Introduction to adulthood inequalities

In 2000, 34.7% of the population in Latin America and the Caribbean was between 30 and 64 years of age. By 2020, it had approached 43% and is projected to continue climbing to 44.7% by 2030.

This rise has yielded a “demographic dividend” in which the share of those aged between 30 and 64, most of whom are capable of generating income, is greater than the rest of the population that is economically dependent upon them.

However, there is no guarantee such demographic dividends will endure as they hinge upon the ability of economies to generate productive and decent employment.

Equality gap diagnosis

The most direct way to adequately satisfy basic needs is with sufficient and secure employment-related income sources.
Unfortunately, adults in Latin America experience considerable income inequality with many relegated to low incomes. Close to 40% of the region’s population earns less than the minimum wage.

In addition to inadequate incomes, elevated levels of informality mean a high proportion of jobs are precarious and lack benefits. This situation leads to gaps in social security access, especially in rural areas.

The region’s rate of informality is roughly 54%, according to the International Labour Organization.

One of the least favored forms of labor insertion is the unskilled self-employment in which six out of every ten individuals among the 20% lowest earning people in the region are engaged.
The introduction of new workplace technologies demands greater worker training and updating, something that is more challenging for adults from the least advantaged social sectors such as Indigenous Peoples, low wage workers and individuals with lower education levels, who tend to be more harmed than benefitted by automation.

Enabling technologies have assumed increasing importance in a world tending towards automation, particularly in relation to information and communications technologies.

Unfortunately, Latin America and the Caribbean suffer from major access gaps in these fields. Only one out of every seven households had internet access in 2017.
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