

Children and young people in Brazil and Latin America – Basic facts

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I - Context: basic facts about the region

- Term Latin America first used in the 1850s. Between 1804 and 1825 many countries won independence from Spain and Portugal. But these movements resulted in land-owning oligarchies taking power. A few states in Brazil for example are still mainly owned by a single family who fill elected positions at all levels of government.
- Latin America and the Caribbean (26 countries, 19 sovereign states and 7 territories and dependencies from Mexico in the north to Chile and Argentina in the south. South America (12 countries).
- LA total population over 600 million. In SA 40,3% below 24, 1/3 below 18.

Location	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
World	43,9	141,2	142,0	95,9	51,0	17,0	3,8
Europe	13,2	51,5	95,9	98,6	53,5	11,6	0,7
United Kingdom	12,5	56,1	105,3	119,1	66,5	13,8	0,9
South America	60,9	106,5	97,0	68,9	39,0	13,7	2,4
Brazil	61,6	99,6	86,5	54,4	27,8	9,3	1,6

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017). World Population Prospects: The 2017.

- In 2012, 95 thousand children and young people worldwide between the ages of 0 and 19 were victims of homicide; 25 thousand of these lived in LA, the region with the highest rate of such homicides in the world. Correlation with high rates of violence to criminal groups, the open presence of armed gangs in the streets, easy access to guns, economic and social inequality, and low levels of education (UNICEF, 2014).
- Spanish and Portuguese settlements massively reduced indigenous populations but differently. Indigenous population of Bolivia is 62% of total population. In Brazil, roughly 300,000 out of population of 200 million.
- Latin America suffers from massive income inequality and low GDPs. While Argentina has a current GDP of 20K, Bolivia's is only 6.4K
- Many cities have high concentrations of low-income populations in low-income communities.

- Brazil is mixed-race country with 43% of people in the last census chose the ethnicity defining color pardo (signifying mixed race). Prejudice and discrimination appear in many ways – racial discrimination being only one form, being poor and resident of a favela (slum).
- Note that during the African slave trade period, two thirds of all slaves who made it to the Americas went to the American South, the majority of those to Brazil.
- Many countries especially Bolivia, Mexico and Brazil wracked by the drug trade and heavily armed drug trafficking gangs.
- On a global scale, the most extreme levels of youth violence are found in Mexico, El Salvador and Brazil, occupying first and third place in mortality rates of 15 and 19 year-olds with rates of 95.6, 55.8 and 54.9 deaths per 100,000 youth, respectively (Waiselfisz, 2015). Mapa da violência (Map of violence). Youth National Department, Brasília.
- The great basis for children’s rights is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and signed by every UN member except the US. The preliminary discussions to the Convention greatly influenced the Brazilian statute on children and adolescents of 1990 as well as other countries in the region.
- Federal law in Brazil, reflecting the post dictatorship discussions of freedom, provides for citizen involvement in policy making. One mechanism is Rights Councils which are mandated by law on several key topics at each level of government. The Constitution (1988) says that children are to have precedence in the provision of government assistance. A new law was based on the framework of rights was passed in 1990 (The Statute on the Child and the Adolescent).
- The Children’s Rights Councils have the duty to inspect children’s budgets and set out children’s policies. The Children’s Rights Council of the city of Rio de Janeiro has been a critical tool in our work. It consists of half nominees from municipal departments and half people elected by children’s connected organizations certified by the Council.

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