GOOD PRACTICES
TO END CHILD LABOUR

Comprehensive protection guided by data

Observatory of the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour

Country
Brazil

Creation year and validity
In June 2019, the Observatory for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour[1]. was launched. The application is currently available by accessing the link: https://smartlabbr.org/trabalhoinfantil/

Responsible institution(s)
The Observatory, which is a joint development between the Public Ministry of Labour (MPT) of Brazil and the International Labour Organization (ILO), operates through a multidisciplinary knowledge management platform, with a focus on promoting decent work based on the organization and publication of data with an emphasis on child labour. It is one of the four thematic observatories of the SmartLab Initiative[2], which also includes occupational safety and health, slave labor and human trafficking, and diversity and equality of opportunities at work.

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1   Bond L. See in: https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/direitos-humanos/noticia/2019-07/mpt-lanca-plataforma-com-informacoes-sobre-trabalho-infantil.

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2   See in: https://smartlabbr.org/saibamais/smartlab.

Child Labour and Information and Communications Technologies

Within the framework of the Regional Initiative for Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labour, eight factors have been prioritized with the potential to accelerate the rate of reduction in child labour and advance towards the achievement of target 8.7 of the SDGs.

As social challenges continue, the differential value of the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), to innovate in actions aimed at development and social inclusion in the countries, grows. ICTs can improve and make more effective the responses of governments and organizations for the fulfillment of fundamental rights. Therefore, they have the potential to reduce gaps in education, economy, health, work, etc. They help to produce and process, organize and analyze information in a cost-efficient way to make evidence-based policy decisions and subsequently assess them.

Issue we proposed to address

Although Brazil produces a diversity of data that are relevant for the formulation and development of public policies, these are usually added to the National Statistical System and, in general, remain under-used and distant from public administrators, academia, public organizations, private and civil society. At the same time, opportunities are missed to collect more relevant data for public policy monitoring and evaluation, mainly due to the use of high-cost traditional methods.

Regarding child labor, the MPT stated in 2019 that the collection of specific data on the subject faced various difficulties in the country. Among them the dispersion of the information, the underreporting, the difficulty to understand the available data and the omission in the measurements that resulted in the invisibility of the victims. It was considered that, although the reduction in the number of boys, girls and adolescents at risk or in a situation of child labor was undeniable over time, it was necessary to improve the gathering of data to make the challenge to be overcome more precisely visible.

The Observatory then emerged as an alternative to face the aforementioned difficulties, and as a tool with great potential to inform public policies, programs and projects developed with the aim of preventing and eradicating child labour in all its forms.

At that time, the MPT[3] reported, based on data and information from the Observatory, that between 2007 and 2018, 300,000 work accidents had been reported in people under 18 years of age. In the same period, there had been 42 deaths as a result of work-related accidents in the 14-17-year-old group.

Regarding slave labour, the Labour Inspection Secretariat of the Ministry of the Economy indicated that the total number of victims rescued between 2003 and 2018 was 937 children and adolescents.

Objectives of the practice

The purpose of the Observatory is to provide relevant information for making public policy decisions aimed at the prevention and eradication of child labour. It gathers data and existing indicators from various sources and performs certain information cross-references, as well as its geo-referencing for the 27 federative units and the 5,570 municipalities of the country, providing more enhanced situational analyzes on the problem.

3   Bond L. See in: https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/direitos-humanos/noticia/2019-07/mpt-lanca-plataforma-com-informacoes-sobre-trabalho-infantil

Target audiences

The Observatory is mainly aimed at people who have roles in the public function and who are responsible for decision-making in public policies, as well as academia and other competent and interested parties in the prevention and eradication of child labour, including civil society. The Observatory seeks to support the management of comprehensive care initiatives for victims, with a focus on reducing vulnerabilities to the worst forms of exploitation of human labour: forced labour, child labour and human trafficking.

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Methodology developed

The Observatory is based on public and official information repositories that are part of the National Statistical System. It includes results of surveys conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) in the areas of education, health, work, social security, justice and assistance and social development, as well as administrative records of different ministries and public and private organizations in Brazil.

The tool allows queries with different descriptors and has filters by geographic area, age groups and lines of work. It is possible to access detailed information on the subject, such as the total number of children and adolescents who are victims of accidents at work or slave labour. It aggregates public data extracted from multiple sources to compile, organize and process it so that the available information has great potential to add value to decision-making processes.

With the use of statistical and econometric techniques, a large number of unpublished indicators were created for municipalities, federative units and the country in general. The platform incorporates, automates and updates a series of indicators from the Municipal System of Decent Work Indicators (SIMTD) developed jointly by the ILO Brazil in cooperation with IBGE and the Brazilian Government.

The sources used are:

- The **Demographic Census,** which is a strategic instrument for the detailed mapping of child labour because it is applied in all Brazilian municipalities. The 2010 data, from the Census point of view, are the most current in a historical statistical series that is fundamental for the development of public policies for the prevention and eradication of child labour. This instrument is particularly relevant because the distribution of financial resources at the federal level is determined from the results it produces and serves as a reference for the development of other research and information surveys within the scope of the National Statistical System. The information from the historical series (2010, 2020, 2030) of the Demographic Census has an additional and strategic importance: the evaluation of the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for the 5,570 Brazilian municipalities.

- The **Brazil Trial of 2017,** a measurement promoted by the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research (INEP) of the Ministry of Education that was carried out with the census measurement method, reaching all Brazilian public schools. One of the questionnaires addressed the issue of child labour outside the home. This information provides a great opportunity to collect more up-to-date data based on the responses of students, especially from public schools, and facilitates the location (active search) of children in child labour.

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- **The 2017 IBGE Agricultural Census,** which provides information on child labour in agricultural establishments for boys and girls. For Brazil and for the federative units, the information is also compiled according to the kinship ties with the producer, whether or not it is family farming. These collected data contribute to the design of policy for the prevention and eradication of child labour, specifically in rural areas. In particular, this measurement is relevant since in these areas child labour has different characteristics from those observed in urban settings. With this dimension, the phenomenon can be more easily understood in context.

- **Accidents at work with children and adolescents** registered in labour relations and in the Database of Communications of Work Accidents (CatWeb). This information is compiled for the Occupational Health and Safety Observatory.

- **Boys, girls and adolescents rescued from slave labour,** which offers information on two dimensions: the place of birth of boys, girls and adolescents rescued from slave labour, which reveals the level of human development, vulnerabilities and residence, to establish whether it relates to places where jobs analogous to slavery are often requested.

- **Social protection and guarantee of rights,** based on qualitative and quantitative data on the presence or performance of public institutions in different geographic units (Brazil, federative units and municipalities), which reflect the greater or lesser presence of a social protection network that includes control, care for victims and prevention through the reduction of vulnerabilities.

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- **Risks of commercial sexual exploitation on federal highways and roads (Mapear Project - PRF),** a registry that maps vulnerable points in a communication network that spans 71 thousand kilometers in 26 states.

- **Administrative records of the Single Land Registry (including "Bolsa Família"),** which provide information on families in situations of poverty and extreme poverty, in which the process of actively searching for children and adolescents in child labour situations must be qualified and expanded.

- **Apprenticeship,** built from information of the Inspection Secretariat of the Ministry of Economics and based on RAIS and CAGED, 2019, offers information about the number of apprentices hired[4] and how much of this potential has been put to good use.

Throughout the Observatory, there are spaces that detail how the information was obtained and organized, and the data sources are explained, as well as the presentation options. This is an intuitive and self-explanatory product. To promote its use, the MPT and the ILO also organize a series of training workshops and outreach events, encouraging the use of its information for decision-making processes.

Expected Results

With the commissioning of the Observatory, the knowledge base on child labour in Brazil has increased, which has allowed the development of prevention and eradication initiatives, informed, supported by evidence and oriented towards results. This process is particularly notable in small municipalities, precisely where the information deficit is greatest and its access and use is more relevant.

In the long term, the Observatory has the potential to inform the achievement of the SDGs, as well as the identification of the territories that have shown more effectiveness in their achievement, facilitating the recognition of smart practices with the potential for adaptation and replication in other places.

Economic, human resources and inputs required

As a knowledge management initiative, the Observatory is cost-effective.

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4 See: https://blogs.iadb.org/trabajo/es/brasil-aprender-en-tiempos-revueltos/

On the one hand, there are thousands of accesses from all over the world; on the other hand, the part that has a greater cost, related to the collection, data processing, operational costs of lodging and maintenance, is assumed by the MPT.

The association between the MPT and the ILO also allows data and information to be developed and submitted with high technical rigor, at the same time that they are presented in an intuitive way, facilitating their reading. In short, the costs are those related to the maintenance of the technical equipment in the MPT and the ILO, thus the two institutions have great added value in this process without requiring a large financial contribution.

Criteria that identify it as a good practice

Innovation

On the occasion of the 108th International Labour Conference (Geneva, June 2019), the MPT was recognized for its innovation in the use of technologies to promote fundamental rights at work and the Child Labour Observatory is integrated into that SmartLab platform.

As expressed by the Public Labour Prosecutor of Brazil, it is a very important recognition for the MPT to be distinguished by this intelligent practice, exporting to the world, in this way, the knowledge developed[5].

Relevance

Brazil, together with the countries of the region, maintains a sustained commitment to the prevention and eradication of child labour. Although the rate has been reduced, intervention still needs to be deepened to achieve the goal of a country free of child labour. This is why the design and implementation of tools that contribute to providing more comprehensive, timely and pertinent information for proper decision-making in public policy, especially at sub-national levels, is considered a priority.

Effectiveness

With thousands of accesses from around the world, the Observatory has fulfilled its objective of expanding the knowledge base on child labour in the country. In addition, due to its characteristics, it is a product that supports capacity development processes through the generation of technical knowledge.

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5   Public Labour Prosecutor. See in: https://revistapreven. org/06/2019/home-noticias/boas-praticas-publicas-em-sst/o-ministerio-publico-do-trabalho-mpt-apresenta-a-tecnologia-dos-observatorios-digitais-smartlab-em-exposicao-intera-tiva-na-oit/

Efficiency

The Observatory maintains a good cost-effectiveness ratio, both due to the volume of access to information and the reduction in costs based on the efficient use of resources provided by the State, such as the collection and processing of data, operational costs of lodging and maintenance and those related to the technical equipment provided by the MPT and the ILO. All of this reduces the required financial contributions and maximizes results.

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Replicability

Although Brazil is a country recognized for the quantity and quality of its data, it is clear that the vast majority of the countries in the region have information available, both from statistics and administrative records, with which it is possible to work to develop identification systems, follow-up and monitoring of child labour and its associated factors. The most important thing is to have the technical knowledge of identification, compilation, treatment and organization of the data so that they can be converted into information. All the programming part is created with free software with wide access and open source. The MPT has published the Observatory scheduling codes on the GitHub repository.

Sustainability

The Observatory for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour, as a component of the SmartLab initiative, bases its sustainability on the use of existing resources, which are optimized to obtain new results at a cost tending to zero.

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