

SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF THE CHILD LABOUR SURVEY IN GUATEMALA

Edition

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The summary results presented here come from the children's work module included in the Living Standard Measurement Study survey (*Encuesta Nacional de Condiciones de Vida*, ENCOVI) conducted by the Guatemalan National Statistics Institute (INE) from July to December 2000, with support from the Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (SIMPOC) of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) of the International Labour Office (ILO).¹ The child labour survey was carried out to collect information on school, domestic, economic, and recreational activities of the population aged 5-17 years in the country.

Children aged 5 to 17 years

According to survey results, in the year 2000 there are 4,006,108 persons aged 5 to 17 years in the country, accounting for 35.2% of total population in Guatemala. Of these, 50.6% are male, 49.4% are female, 42.7% are aged 5 to 9 years, 37.8% are 10 to 14 years old, and 19.5% are adolescents in the 15-17 year age group. By area of residence, 65.2% of these children are rural dwellers. Rural population is slightly younger than the urban one, with 80.9% of rural population in this age group aged between 5 and 14 years, compared to 79.7% of urban population. On the other hand, girls show a slightly higher urbanisation rate – 35.3% vs. 34.2% of boys residing in urban areas.

The survey reveals harsher living conditions for children in rural areas with respect to those in urban environments. For instance, whereas 89.7% of urban residents aged 5-17 years live in dwellings with access to piped water (in their dwelling or property), only 58.5% of rural residents in that age bracket enjoy the same service. In the case of electricity, whereas 94.6% of urban residents aged 5-17 years make use of it, only 55.7% of the rural children do.

Household chores in the own home

Assuming for the analysis a minimum average of 2, 3, and 4 hours per day spent on household chores for age groups 5-9, 10-14, and 15-17 years, respectively, it turns out that 24.6% of children in Guatemala devote at least this minimum time to the chores.² The percentage increases to 37.9% for girls, and it is just 11.5% for boys. Of the total group, 76.3% are female,

¹ For a more detailed presentation and analysis of the child labour survey results in Guatemala, refer to *Understanding Children's Work in Guatemala* (ILO, 2003), and *Analysis of child labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic* (ILO, 2004).

² The idea behind these minimum hours is only to illustrate the extent to which many children bear the burden of domestic chores at home, which could be considered excessive for their age, and also to set forth the differences between sexes, age groups, and areas of residence. These minima are not meant to become a standard for future studies, but are based on previous research. See, for example, *Understanding Children's Work in El Salvador* (ILO, 2004), and *Understanding Children's Work in Guatemala* (ILO, 2003), where a minimum average of 4 hours a day (28 average hours per week) is used in the analysis, and *Estudio analítico e interpretación de los resultados de la encuesta sobre caracterización de la población entre 5 y 17 años en Colombia* (ILO, 2003), where the analysis is based on a minimum of 15 hours per week devoted to household chores.

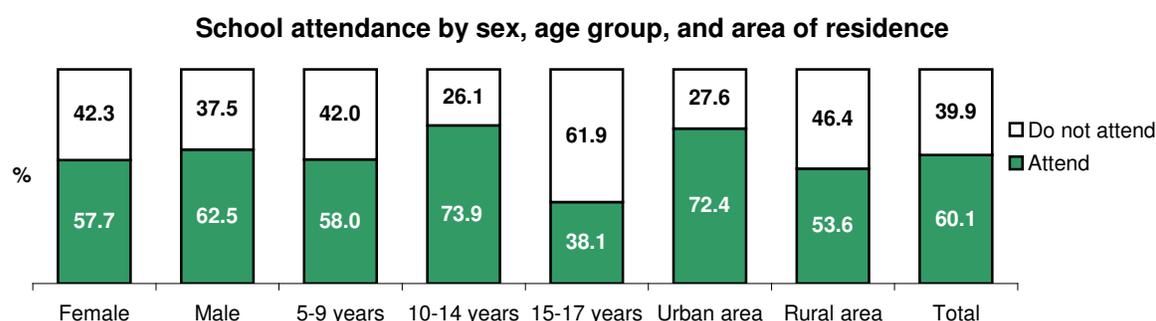
although the female percentage of the total increases consistently with age, reaching 92.0% for adolescents aged 15-17 years.

Responsibility for household chores falls more on youngsters aged 10-14 years. Assuming the same number of minimum hours by age bracket, the share of children performing household chores in their own homes increases from 16.6% to 31.6% when moving from the 5-9 to the 10-14 year group. Some 28.4% of adolescents aged 15-17 years perform household chores at least for the specified minimum. The overall percentage is remarkably higher in rural (27.4%) than in urban areas (19.3%).

School attendance for this group is merely 58.9%. Those who manage to attend school spend an average of 5.2 hours a day doing household chores, while this average goes up to 6.9 hours per day among those who do not attend school. There is a significant gap between females and males concerning average daily hours spent on housekeeping tasks –6.3 and 4.6, respectively. The difference between rural and urban areas is slight –5.9 and 5.8 hours per day, respectively.

Children's schooling

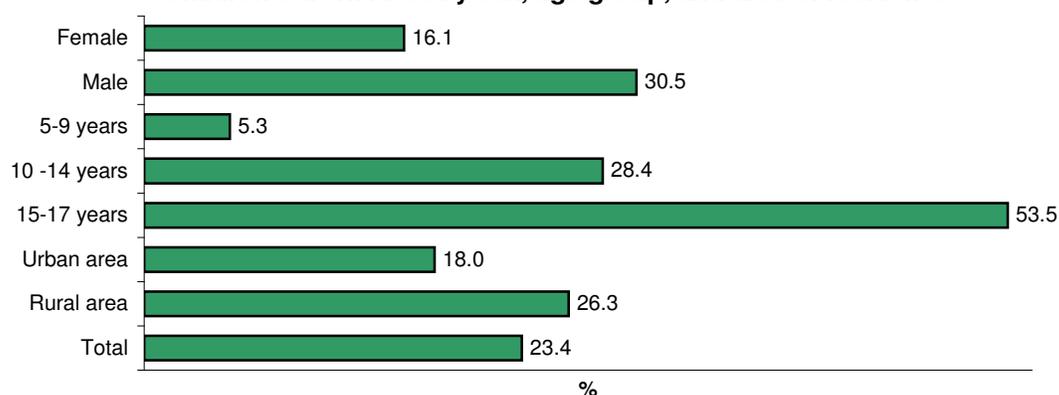
Survey data uncover a serious problem of school non-attendance in the country. Just 60.1% of girls and boys aged 5-17 years claim to attend an educational centre. School non-attendance is a more serious problem for girls than for boys, in rural areas more so than in urban settings, and particularly for adolescents aged 15 to 17 years, of which, only 38.1% attend school.



Working children

For the year 2000 in Guatemala, survey data estimate that 937,530 children aged 5-17 years are working, i.e., 23.4% of the total population in this age bracket. The problem of working at an early age affects boys (30.5%) more than girls (16.1%), rural residents (26.3%) more than urban dwellers (18.0%), and increases with age.

Children's work rates by sex, age group, and area of residence



Of the total of working children, 34.0% are girls and 66.0% are boys. The largest group is the 10-14 year age bracket (45.8%), followed by 15- to 17-year-old adolescents (44.6%). Boys and girls aged 5-9 years amount to 9.6% of working children. Most of the working children, 73.3%, live in rural areas.

ENCOVI results show that in 2000 the country had 393,908 people working below the minimum legal age required to join the labour market under certain conditions (14 years). This figure accounts for 42.0% of total working children. On the other hand, the average age of working boys and girls is merely 13.6 years, male and female alike. The average age in urban areas is 14.1 years, whereas in rural settings it is only 13.4 years.

Percent distribution of working children by age at which started to work, by sex and area of residence

residence area	Age at which started to work (in years)			Total
	Before 10	10 to 14	15 to 17	
Male	39.2	53.3	7.5	100.0
Female	37.0	53.0	10.0	100.0
Urban area	27.5	54.7	17.8	100.0
Rural area	42.4	52.7	4.9	100.0
Total	38.5	53.2	8.3	100.0

Note: The sums of details may not be exactly equal to the totals due to rounding.

It is worth noticing that 91.7% of working children claim they began working before they turned 15 years of age. The percentage of working children who began working before 10 and between 10 and 14 years of age is higher for boys than for girls. In the case of working rural

residents, 95.1% joined the labour force before reaching age 15.

The main industries where these working children are found are agriculture, forestry, hunting, and fishing (55.8%); trade, hotels, and restaurants (17.9%); manufacturing industry (12.1%); and

community, social, and personal services³ (7.9%). The remaining 6.4% work in the “other” industries.⁴

Percent distribution of working children by industry, by sex, age group, and area of residence

Sex, age group and area of residence	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Trade	Services	Others	Total
Female	31.5	20.9	31.1	16.0	0.6	100.0
Male	68.3	7.6	11.1	3.7	9.4	100.0
5 to 9	71.3	8.8	17.7	1.3	0.9	100.0
10 to 14	60.8	11.1	16.1	7.0	4.9	100.0
15 to 17	47.2	13.8	19.8	10.2	9.1	100.0
Urban area	19.3	18.2	33.2	19.0	10.4	100.0
Rural area	69.0	9.9	12.4	3.8	4.9	100.0
Total	55.8	12.1	17.9	7.9	6.4	100.0

Note: The sums of details may not be exactly equal to the totals due to rounding.

The manufacturing, commerce, and services sectors are relatively more important for working girls than for boys. Agriculture is the main sector for all age groups, but its relative importance decreases with age. On the other hand, trade, manufacturing, services, and “other” industries are relatively more important in urban than in rural areas.

The most common status in employment for all working children is unpaid family worker, which is relatively more prevalent in the case of rural areas and girls, although it decreases with age.

Percent distribution of working children by status in employment, by sex, age group and area of residence

Sex, age group and area of residence	Salaried employee	Farmhand, labourer or domestic worker	Own account worker	Unpaid family worker	Unpaid helper or worker	Total
Male	19.6	17.1	2.6	55.7	5.0	100.0
Female	15.8	17.3	4.9	58.2	3.8	100.0
5 - 9 years	0.7	5.4	0.6	85.7	7.6	100.0
10 -14 years	11.8	15.4	2.1	64.9	5.9	100.0
15 - 17 years	28.9	21.6	5.3	41.7	2.6	100.0
Urban area	33.8	19.6	4.8	38.8	3.1	100.0
Rural area	12.7	16.3	2.9	63.0	5.1	100.0
Total	18.3	17.2	3.4	56.5	4.6	100.0

Note: The sums of details may not be exactly equal to the totals due to rounding.

Working children in Guatemala spend an average of 39.6 hours per week at work. The weekly working hour difference between boys and girls is small, as shown by averages of 39.6 and 39.4, respectively. The difference concerning area of residence is larger: 42 average weekly hours in urban settings and 38.7 hours in rural areas. Workloads increase with age. Children aged 5-9

³ According to the International Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC), the services industry includes: public administration and defense, compulsory social security; education; health and social work; other community, social, and personal service activities; and private households with employed persons.

years work an average of 26.4 hours per week, whereas those in the 10-14 year age bracket do it for 36.3 hours per week, and adolescents work for an average of 45.7 hours per week.

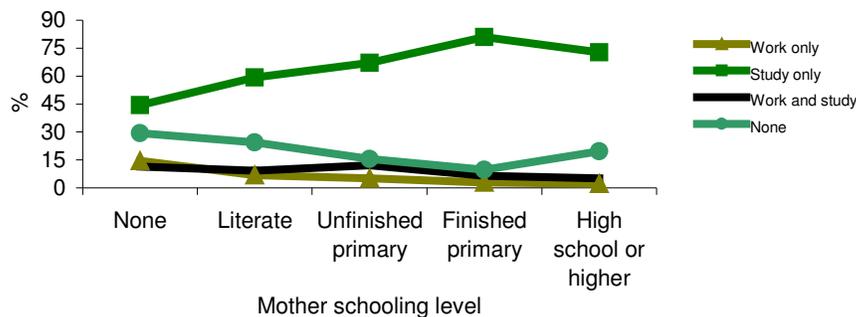
The absence of the father, the mother, or both parents from home is a situation more frequently found in the case of working children than in the case of non-working boys and girls. Survey data show that 8.1% of working children do not live with either their father or their mother, which is the case for only 6.6% of non-working children.

Percent distribution of children by residence of parents, by own activity status

Children's activity status	Parent residence			
	Mother living at home		Father living at home	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Working	89.5	10.5	75.6	24.4
Non-working	91.7	8.3	77.9	22.1

Similarly, children's work and the schooling/work combination exhibit a declining trend as the mother's schooling level increases. The full dedication to study is also positively correlated with mother's level of schooling.

Percent distribution of children by activity, by mother's schooling level



Child labour

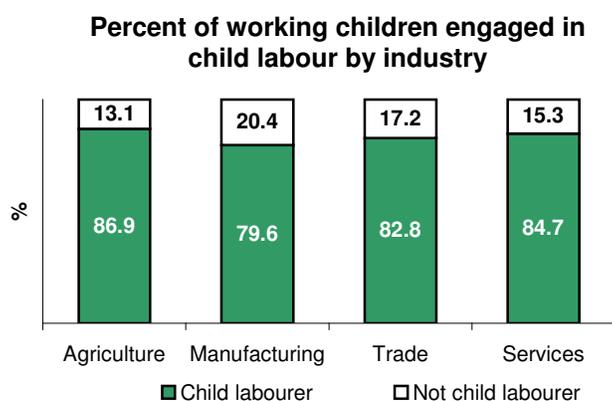
The child labourer population consists of working boys and girls whose involvement in economic activities violates national legislation and/or international conventions because it is physically, mentally, socially, or morally harmful or detrimental to children, or because it somehow interferes with their schooling.⁵ Based on survey results, an estimated 86% of working children in

⁴ The remaining sectors are: mining and quarrying; electricity, gas, and water supply; construction; transport, storage and communications; financial intermediation; real estate, business, and rental activities; not well specified.

⁵ Pursuant to national legislation, relevant international conventions, and previous studies, in analysing data from the Guatemalan child labour survey the following groups are defined as child labourers: 5- to 17-year-olds working in mining and quarrying; construction; electricity, gas, and water supply; transport, storage, and communications; 5-to-17-year-olds working on day/night or night shifts; working children under 14 years of age; 14- to 17-year-olds working over 42 hours a week or 7 hours a day; 5- to 17-year-olds who start or finish working between 6pm and 6am. These parameters are used for illustration purposes only, and are not to be construed as a proposal for legislation.

Guatemala are engaged in child labour. About 32.8% of them are girls and 67.2% are boys; 26.5% are urban residents and 73.5% live in rural areas; 11.1% are aged 5-9 years, 49.0% are 10-14 years old, and 39.9% are adolescents in the 15-17 year bracket.

The sector with the highest percentage of child labour among working children is agriculture, followed by services, trade, and manufacturing.



Child labour is accompanied by high levels of school non-attendance. Only 45.5% of children involved in child labour manage to attend an educational centre.

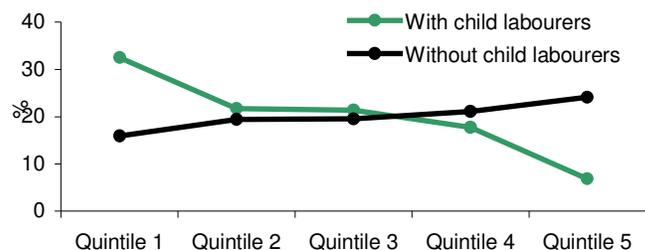
Households of child labourers

According to survey results, 18.3% of heads in households of child labourers are women, as compared to 17.3% of household heads in the case of 5- to 17-year-olds who do not work, or who work but not in child labour.

On the other hand, the households of child labourers are larger than those of other persons in the 5-17 age group, with an average size of 6.9 members, 1.2 persons above the average for other households. This difference stems from the higher average number of family members under 18 years of age in households of child labourers, 4.2, compared to 3.1 in the other households, thus implying a higher degree of demographic dependency in households where child labour exists. Whereas in the households of persons aged 5-17 years who are not involved in child labour there are 1.4 dependants for every person of productive age, this ratio increases to 1.7 in households where children are involved in child labour.⁶

⁶ In estimating the rate of dependency in this case, the dependant population was defined as consisting of people younger than 18 years and older than 64 years, leaving the population of productive age to be those between 18 and 64 years.

Percent distribution of households with and without child labourers by socio-economic quintile



Despite their larger size, households with children engaged in child labour face less favourable living conditions and are found in the lowest socio-economic quintiles.⁷

Conclusions

- About 24.6% of children aged 5 to 17 years, mostly female, spend many hours in housekeeping work in their own home, as per the minimum hours used in this analysis. This group shows a low 58.9% school attendance level.
- Low school attendance problems are evidenced at the national level (60.1%), but are more serious among females (57.7%), rural residents (53.6%), and particularly adolescents (38.1%).
- The survey identified 937,530 persons aged 5-17 years working in Guatemala in 2000, accounting for 23.4% of population in this age bracket.
- Children's work in the country has a rural and male profile that increases with age.
- 393,908 persons under the minimum legal age (14 years) are working, and 91.7% of child workers began to work before they turned 15 years of age.
- Agriculture, forestry, hunting and fishing make up the main industry for working girls and boys, absorbing 55.8% of them. Trade, however, is the main sector for urban residents (33.2%).
- Close to 86% of working children are involved in child labour. The sector with the highest percentage of children in child labour is agriculture (86.9%), followed by services (84.7%), trade (82.8%), and manufacturing (79.6%).
- The school non-attendance rate among children engaged in child labour is high (54.5%).
- The households of child labourers are larger than those of boys and girls aged 5-17 years who are not in that situation, with an average of 6.9 and 5.7 members, respectively, and they additionally face harder socio-economic situations.

⁷ The socio-economic level was measured through an index that summarizes information about housing (prevailing wall and floor materials, average number of persons per bedroom), water connection, drainage, telephone and electricity, and asset ownership (TV set, automobile, etc.). For more details on the construction of said index, refer to *Analysis of child labour in Central America and the Dominican Republic* (ILO, 2004).