The One Stop centres are the meeting point between young people and the majority of available services. They have strong ties with the business sector and are used by employers to select their staff.

this job must be done by organizations such as "Youth at Risk" (Guatemala) or the National Youth Service (Jamaica).

At the initiative of the Secretary General of the United Nations, in 2005 the General Assembly called for the different countries to submit National Youth Employment Action Plans and the respective progress reports. These plans require a suitable institutional environment. Some countries have made progress in this field. The Youth Employment Network (YEN)¹² is working directly in Brazil, Ecuador

and Jamaica to establish guidelines and instruments to be followed by the remaining countries.

The promotion of young people's participation in the preparation and implementation of policies for youth is essential. They are the lifeblood of an institutional body, which will serve their needs.

3.8 The contribution of workers' and employers' organizations

Employers' and workers' organizations can play an active

¹² <http://www.ilo.org/yen>

role in the promotion of youth development for obtaining decent jobs. The subject of youth employment is on both agendas, and is one of the areas in which they agree on many issues. These organizations have implemented a series of actions and initiatives for youth. The presence of youth in these organizations must be strengthened by encouraging young persons to participate more actively in them and by including this subject on institutional agendas and in social dialogue.

Judging by their membership, the presence of young people in workers' organizations is low. It is important to note that new world trade union organization has established quotas for women and youth. Unions are trying to articulate youth's interests in the labour market in their preferred fields (ecology, minorities, pacifism, development of technologies, etc.), by interrelating with other stakeholders and institutions. Actions in this direction include discussion, debate and training efforts, as well as in-depth research.

The presence of youth in the employers' organizations is also

low. These organizations have been quite active in the design and implementation of initiatives aimed at improving not only membership by new enterprises led by young persons, but also youth employment in general. Examples of this are the promotion of the Youth Employment Network in Jamaica (promoted by the Federation of Employers), encouraging the participation of young entrepreneurs in employer organizations, and forging ties with training institutions in some countries.

Another approach is to place the youth employment issue on the social dialogue agenda. One way in which this process could operate would be by establishing a closer link between the bodies involved in social dialogue, usually in the labour area, and the National Youth Organizations, whose action is geared toward the youth.

In general, there is a high level of consensus between social actors on the importance of promoting youth employment, and on their education and training for work. There are certain areas, particularly in labour legislation, in which many differences may arise, but it is clear

Experiences and proposals of employers' organizations

Employers' organizations place a great deal of importance on the need for economic growth and a macroeconomic, educational and legislative environment to promote employment. These organizations have had several experiences, in terms of youth employment, in areas such as:

- Design and implementation of youth employment policies, such as support for the Youth Employment Network in Jamaica, promoted by the Jamaican Employers Federation (JEF). This is a platform which has lent credibility to the process in that country.
- The participation of young entrepreneurs in business organizations, such as the Committee of Young Entrepreneurs of Mexico (COPARMEX), or the young entrepreneurs who promoted the JYEN in Jamaica.
- Labour intermediation services, such as the labour observatories in Colombia managed by the Chambers of Commerce which provide contact services between labour supply and demand.
- Promotion of an entrepreneurial spirit, to modify the training of young persons who are often educated to become employees and not employers. One example of this is the ANDI del Futuro programme, managed by the National Association of Entrepreneurs of Colombia, which provides support for the promotion of real business ventures with young members of ANDI.
- Ties with educational and training institutions, through the technical apprenticeship programme in Uruguay.

Experiences and proposals of workers' organizations

Workers' organizations have given a significant role to the quality of young persons' jobs. They think decent work should involve actions and initiatives from their organization at three levels:

- The institutional plan, driving the need of labour policies to place a great deal of importance to jobs of quality, encouraging more and stronger participation from young persons. On the subject, IPEC-union programmes have been seen as successful in the region, not only in the child labour area, but also in the youth one.
- Civilian society, articulating "youth interests" in the labour market through actions in areas to which young persons pay more attention (ecology, respect to minorities, pacifist movements, use of technologies, etc.) and connecting them with other actors and social institutions. Experiences such as the Eremin Project in Sao Paulo and the Universitas Programmes in Central America are considered as advances towards this direction.
- Trade unions, trying to approach labour associations to youth, through vocational training actions, debate and discussion, as well as studies regarding the relationship between youth and trade unions. An interesting experience on this subject is the UNI, a young persons' network in Argentina.

that through open dialogue based on technical studies, a consensus may be reached on this and other issues.

Participation by youth in the development of countries is impossible to achieve through public policy

alone. The active contribution of employer and employee organizations is essential. In addition, a goal can only be achieved if the youth participate in and feel represented by these institutions.

CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of this Report is to contribute towards actions for creating conditions for most young people in Latin America to obtain productive jobs and to be able to progress in decent employment.

The social contract which must bind the countries of the region together and help to overcome the trends of social exclusion always present in every group, requires the effective inclusion of youth in Latin American societies. Education (basic and advanced) and employment, (understood as self-employment or dependent employment) which will facilitate successful personal development, must be part of this contract.

The Report has made a serious attempt to provide a better description of the region's youth, who are very diverse. These youth should not be viewed as a problem but awaiting opportunity, without false romanticism. They should be understood as an asset to our countries.

The idea of a decent employment record has allowed us to view these diverse young persons in a dynamic and not static manner. Thus, challenges have been identified beyond the traditional common ground related to youth unemployment.

This Report is not a closed book but an ongoing contribution. The attached national reports seek to achieve the same purpose. An institution such as the ILO can serve its constituents with principles, ideas and comparative international experience. The 2006-2015 Hemispheric Agenda to promote decent work, which guides institutional action in the Americas, is an example of this. The promotion of decent work among youth in Latin America is essential for it to remain valid in the daily lives of the people.

The strengthening of democracy and human development in Latin America are more and more the responsibility of its youth.